

Animation Design, Degree Project - Stage 01

Magic Within

Animated short film - How we live our lives today

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Project Guide
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Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
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Industrial Design Center
Indian Institute of Technology

Approval Sheet

The project II titled “Magic Within” by Ketaki Haldipurkar is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for M.Des. Degree in Animation.

Guide

External Examiner

Internal Examiner

Chairman



Acknowledgment



I would like to thank my project guide, Prof. Sumant Rao for his guidance and support through out the project. He has shown extreme patience in trying and understanding me and my needs, and taken great efforts to make me understand and correct my mistakes during the project. I thank him to believe in me and to give me the confidence and freedom to explore my own ideas; for which I am greatly indebted.

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Why
this
subject ?



Introduction



Introduction

One of the subject that has always fascinated me is the fact of how we are living our lives today. I believe that humans are a very interesting subject. Our eccentric behavior always has intrigued me. A recent incident that I experienced made me realize that we have become extremely materialistic. Materialism has gained the power to dictate our behavior and also our attitude towards life. We have stopped respecting who we truly are. We have stopped believing that we have the power to change the situation around us. We have become slaves to the material love and we let the objects build an image of who we are. Knowingly or unknowingly we are constantly taking the 'Materialistic path' to build an image of oneself to portray what we aspire to be even though the potential lies within us to be who we want to be.

I believe in this, that beyond all these silly consumer trinkets that build an outer artificial aura of who we are, deep within us lies all the qualities that can improve or solve all the difficulties that we face in our lives all we need to do is believe in the magic within us.

Hence my animated shot is about how objects should accentuate who we are and not define who we are.



Objectives & Animation



As a student and to get the first opportunity to do something in this field I was completely excited as this would be my own creation. For me animation is a medium that allows me to explore my creativity and imagination. It gives me the opportunity to be a creator and to construct a world that behaves and looks like what I want it to be. It is an overwhelming

process to start with a blank sheet of punched paper and bring every thing to life.

My objective of this project has been to create an animation that lets me understand myself as a student of animation design and to test my ability. Moreover a student project like this gives me the freedom to explore all aspects of animation and film making and the lends me the luxury to make very decision as this is an individual project. This project to me is an opportunity to explore the medium of animation and to learn the craft of it. Also to learn and understand the aspects of story telling and narration, along with exploring other aspects of film making like sound, music, editing and compositing. Moreover, to prove my own self to myself as to who I am as an animator and to know my creative abilities better and what I can deliver when faced with time constraints.



Data collection



Once I had decided my focus was to make a comment on humans and how we live our lives I started going through a few websites and books during this initial stage, to get more insight on human behavior. This lead me to the understanding that as humans are progressive beings. Our basic primary needs of food, clothing, and shelter has gradually changed to a greed for a variety of technological innovations,

luxuries and products which is eventually leading to misuse of our natural resources. Hence material processions and consumption not only hampers our personal identity and happiness but is also atrociously harming the ecological balance of the environment. As preserving natural resources has always been one of my basic concerns, I felt more close to the subject and more determined about the selecting the right topic. Thus my interest lead me to see a few documentaries which kept getting the subject closer to my heart. Some documentaries that I saw were The story of stuff, The fourth world war, Breaking the silence Mahatma Gandhi pilgrim of peace, Money as debt, The debt of dictators, The great green fuel gamble, The secret government, Unreported world brazil, World according to Monsanto. I also read a few books to understand this subject: Asking the earth – Winin Pereira and Jeremy Seabrook, Environmental sustainability booklets.



My approach !

Hence I decided that I would like to create an animation shot where the core of my project will remain “believing in yourself”, whereas materialism and ecological imbalance will be introduced as a subtext.



Mood board Mood board



Initially I started with creating mood board of how the materialism is affecting the eco system to make things clearer to me; as to how my subtext and core can be brought together, how are they connected and what is it that bothers me or is important to me.





Story telling and script



I created and explored a number of stories that could explain my core.

Data Collection: During this stage too I went through a number of short films, read books on zen stories from a few websites and Vikram Seth's 'Beastly Tales from here and there'. The following page has a few of the stories that I churned out.





Story01

A man sets out into a city to start up a business, confused of what he wants to do he goes for a stroll on the city road. His thought process is always disturbed by the sounds of the busy city life. Every time he is disturbed one of his body part turns into a recording part until atlas he becomes a recording studio himself.

Story02

A tree from the forest is feeling lonely as all his friends have left him to go to the city so he decides to go to the city to visit them one day. The city dazzles him and he sees every man made thing as a part of nature and gets impressed of the city life, i.e: if he sees light bulbs then he thinks they are stars, etc.

Story03

A conversation between a little boy and a girl who are playing on a seesaw on how they spent the day. Every time they say a materialistic thing it appears on the seesaw, this keeps happening until both the sides get loaded with objects in no time and the seesaw breaks.

Story04

An interactive game in which a whole day has to be spent. As soon as you do some thing that affects the environment it changes or affects the background of the game. For example - This will let children think twice before using a car to go shopping, and provoke them to go walking instead, etc.

Story05

A family sets out in a boat into a sea. As they go we realize that it is a sea of objects. Immediately the parents start collecting things. The baby does too. They keep filling their boats till all the things are piled up and the boat cannot take the weight any more. It just falls apart. The parents are not disturbed by this, instead they set out on different plank of [broken boat] wood and continue collecting. Initially the baby is horrified as it wants to be with his parents but as time passes by he too starts imitating his parents and starts collecting things.

Story06

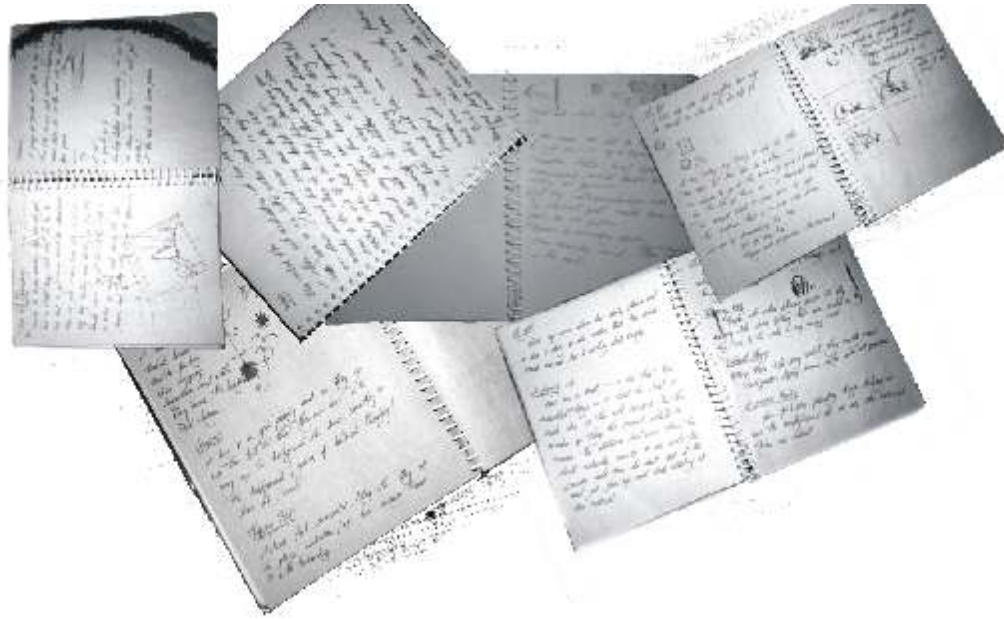
Different objects like laptop, grinder, refrigerator, microwave talking to us as too what they want from their life. This would be a stop motion animation with real objects and the conversation would have a hidden second meaning of why we need to conserve nature

Story07

A contemporary version on King Midas or on the poem Little Jack Honor.

Story08

A man busy wit cutting, pasting, welding, stiching, etc. Basically constructing something big. At the end the camera zooms out to reveal that he is constructing an environment around him as he exists alone on one blank huge space.



Story 09

A story about a common man who is not happy with who he is and whenever a situation reflects a bad point of his personality he escapes to a fair in which is a hall of mirrors which has a 'magic mirror' that shows him the image he desires to have.

These are a few of the story ideas that I had. However I had decided to tell a simple story, which at the same time could have my subtext of 'materialism and environmental issues;' fit like a glove. I was sure that I didn't want to propagandize about the whole issue as I believe that it is up to the people to decide what is right and wrong. Instead I wanted it to be introduced in an abstract manner; as I like to treat my audience as intelligent people and love to give them things to ponder upon and solve a few things as a puzzle, making the whole process of watching the film an active process where the simple story has something to surprise you and keep the subconscious mind a little busy. Hence I choose 'story idea 09' as it had everything in it, it was a simple story with an element of the escape route and it not only touched my heart but instantly had started speaking to me as to what the character, the treatment and animation could be like.



Story concept



This is a simple story about a man who is faced with a situation every day which apparently he feels is difficult to handle, every situation shows him what image it has built for him. As every situation defines him to be a person he doesn't want to be all he does is takes an easy way out - take an escape root -a road made up of materials at the end of which stands a fair. He enters in one of the tents 'The Hall of Mirrors' he enjoys all the mirrors there until...

...he discovers at the end of the tent lies a 'MAGIC Mirror' he stands in front of it and guess what, a mirror that is always associated to tell the truth, starts reflecting the image of exactly what he wants to be, this completely pleases him and he starts buying that for himself whenever he faces a situation that makes him unhappy with what he is.

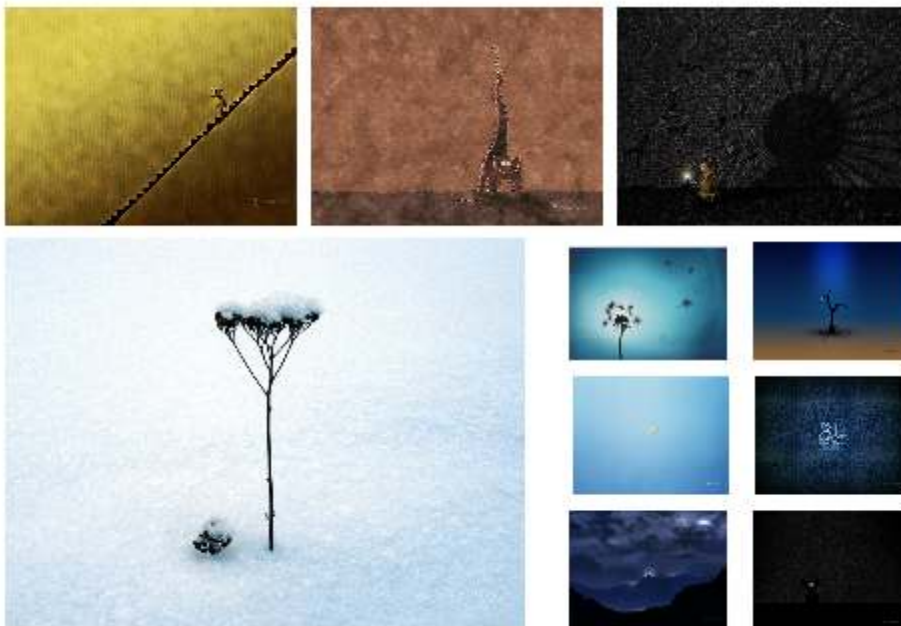
But then one day he accidentally bumps into the mirror crashing it. And as he tries to fix it the mirror tells him to look for the magic within himself and not within the mirror that changes his way of looking at things and life on an whole.



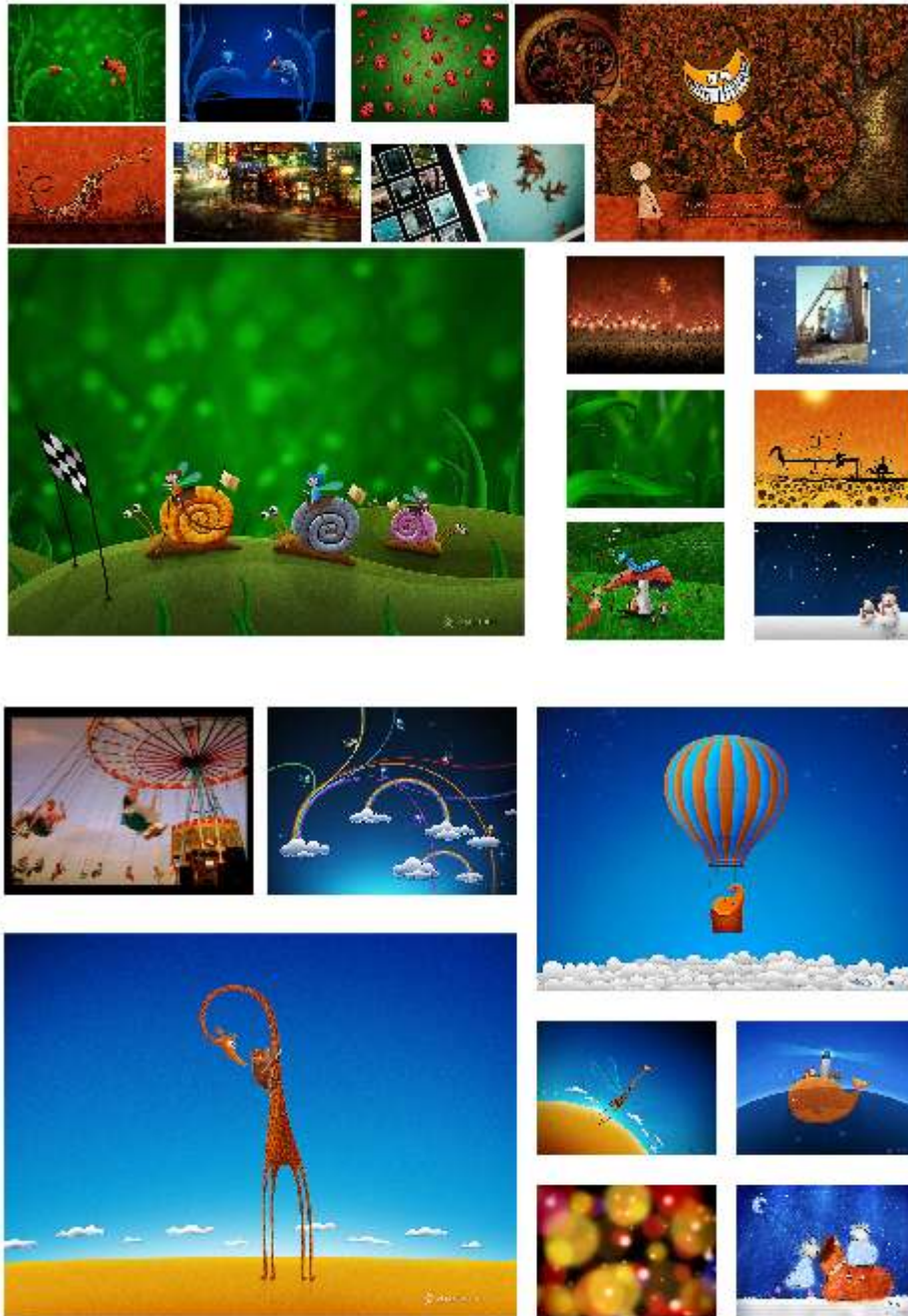
Visual language



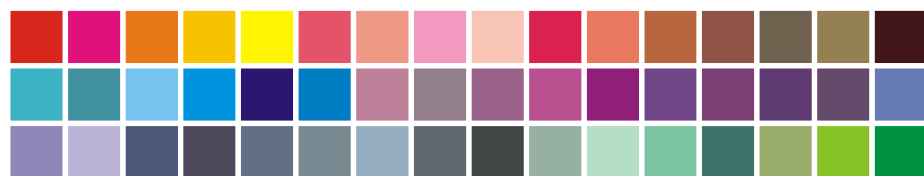
Simultaneously along with the story I had started designing the visual language of my film. So I started designing the style, colour palette, treatment, techniques, atmosphere, camera angles that I would like to explore in this movie. To see if it works I made mood boards and style boards explaining the look and feel of the movie. The following pages have these initial mood boards made with the help of pictures surfed from the net. This made it clear to me as to what my movie will look like, what sort of character design will suite the style of treatment, the techniques I will intend to use to make the film, etc. And then I made a rough animation of the materialistic escape route to see if my style is working.



Initially ,this is the type of mood I wanted to create for all the scenes that take place inside the home. When the protagonist is in the scene similar sort of camera angles, composition, use of light and shadow to create desired atmosphere. Then I thought of using stark black and white images so that though he is having fun a sense of gloominess prevails and also reflects simple unadorned life on the inside world of the protagonist, similarly simple camera angles and composition will highlight this too...



Similar kind of atmosphere will be created. I had thought also to add a touch of glow in these scenes subtly to add to the ‘pretty picture’ quality to the silly consumer trinkets.



^ colour palette for the outside world

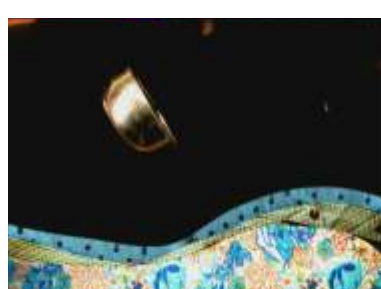
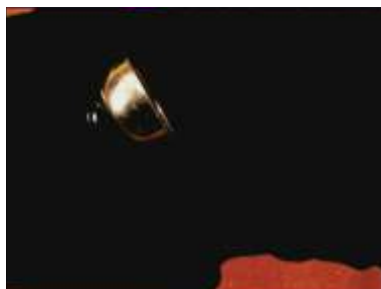
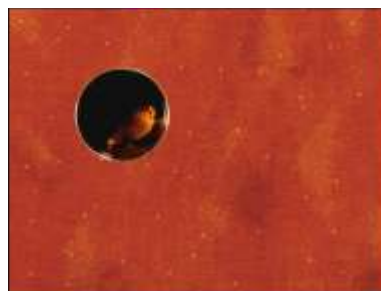
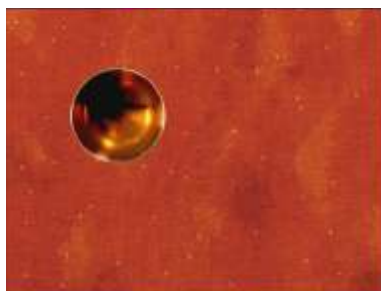


^ colour palette for inside world



^ colour palette for inside of Hall of Mirrors

Stills from the rough animation created for Style exploration





Story board & Animatics

Story board & Animatics



Once the script was done I started working on the story board and animatics. Initially I made rough scribble story board and put it together in an animatic. Initially I had structured the scenes so that only the protagonist will be there in the scene and all the other characters would be depicted through voices. However this did not work and the feedback I got from the audience was that they couldn't understand who was there in the scene also the animatic was too long around 8 mins. The end of the story was also not working as it was too fast to register.

Hence I restructured the whole scene and cut down the animatic to half the previous time. I went through 6 animatic constructions as I kept refining and restructuring the end of the story till I was convinced that it got the reaction I needed from my audience.

Though pain staking it was a fruitful process as it made me learn the importance of story telling and how it matters to tell a story right as you have an message to be perceived by your audience.

Story board

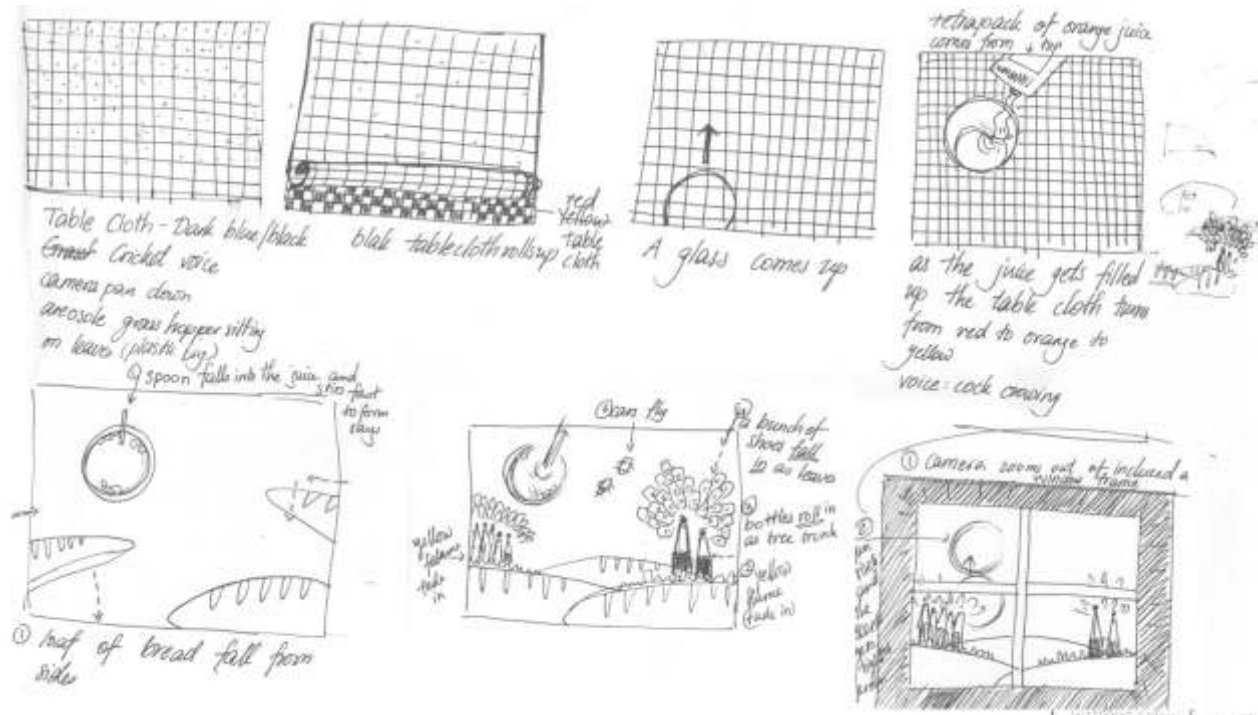


Story board



Sequence 01:

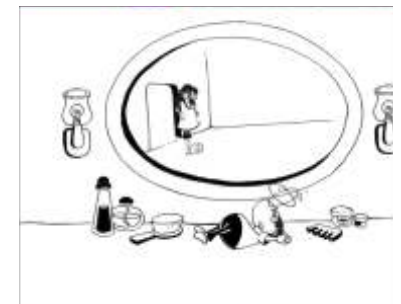
The movie starts with night turning into a morning scene which is made of different objects used in day to day life. The camera starts zooming out and this scene is actually scene through the protagonists home and as the camera pans we see the photographs of the protagonist and his life. We see that he has to do house chores too which he doesn't like much and his wife seems to enjoy when he is busy helping out in the house.





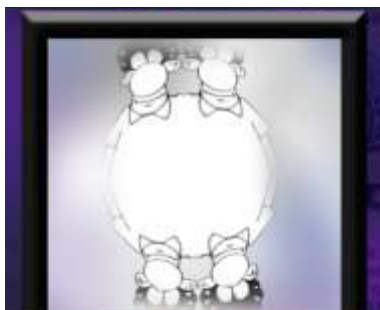
Sequence 02:

The day starts and as the protagonist is combing his hair the wife nagging and shouting from the kitchen. They are busy arguing when the wife throws a pan out at the protagonist. As a result the protagonist shrinks in size as he goes all around the house like a deflating balloon, hits the mirror and falls down becoming a tiny little person...





...He enjoying all the mirrors when suddenly he comes across a beautiful, grand, elaborate 'Magic mirror'. As he stands in front of the mirror it lights up, the words 'you see magic within' appear and his original reflection transforms into a image he desires [for that very moment]. His reflection turns into a physically strong man, and when he opens his fist a tiny little wife is in it. So he sees himself as a person how is strong enough and who can have a command on his wife if he wants. Satisfied with the image in the mirror he does a little joy dance.





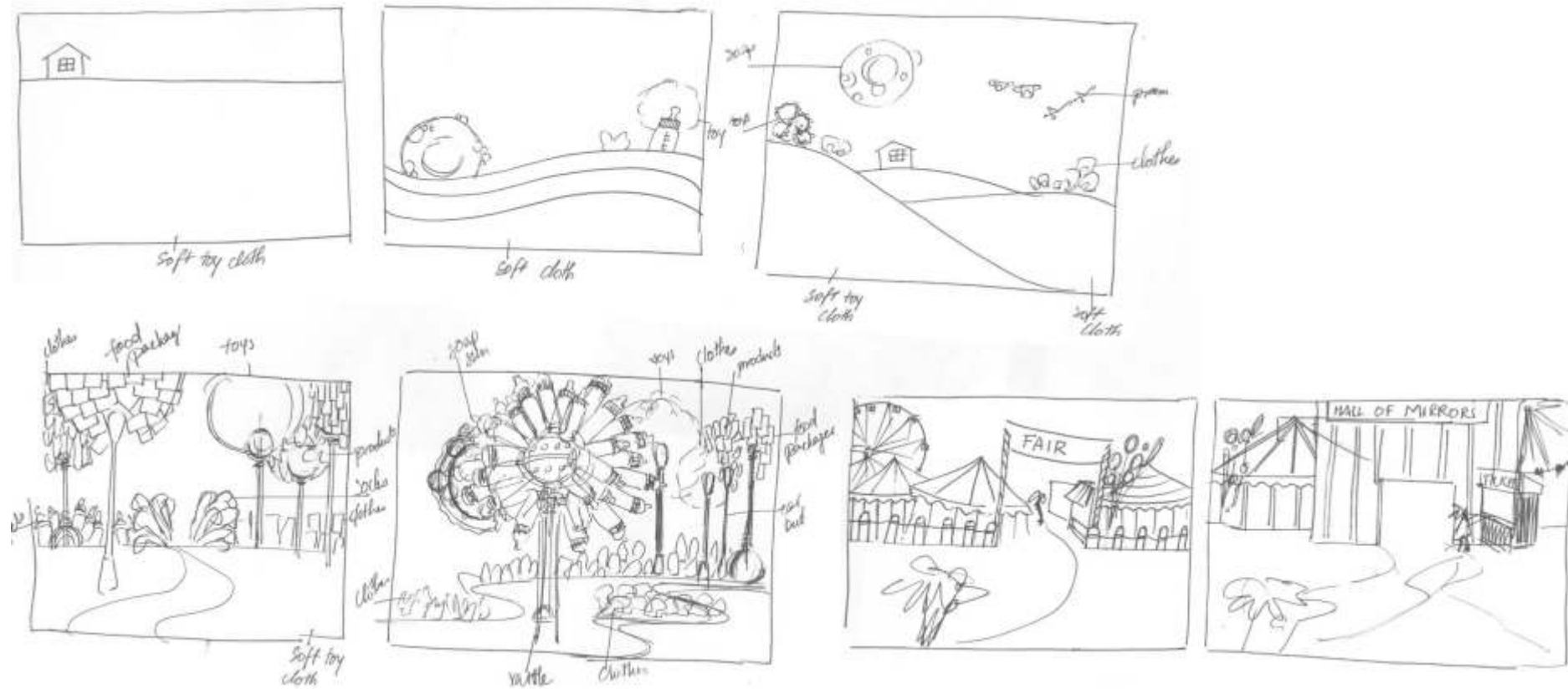
Sequence 03:

It's a new day and the protagonist gets a balloon for his baby. The baby is playing with the balloon while the protagonist is happily reading paper. The balloon suddenly bursts and the baby starts wailing. Getting disturbed the protagonist briefly yells at the baby who inturn starts crying more loudly. The protagonist as usual runs out to the escape route...





...This time the escape route is made out of all the things used for a baby. As before he is looking at the surroundings in wonderment...





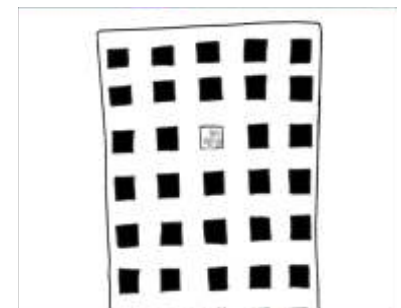
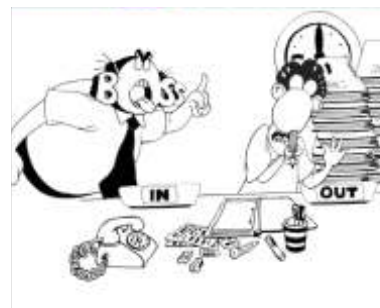
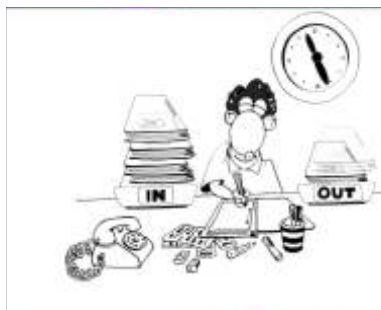
...He rushes in to the fair, right into the hall of mirrors doesn't stop to look at the other mirrors and goes directly to the 'Magic Mirror'. This time he sees himself as a responsible father with as he has a happy baby in his arms.





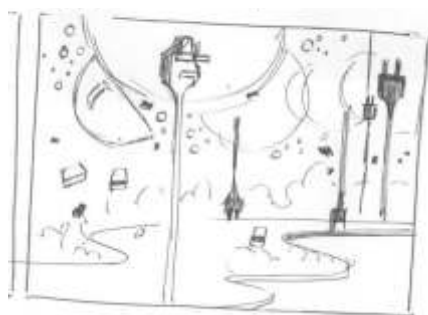
Sequence 04:

It's a new day and the protagonist is in the office happily doing his work when his boss walks in and loads him with work, which makes him work overtime. We see that he is the only one working in the office. As he is done with his work he rushes out to his escape route..





....It is all made up of electronical goods this time, it is late and the evening turns into nights. The protagonist buys the ticket rushes into the hall of mirrors, and goes and stands in front of the 'Magic Mirror'. This time the mirror shows him to have interchanged places with his boss. So he is the boss wearing the tie and at his feet sits his boss busy working. He rejoices with a little dance as usual, but as he dances his hand accidentally smashes the 'Magic Mirror'...





... He starts panicking and tries to put the pieces together. His first few attempts fail, but then suddenly on one attempt the mirror starts working again, but this happens when the words 'you see magic within' has been interchanged and now reads as 'see magic within you'. The protagonist looks at himself and magic sparks come out of him...





.. He starts his journey back home on his way he can see magic sparks changing everything around him. He can now see every thing as they are supposed to be, he sees trees as tree is supposed to be, he sees birds, butterflies, land, sky, sun everything as they are supposed to be. He reaches home the wife is yelling as usual the child is crying as usual. But this time he sees his real wife and not just her typographical head [he accepts her for who she is]. And as he takes her by the hand lovingly the wife gets surprised and stops yelling and smiles in return. They both go to their child and hold him in their arms and cuddle him, this transforms the typographical baby boy into a proper child. The film ends

Titles

The man is again shown combing his hair, the camera zooms out to show that he has made a board and written 'Magic Mirror' on it and nailed it above his ordinary bedroom mirror.





Character development



I have structure the protagonist to be obese as it is one of the major issues created by materialism.

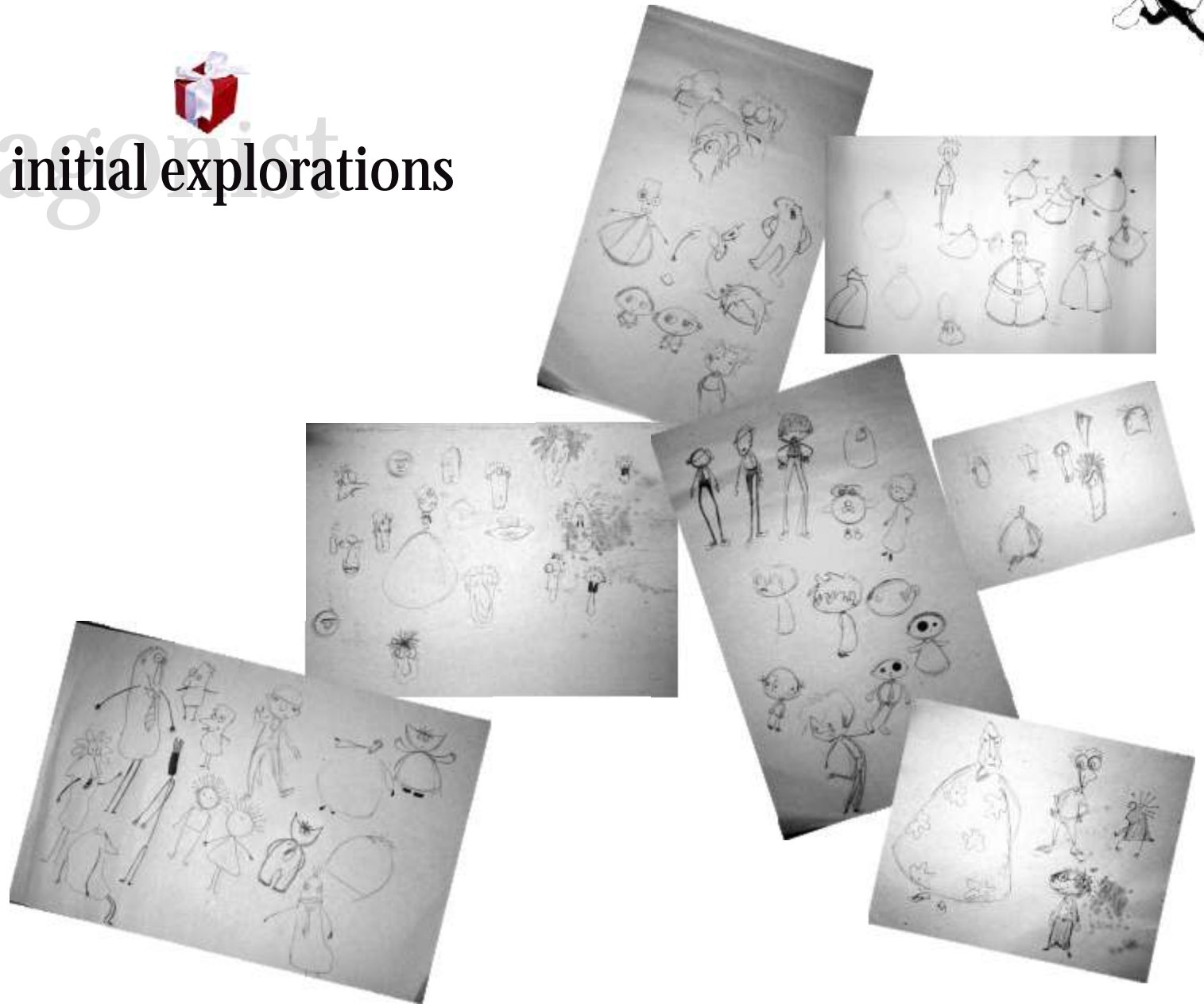
The other characters are created so that in the beginning of the story they will have typographical heads as that is exactly how the protagonist takes them to be. He has literally labeled them they mean nothing to him, they are just another word to him. But at the end when he realizes that is the time when he starts seeing them as real people and not just words.

There are no people in the fair as it is some thing that only you can see - your own false image, that may not exist to the other people.

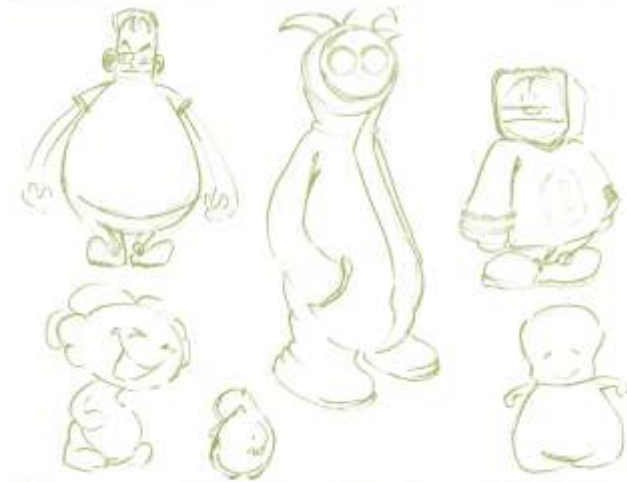


Protagonist

Protagonist initial explorations



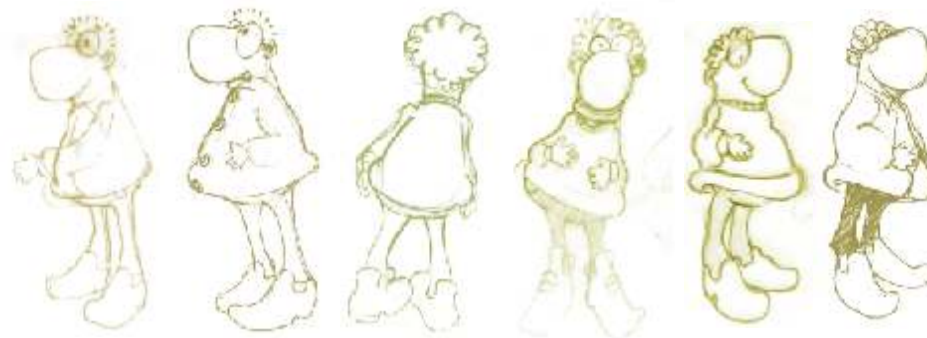
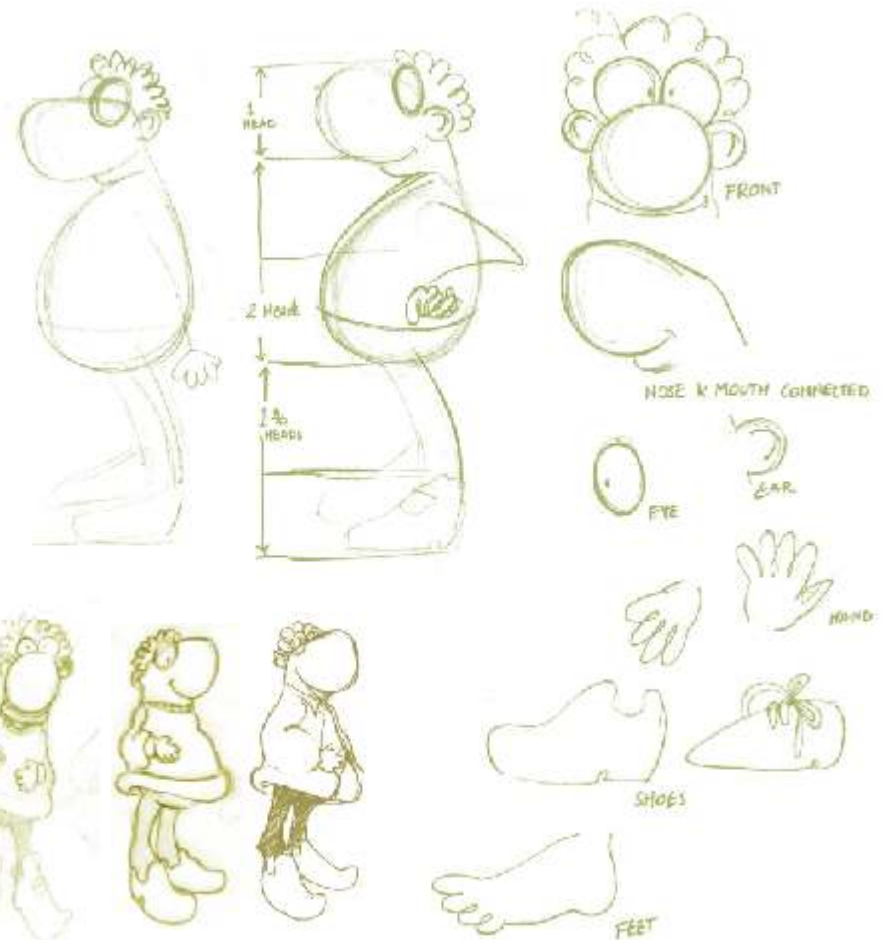
Protagonist Protagonist explorations

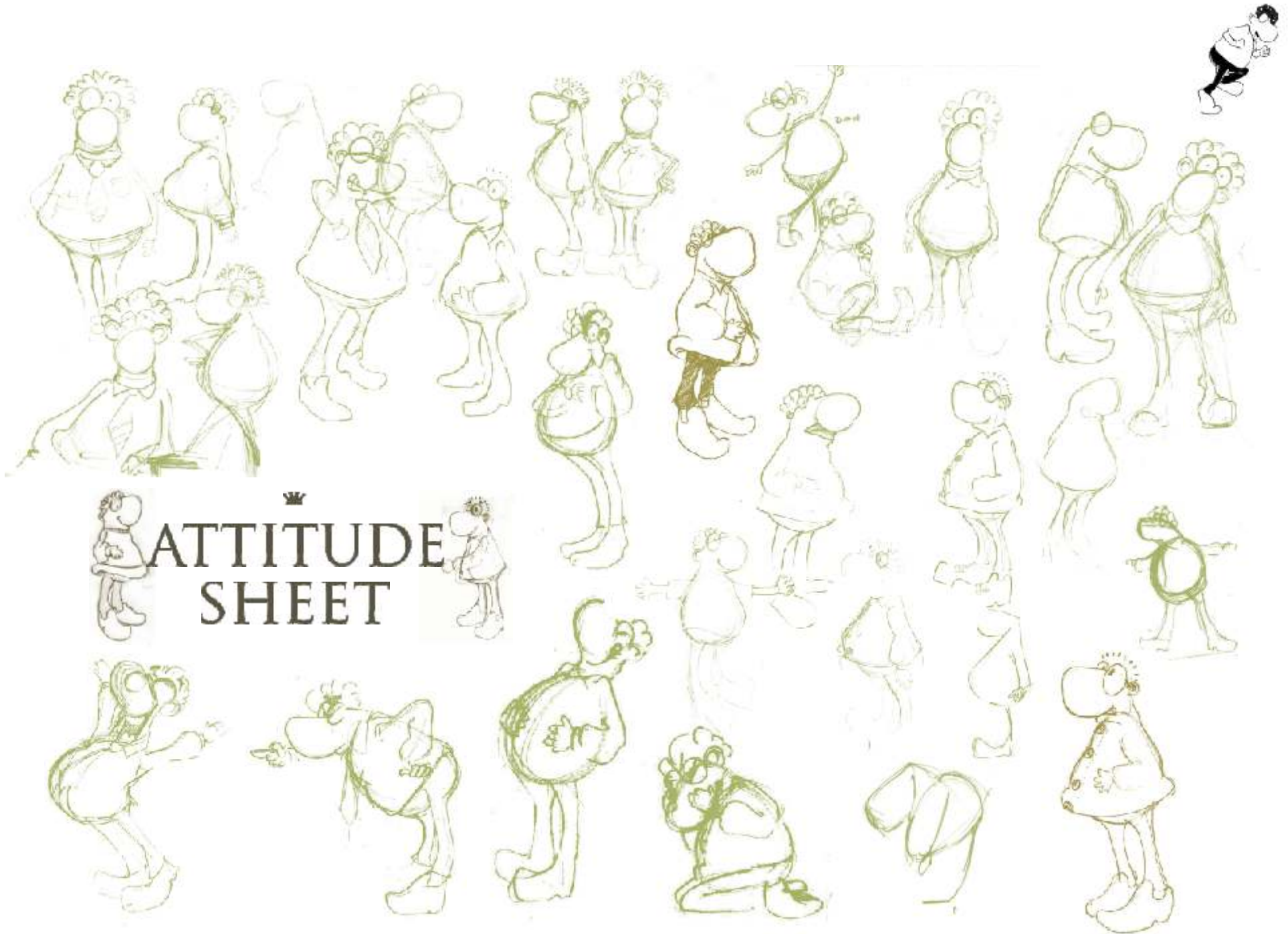


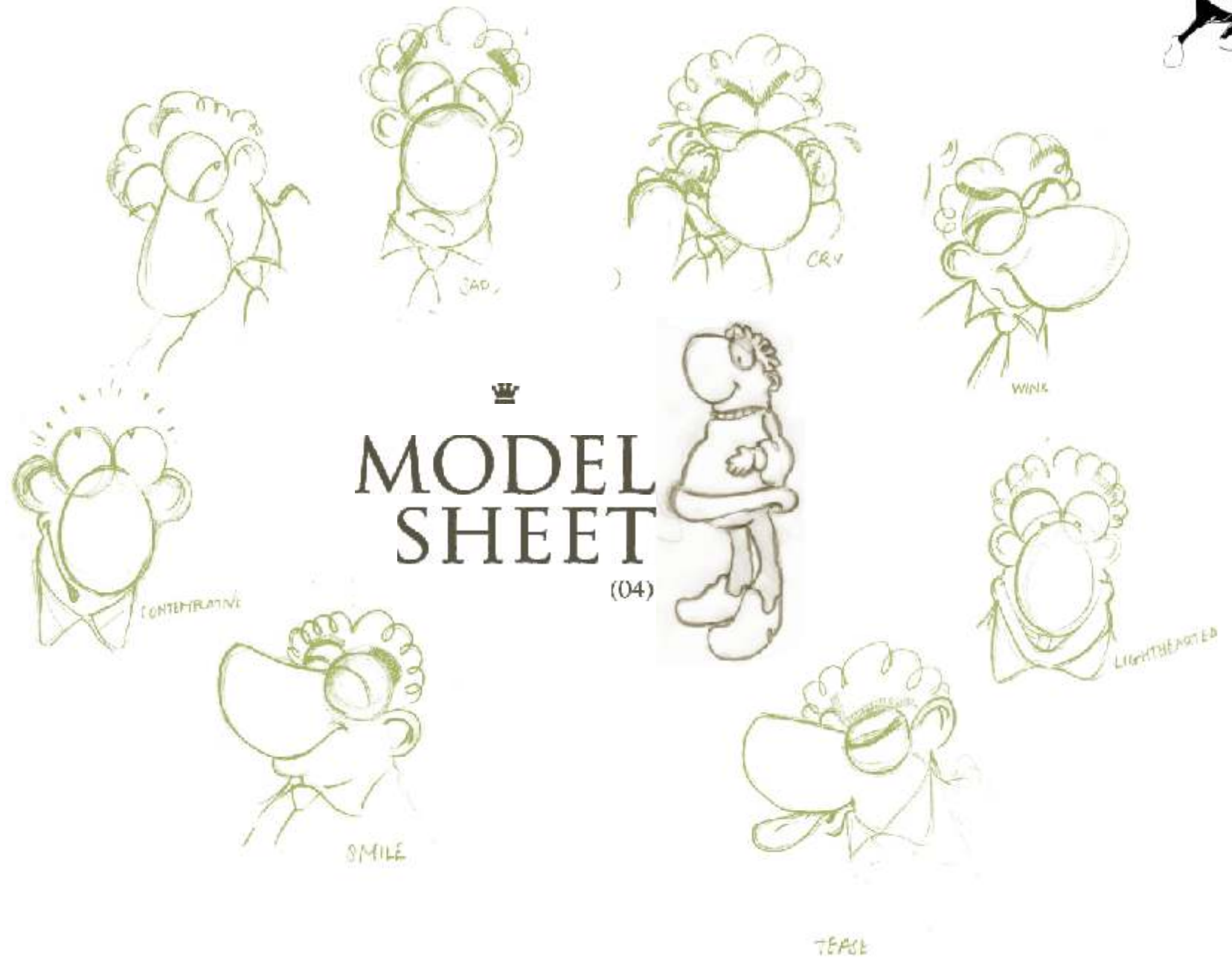


Protagonist

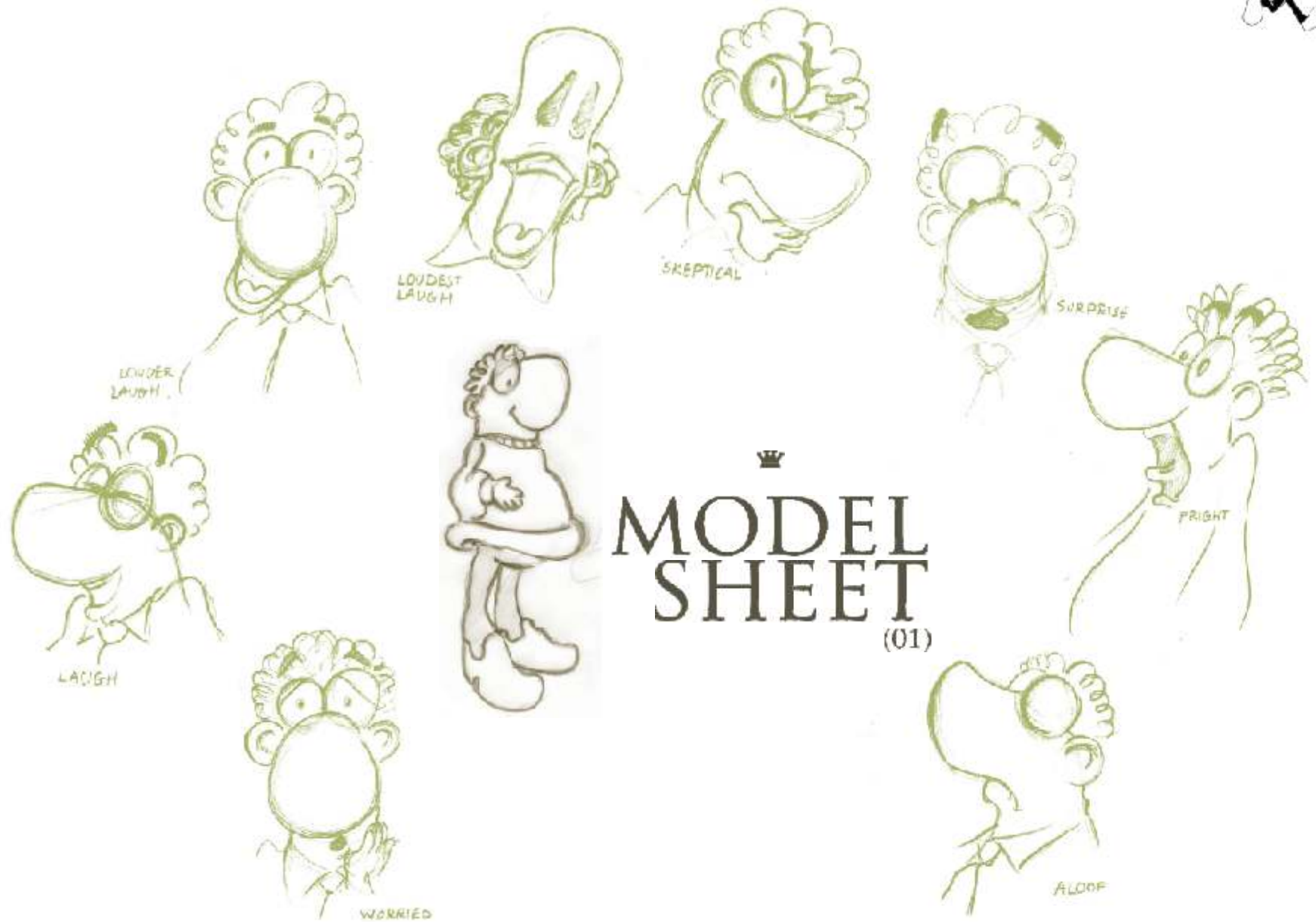
Protagonist final











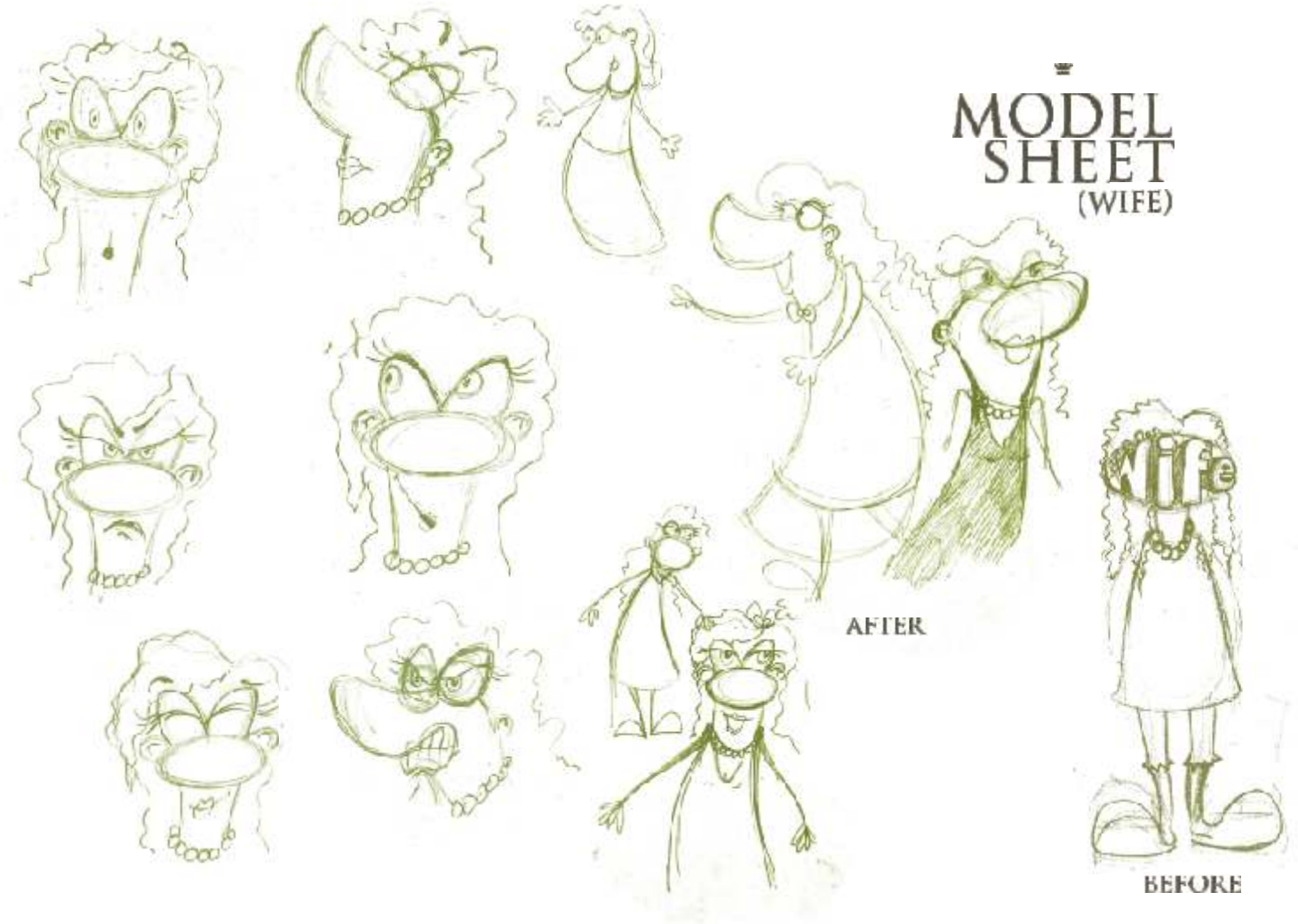


Wife Wife explorations

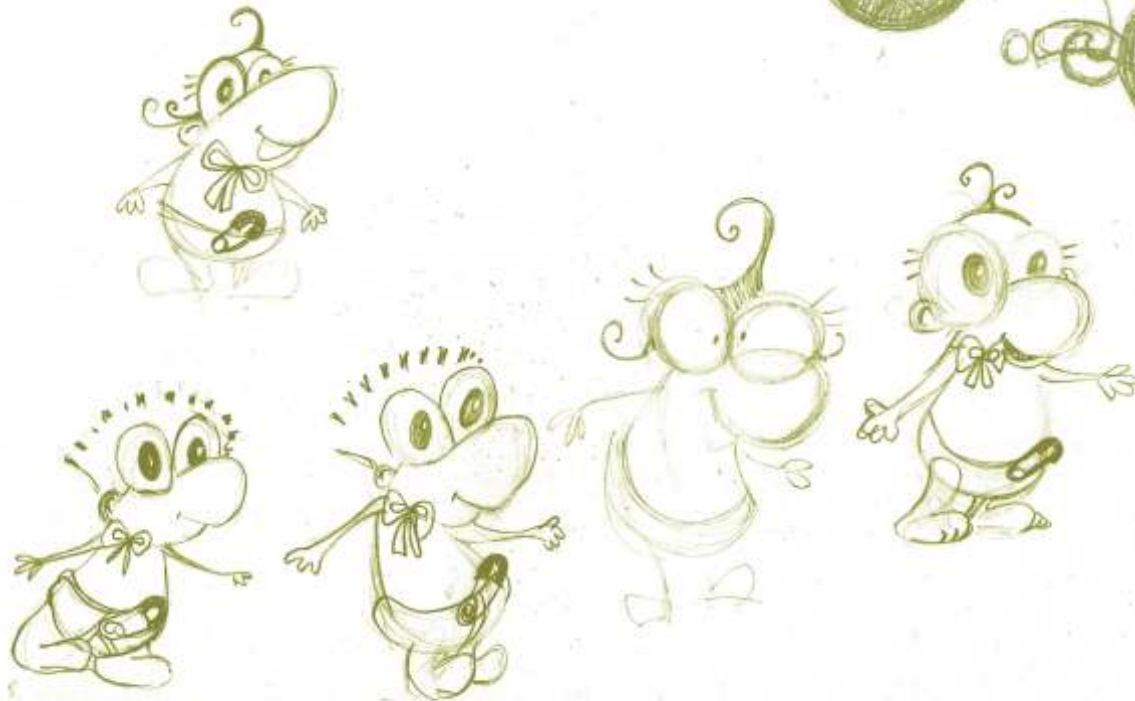
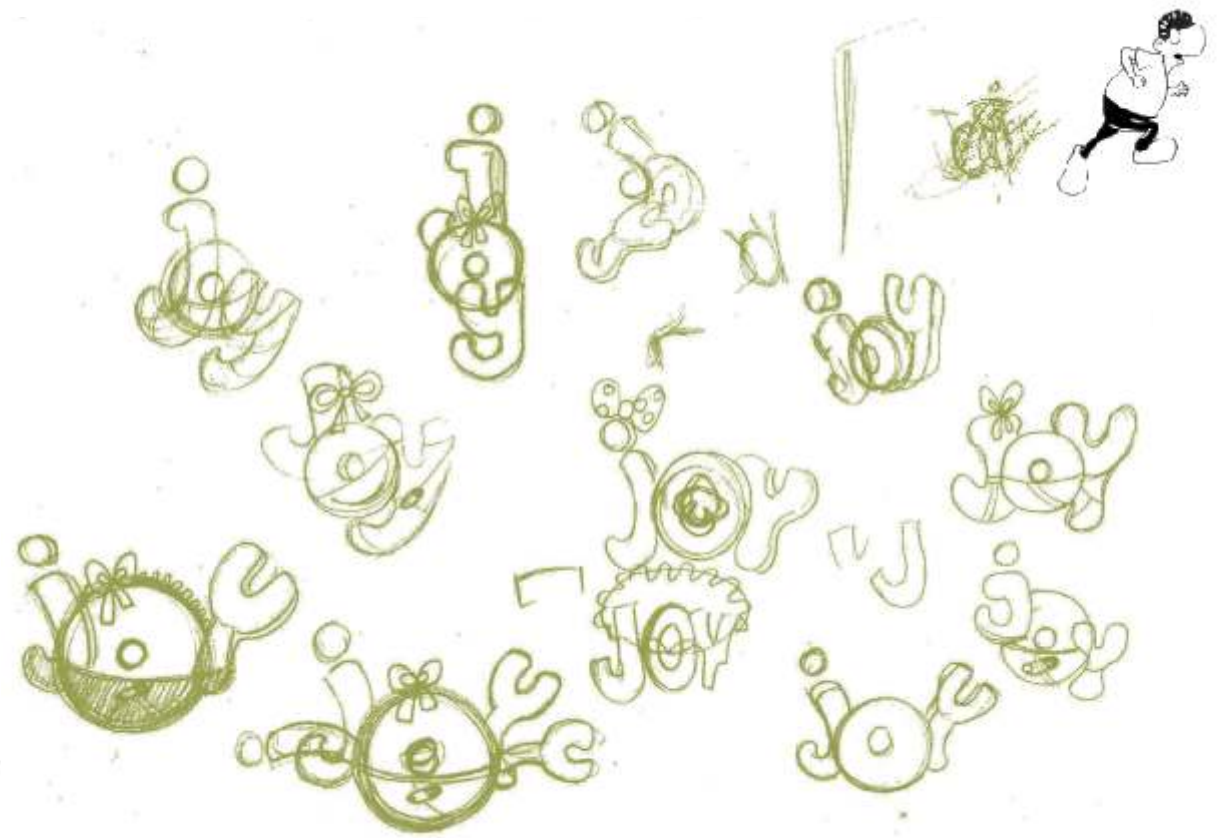


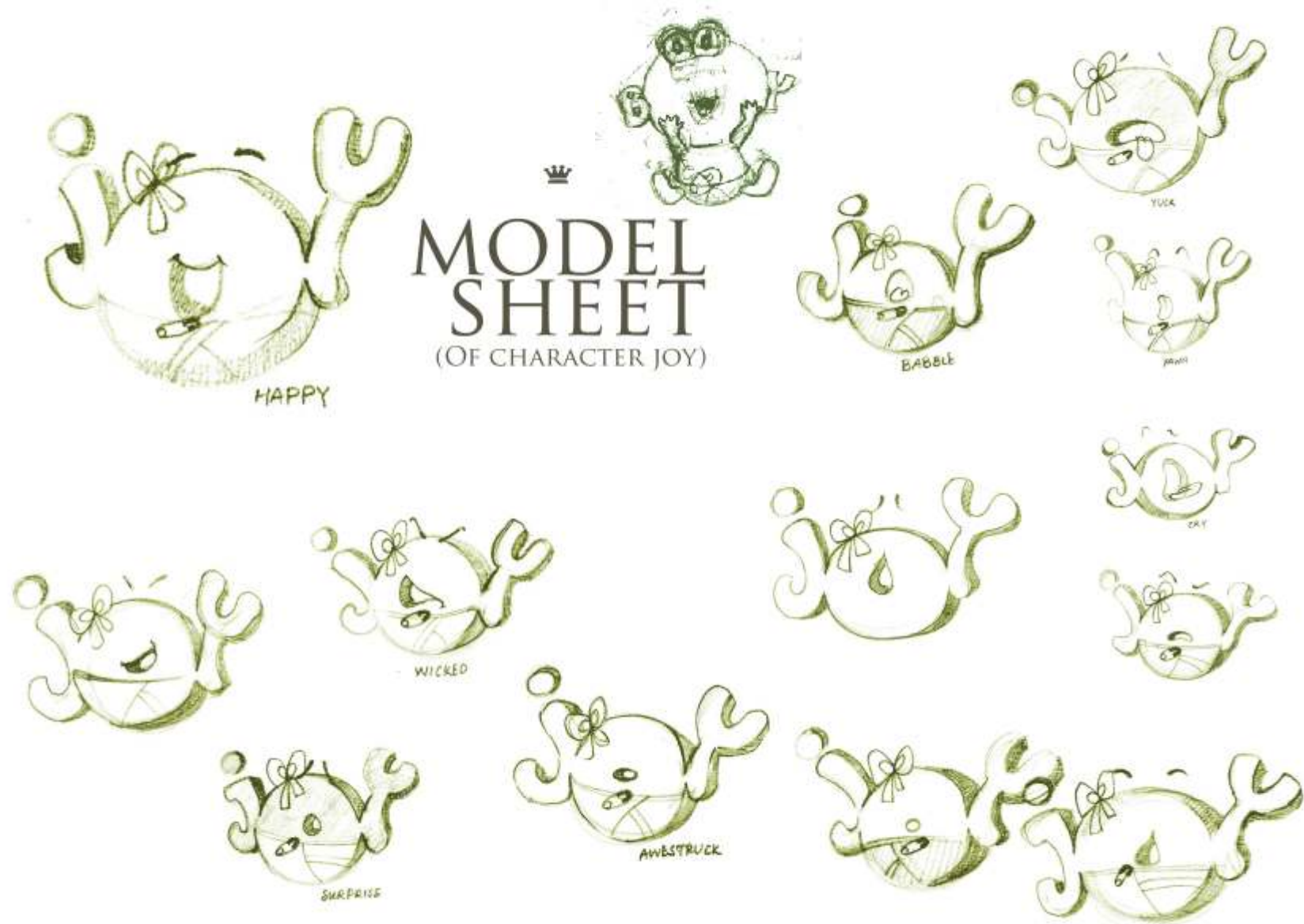


Wife
Wife final



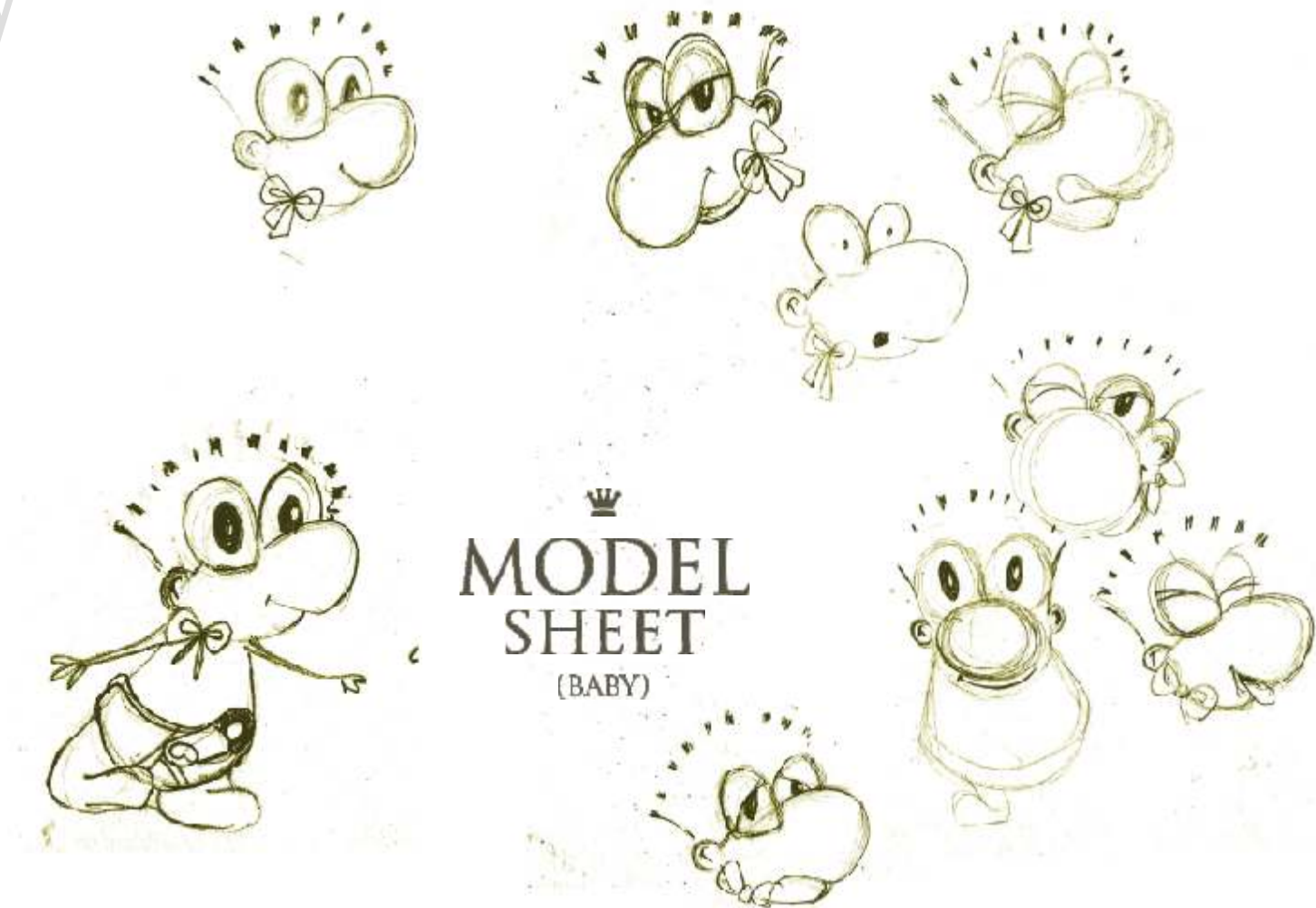
Baby explorations







Baby Baby
Baby final



Boss Boss explorations





Boss
Boss final





Concept art & Techniques



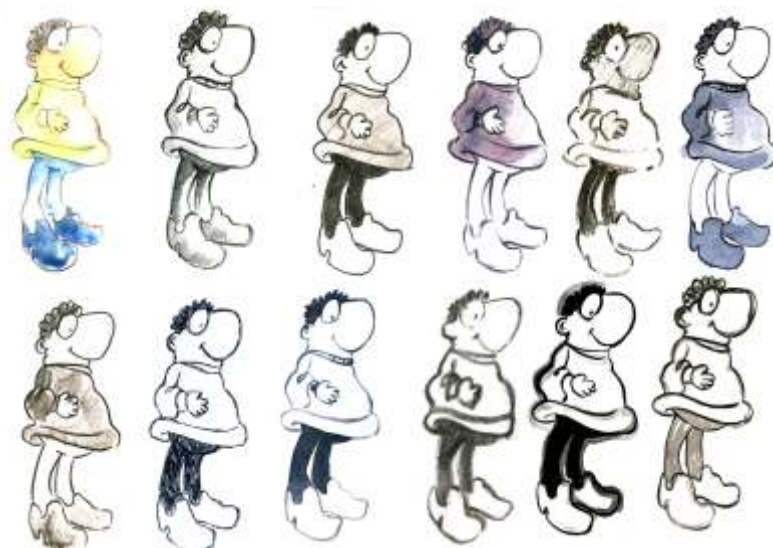
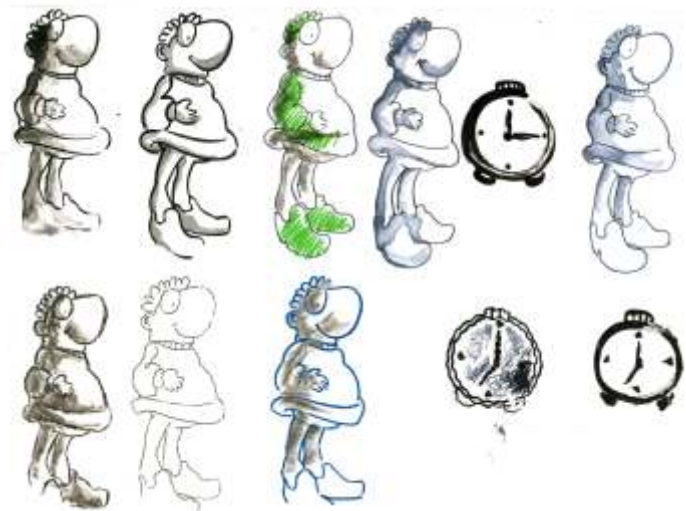
There is a conscious inside world that is the home and an outside world the escape root created.

The inside is simple, black and white, line drawings. It is made up of bare essentials to show how simple life is.

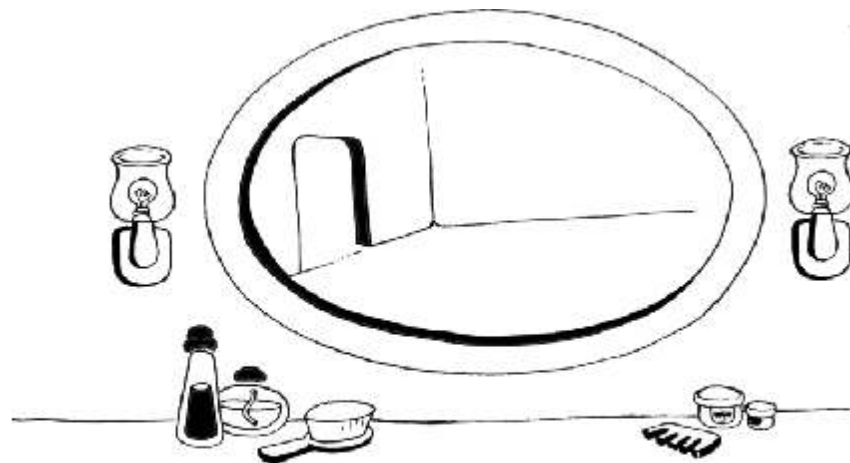
Where as the outside world is cluttered made up of a lot of unnecessary things occupying the scene. It is full of colours, textures, happy, lively, active with a lot of energy in it. The whole scene is constructed with objects which have replaced everything possible from the trees to the land, the sky, birds, water, etc.

The fair is completely made up of money as that is the ultimate end of the journey when you take the materialistic path.

Hence my animated shot will be a juxtaposition of 2D classical animation for the inside world and stop motion for the outside world. The 2D animation was done using the light box completely. Photoshop was used to do the cleanups. Whereas the cleanups of the stop motion was done partly in After effects and partly using Photoshop. The stop motion was done on ground and on table top using 2 flash lights for even lighting and a digital SLR camera was used, Canon D60. The compositing was done using Adobe After Effects. For sound mixing, recording and editing Cool Edit Pro was used. Finally all the audio and visual sequence were put together using Premiere.



^ Styles explored for the inside world



^ finalized visual style



^ Style explored for the outside world



Reference

Reference

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Documentaries:

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The fourth world war- *Director: Rick Rowley, Company: Big Noise Films*

Breaking the silence- *Directed by: Steve Connelly and John Pilger, Produced by Christopher Martin, Carlton Television, Written by: John Pilger*

Mahatma Gandhi pilgrim of peace

Money as debt- *Director: Paul Grignon*

The debt of dictators- *Filmmaker: Erling Borgen*

The great green fuel gamble

The secret government- *Directed by: Bill Moyers*

Unreported world brazil- *Director: Paul Kittel*

World according to Monsanto- *Directed by: Marie-Monique Robin*

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Asking the earth- *Written by: Winin Pereira and Jeremy Seabrook, Published by: Jeremy Publisher, Year Published: 1992*

Environmental sustainability booklets

Beastly tales from here and there- *Written by: Vikram Seth, ISBN: 1-85799-305-5, Publication : Penguin India, Published: 1992*