Film Presentation

Topic: EPISODIC ANIMATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters in Design, Animation

By

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Animation and Film Design

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work done in relation to my Project III film and submitted as a written report to IDC School of Design, 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.

3/6/19

Deepam Jain

2019

APPROVAL

The Report Committee for Animation Design, IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay certifies that this is the approved version of the following report on: Episodic Animation by Deepam Jain, 176340008.

Project Guide:

Chairperson:

Internal Examiner:

External Examiner:

Date:

Place:

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I would also like to thank Prof. Sumant Rao, Prof. Shilpa Ranade and Prof. Mazhar Kamran for providing valuable feedback and support.

Special thanks to Meera Behera , Nandini Bhosale and Lipi Gupta for lending me their voice for my characters. Also, I am grateful to all the people of opened up about their relationship with their siblings to me and helped me understand the bond better.

I would also like to thank all my friends who have helped in all stages of the film. It would have not been possible for me to make the film without their help.

Lastly, I am very grateful to my family members who have been extremely supportive and understanding throughout the journey.

[signature] 3/6/19

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ABSTRACT

This project is the first two episodes of the TV show i am working on - Silly siblings. Silly Siblings is a collection of day to day stories of two brothers presented in an episodic format. Each episode is a slice of life of the two brothers Niku - the outgoing, sport-loving elder brother and Piku - the carefree and creative younger brother.

Piku and Niku are polar opposites in the way they approach things, Niku likes to plan and execute while Piku likes to savour the whole journey as if there is nothing else to care about. They would often pull each other's leg for their ridiculous ways of doing things. But most importantly, they balance each other and can't live without the company of the other.

Through Piku and Niku, I have aimed at celebrating the amazing bittersweet relationship that siblings share and to evoke humour and nostalgia among the audience.

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INTRODUCTION

When one thinks about animated shows one can wonder how moving drawings on television can create such a huge impact on people. But upon a closer look I think it's not surprising at all.

I remember getting up early just to watch an episode of Bob the Builder and sleeping late even when my eyes can barely stay open just to watch another episode of Dragon Ball z that I have already watched twice.

That's the thing about animated TV shows. The characters become a part of our daily life. They are there when we are down and even when we are happy, sometimes they are the reason for our happiness. Sometimes they are our teachers, sometimes they are a partner in crime. But more than anything, these characters end up becoming our friends.

This is unique to daily shows. This is one of the reasons i attempted to work on an animated TV show, to give Indian audience some more friends with whom they can relate to more than the more visible foreign friends.

ABOUT THE SHOW

"Silly Siblings" is a Slice of life/comedy show based on the relationship between two brothers Niku and Piku. While Niku is the more outgoing, sport loving, friendly person, Piku likes to remain indoors, playing with his toys and creating art. He is a carefree little bird in contrast to his elder brother who is the leader of all the kids in the colony. They both respect the difference in personalities but it doesn't stop them from pulling each other's' leg and taunting each other for who they are.

The show is aimed for children from the age 5 to 10 but I believe any adult who watches it would also be able to relate to it and the show would make him/her revisit some of the favourite memories from childhood with his/her siblings.

RESEARCH

The Major focus of my research was towards creating episodic content. I studied how an episode is different from a short film in terms of storytelling both visually and structurally. The pace of the story and production techniques were also topics I really focussed on.

Since episodes have to be produced every week, production methods are different when compared to a film, deadlines are short and ways are devised as to cut production time while maintaining good production quality. I will write about it more in my research.

My research to understanding the episodic format of storytelling was mostly by studying existing shows. Since I am making very small episodes (1.5 minutes) I looked into shows with similar duration of episodes which are the following

- **A Day Before Us** - It is a successful Korean animated YouTube series with around **875k** subscribers.
- **Lamput** - The animated chase comedy on Cartoon Network by Vaibhav studios
- **Hilda** - The show is not exactly a short episodic one, but since its huge success, I studied it thoroughly.

For sibling relationship, I looked at the following shows for reference

- Over the garden wall - An Emmy award winner TV show.
- "Ye meri Family" by TVF

A DAY BEFORE US

A Day Before Us is a reasonably successful Korean animated YouTube series with around **875k** subscribers. It has 3 seasons out of which I have studied two.

Each episode was studied with careful detail and was watched and re-watched to understand how stories were told in 2 minutes. Special focus was given on

1. Staging – how each shot was staged and how it added to the story. The staging of this show is really what made me like it so much. It was so smart and unique. For e.g. in the given shot

An example of smart staging

The above image represents the scene when the three friends were drinking. Instead of showing them drinking, they showed the shot of their feet. Only one person was getting really drunk and it was conveyed by a lot of movement in her feet while retaining the other two peoples' feet calm. IT served two purposes

a. Reduced work for the animators and hence production cost and time.

b. It a very novel and interesting way of storytelling instead of just showing their faces and other behavior.

2. Another thing that I have noticed in the show is that very often they would start the show with a location and highlight the prop that is crucial to the story. In their very first episode the prop is rain, it's the heavy rains that brings the two characters close. Another example is the one below
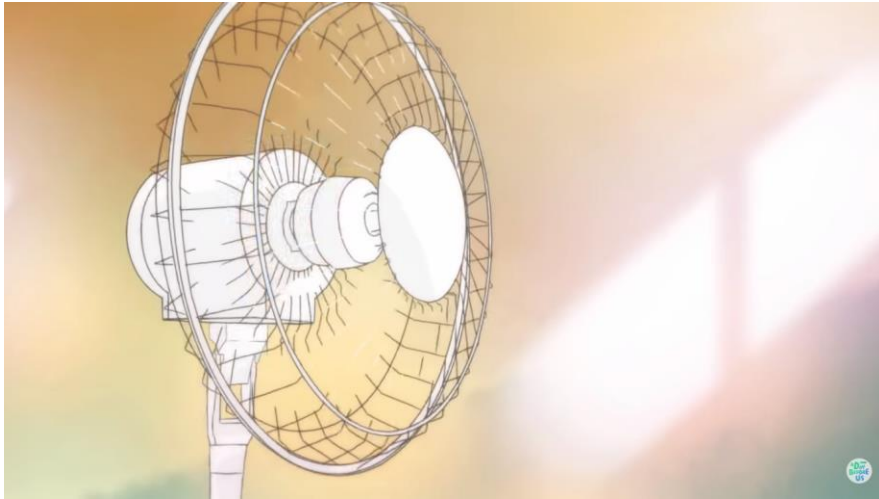
The episode starts with a clear focus on the fan. Switching on of this fan is later used to signify hints of love between the two characters.

The idea is that when the time limit is so less, every opportunity should be seized to move the story forward. Establish the important prop in the establishing shot itself and move ahead with the story. This makes the pace of each episode really fast. But the show doesn't feel rushed.

This kind of smart storytelling makes time for the really important scenes. Significant time is given to such moments, like those of character development, or the emotional scenes.

3. Another thing about the show that I really liked was they kept the incidents very simple. Nothing great was going on, instead, stories were told out of very normal and simple events of day to day life.

These were my notes after studying *A DAY BEFORE US.*

Next I looked up at Lamput

STUDYING LAMPUT

Lamput is a simple show about two doctors try to come up with ways to capture the super-fast, gooey shape-shifter Lamput. How will Lamput escape?

It's a chase comedy, and is reminiscent of shows like the roadrunner and tom and Jerry.

Each episode is about HOW Lamput will escape from the new plan that the doctors have devised to capture it. This keeps it interesting.
But most of the humor comes via acting and animation

The difference in this type of a show is that we already know what is going to happen. Lamput is going to escape from the doctors is a given. The fun in the show is knowing how Lamput is going to escape from the doctors who come up with a crazy idea to capture it every time.

STUDYING HILDA

Hilda is a show about a young girl who is habitual of living in wilderness. She has moved into a city for the first time and struggles there to adjust and befriend not only humans, but dangerous monsters too.

Each episode is around 23 minutes in length so Hilda is not the best reference for my project. But since the show has been extremely successful, I decided to study it.

This is one of the shows which really agrees with my intention of giving an audience a friend. A friend with whom they can learn, grow, get inspired and relate.

One really important thing that I took from the show is that it takes a couple episodes for the people to really start becoming friends with the characters. That time should be given for a solid and friendly character development. A character that the audience would really like to go along with.

But the thing that really caught my attention was the way they began the show i.e. the introduction.

1. Immediately sets her up as an adventurer
2. Immediately tells us that this world is full of mystical creatures

3. The whole plan for escaping the troll is properly explained since the show is for children
4. The attitude of "I can fix this" central to Hilda's character has been straight away emphasized
5. The first 5 minutes explain clearly what the show is about in an interesting manner.

I think these are very important takeaways since my project involves the production of the first two episodes of the show.

STORY IDEAS

I had two concepts for the show initially

CONCEPT 1

A long narrative told in episodes.

The narrative was about a person who wanted to learn martial arts but was considered unfit because of his physical limitations. It's a story of his trial and failure and ultimately him becoming a master of the arts, but not the standard martial arts. His body doesn't support that. He developed his own way of fighting. Slightly unconventional, but a one which his body supports.

The whole message that I wanted to convey was that each of us have different capacities, and we should work on our capabilities to get things done.

CONCEPT 2

This concept is a collections of incidents from the daily life of Niku and Piku (the two brothers). It's called "*Silly Siblings*" and is the one I have worked on in this project.

This concept was inspired by my previous project on siblings. I realized that sibling relationship is a topic that is really close to my heart and it's a topic on which many more stories can be told. So, I decided to make an attempt to create a show that would focus on the amazing relationship and probably give my audience two more friends.

The Show is very simple -

"Silly Siblings" is the collection of everyday incidents that take place when an outgoing, sport loving kid is a brother to a creative introvert. The show is about the fun that happens between brothers despite having starkly different personalities.

Characters

Niku - He is a 10-year-old outgoing boy who would love to play a game of cricket or just cycle around in town with his friends. He is pretty good

academically and wants to become a scientist. Whenever something was being repaired he would go there and watch and try to understand how things work. He himself has managed to fix many things for the house and the neighborhood, no wonder everyone loves him.

He always managed to make a lot of friends thanks to his great storytelling capacities and a few magic tricks that would enchant everyone from kids to even adults. He was leader of the colony kids, always planning what to do next, where to play, what to play, or even the next mischief to do. He is fond of having valuable things like the rare Pokémon tazos and everything considered precious in the school. But all the applause has made him a little arrogant and overconfident and thinks he can outsmart other people. He does that often but it also lands him into trouble

Piku – Piku is an 8-year-old creative boy. He is almost always lost in thought, probably thinking about some creative ideas, or thinking about the stories of what his wolverine would do to the animal kingdom who has attacked his area, i.e. his toys. This absent mindedness causes him to mess up a lot, but he also comes up with some really creative and simple ideas to solve problems. He spends most of the time modelling his new toys from clay, origami or even cloth. His social skills do not match those of Niku, and is brutally honest in his approach (read savage). He likes going out, observing his surroundings a lot. He would not talk much to people, but would observe others. Some people (including Niku) find him boring, but it doesn't affect him as they definitely lack his vision of things and live in their normal boring world. For him, the world is an amazing place to live in and he can never possibly be bored.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP

They have their differences; they would argue over seemingly small things like whether the white puffy things in the sky are clouds or are they cotton candies for the birds? It's very hard for both of them to work together, both of them look at things differently and would invariably mess things up, either because of arguments or because of competitiveness. But that doesn't mean that they don't love or care for each other. In fact, it was Niku who taught Piku how to ride a bike. And its Piku who does Niku's drawing homework, in return for letting him bat first for a day of course.

PILOT EPISODE

The first episode begins with the start of summer vacations. But its only for Piku, Niku still has one final exam left. This makes Piku really frustrated and angry at Niku because he cannot even celebrate his first summer holiday. But amidst all the anger Niku finds a way to make the day special for Piku. Watch the episode to see what happens.

SCRIPT

Episode Name - Vacations begin!

About– Summer Vacation has started for Piku and yet he is unable to enjoy because of one last exam that Niku has. Niku, being an amazing brother, ends up making the day really special for Piku.

EXT. home
PIKU
(Screaming as he enters home while running with joy towards the TV)
Yayyy, chuttiyan shuru ho gayi!!

Niku, who came to the mother directly turns sad from happy seeing Piku jumping out of joy. He had one exam left.

MOTHER
"Nahi, aaj kuch nahi, kal Niku ka exam hai na!"

INT. home
Piku looks angrily at Niku

EXT. home
Niku smirks back at him almost with the sense of getting back at Piku

INT. Home
Niku is lying down on the bed and studying while Piku is making his toys fight with a voice modified in front of the cooler.

NIKU
(complains)
"Mummmyyyyyy!!"

MA
(voice)
Piku!!! Padhne de na bhaiya ko.

Close up of Piku looking angrily at Niku

Cut to the shot of Piku playing on the mobile and sounds coming

PIKU
(Screams while playing on the phone in an excited fashion)
nahi nah nahi nahi nahi.... Ahaa!! Bach gaya

NIKU
(looking angrily at Piku; screams to complain)

Mummy, yaar dekho na isko!!

MA
(Background voice)
Piku !! aaj aaj rhne de na

A frustrated reaction from Piku

Mid shot of Piku acting as he draws.

Zoom out to show two more shots on the same screen

Piku tearing paper to create origami

Piku singing loudly while pooping

MA
(background voice)
Pikuuu!!

Piku finally gives up and sits upset on the bed!

MA
(background voice)

"Piku!!, idhar aao", calls ma

Piku looks surprised with an expression of 'What did I do now?'. He leaves the bed and walks off towards the kitchen

Piku walks towards the kitchen as mother pours out sharbat

MA
Ye le ha, aur bhaiya ko bhi de aa

Piku gets even more frustrated, and takes the sharbat angrily to Niku

Piku, walks towards Niku to give him sharbat

Niku laughing at the furious face of Piku

Piku burning with rage and slamming the glass on the bed to run away to the couch

Looking at his angry brother, Piku realises he needs to make up for it

NIKU
(Politely)
Piku, Idhar aa

Piku looks back in suspicion at the politeness of Niku, and walks towards him slowly as Niku is busy searching for something in his bag

Piku continues to look at him with suspicion until finally he takes out something very precious to Piku from his bag and gives it to him.

Sudden change of expression on Piku's face, his eyes widen with surprise and mouth opens with happiness

PIKU

Sacchi?

NIKU

(Confirms)

umm, hmm

Piku gets really happy and starts dancing and singing

MA

(background voice)

Piku!!
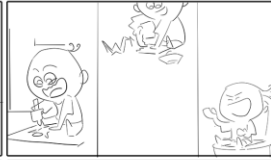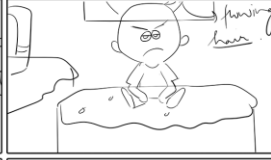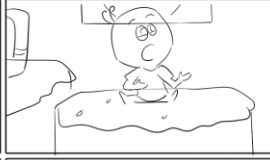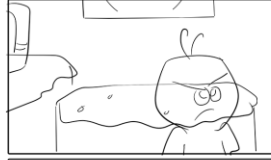
Celebration stops immediately.

STORYBOARD FOR PILOT EPISODE

Create your own at Storyboard That

Scene:	Scene:	Scene:

Scene:	Scene:	Scene:

Create your own at Storyboard That

SCRIPT FOR EPISODE 2

Episode name - A trip to vegetable market

About – Piku and Niku are sent to vegetable market to buy green coriander leaves but they end up buying bubble-gum instead

INT. Home

Niku

(cutting the phone call with frustration)
"Sab so rhe hain, chhuttiyon k din kaun sota hai"

MA
Haa to jab tak sab uthte hain tu Dhaniya leke aaja

Niku immediately regrets telling this to mother

PIKU
(Giggles)
fas gaya!

MA
(background voice)
Piku ko bhi le ja

Piku's face turns to horror

Niku smirks

EXT. Vegetable Market

Both the brothers are walking and looking for the coriander

We cut closer to the brothers
Niku is looking for the vendor while Piku looks around absentmindedly

NIKU

(points at the vendor)

Dekh wo rha thela, abhi achche se dekh, aur sikh

Both start walking towards the vendor until a dog starts barking and catches the attention of Piku. Piku leaves his brother and walks towards the dog.

He looks to see what the dog is barking at. He spots a kitten and then his eyes fall on something else. A huge box of his favourite bubble-gum, Mega Babool. By this time Piku has totally forgotten about the coriander leaves.

Niku is looking at the coriander and finalising and also telling Piku how to look for the best coriander

NIKU

(explaining to Piku)

Ye dekh, sabse hara, aur....., Piku!!

He screams in worry of not finding his brother there.

He looks around everywhere only to find him at the general store gawking at the jar. He is very angry and runs towards him

NIKU

(angrily)

Tu kya kar raha hai

PIKU

(unaffected by anger)

Ye dila de

NIKU

(Sarcastic)

Haan haan, lele, Ma ne to bubblegum mangayi thi na... gadha

PIKU

(begging)

Please na, me kuch bhi karunga, tu aaj ka poora din first batting kar lena. Tv bhi teri pasand ka hi chala lena

NIKU

(clearly tempted by the offer, but controlling himself)

Nahi, aur ab chal

As he is about to leave Piku takes a last glance at the bubble-gum jar and his eyes widen

PIKU

haa chal thik hai... mat dila. ye special edition WWE cards Monty hi le lega then

Niku closely at the jar and the offer. His eyes widen and he starts daydreaming about possessing the card.

Dream sequence

Monty is showing off his huge collection of cards to all the schoolmates who are awing at it.

Monty now looks up at Niku who is coming towards him with an unprecedented confidence.

Everyone in the class is looking at Niku in surprise and then he takes out the special edition WWE card and puts it on Monty's table.

Monty is shell shocked, all his collection is worth nothing compared to the special edition card.

MONTY

(almost crying)

Par.. Par...

And suddenly he starts crying out loud but in the voice of Niku's mother who is asking

MA
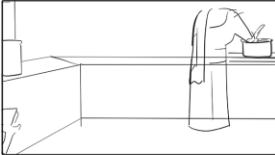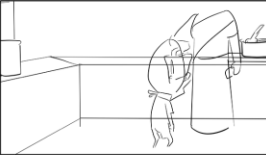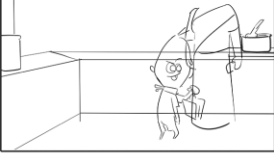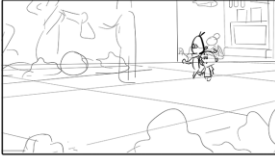
(Background voice)
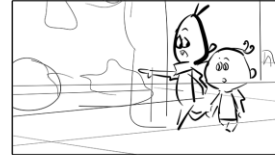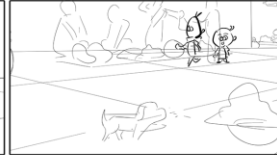
Dhaniya kaha hai!!

Niku's eyes open wide as he realizes what just happened

Both of them look up at the angry mother and Piku's bubble-gum bubble bursts

STORYBOARD FOR EPISODE 2

Scene: FREE WWE GOLDEN CARD

Create your own at Storyboard That

Create your own at Storyboard That

Create your own at Storyboard That

STYLE EXPLORATION

I wanted the look of the show to be similar to those of the 90's cartoons. Since the show is based a lot on acting I wanted to have characters with whom a lot can be done in terms of expression and gestures. The major style influence for me was the show **"Ed, Edd and Eddy".** I love how much freedom the animators have with the characters, especially the expressions.

Notice how extreme the expressions can go. I also adore the simplicity of the backgrounds and the tilted angles of objects. This is the style of background that I decided to go for.
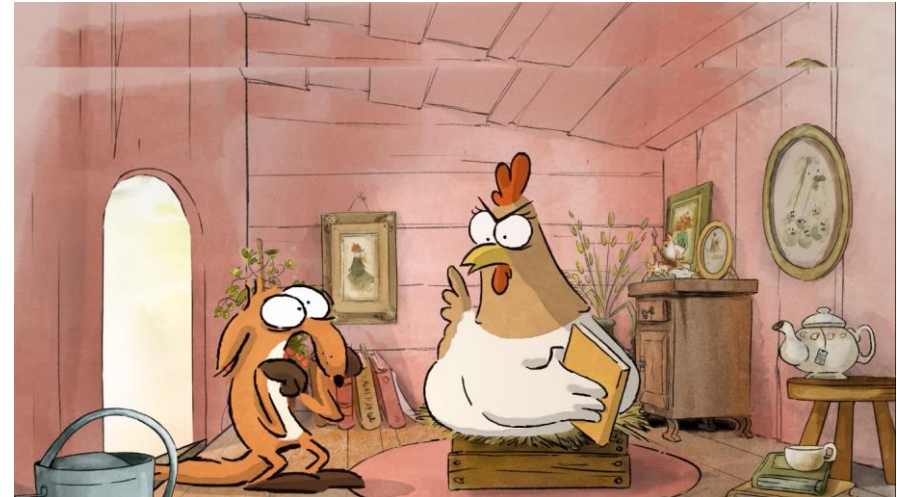
Another style that I noticed was from the trailer of "The big bad fox". This style had a similar flexibility for characters and seemed really fun to animate.

Other influences are "*Calvin and Hobbes*" and the short film "*The Cat Came Back*"
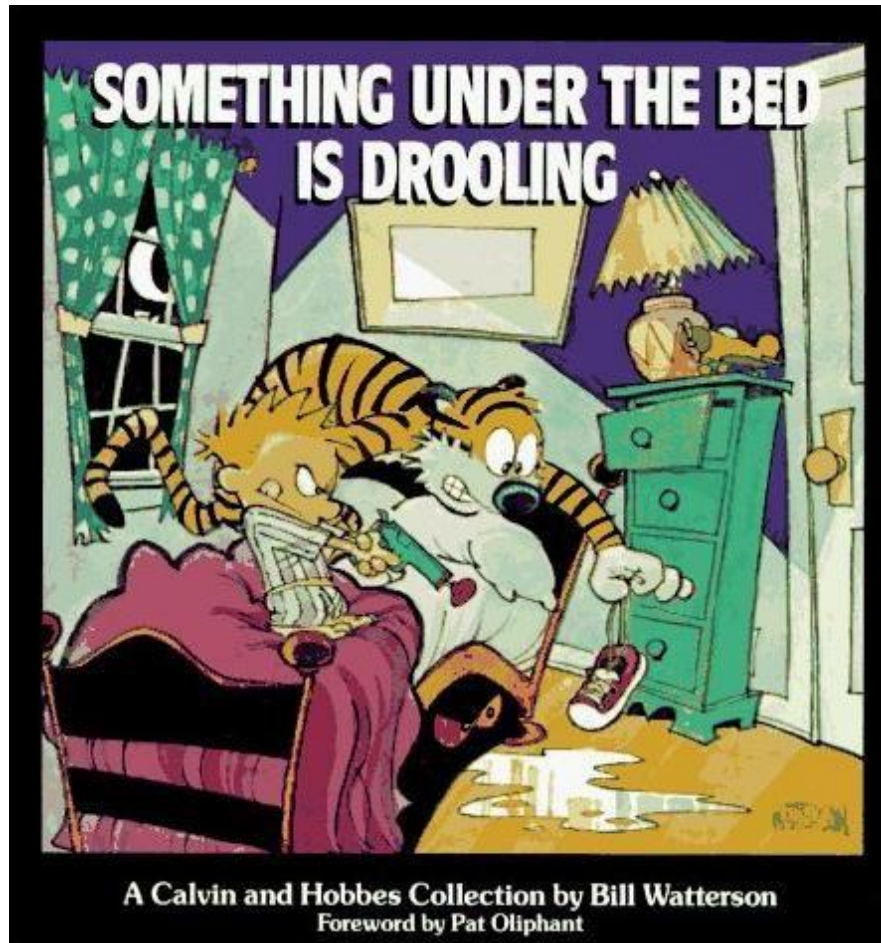
Another wonderful reference for backgrounds

I loved how much freedom the animator took in animating this film

CONCEPT ART

Initial explorations

I thought giving a chalk like feel to the backgrounds could add to the nostalgic and child friendly feel I am looking for. The backgrounds have been kept very simple to cut down on the production time.

Another attempt at look and feel for the show. I was not quite content with the character design in this as well as the style of backgrounds. More work needed to be done.

Another exploration. I was pretty happy with the style of backgrounds I have used in this one except for the color scheme. At this stage characters just needed to be refined a little more and the color scheme needed to be altered.
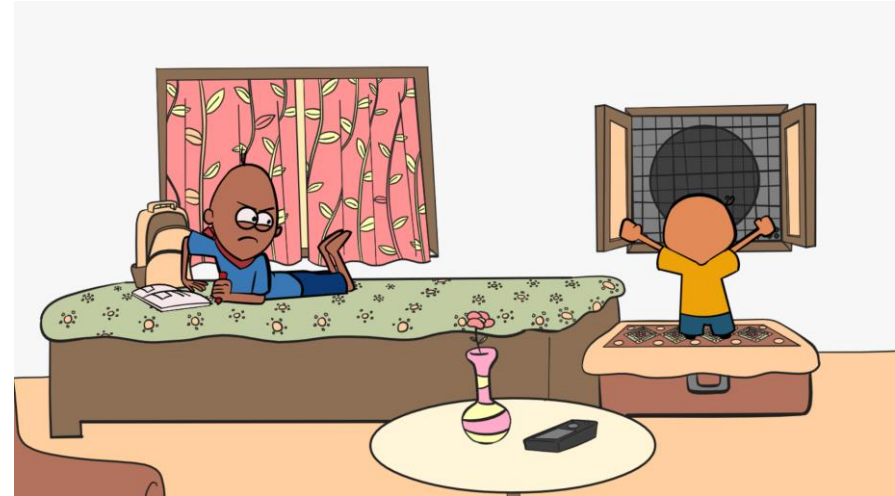
This is one of the finished shot from the film. I wanted this show to be based in Rajasthan an I have tried to induce that feeling via the color scheme and the patterns on the curtains, bed sheets and sofa covers. Also the arrangement of the room has been done according to my idea of how a Rajasthani home looks like.

CHARACTER EXPLORATIONS

PIKU EXPLORATIONS

PIKU FINAL DESIGN
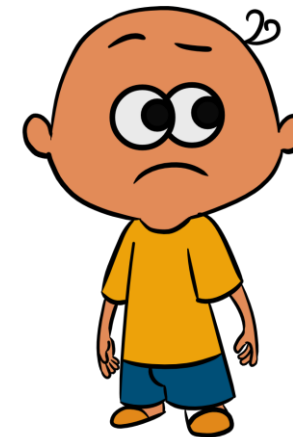
NIKU EXPLORATIONS

NIKU FINAL DESIGN

ANIMATIC

To create the animatic, I arranged the storyboard panels on a timeline in Adobe Premiere Pro. Then I recorded dialogues and downloaded sound effects. According to the sounds and my intuition I estimated the time each shot would take to finish and gave that much time to it in the timeline.

Upon playing the animatic, few panels were scaled and panned to improve on the storytelling.

Now that I have timing for each shot along with its sounds, I can start animating.
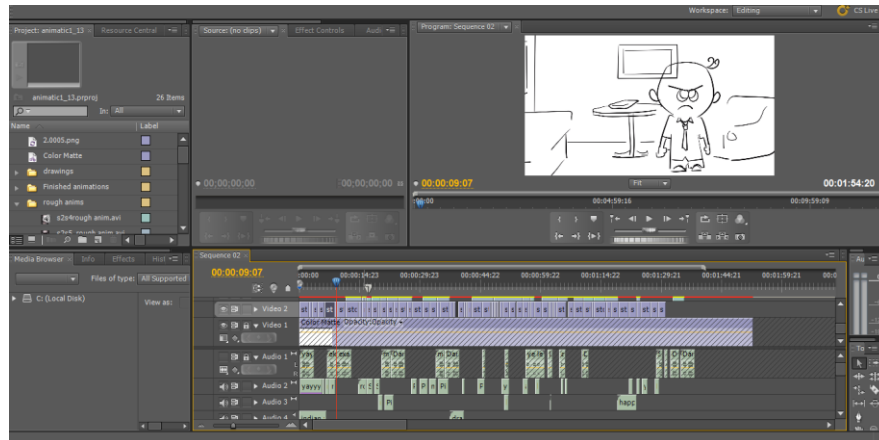
Animatic for my film. It can be noticed that many layers of both audio and video are present. As soon as a scene is updated, I would update it in the animatic too.

ANIMATION PRODUCTION

I have worked with 3 software in the project. Opentoonz for pre-production and production. Adobe After Effects CS 5.5 for composition and Adobe Premiere Pro CS 5.5 for editing. Following is my animation production protocol for one complete scene.

PROCESS

For every scene I would follow the below process.

1. I would create levels for rough background, rough character animation for Piku and Niku (different levels for both) and rough foreground. This is done on "Raster" levels. In case the background needs to be in multiple layers, I would make the layers in the same level but place them in different layers in the exposure sheet.

2. Once I finish making the rough layout, and arranging it in different layers in exposure sheet, I start animating. Each character is animated on its own level. First all the key frames are created, then breakdowns and in-betweens are added.

3. It is at this stage I make any changes in the layout or animation if needed. I would place the rough video in Adobe premiere pro to see if the clip is working well with the clips around. If not I make suitable adjustments, else I go for Cleaning it up.

4. Once I am happy with the scene I start cleaning it up. I use "Toonz Vector" levels for clean-up. It has many benefits

   - Toon vector levels allow all the strokes to be vector which allows a lot of control over lines, making the whole process faster.
   - Also, since the drawings are vector, it can be distorted or scaled without any loss of quality.
   - If I need to change the color or style of the strokes, I can easily change it in the style editor. It will affect the styles for every drawing in that level.

5. Once the inking is done, I color the drawings. I am using flat colors for faster production. Color palettes are developed for backgrounds and characters. All that is needed is to take the fill bucket and fill in the colors.

6. In case I want to change a color in the palette I just need to change it in the color palette file and the change will take place everywhere the palette was used.

7. Once I am done cleaning up and coloring, I would export the scene either complete, if I am happy with the composition. Or, I would export different layers of the file for composition in Adobe After effects.

8. After composition and applying effects (if needed) I would export the high quality file to be added to the animatic.

SOUND DESIGN

DIALOGUES

It was an interesting challenge to get the dialogues acted out in a correct fashion. I had to know how exactly I want the dialogues, what emotion and mood is it that must be reflected in the acting. For this I first spoke all the dialogues myself and when I was content with the delivery I reached out to the voice actors Nandini Bhosale (Piku), Meera Behera (Niku), Lipi Gupta (Mother).

I explained the story and the mood of each scene to them. I made them hear my delivery and asked them to better it and add their own interpretation to the scene. We took multiple takes of the same dialogue to see which one feels the best.

All the voice actors did a fantastic job in delivering the emotions I had in my mind through their voice and thus adding another layer of life in my characters

SOUND EFFECTS

The one-week session with PM Satheesh sir was of great help in this part of the film. My process was to download all the sound effects that I need and them juxtapose them together in Adobe Premiere Pro to get the desired sound effect.

Sound effects have been taken from

1. https://freesound.org/
2. YouTube audio library

MUSIC

The background music has been taken from the following sites –

1. YouTube audio library
2. https://filmstro.com
3. https://www.bensound.com/

CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS

There were many challenges that I faced.

First challenge was to come up with a good idea for a show that audience would want to watch. I knew it revolved around sibling relationship. But I just didn't know how to convey the relationship. Should I have a monster hunting pair of siblings? Or should I have orphans taking care of each other? In the end I figured I should probably keep it really simple and tell the tale as it is, like most people live it. Like I lived it.

After deciding the genre of the show it was again challenging to come up with multiple story ideas for me to convince myself that the show can continue for long and wont exhaust after 4 or 5 episodes. It was also tough to decide which story should be chosen as the pilot episode.

Pilot episode itself was such a big challenge because it had to be amazing. It was my show's first appearance in front of audience. This episode conveys what the show is really about to the audience and it needed to convey that well. It introduces the major characters. It has to be on point in every aspect. I hope I did a decent job with it.

Other than that it was really challenging to get my characters to act. The show *runs* on acting. If the acting comes out good the show works, else it is just plain boring.

This is the second animation project I am working on. This one was bigger than the previous one. There were naturally many learnings both technical and about myself.

I learnt a lot about episodes and production hacks that really helped me fasten my work process.

I understood that in animation, the overall motion is the king and the frames could be molded in a way to add to the animation. They can be drawn inaccurate from the model just to make the overall animation look appealing. I think a got a deeper understanding of the 12 principles of animation with this project.

I realized I am a lot more into storytelling than I thought. I loved the pre-production part of it more than anything else. From the research, to developing multiple stories, characters and storyboards.

Overall it was a lot of fun making this film. It was challenging, both mentally and physically but is equally rewarding in terms of learning, growth and of course the output.

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