

Introduction to Animation

Computer Graphics
CMU 15-462/15-662

Increasing the complexity of our models

...but what about motion?

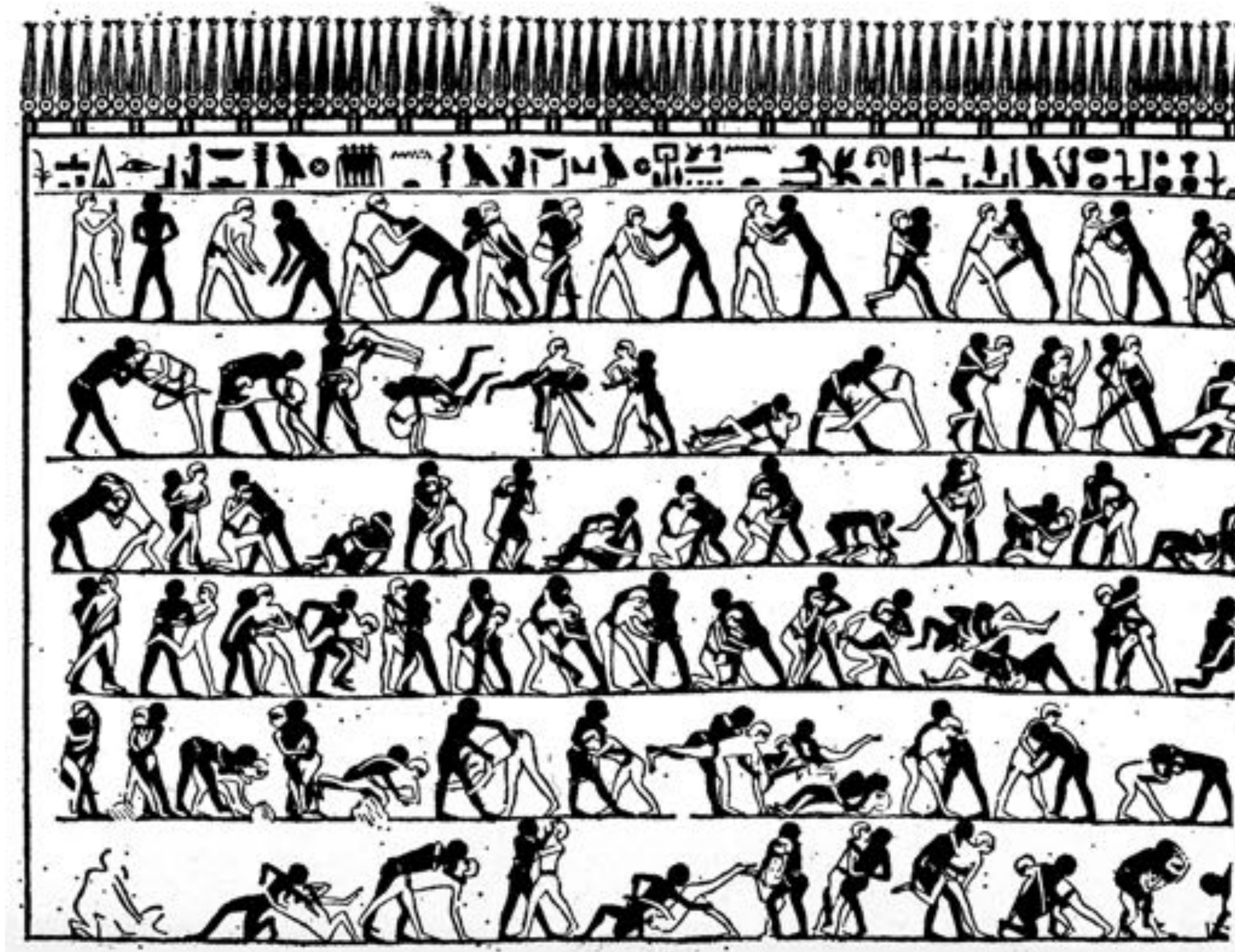


First Animation



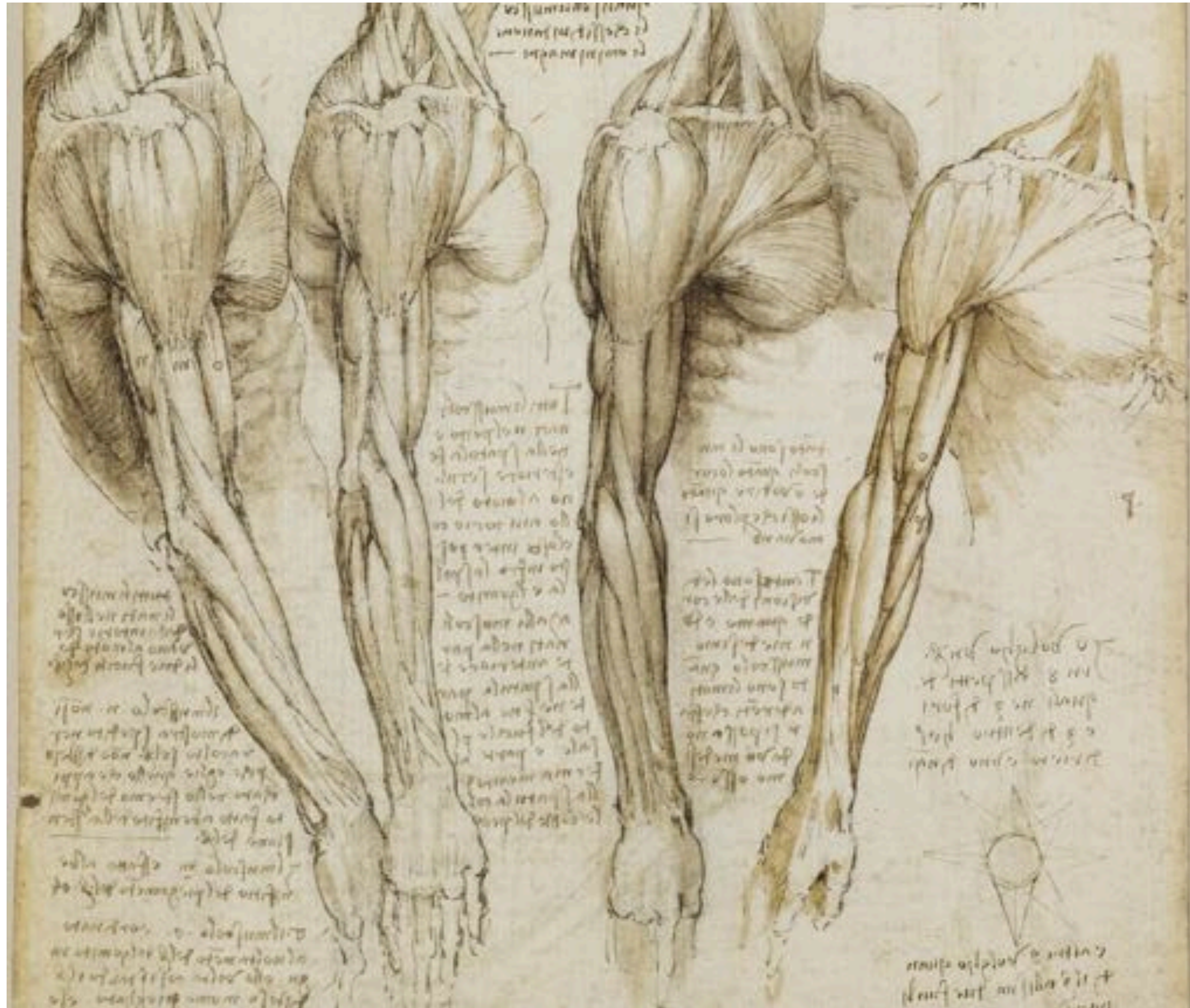
(Shahr-e Sukhteh, Iran 3200 BCE)

History of Animation



(tomb of Khnumhotep, Egypt 2400 BCE)

History of Animation



Leonardo da Vinci (1510)

History of Animation



Claude Monet, "Woman with a Parasol" (1875)

History of Animation



(Phenakistoscope, 1831)

First Film

- Originally used as scientific tool rather than for entertainment
- Critical technology that accelerated development of animation



Eadweard Muybridge, "Sallie Gardner" (1878)

First Animation on Film



Emile Cohl, "Fantasmagorie" (1908)

First Feature-Length Animation



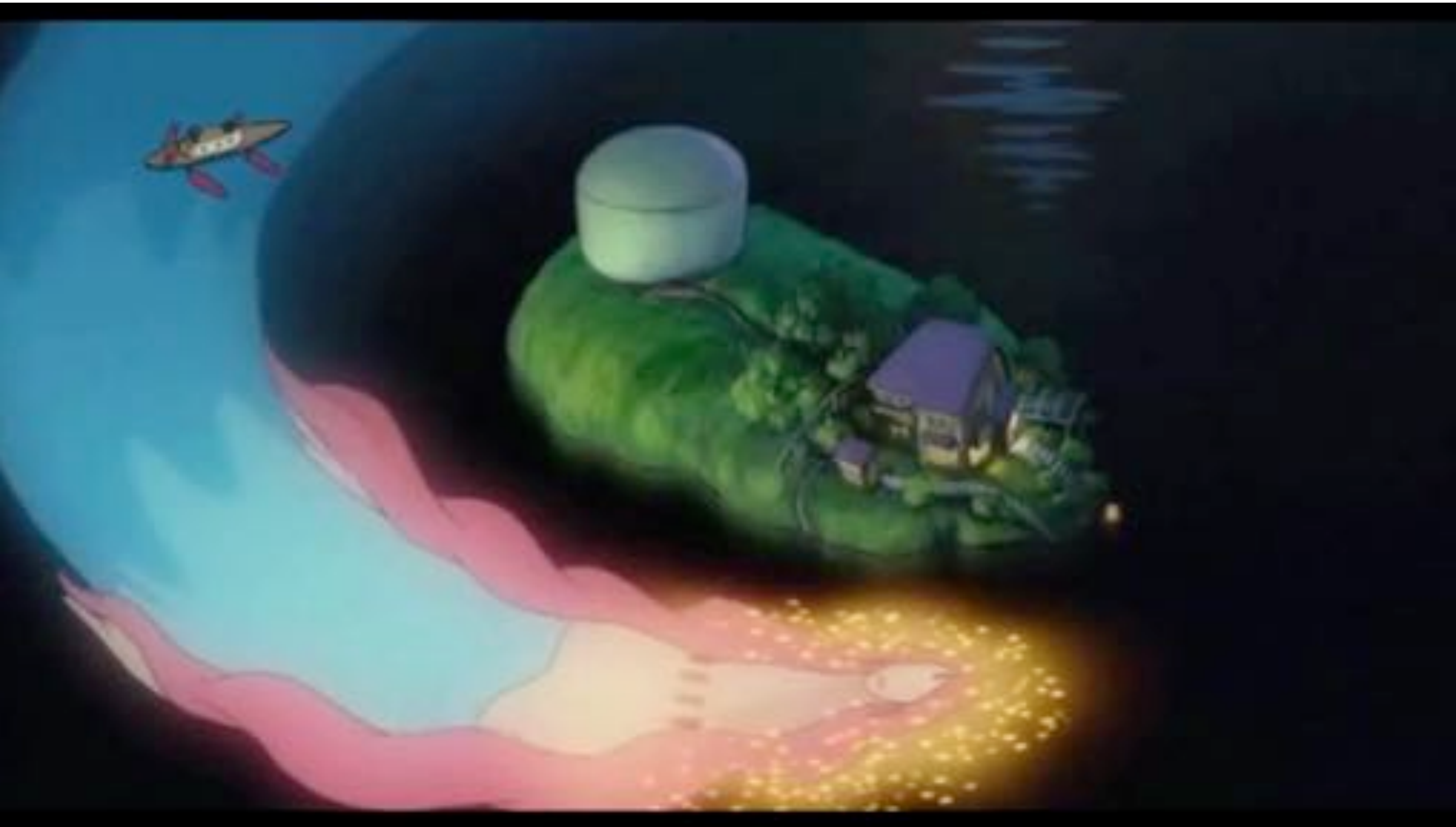
Lotte Reiniger, "Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed" (1926)

First Hand-Drawn Feature-Length Animation



Disney, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" (1937)

Hand-Drawn Animation - Present Day



Studio Ghibli, "Ponyo" (2008)

First Computer-Generated Animation

- **New technology, also developed as a scientific tool**
- **Again turbo-charged the development of animation**



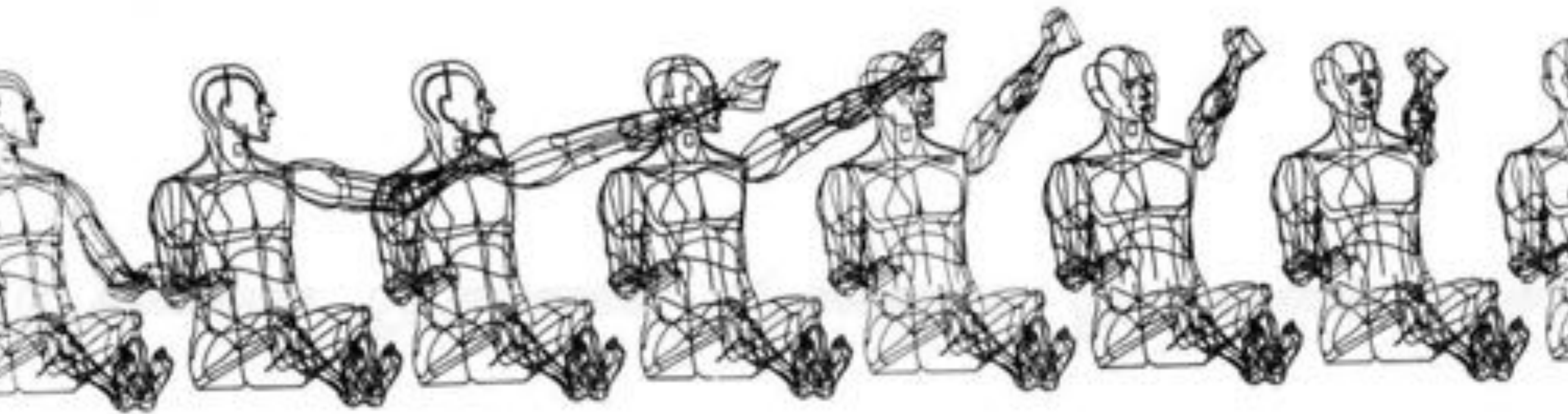
John Whitney, "Catalog" (1961)

First Digital-Computer-Generated Animation



Ivan Sutherland, "Sketchpad" (1963)

First 3D Computer Animation



William Fetter, "Boeing Man" (1964)

Early Computer Animation



Nikolay Konstantinov, "Kitty" (1968)

Early Computer Animation



Ed Catmull & Fred Park, "Computer Animated Faces" (1972)

First Attempted CG Feature Film



NYIT [Williams, Heckbert, Catmull, ...], "The Works" (1984)

First CG Feature Film



Pixar, "Toy Story" (1995)

Computer Animation - Present Day



MOVIECLIPS.COM

Sony Pictures Animation, "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs" (2009)

Zoetrope - Solid Animation



Zoetrope - 3D Printed Animation



John Edmark — BLOOMS

Perception of Motion

- **Original (but debunked) theory: persistence of vision (“streaking”)**
- **The eye is not a camera! More modern explanation:**
 - **beta phenomenon: visual memory in brain—not eyeball**
 - **phi phenomenon: brain anticipates, giving sense of motion**



beta



phi

credit: Akiyoshi Kitaoka

Generating Motion (Hand-Drawn)

- Senior artist draws keyframes
- Apprentice draws inbetweens
- Tedious / labor intensive (opportunity for technology!)

keyframe



keyframe



keyframe

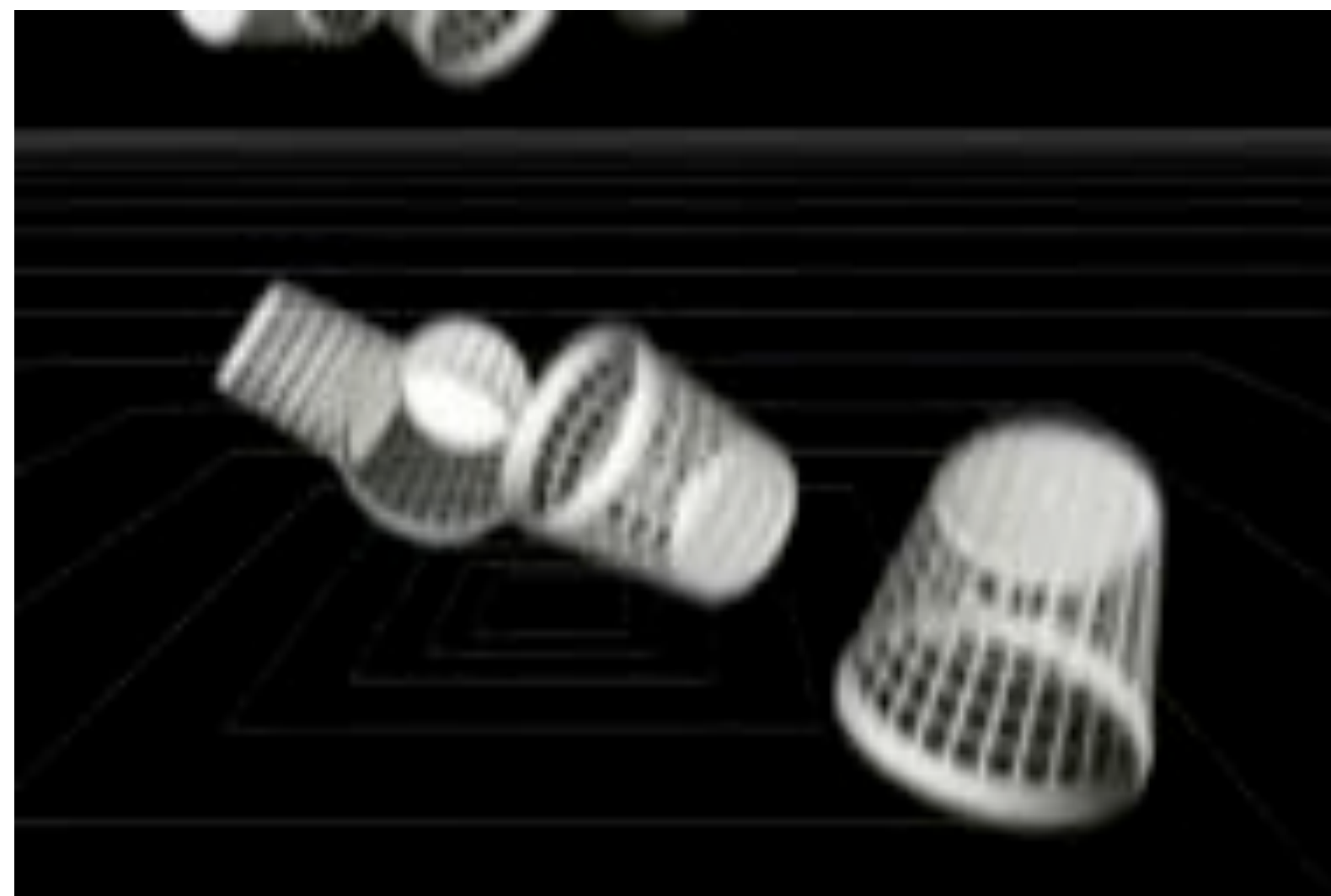
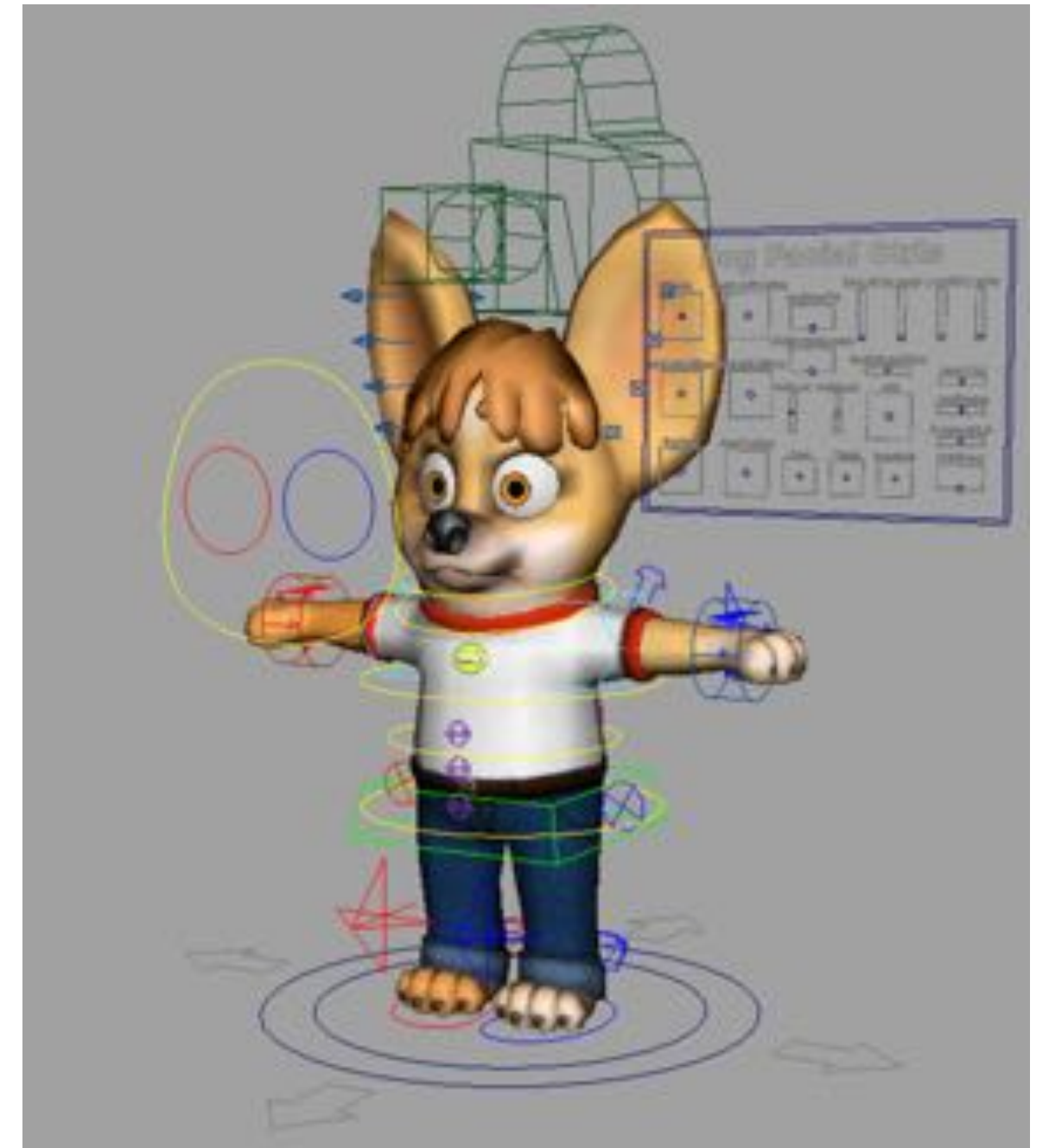


inbetweens ("tweening")

How do we describe motion on a computer?

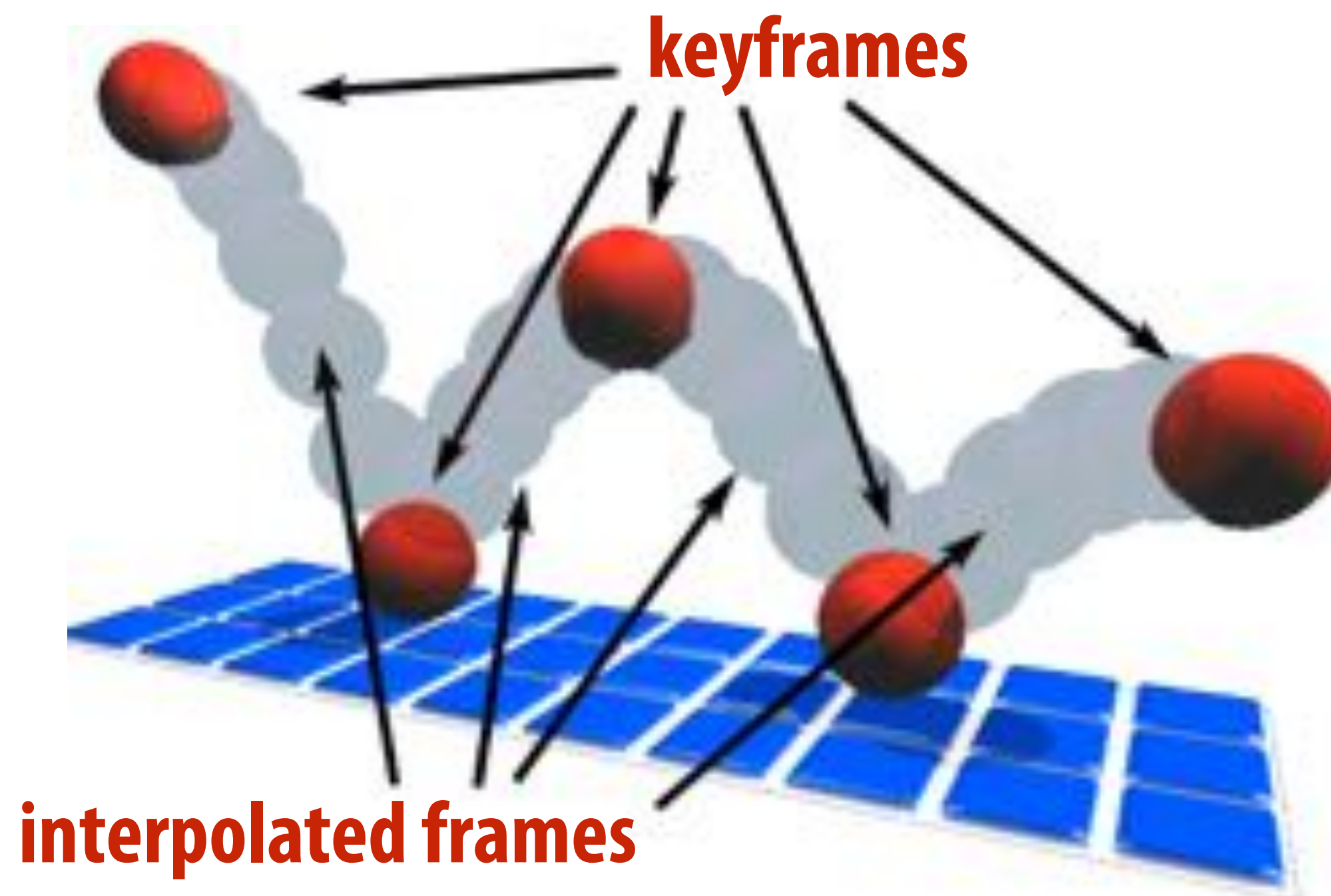
Basic Techniques in Computer Animation

- Artist-directed (e.g., keyframing)
- Data-driven (e.g., motion capture)
- Procedural (e.g., simulation)



Keyframing

- **Basic idea:**
 - **specify important events only**
 - **computer fills in the rest via interpolation/approximation**
- **“Events” don’t have to be position**
- **Could be color, light intensity, camera zoom, ...**



How do you interpolate data?

Spline Interpolation

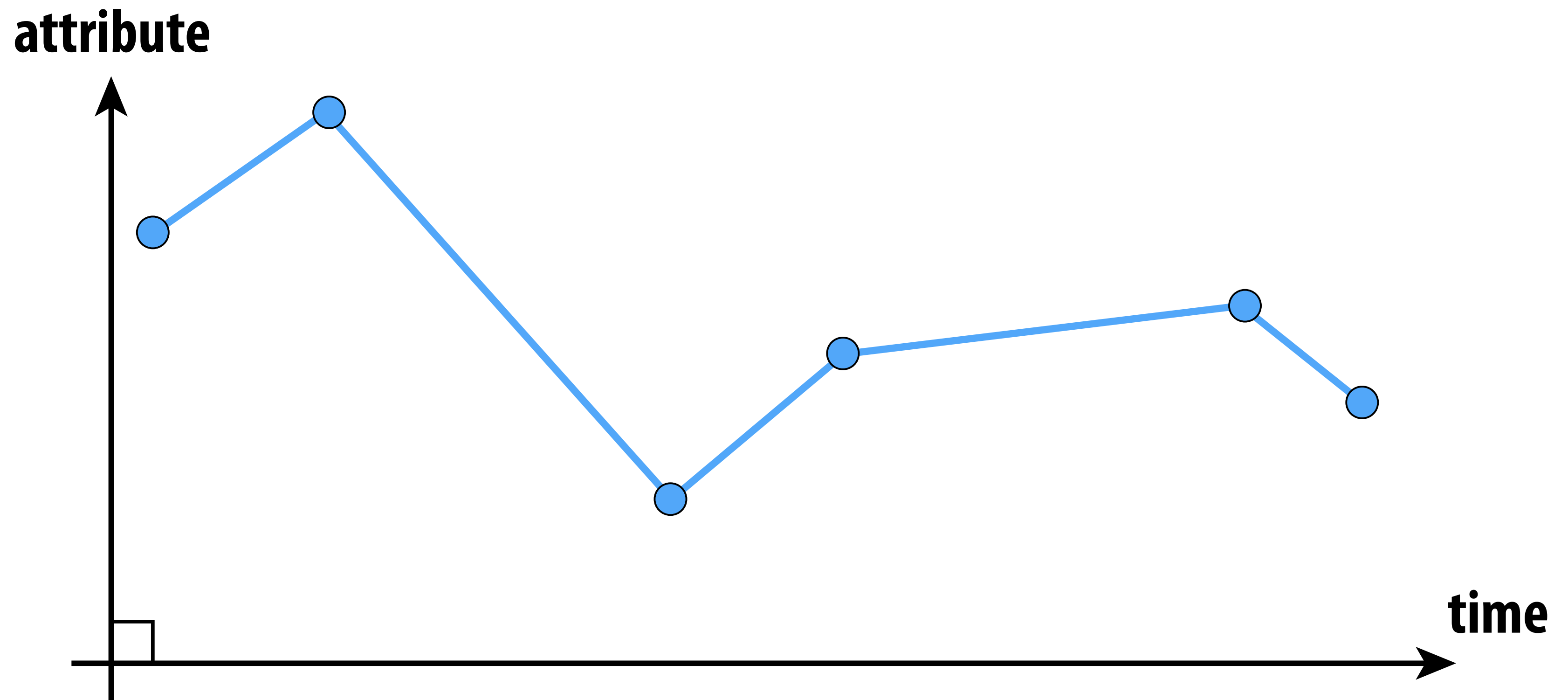
- **Mathematical theory of interpolation arose from study of thin strips of wood or metal (“splines”) under various forces**



(Good summary in Levin, “The Elastica: A Mathematical History”)

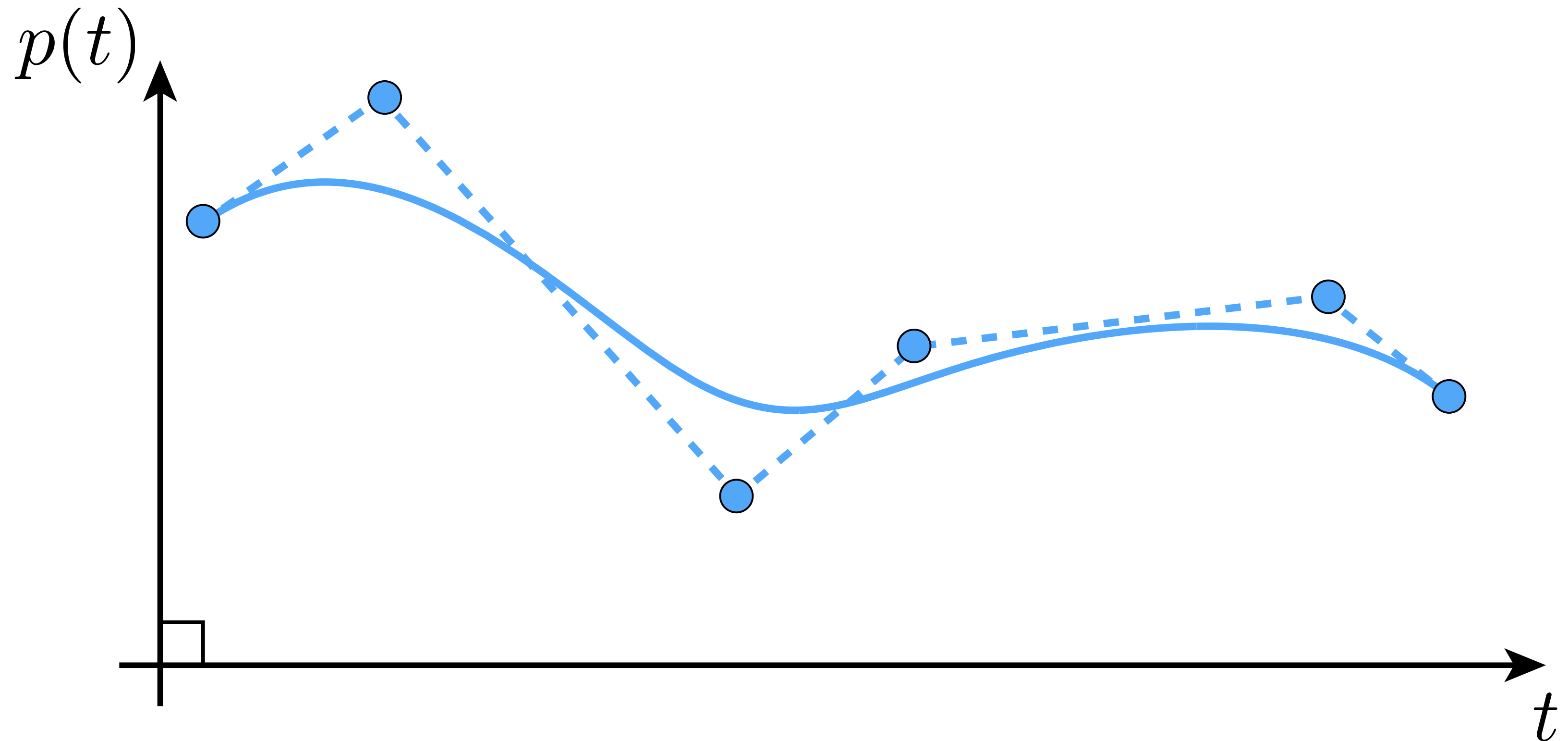
Interpolation

- **Basic idea: “connect the dots”**
- **E.g., piecewise linear interpolation**
- **Simple, but yields rather rough motion (infinite acceleration)**



Piecewise Polynomial Interpolation

- Common interpolant: piecewise polynomial “spline”



Basic motivation: get better continuity than piecewise linear!

Splines

- In general, a spline is any piecewise polynomial function
- In 1D, spline interpolates data over the real line:

$$(t_i, f_i), \quad i = 0, \dots, n$$

“knots” *values*

$t_i < t_{i+1}$

- “Interpolates” just means that the function exactly passes through those values:

$$f(t_i) = f_i \quad \forall i$$

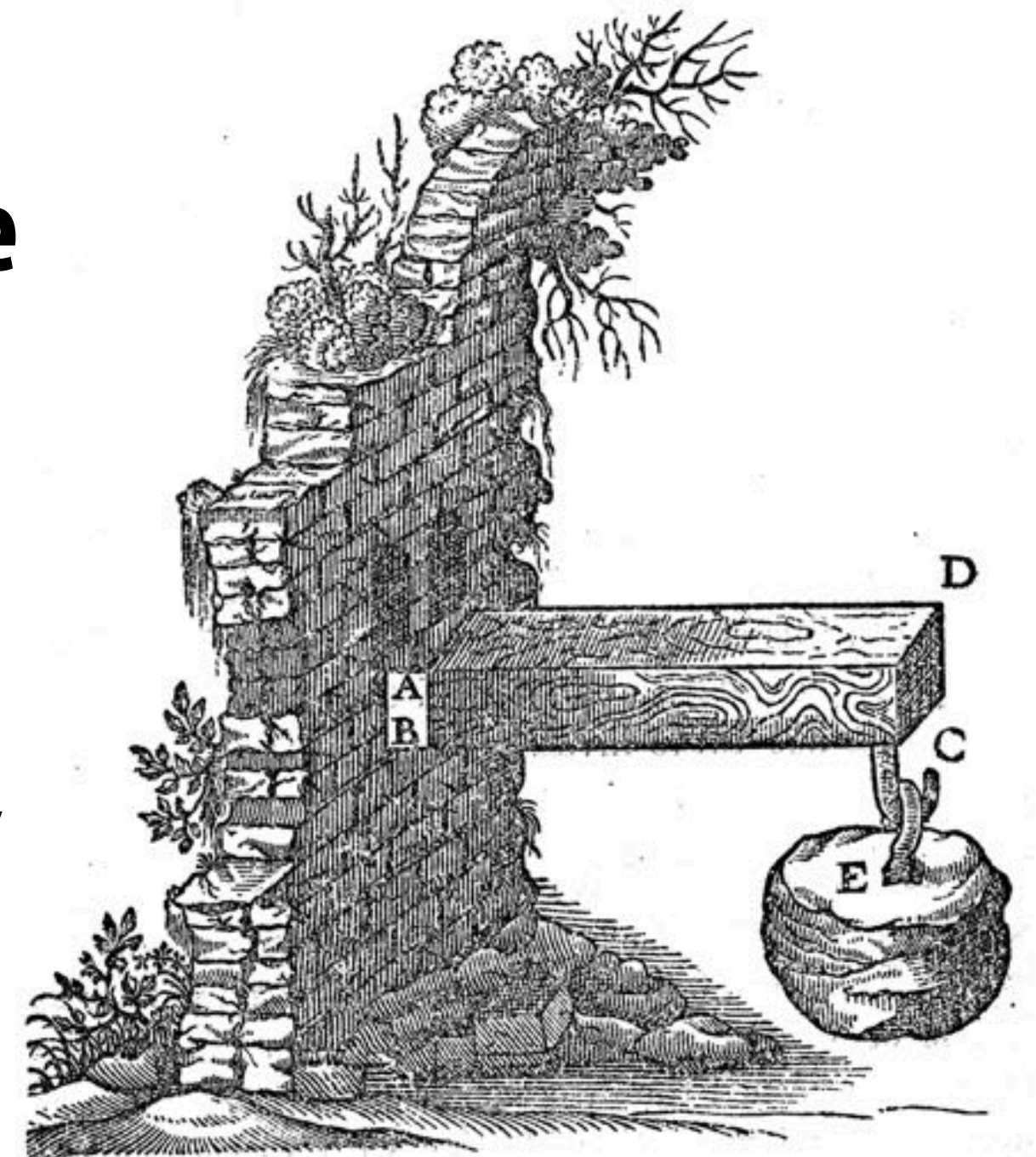
- The only other condition is that the function is a polynomial when restricted to any interval between knots:

$$\text{for } t_i \leq t \leq t_{i+1}, f(t) = \sum_{j=1}^d c_i t^j =: p_i(t)$$

degree *polynomial*
coefficients

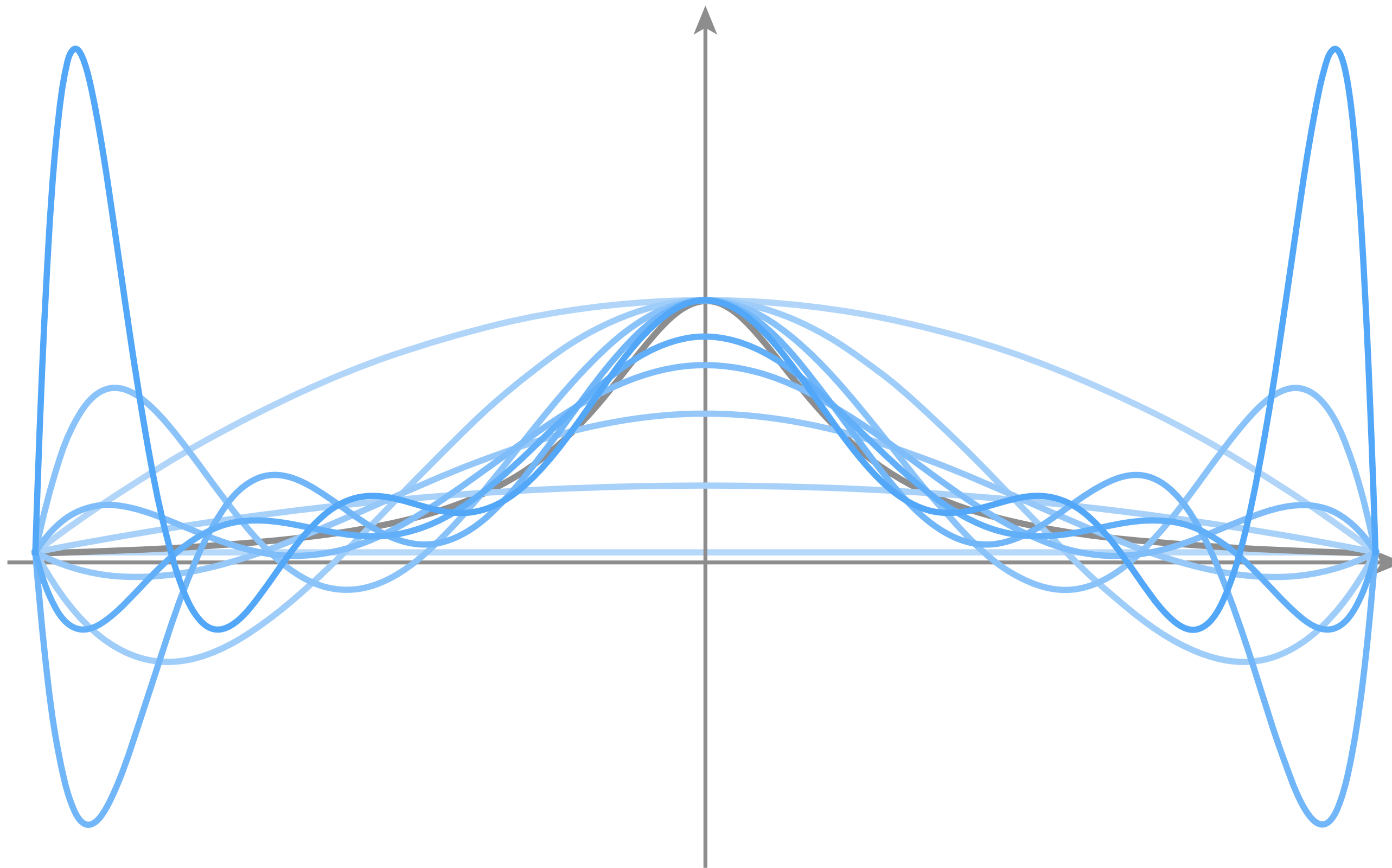
What's so special about cubic polynomials?

- Splines most commonly used for interpolation are cubic ($d=3$)
- Piecewise cubics give exact solution to elastic spline problem under assumption of small displacements
- More precisely: among all curves interpolating set of data points, minimizes norm of second derivative (not curvature)
- Food for thought: who cares about physical splines? We're on a computer! And are interpolating phenomena in time
- Motivation is perhaps pragmatic: e.g., simple closed form, decent continuity
- Plenty of good reasons to choose alternatives (e.g., NURBS for exact conics, clothoid to prevent jerky motion, ...)
- Also...



Runge Phenomenon

- **Tempting to use higher-degree polynomials, in order to get higher-order continuity**
- **Can lead to oscillation, ultimately worse approximation:**

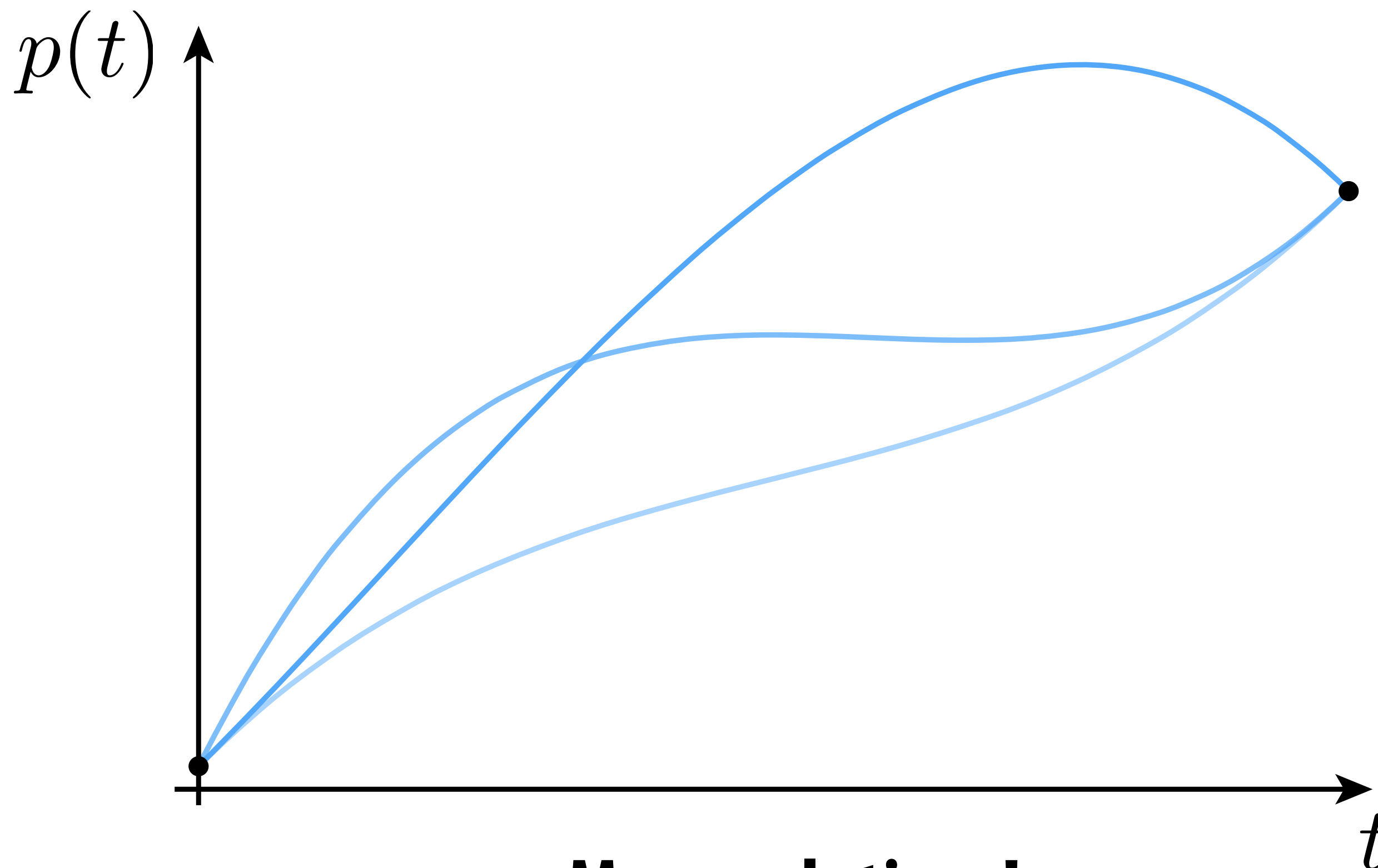


Fitting a Cubic Polynomial to Endpoints

- Consider a single cubic polynomial

$$p(t) = at^3 + bt^2 + ct + d$$

- Suppose we want it to match given endpoints:



Many solutions!

Cubic Polynomial - Degrees of Freedom

- Why are there so many different solutions?
- Cubic polynomial has four degrees of freedom (DOFs), namely four coefficients (a,b,c,d) that we can manipulate/control
- Only need two degrees of freedom to specify endpoints:

$$p(t) = at^3 + bt^2 + ct + d$$

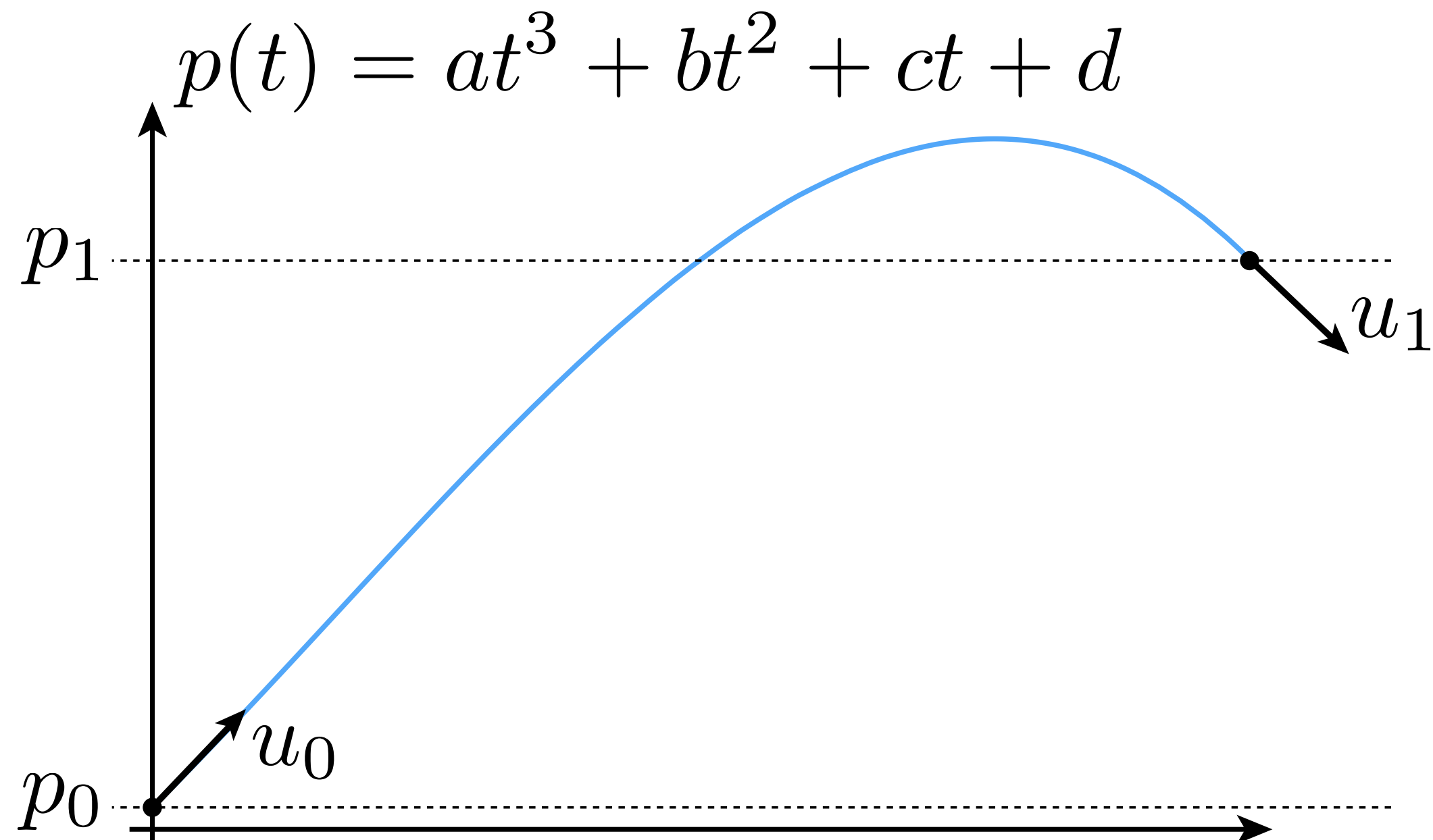
$$p(0) = p_0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad d = p_0$$

$$p(1) = p_1 \quad \Rightarrow \quad a + b + c + d = p_1$$

- Overall, four unknowns but only two equations
- Not enough to uniquely determine the curve!

Fitting Cubic to Endpoints and Derivatives

- What if we also match derivatives at endpoints?



$$p(0) = p_0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad d = p_0$$

$$p(1) = p_1 \quad \Rightarrow \quad a + b + c + d = p_1$$

$$p'(0) = u_0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad c = u_0$$

$$p'(1) = u_1 \quad \Rightarrow \quad 3a + 2b + c = u_1$$

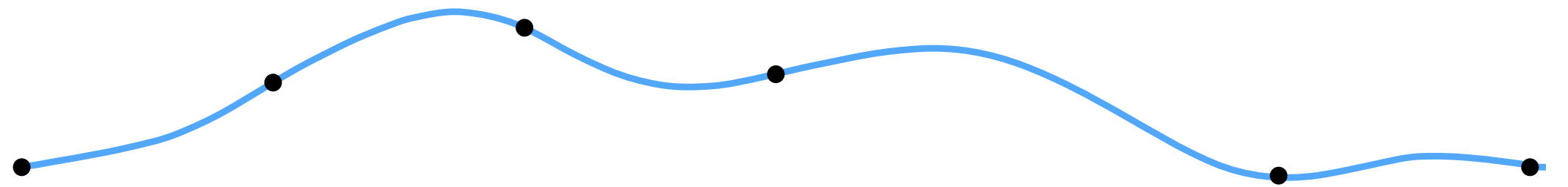
Splines as Linear Systems

- This time, we have four equations in four unknowns
- Could also express as a matrix equation:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 3 & 2 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} a \\ b \\ c \\ d \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} p_0 \\ p_1 \\ u_0 \\ u_1 \end{bmatrix}$$

- Often, this is the game we will play:
 - each condition on spline leads to a linear equality
 - hence, if we have m degrees of freedom, we need m (linearly independent!) conditions to determine spline

Natural Splines



- Now consider piecewise spline made of cubic polynomials p_i
- For each interval, want polynomial “piece” p_i to interpolate data (e.g., keyframes) at both endpoints:

$$p_i(t_i) = f_i, \quad p_i(t_{i+1}) = f_{i+1}, \quad i = 0, \dots, n - 1$$

- Want tangents to agree at endpoints (“C¹ continuity”):

$$p'(t_{i+1}) = p'_{i+1}(t_{i+1}), \quad i = 0, \dots, n - 2$$

- Also want curvature to agree at endpoints (“C² continuity”):

$$p''(t_{i+1}) = p''_{i+1}(t_{i+1}), \quad i = 0, \dots, n - 2$$

- How many equations do we have at this point?

- $2n + (n-1) + (n-1) = 4n - 2$

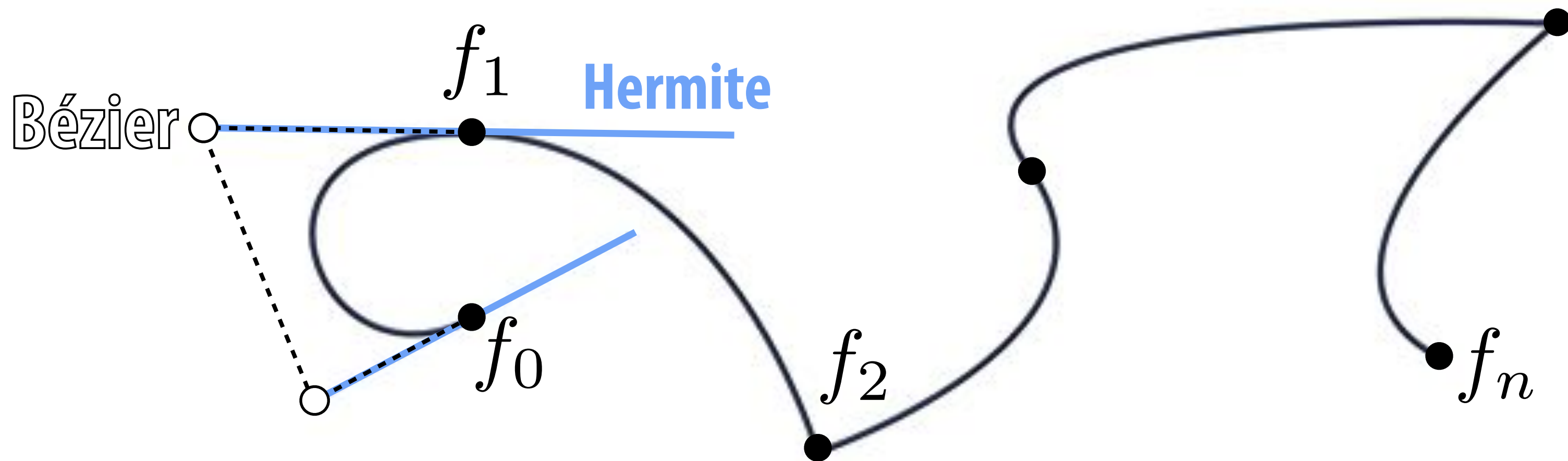
- Pin down remaining DOFs by setting curvature to zero at endpoints (this is what makes the curve “natural”)

Spline Desiderata

- In general, what are some properties of a “good” spline?
 - INTERPOLATION: spline passes exactly through data points
 - CONTINUITY: at least twice differentiable everywhere
 - LOCALITY: moving one control point doesn't affect whole curve
- How does our natural spline do?
 - INTERPOLATION: **yes, by construction**
 - CONTINUITY: **C^2 everywhere**
 - LOCALITY: **no, coefficients depend on global linear system**
- Many other types of splines we can consider
- Spoiler: there is “no free lunch” with cubic splines: can't simultaneously get all three properties

Review: Hermite/Bézier Splines

- Discussed briefly in introduction to geometry
- Each cubic “piece” specified by endpoints and tangents:



- Equivalently: by four points (Bézier form); just take difference!
- Commonly used for 2D vector art (Illustrator, Inkscape, SVG, ...)
- Can we get tangent continuity?
- Sure: set both tangents to same value on both sides of knot!
 - E.g., f_1 above, but not f_2

Properties of Hermite/Bézier Spline

- More precisely, want endpoints to interpolate data:

$$p_i(t_i) = f_i, p_i(t_{i+1}) = f_{i+1}, i = 0, \dots, n - 1$$

- Also want tangents to interpolate some given data:

$$p'_i(t_i) = u_i, p'_i(t_{i+1}) = u_{i+1}, i = 0, \dots, n - 1$$

- How is this different from our natural spline's tangent condition?

- There, tangents didn't have to match any prescribed value—they merely had to be the same. Here, they are given.

- How many conditions overall?

- $2n + 2n = 4n$

- What properties does this curve have?

- **INTERPOLATION** and **LOCALITY**, but not **C² CONTINUITY**

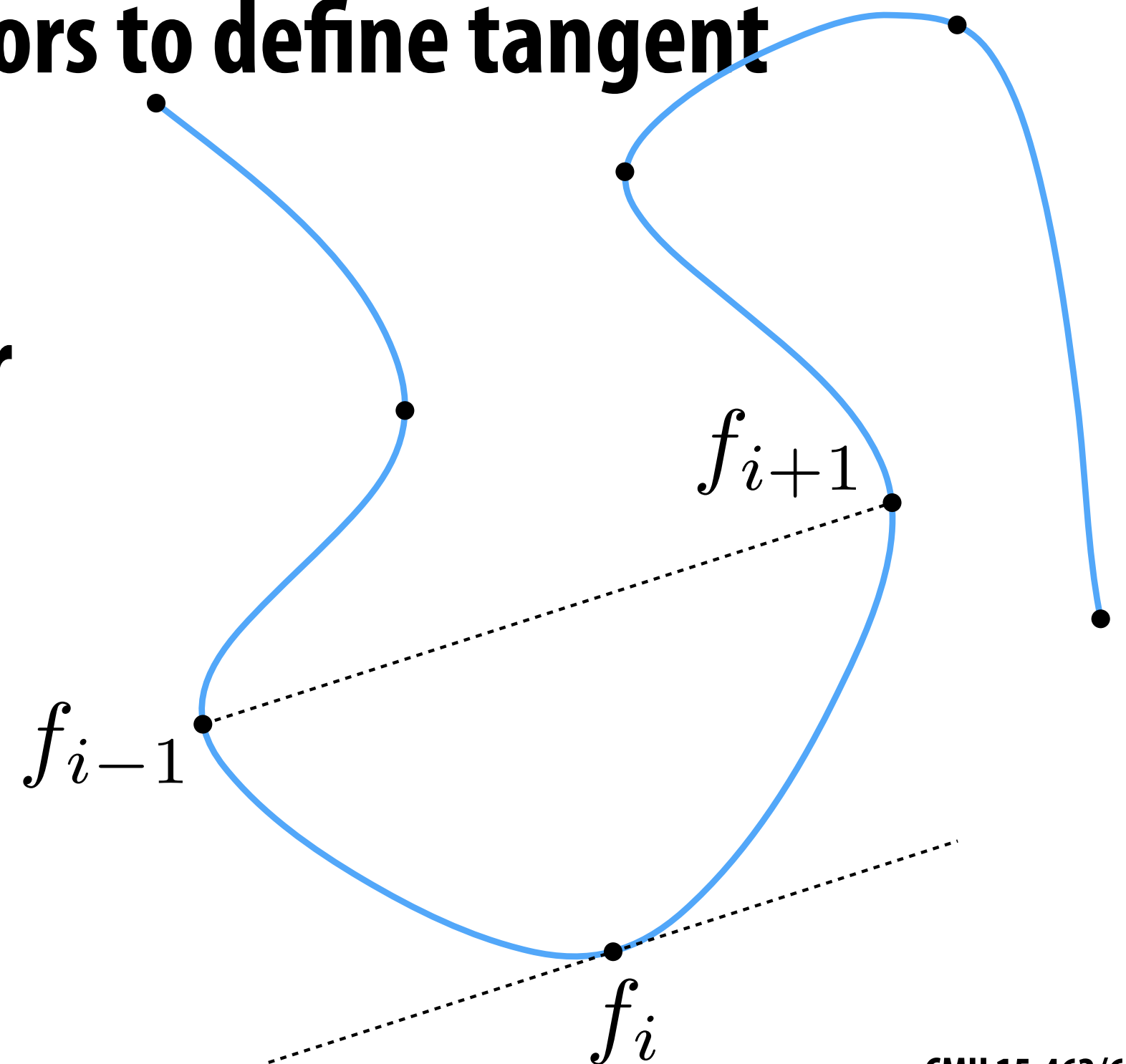
Catmull-Rom Splines

- Sometimes makes sense to specify tangents (e.g., illustration)
- Often more convenient to just specify values
- Catmull-Rom: specialization of Hermite spline, determined by values alone

- Basic idea: use difference of neighbors to define tangent

$$u_i := \frac{f_{i+1} - f_{i-1}}{t_{i+1} - t_{i-1}}$$

- All the same properties as any other Hermite spline (locality, etc.)
- Commonly used to interpolate motion in computer animation.
- Many, many variants, but Catmull-Rom is usually good starting point



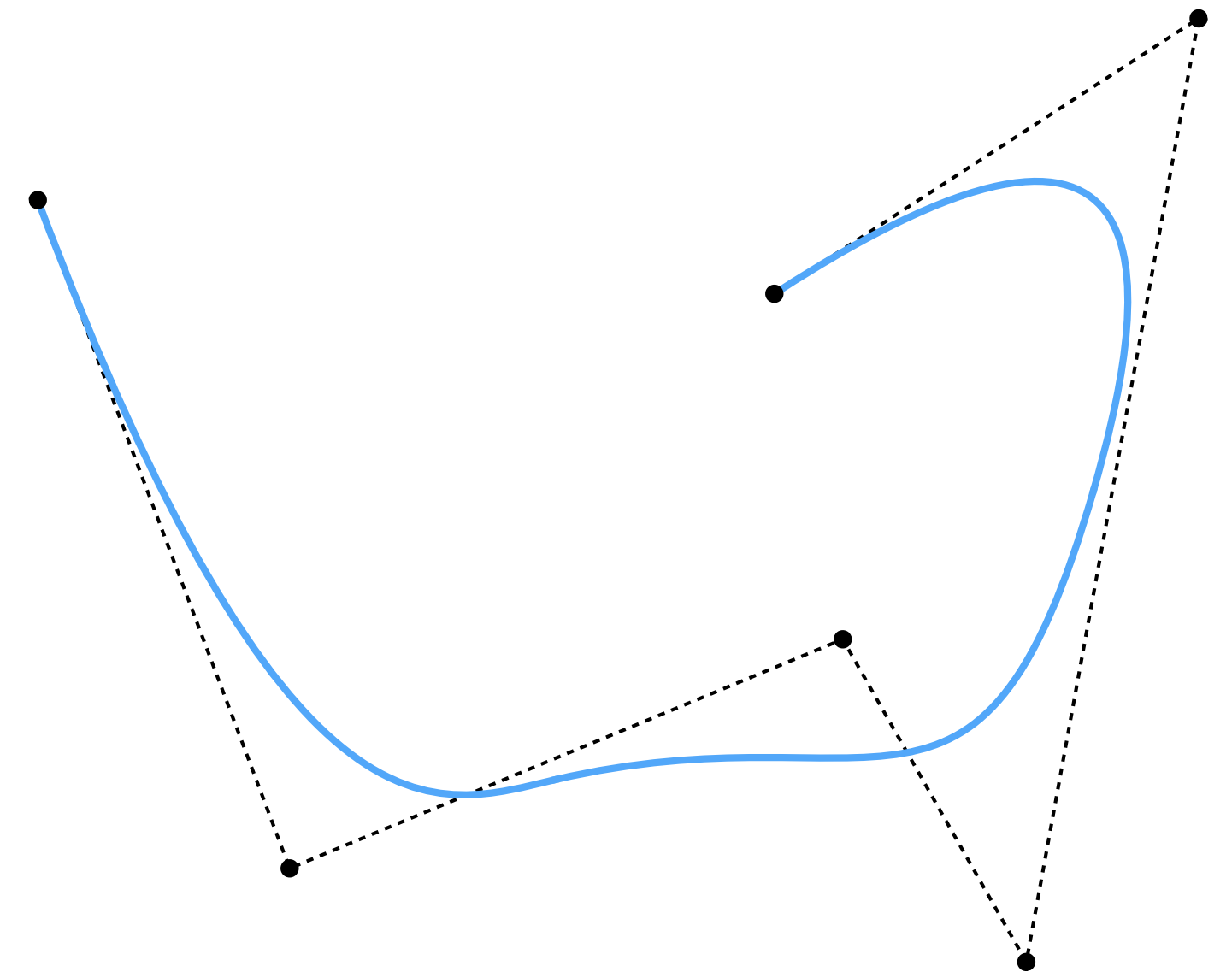
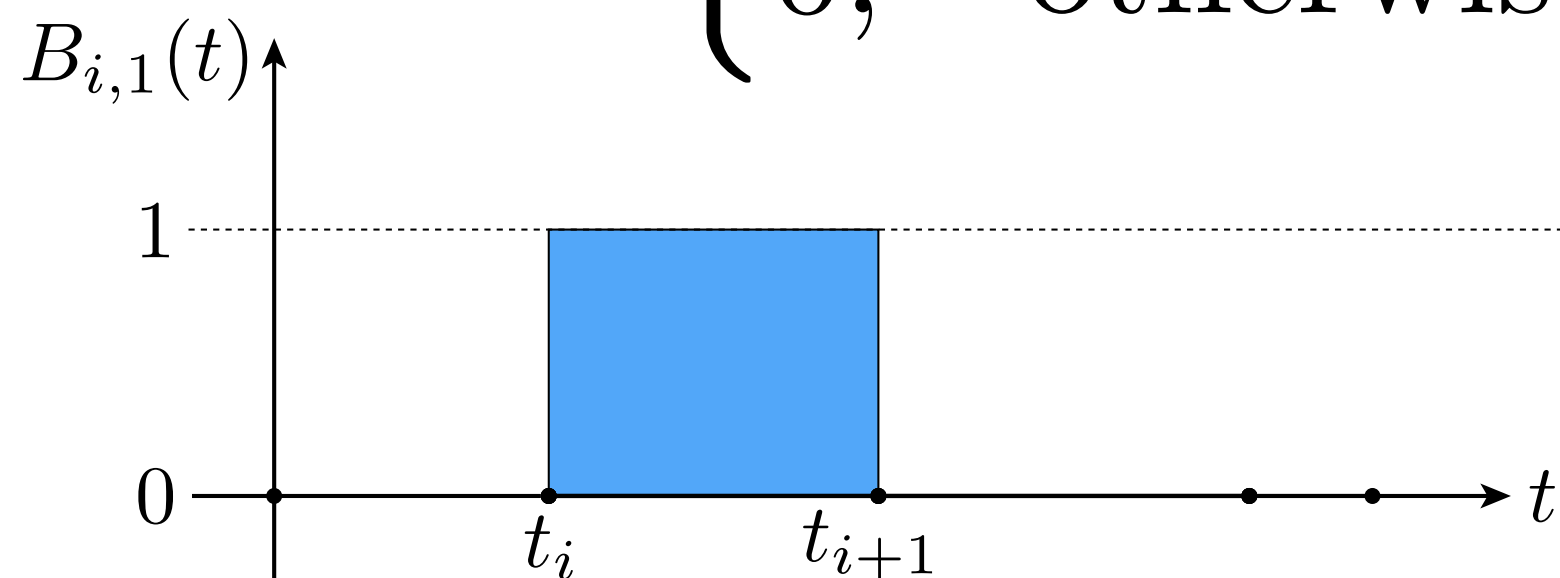
Spline Desiderata, Revisited

	INTERPOLATION	CONTINUITY	LOCALITY
natural	YES	YES	NO
Hermite	YES	NO	YES
???	NO	YES	YES

B-Splines

- Get better continuity and local control by sacrificing interpolation
- B-spline basis defined recursively:

$$B_{i,1}(t) := \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } t_i \leq t < t_{i+1} \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$



$$B_{i,k}(t) := \frac{t-t_i}{t_{i+k-1}-t_i} B_{i,k-1}(t) + \frac{t_{i+k}-t}{t_{i+k}-t_{i+1}} B_{i+1,k-1}(t)$$

linear interpolation

- B-spline itself is then a linear combination of bases:

$$f(t) := \sum_i a_i B_{i,d}$$

degree

Spline Desiderata, Revisited

	INTERPOLATION	CONTINUITY	LOCALITY
natural	YES	YES	NO
Hermite	YES	NO	YES
B-splines	NO	YES	YES

**Ok, I get it: splines are great.
But what exactly are we interpolating?**

Simple example: camera path

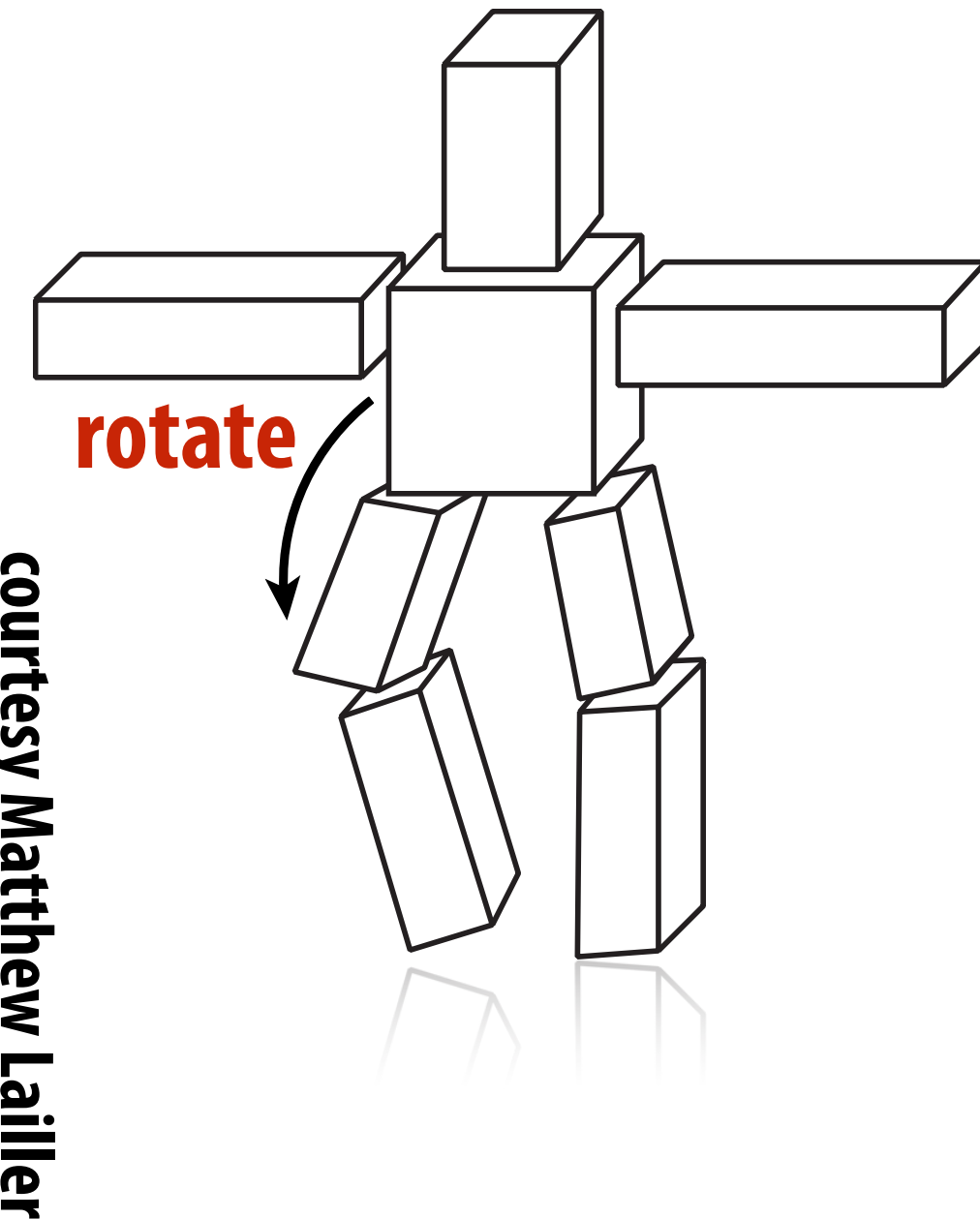
- Animate position, direction, “up” direction of camera
 - each path is a function $f(t) = (x(t), y(t), z(t))$
 - each component (x,y,z) is a spline



Zaha Hadid Architects—City of Dreams Hotel Tower

Character Animation

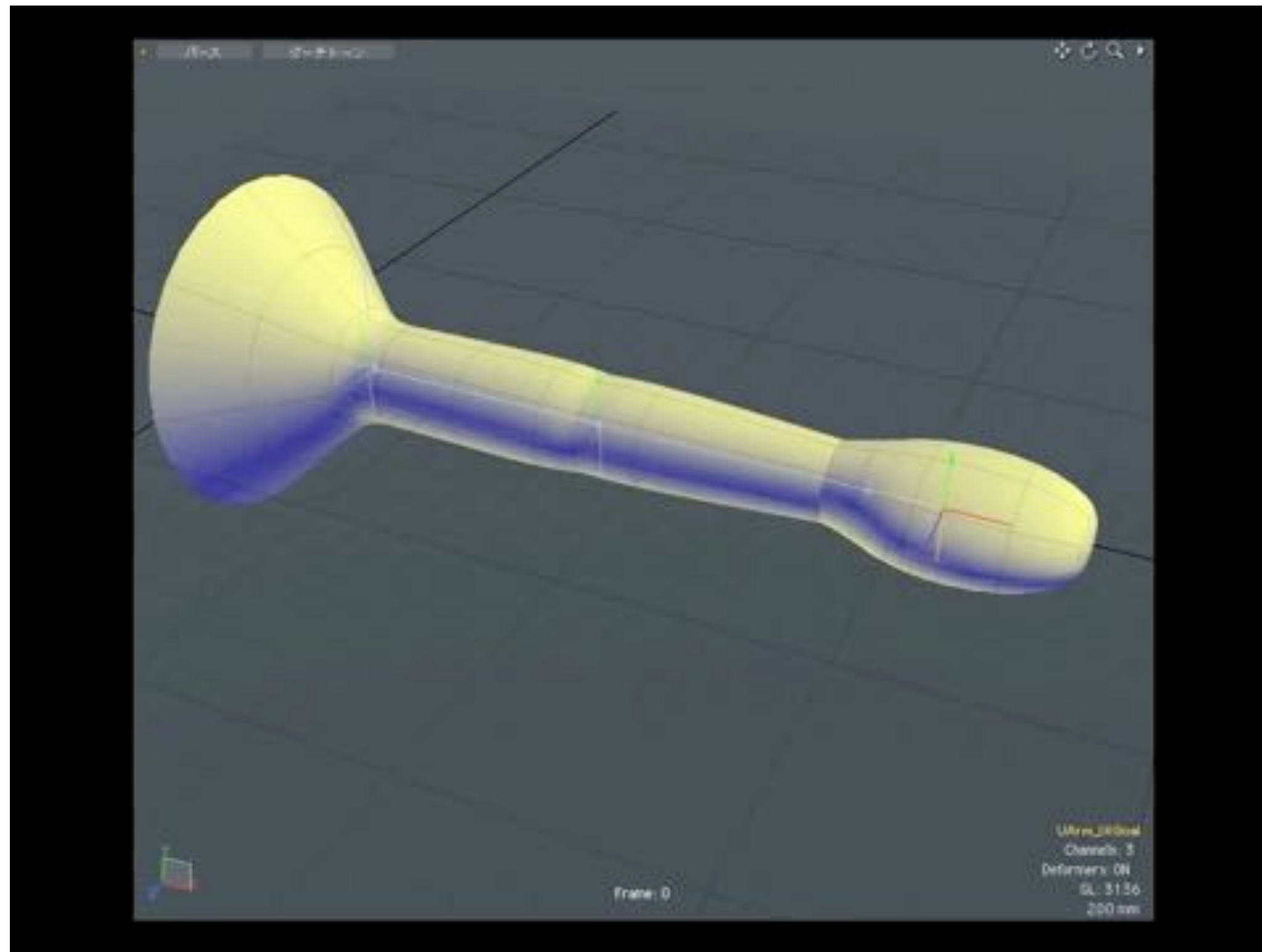
- Scene graph/kinematic chain: scene as tree of transformations
- E.g. in our “cube man,” configuration of a leg might be expressed as rotation relative to body
- Animate by interpolating transformations
- Often have sophisticated “rig”:



Even w/ computer “tweening,” a lot of work to animate!

Inverse Kinematics

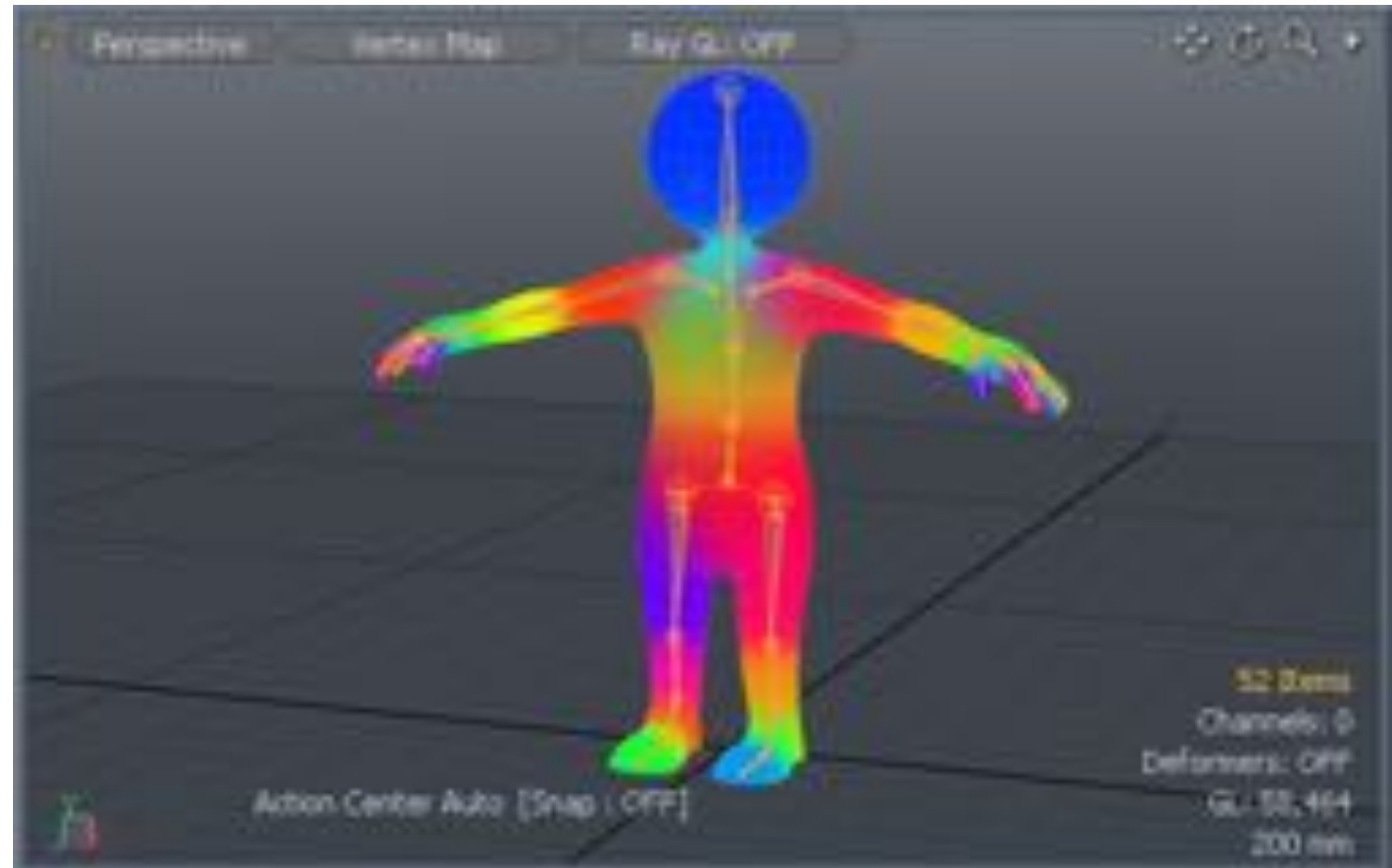
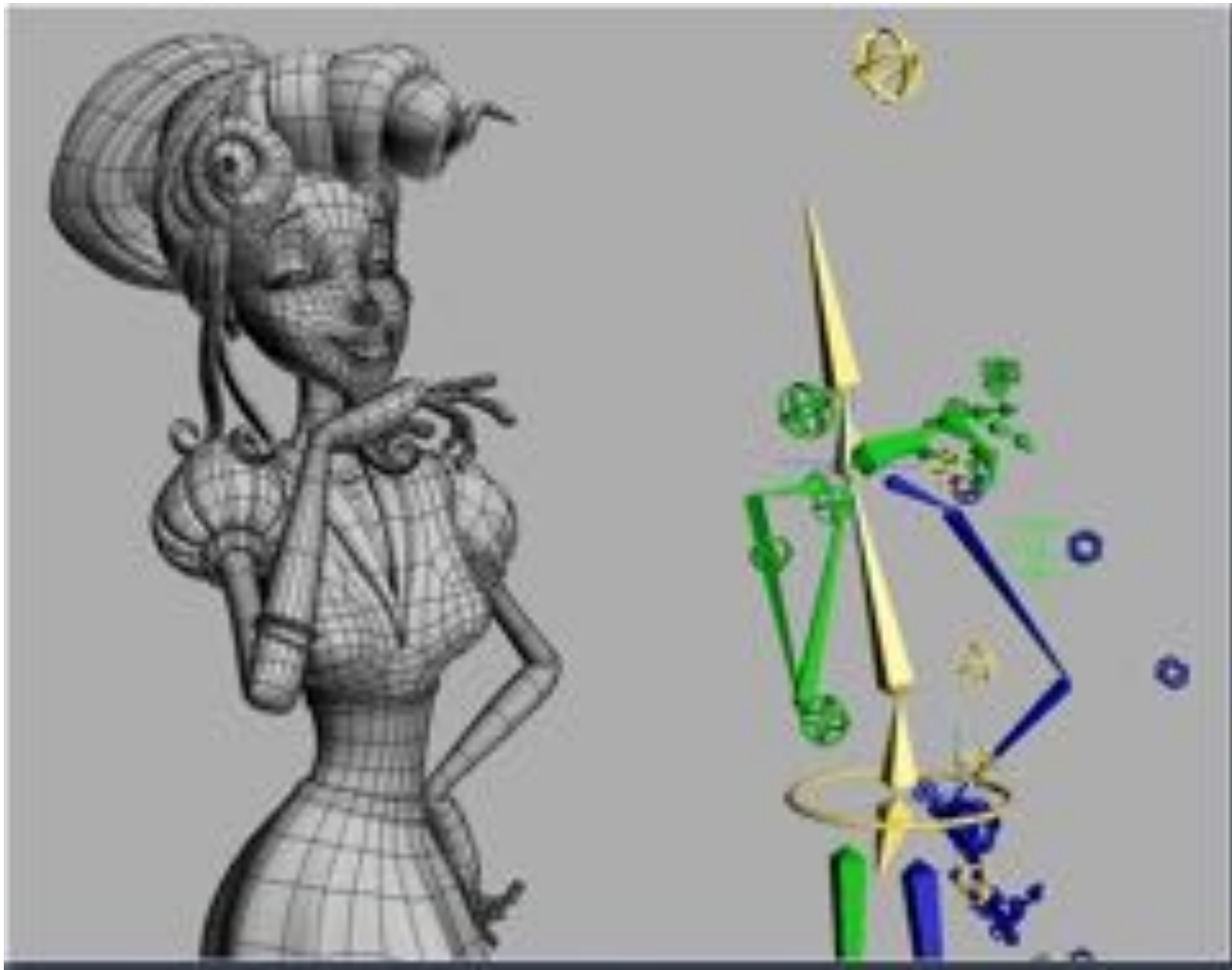
- Important technique in animation & robotics
- Rather than adjust individual transformations, set “goal” and use algorithm to come up with plausible motion:



Many algorithms—basic idea: numerical optimization/descent

Skeletal Animation

- Previous characters looked a lot different from “cube man”!
- Often use “skeleton” to drive deformation of continuous surface
- Influence of each bone determined by, e.g., weighting function:



(Many other possibilities—still active area of R&D)

Blend Shapes

- Instead of skeleton, interpolate directly between surfaces
- E.g., model a collection of facial expressions:



courtesy Félix Ferrand

- Simplest scheme: take linear combination of vertex positions
- Spline used to control choice of weights over time

Coming up next...

- Even with “computer-aided tweening,” animating everything by hand takes a lot of work!
- Will see how data, physical simulation can help

