

Animation Degree Project (Stage II)

Magical Umbrella

A Short Animation Movie on Umbrella



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Batch of 2007-2009

Industrial Design Center
Indian Institute of Technology

Approval Sheet

The project III titled “ Magical Umbrella (A Short Animation Film on Umbrella)”
by Kavita Dicholkar is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
M.Des. Degree in Animation (2007-2009)

(Guide)

(External Examiner)

(Internal Examiner)

(Chairman)



I would sincerely like to thank my guide Prof. Sumant Rao for his immense guidance and support throughout the course of this project. I would also like to thank Prof. Nina Sabnani for her valuable suggestions during the presentation. I also sincerely thank all my friends for their constant feedbacks and suggestions. Lastly, I am also thankful to my family members for their kind support all the way.



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Reading articles in newspapers, magazines and cutting it out and preserving it is one of my favorite pastimes. One day, during this process, I came across a story about an umbrella. In the story, the writer had made the umbrella look like it was alive. It was moving about dancing and swinging. I really liked the thought of writer. Somehow, I was very attracted to that story and it became the inspiration for my P3 project. With the help of my guide, this began the process of taking this seed of an idea, developing it into a story, script and finally an animation film.



Thinking of the whole story, the first word that came to my mind was 'suspense'. I wanted to generate a sense of curiosity and excitement in the minds of the audience while watching the movie. I also wished to see an exclamation mark on the face of the audience after looking at the moving umbrella.

The Initial story

A man after walking a long distance decides to rest under the shade of a tree. He also carries an umbrella along with him. After a while, hearing some noise, he wakes up and to his surprise he sees his umbrella swinging left to right. The man was totally shocked to see his dancing umbrella. He gets up to find out what's happening. But his umbrella runs away behind a bush. After a long time of playing hide and seek, to his surprise he a small child comes out from behind the umbrella.

While implementing this I had faced some limitations in terms of different camera angles. But other than that my major concern was, even though I had an interesting concept in hand, I didn't know how to keep my story rolling. So I started exploring the concept further and modified it with a few fresh ideas.



Watching Movies

Before starting my process I watched some stop motion animation movies and also looked at the making of those movies. I also got the opportunity to view the making of the Ammron battery advertisement done by Vaibhav Studios, Mumbai along with the AIDS awareness short film (Chunnial) done by Famous House of Animation and Corpse Bride (2005), in order to know the proper technique and process of stop motion. Other than that I also viewed the movie 'The Blue Umbrella' (2005) directed by Vishal Bharadwaj. In the movie director has rightly shown the girl getting fascinated with the blue colored umbrella.

In the month of January in IDC Vaibhav Kumaresh conducted workshop of clay animation. It was very helpful for me to understand the making of the character and character armatures for stop motion. Indirectly that workshop was very inspiring and it also guided me to the right direction.





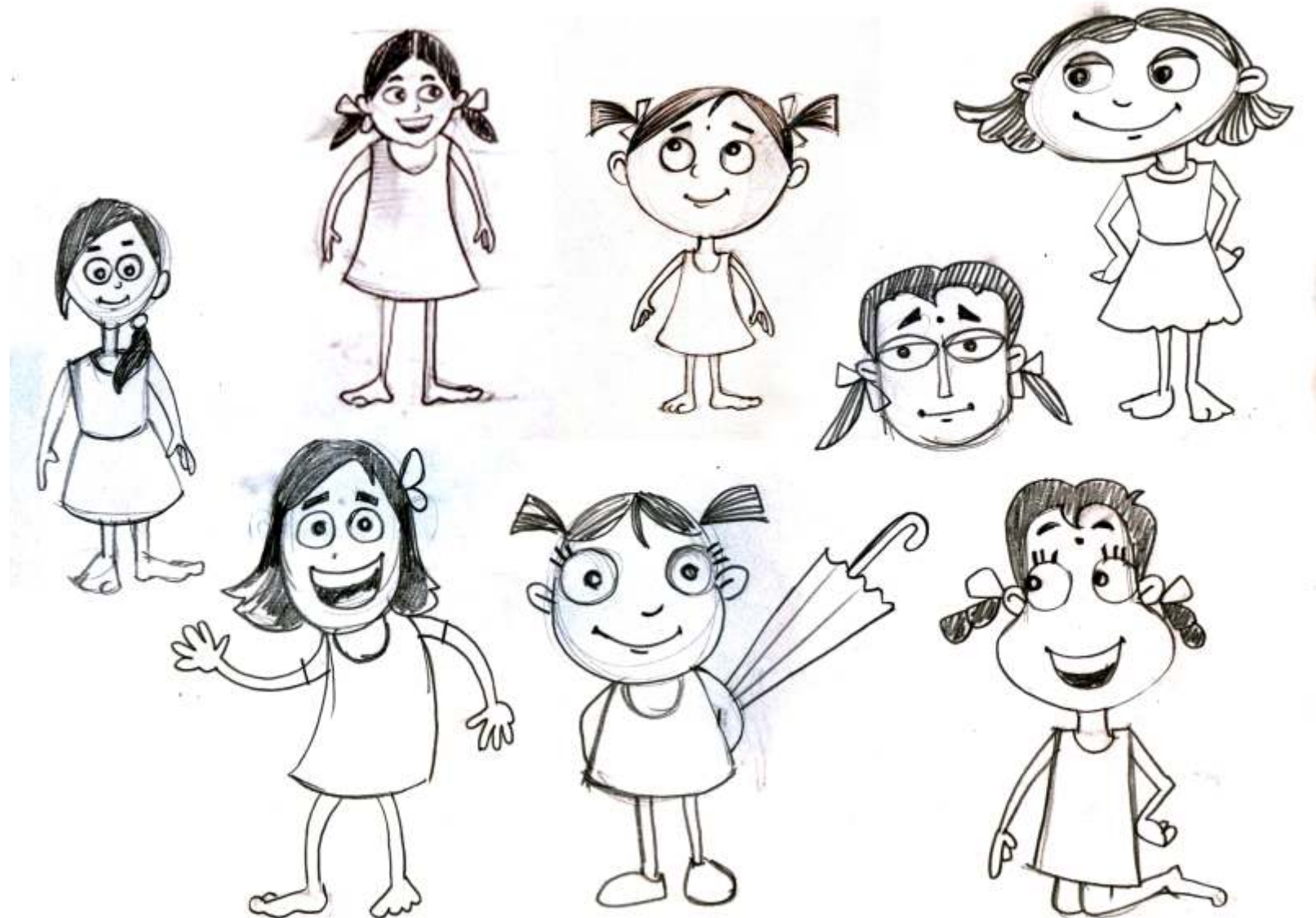
I always wanted to make something unique but in a very simple manner. In my final idea, the character of the man is not very happy with his umbrella, while on the other hand the small girl really gets fascinated with this same umbrella. Here, I will be trying to convey the emotion of man as well as the girl, about the same umbrella, but in a contrasting manner. The whole story is totally based and looked upon from the man's perspective but at the same time, the audience will be also experience the story from the small girl's point of view.

Final Story

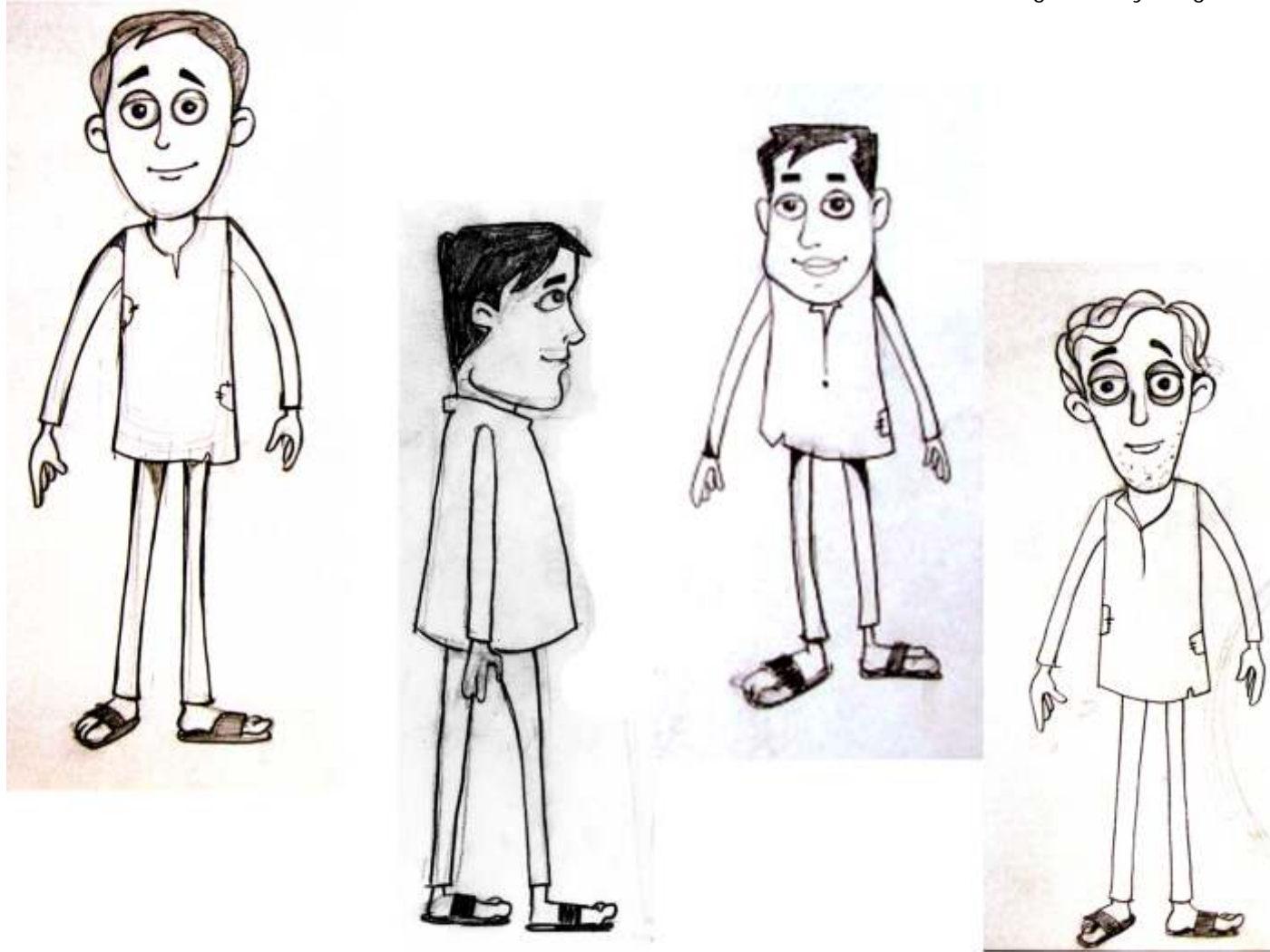
Story begins with a man struggling with his umbrella. The man tries to open his umbrella but cannot not open it. He tries harder and finally manages to open it up. It is an old worn-out black umbrella. The sunlight filters through two holes, falling on his face. He looks at the umbrella and shakes his head in disappointment. He keeps on walking in the hot sun holding the same old torn umbrella over his head. Sweat trickles down his cheeks as the heat increases. After walking for a while, he spots a tree by the roadside. He angrily closes his umbrella and throws it aside. The tree is surrounded by bushes and its shade seemed to promise a peaceful place to rest for him. Tired of walking in the hot sun, he thinks of getting some sleep. Suddenly a small girl pops out from behind the tree and looks at the man. Then she steps out from her hiding place and observes his face very closely. She realizes he is sound asleep. Her eyes fall on the umbrella and she becomes curious to know what it is. She picks up the umbrella and tries opening it, but isn't able to do so. After trying to open it several times,

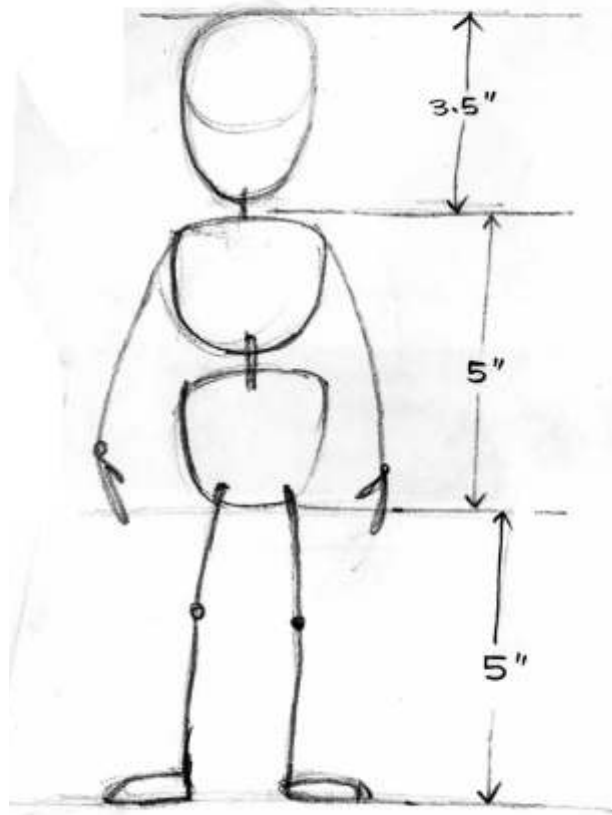


She finally gives a strong jerk to the umbrella. In that attempt, she falls with the umbrella and rolls over into the bushes and the umbrella opens in a flash. The man wakes up hearing that sound and looks around for his umbrella but can't find it. Following the sound, he slowly peeps through the bushes, where he can only see the opened umbrella and not the girl. On the other side of the umbrella, the girl stands amazed at the beauty of umbrella. Her eyes light up with delight. She bends the umbrella- first to the left and then to the right. She is full of smiles as she sways it. The man can't understand what was going on. He feels as if the umbrella is moving by itself. On the other side of the bushes, the girl's joy is multiplying as she dances with the umbrella. She rotates it first clockwise and then anticlockwise, and is amused with the pattern of sunrays that is coming through the two holes. The little girl pulls it towards herself and then pushed it away. The man cannot control his curiosity. Through the holes of umbrella, the girl could see the man staring at the umbrella. He starts walking along the bushes to find out what the mystery behind the moving umbrella is. As he moves to the left, the umbrella moves to the right. He stops and starts moving to right, but then, the umbrella moves the other way round and the whole drama continues for some time. The man has a strange expression as the chase happens once again. He notices that the umbrella was trying to hide. It stands still at the edge of the bushes. He slowly goes and stands near it, trying to peep through the umbrella. Suddenly the girl turns back and their eyes meet. The man gives an angry look to the girl with a raised eyebrow. She gets scared and looked at him innocently. After few seconds of silence she offers the umbrella to him. Looking at her innocence, the man's face slowly curves into a smile. Finally the man walks away but this time happily rotating his umbrella. All of a sudden, the rain poured down and the droplets of water were entering the umbrella from those two holes. The man again looked through the hole towards the sky but this time he has found a strange childlike pleasure with the rain coming through the torn umbrella.

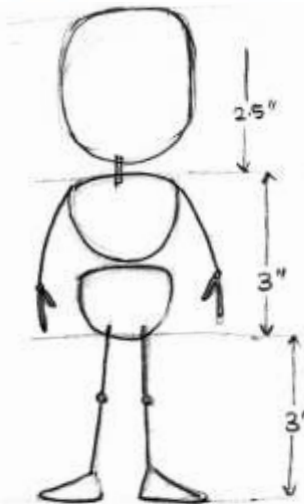


Once my storyboard was finalized, I started exploring with my three main characters (man, girl and the umbrella). Before finalizing all the three characters I did a lot of sketching on how my characters should be. It covered the physical aspect, various expressions as well as gestures made by the characters. For this I did some model sheet, attitude sheet and some other extra works to get everything in the right place, like I wanted it to be.





As far as the character of the girl is concerned, I wanted it to be very cute looking, innocent as well as with a naughty look. I wanted the character of the man to look like coming from a poor background, so I showed his clothes as tattered and gave him an unshaved and shabby look.

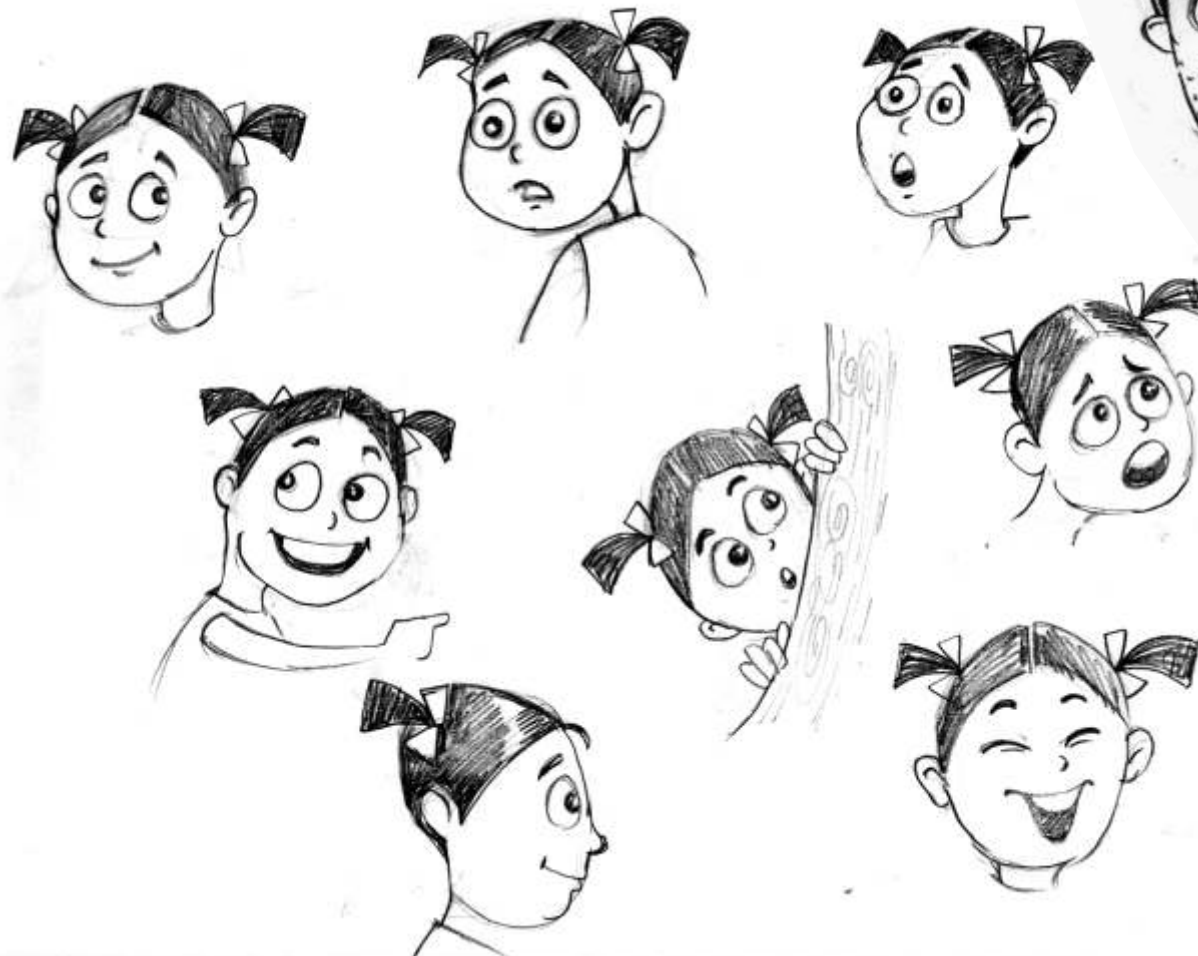


In the movie the character of the umbrella is of that poor man, so I wanted its features to match with the poor man's character. In order to look like that I gave it a couple of holes and also gave some rusty and old look to it.











After exploring with my concept art design, I moved on and decided to finalize the technique. In my previous project I had already experimented with cut-out animation. So this time I thought I should explore in a different technique which will also suit my storyline the best. During the exploration I had already experimented with materials so I decided to do my whole movie with stop motion animation. Before working on stop motion I worked on 3D character modeling. For the same, first I made my characters in clay models along with their armature. Other than my main characters, I also focused on making some dummy 3D props for the background like the tree, bush and the umbrella.

To get an approximate idea about the timing of my animation, I made animatics along with some sound effects to go with it.

Exploring with different materials, I finally decide my character and the background style. I decided to have the entire set to have the woolen effect. The character and the background objects were made out of wool & fur. I made my characters models along with their armature. For the skin of my characters I used Acrylic fur and for the look and feel of hair I have used different size of threads that rightly suited their face. While on the other hand, I used proper woolen cloth material to make the clothing of my characters. For the creation of the character of umbrella I used black paper and the reference to make the armature for umbrella was taken from a miniature of an umbrella which used for cocktail. To be on the safer side, I made four similar kinds of umbrellas, as I was a bit scared if the umbrella would break in between the shoot.

For various expressions of my characters, I decided to create different expression on a sticker paper, so that whenever I want to change the expression of my character I can use different sticker papers for different expressions. This in turn will bring my animation to life.

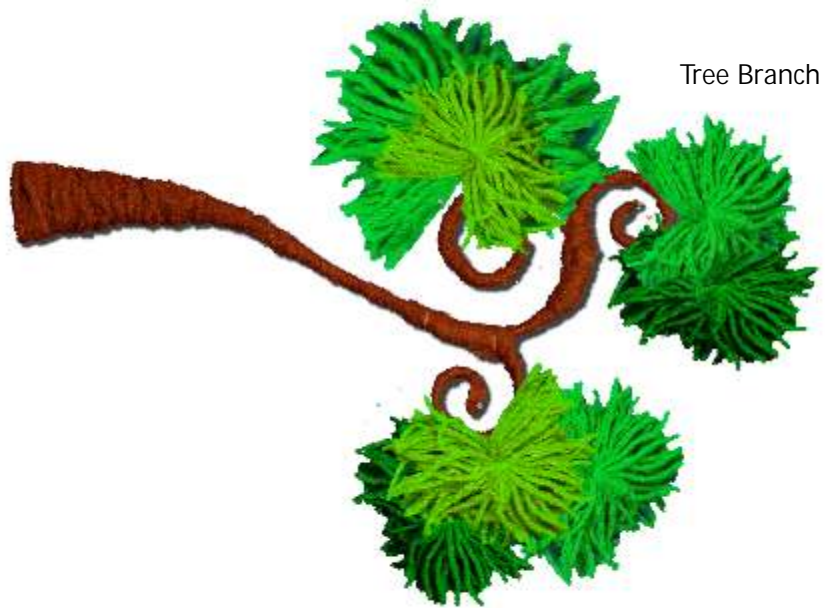




For references I clicked few images which I thought would be helpful to create for my own background set.

For stop motion animation, decided to create a three dimensional set, for this set I used thick foam sheet and woolen texture cloth. after making the final set I took photographs from different angle with the proper lighting. Even in croma background I took photographs of other objects like tree, houses, bushes, tree branch etc.





Tree Branch



Bush



Main Tree



Small Tree



Rock



House



Grass

Before starting character animation shoot I had to do an X sheet for the per frame action of the character. Only after the completion of that, I started to shoot each and every movement of my characters animation using croma background with appropriate lighting effects. I also decided that each and every character will be shot individually and then digitally those characters will be placed tighter as per the scene. While animating the characters, one of the most challenging parts was when some character actions had to be shot with the help of support. I faced a bit of difficulty as it demanded patience and also consumed a lot of time.

After completing the character animation shoot I started cleanups using Adobe Photoshop. On the other hand I used Adobe Aftereffects for final compositing, while the final editing of my movie was done with the help of Adobe Premier. For soundmixing and editing I have used Cool edit pro software.





Screenshot from the movie

With the help of animation I want to convey that, no thing in this world is labeled as good or bad, it is the perception or the way of seeing by a human mind towards a particular object. For the reason I have shown the perceptive of both man and the small girl. The moral that you can derive from here is, if you have a positive attitude, everything in this world will look beautiful.



References

Inspiration

I got inspired of story “Chatri” by Divakar Krishna Acharya.

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Done by Famous House Of Animation

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Corpse Bride (2005)