

“SALAM”

(Interpreting the meaning of Jihad)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements

Of the degree of

Master in Design

By

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Industrial Design Center

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY

2015



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Interpreting the meaning of Jihad





Interpreting the meaning of Jihad

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Animation & Film Design

Guide: Prof . Sumanth Rao

Approval Sheet

The animation Project entitled “Salam , Interpreting the meaning of Jihad” by Jamshed Nassin KV, 136340007 is approved in for the partial fulfillment of the Master Design Degree in Animation and Film Design.

Project Guide:



Chair Person:



Internal Examiner:



External Examiner:



Date: 28-04-15

Place: IDC, IIT Bombay

Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words others ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated any idea/ data/ fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature: 

Date: 21-04-15

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Content

Interpreting the meaning of Jihad	.III
Approval Sheet	VII
Declaration	.IX
Acknowledgment	XV
Abstract	.XVII
Introduction	1
Research.	5
Study of the subject	7
Story	13
Development and Story Idea	15
Visual Development	19
Thumbnails And Stoaryboards	21
Character Design	27
Salam	29
The Kid	31
Animatics	35
Trailer	37
Style.	39
Production Planning and Management	43

Animation	47
Animation	49
Compositing & Editing	51
Sound Design.	55
Poster Design	57
Conclusion	59
Reference and Links	61

Acknowledgment

I sincerely extend my gratitude to my guide Prof. Sumant Rao for his guidance and support throughout the project. I thank Prof. Phani Tetali, Prof. Nina Sabnani, Prof. Shilpa Ranade and Prof. CP Narayan for their invaluable support. I thank my family and friends for their encouragement and support.

Abstract

‘Salam’, an animated short film project is a journey of me as human being and as a believer of the Islamic faith to understand the meaning of the word ‘Jihad’. In my research I have come to understand that it has far different and deeper meanings than just a Holy war. The film showcases my humble attempt to express its meaning from my understanding through a story of a mother and her son.

Introduction

Ever since I was a child and during the time while I was growing up, I used to read and hear a lot about terrorism, and Islam being labeled as a religion of terrorists. I was confused, as this is not what Islam is all about, I thought. As a believer of the faith, it really saddened me when an entire community of humans were misunderstood or the truth behind the faith mistaken. So when the opportunity arose to make a short film of my own, I had no two thoughts in my mind and I decided to work on this, as this thought was very close to my heart.

It was a deeply moving and personal journey. In my research on the subject of terrorism and its link towards Islam, I have come across information which was very revelatory as well as very humbling. Such was the history of Islam that many have used and abused it in many ways. During this time of research I came across a certain word multiple times. People were using it in various contexts and giving it as an excuse for being a terrorist or encouraging terrorist activities. It was 'Jihad', a word known among all of us. It is a word shrouded in mystery by years and years of its misuse, the real truth behind it unknown. The only thing that we know is about the consequences that it creates. Jihad is what led me to my film. The film is a culmination of my want to understand its true meaning and my desire to let my fellow human beings be able understand it as well.

The report covers my journey into literature, films and other materials in search for a better understanding of the subject I am dealing with, as well as the treatment of the characters, visual style and narrative structures.

Research

Study of the subject

In my primary research I discovered that, Jihad, as an Arabic word simply meant struggle or strife. In an Islamic context it meant

“ Striving Or struggling effort expended

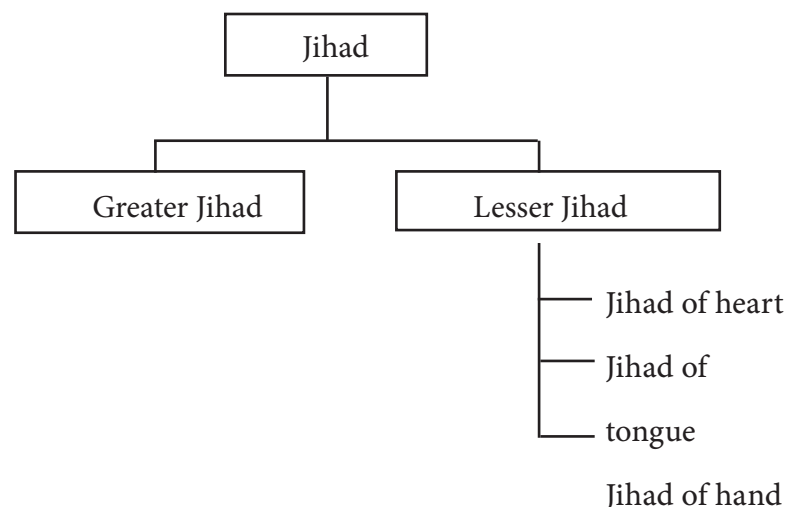
By the individual Muslim to walk

In the path of the God”

I was surprised at how such a simple and humbling message turned into something about destroying people's lives in the name of God. One google search would turn out results after results of blood and destruction.



To understand further the meaning of Jihad, I went into the heart of the Holy Quran or the Hadith of Prophet Muhammed, where Jihad is mentioned. I also wanted to know whether the history and life of Prophet reveals anything about its meaning. There I understood that Jihad is duty. And the person who has done his duty is called a Mujahid. Further delving into the subject, I discovered that there are two types of Jihad - The Lesser Jihad and the Greater Jihad. The Lesser Jihad refers to combat and the Greater Jihad refers to the struggle in the name of God with their own tongue, hand and heart - the Jihad to oneself. The soul and meaning of Jihad was not properly interpreted and it got misused to spread violence and terrorism throughout the world by force. The Quran never advocated this



kind of terrorism.

Historically, Islam went through some very difficult early period during which violence was the only option for survival and protection of the followers of Islam. It was in this context that Islam supported the killing of the 'enemy'. But who was the enemy and under what circumstances was it ok to resort to violence has been clearly stated in the Quran. Even in these cases, for physical fighting, killing and destruction, it wasn't 'Jihad' but the word 'Qathil' was used.

In all other contexts, Jihad had a much more deeper meaning that of an inner struggle in the path of God.

This idea of Jihad, which did not really advocate violence at all, was the soul which I wanted to instill in the story that I developed.

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمَرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا
أَنْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Sahih International

There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Story

Development and Story Idea

Developing a storyline was an iterative process. Since I was dealing with a very delicate issue, it had to be simple yet very effective in communicating the idea.

After going through the process of writing different versions of the possible plots which I had in my mind, one particular story to come out more effectively than the others. It was the story about a mother and her son

The Story

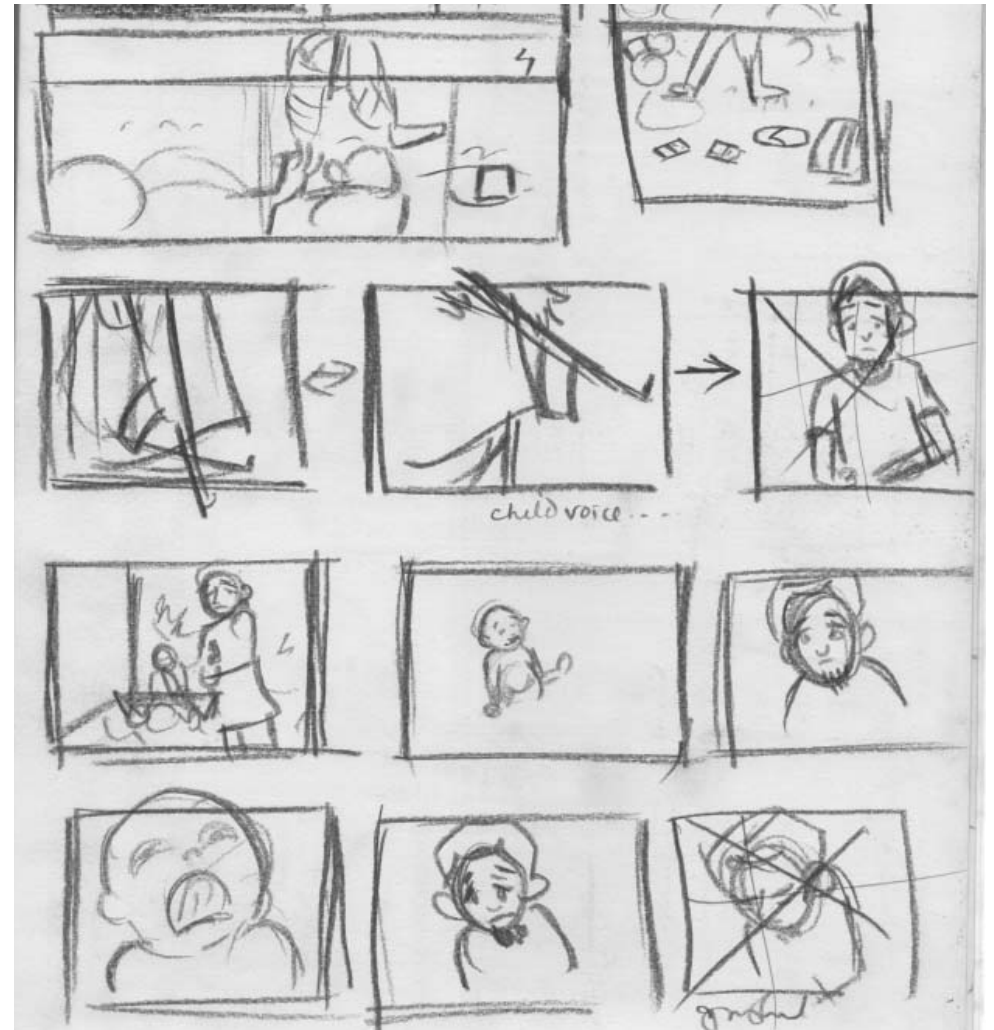
In a small village in Malabar, there lived a small muslim family of a mother and her son. The son went away for work one day and never returned. Everyday the expectant mother, praying for his return, used cook for him and wait for him to come back, but he never did. One day her prayers came true and he returned home. The mother was overwhelmed with emotions and happily fed him all that she made. The son was relieved to be back home and be with his mother. He was so tired that he lay his head on his mother's lap and slept. In his dream, he could hear the firing of guns, blasting grenades and crumbling buildings. As the days went by, the dreams became more vivid and he kept reliving the life that he left behind, the life of a terrorist. One dream was particularly reminiscent of the reason why he stopped being a terrorist, the slaughter of a child. The son was visibly

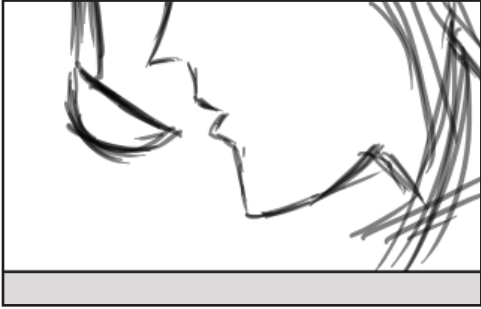
disturbed and the mother became increasingly aware of this disturbance. She felt that there was something wrong happening with her son. She tried to reason with him, but he was lost in his own thoughts and memories. One quiet morning, he heard rattling sounds and movements of boots. There were military personnel waiting for him outside his house. He looked at his loving mother, who was busy in prayer. He didn't want her to know what he had done and how he would be prosecuted for it. He quietly bade farewell to his mother and surrendered. The mother still kept waiting for him to return, cooking his favorite food and keeping it warm. She continued doing this everyday, yearning for her son to return. In a distant dark place, a young boy covered in black is taken to be executed by hanging. As he is hung, the mother, who has dozed off at the table, jolts awake, as if she felt her son returning home.

Visual Development

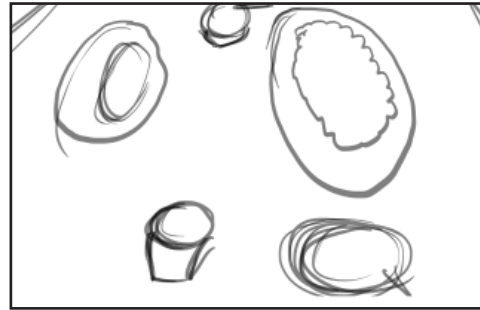
Thumbnails And Storyboards

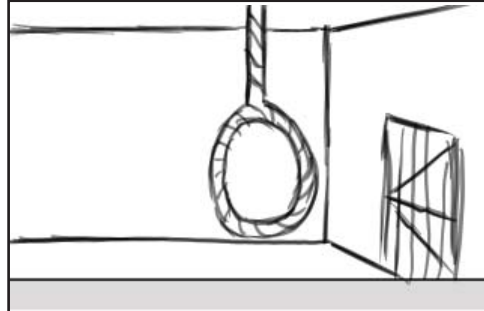
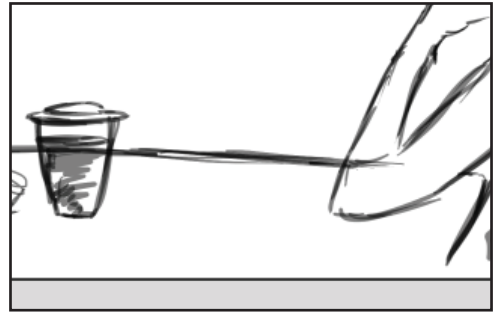
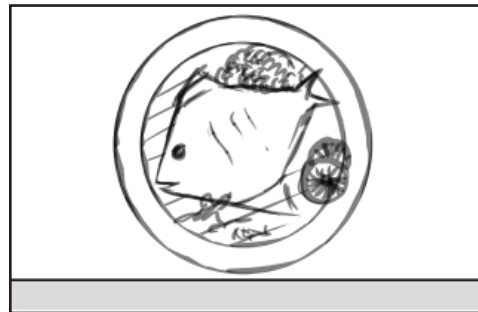
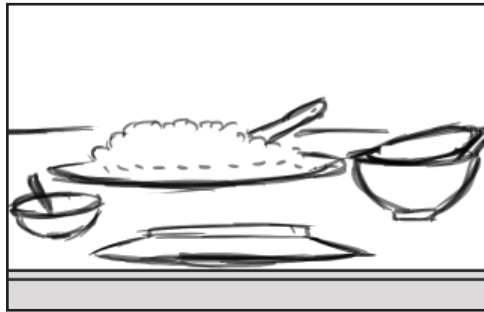
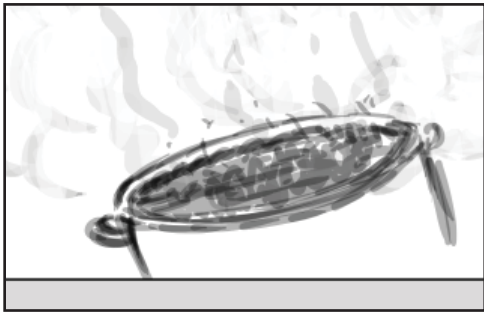
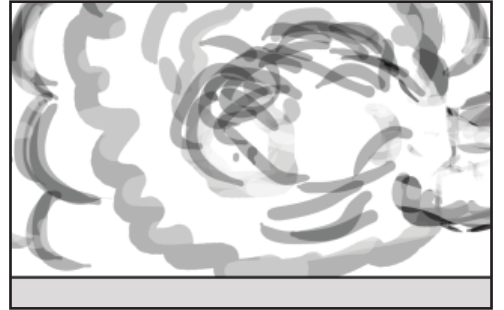
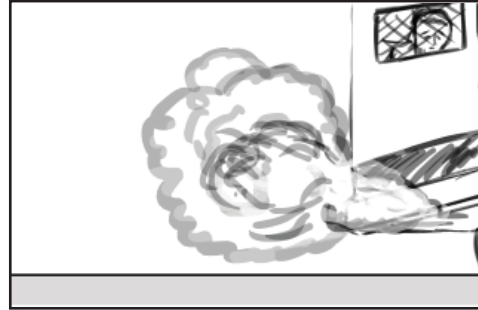
Thumbnails are a quick way of fleshing out a story visually. Through thumbnailing, I explored various ideas of how to make the visual story interesting without making it a time consuming process. This process helped me converge my ideas into the final story. The thumbnails were later





refined and converted into digital storyboards. Here I experimented with the visual language of the film, playing with camera angles and leaving subtle metaphors in visuals and lights.

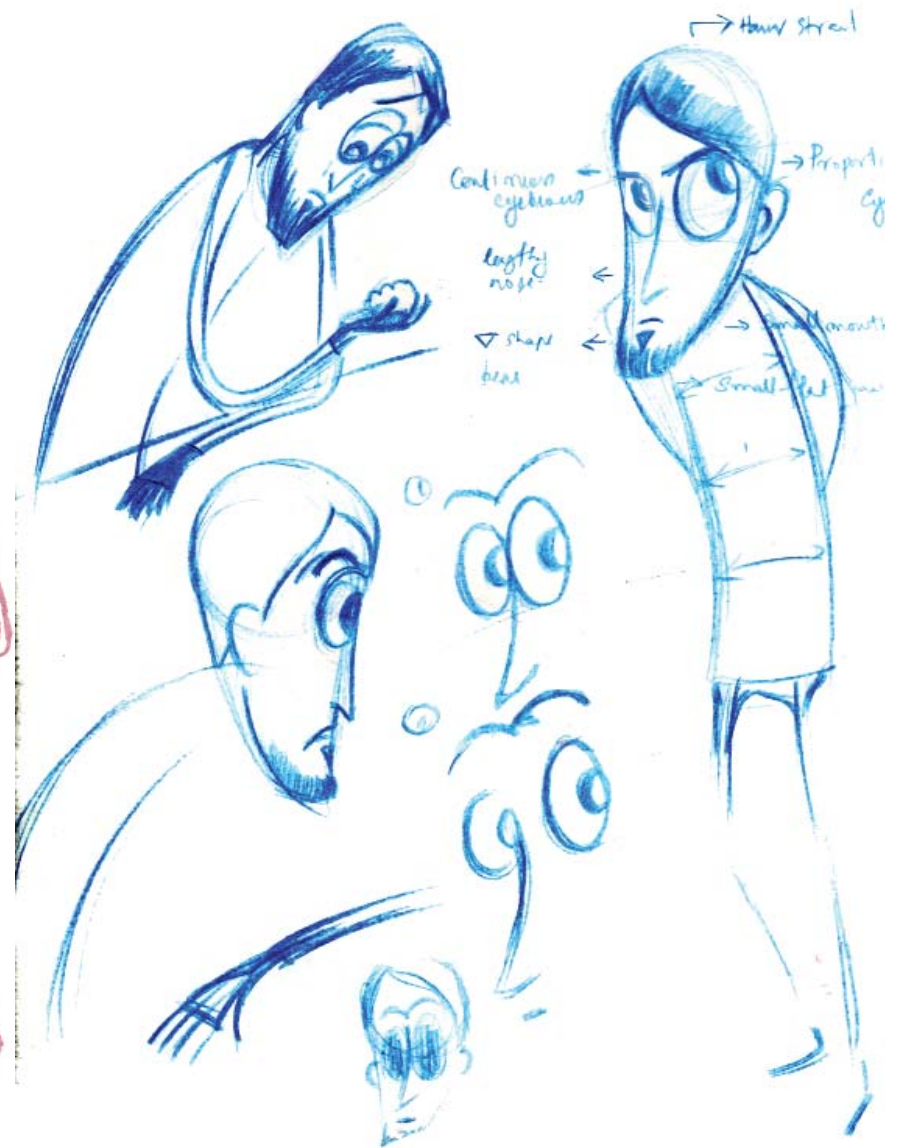
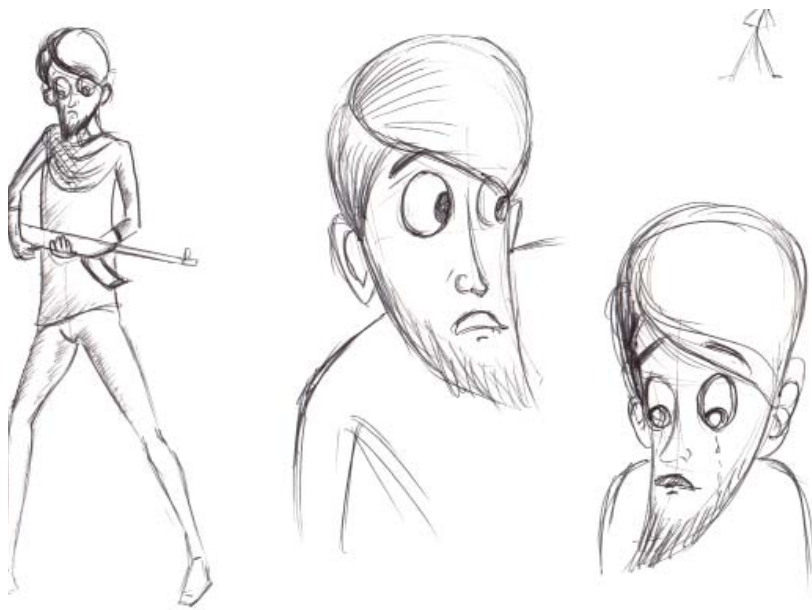




Character Design

Given the seriousness of the subject, I felt it was appropriate to try and maintain realistic features while developing the characters. The main characters which were developed are the mother and the son, Salam.





Salam

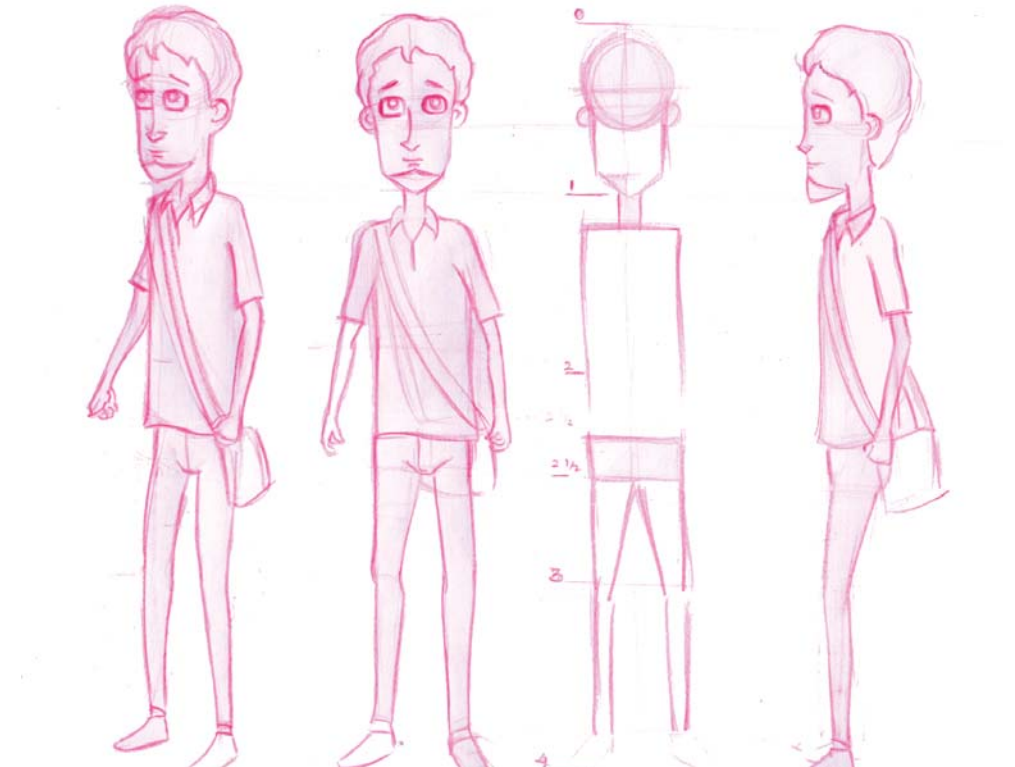


The Kid





These went through several iterations until I was satisfied with the characters developed. This was important to get right at the onset for two reasons. The first was that they needed to be both specific to my story on one hand and yet familiar enough for the audience to identify with them as real people. The second is that they needed to be animatable, which is often a problem with realistic characters.



Animatics

From the storyboard, animatic was created with a rough soundtrack including dialogues, music and sound effects. This enabled me to ensure that the storytelling worked as a film. Changes were made to the animatic with simple animation, camera moves, transitions etc. until this was achieved to my satisfaction.

This became a blueprint for the production process of the the film. It allowed me to know exactly what each shot was, how it worked in the film as well as its duration.

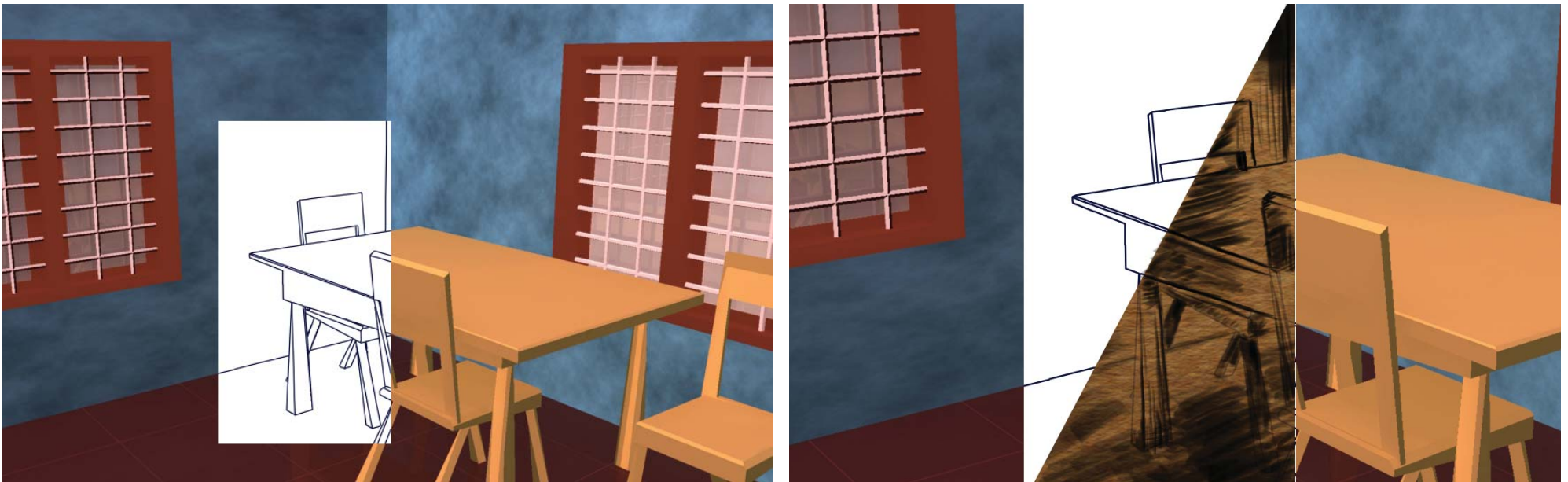
Trailer

The duration of the film is 5 minutes and it was a challenge to cut a trailer which encompasses the soul of the film into a few seconds. Like for the main film, I did thumbnails for the trailer too. It was an immense learning experience as it allowed me to try different combinations of shots. Based on this, I decided to include shots which had some narration weaved into it. Thumbnailing also helped me decide the duration of the trailer.



Style

Initially the visual style which I wanted to create was creating a 3D set with Initially the visual style which I wanted to create was creating a 3D set with traditional 2D animated characters. Based on my explorations to fine tune this visual style, this evolved into something very different. One shot from the film was taken and experimented on for its visual treatment. 2D as well as 3D elements were incorporated to develop the look of the layout and backgrounds. They were composited together to arrive at the final image. Different options were then compared and analysed before deciding on the final look.





Style exploration

Production Planning and Management

Making an animation film is a complex process and I felt that one needed to plan the entire production process so as to manage finishing the film within the available time and resources without compromising on the visual design and story.

	sq_sc no.	Dum.	description	layout & scene planning	Camera Setup	rough animation & linetest	BG	final animation	compositing	effects	final comp	edit	corrections
	sq01sc01	01s.00f	Bismi										
	sq01sc02	10.2	Quran words										
	sq01sc03	2.16	papad fry and IDC presents	layout 1									
	sq01sc04	4.21	pot stirring	layout 2									
	sq01sc05	3.12	chinease pot,smoke rise	layout 3									
	sq01sc06	5.3	title salaam										
	sq01sc07	1.3	pot stir ,lift spoon	layout 3									
	sq01sc08	4.12	sipping and tasting	layout4									
	sq01sc09	1.12	potstir,spoon back	layout3									
			fish fri ,pan ,taking...A film										
	sq01sc10	4.16	by jamsheed	layout5									
	sq01sc11	8.15	pan shot table..fish	layout6									
	sq01sc12	2.5	mother face	layout7									
			table with food ...mother										
	sq01sc13	1.12	POV	layout 8									
			mother turn towards										
	sq01sc14	2	camerhead	layout 7									
			towards open door...turns	layout 8,									
	sq01sc15	8.3	into city and explotion	layout 9									
				layout 10									
	sq02sc01	5	vertical pan										
			horizontal pan,terrorist										
	sq02sc02	4.9	passing,kid appearing	layout11									
	sq02sc03	2.16	terrirst turn	layout12									
				layout 11									
	sq02sc04	2	kid nirsing										
	sq02sc05	1	terrorrist face	layout12									
	sq02sc06	1.6	kid nirsing cont	layout11									
	sq02sc07	0.8	terrorrist gun zooming	layout12									
	sq03sc01	3.21	pressure cooker	layout13									
	sq03sc02	2	Mother placing food	layout14									
	sq03sc03	5.12	Mother on chair	layout7									
	sq03sc04	1.6	door zooming	layout8									
			Mother face zooming										
	sq03sc05	1.12	lokking to cameraor door	layout7									
	sq03sc06	2.12	door zooming	layout8									
	sq03sc07	4.3	house night external	layout15									
	sq03sc08	3	clock pendulam	layout16									
	sq03sc09	1.18	glass of water	layout17									
			mother lying sound wake										
	sq03sc10	2.1	her up	layout7									
	sq03sc11	2.1	door open	layout8									

A shot breakdown was made using the animatic as a reference. A spreadsheet was made from this shot breakdown which had columns for each stage of the animation process for each shot. Using this, I could get an estimate of the amount of work involved. I could prioritise which shots I needed to work on each day, how much time I can spend on it and by regularly updating this, I could get a clear understanding of the progress of the project.

For each shot, the animation, final backgrounds, overlays and compositing was done and the shot was added to the animatic to make sure that it worked in the film. As the film progressed and more and more shots were added, changes were incorporated in shots where it was felt necessary.

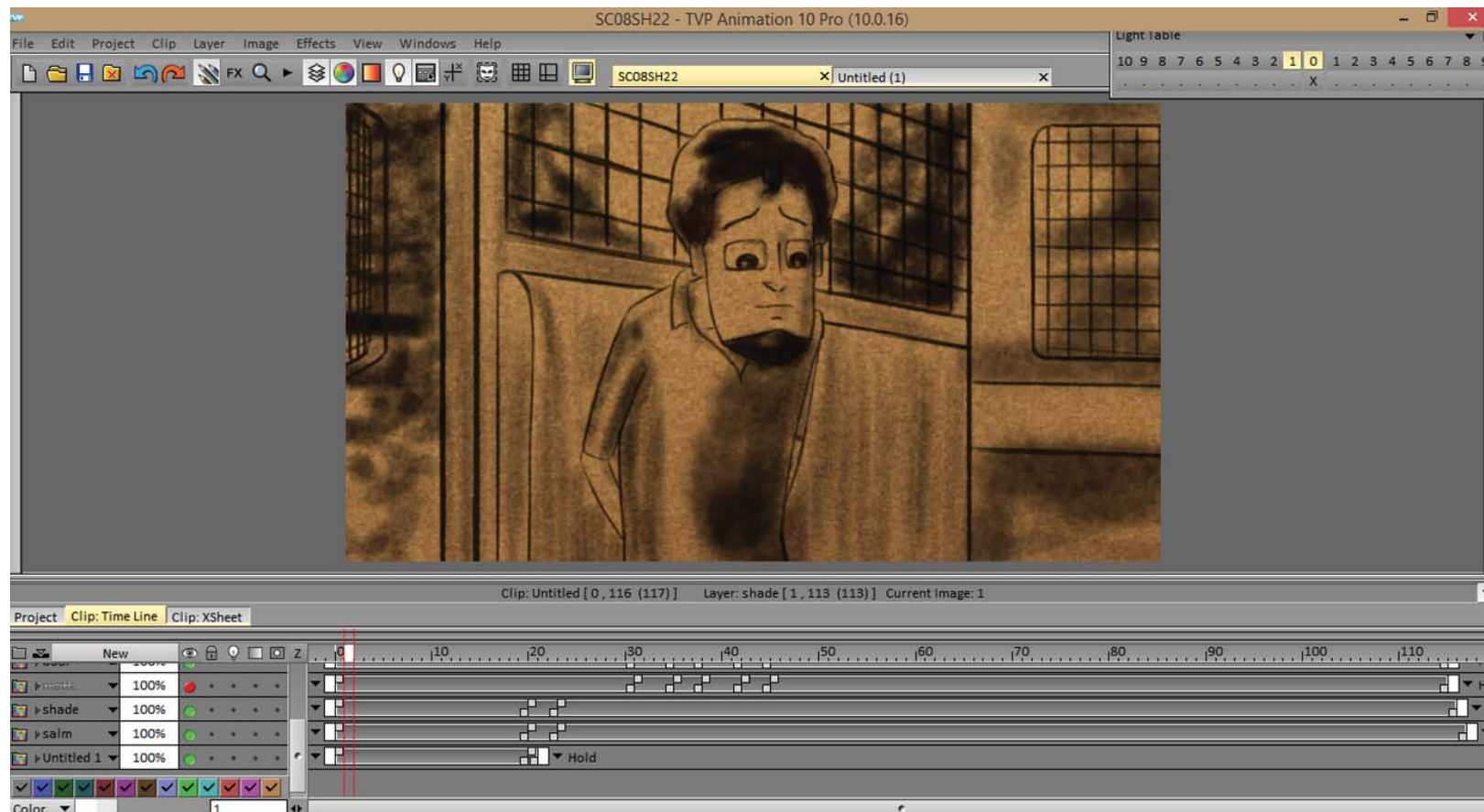
Once I felt the animation for a particular shot was ok, any effects animation that were necessary for the shot was completed and updated in the edit.

Animation

Animation

TVPaint was used for animation as it allowed me to achieve the look I wanted easily. I did the background, line test, clean up and shading simultaneously for each shot.

Basic line tests of shots were made after which they were inbetweened and cleaned up.



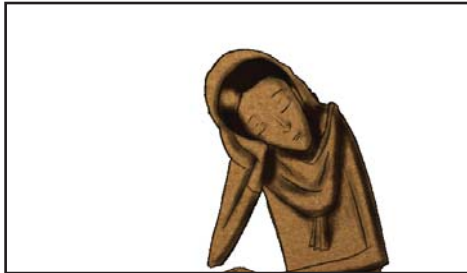
Compositing & Editing

Effects, smoke,
vapour extra
lighting



Layer 4

Character or object
animation



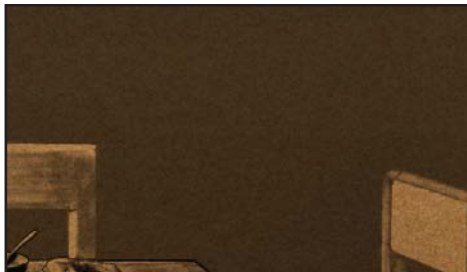
Layer 3

Shadows



Layer 2

BG



Layer 1

The animation, background and foreground elements were separately exported out as sequences from TVPaint and brought into After Effects for compositing. It was here that the animation took shape by effectively adding visual effects and camera movements to enhance the experience of the film. The sequences were then imported into the animatic edit in Premiere pro.

Though the timing of the animation was initially realized with the animatics, once animated, in some cases I felt that certain parts required momentum and others, moments of stillness which slightly varied the initial timeline. Accordingly changes were made in the edit. .



Final Composited out put



Few shots from the final film

Sound Design

During the animatics stage, a rough cut of the sound was made to go along with the animatics. It helped me understand the mood, pace and duration of the film as I wanted.

The voice artists were hard to find as it was difficult to find people with the proper slang that I wanted, the Malappuram Malayalam slang. Some of my friends helped me achieve the initial emotions of the dialogs by acting into a phone. Later they were recorded in the sound studio. Foley sounds were recorded with real materials and it was a really enlightening experience.

Indian instruments were used in the development of the background score to believably achieve the emotions and environment of the film.

Poster Design



Conclusion

The process of creating a short animated movie of my own was truly an exhilarating experience. I have tried my best to communicate what I had in mind, about the true meaning of Jihad, in simple terms to both Muslims and Non-Muslims alike. It was a challenging task to converge such a deep concept into a span of a couple of minutes. My wish is that 'Salam' would have touched at least one person in delving deeper and understanding more about the deeper meaning of Jihad.

I look forward to making more films, until then...

Salam.

Reference and Links

Holy Quran

Sahih Hadith

Times of India

BBC

Wikipedia

<http://islamicsupremecouncil.org/understanding-islam/legal-rulings/5-jih>

<http://www.peacewithrealism.org/jihad/jihad03.htm>

http://www.gainpeace.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article

<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/submitted/heit/whatisjihad.html>

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<http://quran.com/>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guw5bez0wuA>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUo_jMJfwgs

<http://www.whyislam.org/>

<http://www.ted.com/talks>