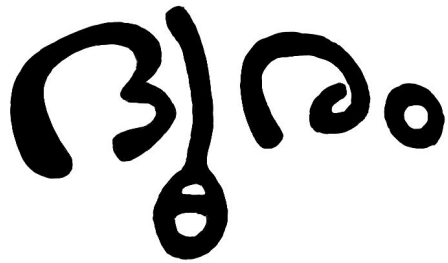


ANIMATION DESIGN PROJECT II



Dhooram (Distance)

An Animated Short Film

Dhooram (Distance)

An Animated Short Film

Project by:

Bharathkrishnan S.

216340006

November 2022

Project Guide:

Prof. Mazhar Kamran

M.Des Animation Design

Industrial Design Centre (IDC)

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay

Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas and process in my own words. Wherever other people's ideas and words have been included and reference of works have been made, I have adequately cited the original sources.

I also declare that I have adhered to all the principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/ data/ fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been appropriately cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.



Bharathkrishnan S. (216340006)

November 2022

Approval Sheet

The Design Project 2 Titled “ Dhooram : Animated Short Film ” by **Bharathkrishnan S., Roll Number 216340006**, is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the ‘Master of Design’ in the Animation and Film Design at Industrial Design Center, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

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Mazhar Kamran (i15074)
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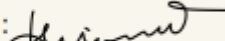
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Internal Examiner :

External Examiner :  Dhimant Vyas

Date : 06-07-2023

Acknowledgement

The completion of this project could not have been possible without the participation and guidance of many people. I sincerely extend my deepest gratitude to my guide and mentor, Prof. Mazhar Kamran, for his guidance and support throughout the project. I am very thankful for Prof. Swati Agarwal and Prof. Aditi Chitre for giving me constant support during ideation and the execution of the project.

I would also like to sincerely thank Prof. Prosenjit Ganguly, Prof. Sumant Rao, Prof. Shilpa Ranade, Prof. Abhishek Verma, and my friends for all their patience, valuable feedback and constant encouragement.

I'm deeply grateful to people who contributed their valuable time to aid me in both story and execution of the project.

Bharathkrishnan S.

Abstract

Leaving home and loved ones is something almost every person experience in their life. This film is trying to shine light on such situations. What exactly are we missing when we feel homesick? Wouldn't the next place be your next home? These are the questions that came to my mind while doing this project. This story revolves around a seed which gets lost from its home and finds refuge elsewhere. Inspired from my own experiences of leaving home after a long while, this project has pushed me both mentally and to learn filmmaking in another level.

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Introduction

Separation anxiety is experienced by many people. It is mostly seen in kids formed from the fear of staying away from their closed ones, like parents, grandparents, etc. But it is not specific for just humans. Even pets show signs of separation anxiety. And separation anxiety can lead to homesickness. Nearly everyone misses something about home when they are away. But some people might feel more severely homesick than others. Homesickness is the feeling of emotional distress when you are away from home and in a new and unfamiliar environment. It affects those who have moved both temporarily and permanently, such as students, migrants, refugees, and those in the military. It is estimated that 50% to 75% of the general population have felt homesick at least once in their life. People do not just miss home but the ones who make it feel like its home. It is because of some strong longing and preoccupying thoughts of any incident or object at home. Homesickness can cause depression, grief, it affects productivity, and sometimes cause physical effects such as lack of appetite, stomach problems, lack of sleep, headaches, and fatigue.

I have always been very anxious about leaving home and staying away from my family. I also have a dog at home and I miss him the most. Ever since I joined the Masters programme, I have been thinking about this situation where I have to leave everything behind and travel kilometers away and stay far from home. This would be my first time staying away from home. It is sure that there will be more people like me who can relate the same. I want to express that homesickness is normal and it is just a phase in life which will pass eventually.

Animation would be a great method to convey my feelings through the medium of stop motion. Even if it is a short one minute film, I want to show the very real nature of separation anxiety through simple and stylized characters which would have the potential to target both adults and kids and make them feel it is alright to feel anxious of staying away from someone or something.

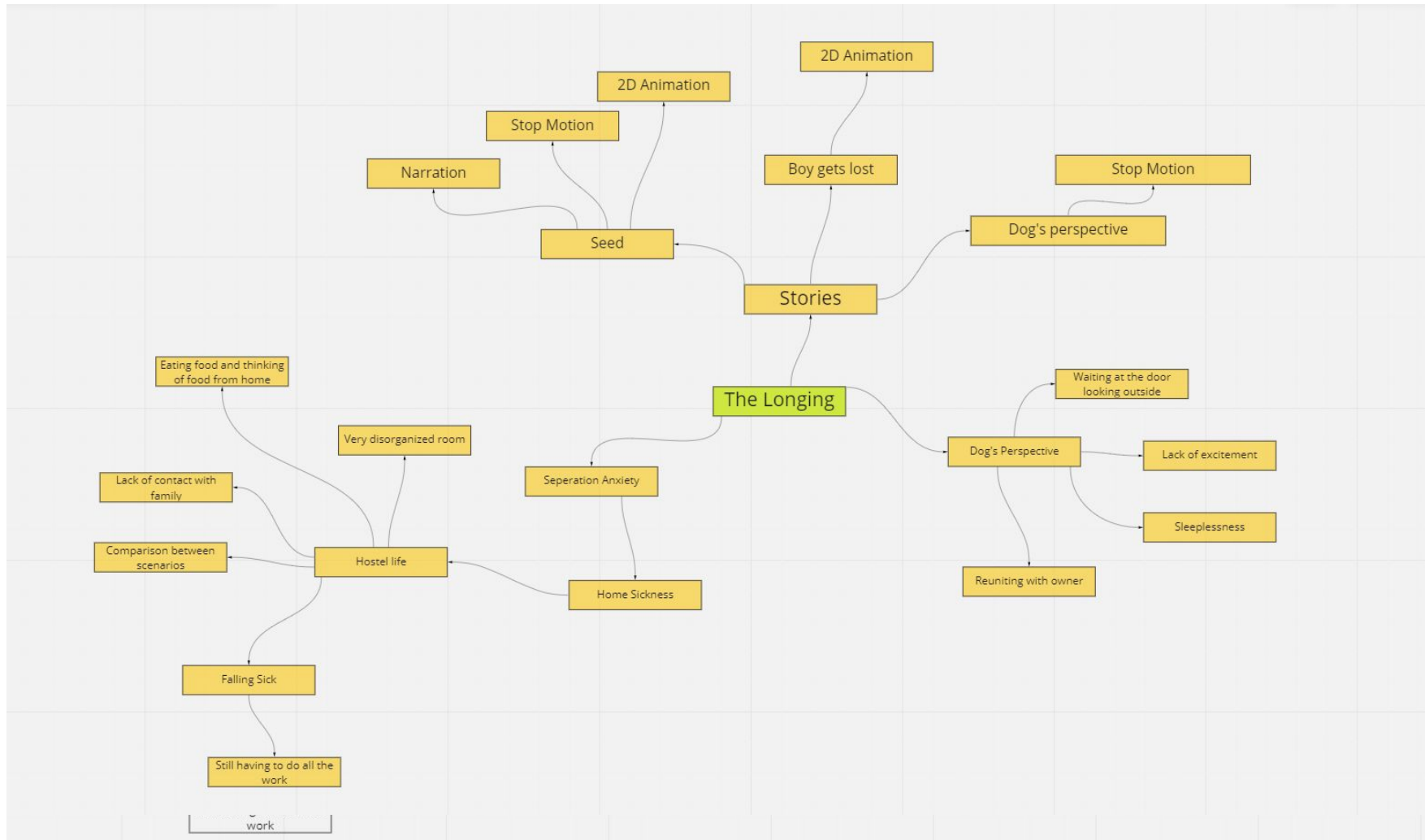
Research

Primary Research

I talked to some people and they all shared some interesting stories about their first time experiencing homesickness and separation anxiety. The fact that the feeling of staying away is a bit unreal at first is an interesting direction to research on. It takes time for that to sink in that we are actually alone and far from home. A lot of things will feel different. Eating food is not the same anymore. All the time we took our mother's cooking for granted and suddenly we get served food from the hostel and it will make our tongues go numb. The sleep schedule gets disrupted as now we have to do more work and rest less compared to at home where other members do work collectively. The way we spend money changes all together. At one point where we would not be thinking about money, but now always being conscious about what to spend it on. Similarly each and every situation has its own version of how it would have been if we were at home.

After some research, I came to the conclusion that the sooner one gets to experience homesickness the sooner he/she would get cured of it. It is an inevitable feeling for most people. But, even for the people who have been used to staying away from their home for a long time still feel a deep longing to get back home. Home is something which is an unavoidable part of everyone. Some people get immediate urge to go back after a long time staying away, which is normal for everyone.

Mind Map



Research

Secondary Research

I referred to a lot of short films, movies, articles, short stories, photographs and artworks. I was able to interpolate whatever I could about leaving home from all of the above materials. I was able to make a mind map and a moodboard to communicate my story better.



Moodboard

Film References

Two Countries

Anything made of paper

Scent of Geranium

Leaving Home

Some Thing

The man who planted the trees

The Red Ant

The Coin

Moodboard

Artists

Ivoryowlco

Artkitt

cute

addition of characteristics

Messy

Colourful

Background

Inspiring Art Styles

Miscellaneous References

puli

athichakka

mangostin

star shaped

bitter gourd

chambakka

pavakka

munthiri

cocoa pod

mulberry

maathalam

custard apple

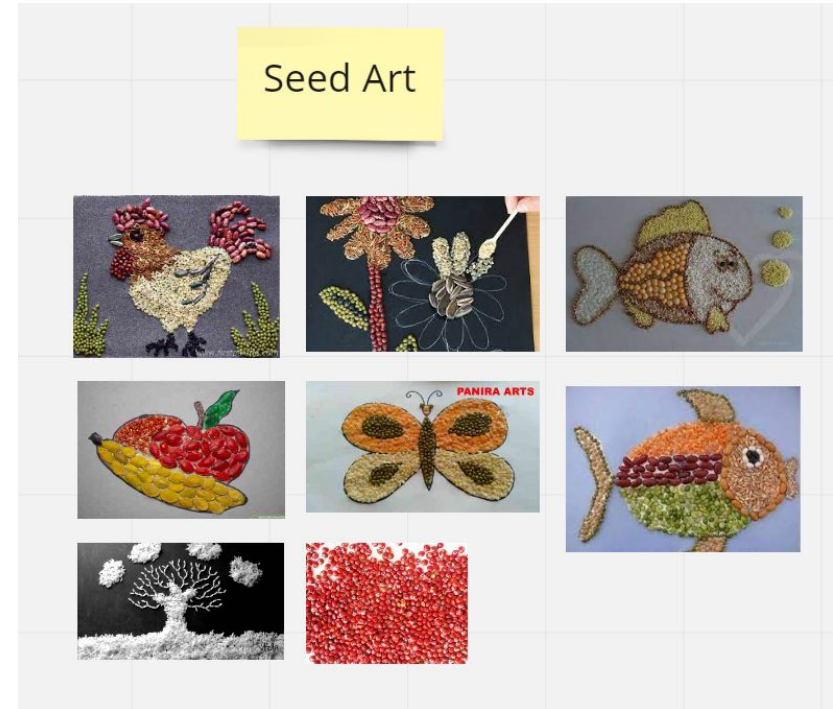
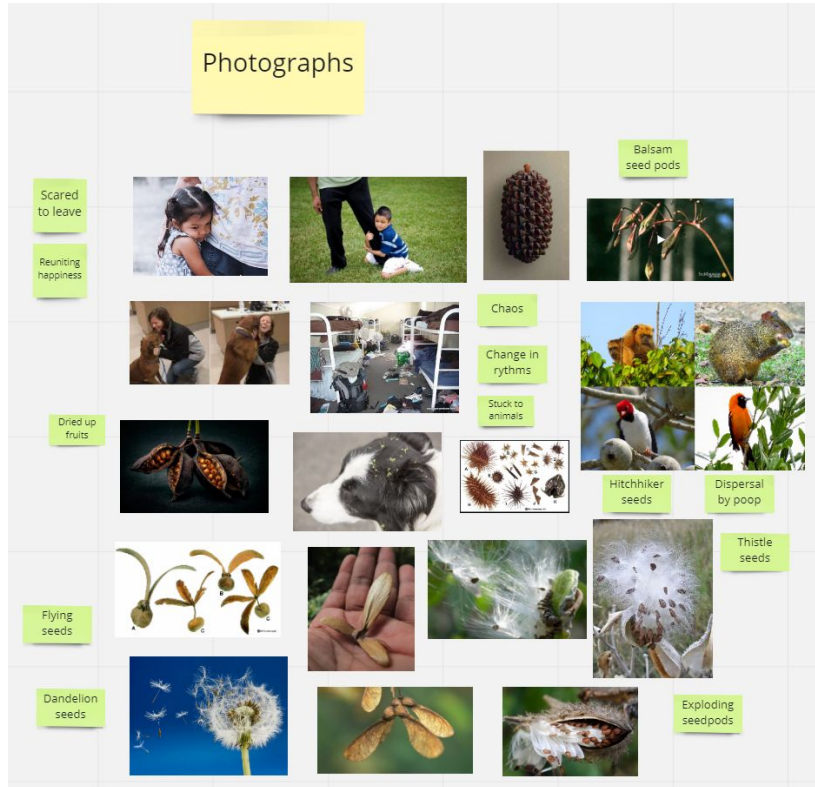
pomegranite

tamarind

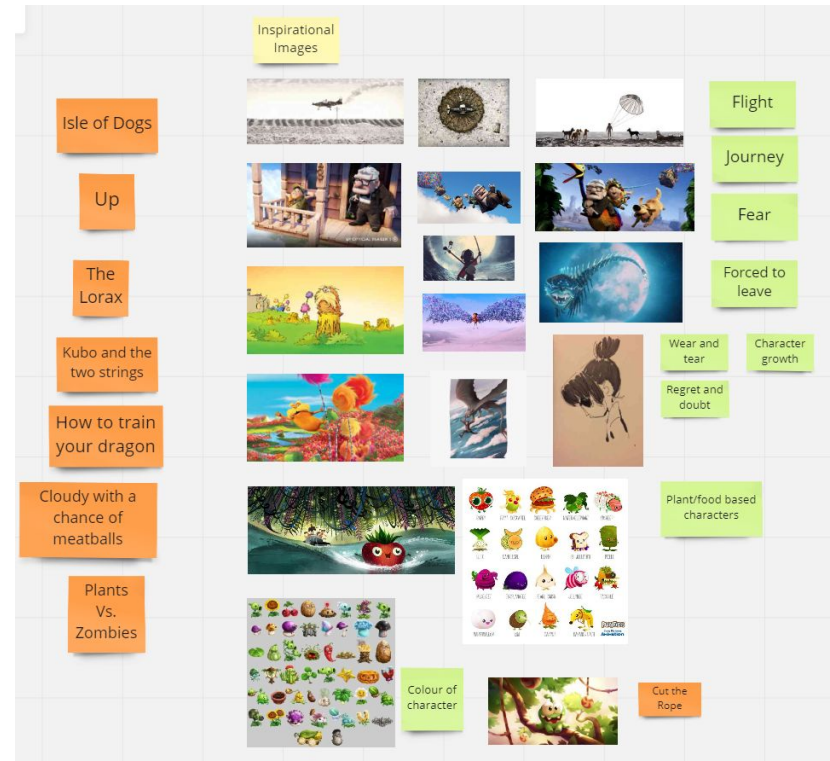
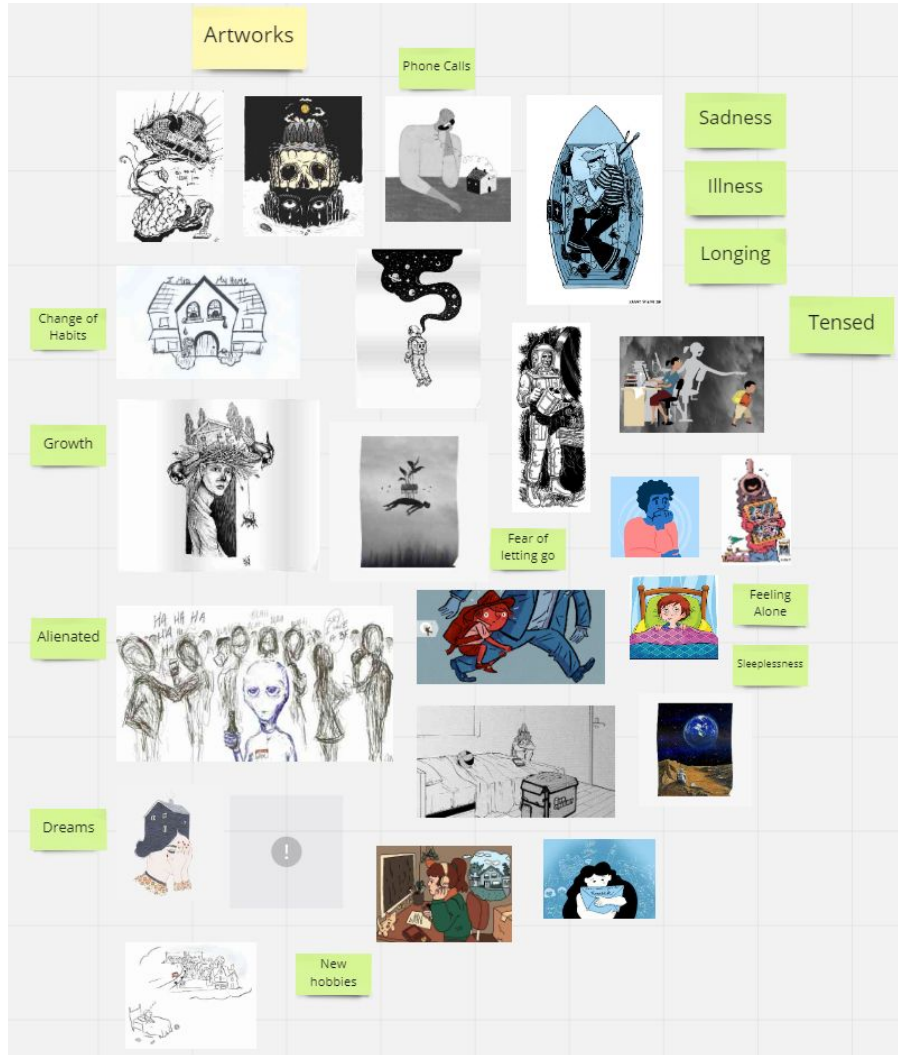
vibrant colours

Stopmotion References

Moodboard



Moodboard



Story Development

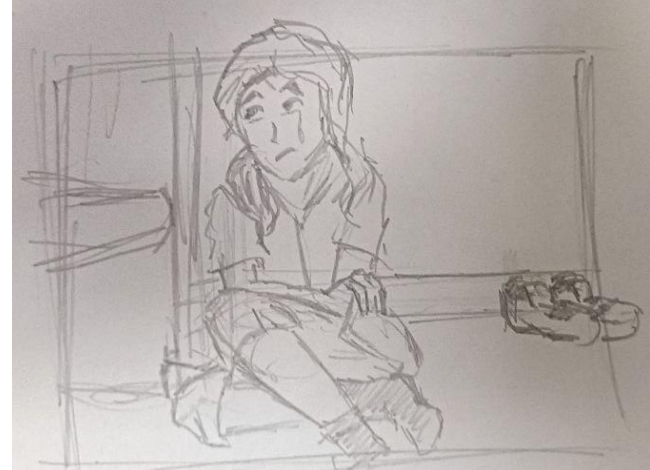
Creating a story was a bit difficult with this kind of topic at hand. Even when ideas were available in my mind, to create a story which could be conveyed in one minute but still work perfectly was a difficult task. I used the 6 boxes technique of creating stories which was introduced to us by Prof. Abhishek Verma. With that method, I was able to analyse the story graph and character graphs. I tried making various concepts for the stories using this method.

Plot	Opportunity	Progress	Complication	Push-up	Resolution/Climax

Story Concepts

1. There is a seed in a fruit with many other seeds. It is on a tree and many such trees are in an orchard growing in the same manner. The orchard is very green and lush with many resources available. Every seed at one point will have to let go from its parent fruit and start a new life. Or else the wind will carry the fruit away and then nobody knows what will happen. But regardless of other fruits' warning, the seed doesn't let go until one day arrives and the wind carries away the fruit along with the seed. While being swept away he could see his other siblings already sprouting and regretting his decisions. The seed is carried by wind and along way it gets worn and torn. Sad and lost, the seed ends up in a very dry and barren landscape. The seed grows up with tasting water and nutrients which are not similar to what it had experienced before, but still takes whatever it gets. The seed sprouts and grows into a tree which is very different from its ancestors. Very wide variety of leaf size, shapes, colors and fruits of different types. What used to be a very dry and empty place is now very lively with a lot of birds and animals. The seed is now not regretting his action and enjoys life as it is.

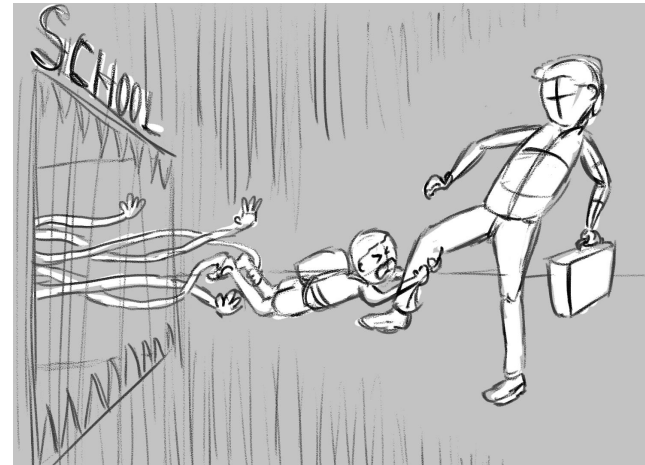
It realizes the unnecessary fear of leaving its home. The book closes and the mother is talking through the phone to her 7 year old daughter who is at a boarding school. The daughter has a dried up tear mark on her cheek but is now smiling.



Story Concepts

2. A small boy who is very anxious about leaving home and always clinging onto his parents. He always finds excuses to not go outside. One day he is taken along with his parents for a function and in the midst of this he gets separated from his parents. The function ends and he is left in the streets. He roams around in panic and sees a cat and approaches it. He tries to hang around with it and they both become friends. Both of them start living in the streets. One day the cat is snatched by an animal welfare organization and is kept for adoption. The boy finds trails and follows to the place but gets late, so he tries the same to follow the family which adopted the cat. He knocked on the door and out came a girl who was a classmate of his from kindergarten. They contact his parents and they find him. Ever since that day he comes to this house. All three of them became good friends.

3. The story is entirely told through dog's perspective. The dog is left at home but his favorite person has left him with the family and left for working abroad. The dog perceives time differently and the waiting of the dog is conveyed in one short minute while in the story it passes months.



Story Versions

1. There is a seed in a fruit with many other seeds. It is on a tree and many such trees are in an orchard growing in the same manner. The orchard is very green and lush with many resources available. Every seed at one point will have to let go from its parent fruit and start a new life. Or else the wind will carry the fruit away and then nobody knows what will happen. But regardless of other fruits' warning, the seed doesn't let go until one day arrives and the wind carries away the fruit along with the seed. While being swept away he could see his other siblings already sprouting and regretting his decisions. The seed is carried by wind and alongway it gets worn and torn. Sad and lost, the seed ends up in a very dry and barren landscape. The seed grows up with tasting water and nutrients which are not similar to what it had experienced before, but still takes whatever it gets. The seed sprouts and grows into a tree which is very different from its ancestors. Very wide variety of leaf size, shapes, colors and fruits of different types. What used to be a very dry and empty place is now very lively with a lot of birds and animals. The seed is now not regretting his action and enjoys life as it is. It realizes

the unnecessary fear of leaving its home. The book closes and the mother is talking through the phone to her 7 year old daughter who is at a boarding school. The daughter has a dried up tear mark on her cheek but is now smiling.

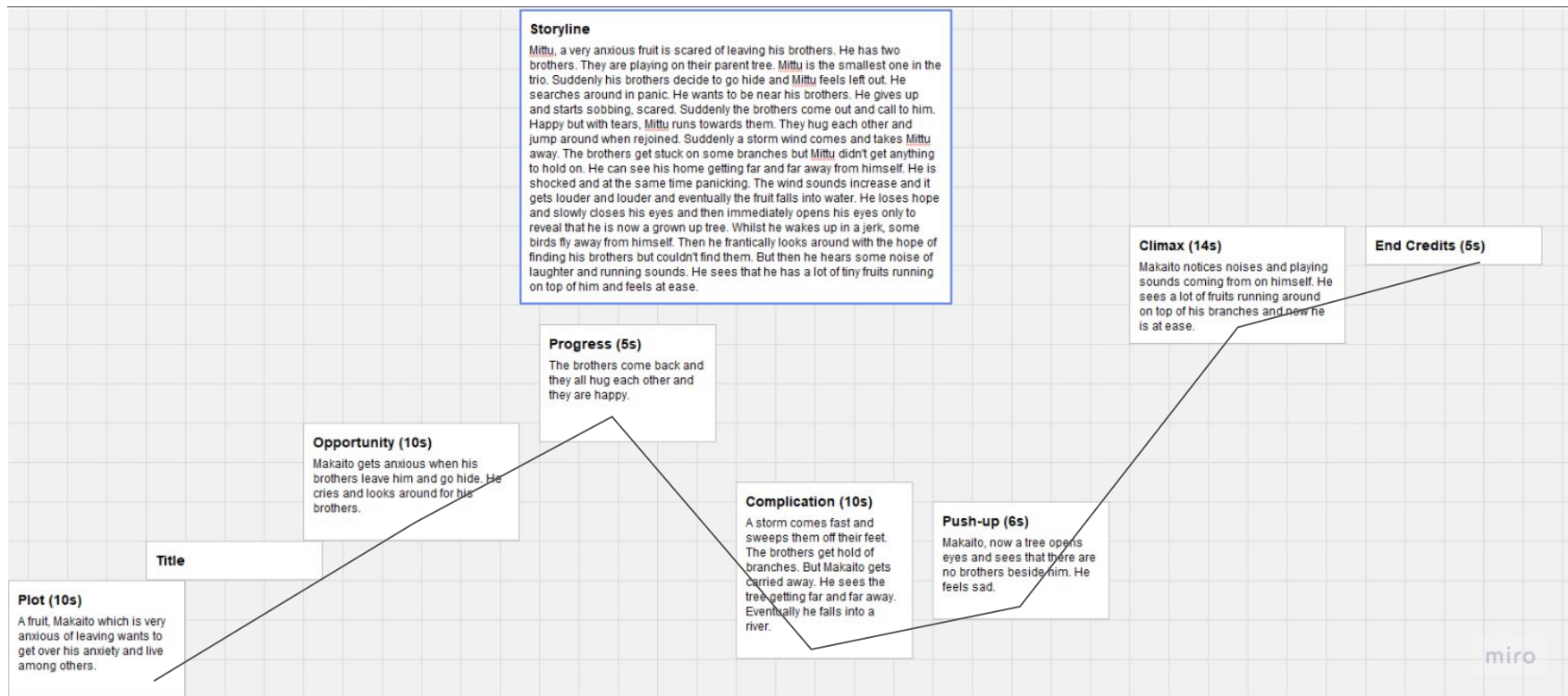
2. On the outskirts of a forest there are lot of trees with a lot of different fruits. The time of dispersing is here and every fruit leaves their tree one by one. Except for one fruit who is anxious of leaving home. A sudden wind will take away fruits nearby but then this fruit holds on. But then the wind speed increases, rain starts and despite trying so hard, it gets separated from its plant. It falls into the stream nearby and gets submerged. A fish nibbles on its wing and it tries to escape only to bump into a rock and lose consciousness. Rains stop and the fruit is floating in the stream and then a bird picks it up and flies away. The fruit wakes up and wiggles. The bird drops the fruit and the fruit flies away with the help of the strong winds. It tries to find home but couldn't do it. It is carried off into a barren rocky landscape where it tries to latch onto something. And then it sees a small tree which reminds it of its parent. It frantically starts to go towards the tree and sees a crack on the ground. It reaches out its roots and goes into the crack.

Story

It lay there without any nutrition or water and lost all hope. One day it rains and the fruit starts forming shoot on its head. The fruit is becoming a tree and it turns out to be a better tree than its ancestors. The whole area changes because of the influence of this tree.

3. Mittu, a very anxious fruit is scared of leaving his brothers. He has three brothers. They are playing on their parent tree. Mittu is the smallest one in the four. Suddenly his brothers decide to go hide and Mittu feels left out. He searches around in panic. He wants to be near his brothers. He gives up and starts sobbing, scared. Suddenly the brothers come out and call to him. Happy but with tears, Mittu runs towards them. They hug each other and jump around when rejoined. Suddenly a storm wind comes and takes Mittu away. The brothers get stuck on some branches but Mittu didn't get anything to hold on. He can see his home getting far and far away from himself. He is shocked and at the same time panicking. The wind sounds increase and it gets louder and louder and eventually the fruit falls into water. He loses hope and slowly closes his eyes and then immediately opens his eyes only to reveal that he is now a grown up tree. Whilst he wakes up in a jerk, some

birds fly away from himself. Then he frantically looks around with the hope of finding his brothers but couldn't find them. But then he hears some noise of laughter and running sounds. He sees that he has a lot of tiny fruits running on top of him and feels at ease.



Graph of the Story

Screenplay

EXT. FOREST (EVENING)

TREE - Big, wide and healthy looking tree. Lot of branches and leaves on itself.

MAKAITO - Small and scrawny looking fruit, which looked very weak

BROTHER 1 - Eldest brother, healthy looking tall fruit which looks dependable

BROTHER 2 - Second brother, medium size and looks very healthy. Looks a bit chubby but not the tallest in the trio.

A small forest which has some trees here and there. A lot of small shrubs are growing everywhere. All the leaves are very still as if not even a breeze is present. Some light is coming from one side of the forest. In the midst of it there is a small clearing and a tree in the center of that clearing. The tree had a very huge trunk unlike the other trees present there. It looked as if it is filled with life. It has a lot of branches. The tree's eyes show tiredness. On one wide and flat branch there are three fruits which are running around. The big brothers run ahead first followed by Makaito. They are laughing all the while. Makaito notices something on the branch. It is a bug crawling about. Makaito tries to get a closer look at. Noticing this, the other brothers discuss and quickly run off to hide. They hide behind some foliage on the branch itself. Makaito looks up to see no one around him. He panics and gets uneasy. He searches for his brothers, but couldn't find them. He starts sobbing and sits down sad. His brothers then pop out of their hiding places and comes to Makaito. He gets up with teary eyes but happy and hugs his brothers. They jump around with happiness. Out of the blue a strong gush of wind approaches and sweeps them all off their feet. The two brothers get hold of branches around to stop themselves from getting carried away. But Makaito couldn't get a hold of anything. As he turns round and round in the air he could see the tree and his brothers getting far and far away from him. He falls into a river. A lot of bubbles form around him and then it reduces. The light decreases and it becomes darker and darker by each second. Makaito closes his eyes very slowly and lets out some bubble from his mouth.

miro

EXT. VALLEY (MORNING)

MAKAITO - All grown up now as a tree. Very strong and big tree with lots of branches and filled with many fruits, flowers and leaves. A lot of birds and tiny animals are also residing on it.

FRUITS - Round and tiny fruits which look all the more similar to each other.

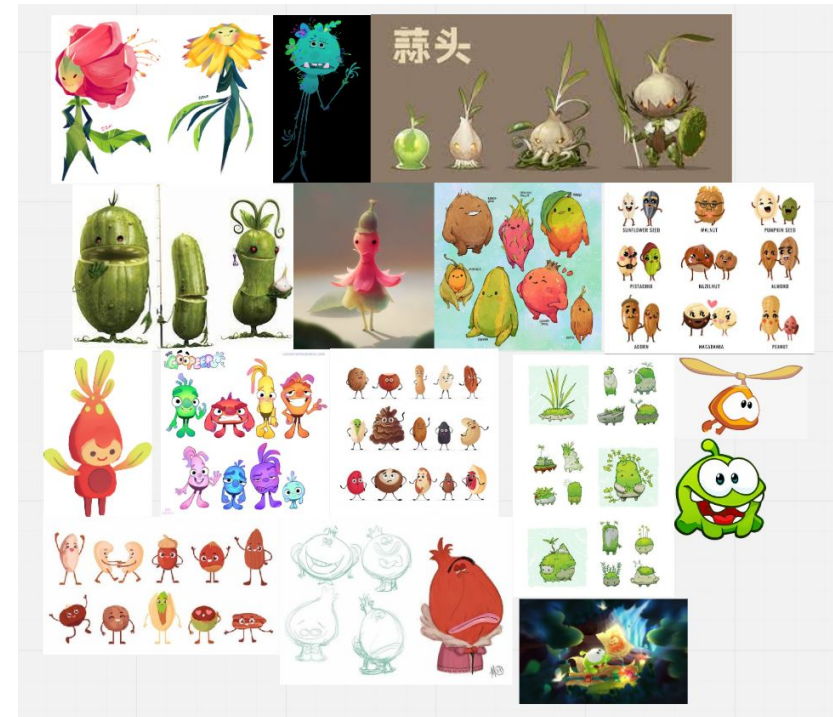
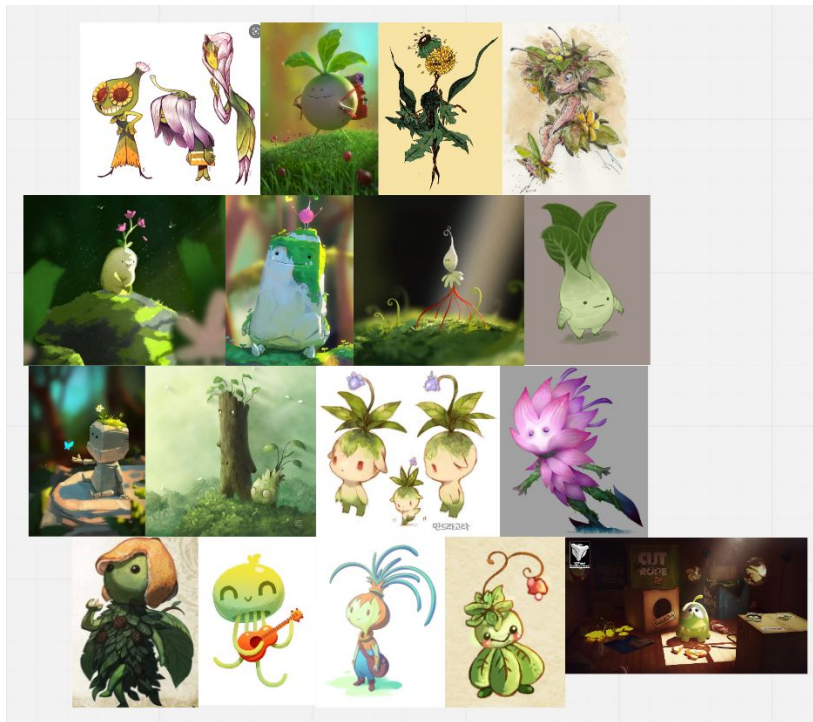
Makaito opens his eyes in shock. A few birds flies away from on top of Makaito. Makaito looks here and there desperately. The valley is shown with a very green landscape and filled with a lot of shrubs and small animals running about. Makaito is seen as droopy. Suddenly he is reacting to some sounds. He sees a lot of tiny fruits running on himself. He is smiling in the end.

miro

This screenplay is the third and final version of the story. It was created in the software FinalDraft 12. The software enabled me to arrange the significant parts of the story very easily.

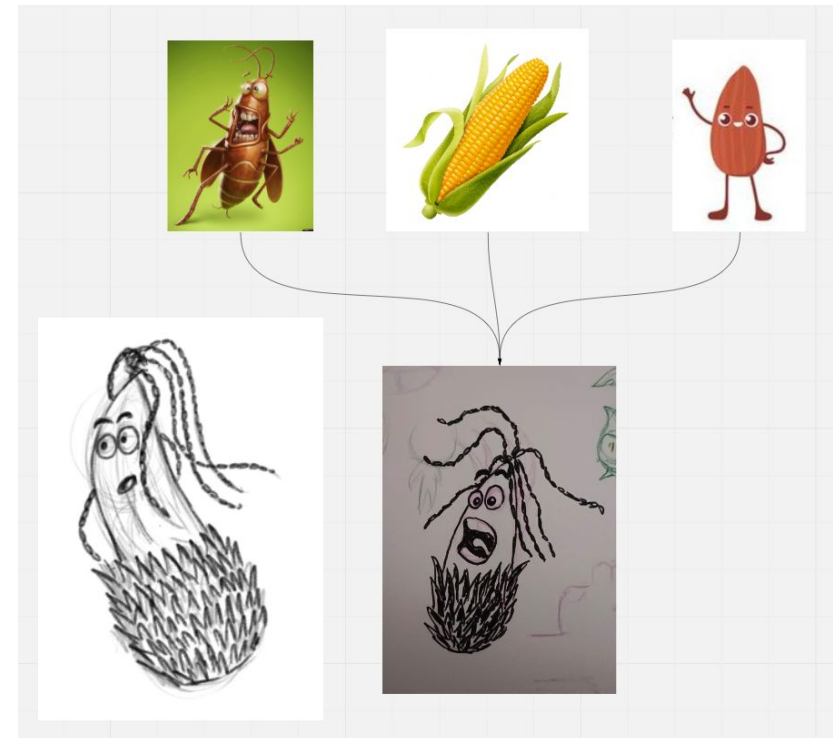
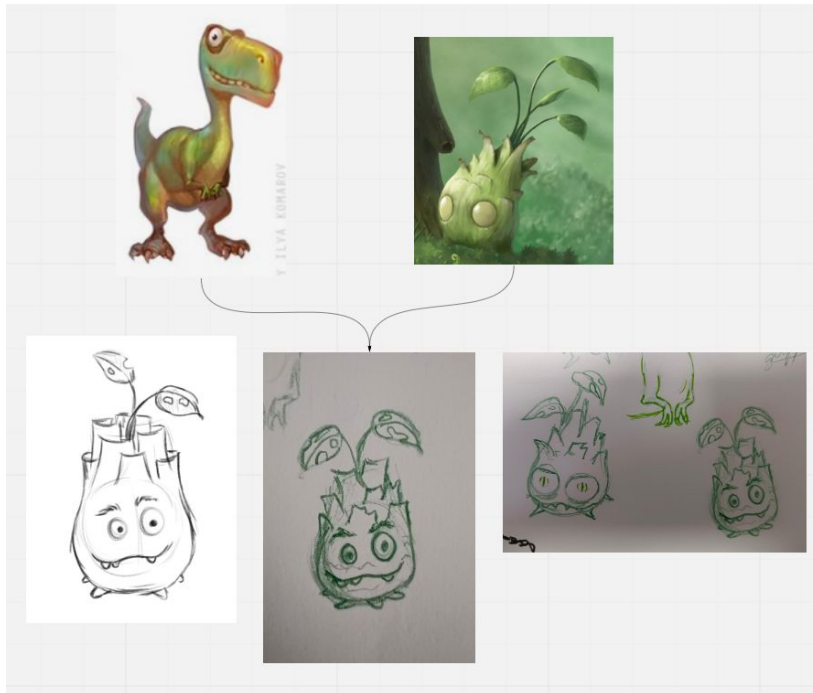
Character Inspirations

I was always interested in creating characters which looked like the combination of different creatures and plants. I found a lot of references on the internet from which I started creating my own versions of the characters.



Character Exploration

I would select random character or object artworks and try to give those characteristics to a shape which resembles seeds. In this way, I was able to gain a lot of ideas for character styles and opened up my mind for explorations.



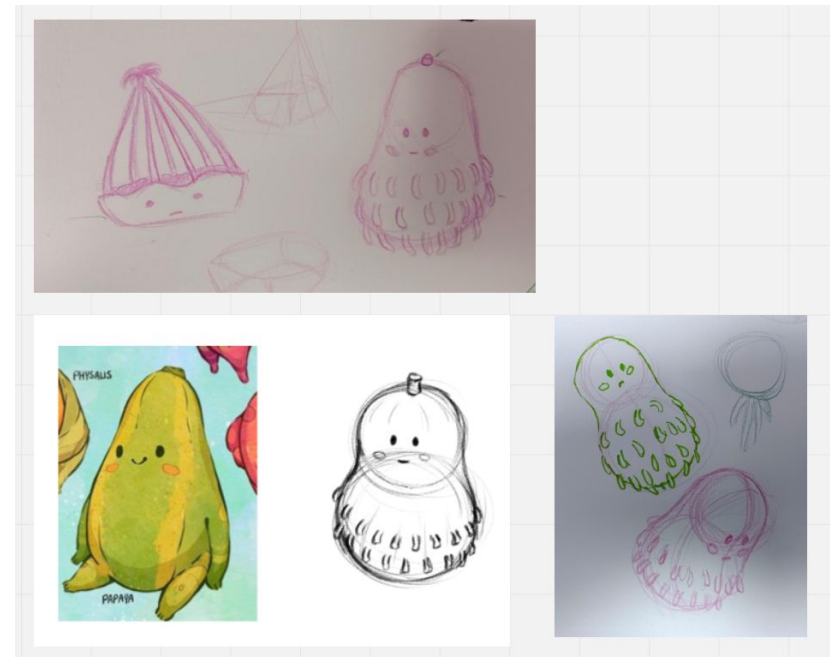
Character Exploration

I also used random human characters and existing seed shapes to combine and create characters. I had to keep in mind about how the seed is transferred from one location to another. So the design of the character should also do justice to the function of dispersal. So I explored how seeds get dispersed like air, water, with help of animals, etc.

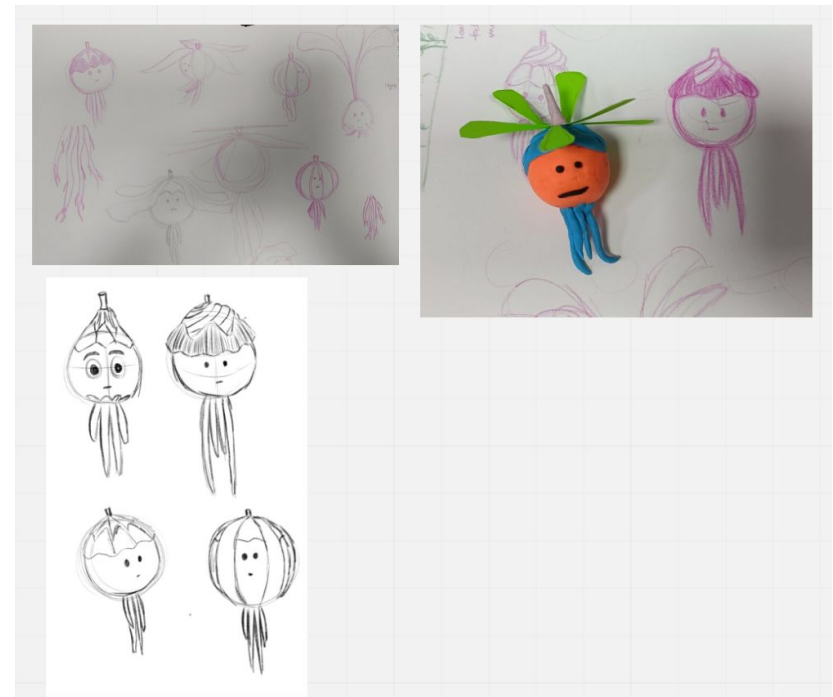


Character Exploration

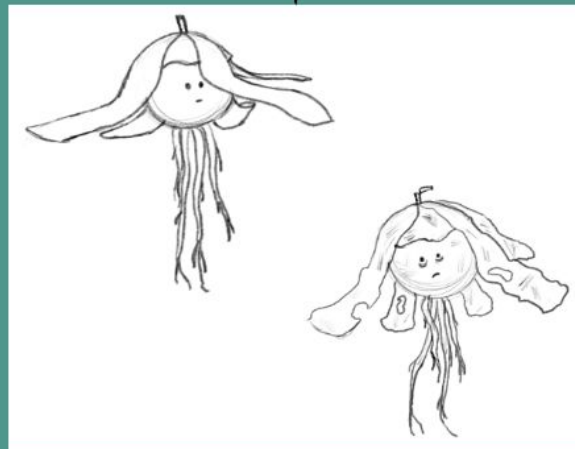
I also wanted to target the kid audience so the characters needed to look more appealing. So a lot of thought went into planning what would be ideal for giving out that feeling and at the same time is serving the function.



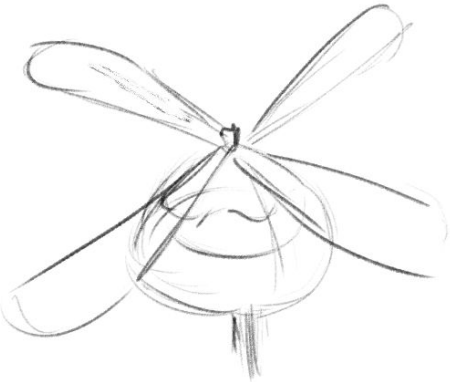
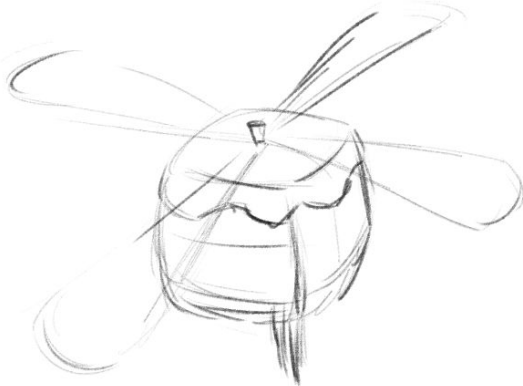
Character Exploration



Character Exploration

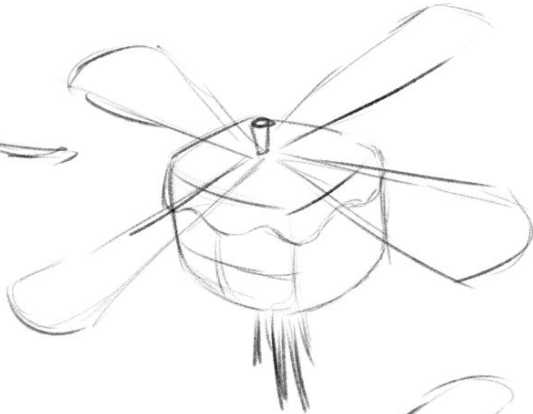


Finalised Character

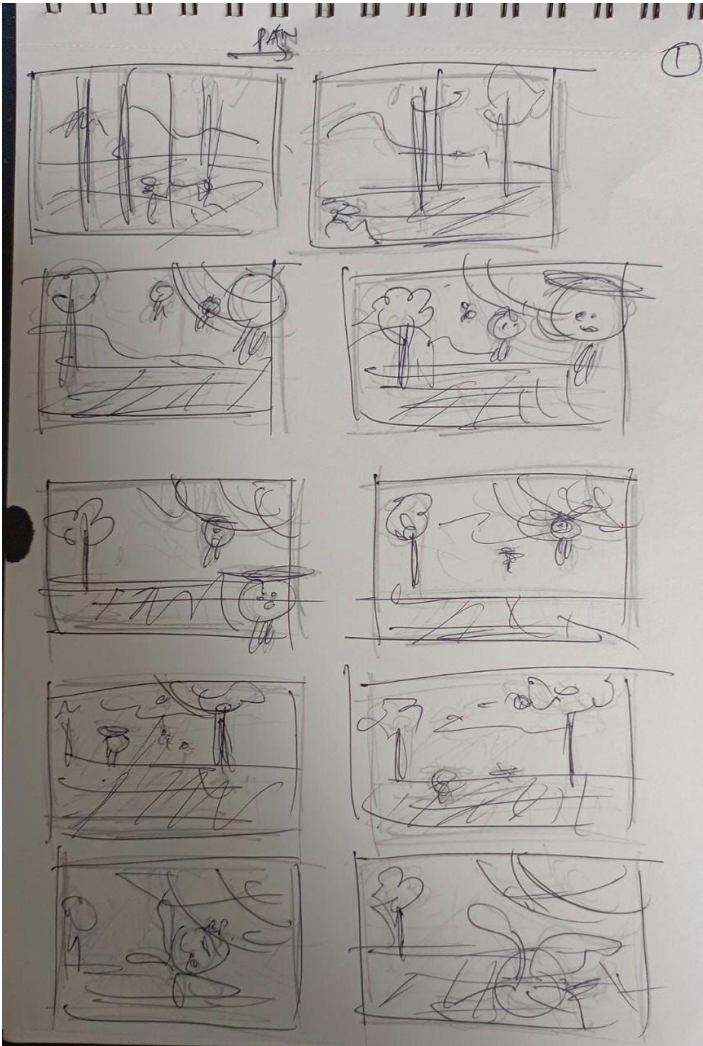


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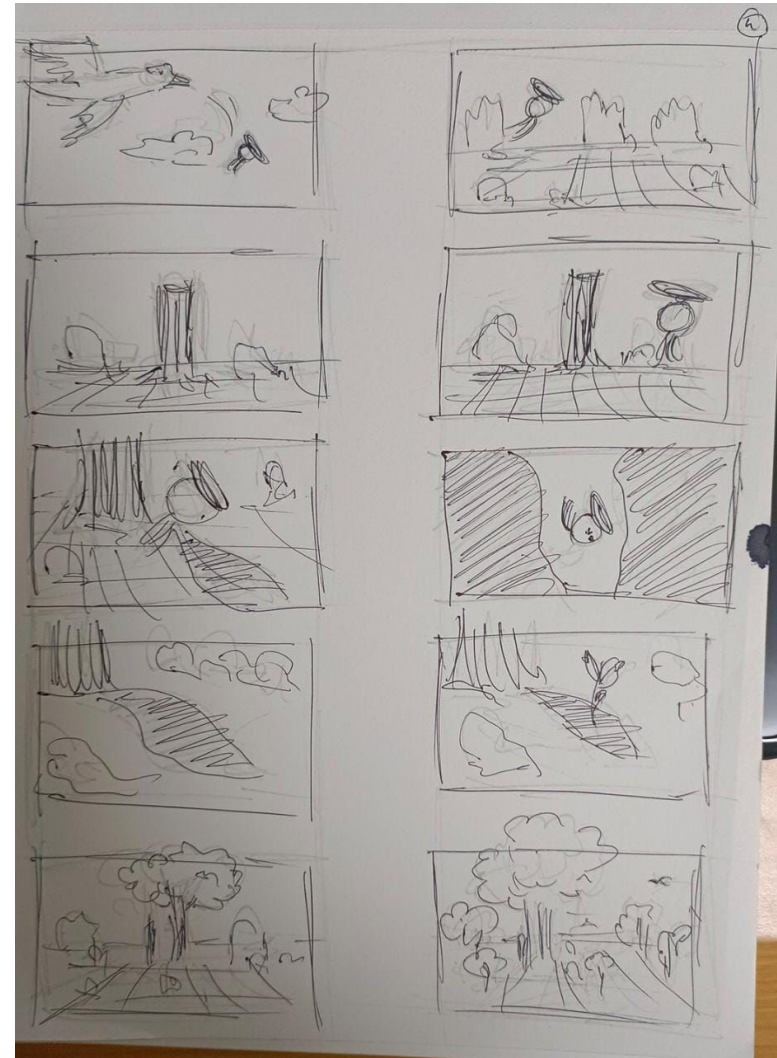
Finalised Character



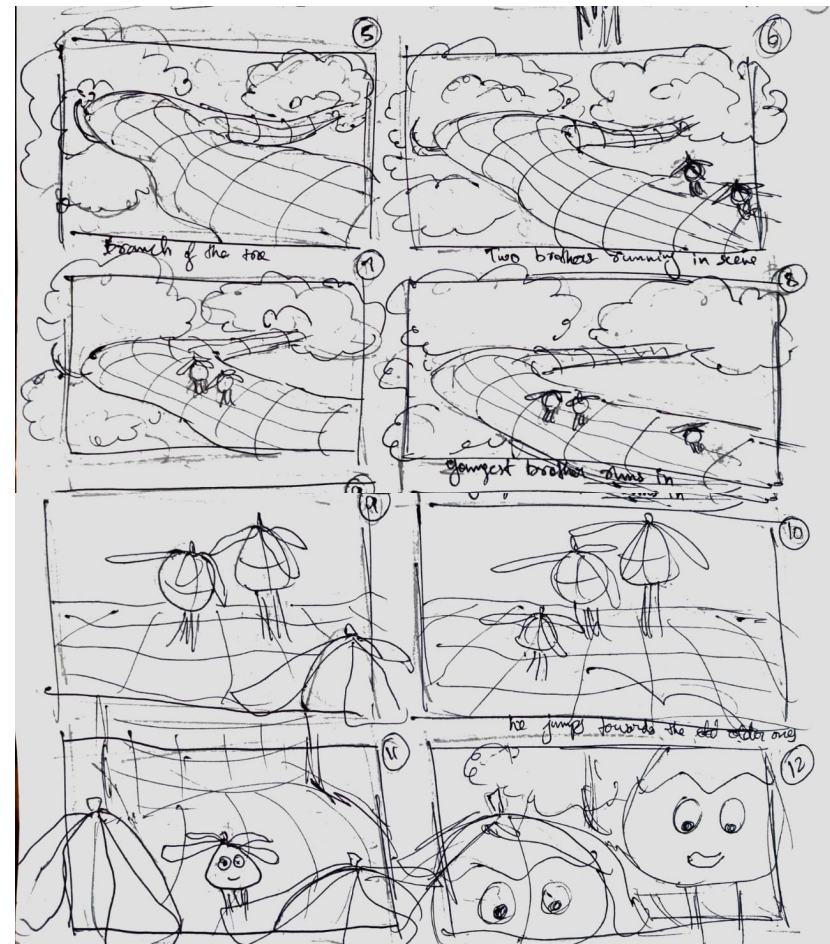
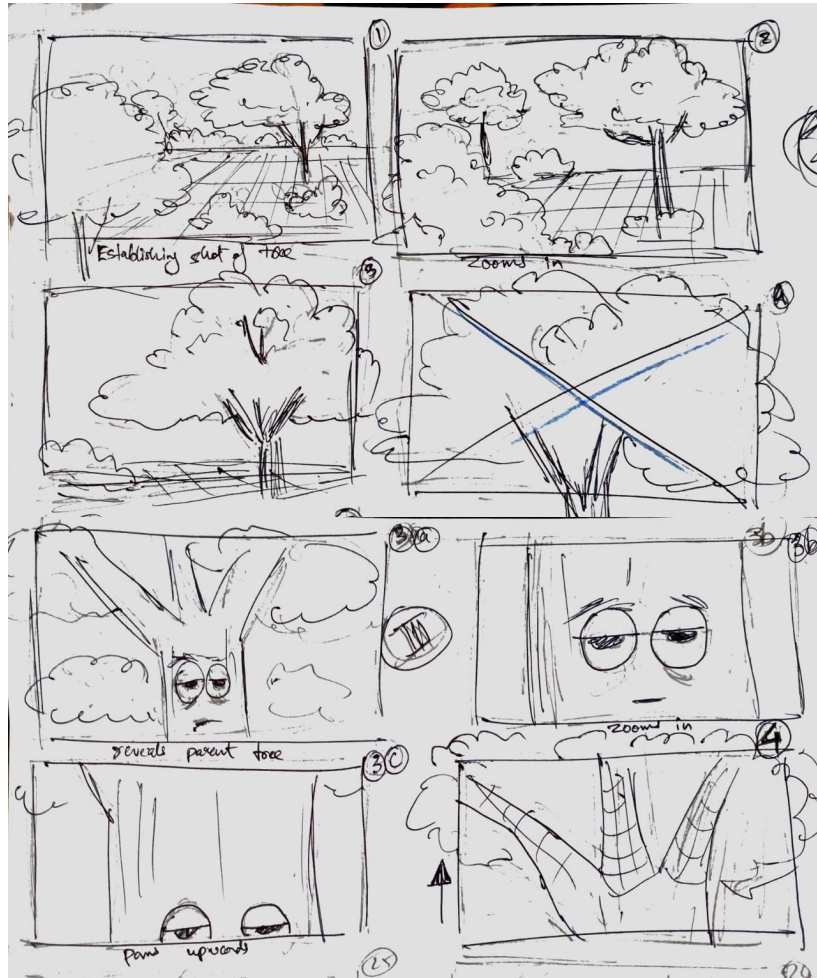
Storyboard Draft 1



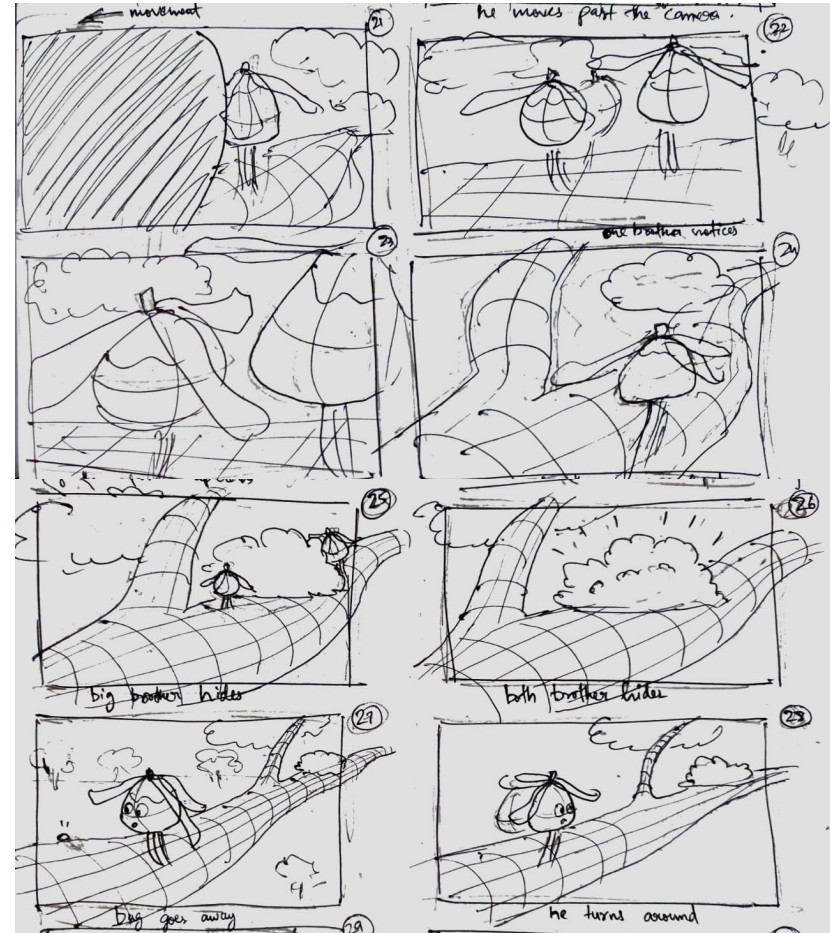
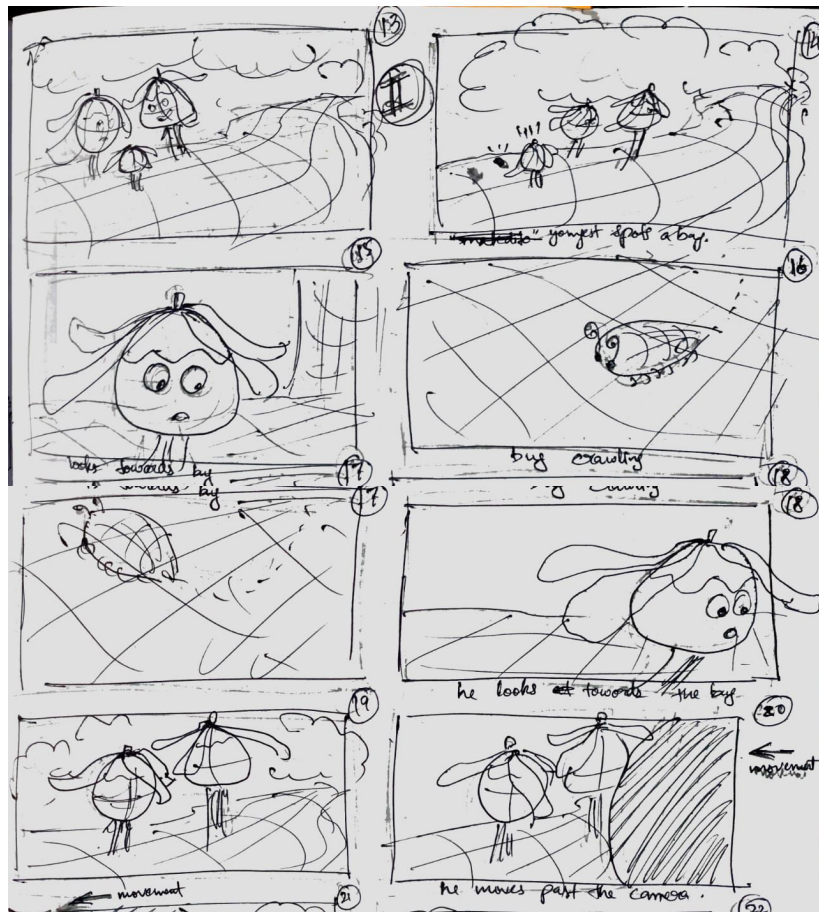
Storyboard Draft 1



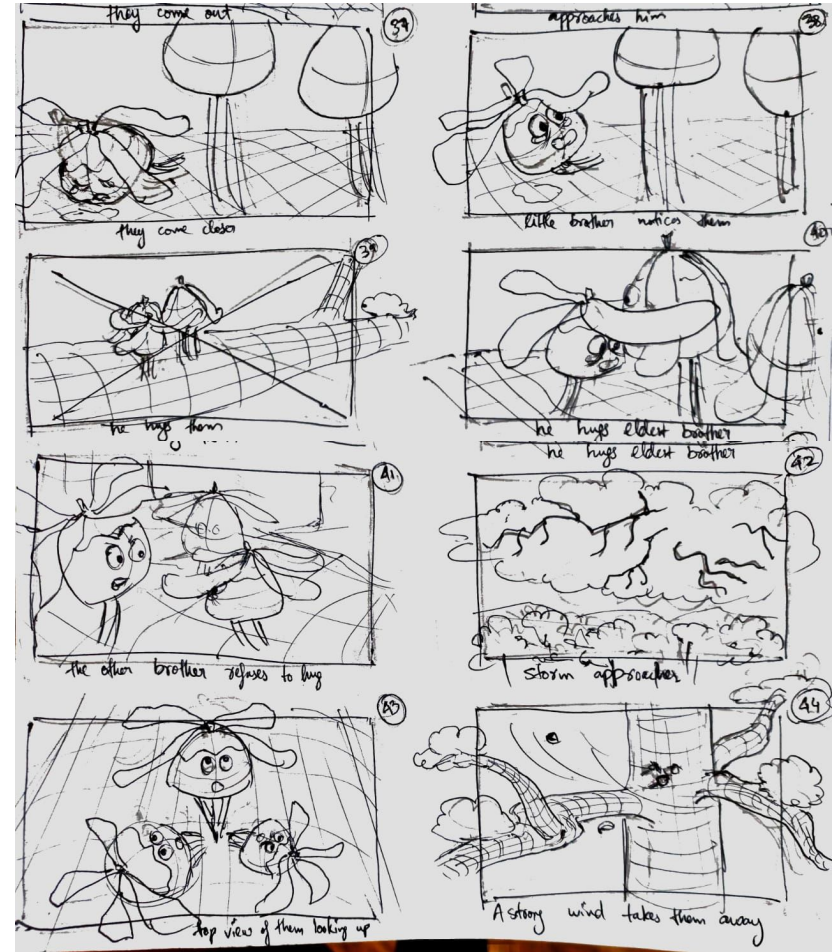
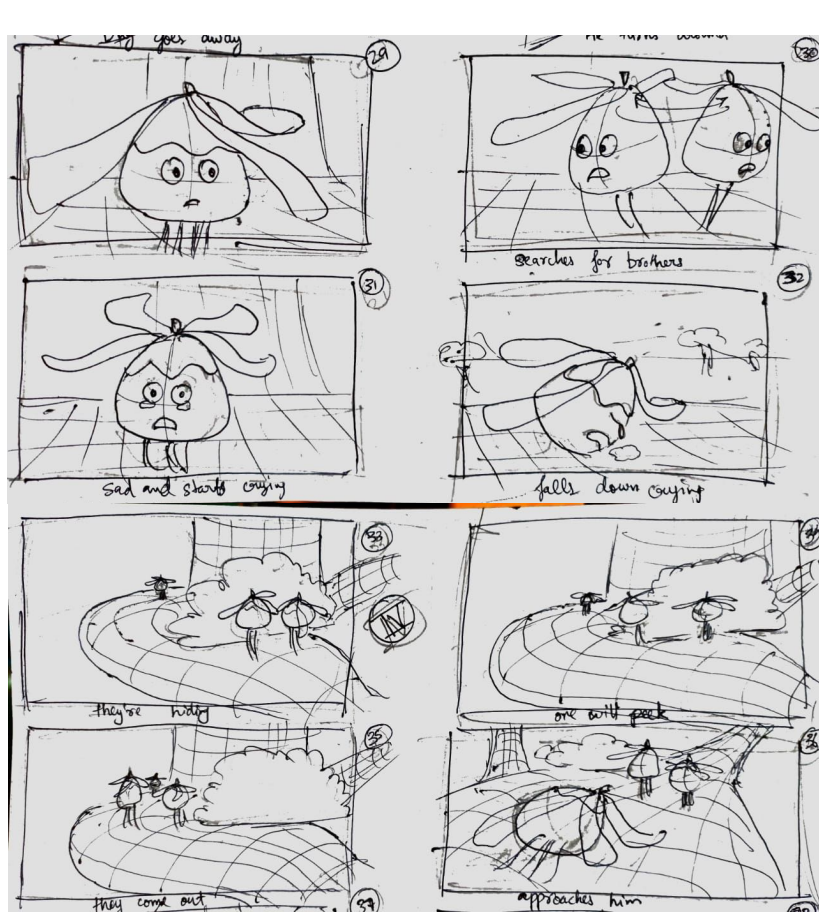
Final Storyboard



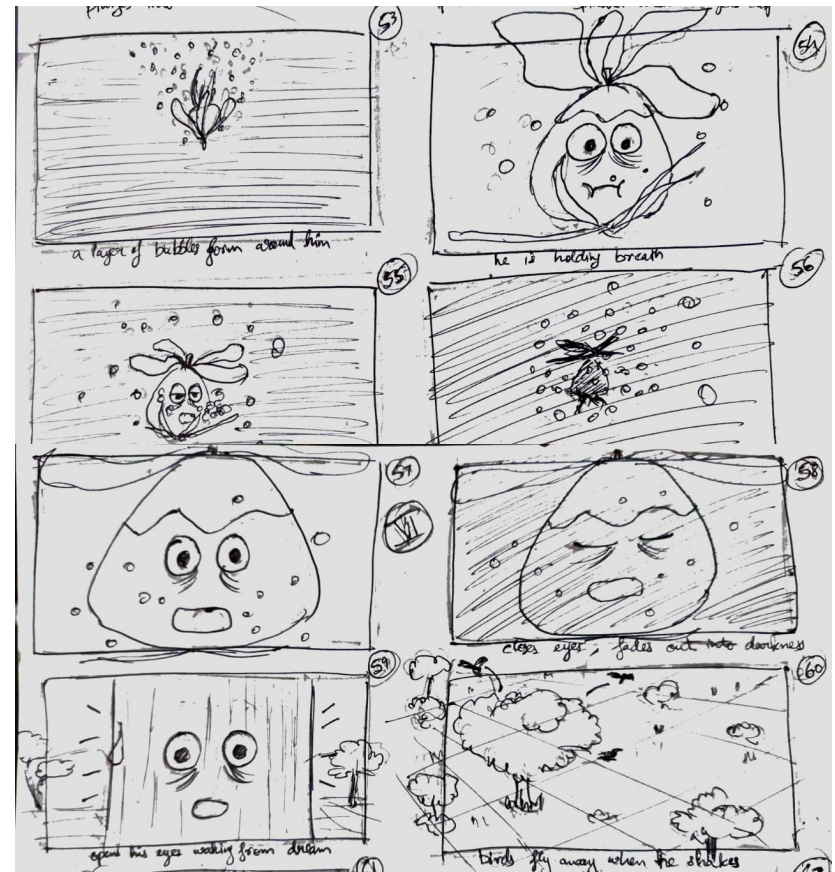
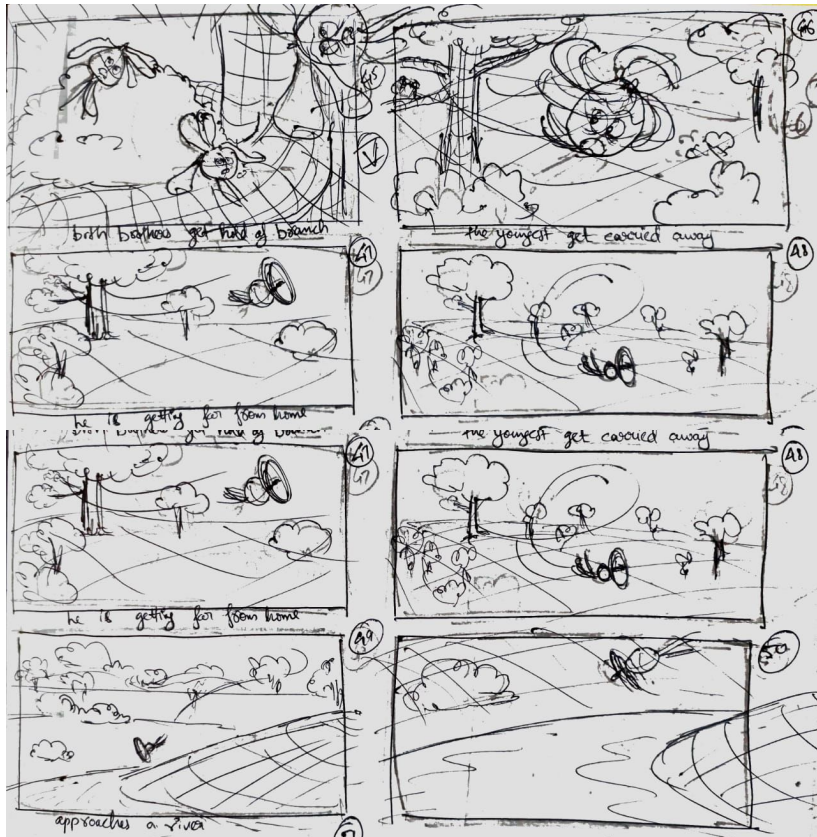
Final Storyboard



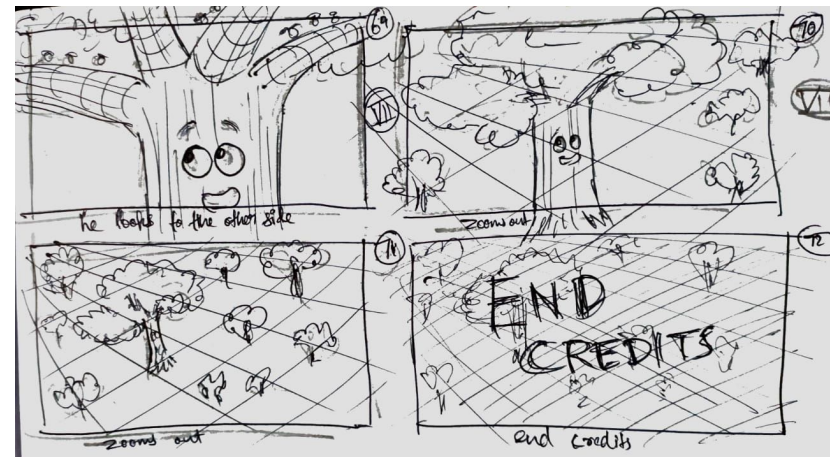
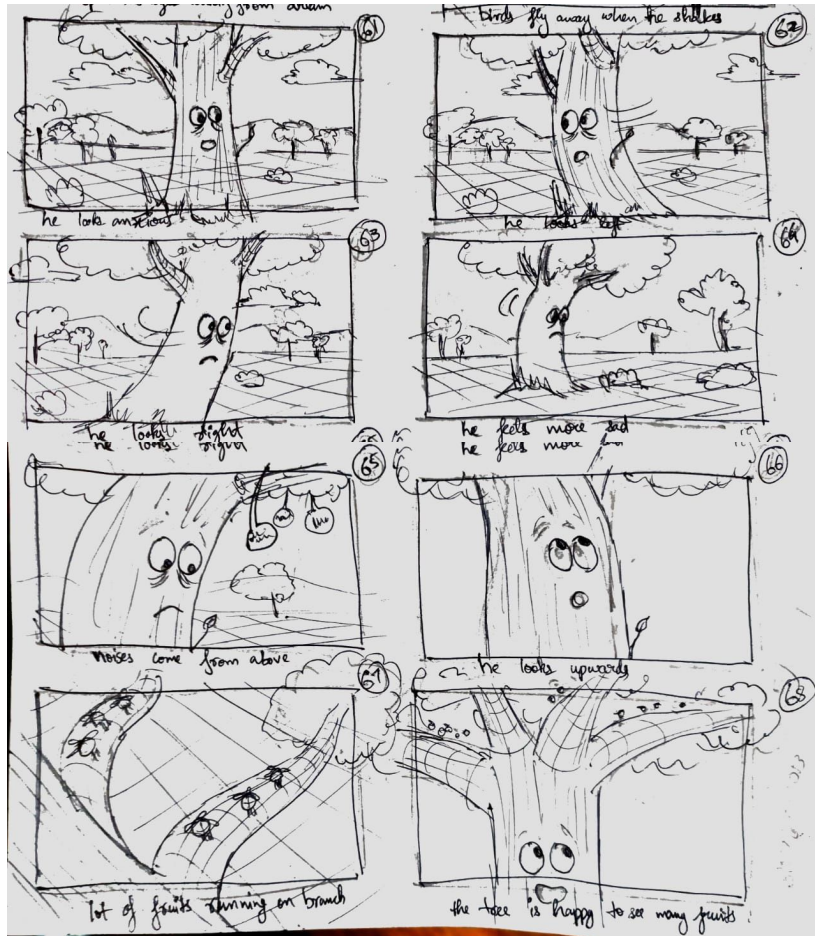
Final Storyboard



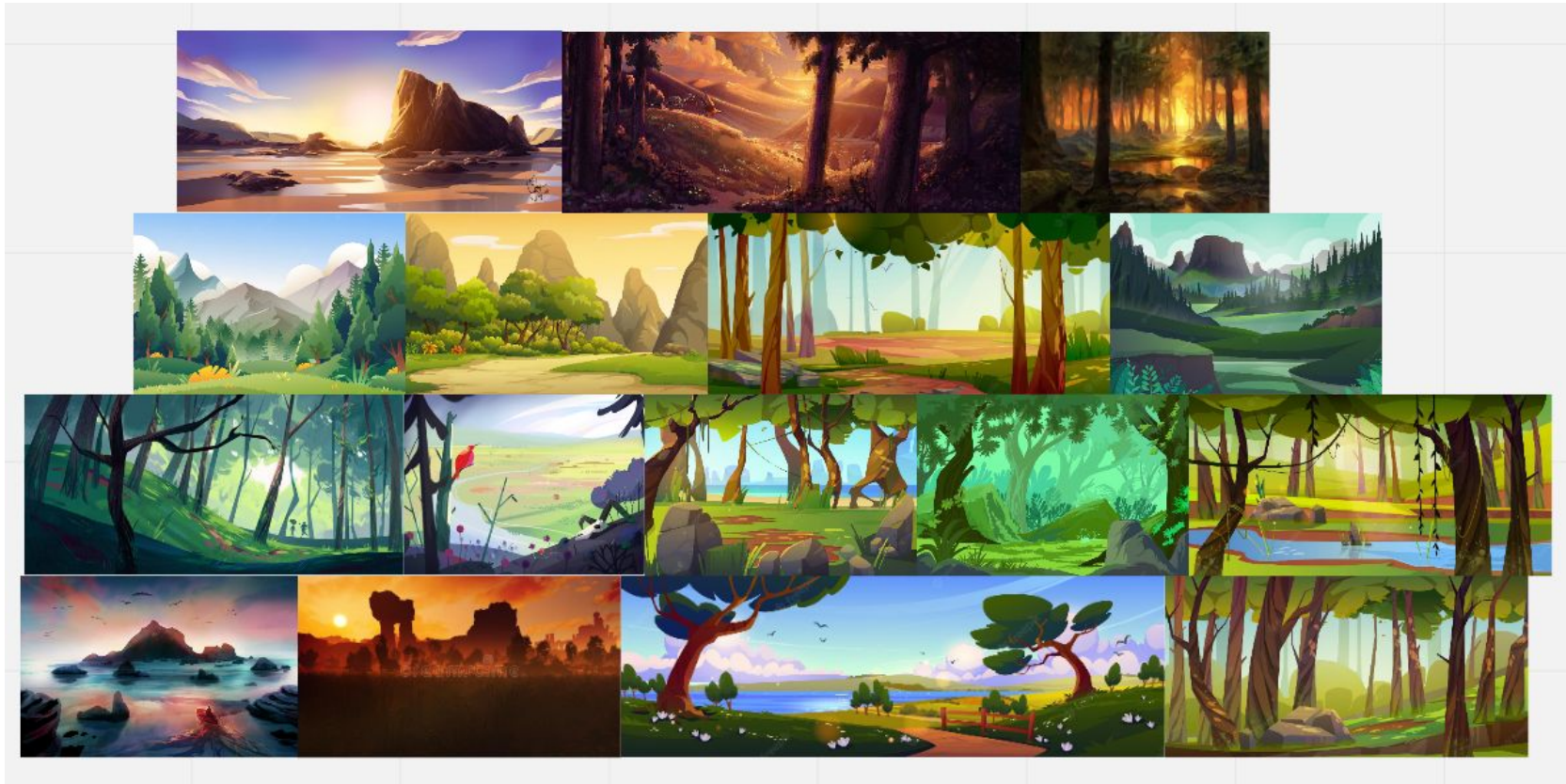
Final Storyboard



Final Storyboard



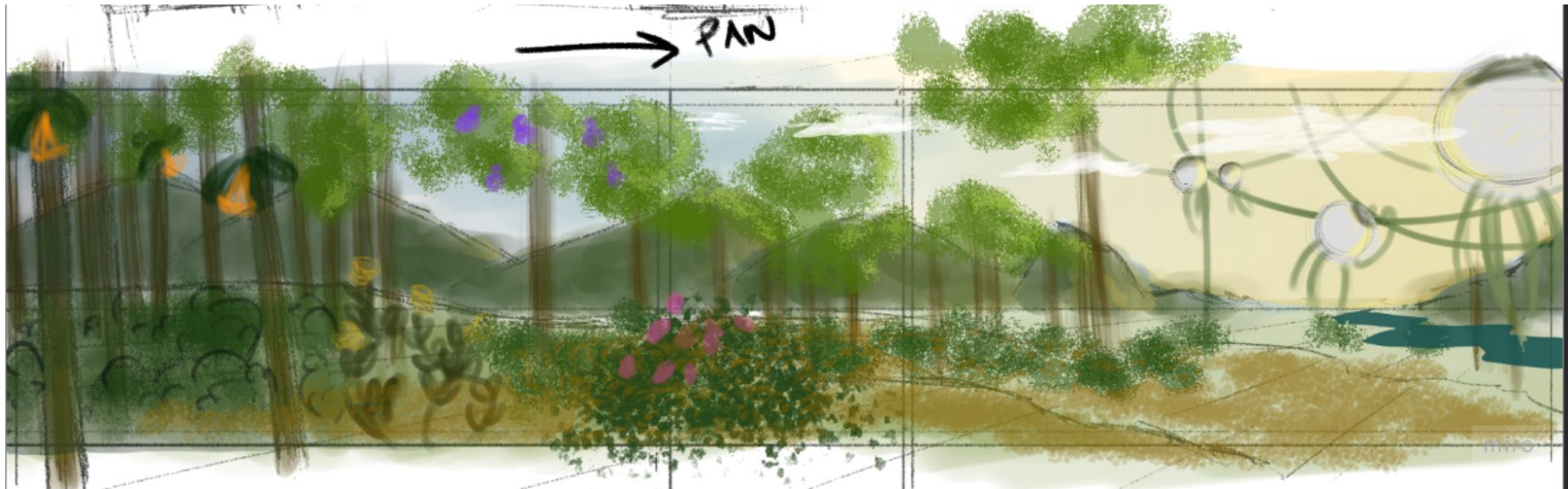
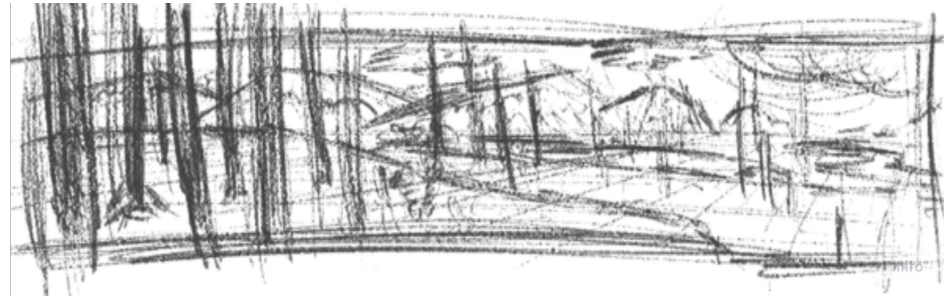
Background Inspirations



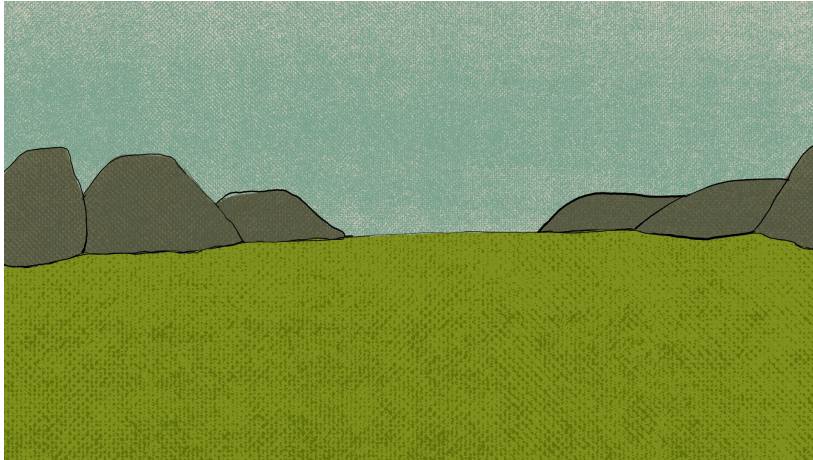
The background inspirations include a forest area, which would be reflecting an Indian forest.

Concept Art

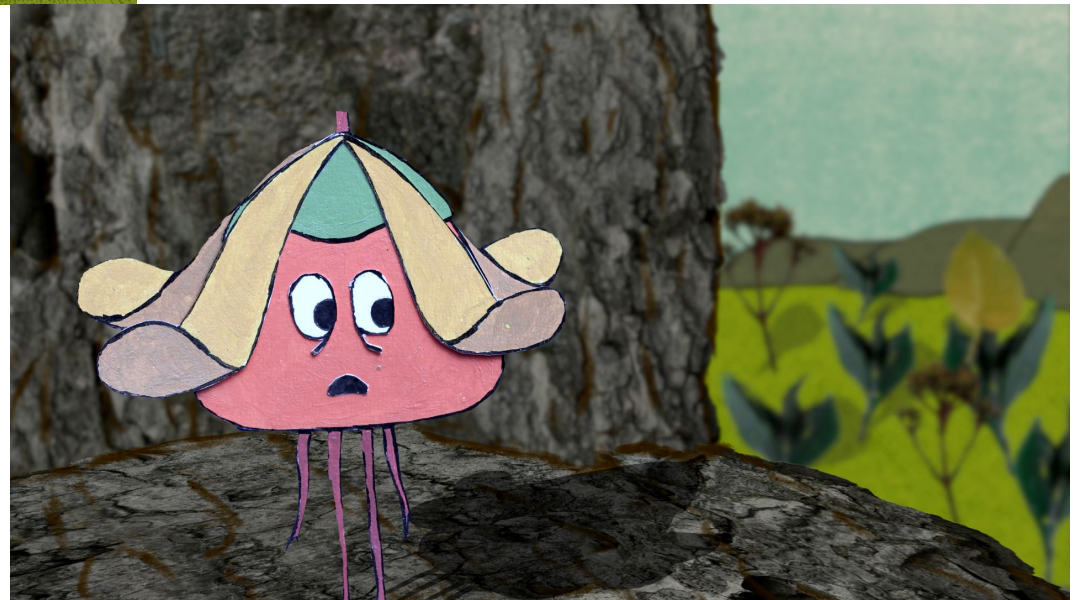
A lot of concept art sketches were made to identify the look and feel of the film. From exploring different textures, materials and altering it to explore the visuals, I was able to get to a satisfactory style for the film.



Concept Art



The backgrounds used in this film are simple textured layers in the back and foreground made with assets which I clicked pictures of leaves and barks. The animations were shot on blue screen, then removed using ultra key. After compositing it in After Effects, it was possible to get an expected look for the film.



Experimentation

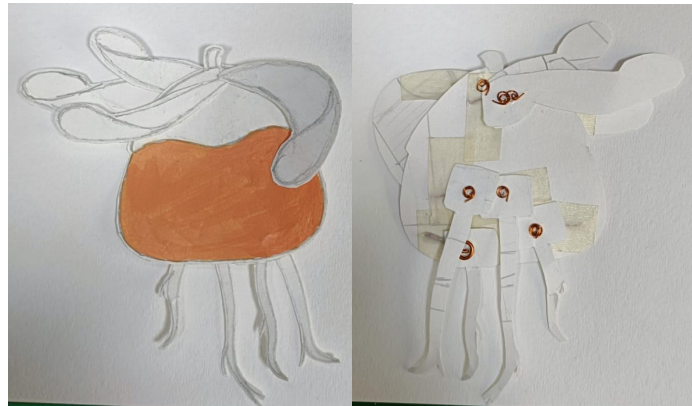
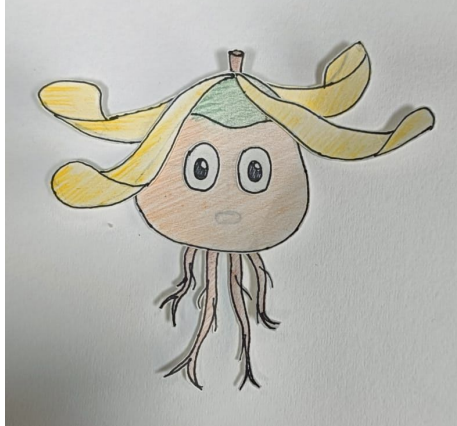
For the look and feel of the character, I experimented with different materials. I made a small 3D clay model of the character to understand whether it would be good for my film. It turned out I did not enjoy or was taking too much time for the creation of puppets.



Then I tried 2D clay model which turned out to give the same kind of results. In this puppet, I used stick, paper, clay, and wires. This did not solve the problem of time management.



Experimentation



So I switched to paper cutouts animation. Even in cut-out puppets, there had been a drastic learning curve of how to make a perfect functioning paper puppet which would work very well for my film.

By making a paper puppet, I realised there is a need of joints for the movement of limbs. So, iterations were made for the puppet and I made copper wire joints which served the purpose of movable joints. Once I learned how to rig the puppets, I started making better and easier puppets.

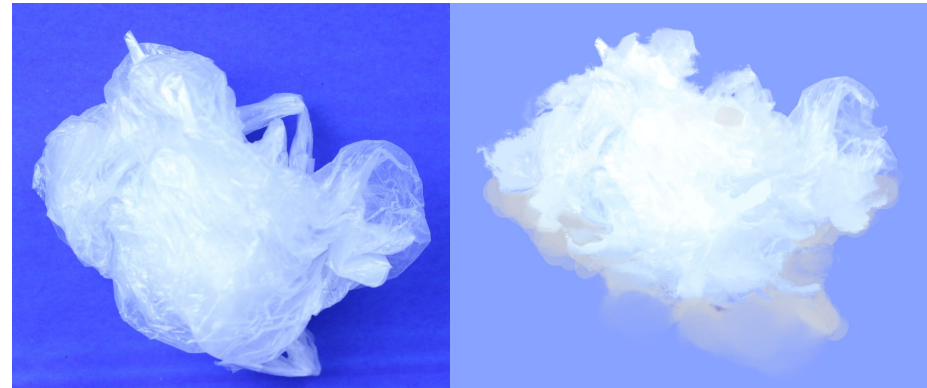
The copper wires worked really well in fixing the rig, and at the same time help for easy movements. As for the puppet still looked bland and without life. So more iterations were made with the colouring done manually by acrylic paints. The textures on the characters looked good now.

Experimentation

For clouds, I clicked pictures of white clothes and then changed the colour tones of it. Then touched up the edges and made it look like they are real clouds.



But the clouds looked fake, so instead polythene covers were used which turned out to be better. After that made that into a small animation and looped it for the background animation.



Cloud animation is added in After Effects, then the background is cleaned away using colour key.

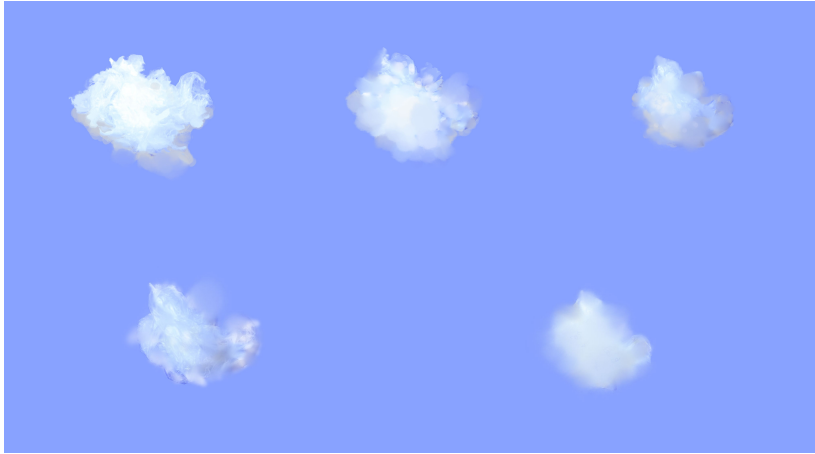
Experimentation



For the movement of tree, a group of sticks were used for animation, it did not turn out as good as expected. So, the tree animation is also done with cut out with replacement technique.

There were a lot of leaves, clothes, polythene covers and rocks pictures clicked and used as assets. Some were altered according to the need of the particular shots.

Asset Library



Cloud Library



Bark Library

Asset Library

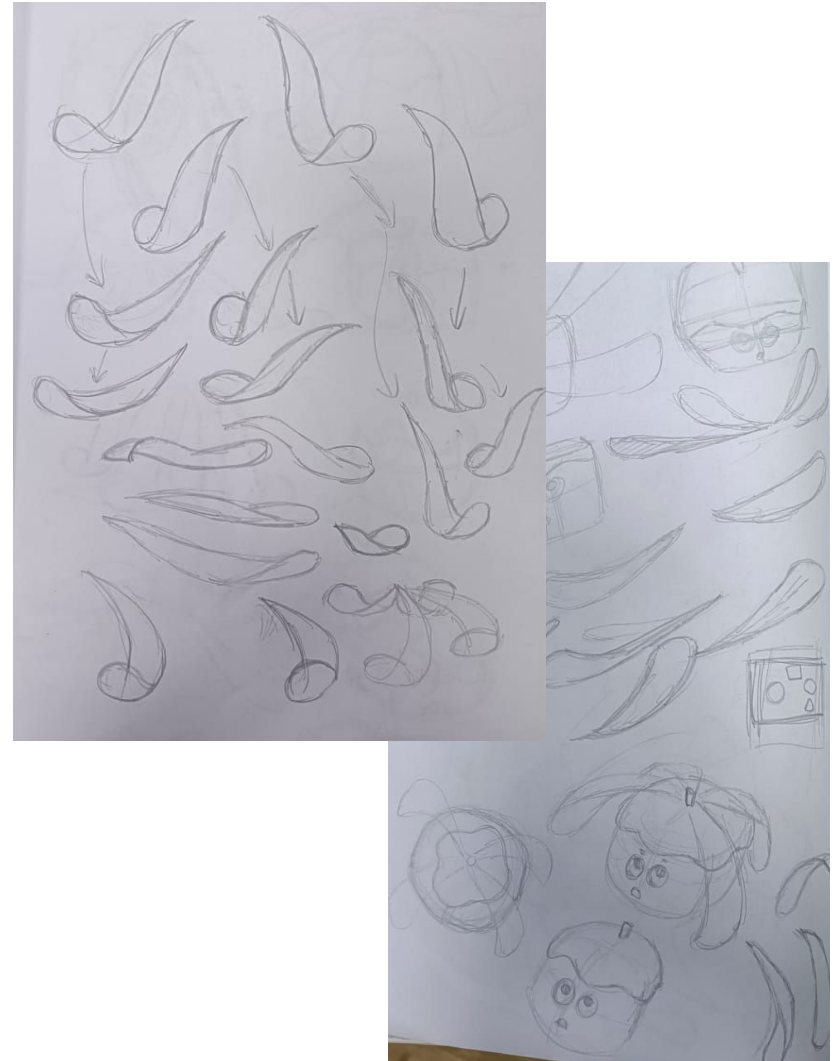


Foliage & Leaf Library



Production

Production included preparation of cutout assets. In order to do that, a lot of preparatory sketches were made to figure out what all were the poses needed for the shooting.



Production

After the preliminary sketches, next process was to make cutouts, and then painting of the cutouts. Wherever needed, the puppets were rigged.



The expressions were made separately and animated with replacement technique.



Production

A camera attached to the laptop was used for shooting the animation. The whole animation was done in DragonFrame software. Later on the video was edited and composited in After Effects.



Challenges & Learning

Ever since the beginning of this project, I had an inclination towards stop motion. I knew well enough about the painstaking process of doing a stop motion project. But I really wanted to learn more about film making in that particular angle. Initially I was planning to do a 3D stop motion film which includes puppet making and creating set for the film. Given the time constraints, I was not able to meet with the needs for that. So, I switched my approach towards doing it in 2D stop motion using camera from table top. The issue was with maintaining consistency to the character design of the seed. I explored materials to work with. And finalised on doing paper cutout animation.

There had been a big mistake during my pre production stage where I was too ambitious and planned out an entire storyboard and animatic which was compatible with a 3D environment and 3D character. But even when I changed the approach towards character, I was fixed on the existing storyboard and wanted to do it that way itself. By doing so, I lost a lot of time figuring out how the puppets would work together in a 3D environment.

As for the things I have learned, there are many. I understood how to work in stop motion, and make a complete film. I figured out how to use After Effects to begin with. DragonFrame is also another software I learned while doing this project. By doing the project without any proper planning, I learned how to proceed for a project in the future. This project has increased my knowledge about film making by a tremendous lot.

Conclusion

To make an animated film is very difficult task and that too in stop motion medium is back breaking work. I always wanted to work on a stop motion film and know the difficulties of the process. The first film I work on is a stop motion project. And I am very grateful for 'Dhooram' for giving me such an opportunity. I am seeing this as my first milestone out of many which is yet to come in my life. From not at all knowing which topic I would choose, to having a finished film in front of me, I have grown a lot as an animator and a student.

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THANK YOU