

“BAAK”

a short animation movie

Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements

Of the degree of

Master in Design

By

Kangkan Sharma

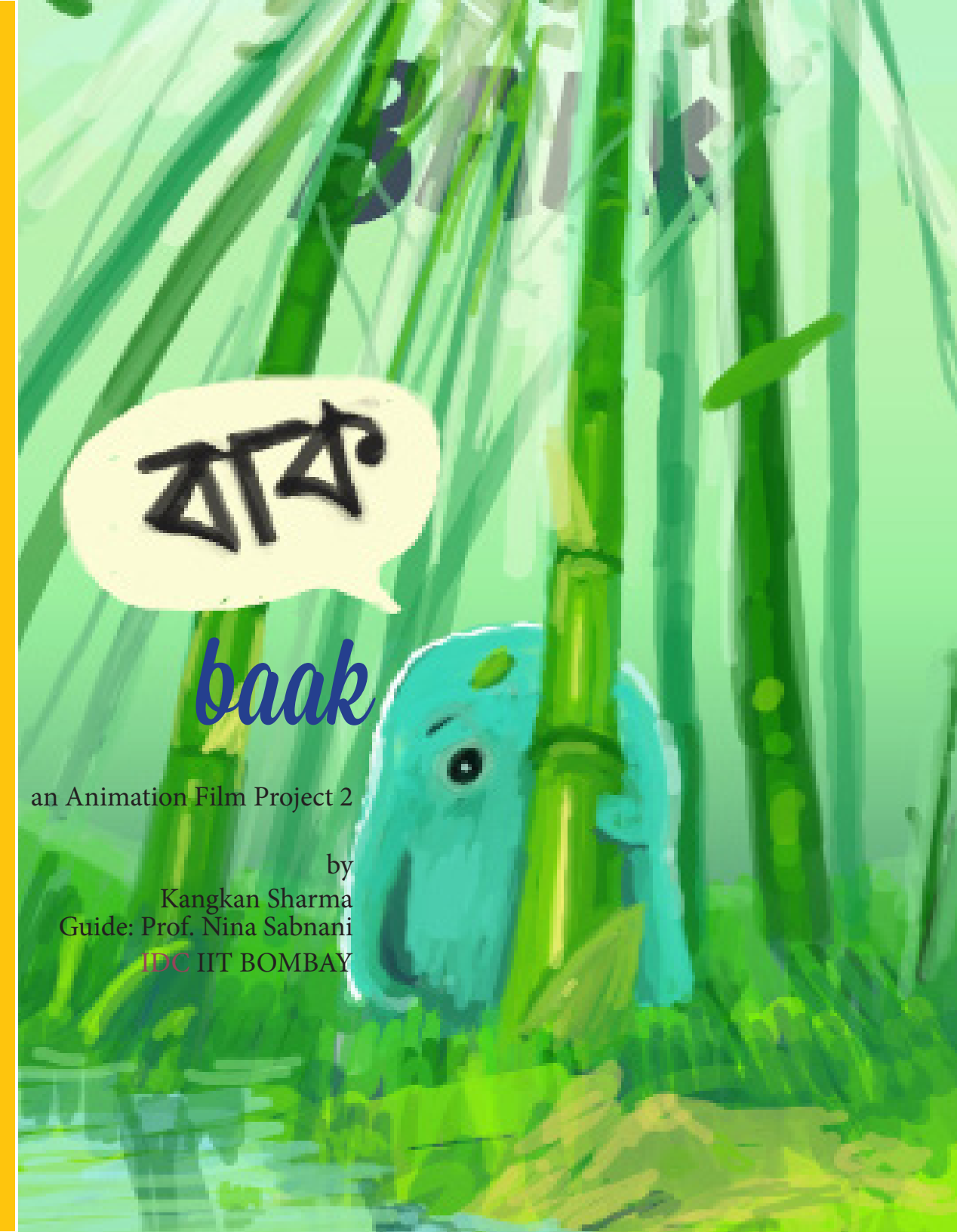
Supervisor:

Prof. Nina Sabnani



Industrial Design Center

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY

A blue cartoon elephant is peeking out from behind a bamboo stalk in a lush green forest. A speech bubble above the elephant contains the Hindi word 'बाक' (Baak).

बाक

baak

an Animation Film Project 2

by

Kangkan Sharma

Guide: Prof. Nina Sabnani

IDC IIT BOMBAY

TITLE

BAAK

a short animation movie

PROJECT 2

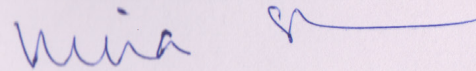
a film by
Kangkan Sharma
AN 136340002
Animation and Film Design
Guide: Prof Nina Sabnani

Industrial Design Centre
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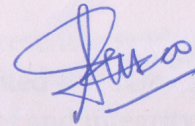
Approval Sheet

The animation Project entitled "Baak" on the Topic "Assam" by Kangkan Sharma, 136340002 is approved in for the partial fulfillment of the Master Design Degree in Animation and Film Design.

Project Guide:



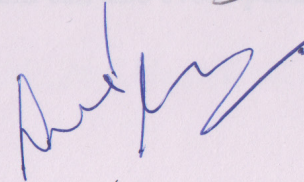
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Date: 27.11.19

Place: IDC, IIT Bombay

Kangkan Sharma
AN 136340002
Animation and Film Design
IDC, IIT Bombay

Declaration

I further declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where other's ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I affirm that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or falsified any idea/data/fact/source to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any violation of the above will cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have not been cited properly.

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Acknowledgement

I sincerely extend my deepest gratitude to my guide Prof. Nina Sabnani for her guidance and support throughout the project.

I thank Prof. Sumant Rao, Prof. Shilpa Ranade, Prof. Phani Tetali and Prof. C. P. Narayan for their invaluable support.

I thank my teachers, friends and family for their gracious involvement in seeing the project taking shape. I am also grateful to all my batchmates and seniors at IDC for their encouragement and support.

Kangkan Sharma
AN 136340002

Abstract

Assam is a state of rich ethnic cultures and natural heritage. Its folklores contains a interesting collection of tales concerning ghost. One of it is the Baak, a malevolent ghost which has finally found a way into my animation project as the main protagonist unlike its real counterpart as per common rural belief.

I had always considered Assam to be a rich topic to create very interesting and fun topics, but sadly with the recent communal clashes in the valley, i had concidered on focussing on the serious side. Hope it provides me few more insights as i continue my progress on the project at hand.

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“Nothing reflects better the norms, mores and fears of a society than the ghosts and evil spirits
it creates in its mind”

Introduction

All my childhood, I usually grew up listening to my grandmother's story of the "Rong-Hinga and Khong-Hinga" where a milk stealing thief is caught by a well-notorious herd of buffaloes where they agree to let him go if he decides to look after the herd. He agrees and then he is gifted with a pair of horns called rong-hinga (means happy horn) and khong-hinga (means 'angry horn') to blow them whenever there is some danger. And so the story goes. Another time, it's the heart aching sad story of "Tejimola" a poor innocent teenage girl, who is grinded by her step-mother with a dheki (an Assamese traditional wooden mortar and pestle operated by two people) and then is buried behind the house where she blooms into a plant. The story continues with her step mother uprooting every vine she grows into and then throwing the last vine into the water to be later found by her father in the form of a water lily.

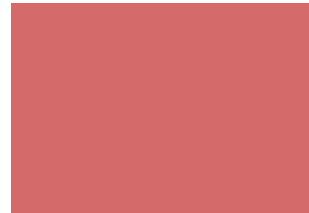
Unlike today's generation, our childhood times were spent beside grandmother in the bonfire every evening listening to her numerous stories and folklores. The well-lit fire created shadow in the wall and my imaginations created a cinema like screen which I am sure I enjoyed more than the times nowadays when I am sitting in a multiplex with my 3D glasses on.

My mother often used to sing me a lullaby where her baby would happily pick up tasty plumps from the ground under a plump tree and of the fox who used to come for the children. The song speaks of a mother's warning to the fox that if she comes for her son she will cut its ears and use it as a Saki (Diya/lamp) as assurance that no fox can harm her baby. Amusing it was and yes it did work, driving me to sleep under her warm embrace but also taught me to imagine. So every other time my mother would sing that lullaby, I would see Mr Fox in a trench-coat under the plum tree offering me some plump from his pockets. With all the mothers of the kids threatened to cut his ear if he approaches any of their kids, maybe all Mr Fox desperately needed was just a friend to play with. Ah we can't predict how a child's imagination works! Neither did my mom then.

I was a avid reader and listener of horror stories. I did grow a distaste for plum when I grew up, but one thing remained, Mr Fox still comes in my dream sometimes. Once my mother bought me a book full of ghost stories. Literally it was like a thesaurus of various kinds of ghosts that existed in Assamese belief. The author would define each ghost narrating few small told-tales and incidents from each. While most stories were very exciting, this one particular ghost did caught my extra attention. A ghost who would steal fishes from the fisherman. It's known as a Baak. Of course it was the most famous Ghost in Assamese folklores and stories, so why not I try something new with this Mr Fox-Baak mix Assamese recipe in my degree animation project. Maybe adding an extra motive I can end up a good concept and story for my animation. Why not the recent communal violence happening in Assam. I just nodded.

Research and Initial Studies

The Baak
Definition
Belief/Articles/Media



“Baak: A malevolent ugly creature that sometimes kills a person and takes on the corpse’s appearance. Endemic to the region with a taste for fish, it usually hants the water bodies.”

Definition

Definition of the Baak was found on few pages of the internet including few blogs and articles. An Assamese thesaurus released by Pranavjyoti Deka , the Jyoti Bilingual thesaurus (or Jyoti dvibhashika abhidhana) also list the Baak among the 60 various assamese ghost and spirits who are endemic to the assamese culture and beliefs. Apart from my initial impression of the Baak and numerous stories I have heard over the years, I also tried to contact few elderlies from my native place Assam and tried to know about their views on it. Beliefs were all centred about its peculiar obsessions of stealing fishes and its ability to take any human form. Recently an Assamese direct-to-video live film was released named “Baak’or Putek” meaning “Baak’s Son” . The story is about a wife who was believed by the villagers to be fooled by a Baak, disguised as her husband, to sleep with him and conceive a baby later. It mostly revolved around the superstitious beliefs of the Assamese society and its evil impact on the common people.

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Abstract

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Journal of Internal Medicine 262: 353–363



- The Political Process

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Ghosts of the East and West

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1121



(plant stems, plants)
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 across the stream,
 into it, down, right
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 down, reaching
 down, but just
 down, down, down,
 down for the first
 The first, the first



— **Kamalong Factory Bangalore:** **Assistant Lorry Driver,** Lorry says, "I went there for a number of years and in fact a couple of glances... I thought, that I had now saved my fee, for some bank in some village. The glances was that of a 12-year-old who wanted to be the daughter of someone in the early 1960s in the commercial district of some area and that is the factory business."

Problem Two: Budget

Smallholder's share of total production
and income

Journal of Management Education 35(1)

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Ghost of the East and West
FEW EXCERPTS FROM THE PAGE

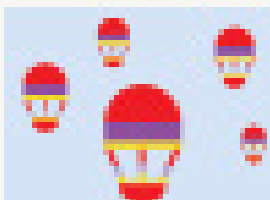
“Tea garden bungalows come equipped with a retinue of servants and often a resident spook (no extra charge!). Invariably the spook is a boga-sahib (white master): an old British tea planter who died on the job and who is buried somewhere in the tea garden. The bungalows themselves are creepy: drafty with echoing rooms, weak-wattage bulbs, creaky wooden floors and rattling rafters. Many are located within deep forests and surrounded by bamboo-baris (FYI the spooks love bamboo as much as pandas!). Add to that the blackest, deepest nights of Assam, lots of melancholy rain and vapors steaming off the jungle floor and voila! you have a phantom’s paradise”

Baak A malevolent ugly creature that sometimes kills a person and takes on the corpse’s appearance. Often seen hanging around isolated ponds and lakes.



SHORT STORIES / THE INDIAN SPOOK DIRECTORY

BUY
CURRENT
AND BACK
ISSUES
ON FLIPKART



FOLLOW THE BALLOON

THE INDIAN SPOOK DIRECTORY

TEN ARCHETYPAL GHOSTS AND SPIRITS OF THE SUBCONTINENT.

Book

by Anurag Das



©

THE BAAK

Wet and cold like fish, Baak's are territorial spirits that haunt water bodies, according to Pranavjyoti Deka, author of the *Jyoti Bilingual Thesaurus* (2007), a compendium of Assamese terms and their descriptions on subjects ranging from punishment to agriculture to ghosts. Baaks are mostly believed to be endemic to certain rural parts of Assam with many stories depicting their mischiefs and benevolent characteristic. While some tales of them having twisted arms and legs, there are certain belief that they are ugly headless creatures with eyes in their stomach. There is also an other variation of Baak where it said to take the form of a horse and with the power to create whirlpools. Dwelling in ponds mostly isolated, eating fish is said to be their main obsession. There are many stories of how the Baak steals fishes from the fishermen and keeps it in its net. The only way to ward off this mischievous creature is to steal that net and hiding it under mustard seed.

Concept and Initial Development

Story 1

Story 2

Character design

story 1 Storyboard

Background Exploration

ASSAM

FOLK-TALES

GHOST STORIES

HARMLESS

HARMFUL



LOCATION

FLOOD

VILLAGES

RELIEF CAMP

BUNGALOWS

COMMUNAL RIOTS

BODO-MUSLIM

BORDER CLASH

LAND-CONFLICTS

TIME ZONE

PRE-CRISIS/ CRISIS/POST CRISIS





STORY 1

Somewhere in a village of Assam, in the greenest of the green region of this part of the world, there lived a Baak. A cute little monster, often misunderstood & even accused of stealing fish. But all the poor soul did was save fish by letting them back into the water from the fisherman's net. He didn't know to communicate with humans and humans assumed he was bad. All he needed was peaceful co-existence between human beings and nature.

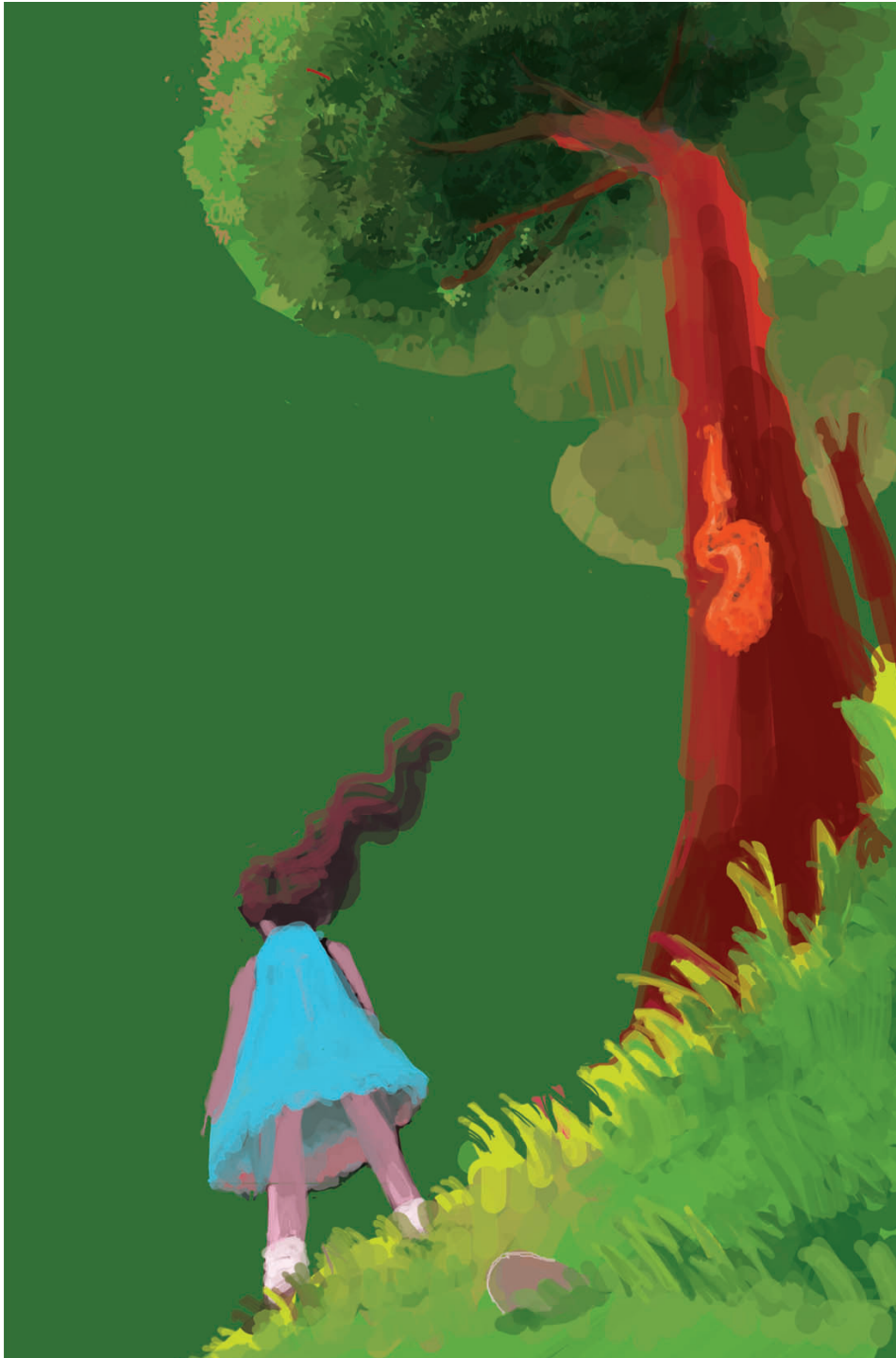
The village where the Baak lived was the model secular & small time charm. The Gods often looked at them and were very bored. One day to ward off the boredom, the gods decided to play a prank on a poor pig. Out of thin air they sent a colourful butterfly with a huge stinger to freak the pig out and it worked! The butterfly landed on the pig's snout and plunged its stinger and off ran the pig squealing... well like a pig!!

The Baak after enough fish for the day slipped off the fisherman's boat and was ambling around when he saw the pig now running around in fright. To the Baak's shock the pig jumped off a freaking high cliff... yes the pig did!

Now that the poor pig had plunged itself to death despite most probably got rid of his fear of colourful butterflies for the rest of his life, the Baak knew this is not going to be good. He knew the butterfly effect would be each community blaming each other. This one incident would be the reason of world war 3 and the end of all humanity and not to mention the Baak's own peaceful existence.

So the Baak decided to save the world by transforming into the pig even before the villagers realised that one pig has gone missing. Thanks to the poor Baak the day was saved.

THE END



STORY 2

Scene 1

It's another gloomy silent night apart from the sound of a distant cricket and a boat sliding across the water. From over the top of the trees across the foliage, we can see a fisherman's boat floating in the water lit by the moon. At one end of the boat, a lone fisherman sits, his eyes fixed on the string of his fishing line as he awaits patiently for some fish to get caught in the line. But unknown to him a dark gooey figure is lying (what it seems) in the other end of the boat putting back the caught fishes into the water. Our strange dark character stirred by something or whatever not known ,puts a fish into his mouth and drops into the water from the boat, as swift and silent the way he may have got into the boat in the first place. The fisherman looks back. Sways his torch across the boat. Alas all now remained are two three fishes from his last catch. A look of frustration across our poor man's face. A fish just left carelessly in the side of the boat, falls into the water where it takes a dip into the water. INTRO CREDIT ROLLS WITH THE TITLE AT THE END.

Scene 2:

It's the village pond's ghost called the Baak that is after all this nuisance. It appears from below the water moving towards the shore. Once in the shore it takes out the fish from its mouth. It stirs the water holding the fish and then slowly opens his hold. The fish gets out in the water, remains in the surface for a second or two and then swims away with some flocks of fishes. The pond shows a lot of activity, unlike the shore which depicts the lonely feel with our Baak giving a sign of loneliness.

Scene 3:

The Baak picks something from the ground. It's a beautifully crafted bamboo toy resembling a human figure .lying down in the ground beside the pond it hugs the only twig friend and closes its eyes. Suddenly the Baak opens his eyes and finds a pair of eyes looking at it from the bushes across the tree line.

Meena has stranded into the wood. It was that silky cute squirrel she was after and couldn't resist to follow it as it jumped across the tree branches. But the trail was towards the village pond which Meena's mother had warned her of venturing in the noon. There are stories that during the noon the pond is haunted by a benevolent ugly ghost call the Baak. She have heard stories of the Baak stealing fishes from the fisherman. It's also said that in couple of occasions it kills a person and wears its skin and wanders off into the village to steal more fishes from the kitchen. Maybe the Baak just needs friends but skinning a live human is absurd.. That is what Meena had thought. She had shrugged off her fear and hopped toward the trail of the squirrel without another thought. And now she is kind of lost. Even the squirrel is nowhere to be seen and the eerie silence in that part of the wood is giving Meena a weird feeling. She should have listened to mother. As she turns her back to return through the way she came, from the side of her eyes she thought she saw something move in the shore of the pond across the bush. Is it the Baak that mother and the whole villagers had been warning of? A sense of hair tingling feel mixed with a rush off adventure

drove her and within a second she is there peeping through the bush into that strange creature that the people call as Baak.

The Baak equally shocked at the pair of eyes looking at it in a sudden jumps into the water. Not knowing what to do next it peeps out of the water to see a little girl behind the bush. With the sudden appearance of the little stranger the Baak thinks of something and moves towards the girl.

Where did it go...thought Meena. Suddenly she heard the crackling of the leaves in the ground behind her. She turned slowly and froze in her ground. Coz in front of her was the most horrifying creature she have ever seen. It's the blob standing in front of him. Its eyes staring at poor Meena. She starts to cry. Poor heart.

But the Baak reaches out and puts forward something that it is holding in its hand. Not knowing what to do she grabs the thing and slowly turning back she starts moving towards the village.

Its night, back in her hut, Meena looks at the thing as she lies in her bed. It's a stick figure carefully handcrafted out of a bamboo twig. She smiles but wonders with her little mind what might be the Baak be doing now. Is he going to sleep alone now that he had given her his only bamboo friend? Meena thinks about her own time when mother was once away from home for a whole one night. She had gone to the town's hospital and stayed there beside her dying father and even so when aunt konai had stayed instead for the night, she had cried herself to sleep. If only she could have returned the Baak his friend. Or maybe something else as a gratitude.

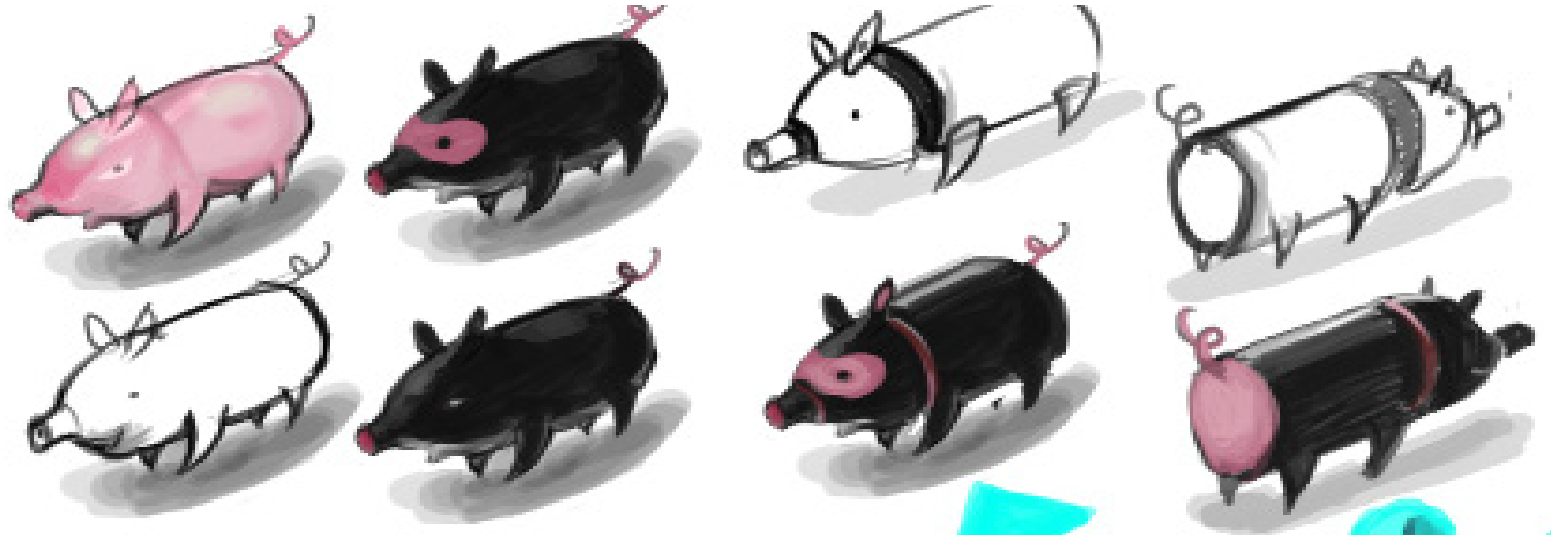
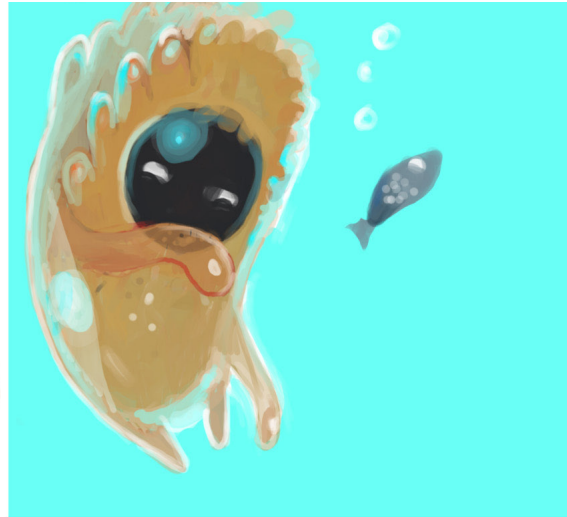
Its raining heavily and the baak stares at the trees swaying wildly. It does miss something now. It stares at its own hand as the drops of water falls in it. Suddenly he hears a sudden motion behind him only to find little meena holding up a small doll towards the now surprised Baak.

The end.

*Character build of a Bodo tribe character and
a Bengali speaking Muslim*

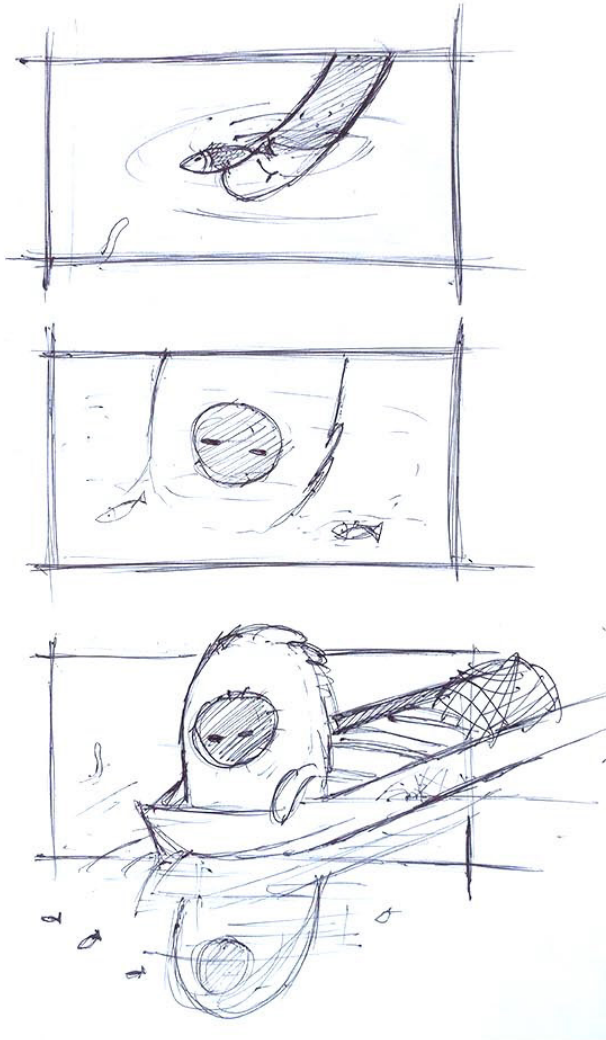


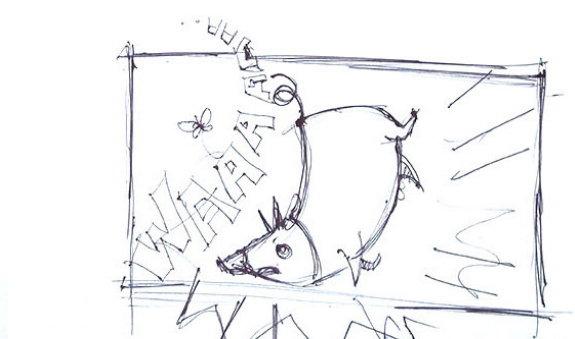
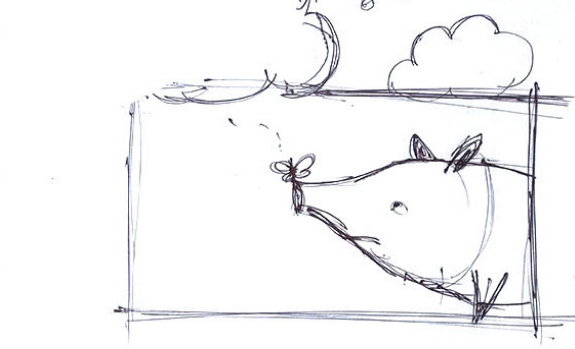
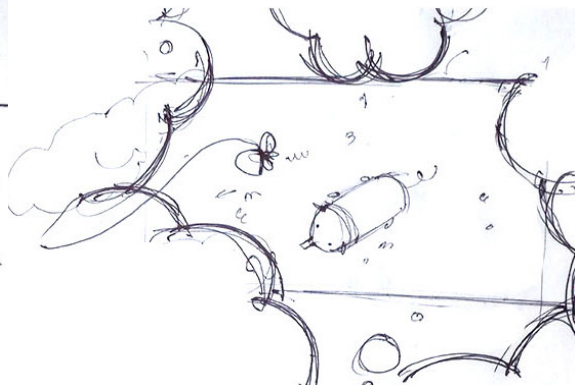
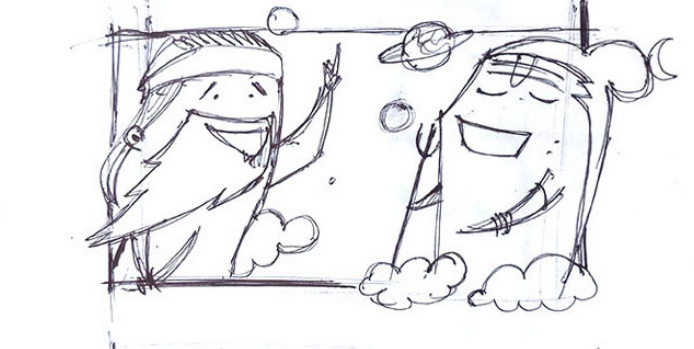
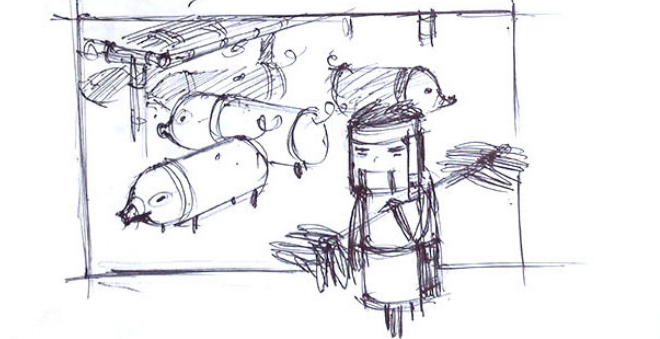


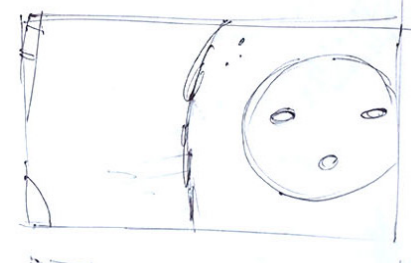
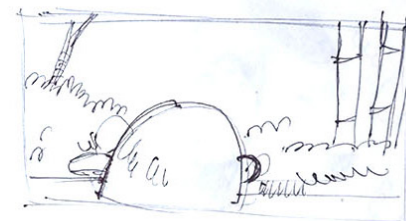
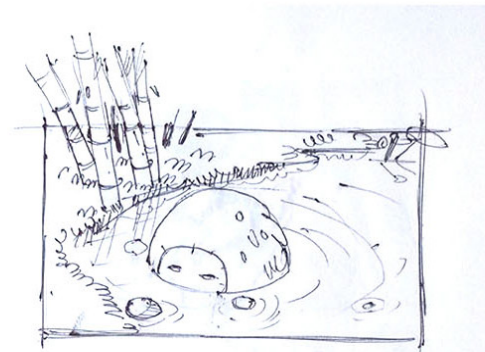
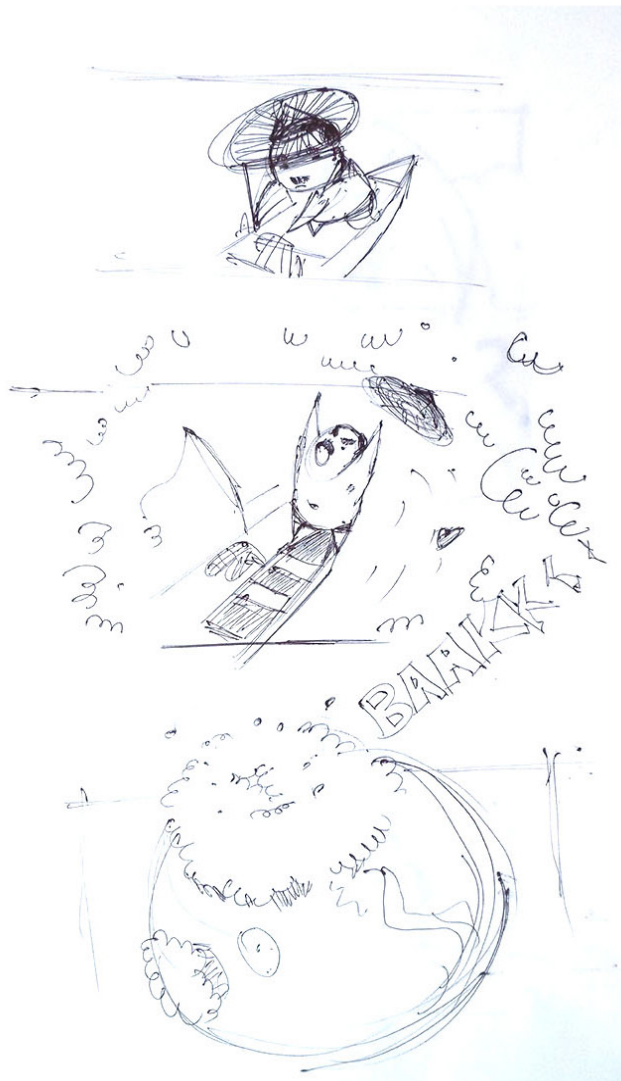
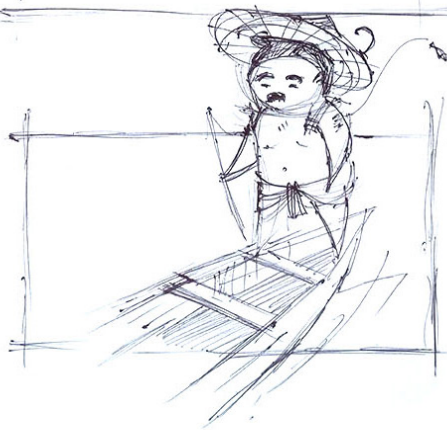
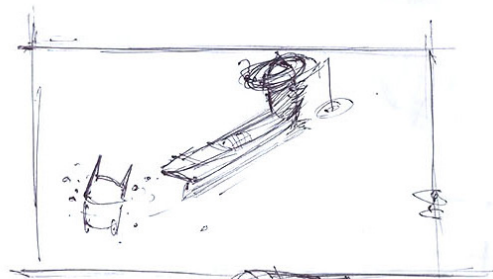
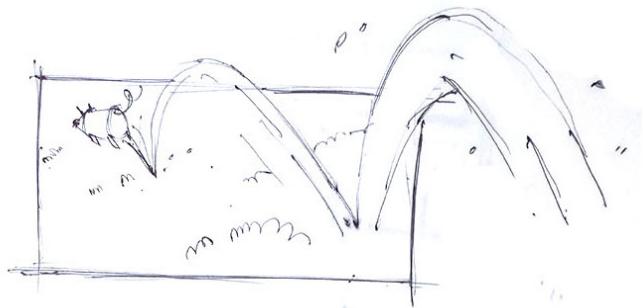


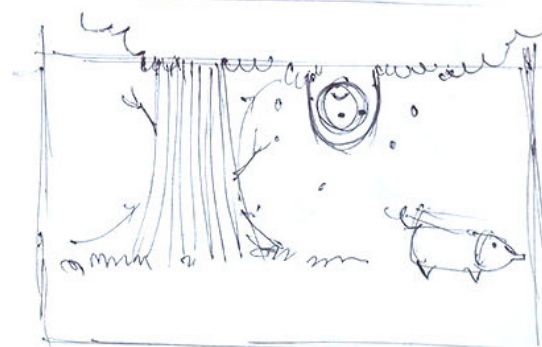
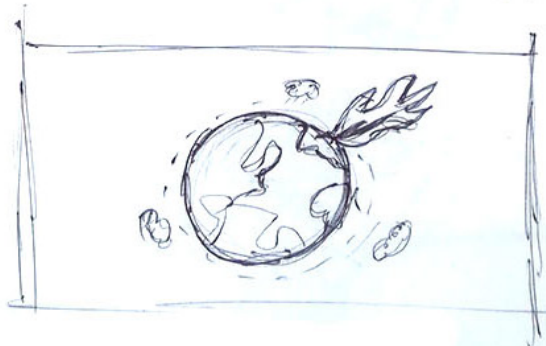
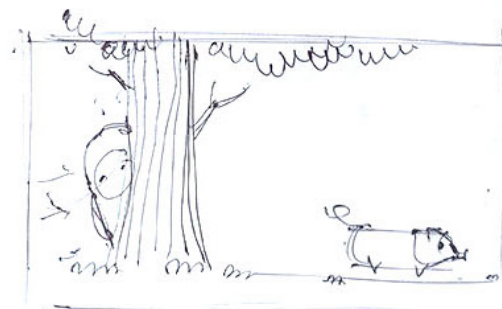
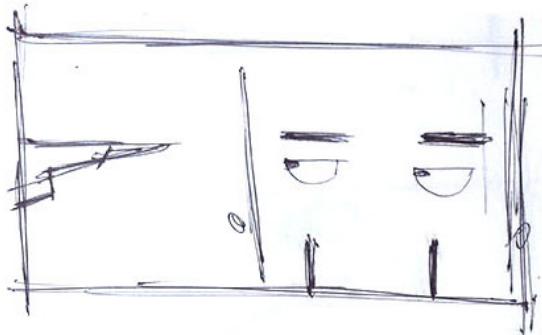
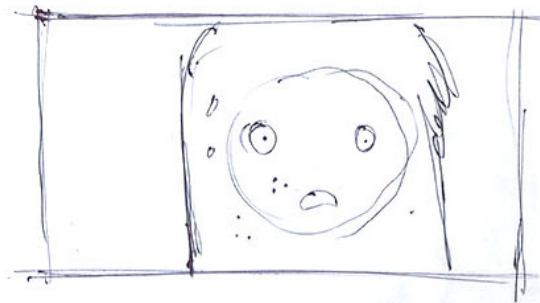
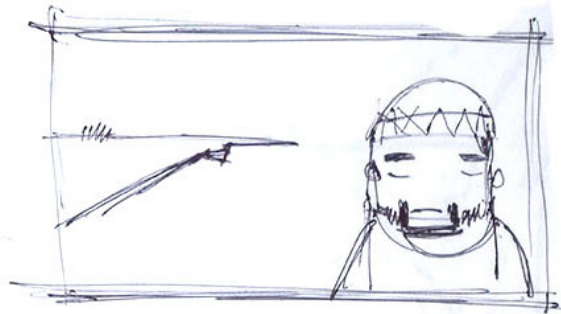
STORYBOARD

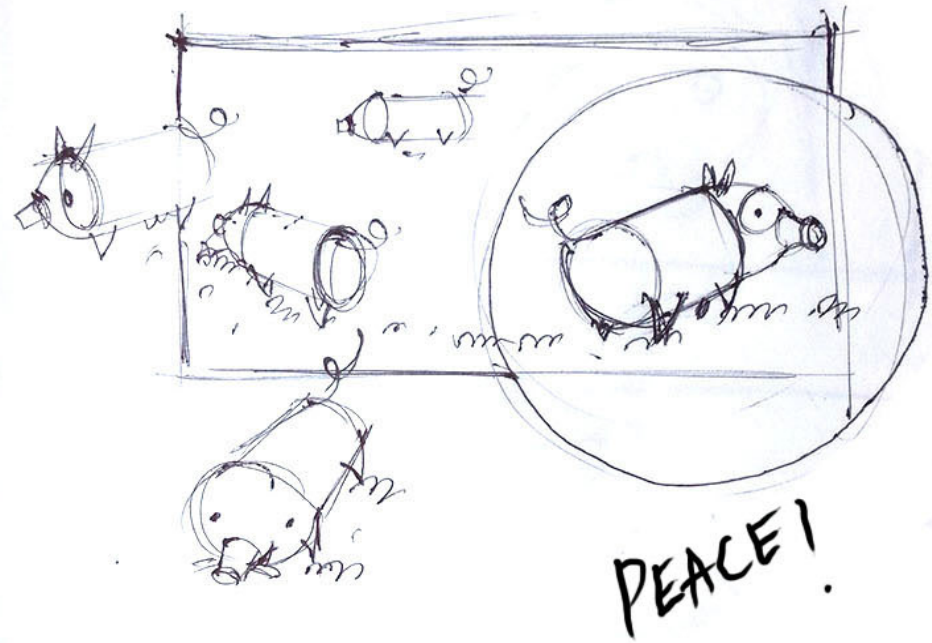
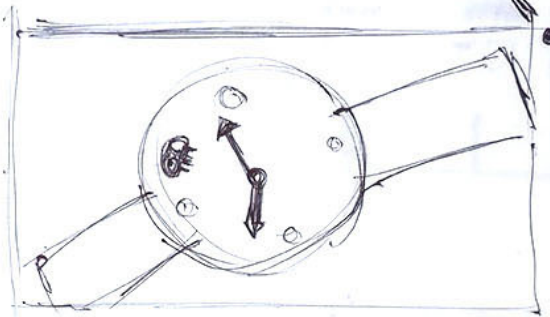
Story 1

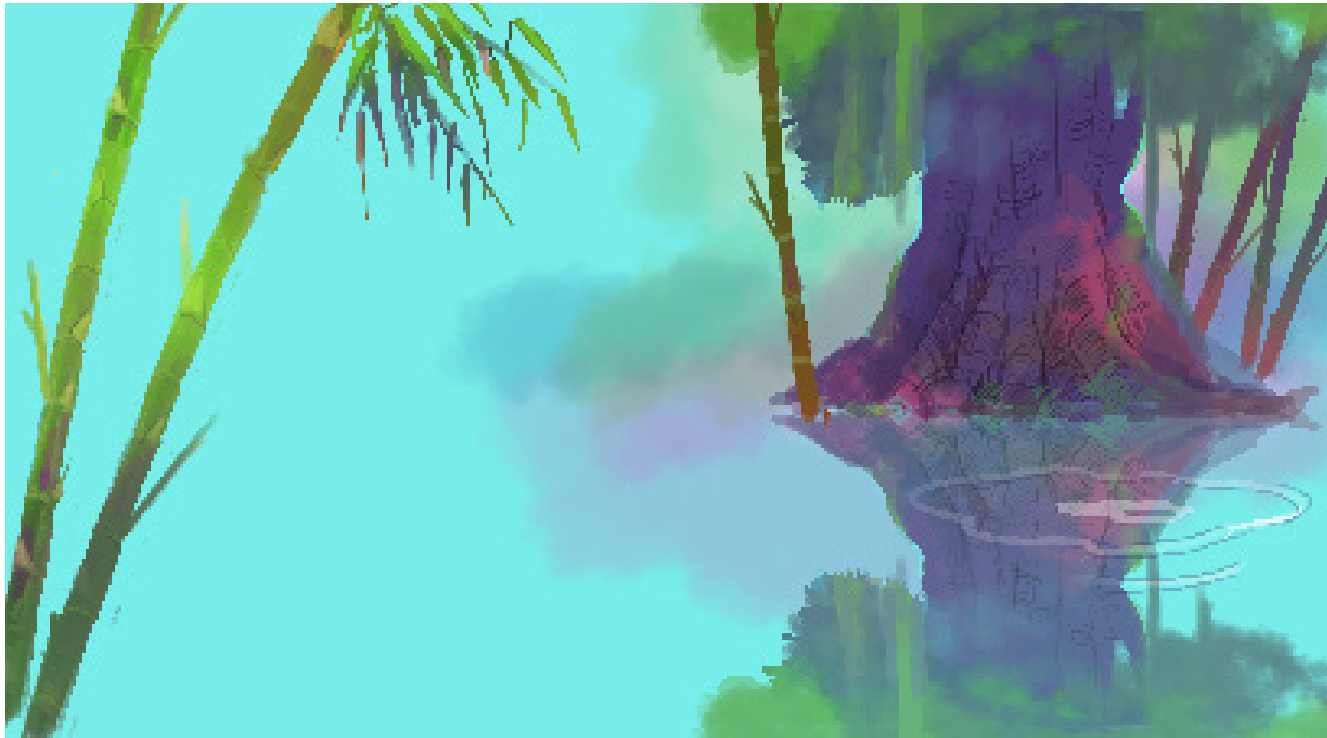












Initial background Sketches



FINAL DESIGN

Final Character Development
The Last Story
Storyboard
Moodboard
Final Story
Final Style & Layout





Final Character Development



The Last Story

INTRODUCTION

It starts in a dark room with a thunderstorm happening outside. A little girl asks her grandmother to tell her a story (voice in a black scene). The grandmother starts telling her about a ghost called the Baak who used to be feared and loathed by the villagers for stealing fishes from fishermen's boat. Elsewhere with each thunder light we see a strange dark creature looking through some bushes. It's raining here too with people's feet passing between the bush and camera. There is a sense of some commotion going on with so much movement. While the eyes are just staring at the audience depicting something is happening.

It's the inside of a commercial passenger plane and a guy is reading a newspaper. The newspaper headline can be seen clearly talking about the recent communal violence happening in the state of Assam. The guy looks nervous, wipes his head with a handkerchief and asks for water. As the plane flies we can see underneath the green patches of land denoting the plane is flying above some village of Assam. We see the plane pass by overhead through an opening of the treelines. The camera pans down to reveal the surface of a pond. A strange hand bends over and stirs the surface. A little fish peeks to the surface wags its fin a while then swims away as another shoal of fish swims through. We can see the reflection of a strange face in the water.

Its night time and a boat slowly wades through the dark water of a pond. From over the top of the trees across the foliage, we can see its a fisherman's boat floating in the water lit by the moon where at one end of the boat, a lone fisherman sits, his eyes fixed on the string of his fishing line as he awaits patiently for some fish to get caught. But unknown to him a dark gooey figure is lying (what it seems) in the other end of the boat putting back the caught fishes into the water. Our strange dark character stirred by something or whatever not known ,puts a fish into his mouth and drops into the water from the boat, as swift and silent the way he may have got into the boat in the first place. The fisherman looks back. Sways his torch across the boat. Alas all now remained is two three fishes from his last catch. A look of frustration across our poor man's face. A fish just left carelessly in the side of the boat, falls into the water where it takes a dip into the water.

The body now emerges out of the water. The village Baak looks into the horizon. The thunder cracks and it suddenly starts to rain. It's a heavy thunderstorm at this time of the year. The trees sways like wild animals pouncing at its prey. Behind the thick foliage towards the village something

seems burning. The Baak senses something is wrong and moves toward the settlement. But all is heard is loud thunders. Mixed with the strong wind and rain it's a howling sound. The Baak keeps moving through the paddy fields towards a tree line across which lies a village. A burning village.

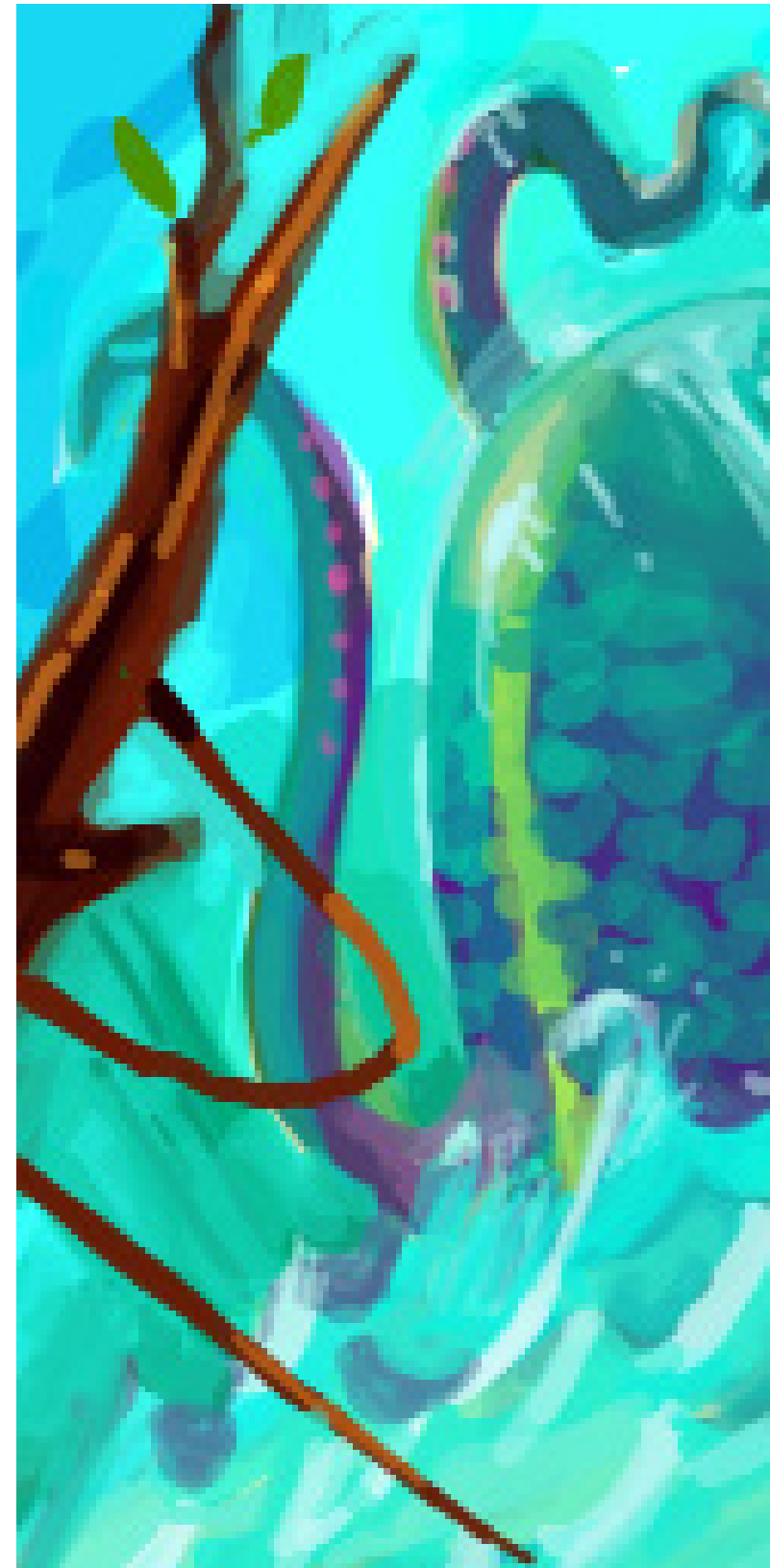
The scene is back where the Baak is looking through the bushes. People are running all over. Its chaos and agony. People are killing each other. Slowly the Baak moves toward a burning hut. He can hear a small girl crying for help. He removes the burning logs that was surrounding the hut. Inside the girl is hardly in a position to be alarmed at the strange figure trying to save her from the flames. The Baak somehow drags the girl away from the now collapsing hut. Figuring out she hardly have a safe place in the village the Baak helps the little girl move away from the burning village.

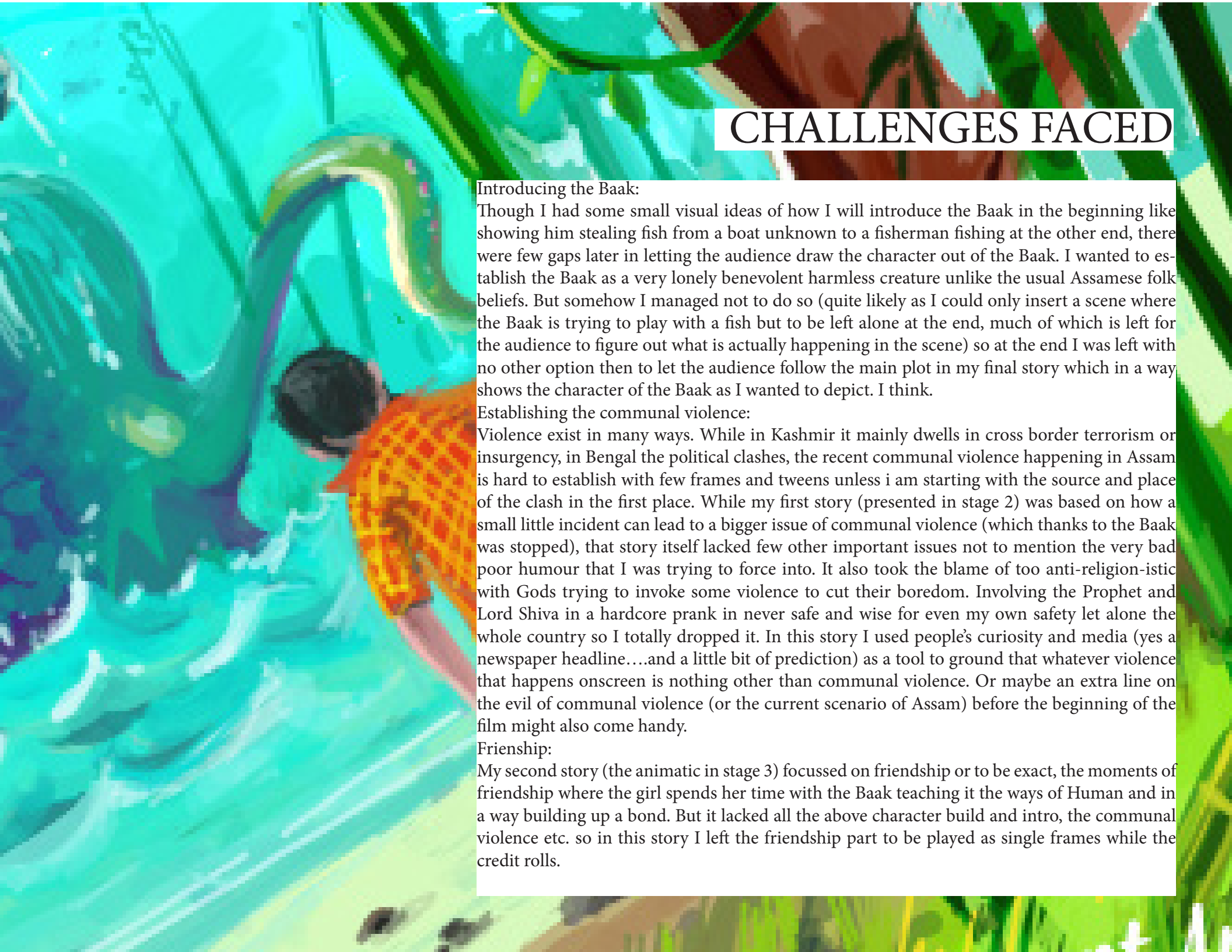
The storm has somewhat calmed down. Still a strong breeze is blowing in this calm wood away from the chaos of the village behind. The girl has started to find her legs and walk upright though with some help of the Baak. At one point the girl stops walking and looks at the stranger. Her eyes shows gratitude to her strange rescuer as well as pain maybe from losing some loved one in the night's fire. Who knows how many she might have lost in this violence that man has created within themselves. A final walk into the horizon shows the beginning of a new friendship.

Credit Rolls*

THE END

**The scenes as the credit rolls will show what might have happened after the incident. With slides of pictures it shows how the girl and the Baak became very good friends and had fun together.*





CHALLENGES FACED

Introducing the Baak:

Though I had some small visual ideas of how I will introduce the Baak in the beginning like showing him stealing fish from a boat unknown to a fisherman fishing at the other end, there were few gaps later in letting the audience draw the character out of the Baak. I wanted to establish the Baak as a very lonely benevolent harmless creature unlike the usual Assamese folk beliefs. But somehow I managed not to do so (quite likely as I could only insert a scene where the Baak is trying to play with a fish but to be left alone at the end, much of which is left for the audience to figure out what is actually happening in the scene) so at the end I was left with no other option then to let the audience follow the main plot in my final story which in a way shows the character of the Baak as I wanted to depict. I think.

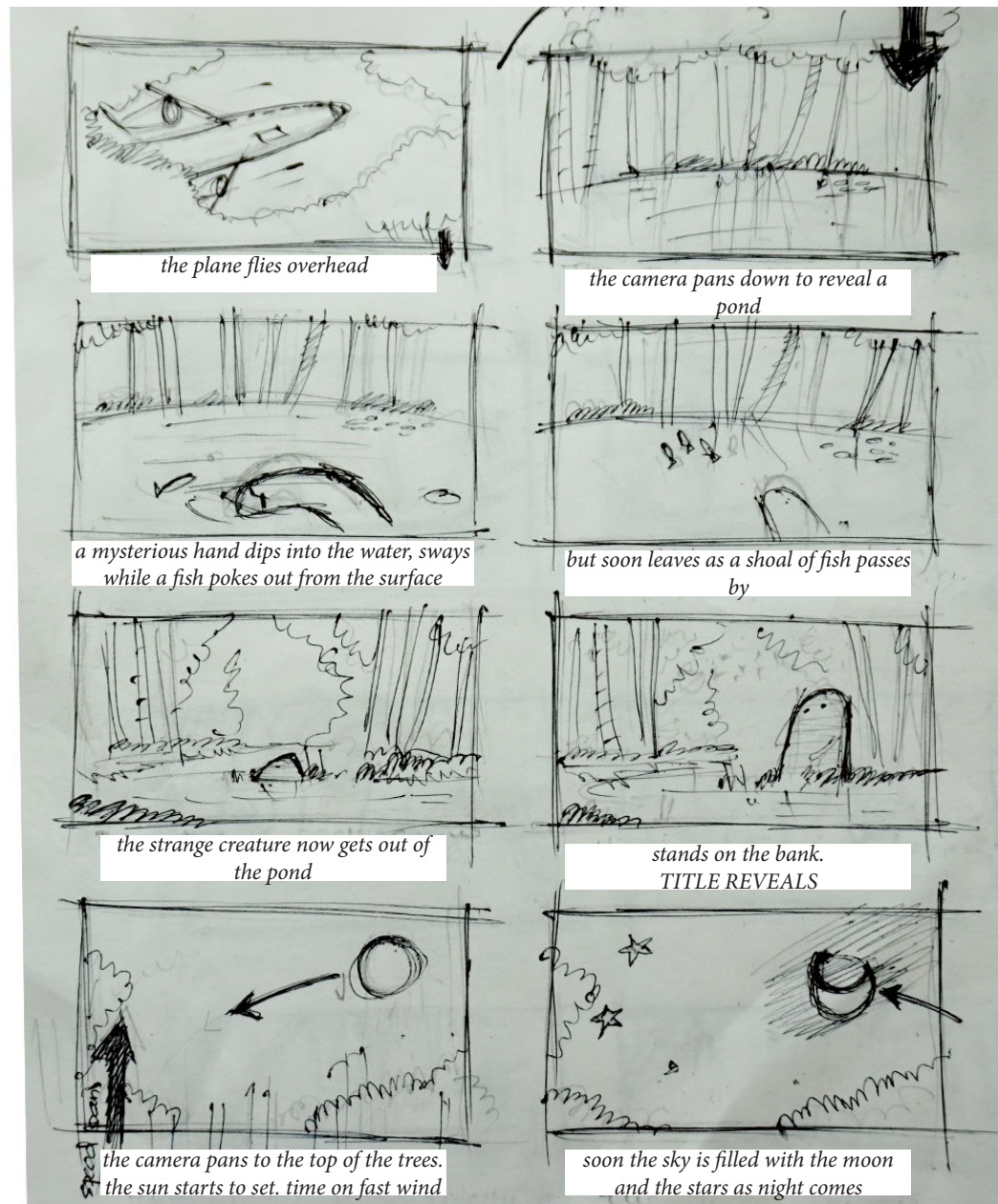
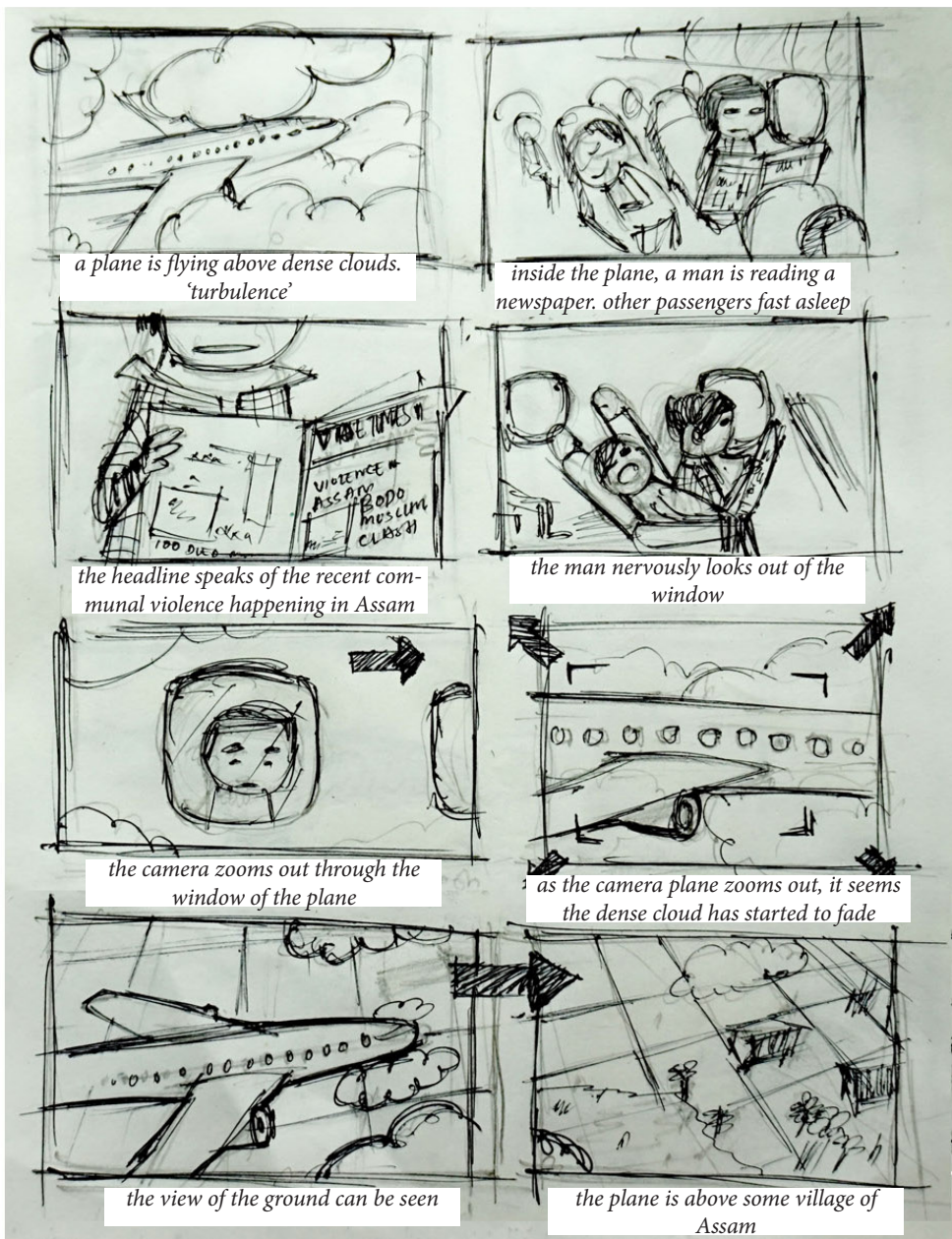
Establishing the communal violence:

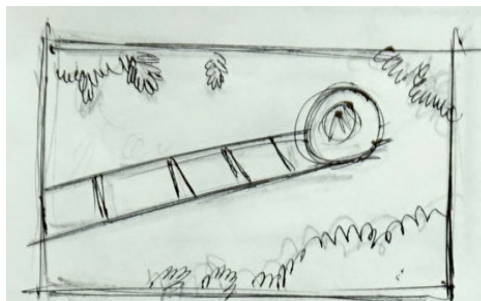
Violence exist in many ways. While in Kashmir it mainly dwells in cross border terrorism or insurgency, in Bengal the political clashes, the recent communal violence happening in Assam is hard to establish with few frames and tweens unless i am starting with the source and place of the clash in the first place. While my first story (presented in stage 2) was based on how a small little incident can lead to a bigger issue of communal violence (which thanks to the Baak was stopped), that story itself lacked few other important issues not to mention the very bad poor humour that I was trying to force into. It also took the blame of too anti-religion-istic with Gods trying to invoke some violence to cut their boredom. Involving the Prophet and Lord Shiva in a hardcore prank in never safe and wise for even my own safety let alone the whole country so I totally dropped it. In this story I used people's curiosity and media (yes a newspaper headline....and a little bit of prediction) as a tool to ground that whatever violence that happens onscreen is nothing other than communal violence. Or maybe an extra line on the evil of communal violence (or the current scenario of Assam) before the beginning of the film might also come handy.

Friendship:

My second story (the animatic in stage 3) focussed on friendship or to be exact, the moments of friendship where the girl spends her time with the Baak teaching it the ways of Human and in a way building up a bond. But it lacked all the above character build and intro, the communal violence etc. so in this story I left the friendship part to be played as single frames while the credit rolls.

Storyboard

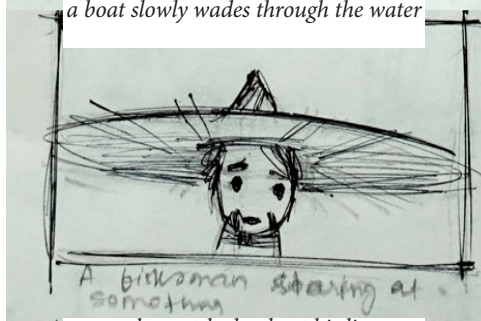




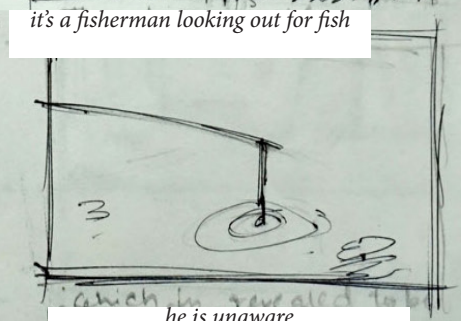
a boat slowly wades through the water



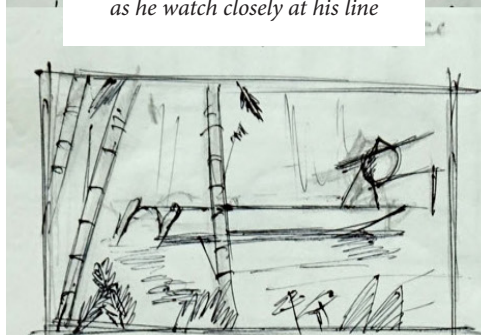
it's a fisherman looking out for fish



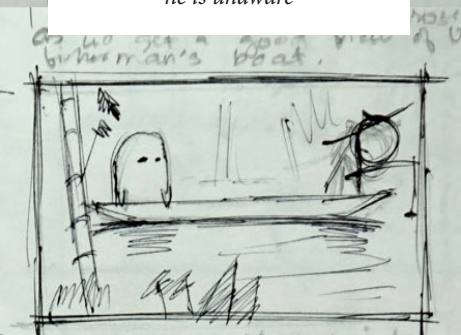
as he watch closely at his line



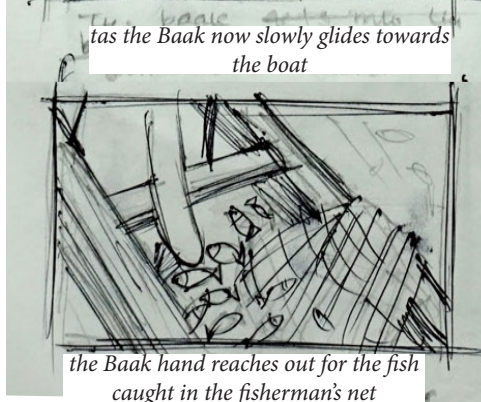
he is unaware



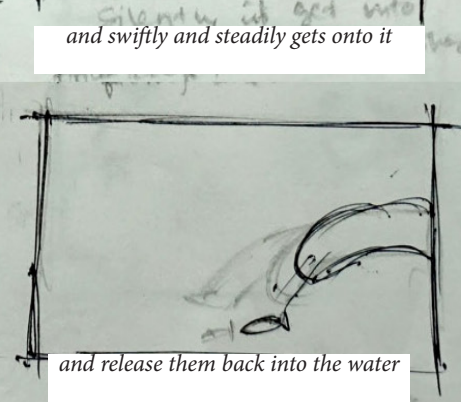
tas the Baak now slowly glides towards the boat



and swiftly and steadily gets onto it



the Baak hand reaches out for the fish caught in the fisherman's net



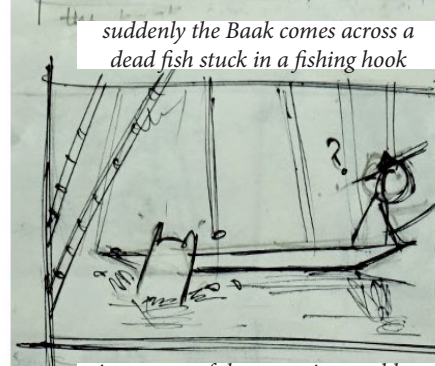
and release them back into the water



suddenly the Baak comes across a dead fish stuck in a fishing hook



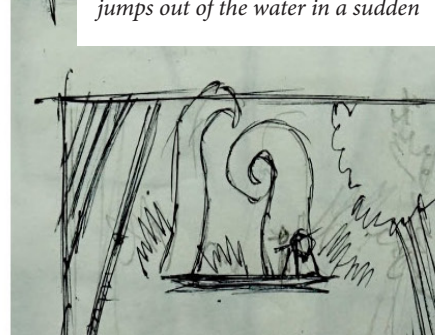
there is sudden anger in its face



jumps out of the water in a sudden



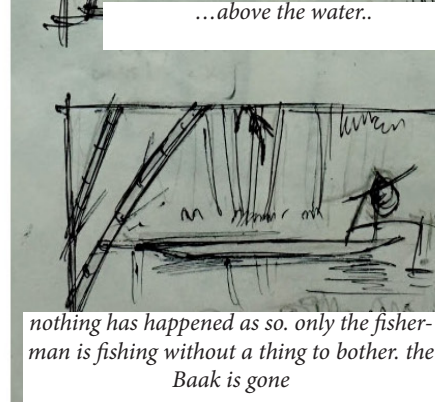
huge tentacles rises...



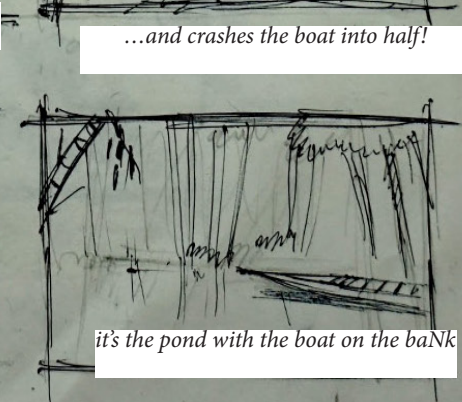
...above the water..



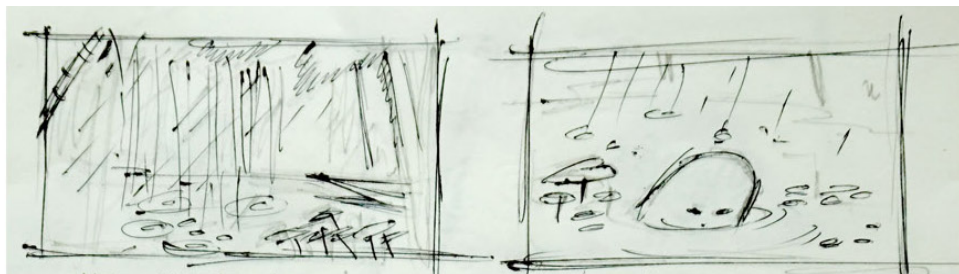
...and crashes the boat into half!



nothing has happened as so. only the fisherman is fishing without a thing to bother. the Baak is gone

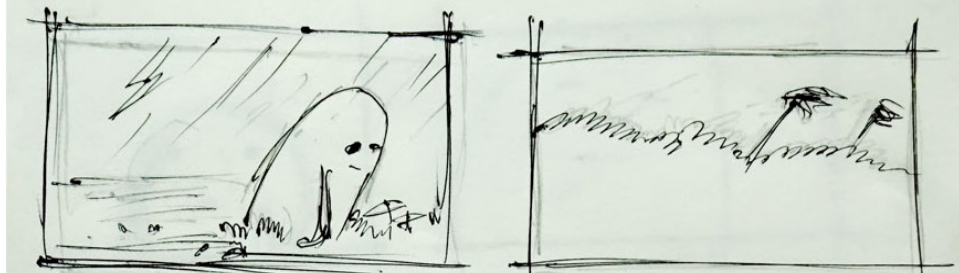


it's the pond with the boat on the baNk



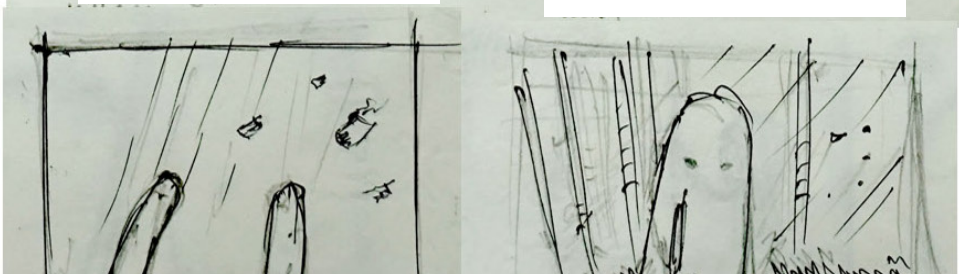
it starts to rain

the Baak emerges out of the water



it stands in the bank

trees swaying wildly, a storm is coming



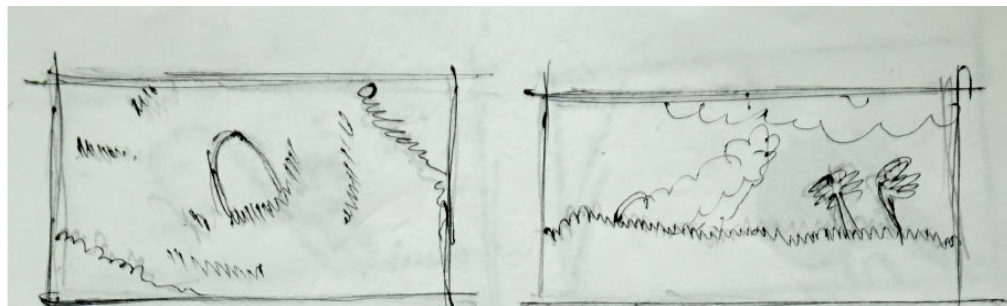
the Baak stares at its hands. rain drop falling. suddenly a small piece of burning cloth falls on the Baak's hand

he looks around to find now burning debris and ash falling along with the rain



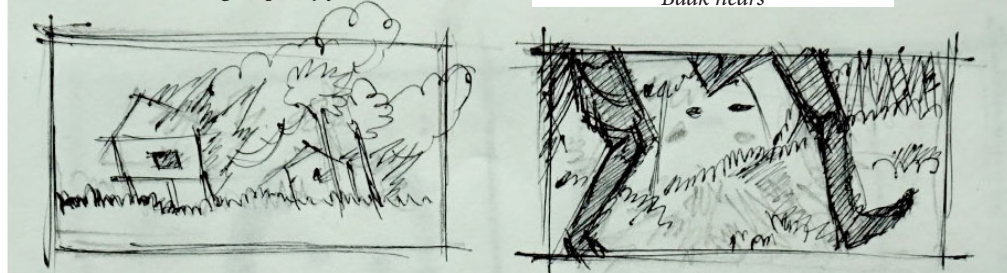
in the distant across where lies a village, something is on fire

.....



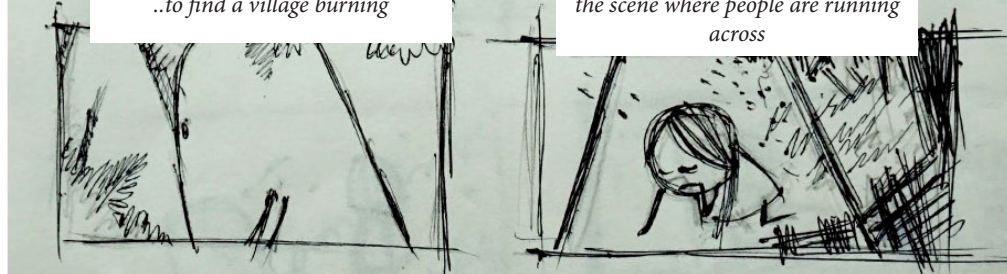
the Baak walks towards the village through a paddy field

smoke can be seen in the distant as the Baak nears



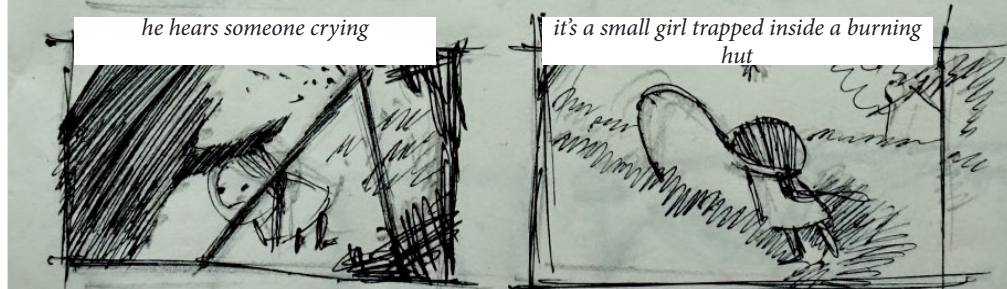
..to find a village burning

the scene where people are running across



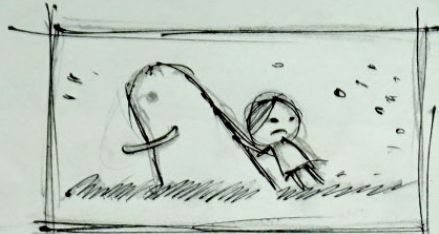
he hears someone crying

it's a small girl trapped inside a burning hut



the Baak removes the burning log trapping the girl..

and drags her outside towards the wood away from the fire and the people



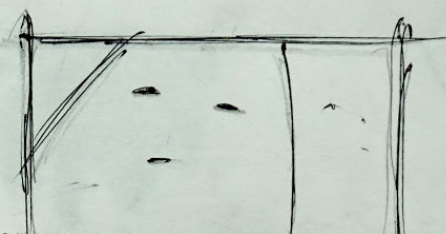
the poor scared girl looks back at the now burning village



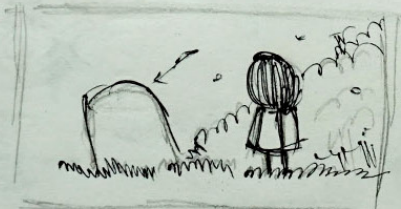
and then looks at her strange rescuer



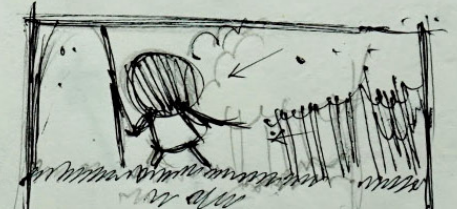
surprised and scared at the same time



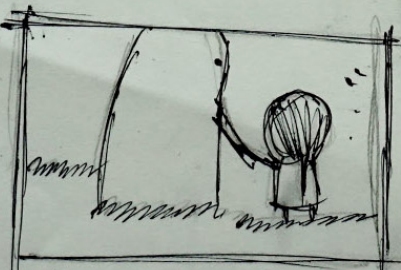
....



the Baak starts to leave now that the girl is safe



but the girl runs towards the Baak

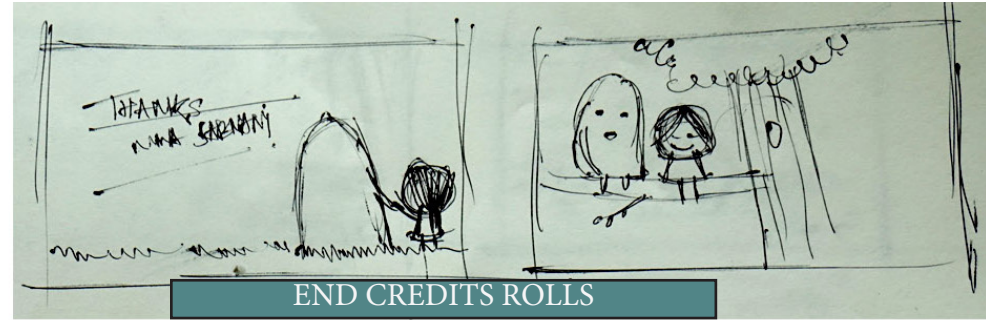


and holds its hand

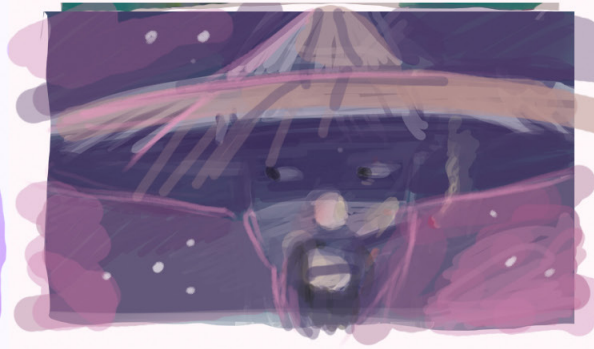
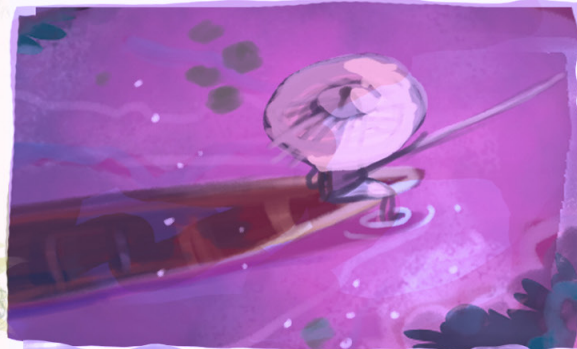


the start of a new friendship

the end



Moodboard



**Finally after going through the feedbacks and the guidance, the last story got a tons of changes. Told from the perspective of both Meena and the Baak, the new story has avoided dwelling into the Communal Violence topic. Instead it focuses more on the Friendship part and the humanitarian side of the Baak we otherwise call a evil ghost.*

Final Story

Scene 1 (intro)

The camera zooms from space with a plane flying through the clouds. Little Meena is visiting her Grandma's home after a long time. She is sitting there in her seat beside the window reading a book. As she stares out the window, she is amazed to see the greenery as now the plane fly above a little village of Assam. From outside, we see the plane pass by overhead through an opening of the treelines. The camera pans down to reveal the surface of a pond. A strange hand bends over and stirs the surface. A little fish peeks to the surface wags its fin a while then swims away as another shoal of fish swims through. We can see the reflection of a strange face in the water. Gradually the camera moves towards the strange creature, the Baak. The camera then zooms out leaving the Baak alone, away from the woods into a village.

Scene 2 (night scene) :

It's another gloomy silent night apart from the sound of a distant cricket and a boat sliding across the water. From over the top of the trees across the foliage, we can see a fisherman's boat floating in the water lit by the moon. At one end of the boat, a lone fisherman sits, his eyes fixed on the string of his fishing line as he awaits patiently for some fish to get caught in the line. But unknown to him a dark gooey figure is lying (what it seems) in the other end of the boat putting back the caught fishes into the water. Our strange dark character stirred by something or whatever not known ,puts a fish into his mouth and drops into the water from the boat, as swift and silent the way he may have got into the boat in the first place. The fisherman looks back. Sways his torch across the boat. Alas all now remained are

two three fishes from his last catch. A look of frustration across our poor man's face. A fish just left carelessly in the side of the boat, falls into the water where it takes a dip into the water.

The village Baak is after all the nuisance. It appears from below the water moving towards the shore. Once in the shore it takes out the fish from its mouth. It stirs the water holding the fish and then slowly opens his hold. The fish gets out in the water, remains in the surface for a second or two and then swims away with some flocks of fishes. The pond shows a lot of activity, unlike the shore which depicts the lonely feel with our Baak giving a sign of loneliness.

Scene 3 (Evening Scene) :

The Baak picks something from the ground. It's a beautifully crafted bamboo toy resembling a human figure .lying down in the ground beside the pond it hugs the only twig friend and closes its eyes. Suddenly the Baak opens his eyes and finds a pair of eyes looking at it from the bushes across the tree line.

Meena has stranded into the wood. It was that silky cute squirrel she was after and couldn't resist to follow it as it jumped across the tree branches. But the trail was towards the village pond which Meena's Grandmother had warned her of venturing in the noon. There are stories that during the noon the pond is haunted by a benevolent ugly ghost call the Baak. She have heard stories of the Baak stealing fishes from her Grandma once. It's also said that in couple of occasions it kills a person and wears its skin and wanders off into the village to steal more fishes from the kitchen. Maybe the Baak just needs friends but skinning a live human is absurd.. That is what Meena had thought. She had shrugged off her fear and hopped toward the trail of the squirrel without another thought. And now she is kind of lost. Even the squirrel is nowhere to be seen and the eerie silence in that part of the wood is giving Meena a weird feeling. She should have listened to Grandma. As she turns her back to return through the way she came, from

the side of her eyes she thought she saw something move in the shore of the pond across the bush. Is it the Baak that mother and the whole villagers had been warning of? A sense of hair tingling feel mixed with a rush off adventure drove her and within a second she is there peeping through the bush into that strange creature that the people call as Baak.

The Baak equally shocked at the pair of eyes looking at it in a sudden jumps into the water. Not knowing what to do next it peeps out of the water to see a little girl behind the bush. With the sudden appearance of the little stranger the Baak thinks of something and moves towards the girl.

Where did it go...thought Meena. Suddenly she heard the crackling of the leaves in the ground behind her. She turned slowly and froze in her ground. Coz in front of her was the most horrifying creature she have ever seen. It's the blob standing in front of him. Its eyes staring at poor Meena. She starts to cry. Poor heart.

But the Baak reaches out and puts forward something that it is holding in its hand. Not knowing what to do she grabs the thing and slowly turning back she starts moving towards the village.

Its night, back in her hut, Meena looks at the thing as she lies in her bed. It's a stick figure carefully handcrafted out of a bamboo twig. She smiles but wonders with her little mind what might be the Baak be doing now. Is he going to sleep alone now that he had given her his only bamboo friend? Meena thinks about her own time when her Mom was once away from home for a whole one night. How she cried and shouted at her dad and didn't slept until Mom returned. If only she could have returned the Baak his friend. Or maybe something else as a gratitude.

The Baak stares at the night sky as it feels a cold breeze pass by. It does miss something now. It stares at its empty hand for a while. Suddenly he hears a sudden motion behind him only to find little Meena holding up a small teddy towards the now surprised Baak.

It was the last night of Meena's vacation stay. Dad has come to take them

back to Mumbai. Meena thought about the strange creature that she met that night. She thought of visiting it again but had hesitated. Maybe she will visit him again, next time she comes to grandma's place in her next vacation. And moreover Grandma would be glad to have her coming again.. Just then it started to rain heavily. Very heavily and with thunder strikes.

The Baak looks out at the wild clouds. A storm is coming. Suddenly it starts raining followed by huge thunder strikes. He can see the trees swaying wildly like wild animals pouncing at its prey. A thunder strike lands just a few metres away from the pond. Behind the thick foliage towards the village something seems burning. The Baak senses something is wrong and moves toward the settlement. But all is heard is loud thunders. Mixed with the strong wind and rain it's a howling sound. The Baak keeps moving through the paddy fields towards a tree line across which lies a village. A burning village.

A wild thunder strike had somehow landed in one of the hut and now the whole village is in fire. The Baak thought he could hear a girl crying. Slowly the Baak moves toward that burning hut from where the sound was coming. He can hear a small girl crying for help. He removes the burning logs that was surrounding the hut. Inside its Meena lying on her knees crying. Beside her, Grandma is lying unconscious maybe because of the smoke she had inhaled. Meena glad to see her old friend somehow gets on her feet. The Baak drags out grandma and Meena out of the hut away from the fire. Once away in the safety, as Meena's parents and the rest of the villagers comes to aid, Meena looks towards the Baak only to find him gone. As the rest of the people tends to grandma, Meena runs towards the wood to find the Baak leaving. She runs and holds the Baak's hand with gratitude. The Baak stares at her. Meena smiles back. Marking the beginning of a new friendship.

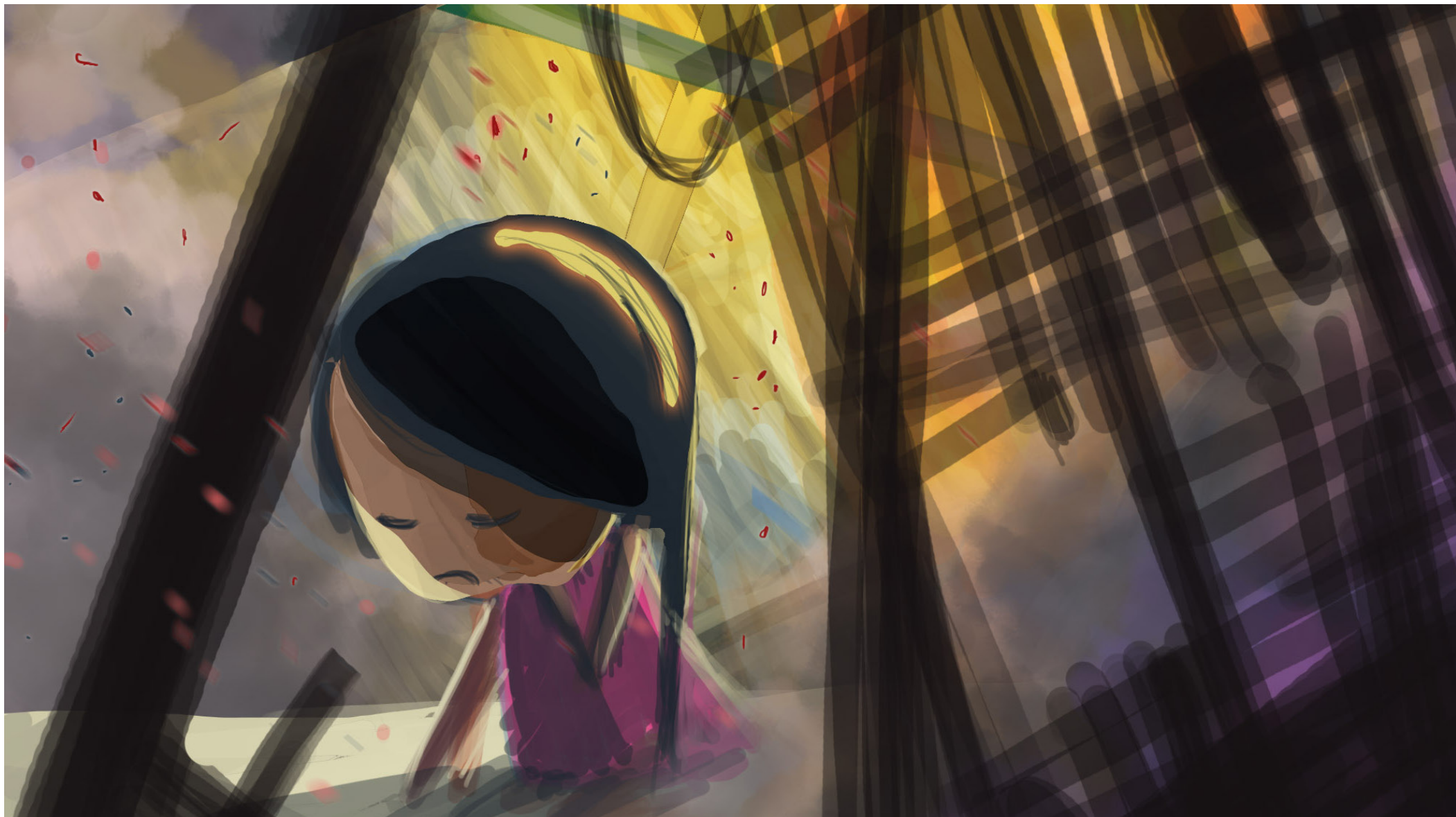
THE END

*hand drawn animation
using TVPaint, Adobe Photoshop and After Effects.*

Final Style and Layout







Conclusion

With IDC at my side, I had always conspired to adapt my learnings towards my native state, and when its something particularly endemic to the place like the baak, I had to give it a try. Nevertheless I had been always captivated and inspired by the scenic beauty of Assam and always wondered the possibility of capturing it in a moving canvas. Its rich flora and fauna along with the strong cultural diversity and traditions gives tremendous possibility to experiment and animate. Monsters and ghost were always my favourite and the way we can turn them into likable creatures for a kid is exciting. With a serious topic alongside when the valley is in flames and a monster trying to save the day , i promise to give my best hand and imagination to drive this project to completion.

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