

DEGREE PROJECT III

Film Presentation

Topic: An Indian Erotic story

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Masters in Design, Animation

By

Tamal Saha

176340003

Under guidance of:

Prof. Sumant Rao



Animation and Film Design

Industrial Design Centre

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, BOMBAY

2017-19

Declaration

I hereby declare that the project work done in relation to my Graduation Project I film and submitted as a written report to the Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay is a record of the original work done by me under the guidance of Professor Phani Tetali. Unless otherwise stated, the contents of this report in the form of the text and images are entirely my own. The views expressed in the documentation as part of the written submission of the project are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tamal Saha', with a small dot at the end.

Tamal Saha

176340003

May, 2019

Approval

The Report Committee for Animation Design, Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay certifies that this is the approved version of the following report on: Communication Breakdown by Tamal Saha, 176340003.

Approved by

Project Guide:



Chairperson:



Internal Examiner:



External Examiner:



Date:

Place:

Acknowledgement

This film as a part of my P3 presentation was an incredible experience and learning opportunity for me. The expert level guidance and amazing insights given by my guide and colleagues on the topic and the production process helped me enrich my personal as well as professional growth. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my guide, Professor Sumant Rao, who has not only guided me throughout the entire process but also pushed me to venture out beyond my comfort zone and accomplish my second animation film with a little more in-depth knowledge of the concerned topic.

I am extremely thankful to Prof. Nina Sabnani, Prof. Shilpa Ranade, Prof. Phani Tetali and Prof. Mazhar Kamran, who have also guided me from time to time and encouraged me on the right path with their valuable criticism and suggestions.

And last but not the least, I'd like to convey my gratitude towards my parents, friends and peers who constantly supported my off book endeavour and kept me grounded enough to see this project through completion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tamal Saha', with a small dot at the end.

Tamal Saha

176340003

Content

Declaration	ii
Approval	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	1
Introduction	2
Initial Exploration	3
Initial Concept.....	4
Story Ideas	4
Final Story	6
Style Studies for Final Story.....	8
Inspirations and References.....	9
Character Explorations	10
Final Characters	11
Storyboard	12
Animatic	20
Sounds and Music	21
Design Process	22

Final Look	24
Challenges and Insights.....	25
Reference	26

Abstract

India is a country which has not exactly been shy about exploring and depicting eroticism and sensuality as witnessed in ancient texts, visages, sculptures and art forms. Owing to the enormous diversity in cultures, traditions, religions, ethnicities and regions the understanding of Indian eroticism has varied from place to place with time. But somehow in India, over time our modern society, in the guise of cultural appropriation and stringent tradition, has stigmatized eroticism as the unapologetic manifestation of sexual desire and romantic perversion and rendered it a taboo of the highest order.

This 2D animation short is my personal endeavour to understand the concept of eroticism in India and in the process try and initiate an open conversation about its effects on our understanding and acceptance of individual sexuality.

The story follows a young widow in northern Bengal in the 1880s struggling to make ends meet and her chance encounter with a mysterious stranger that transcends into an evening of erotic revitalization.

Introduction

Personally I've been always fascinated by Renaissance Period paintings of artist extraordinaire such as Michelangelo, Botticelli, Donatello, Rembrandt, etc. One of the main things that caught my eye was the amount of nudity and depiction of human beings in compromising positions in these pieces of art which never seemed to cross over into the vulgar territory. And that was immensely puzzling to me as my family and society always looked down upon such art forms with disgust and general aversion. What enthralled me was that inspire of the erotic nature of those there was something aesthetically pleasing about those art pieces which was difficult to comprehend for conservative minds. While western world openly embraced eroticism, India was more closeted towards the notion.

As I grew up and started to explore my personal sexuality I came upon a realization. Throughout our history, India as a country has been embracing a diverse range of erotic art forms and practices as a sub culture, hiding away from mainstream, from the judgements of the evolving society. Defined by the time periods, foreign rule influences, region specific practices and personal choices, eroticism in India has been existing for a long time under various facets. But the modern society had a sort of moral embargo on the thought of expressing one's erotic ideas onto a canvas or stage. To be true I've been struggling to grasp the essence of erotic art form and distinguish it from obscene or pornographic ones. Hence it was a personal endeavor to explore the matter as I steadily reached a stage in life when it mattered to me.

I tried to learn more about the differences between sexuality and eroticism. However, my exploration soon hit a wall as I came across the ground reality that even though India is the second most populated country in the world we deny to talk about subjects involving sexuality or carnal desires. In modern society the rise of curiosity over knowledge about sex and the increasing statistics against violent sexual crimes in the country clearly demands a better understanding about our own sexuality. And for that a legitimate and proper conversation should be instigated among the masses.

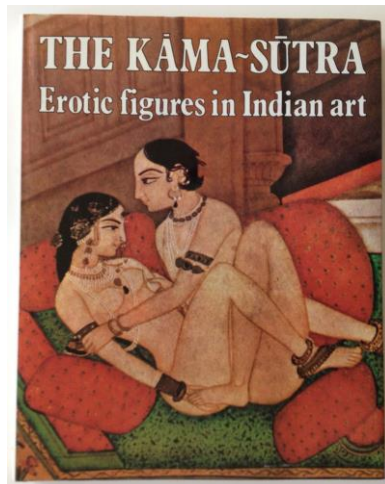
The blind disregard for the necessity of sex education and understanding has had a profound impact on the acceptance of erotic art forms. The essence of the erotic intellect of India seems to be in deep hiding or slowly being eroded away by impositions and restrictions sanctioned by a society too afraid to acknowledge its power.

The decision to explore eroticism as understood through the lens of Indian culture and tradition proved a tricky one as not much documentation is available in the modern context. So a lot of data and study had to be conducted which were not eventually realized in the final product but surely enriched me with invaluable knowledge and wisdom in the process. After all India, as the country that gifted the world a love manual called Kamasutra and Khajuraho with no proper discussion or understanding of eroticism is grandly paradoxical.

Initial Exploration

To gain proper insight and a better understanding of the topic undertaken initially, i.e., Eroticism in India, I endeavored on a journey of philosophical, spiritual as well as digital exploration. This included self-review and introspection about the said topic, discussions with various people and review and studying of reading materials, research papers, interviews and documentaries, digital media bits, magazines and movies.

One of the first books that I studied in detail was the world renowned manual on love making, Kamasutra.



On studying this book, I was surprised to find that even though it's supposed to be a manual on almost all things conjugal and carnal, it hardly had any sensuality to it. The detail and expertise with which the book was compiled was methodical and thoroughly

analytical. Somehow it seemed to be blueprint to exercise and explore one's erotic nature rather than dictate sexual desires. The book, even though an age old text, so explicit yet never vulgar, gave me a quiet peek into the psychosexual ideologies of our ancestors. How a culture goes from writing the most famous manual on love making has evolved into a society of hypocritical prudes, is only anyone's guess.

Following this I read a lot of articles, few papers and online materials to paint a clearer picture of what I was trying to get to. Most of the papers and materials talked about sexuality and sexual development or education. Few of them talked about co dependencies of culture and society while others complained about the lack of understanding of erotic expressions.

Initial Concept

The initial concept I arrived at was more of a surrealistic exposition of eroticism throughout India through symbolism and evidential historical fact presentation. I wanted to take us on a ride through the molding time periods that definitively altered our understanding and acceptance of what is erotic and what is not.

However, upon further exploration it seemed a daunting task to assimilate the entire erotic history of a land as diverse and ancient as India, that too in the given time. The research part in itself needed a lot more study and exploration just to sink a tooth into the fabric of social and psychosexual dissemination of a topic as subjective as eroticism.

Hence I had to decide to stick to a very general narrative possibility. A depiction of probable sexual revelry in our past presented through the lens of erotic symbolism.

Story Ideas

As I started to work on the project I roughly sketched out the path I wanted to take while exploring this topic. While I was influenced by my learnings and knowledge of the topic, I wanted the idea of the narrative to be unique, relevant and progressive. Thus began the explorations and brain storming about the various avenues I could take. Majorly, my initial ideas started with how eroticism was prevalent and accepted in our existing Indian culture and sub cultures and how we've gradually grown apprehensive and distant to express our erotic ideologies through our art forms and explorations. While the initial thought was to tell a story on the practices and erotic viability of India as a homogenous culture, I finally gyrated towards a more personalized story to try and portray a story about human sexuality through erotic nuances. The stories that I came up with earlier were:

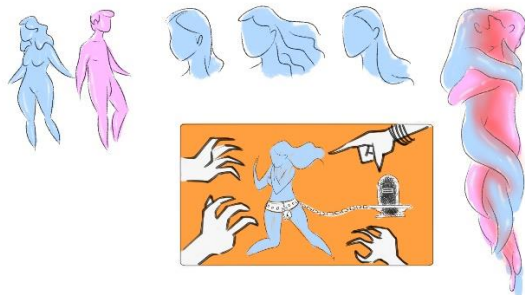
Story 1:

A young couple in rural India wants to have sex for the first time. As they try to come into terms with their societal anxieties regarding sex, the taboo attached with it and the cultural sanctions against it, they are thrust to reconsider their decision in the most hilarious way possible. We take a look into the sexual practices of rural India, the second biggest population in the world, in this satirical take.



Story 2:

A surrealistic exposition of merging figures and fusing forms to tell a tale which is known to all but discussed by none. From ancient dance forms to ritualistic practices, art forms and literature to modern day relegation and exploitation of eroticism and sexuality to sell products, we have witnessed it all but seldom have the nerve to portray the necessity to talk about it in the conservative Indian society. This abstract animation will try to stitch together visuals to form a narrative that can purposefully and successfully transcend the boundaries of our cultural understandings and help us move with the times.



Story 3:

Parents in a middle class home find pornographic materials in his teenage son's possession resulting in a crisis which the parents find easier to solve by berating and scorning the son for his choices and behaviour rather than tackling it with proper counsel and wise knowledge. This pushes the confused and curious son to question back his parents eventually and face them with an awkward conversation that is uncommon in middle class Indian households.



Story 4:

A freshly employed saleswoman of a company that produces condoms and other sex related materials has to delegate with dealers, distributors and customers on a daily basis. Her experiences regarding the same is documented in this animated short.

Story 5:

In 18th century feudal Bengal, an injured warrior is nursed back to health by an aged sculptor and his kind beautiful daughter. On recovery

the warrior finds out he has become blind. Overcome by grief and depression, the blind warrior tries to end his life only to be saved again by the daughter of the old sculptor. Soon they fall in love and their passion overflows into a night of unbound love and intimacy. Finding about the warrior's transgressions, the old sculptor chastises him and banishes him from his vicinity. Decades later a young man comes searching for the blind warrior who is now a reclusive old sculptor and has been carving out the exact figure of the old sculptor's daughter in various forms and poses all through the caves in the adjacent hills. The young man is revealed to be his son and is amazed to see his mother's exact statues all around, sculpted by a blind man.



Final Story

Movie name: **Raas**

Backstory- [The year is 1870. In a rural part of North-Bengal, a lower caste young widow, Rukmini, lived along with her aged parents-in-law. In between her responsibilities towards her in-laws, her daily household chores and job as a seller of weaved baskets, she seldom found any time to look after herself. Many men in the village lusted after her and often harassed her with lude comments and indecent proposals. At home she was demonised for “killing” her husband too soon. She lived; a hollow life, not a woman, neither a girl anymore. She had almost forgot what it meant to be young and passionate.] On the eve of Raas-mela, she decided to have a nice bath at the adjacent hot water brook by the bamboo grove, before going to the fair to sell her baskets. This fair celebrated the erotic story of Krishna and his gopis. Yet she felt sad she was forcefully devoid of any sensual touch of another human being ever since her husband's death. Lost in her thoughts, tears started to roll down her cheeks. As the flowing water caressed her naked body and the hot steam gently enveloped her glowing skin, suddenly she felt sensations she hadn't felt in a long while. She felt her womanhood rekindled, her passions reignited. And almost suddenly she heard a rummage in the bushes nearby. She jumped out of the water and wrapped her saree somehow, only to find a cute little lamb stumbling out of the bush, running up to her. Amused at herself she picks up the lamb in a motherly cradle, her wet saree still silhouetting her wet body. A slight crack breaks her trance and she looks up to find a young man, a shepherd no older than her, standing in front of

her staring right at her. Startled she lets go of the lamb, which almost immediately gallops away. But she gets too nervous to move. If she could she would melt away in shame but something about this young man seemed different. Neither could remove eyes from each other, their gaze never slipped. She felt time halted; the world around stopped moving. As the young man stood deeply peering into the heavenly face of Rukmini, she shyly unclasped her saree. The young man closed his eyes resolving to look away but almost immediately found a soft gentle hand touching his chin and returning it to its initial position. Rukmini wanted him to see her. The woman in her wanted the appreciation even if it was for a moment. Slowly as he opened his eyes Rukmini lured him into the shallow waters of the brook all the while peering into each other's soul through their eyes. By the very touch of the shepherd her sensory pleasures crashed through her entire body. She started giving in to the erotic pleasures that she had been craving for a long time. As she consummated with her lover she was filled with pleasures she never knew existed. Far away the celebrations of Raas-mela had started but all she could think of was how the shepherd's hand on her waist felt like clay being moulded by a potter; his hands on her bosom felt like the rush of the wooden fairy wheel; or how a kiss was even sweeter than the most exquisite sweet available in the fair. As she submitted herself to her carnal pleasures and uninhibitedly embraced her erotic side, all worldly thoughts were eviscerated from her mind. In the dim glow of the setting sun she completely lost herself in his arms. After her overwhelming experience, she woke up to find her lover and she coiled in a serpentine embrace. With a sprinkle of shyness, she hastily wrapped herself in her saree. The on looking shepherd

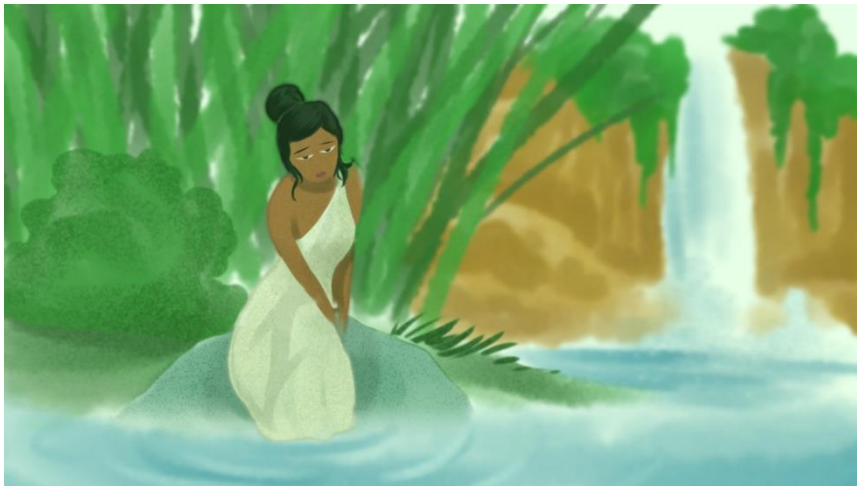
reached inside his small pouch and pulled out a dainty peacock feather which he kissed then handed over to Rukmini. Apprehensive at first, she accepted the token gift of her erotic encounter then dashed off into the forest path with a smile. As she walked away, she heard a melodious sound of flute coming from the direction she left her lover. Amazed, she halted on her tracks, turned back with a smile and ran back. But to her dismay, when she got there she couldn't find anyone and the flute seemed to be getting further and further away. She realized something and looked back at the peacock feather. Did she just make love to Lord Krishna? Or was it her senses that played tricks on her to satisfy her erotic urges? She wondered, but never figured it out. She returned home.

Highlights:

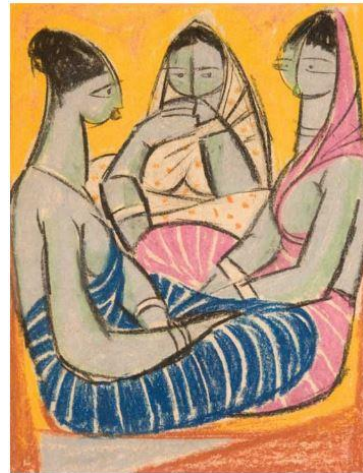
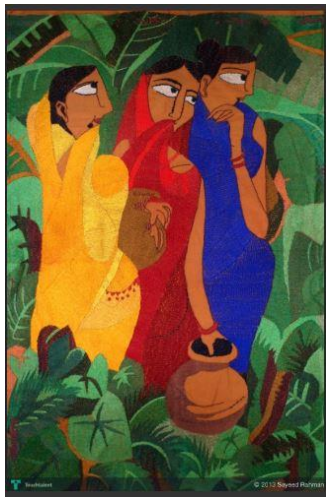
1. Usage of a light green filter wherever necessary, the depicted colour of Shringaar-Rasa, the one associated with eroticism, sensuality and love, of the Nine rasas.
2. Raas-Mela has been a very culturally inclusive occasion celebrated throughout North-Bengal. It is to commemorate the erotic adventures of Lord Shri Krishna and his lady-friends or gopis. In his Madan-Mohan avatar he serves as the overlord of carnal pleasure and sensual satisfaction.
3. A tale of probable psychosexual experience gratified with religious connotation.

Style studies for Final story

While the initial concept was a surrealistic and fantastical approach on the concept of eroticism, the final story was mostly grounded and taken from incidents that occurs or can occur in our everyday life. This prompted me to adopt a less dramatic and malleable look for the animation for the movie and adopt one with depth and realistic. I started exploring animation styles pertaining to the look and feel I desired. This led me to various works from around the world. Few of the most prominent influences were



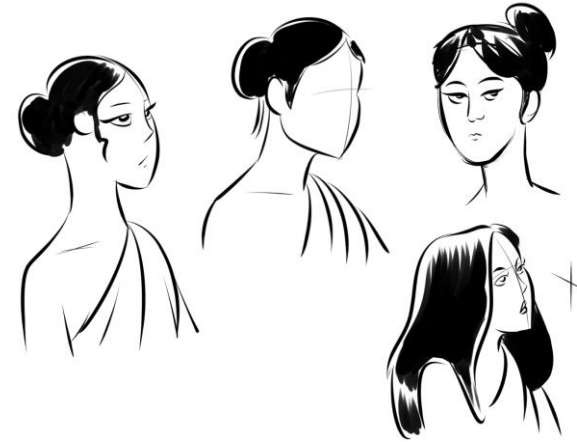
Inspirations



Historical references



Character Explorations

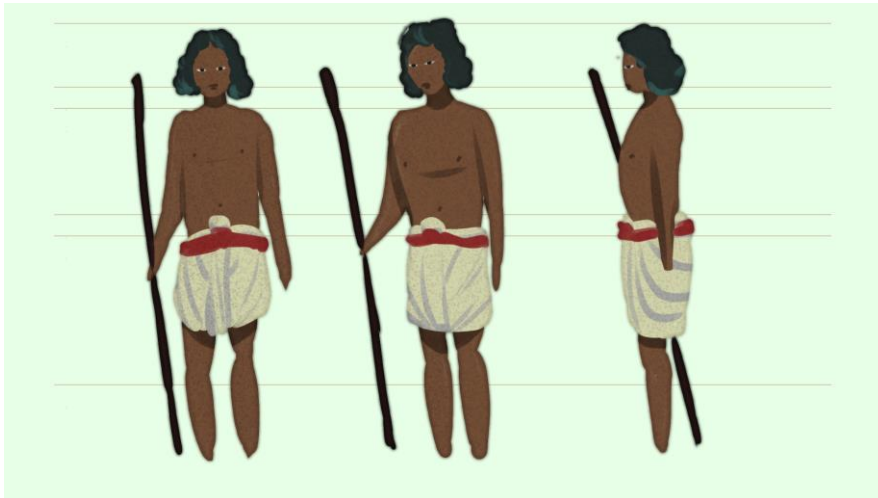


← Better
with perfect
animation

Final Characters



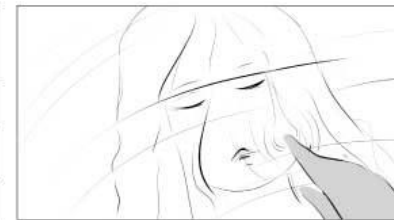
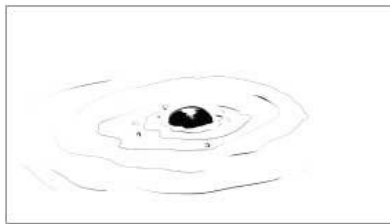
The Widow

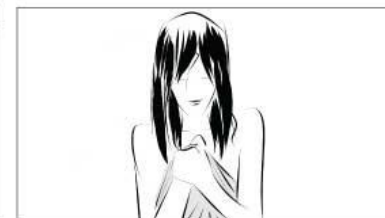


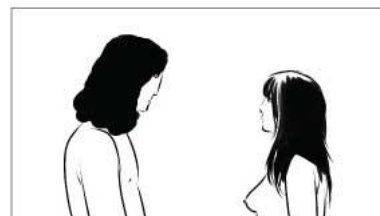
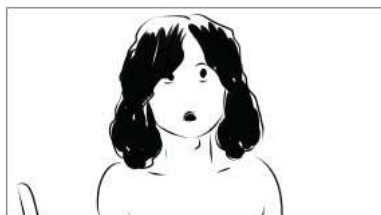
The Shepherd

Story Boards

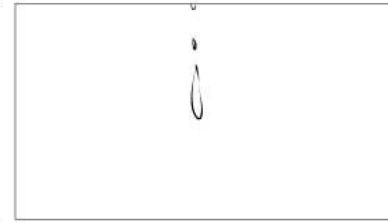
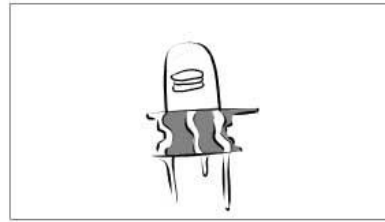
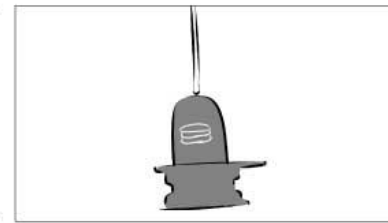
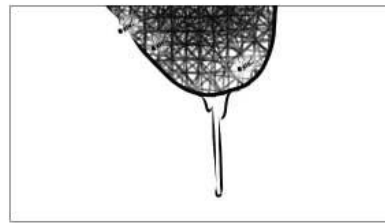
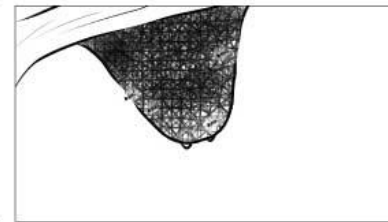
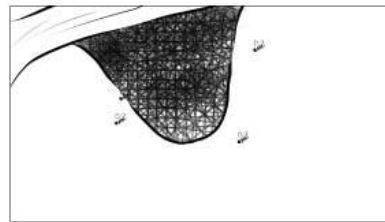
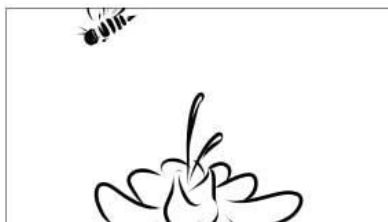
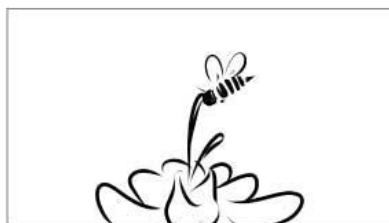
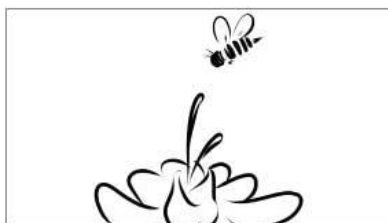


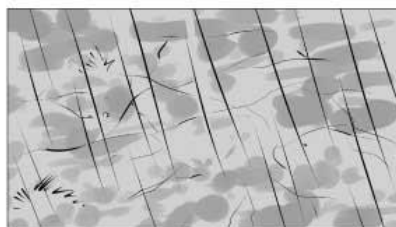








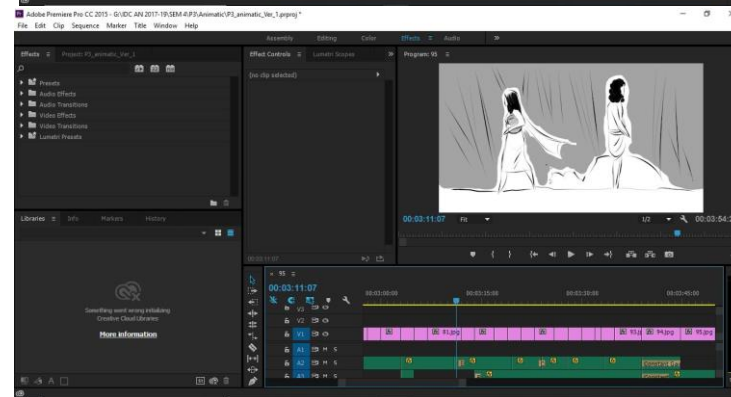
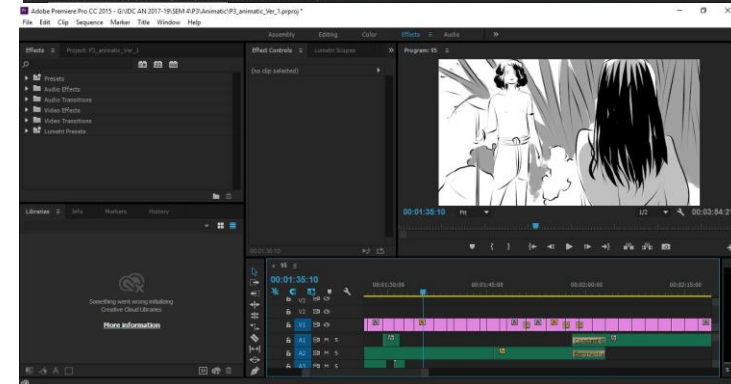
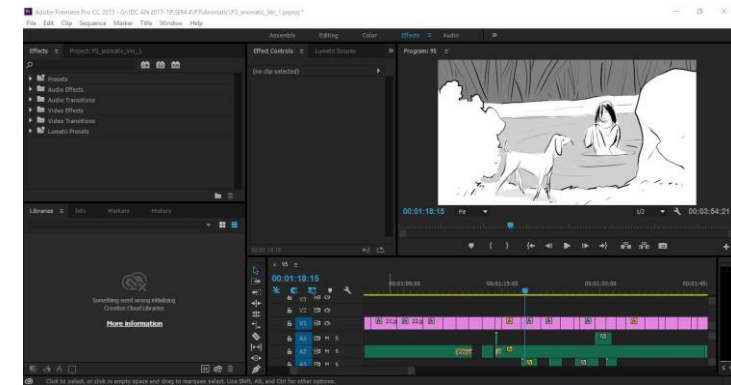
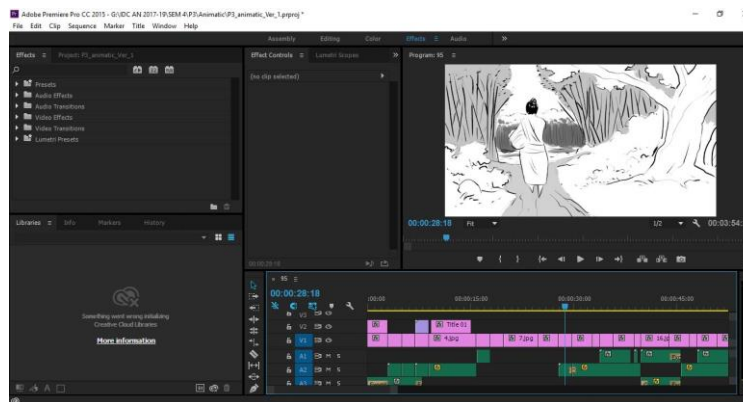
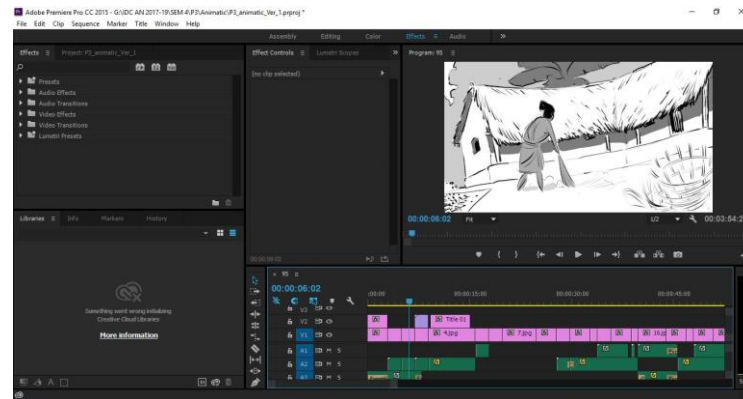






Animatic

The storyboard was then imported to Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 and put into a cohesive track. Background music, Foley sounds and rough voice-overs were added to get an idea of the total film duration and each shot clarity. This gave me the proper idea of how my final film would cohesively look like. Depending on this animatic I started my final production work.



Sound and Music

Background Music

Due to the specific topic chosen, the background music needed to be rustic and needed to have a vintage feeling to it due to its period setting. Since the time period chosen and the setting explored is that of a rural part of Bengal in the late 1800s, the choice of background music needed to have elements of Indian born musical instruments of that period and should also gel with the rural setting. There are various instruments which could be used but I felt it best to go with sitar for the surrealistic portion of the movie and a haunting flute piece for the ending.

Voice-over

The rough voice over used in the animatic was all done by myself just for timing purposes. However, for the final voices I sought the help of my fellow batch mates for their voice talents. I'd also like to thank my mother for lending her voice to the movie. The dialogues are mostly in a local dialect called Rajbanshi. So the voice cast comprised of Bengali speaking individuals specifically for the authenticity. Additional voices are provided by few of my family members who know the language. The plan is to provide subtitles in English for the dialogues.

Foleys and Effects

Most of Foleys are sound bites downloaded from the internet. While few were from *Zapsplat.com*, others were mostly taken from *Freesound.org* and *YouTube sound library*. A few of the sound effects were recorded as Foley sounds.

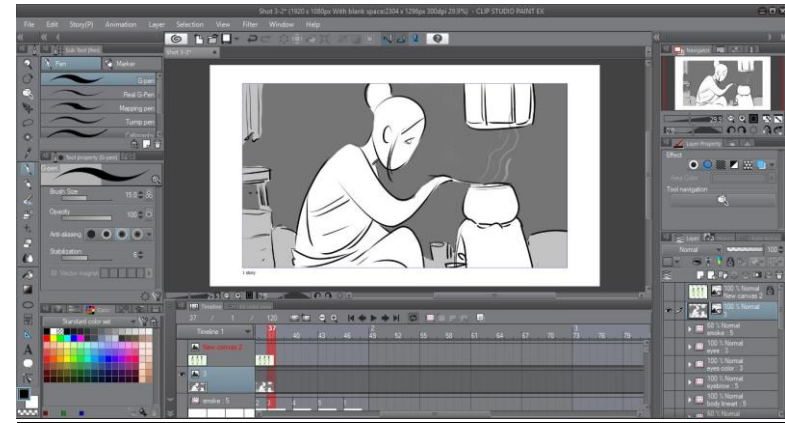
Design Process

Preferring digital illustration/ animation over traditional or tra-digital was a conscious decision to cut down the time and effort for the final product. However, this also meant that the responsibility for coming up with a superlative animation was imperative.

Working on my personal Lenovo laptop I was torn between software to use for my digital illustrations and animation. After an initial confusion and trial period, I made up my mind to work on the background-layouts and the pose to pose animations using Clip Studio Paint. This gave me the freedom to try out various ideas and effects until I was happy with the desirable look. There are two distinctly different looks utilized throughout the movie. Most of the movie is made using standard art style reflecting simplicity of Kalighat style paintings as well as significant dose of comic style renders. The colour scheme was extremely simple as a remnant of the era which was much simpler. The surrealistic middle portion is done as a dreamy sequence to emphasize on the transforming shapes and forms to narrate the story.

However, since the style I adopted was closer to realistic than I previously envisioned I figured the animation needed to be fluid and exciting and it should clearly portray the emotions and nuances of the main philosophy embodies in the topic.

Breakdown of Shot 3#



Rough sketch



Line art- pose to pose

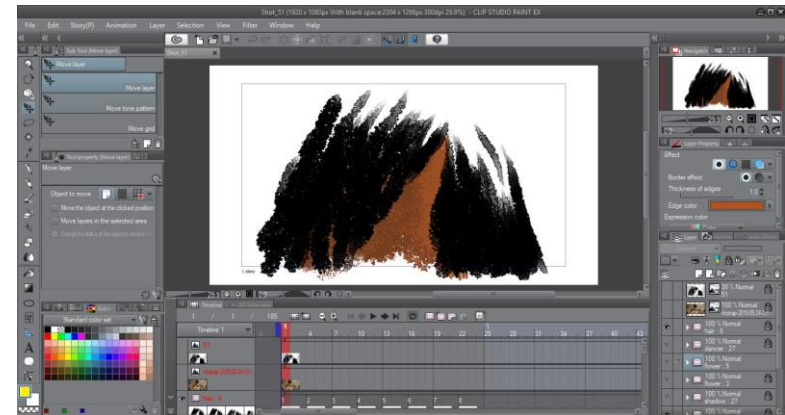


BG colors

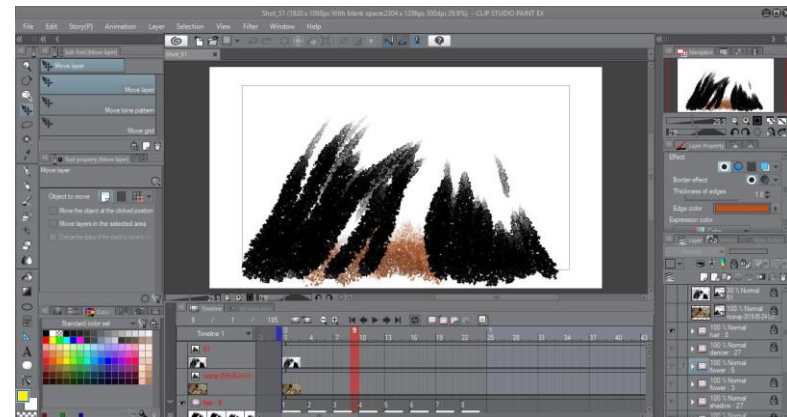


Final coloured version

Breakdown of Shot 51#



Open brush strokes, no edges



Bleeding colours denotes melting

Final Look

The film even though unfinished, looks a colourful synchronization of the main idea I wanted to propagate. The colour palette consists of de-saturated earthly tones that really looked pleasing to me and pushed the visual story ahead.



Challenges and Insight

Even though I ended up taking a vastly different take on the idea that propelled me to choose this specific topic in the first place, I still feel I have been able to create a story which can propagate the philosophy I wanted to observe and promulgate. Even though a lot more could have been explored and portrayed, personally I feel a little more accomplished to have tried to express my erotic inspiration in such implicit and brave form while maintaining the dignity and sanctity of the media chosen.

Animation as a media has been a superb tool to express the ideas I had for the narrative. In fact, the simplicity with which I could represent the story could only be achieved through animation as compared to live action because a meaty portion of the animation was a morphing surrealistic take on the erotic aspect of human carnal acts.

However, this topic required a lot more detailed research and exploration and in depth understanding before I could even start weaving a narrative. Furthermore, given the different ideologies and cultural outlook specifically in India, it was incredibly difficult to even weave a narrative which could be bold yet genteel, simple yet multi-layered. As per the initial concept, I tried to develop a narrative for a representing what Erotic India might mean, but I failed at devising a plot for the same. Thus I had to relegate to much simpler story to get my point across.

Also I'd like to take this opportunity to convey my apologies and congratulations to my guide Prof. Sumant Rao, who tried to

make me look into the topic much more closely and intricately but I couldn't. We had contradicting outlooks about what eroticism means. And it is only after I studied the subject and explored it by myself have I come to realize that, in fact, it is what I was previously made privy to.

I'm glad that I took up this challenging project. People might misconstrue the idea of Eroticism with that of sex and desire but still I hope it opens up some sort of avenue to start a discussion about the same, in a country with the 2nd largest population in the world. If nothing at all, at least I'll be content with fact that I have a deeper understanding of Eroticism and the various ideologies and philosophies attached to it now through the project and I'd love to explore more on the topic in the very near future.

References:

Articles

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rasa_\(aesthetics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rasa_(aesthetics))
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sringara>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natya_Shastra
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohiniyattam>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eroticism>
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Erotic art of India](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Erotic_art_of_India)
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Malampuzha Yakshi](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Malampuzha_Yakshi)
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Erotic reliefs in India](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Erotic_reliefs_in_India)
<http://www.kamat.com/kalranga/erotica/>
<https://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/fall-2013-america-schools-4-big-questions/indias-sensual-past-and-puritan-present/>
***<https://scroll.in/article/815329/only-the-erotic-remains-mysterious-unconquered-everything-else-has-become-data>
<https://bigthink.com/think-tank/esther-perel-on-the-difference-between-sexuality-and-eroticism>
<https://www.indiatimes.com/culture/who-we-are/14-temples-in-india-where-you-get-a-lot-more-than-just-the-traditional-prasad-231878.html>
<https://lakshmisharath.com/stories-erotic-sculptures-of-khajuraho/>
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khajuraho Group of Monuments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khajuraho_Group_of_Monuments)
<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/25/health/india-dangerous-country-women-survey-intl/index.html>
<https://www.indiatimes.com/news/world/india-3rd-most-porn-watching-country-in-the-world-up-from-4th-last-year-249212.html>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3705691/>

Books

- 1.Kamasutra
- 2.Ananga Ranga

Movies

- 1.Emmanuelle <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071464/>
- 2.Cosmic Sex <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4566934/>
- 3.Erotic in Indian Dances (Youtube)