

THE GIFT

Project 2 Report

Submitted by:

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Animation & Film Design (2009-1011)

IDC, IIT Bombay

Project Guide:

Prof. Nina Sabnani

DECLARATION SHEET

I declare that this written submission represents my idea in my own words and where other's idea or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources.

Hemali Vadalia

Hemali Vadalia
09634802
22nd November 2010

APPROVAL SHEET

The Project II titled "The Gift" by Hemali Vadalia is approved in Partial fulfillment of the requirement for M.Des. in Animation & Film Design.

Guide



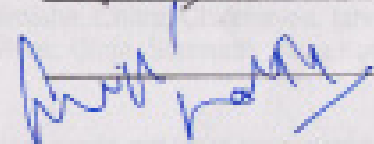
Ext. Examiner



Internal Examiner



Chairman



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The project has been an enriching experience and I wish to express my gratitude to the Animation Design Faculty, Industrial Design Centre (IDC). I am grateful to my guide Prof. Nina Sabnani for her timely guidance, support and advice, and Prof. Sumant Rao and Prof. Sudesh Balan for sharing their valuable experience, suggestions and helping me with the technicalities throughout the project. I thank Prof. Phani Tetali, Prof. Shilpa Ranade and Prof. C.P. Narayan for their valuable suggestions and encouragement. The IIT Bombay and IDC library and the IDC Product Photo Studio have been very valuable resources to the project.

My special thanks to Vaibhav Kumaresh and everyone at Vaibhav Studios for sharing their process in clayanimation.

I thank my friend Abhishek Naik, Niti, Shashank, Sujata, Ruchi, Naveen, Sumeet, Anindya, Abhilash, Nimisha, Chitra, Chinmayee, Ishneet, Devina, Vinita, Shampa, Hari, Nikhil, Vivek, Girija, Somnath, Vajra, Ketaki for their support and help.

Last but not the least, this project would not have been possible without my family and relatives, who have always given me the strength and courage to go on.

My sincere and heartiest thanks to all!



ABSTRACT

The project aims at understanding different narrative structures of storytelling. I have used the 'Framed Narrative' structure for telling the story of a child and his grandfather. Framed narrative is a nested narrative; a story within a story. The film deals with the fascination of a child for a gift that has been hand made by his grandfather for his birthday. The child eagerly searches for this present. The sequence of events is non-linear; hence the relation between the grandfather and the child is gradually revealed towards the end of the film.

Besides exploring the story structure, I have tried to fuse different mediums of animation like clay, cutout, hand-drawn animation to achieve the desired look and feel for the film.

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AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the project is to understand framed narrative structure in the context of different narrative structures and to be able to use it effectively. To construct an interesting story by changing the sequential or linear pattern of events into a non-linear structure.

The second objective was to use different mediums that can justify the desired look for the sub-stories in the film. Blending these mediums together, learning different nuances of video editing, understanding how lighting helps in setting the mood in the film and compositing were some of the other objectives.

INTRODUCTION

'The Gift' is a token of love from a grandfather to his grandchild. The gift is special to the child because his grandfather, who is a storyteller and tells stories through his book sculptures, personally makes it for him. My film consists of three stories that are inter-laced and transit from one to the other.

The medium used for each of the sub stories is distinct and characterizes the requirements of each story.

I wanted to work on the concept of framed narrative for story telling as the form has fascinated me for some time and I found an opportunity to explore it. In a framed narrative, the introductory story sets the stage for organizing the interrelated sub-stories. The first story leads to a second story, which in turn leads to another. But these in-between stories are crafted in a manner that they also have some significance in themselves, and are therefore not treated like vehicles that are used conveniently to jump from one story to the other.

EXPLORATIONS: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

UNDERSTANDING FRAMED NARRATIVE:

In a nested narrative a story sits within another story. I understood that a framed story answers the “why” “how”, and “who” of another story. Sub-stories are utilized to tell the back-story of the character, which is usually revealed, partially or in full, chronologically or otherwise, as the main narrative unfolds.

It may raise questions like: If a character is at a certain place, then how did he reach there? How is he related to the characters in another story? Why did he go there, what was the reason? The whole answers the parts.

Framed Narrative structure can be used in either of the following:

SINGLE STORY:

Here the writer puts the readers’ reactions in the story in form of the characters listening to it. This is done to engage the reader’s interest by telling the story to answer the curiosity of his listeners, or by warning them that the story began in an ordinary seeming way, but they must follow it to understand later actions.

This type stories also includes dream vision, where the narrator claims to have gone to sleep, dreamed the events of the story, and then awoken to tell the tale.

A SET OF STORIES:

There will be set of interconnected stories, starting with the main, introductory story.

Example: I write letters to my sister describing the story told to me by my friend; this story contains the monster’s story; the monster’s story even briefly contains the story of a family he had been living amongst.

Other examples are Epics Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Vishnu Sharma’s Panchatantra.

The Panchatantra, is an early example of framed narrative. It is the collection of fables that is framed by the story of a sage, Vishnu Sharma. Vishnu Sharma has been appointed by the king to teach his dim-witted princes about the kingly conduct. Vishnu Sharma decides the best way to teach these principles is with fables, so he tells stories around the five principles which they need to learn to be effective leaders.

I wanted to use multiple stories over a single story structure as it gives an opportunity to weave three seemingly independent stories to make it a part of one strong story.

PRE-PRODUCTION

STORY DEVELOPMENT

After understanding the structure, I began to write different stories and tried to merge them to form a single story.

INITIAL IDEAS:

1.

In a Child's mind's eye, a stick can be a cricket bat, a sword, a tool, a writing implement...or a cardboard box can be a car, a space ship, or house...or a piece of paper can be made in an airplane, a hat, or a kite...maybe an imaginary character following a child as he or she walks around and finds these things and then showing how in his or her mind he or she perceives these things as more than just a stick, box or paper.

2.

Girl Reading a book – What is it that will make her take interest in the book ? Reading pictures is the first step towards reading words. Helps in absorbing the details. May be a train journey, mountain adventure, spy stories, treasure hunt. As she starts reading it, the scene is taken to the fantasy world. Or may be connecting to an old story in a personal way or there could be any back-story that the girl imagines in the book world. Objects in the real life become characters in the story. Ordinary people in her real life are visualized as transformed personalities in the fantasy.

3.

Secret Diary:

She finds a diary of her grandfather, and in that diary, grandpa has written about his experiences when he was lost in a jungle amidst a tribal area.



4:

Kids have become like puppets in our modern society. Where they simply have to follow the instructions of their parents and teachers. They feel highly pressurized and hardly have the time to do what they love.

There is a child who is playing the snake and ladder game with her cousin. They play with the tokens that move according to the throw of dice. These tokens represent their own selves, their dreams and the problems they face. These tokens will be the characters in the other world of the board game. The ladders in the game will show the positives or the blissful moments. The snakes are the metaphor of the negative things like greed, jealousy, lack of confidence.

It gives a possibility to explore three different worlds:

1. The modern world where the child lives.
2. The characters in the form of tokens on the board.
3. Their journey in the game.

The snake and ladder game actually represented "Moksha Patamu" that the good deeds lead to salvation (Moksha) while doing evil results in lower forms of life (Patamu). The ladders are less in number than the snakes showing that the path of good is difficult.

5:

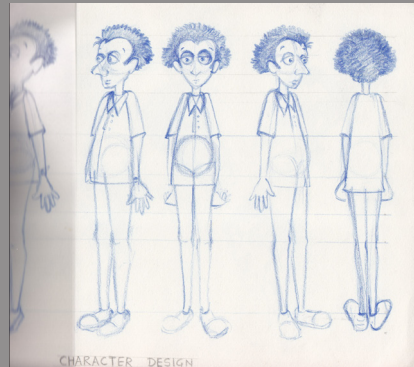
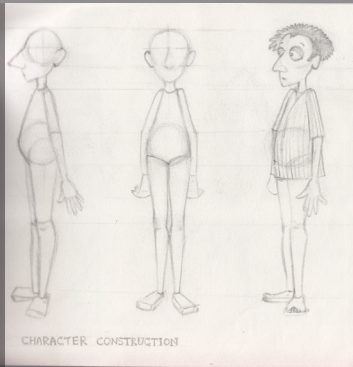
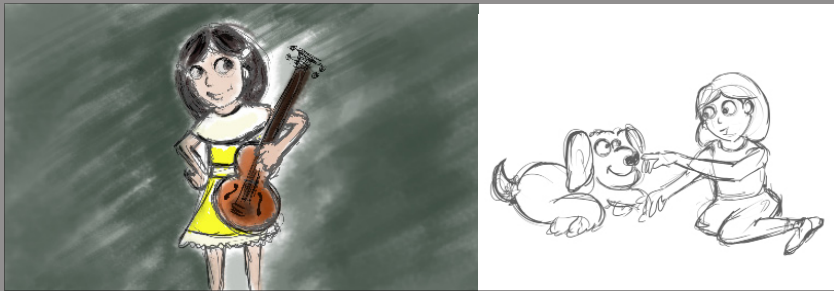
Role reversal: Water babies:

A birds' family (pelican) goes on a picnic to a nearby lakeside, and they find a baby in the lotus.

6.

A girl listens to the story from her pet parrot in the cage.

The parrot tells the story about the times where people used to live in the tree houses



7.

Mr. Ghosh receives a present one morning from his friend on his birthday. He gets all excited when he sees a violin in the box. He is a music lover, and listens to a lot of classical violin music.

He has a pet cat. She is generally very calm and docile. One day when he returns home from work, he finds the violin broken.

He gets very upset, but when he takes the broken violin in hands, to his surprise he finds a note inside the body of violin. Someone named Tina had written the letter. She has also stuck a label at the end of the letter, with her picture. Which shows her full name, school. The color of the violin is also chipped off from some parts. And Mr. Ghosh could see the drawings made by the kid. He rubs off the color to reveal the drawings behind the paint.

The drawings and letter bring back the old memories and he decides to gift a violin to Tina. Mr. Ghosh remembers his past. When he used to play with his son. He is emotionally touched when he reads the letter. And he decides to buy a new violin for Tina.

A violin gifted by Tina's uncle is one of her prized possessions. She has covered it with drawings, and also has written a secret letter and slid it inside the body of violin. Now, in some adverse situation, she loses the violin. (may be it is stolen/ she forgets it somewhere/ she has to put it under the items for auction/ while shifting home/ lent to someone but never returned)

It reaches a person who has a shop of musical instruments. He repaints it and makes it look like a brand new. Someone buys it from the shop and gifts it to Mr. Ghosh. The drawings and letter in the violin bring back the old memories and he decides to gift a violin to Tina.

At the end, a doorbell rings; it is Tina's house. And she receives a present. She opens it in excitement. And finds a violin.

Finalizing the story:

In my initial attempts, the transition from one story to the other was not as effective as it should have been. Then after a bit of reading and contemplation I came up with 3 different stories that had the potential to be a part of the single story. I continued to work on it and tried to find the ways to make it more interesting by cutting back and forth to different stories rather than having a sequential structure.

My final story is about a child awaiting a gift from his Dadaji (grandfather).

The sequence of events in the film is not linear; the relation between the grandfather and the child is revealed only at the end of the film.

SCRIPT

INT. DADAJI'S ROOM, NIGHT:

Dadaji, a storyteller, is busy making his new book sculpture. There is a bulb hanging in the front above the book sculpture. Some scrap is lying on the table. Things in front of him are blurred. Dadaji blinks, strains his eyes to see things clearly. Suddenly a bee comes into the frame. The bee goes near the light bulb. Everything is still blurred. Dadaji puts on his glasses. Things become clearer now. He looks at the bee and shoos it away. Then he looks at the book. Things on the book are clearly visible now. One can clearly see that there are trees & a house on the book sculpture. Soft yellow light comes out of the house. Dadaji puts another tree on the book sculpture. He smiles.

He carefully looks at things lying on the table. He is making a book sculpture where a mother is narrating a bedtime story to her daughter.

He takes a cutout sketch of the mother lying on the table and glues it to the book. He also takes a cutout sketch of the daughter and glues it. He carefully adjusts the characters. Then he searches for something from the mess lying on the table. He finds a small book, which is then placed in the hands of the mother.

Dadaji happily looks at the book sculpture. He smiles. Then he leans back in his chair and falls asleep.

INT. DADAJI'S TABLE, BOOK SCULPTURE, NIGHT:

When Dadaji falls asleep, the characters on the book sculpture come to life. The mother opens her eyes, lifts her head. She blinks. There are paper trees behind her on the book sculpture. Also, there is a soft yellow light coming from the house on the same book sculpture. After sometime the daughter also opens her eyes. The Mother smiles at her. The daughter looks at her mother who has a book in her hands. Book cover page shows the title: "Bedtime stories". The daughter bends and asks her mother to narrate a story from the book. The mother smiles and turns the page. On the next page there is an illustration of balloons. She turns the page. Another illustration shows children wearing the birthday caps with the birthday decoration on the walls. Next page shows the birthday cake, children are very excited. On the next page Chintu is blowing out the candles.

INT. CHINTU'S ROOM, NIGHT:

Face of Chintu in the illustration blurs. There is a transition of Chintu in the book illustration to real life where Chintu is shown sitting on the bed in his room, looking out of the window. It is night's time but he is not sleepy. He is gazing at the stars. The house of Chintu is shown in the extreme long shot. There is a voice over of his mother asking him to go to sleep. She asks him not to open any of the gifts until morning. The light in Chintu's room goes off. Then the light in the mother's room goes off. After some time, the light in Chintu's room is turned on. It is still the extreme long shot of the house.

INT. DADAJI'S TABLE, BOOK SCULPTURE, NIGHT:

Mother turns the page of the book in her hands.

INT. CHINTU'S ROOM, NIGHT:

Chintu gets off his bed. He is keen on searching for a special birthday present. He wears his slippers and goes to the living room. There is a stack of gifts lying in front of Chintu. Room was decorated for his birthday. He looks at the gifts, camera panning from his eye level to the ceiling. He thinks for a while. He pulls one gift that is wrapped with bright colored paper and the entire pile of boxes falls down making some audible sound.

INT. DADAJI'S ROOM, NIGHT:

Dadaji suddenly wakes up. He is puzzled. He looks here n there to figure out what made that sound.

INT. DADAJI'S TABLE, BOOK SCULPTURE, NIGHT:

Mother and daughter quickly take their initial position.

INT. DADAJI'S ROOM, NIGHT:

Dadaji goes to sleep again.

INT. DADAJI'S TABLE, BOOK SCULPTURE, NIGHT:

Daughter: Show me! show me, what's happened!

Mother: Shhhhhhh...

Mother then smiles and looks at Dadaji's face to make sure that he is asleep. She then continues with the story from the page where they stopped. The page shows all the gifts scattered and they surround Chintu.

INT. CHINTU'S ROOM, NIGHT:

Chintu looks here n there, hoping none should wake up. The gift boxes surround Chintu. He is searching for a special gift and seems least interested in the rest of them. He fumbles through the boxes. Eventually he gets up and searches for the gift under the couch, and then he remembers something and runs back to his room. He stands in front of the wardrobe. Uses the stool to get to the top of it. Only his hand reaches the top of the wardrobe. He gropes for the gift on top of the wardrobe.

INT. DADAJI'S TABLE, BOOK SCULPTURE, NIGHT:

Close up of daughter: But what is he searching?

Mother smiles.

Mother: he is searching for his special birthday gift.

Daughter (loudly): Special Birthday gift??

INT. CHINTU'S ROOM, NIGHT:

A ball falls from the top of the wardrobe. It rolls under the bed revealing some shiny thing. Chintu jumps off the table and looks under the bed, there he sees a gift nicely wrapped. He looks extremely happy. He pulls the gift box and screams out of joy.

INT. Dadaji's table, Book Sculpture, Night:

Daughter: He found it!!

INT. DADAJI'S ROOM, NIGHT:

Alarm rings in the room. Dadaji coughs. Begins to resume his work.

INT. DADAJI'S TABLE, BOOK SCULPTURE, NIGHT:

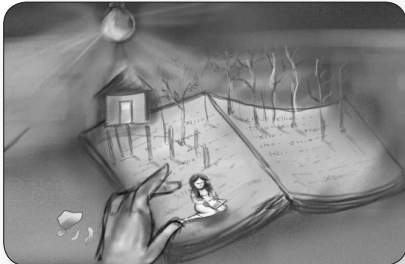
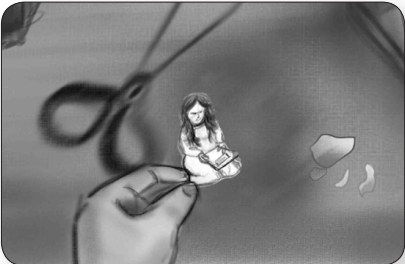
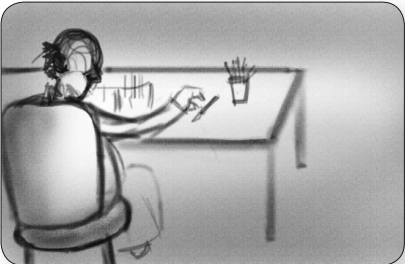
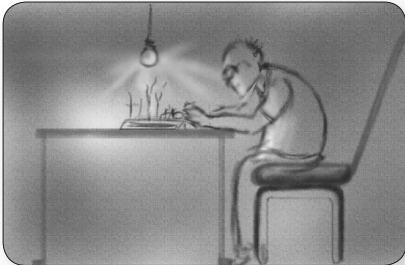
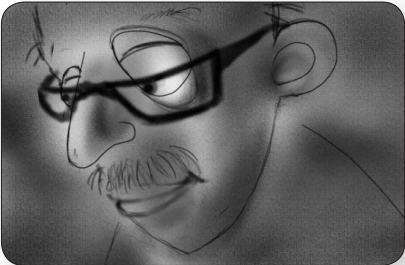
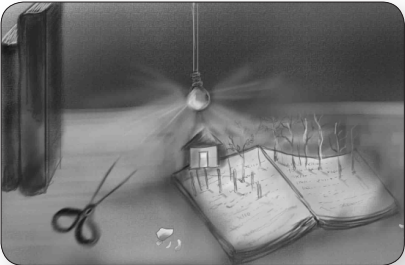
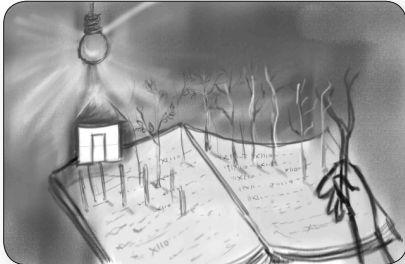
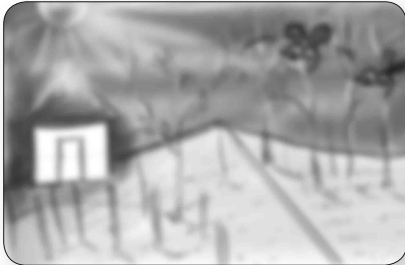
Mother and daughter are in their initial position.

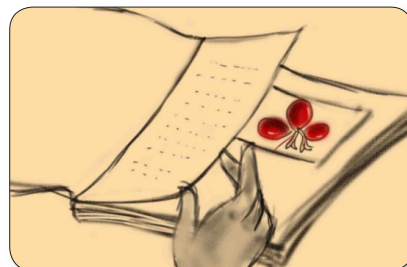
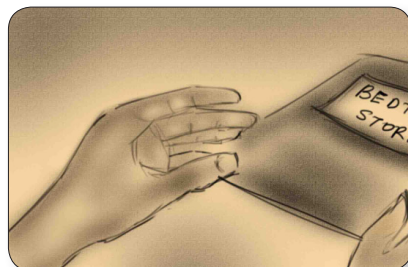
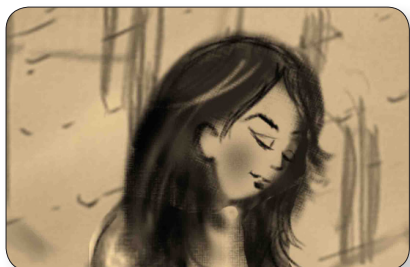
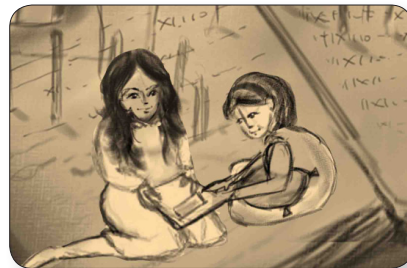
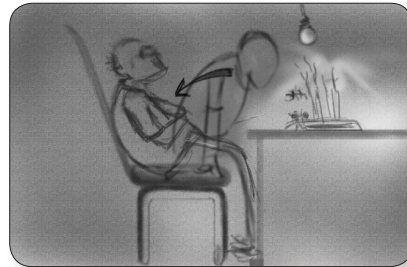
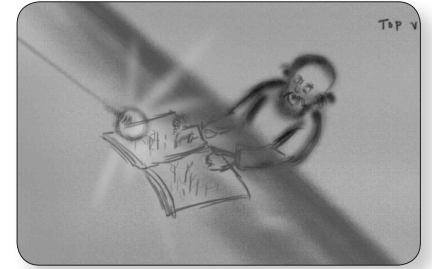
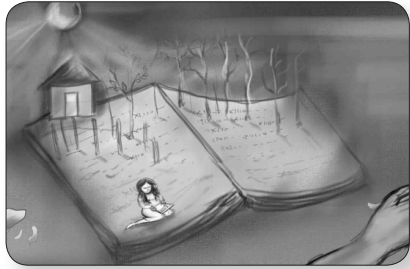
INT. DADAJI' ROOM, NIGHT:

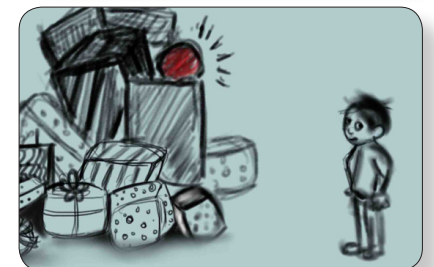
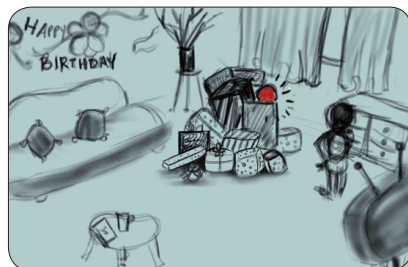
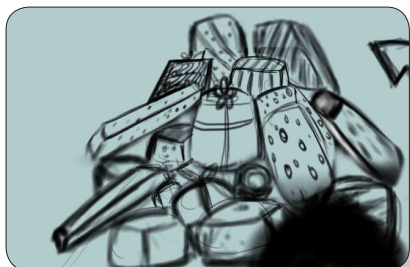
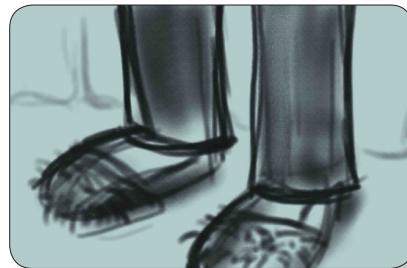
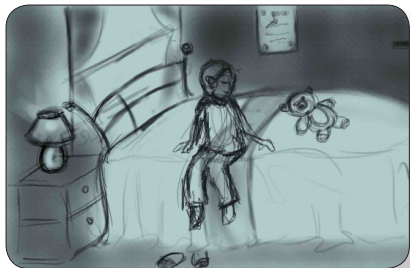
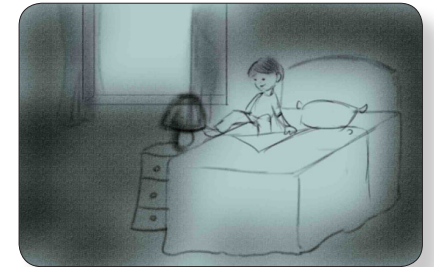
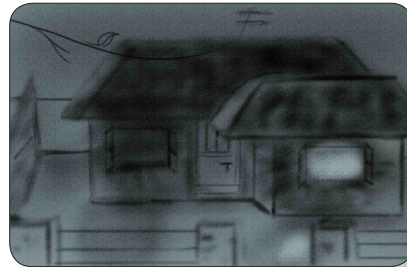
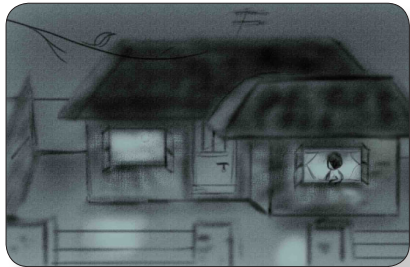
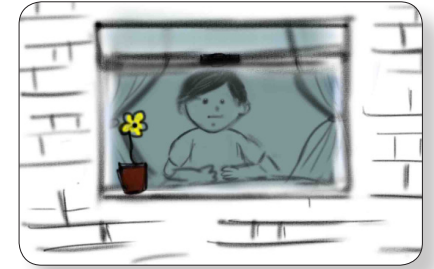
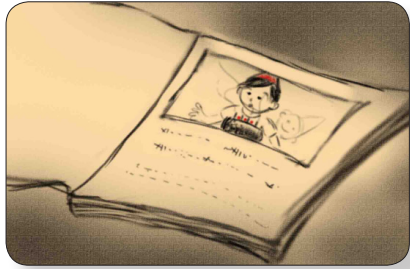
Dadaji carefully looks at the book sculpture. Then he closes the book. He gift packs the book sculpture. Folds the wrapping paper and ties the ribbon. He leaves the chair and the camera pans to show the scraps of gift papers and ribbons lying on the table. (These ribbons and wrapping paper match with the gift that Chintu finds under the bed) Camera Pans to show the calendar that has date 30 marked on it. He keeps the gift under the bed. Smiles. Camera pans to the wall and shows the photo frames on the wall. These photo frames show the wonderful memories of child with his grandfather. Camera zooms to one of the frames where Dadaji and the child are shown, with the gift in hands.

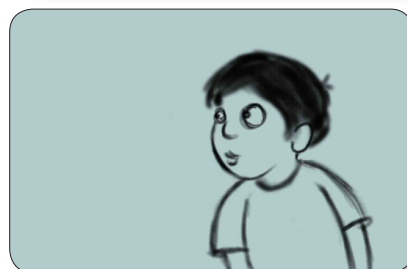
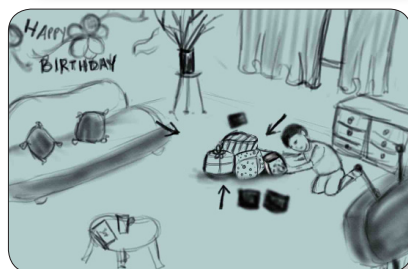
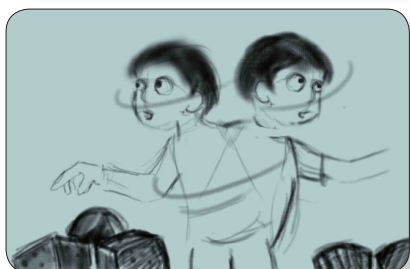
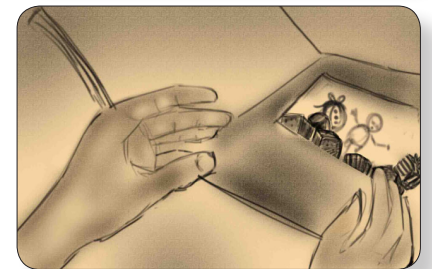
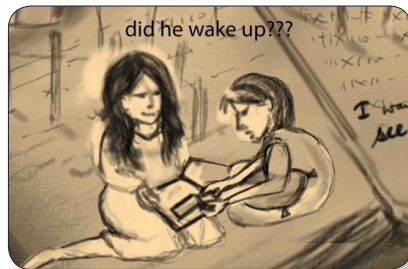
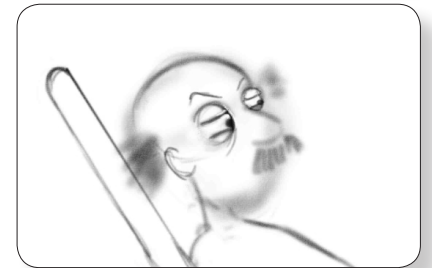
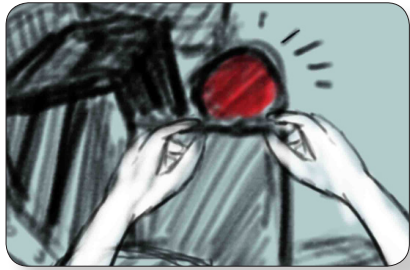
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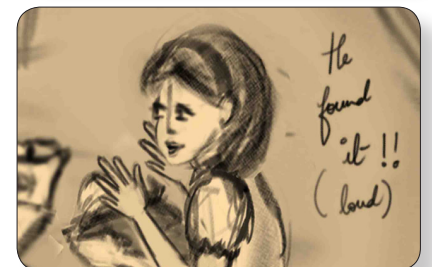
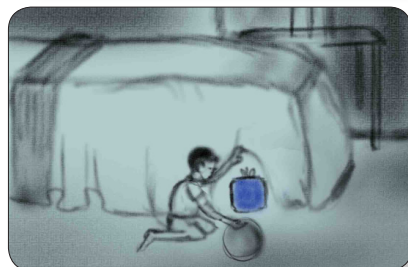
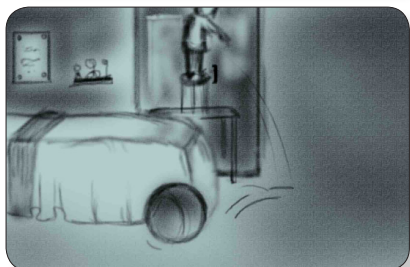
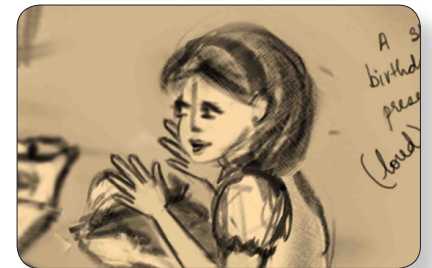
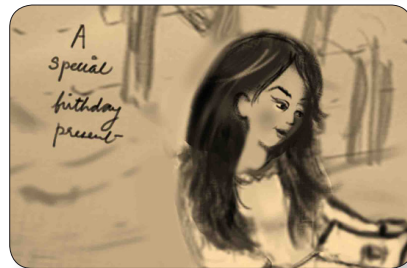
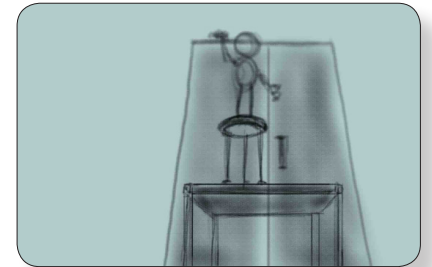
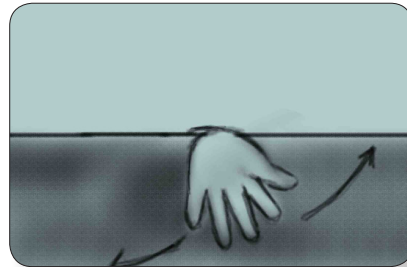
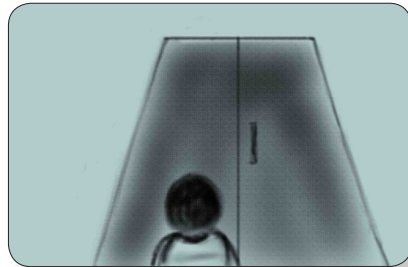
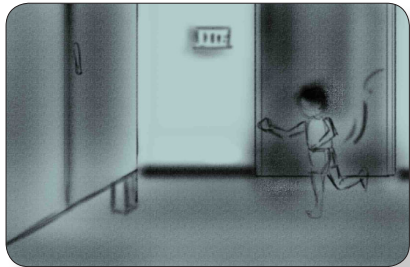
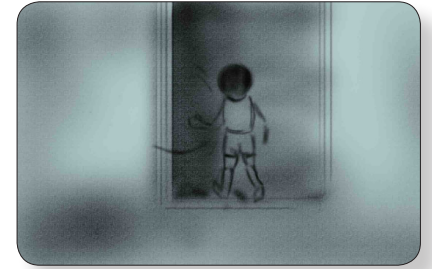
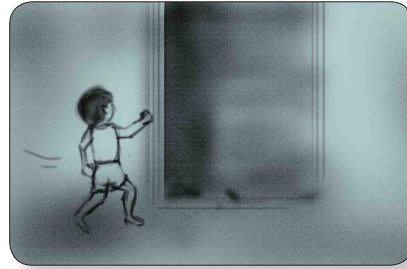
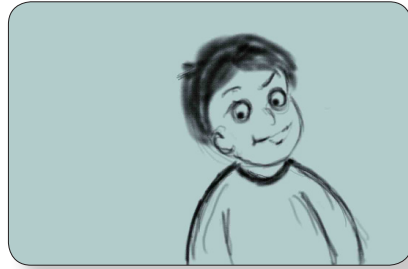
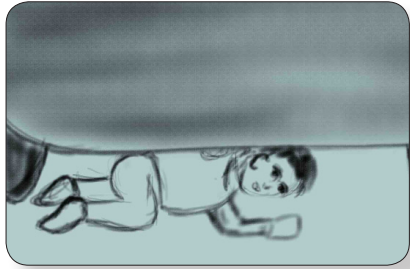
STORYBOARD

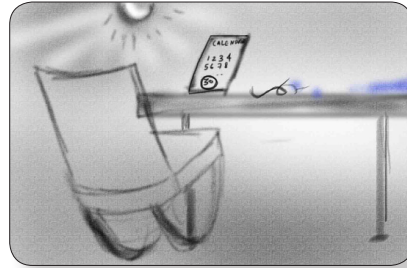
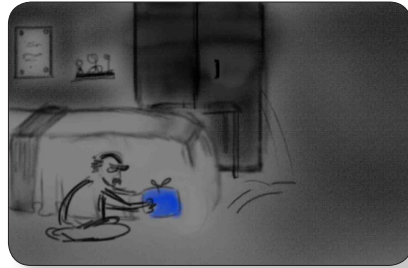
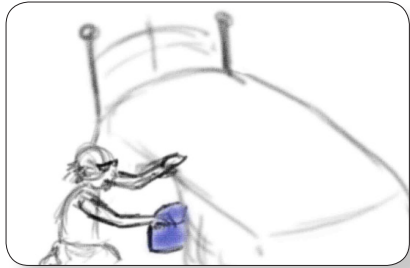
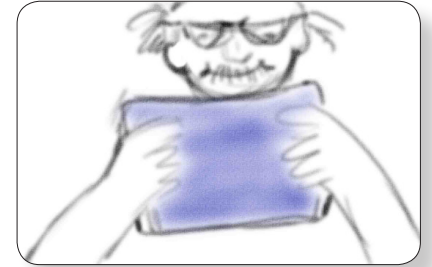
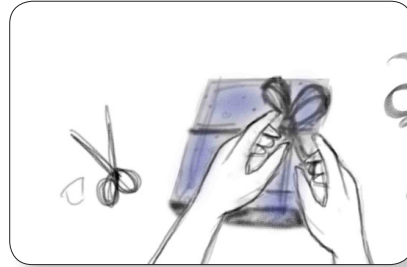
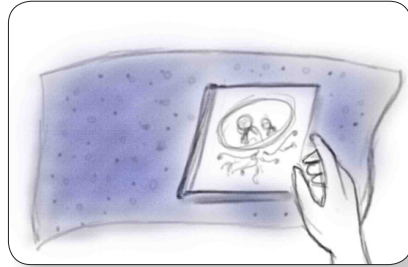
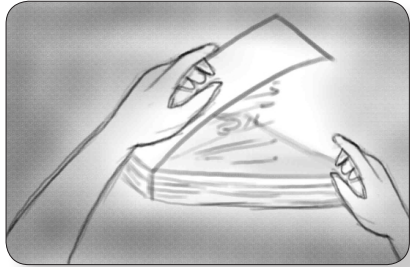
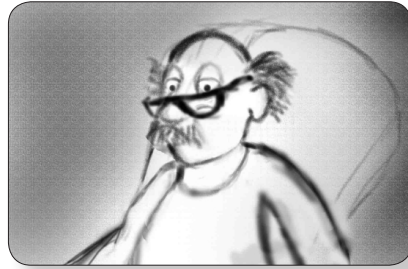
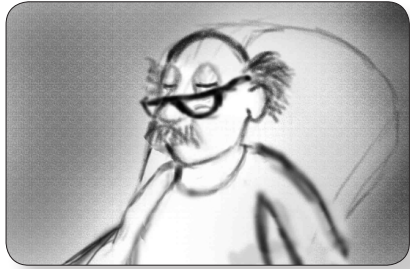












CONCEPT ART



Interior of Dadaji's room

Images from the bed-time story book:



Book Sculpture



EXPLORING MEDIUMS: Visual references & Inspiration

EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

The concept of a framed narrative and the structure of my story allowed me to try different mediums for animation.

Like the first part where grandfather is making a book sculpture gave me a possibility to work with Clay. The sequence where mother and daughter are interacting, they being the cutouts, naturally the chosen medium was cutout animation.

And the last part where the boy is searching for his gift, because it is a story told from a storybook, I decided to do it in classical hand-drawn animation. Also some part is to be shot in live action and then integrated with the animation footage.



Mary and Max



The PJs

CLAYMATION

The works of Aardman Studio filmmakers, Tim Burton, Harryhausen and Harvie Krumpet, have always fascinated me. Claymation in PJs, Creature Comforts, Wallace and Gromit, Chicken run, Shaun the Sheep, Coraline, Mary and Max, The Necktie by Jean Francais have been inspirations for me. A visit to Vaibhav Studios, gave me an insight into what is required in making a claymation film. There I learnt the making of the clay models.



Harry Hausen with his models



Chicken Run

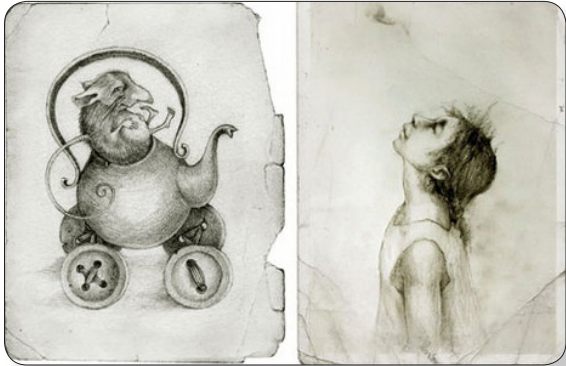


The Necktie by Jean Francais



VARIATION WITH CLAYMATION:

One variation that I wanted to try with Claymation was, to try live footage of human eyes and match it with the clay models' eyes. This technique I had seen in some of the videos online by the filmmaker Carlos Lascano, which was very impressive hence I tried incorporating that in my film.



Rima Staines

CUTOUT ANIMATION

INSPIRATIONS:

RIMA STAINES: For her very feminine style of illustrations and cut out animation.

SU BLACKWELL: For the Book Sculpture.

CARLOS LASCANO: For his mix-media techniques using 3D live action, 2D, Clay to make the film look very raw yet extremely motivating making me wonder as to how those things would have been achieved.



Su Blackwell



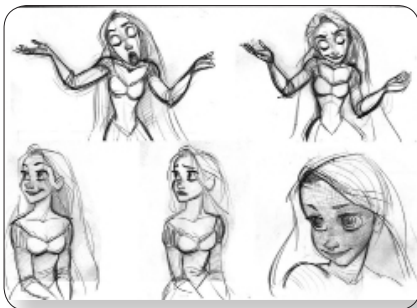
Carlos Lascano



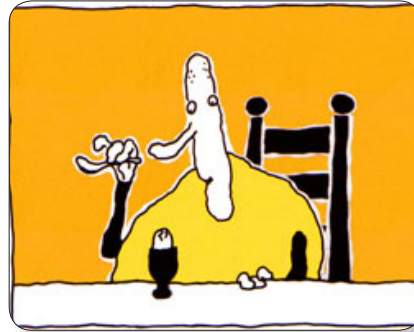
'The Chestnut Tree'
by Hyun Min Lee



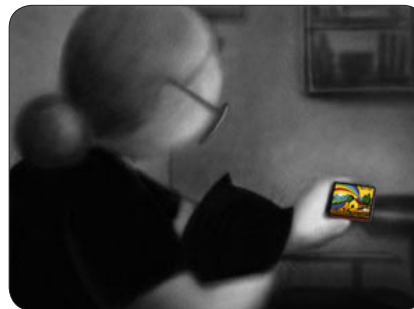
'Your Face'
by Bill Plympton



Rapunzel sketches
by Glen Keane



'Killing of an Egg'
by Paul Drissen



'Printed Rainbow'
by Geetanjali Rao

HAND DRAWN ANIMATION

For certain part of the film, I wanted an unrefined and very sketchy look, while for some part, a semi realistic look; achieving this using the help of the tools available was an interesting part in the learning process. However, I also wanted to learn the process of 2D animation. Line testing, cleaning up of line-tested images, applying colors and textures, compositing were crucial to understand the process.

INSPIRATIONS:

Paul Drissen, Bill Plympton, Glen Keane, Geetanjali Rao, Hyun Min Lee's The Chestnut Tree.



CHARACTER DESIGN

There are four characters in the film: Dadaji, Dadaji's grandson Chintu, a mother and her daughter.

I made two models in clay: Dadaji and the child. The child was made so that I can shoot both of them with the gift for the photo frames. However for the film, only Dadaji's clay character had to be animated.

DADAJI:

Dadaji is an old man, with specs. He is an artist. He has a big moustache which almost covers up his mouth.

THE CHILD:

The child's characteristics are playful, quick and mischievous.

THE MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER:

These are the characters on the book sculpture. It is a night scene shot with the light coming from the house on the book sculpture along with the ambient light of Dadaji's room. Mother is narrating a bedtime story to her daughter.

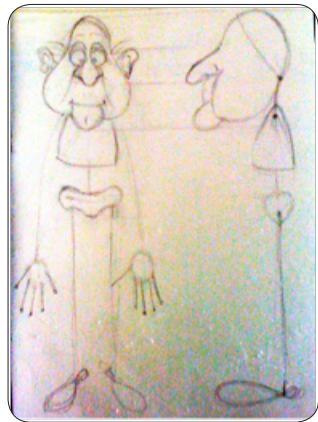


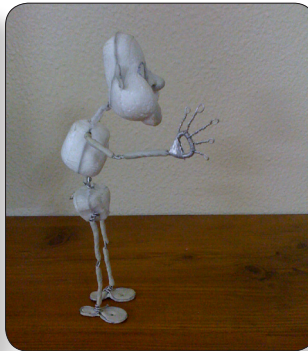
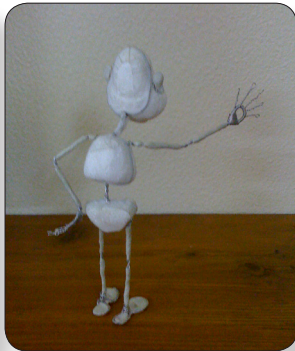
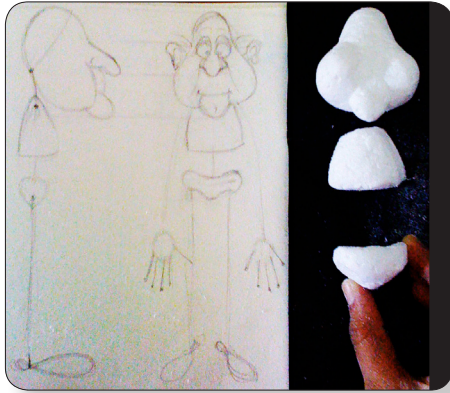


MAKING THE CLAY MODEL:

MATERIAL & TOOLS REQUIRED FOR MAKING THE ARMATURE:

1. Aluminum wire, dia 6 mm for making the body
2. Aluminum wire, dia 2 mm for making the fingers
3. Flat nose pliers.
4. Bent nose pliers
5. High density thermocol
6. Character sketch
7. Blade
8. Scissors
9. Fevicol
10. Sand paper: 80, 220, 400
11. Sponge sheet
12. Palanco's rubber solution
13. Doctor tape
14. Hobby idea's white m-seal





- In the beginning I drew the character on paper in exact proportions with required shapes of its head and torso.
- Then I carved out the shape in high-density thermocol, and sanded it with a fine sand paper till the surface becomes smoother.
- After this, I applied a layer of fevicol on the pieces that have been carved out. This is to make the surface stronger as we need to fix wire over it. Also fevicol makes the surface even which helps later when one needs to apply clay over the surface.
- Then a medical tape is wound on the periphery of the thermocol pieces where wire is going to be wound.
- I took approximately 2m of 6 mm wire and started making the skeleton of the character as shown in the figure.
- Then m-seal is applied on the areas of bones. And wherever one needs the joints like areas of knee and elbow are left open in order to make movement. It is shown in the figure.

- After this, the detailing of face is done using m-seal. For making ears, I took 2mm wire and inserted in the place of ears. Then m-seal is applied to give it some volume. Nose is directly made of m-seal.
- After m-seal dries up, holes for the eyes were done using an incense stick.
- Because my character had to sit on the chair, I had to make sure that it does not move while animating it. And hence two loops were made from aluminium wire and fixed with the pelvis using medical tape.
- After m-seal dries up, sponge sheet is cut into strips and it is then wound over the armature. This is done to give volume to the skeleton that has been created. I used rubber solution to stick the sponge sheets on the armature.
- After this, the fingers are made using the aluminium wire of 2 mm thickness.
- After this, the clothes are done. I wanted my character to wear a kurta pajama and a sweater. Hence small sized clothes were stitched and then directly fixed on the model.
- The wire is used on the lower border which helps in creating follow through while animating.
- Tiny buttons in kurta were made using m-seal. Specs were made using mount board and m-seal.

CLAY:

- Skin shades were made using different portions of brown, red, yellow and white plasticine.
- It is always better to use minimum clay, because more clay increases weight of the characters and then starts toppling down while animating.
- Very thin layer of clay is applied only on the exposed parts like head and hands. It is advisable to make more clay of particular shade because clay gets dirty very fast and then matching the right shade gets difficult.

HAIR & MOUSTACHE:

- I wanted very realistic look for the hair and moustache. So I tried using the real hair, but it became quite unmanageable. Hence I had to use more stiffer clay, i-clay. It is lightweight, can be shaped easily and dries holding the desired shape.
- The only disadvantage of using the i-clay is it breaks off very easily after about a month.

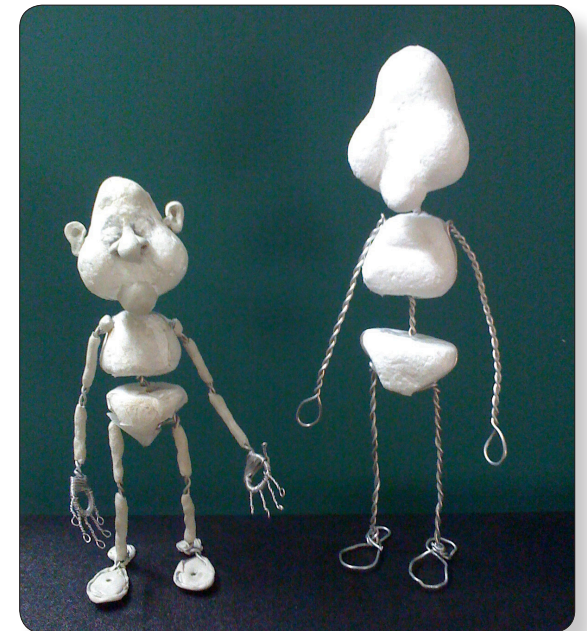
EYES:

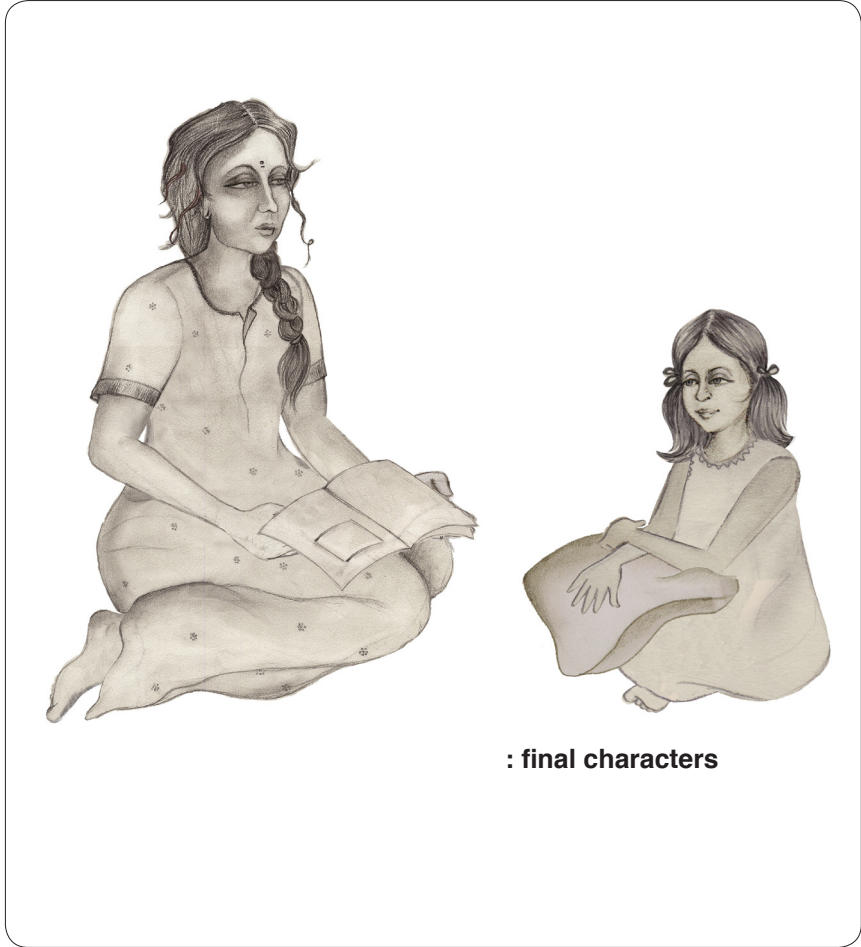
- Initially Eyes were made out of plastic beads. (Glass beads are better as they give nice realistic shine)
- These beads were painted white and then i painted iris on the top.
- Then later I decided to incorporate the live eyes in place of the eye beads. Hence I cut out a circular piece of white cardboard and marked the center with black dot so that it can be tracked in after effects. This piece was then stuck in place of the eyes of the character.

PROBLEMS FACED WHILE MAKING THE MODEL:

One has to make sure that the model that is made should not be too small otherwise it gives problems while animating. If the fingers are very small, it will be difficult to fold them in order to make the character grab or hold something. After making the models I realized that the Dadaji's model I made was too tiny to be animated. The height was 8 inches. Hence I made another model with height 10 inches.

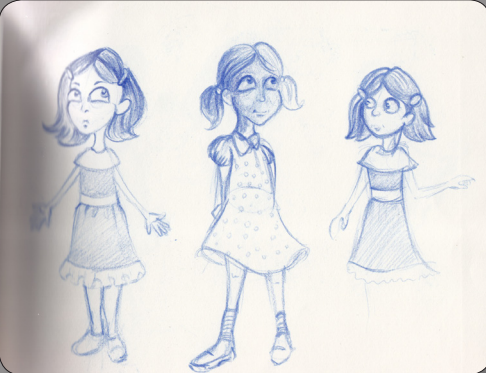
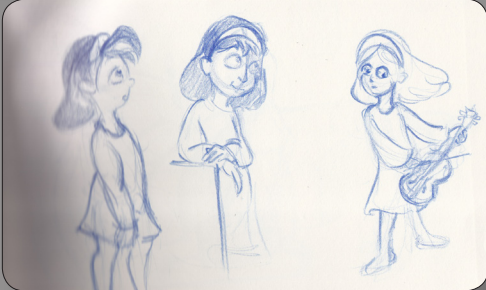
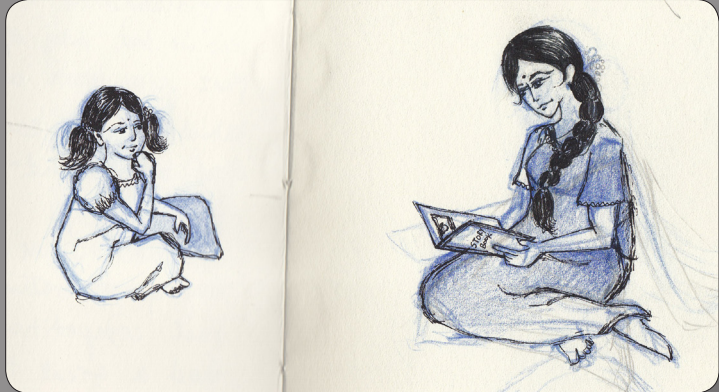
I realized that one should also have a backup character ready. Because towards the end of the shooting, the neck, one finger and the left shoulder joint of the main character(dadaji) broke. It made the whole process extremely slow. It was difficult to control the movement of the head as the neck was broken, So some of the shots were taken with the minimum or no movement of the head and one hand.





CHARACTERS OF THE MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER:

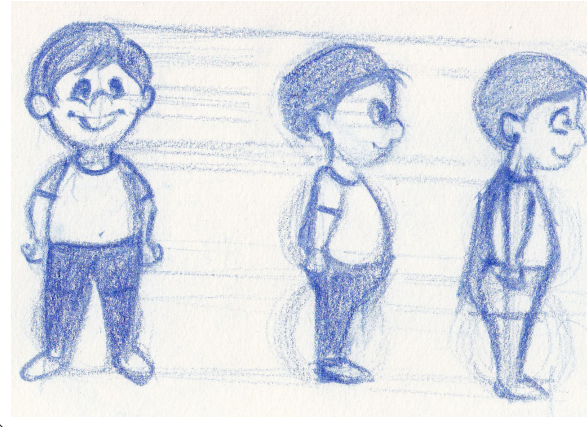
Initial Explorations:





CHARACTER OF THE GRANDSON:

Initial Explorations:

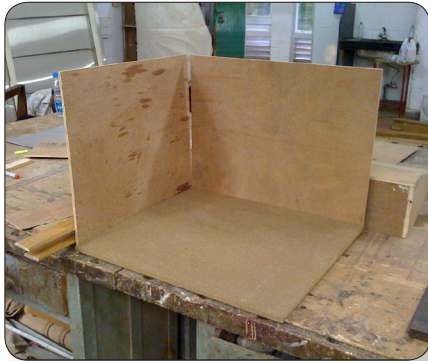


Though the character of the grandson (Chintu) was to be animated using classical hand-drawn animation, a clay model was made for the photoframes on the wall.



ENVIRONMENT DESIGN
: Dadaji's sequence



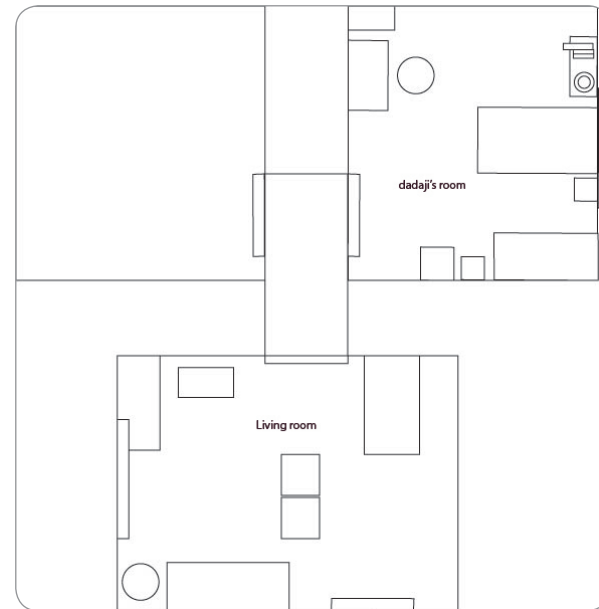


For the claymotion sequence, I wanted the house to look like an old house in 1980s with a nicely wood furnished interiors. And Dadaji being an artist, it should also reflect in the room that he works in. So I decided to use old vintage wallpaper for the walls.

Also in the film, the grandson searches for his special birthday present in the same room as that of Dadaji's, but the medium is different. Hence I decided to have some unique props to make the room look the same in the mediums.

I used plywood for the walls and soft board for the base. Soft board because the character and the furniture can be pinned to the board and one can make sure that nothing moves when we are animating

A rough plot was made to make sure that the room shown in the 2D sequence where the child (grandson) finds his special gift matches with Dadaji's room in Claymotion sequence.



I used following color palette for the room:

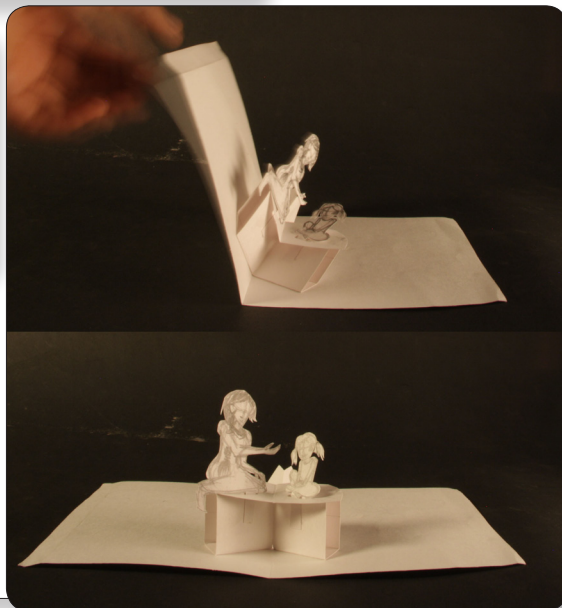
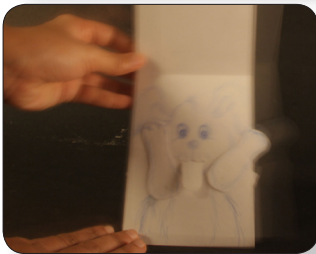
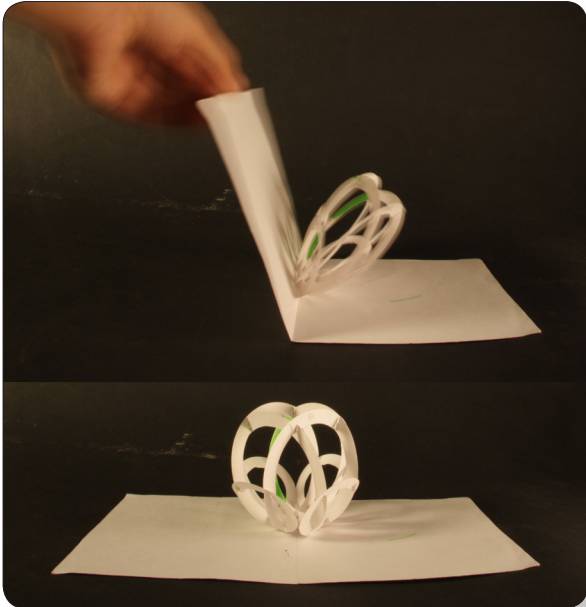




**ENVIRONMENT DESIGN:
Book Sculpture - Cutout sequence**



INITIAL POP-UP EXPLORATIONS:



For the sequence of book sculpture where a mother is narrating a bedtime story to her daughter, I used an old book as it has yellow colored pages that gives a very scenic look and has a unique feel to it.

My initial idea was to have the pop-up book instead of a book sculpture. So I tried a lot of pop-up techniques, referred to some paper architecture books by Chatani, Robert Sabuda & Matthew Reinhart.

But the entire structure was too difficult to be constructed in the pop-up. Hence I decided to make the book sculpture. Only a part of it was done in pop-up.

Everything is sculpted from the book except for the house and the characters. A thin aluminium wire is used so that the trees do not bend easily while doing stop motion. A low light is lit inside the house.

The book had to be a little bigger than A4 size and had to have a flat surface so that the trees, the house and the character stay straight on its surface.

A similar miniature had to be made for the claymation sequence.

The closeup sequence of the book sculpture where dadaji puts the characters of the mother and her daughter on the book sculpture is shot separately using pixillation technique wearing a glove and applying clay on it.



ENVIRONMENT DESIGN: Grandson sequence



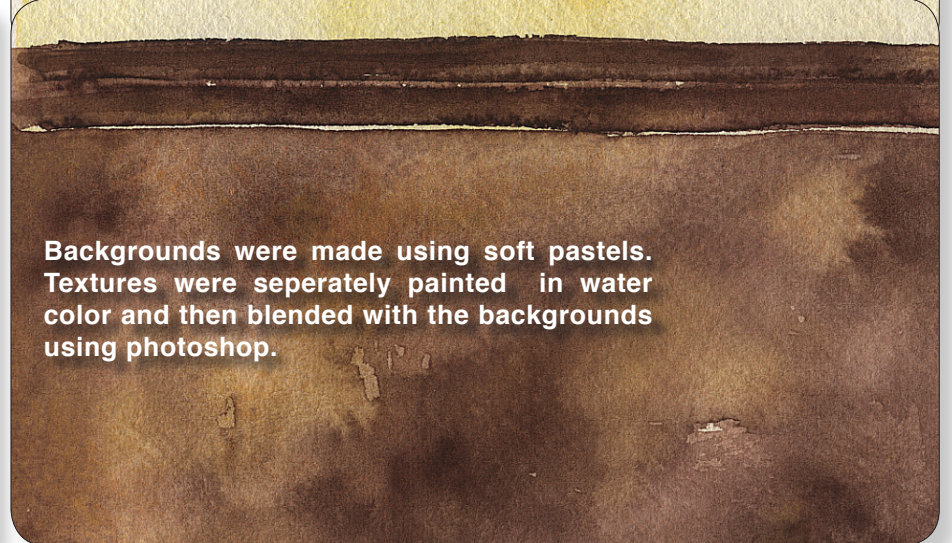
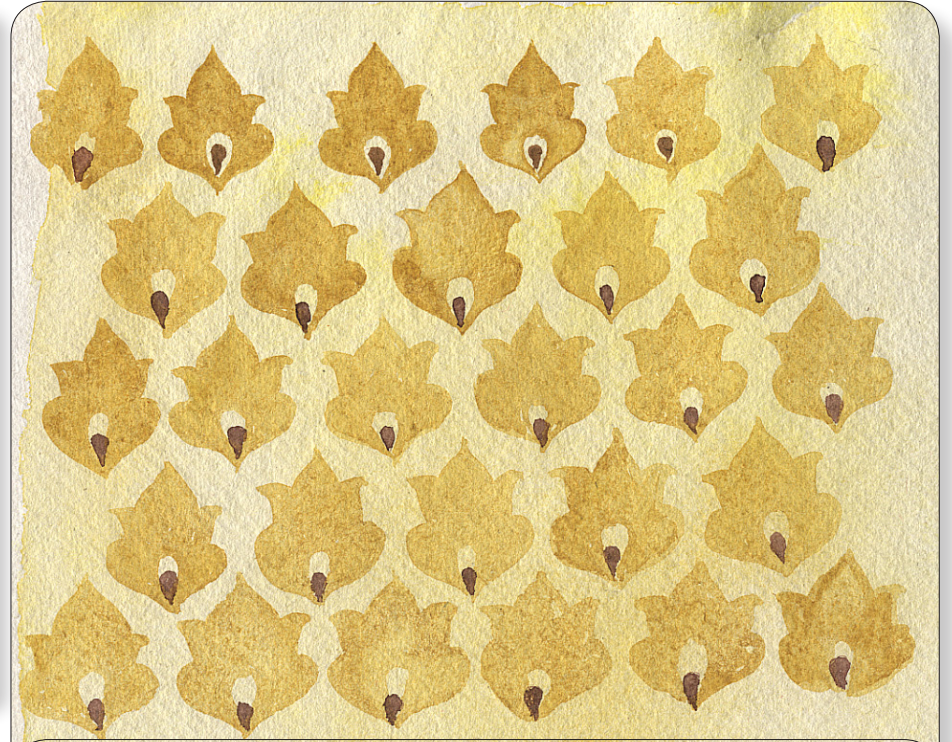
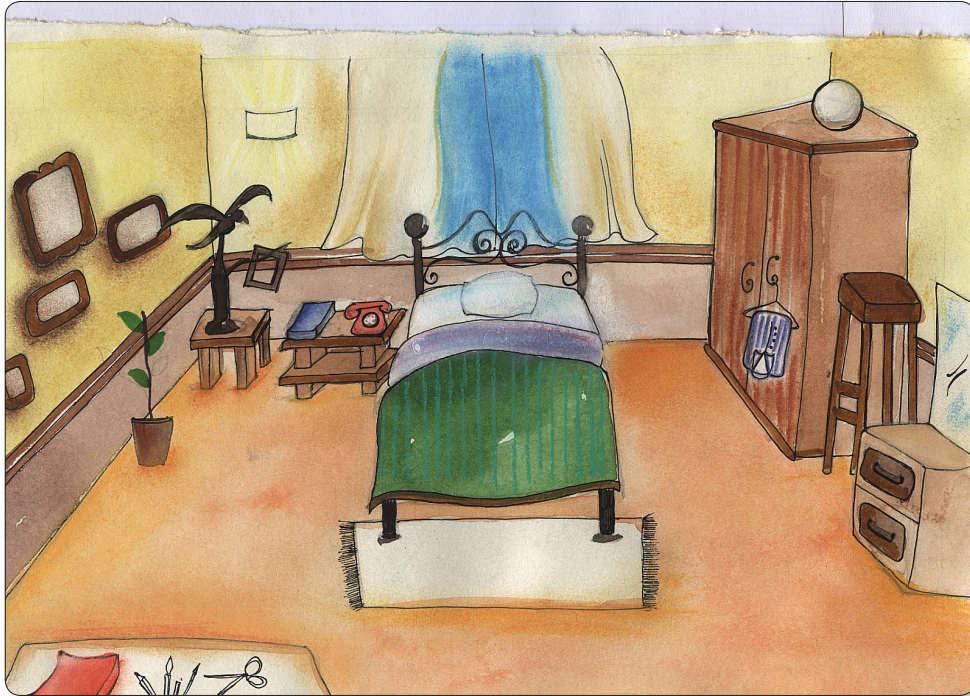
Initial Explorations:



The boy sequence is done in classical hand-drawn animation. The room had to be illustrated in such a way that the viewer can easily identify that it is the same room as that of Dadaji.

Here I chose the water color medium with some textures.



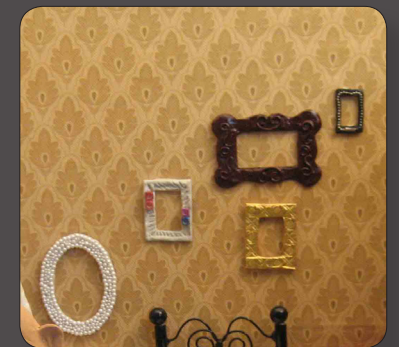


Backgrounds were made using soft pastels. Textures were seperately painted in water color and then blended with the backgrounds using photoshop.

Making the Props



In Process images





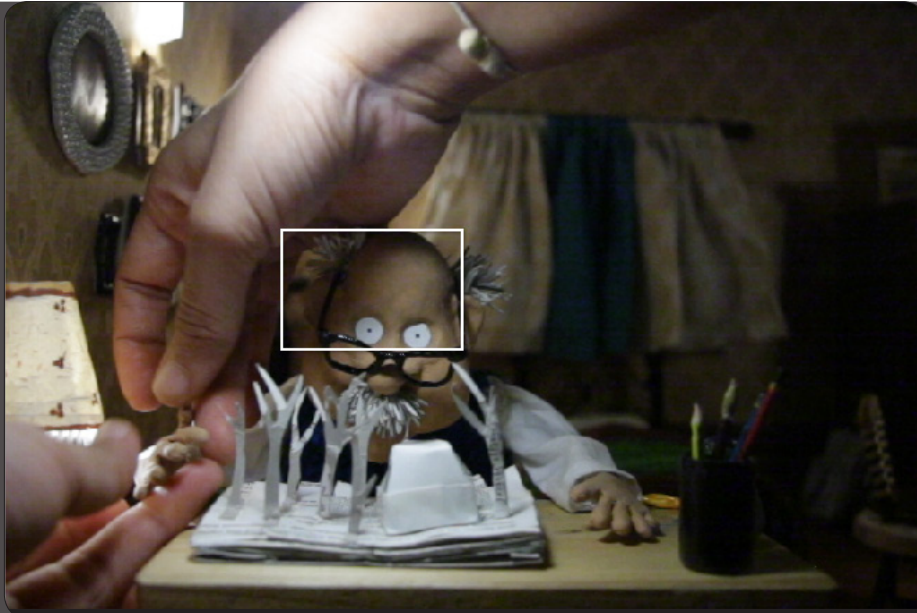


For the photoframes, all the photos were shot individually with all the characters.



Scale comparison:





PRODUCTION & POST-PRODUCTION

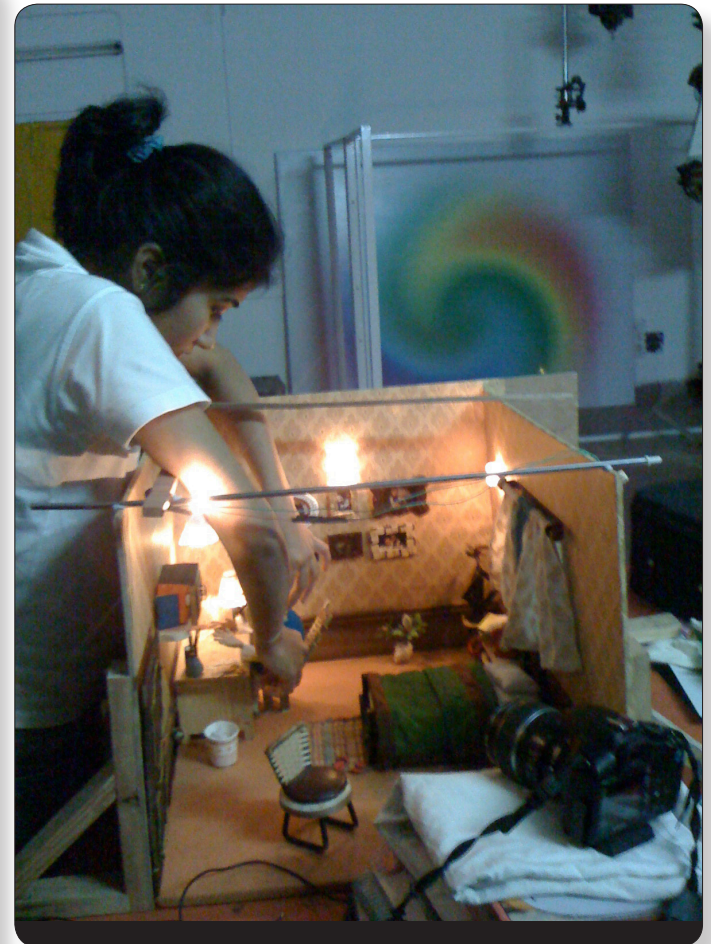
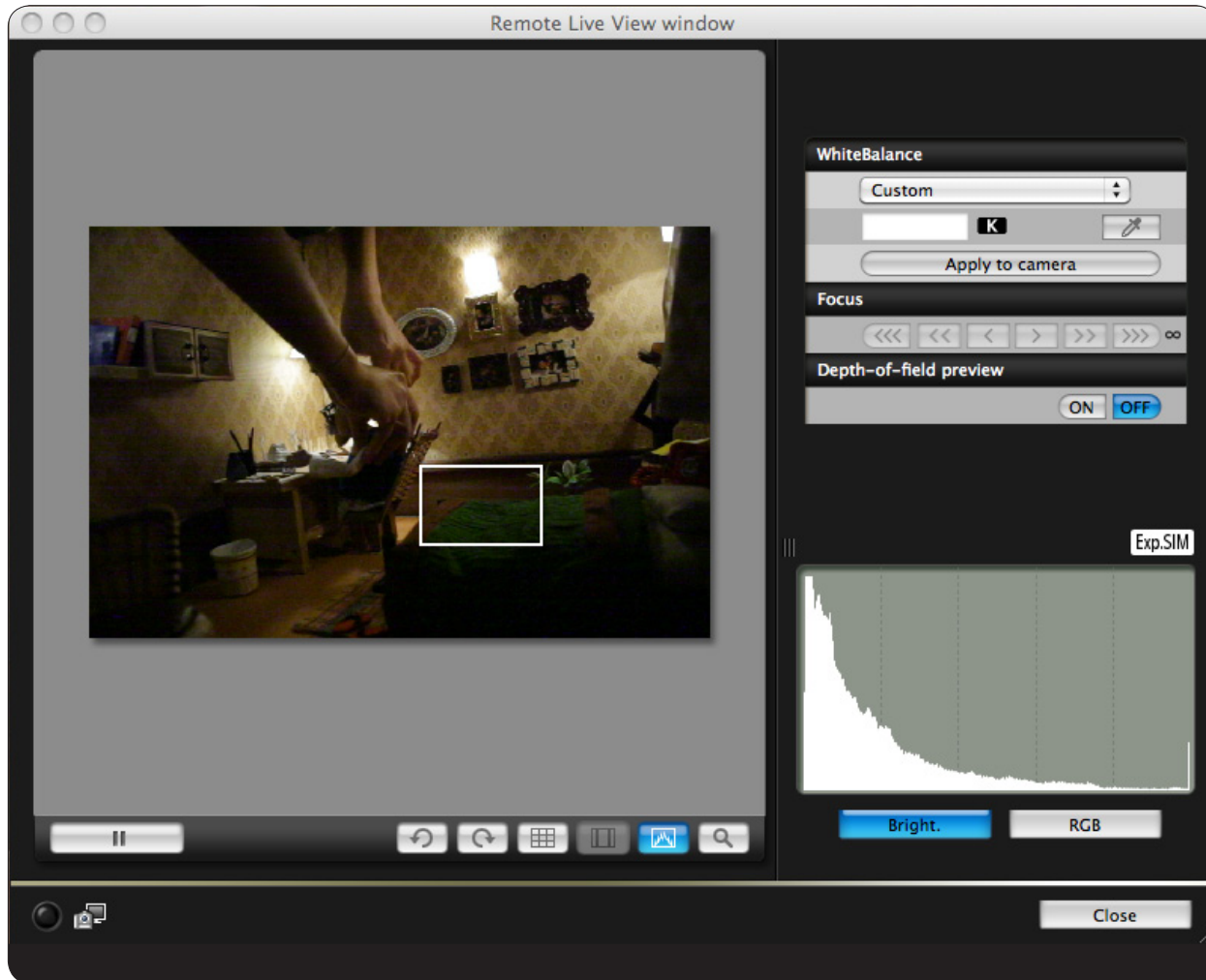
ANIMATION

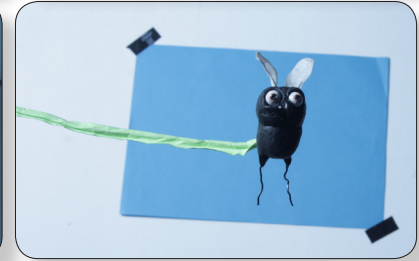
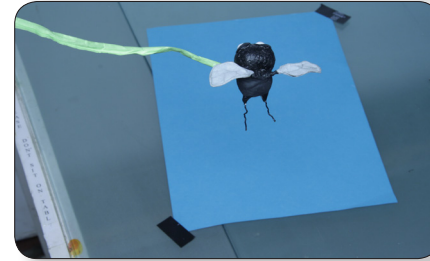
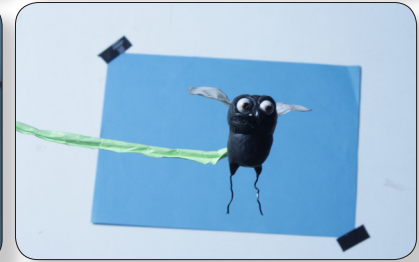
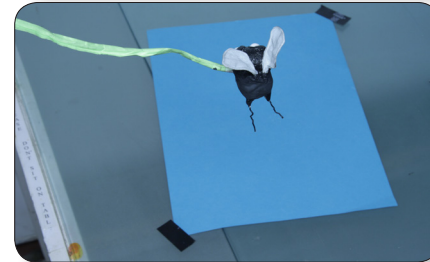
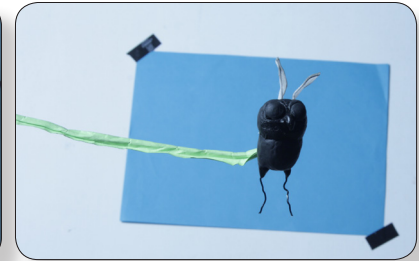
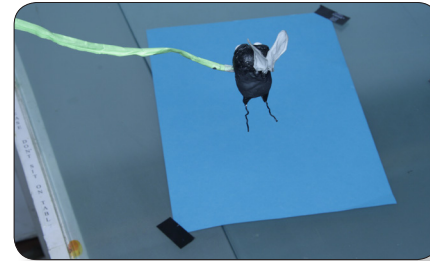
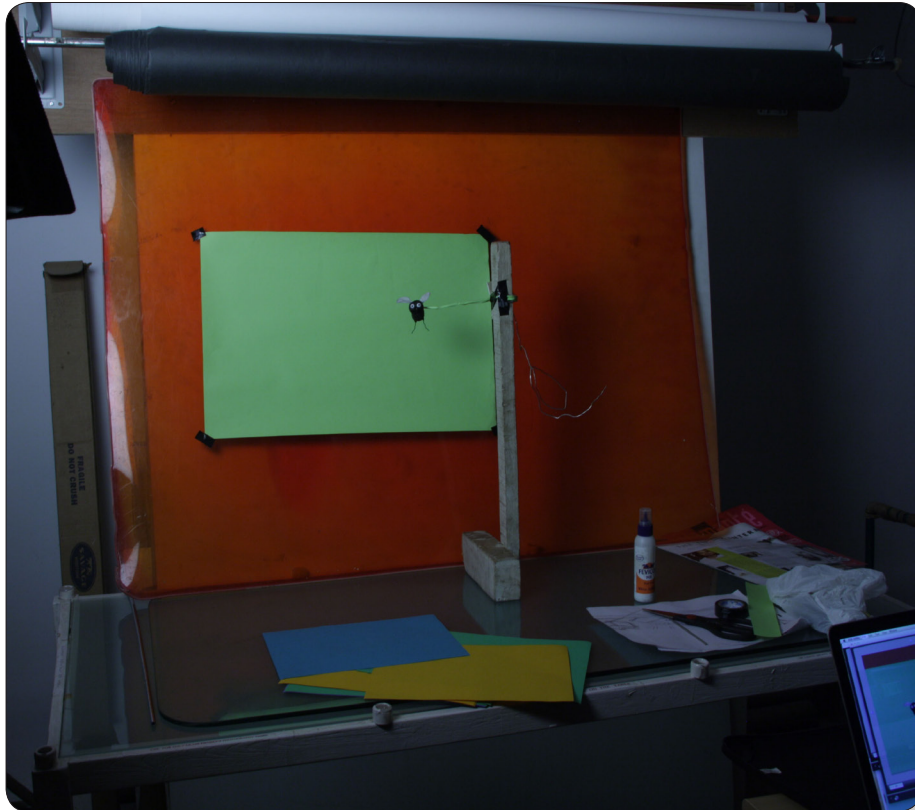
Stop motion animation started with reference from the animatics. Before starting the shoot, the camera angles were finalised so that all the shots having the same camera angle can be shot in one go. An excel sheet was made in order to plan the shots.

EOS utility was used as a remote capturing software for capturing the images using the laptop.

shot	FG	BG	Character	Cam	shot	Comment	3D element	Test reqd?
1	trees	room	dadaji	D		panning from the chair to dadaji's face	-	n
2		book, table,	bee	L		dadaji's POV blur spec frame crossing camera	wings in 3D	yes
3	trees	room	dadaji	D	book's pov	adjusts specs		
4		book, table	bee, dadaji's hand	L	dadaji's pov	dadaji shoos the bee away		
5.2				C	hand showing up from the front			
5				G	long shot, lamp's pov	dadaji's hands on the table's edge, looking at the door.		
6				G	Over the shoulder shot, lamp's	dadaji and the book sculpture, looking at the		

Canon EOS utility for the remote capture





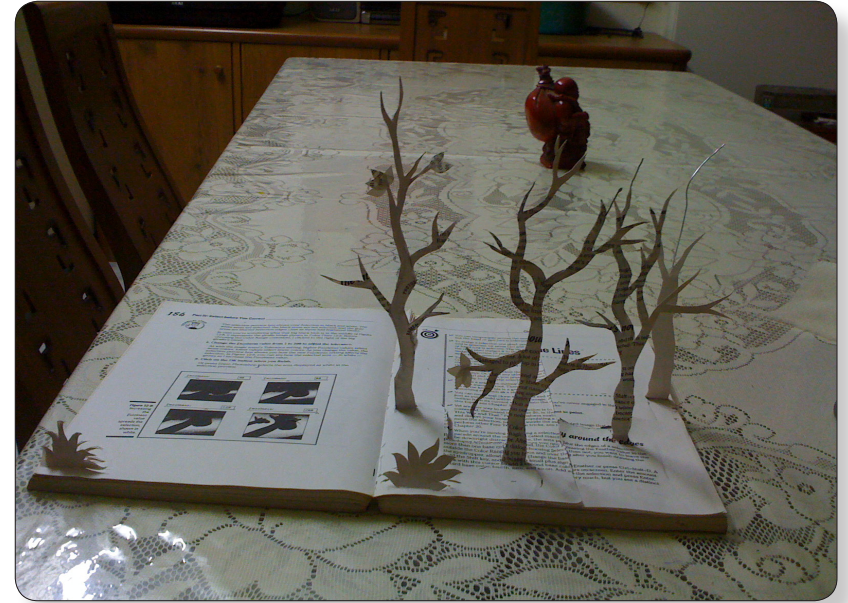
Bee animation was done against a green screen and then later the green /blue was removed in photoshop.



CLOSEUP SEQUENCE FOR DADAJI'S HAND:

For the close-up sequence of the book sculpture where dadaji puts the characters of the mother and her daughter on the book sculpture, the hand was covered with a glove and then the skin color clay was applied on the glove.

Animation was done using pixillation - frame by frame by moving the hand and the fingers.



Also, initially tracker points(green) were used in place of mother and daughter and panning shots were tried.

Camera was moved such that it first shows the trees on the right and then the camera moves to the left showing the green tracker points. These tracker/markers were to be replaced by the characters of mother and daughter.

But it didn't work and hence, the animation was done using after effects where mother and daughter were animated using cut-outs as individual layers in after effects and the background was separately shot.





Production & Post-production

CAMERA

Canon 1000 D was used to shoot the stop motion sequence of the film.

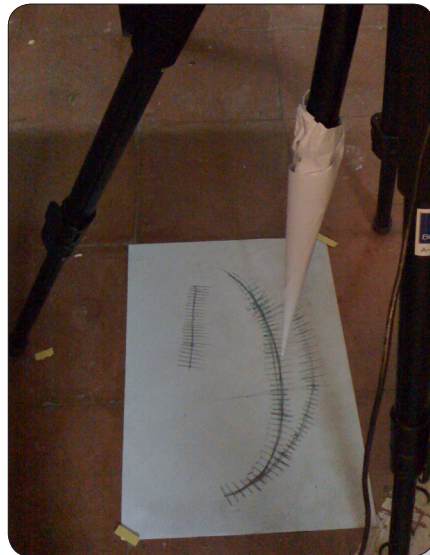
Lenses:

50 mm

18mm-35 mm

17mm- 85 mm: The macro lens gave a good depth of field to the images.

For the panning shots, markings were done on the paper just below the tripod and the tripod was moved on those markings frame by frame. Also, for these shots, the character was animated frame by frame along with tripod/ camera.

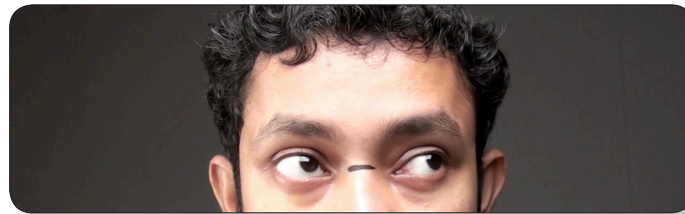
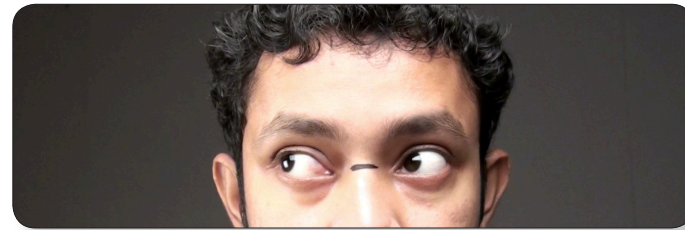




Production & Post-production

INCORPORATING LIVE ACTION IN CLAYMATION

Live-action eyes were shot separately after the stopmotion. Eyes were shot exactly at the same angles in order to match its position with the clay model.



Then later on it was placed at the position of the marker (Black dot in the white circle) using the AfterEffects tracking tool. The eyes were then color corrected in after effects to match with skin color.

CONCLUSION:

The major challenge that i faced in this project was to create a story using a framed narrative structure and to identify the substories such that they are distinct, but should also be related.

The execution had its own challenges in terms of the handling of different mediums and fusing them together.

Through the brief learning about narratives it was felt that the art of story telling and writing is a skill which is to be practiced.

It was also felt that while experimenting with different media, it helps if the medium is decided early in the project. It minimizes the rework and also helps in building the confidence for the execution of the final story.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

BOOKS:

CREATING 3D BY NICK PARK

This book beautifully explains the entire process of clay animation step by step. Right from the conceptualization, story development, set and character making to grabbing the images with the camera. Even though the method and the material they have used is a bit different from here, this book helped me a lot throughout the project.

CLAY ANIMATION by Michael Frierson

The book mainly talks about the invention of clay animation and its development right from the beginning. Various techniques and tricks used by different people like Will Vinton, Willie Hopkins along with their style of Claymation. This book gave me the knowledge about different techniques of animation that I could use while making my animation.

paper architecture books by Chatani, Robert Sabuda & Matthew Reinhart.

Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter by Mario Vargas Llosa

The world of Indian Stories by Cathy Spagnoli

Satyajit Ray's Short stories.

World Myths and Legends by Anita Nair

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