WALK THIS
WAY: CREATING
CHARACTER IN
A CYCLE WALK

AN INTRODUCTION
TO THUMBNAILS

GOOD ACTORS:
DEVELOPING A
STORY CONTEXT
FOR YOUR
ANIMATION

EVERY MOVE YOU
MAKE: ANALYZING
THE CHARACTER
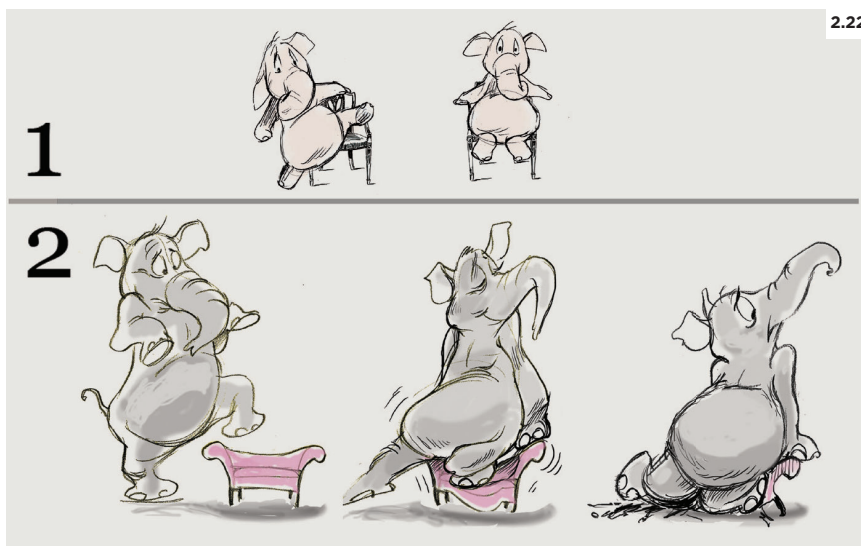
CHARACTER
VOLUME, SIZE,
AND MOVEMENT

AN INTRODUCTION
TO DIALOGUE
ANIMATION

DON'T JUST DO
SOMETHING …

Size and weight:
He's not heavy … (not yet, anyway)

Character scale (relative sizes) has a major influence on movement. Animated characters that work together are often designed with contrasting sizes and silhouettes. Think of Tom Cat and Jerry Mouse, the Roadrunner and Coyote, Shrek and Donkey, and Wallace and Gromit. Contrasting sizes make it easy to tell these characters apart. Contrasts are also created by using different lines of action, which make each character's movements unique.

Ideally, characters will not all appear to be the same weight when moving. This is a major problem for the beginning animator. CGI animation makes it easy for the animator to maintain volumes and keep character appearances consistent (on model), but this advantage can turn into a disability if the rig doesn't distort sufficiently or if textured timing in the movement of the joints is not used to indicate the character's weight. Hand-drawn animation easily distorts, squashes, and stretches but can suffer from fluctuating volumes and go "off model" very easily. Both types of animation can "float" if the weight and size of the character do not affect its every movement. In animation, the term *floating* refers to characters that appear weightless in a situation where

2.22

movements and body masses should be affected by gravity or contact with solid objects, as shown in Example 1 of Fig. 2.22. Example 2 shows a better example that distorts the chair as well as the character. Weightlessness can be avoided by using textured (variable) timing on different areas of the character, especially in the legs. Floating is sometimes done deliberately, for example, if characters are moving under water. The speed of their movements and reactions can indicate weight even when the water's resistance replaces the effect of gravity, as discussed in Chapter 5.

2.22 The first elephant's body maintains its volume at all times instead of distorting during the movement. There is no reaction on the chair as it sits. As a result, the elephant appears to be weightless. The second elephant weighs much more—and this has an effect on the chair.