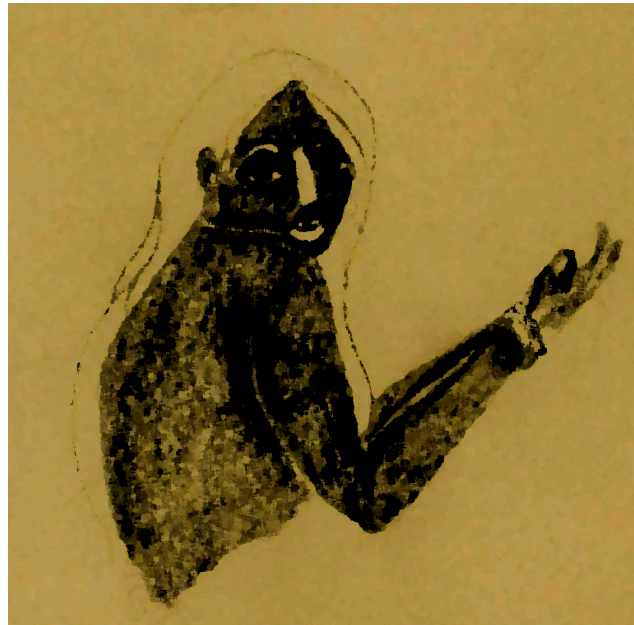

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short

Submitted by: Poonam Madhav Athalye • 05625006

M.Des V.C 2005 • Guide: Prof.Raja Mohanty

Project Report • IDC, IIT Bombay • November 5, 2006



Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Approval sheet...

The project 2 titled “Understanding sexual morality” by Poonam Madhav Athalye is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Design degree in Visual Communication.

Guide _____

External Examiner _____

Internal Examiner _____

Chairman _____

IIT Bombay, November 2006.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Acknowledgments....

Acknowledgments

To begin with I would like to thank my project guide **Prof.Raja Mohanty** for his guidance. He has a way of guiding without interfering which worked wonders for me. He lent me some of his very nice books which were very useful to me. They aided me to view the subject of sexual morality from a number of view points. Also the books added to the richness of my script. The movies I watched with him in this process also added a lot of insight during the making of this animation.

I would also like to thank **Prof.Shilpa Ranade** for her guidance.

Thanks to

My mother, **Mrs.Aarti Athalye** for her valuable guidance on Hindustani classical music.

Mrugank Inamdar for writing the script and enhancing my story from time to time.

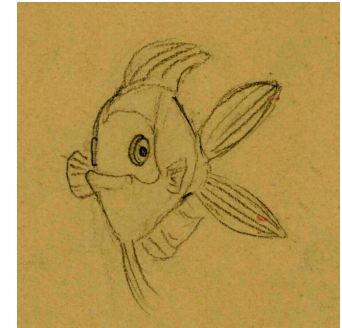
To my friends **Chitra Venkataramani** and **Anand Prahlad** for all their technical help and teaching me Toon Boom.

and...

my other friends,

Vaibhav, Prarthana, Barkha, Fatema, Harsh, Rajiv and Nikhil.

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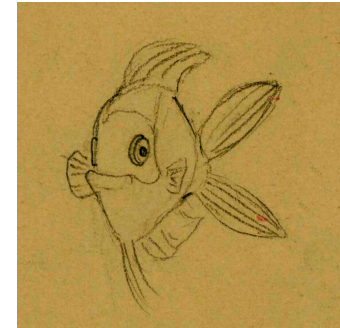


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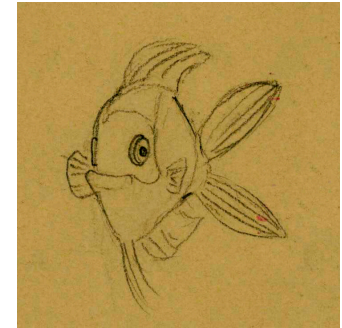
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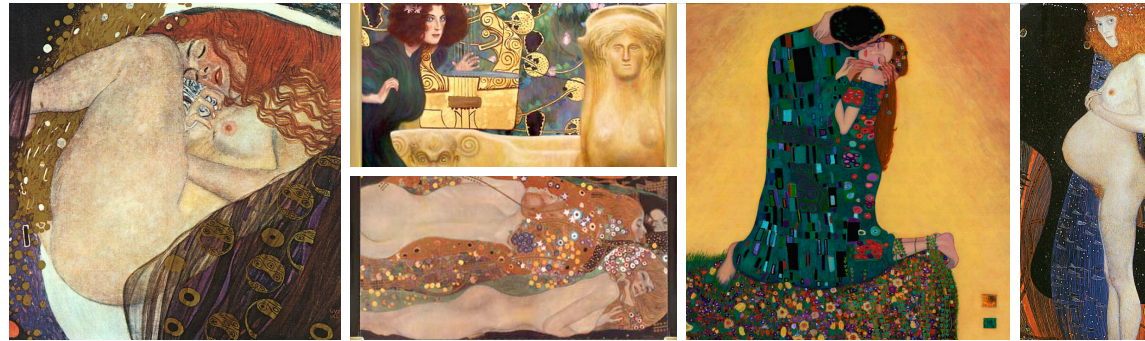
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The Initial study...



Gustav Klimt, an inspiration for my illustrations

Why did I choose this Subject?

I wrote a script as it came to me. Once I was thinking of a dear friend of mine. We were best of friends when we were kids, but as time passed by, we went different ways. I was not in touch with her for a long time. Later when I heard of her, she was known to people as an easy woman. Someone known for swindling men around. I was very disturbed and felt really bad. I tried to justify her side unknowingly to our common friends, but I could not. I was angry with her but I never showed it. I wanted to scold her, but I thought I could not. It took us five years to develop affection for each other again. And it took me even longer to realize that she did not do anything 'wrong'. Neither was she right. There is nothing that is right or wrong sometimes. I think no one is in a place to judge if somebody has been 'morally' right or wrong. Because if one tries to see from the involved person's point of view, it is circumstances and time which together can lead you on a path, which can neither be right or wrong. It can only be different from your path. There are several kinds of sins which are morally put forth, but I decided to contemplate on the sin of lust. These are matters which involve intimacy. I certainly don't advocate betrayal or cheating, but I feel the sexual parameters change depending on the person. I feel there should not be ground rules for morality which are applicable to everyone.

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The Initial study...

Why this script?

As I went on thinking about this issue, a lot of things started to come to my mind. At least my friend was doing it out her choice. What if someone is forced into these situations? What sort of moral system will you judge them by? Do we expect them to keep fighting with their circumstances and maintain the same sense of right and wrong that we have? Would they not find a radically different way of treating life? I feel that a person can keep fighting with their circumstances for sometime. But struggle with your present means unhappiness. Everyone of us wants to be at peace, wants to be happy. Sometimes at a very subconscious level. So knowingly or unknowingly most of us cave in. We give in to our lives and make peace with it. Essentially by finding happiness in the same things we were once struggling with. But somewhere, we keep thinking or we are fully aware that there is something better than this, something we could never get. This feeling mostly keeps us unhappy at a deeper level and causes unrest.

Outline of the story- first draft of the script.

This is a story of an Indian woman sex worker, who is happy. She has accepted her life to be what it is long time back and she has grown up to be good at what she does. She thinks she has everything she wants and she is at peace with herself, until an incidence takes place in her life which reminds her of all that she cant have. Being the kind of person she is, she manipulates a way of bringing it into her life. And then her life turns upside down, only to realize that what she had, was probably what she wanted.

The objective

The ideas I have expressed through my animation are the ones that I have learnt about this subject. To take a stand and try to change how people think is almost impossible to do. All I can do is try to say what I have understood and hope that I make people rethink. If the audience understands my efforts behind the story and thinks further on this subject, then my objective will be fulfilled.

Understanding sexual morality

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The Initial study...

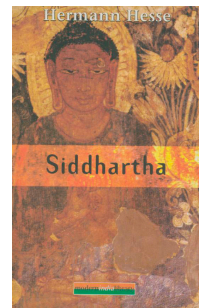
Why animation?

I could imagine this film both in live action and animation. But I find it more interesting to tell a story through an animation than through live action. Though live action was the obvious choice, I decided to take up the challenge of making a serious script into an animation.

Books read

Siddhartha - Hermann Hesse (fiction)

Siddhartha in his process towards salvation decides to be an ascetic. After three years of living without worldly pleasures he realizes that he is still striving for something more. This is when he meets Gautam Buddha and decides that learning from teachers will not lead him to Nirvana. When he decides to leave his path of being a Samana, he learns to be a part of his surroundings. During this phase of his life he happens to meet a prostitute who teaches him a great deal and soon he realizes that both of them are similar. The interaction between the two has added a great deal to my understanding.



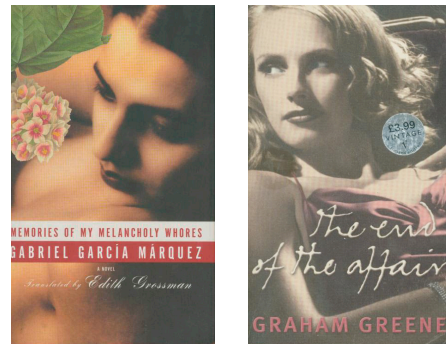
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The Initial study...

Memories of my Melancholy whores - Gabriel Garcia Marquez (fiction)

I think this author does not agree with the idea of morality to start with. He believes that morals change with time and thus what may seem to be immoral today might turn into something acceptable tomorrow. He treats morality like an unnecessary burden inflicted by social human beings on themselves and others to make themselves feel safe and in control of their society. His writing, I thought, was very amoral and was an eye opener to the idea of a morally free society. This book is about an old man who decides to have sex with an adolescent fourteen year old on his ninetieth birthday but ends up only staring at her asleep. She never gets to see who he is but they fall in love by the end of the book.



The end of the affair - Graham Greene (novel)

This book deals with a lot of human emotions related to sex. Nostalgia, jealousy and obsession seem to be the emotions that the author wants to speak about. The book is about a love affair between a married woman and a man studying her husband who is a senior civil servant. She suddenly and without explanation breaks off to leave the protagonist puzzled. After a chance meeting he rekindles his love and jealousy two years later. He hires a private detective to follow her as he thinks that there is someone else other than the two of them who she is involved in. Slowly his love for her turns into an obsession.

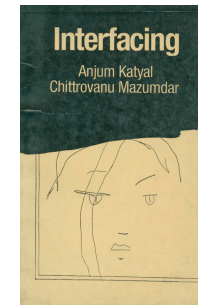
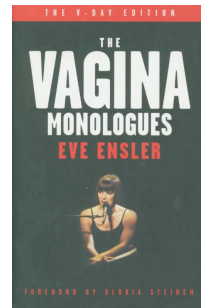
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The Initial study...

The Vagina monologues - Eve Ensler

This book is a poignant and hilarious tour of the forbidden zone. It is a celebration of female sexuality in all its complexity and mystery. It is said to be the bible for a new generation of women, it has been performed in cities all around the world. It seems to have inspired a dynamic grassroots movement to stop violence against women. Witty, irreverent, compassionate. It has managed to give voice to woman's deepest fantasies and fears. The author claims that after reading this book no one will ever look at a woman's body, or think of sex in quite the same way again.



Interfacing - Anjum Katyal, Chittrovar (poetry)

Poetry in this compilation is of a mysterious and sensuous nature. Like most poetry, metaphors have been used to speak of very intimate incidences and moments. Its very interesting to read, especially when one realizes what the poetess is trying to say, only towards the end. Its personal nature almost like someone is writing while in the midst of the experience is what makes it very real. Some of it is too abstract and private to relate to, as if one can understand only after experiencing the same moment.

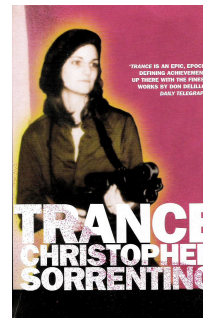
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The Initial study...

Trance - Christopher Sorrentino (non fiction)

Based on a true story, this book speaks of the Stockholm syndrome. It is a biography of a newspaper heiress who was kidnapped by the SLA. She was a captive for sometime, after which she decided to join them. She became a member of their gang who believed in their missions. Her gang was killed in police encounter, except for herself and two other members. These three then went into hiding. The book is mainly of her experience in this period. Though this book is remotely related to my topic, I thought the idea of the captive getting affectionate towards her captor, and then finding it difficult to part with him, is very similar in nature to subject I am studying. It speaks of a very similar complexity of the human nature.



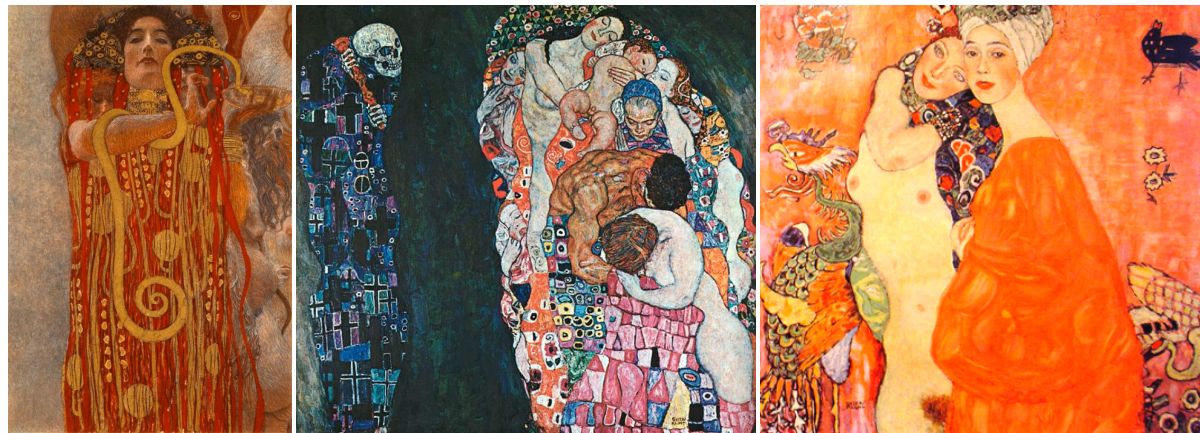
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The Initial study...

Inspiring styles of illustration

Gustav Klimt



The primal forces of sexuality, regeneration, love, and death form the dominant themes of Klimt's work. The bold and intense colors, the details in the human figures besides the collage of geometric patterns is what I appreciate in this Artist's work.

Understanding sexual morality

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The Initial study...

Ruth Lingford



Death and the mother is an animation short. It has a very serious and eerie approach towards animation. The illustrations are Computer generated, made to look like woodcuts. I like the play of the negatives and positives, and the intensely emotional feel of the film. There are only three colours used in this animation black, white and red.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The script...

The final draft

She was 21 years old, but she was not young. She had seen much and for most of the last 4 years, she had been on her own... And yes, she practiced the world's oldest profession. Life had been good at times, but it had also been difficult. She didn't have too many people to love, even growing up. And surely she hadn't been loved much. Growing up, she had imagined her life turning out so much different. Well, she had grown up now, had made her choices, and had accepted her fate now. There were friends that she had in her youth, friends that she sometimes saw in the market place, in theaters. She didn't stop and say Hello, of course! She was too ashamed. What would they be thinking of her? They, respectable wives, mothers, with their perfect lives, husbands... and she- a fallen woman, a prostitute, a whore! Nobody wanted to be familiar with her. Not even her own uncle, the one that she had supported for a while in his illness. He had scorned her the moment he got better.

Her life was busy. There was a steady stream of 'customers', strange men, in and out of her room. Some were new, some 'regular'. No one showed familiarity. Not even the regulars. Not with her, only with her body. To her, they seemed plain ashamed. To show familiarity was to accept their presence with her. And their reality was what had brought them here. That reality was what they wanted to forget. That failed marriage, that broken heart, those parents that didn't understand, that's what drove them to her. The new ones too- they seemed to be trying to deal with the enormity of their choice, the step that they had taken to be with her- the loss of innocence. They seemed to grapple with it even in the act of love.

For her the physical realities of her work had stopped hurting. She had become numb to the actual act. She had been with all sorts of men, young-old, novice students, 'experienced' college professors. Some men just went about their business, some tried to make small talk, mostly to ease their discomfort and guilt. Some asked obtrusive questions to satisfy their curiosity, to understand how this woman had ended up as she had. But they were there to just play with her body, for them the mind did not exist (or at least they hoped so). There was no eye contact. There were some that acted considerate, to ease their guilt or because they felt sorry for her, but then again, eye contact was to be avoided. They didn't know that this assumed kindness was what hurt the most. 'Fallen Woman, have pity on her' their actions screamed. The sympathy, the kindness, the feigned understanding was unwanted. She had grown up, like most others, with romantic notions of right and wrong, domestic bliss, happiness, fidelity, security and stability. Her life had only strengthened the depth of her feeling. After all, one can only romanticize further what one does not know. And if what one does not know- cannot be known- then a picture is painted with nostalgia for a life and reality not known, nor understood. Like the blind men describing an elephant. Bits and pieces of truth, the rest is intuited.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The script...

But when you don't like your reality, and cannot change it, then your fantasies can keep you going. Your fantasies are what give you what you cannot have. She imagined a life filled with all those things that she could not have- domestic bliss, a loving husband, loving friends and family. She imagined a perfect home, a perfect garden, a love story- with the extended courtship, the first kiss, the first time, the mock fights, the perfect make-ups. There wasn't a face to her man, but the rest of him was known... and so close that she could almost touch him, taste him, pull him close and make love to him. She imagined not just him but the whole experience, with relatives and servants, and trips to the marketplace. She could picture herself staring at her current address, pointing, sneering... But she kept coming out of her reverie. Her work ensured that. Till even that was absorbed into her fantasies...

She dreamt of her wedding night in her husband's bed. She lived that part as one man after another passed in and out of her room. She blanked herself to the reality of her life, her profession, and instead consummated her wedding each day and night. Each day, her husband looked different, smelled different and sounded different. Sometimes, in her fantasies made real, her husband was an inexperienced novice, at other times; her man was a worldly-wise businessman, all confident and serious. She smiled as he took her in his arms, laughed as he fumbled in his inexperience, or sighed and moaned at his expertise. Every wedding night was different and there was, finally, some contentment. She had what she wanted. So it wasn't true- but what did it matter? Everyone is capable of self-deception. In fact, very few can afford to live with themselves as they are, in their entirety... so it was with her.

The men still did not, if ever, speak to her. They still did not look into her eyes. They still asked curious questions and made nervous, guilty small talk. She resolutely clung to her delusions. Sometimes, just sometimes, she saw herself as was- for what she was. When a man turned violent... or someone in the street passed a comment intended for her, thinking that her profession meant that she wasn't human. Then she came crashing down.

She had been lonely and depressed for long. And that too, quite often. Like most of us, she had adapted to her state. Most of us notice the increments in our life- The incremental joy, the incremental discomfort. For the poor, an easy meal is like a gift from the heavens, but for the rich and the privileged, dinner served late is a discomfort, too big to be endured. But when there is a joy or sorrow that's not incremental, not in reference with the status quo, then it gives greater joy... or pain. This was, for her a breakdown because the pain was not incremental. It was a new wound every time. It was, for like a mirror placed right in front of her face, forcing her to look. It forced her to see who she was, what she was.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The script...

Then she would be inconsolable, weeping silently even as some stranger took possession of her body. This would be her till she again, slipped back into that delusion of hers, with her eyes wide open. He saw her in her moment of weakness. She stood at the street corner, waiting for her man, except she was not in her delusion. This was her looking at her life, reliving the shame of her existence. She had enough sadness in her to rouse him to kind words. And those kind words were the Holy Land at the end of the crusades for her. For someone starved of human kindness, a single kind word can go a long way. She had seen men and women, pitying her with kindness. But to her, this was pure.

She slipped back into her delusion that she would have anyway. His words just had her slip her rose-tinted glasses back on. This to her, was her wedding night. This was her making eye contact with her man, doing everything in her power to please him. But it was also tempered. She felt enough self-pity to let him see it. And he saw the smoldering hurt, the gaping wound. He was too kind a person to be able to resist. His life had been easy so far. Simple if unremarkable. Never rich, never poor, always sympathetic, always smiling, never judgmental. Life had never been hard enough for him to get bitter or judgmental. He had never seen real pain.

And when he saw it, he couldn't help but care, he couldn't help but respond. He couldn't help but pity her. But he was still not judgmental. He saw her as having had a tough life, and he was glad to help. What he did not count on was falling for the object of his affection and kindness. When that happened, he laughed at his fate, he didn't fight it. Life had been happening to him, and he had always been all right. He was not the type to argue with his heart, or his life. He took her home with all her baggage and pain and passion and the hurt.

Now she had everything she ever wanted. She had a man taking care of her, given her stability, security, and love. She had respectability. This is what she wanted as she slept with strangers that did not care if she lived or died the day after. This is what she had wanted as she sobbed herself to sleep on countless nights, trying to remember a family she had never known and the human touch that her life had always lacked. He took care of her. He took her out. She smiled at strangers on the street, when in his company, just proud of him, of them, of the normalcy of her life. She laughed loudly at his joke, she clung to his arm and hugged him as they walked about in the market, it was just as she had imagined. The nights were full of passion and love. She found herself eager to please and rejoiced at his taking the effort to please her. The act of love seemed more meaningful, more secure. She found herself trusting in the strength, the feel, the smell, the taste, the feel of one man.

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The script...

How many years had she been waiting for this? How many nights had she hoped against all hope for a time like this? How long had she waited to feel innocent? When had last been treated as a person and not an object? But was this enough? A stream of men had been in and out of her room. She had been miserable to start with. Then she had become indifferent to the trials of her body and soul. She had been forced to create for herself a reality, a universe of her own. And she had done that. She had then treated herself to her wedding night with a thousand grooms that she had been madly in love with. She had allowed herself to feel pleasure in the act. She had allowed herself to love and be loved... and nothing else. There was no reality beyond the body of her husband in her arms. She was beyond right and wrong. She was beyond good and bad. She was human and she had found her way to be happy. Now she had to be moral again. Which is what she had always been in her mind? She had always pictured that one guy ... and her wedding night. She had never been unfaithful to that one guy. She had lusted after the men that she had seen, but they were always her grooms. As she stood at the street-corner at the night, she picked up those men that she could have been married to, in a different life. To that extent, she exercised choice- it was her profession that she did not have a choice about.

The nights with these strangers were always her wedding nights. There was excitement and there was pleasure. All mistakes were forgiven and she was eager to please. She gave her everything to these men, and if they gave back something, then she felt grateful, and satisfied. She had that night now too. And it was all she had thought it would be. It was the real thing after infinite dress rehearsals. She loved him, for what he was doing and she was grateful for his willingness to accept her. She gave him everything as she always had... and she noticed that he gave her everything in return. That was perfection. That was meaning. But that was also only one night. Initially, as the days passed, she was disappointed- but she accepted it. She excitedly looked forward to the next time, the next night. But it was the same. There was no other wedding night. There were other nights when he made passionate love to her. But there were also nights when he was tired and just wanted her to hold him. There were other nights when he wanted to tell her everything, to pour his heart out. There were moments when he was low, and wanted her to comfort him. But that meant that there was communication required. But there was only one act of communication she knew, she remembered only one act of comfort. She didn't know the right words, the right gestures. She had to learn... and she tried. He was an eager teacher. He noticed her effort and was gratified. She had the intent, the rest would follow. He taught her the right words, he taught her to communicate. He taught her to really love. He thought she was complete. But... there was only one wedding night. She had love, but she wanted the culmination of it. She had built her life around romantic ideals. And romantic ideals, whether in movies, books, or in contemporary expressions, were about culmination, they were perfect. What happened next?

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The script...

That wasn't a thought of much use to someone on the other side. The notion, the hope was what you lived for. And you could never have that. But if you could, then what happened after the culmination?

Life happened. Days and months passed. There were things to be done. There were small worries and big worries. There were fights and there were battles. But there was also love. She craved the culmination still. And she craved it still. She craved looking into a man's life with the knowledge that this was the best night of her life. It was the first night of the rest of her life. And she could never feel that again. She thought that she had learned to accept it though. But, on the streets... in the marketplace... on the beach, she saw unknown men. And she couldn't help wondering... She couldn't help wondering what it would feel like.

This was natural for her. It was an unconscious reflex after years of walking the street. She had thought of every man as a potential husband. But the thought was also sexual. She had imagined her wedding night with a thousand men. She had imagined it pure, but the thought was still sexual. But something had changed now. The thought had never been wrong before. It had, in fact, been right. She had felt it moral that she craved the daily drudgery of her work and life become 'pure' and 'right'. Now suddenly, she felt guilt, about the same thing. What difference a day can make!

Her bedside manner had changed now- with her man. He could feel a waning in intensity and he could feel her struggling with some burden of which he was unaware and about which she would not talk. He could feel her struggling to look into his eyes when at one time, she had insisted on that joy of which she had been starved. She struggled further against her nature and against what she wanted. As time passed, her craving grew stronger. She found herself craving the touch of some stranger on the street who was her groom and who treated her like a delicate flower. She found herself craving for the violent, passionate touch of the ruffian on the street who would treat her like an object and violate her body in ways that would only intensify her pleasure. She imagined that beautiful young adolescent with his look of longing. She imagined the boxer who danced in the ring with the gait of a dancer and the body of a god.

He saw her struggle. Perhaps she should have spoken to him. After all, he knew about her past. But she could not communicate like he could. No matter how she tried, she was foreign to this communication. Her feelings were not words, they were just feelings. To put them in words was to interpret them. She couldn't, especially because she couldn't understand when and how she had changed.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The script...

She didn't even realize when she let herself go. She didn't even realize when the first stranger made love to her as she lay in the arms of her man. She didn't even see him; she saw only the stranger and experienced their wedding night. He noticed the change in her. He noticed the energy, the passion again and he was glad. What did he know the goings on in her mind!

She, on the other hand, felt guilt; a guilt that she felt would consume her. She had cheated on her man, even if only through her delusions. But what was the difference? Her delusions had been what kept her moral in her own eyes. Now they were conspiring against her, taking over her. Her best friends had turned against her. And so it was. She would force herself back to her man while secretly pulling to her bed a hundred men as she made love to him. She didn't love those men. She needed them, and it was now a part of her nature. They were her grooms, all of them. She could never have them, she could never touch them, yet she made love to them as she made love to her man. She took him into her arms and secretly pulled them, those strangers, her grooms into bed. And as he touched her, as he pleased her, they touched her- causing her pleasure and pain. He knew about the change. Somewhere he guessed it. Somewhere he felt it or intuited it. He accepted it. Life was not perfect. Not his life. And that was to be accepted.

written by Mrugank Inamdar

Mrugank is a very old and dear friend. B.E (entc), MBA (XLRI, Jamshedpur). Currently writing as a hobby, in Bombay.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Second stage study...

Visit to a red light area



It is this visit that changed my outlook towards this project. I realized that I could not relate my script to any of the women I met there. I realized that their lives are not exactly the way I had imagined them to be. Their basic needs like food, shelter and clothing consume most of their desires. They are rather indifferent to the men they see. This made me feel like I had a script based on some other character who was not one of these women.

The Paradigm shift and the early story board

I was investing a lot of time in getting the feel of the animation right. Trying to set the ambience as that of a red light area, crude and poor. I was also focusing too much on making the character realistic. It was a great concern to me to make her look right. But then I figured that I am wasting too much time on these things which are not going to help me in telling the story I want to tell. It has very little to do with the look of the movie and a lot to do with the thought I am presenting. I thought I was getting lost and going on the wrong track. Thus I changed my focus towards attempting to communicate the story more effectively. Thus I decided to give very little importance to the context where the story is based. An urban context is what comes to me naturally. It did not seem to cause any harm to story being told. The character of the protagonist is explained through a series of events that take place in the animation. There is nothing in the way she looks, or where she lives that gives out that she is a prostitute. It is actually left to the audience to determine who she is. Some might find her to be a fallen woman, maybe someone with a loose character. Some might judge her to be a prostitute. I decided to not force an identity on her. I think this decision has really shaped the animation.

Understanding sexual morality

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Second stage study...

The line between a realistic and an abstract approach

To make the animation look very realistic was like taking a video approach, which would take away the benefits that animation gives. Like avoiding the conventional features of the environments. What I mean to say is that in a video a car looks like a car. There is nothing one can do about it. But in animation a car can be made to look different by changing some elements which are intrinsic to it. Which is probably the reason why and how a car can talk and appear like a human being, without losing its identity in cartoons. I wanted to retain this freedom. So abstraction was felt necessary. But I was dealing with a script which needed to be communicated well. Too much abstraction could mean communicating incorrectly. It would also confuse the audience. So some amount of reality was required. I tried to come up with a story board which would be a mean between the two.

Experiments while illustrating

I started by sketching the protagonist, from a very realistic form to an extremely abstract one. The abstraction included exaggerating some of her body parts like her lips and breasts. This was done with an aim to depict her as something like a display item. Almost as if none of the other parts mattered. Then I thought of showing her as a black roughly sketched woman. This was to show how she feels.



A realistic approach to illustration

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



A little less realistic approach to illustration

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



An abstract approach to illustration

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

Experiments to find an original way of illustrating

I wanted to come up with an original style of illustrating. I also wanted to experiment with a lot of color. Photo-paints excite me a lot and gives vibrance to the illustration if used effectively. I realized that I cannot come up with original illustrations overnight. I started by doing a number of paintings to experiment with the color and to device a way of illustrating.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

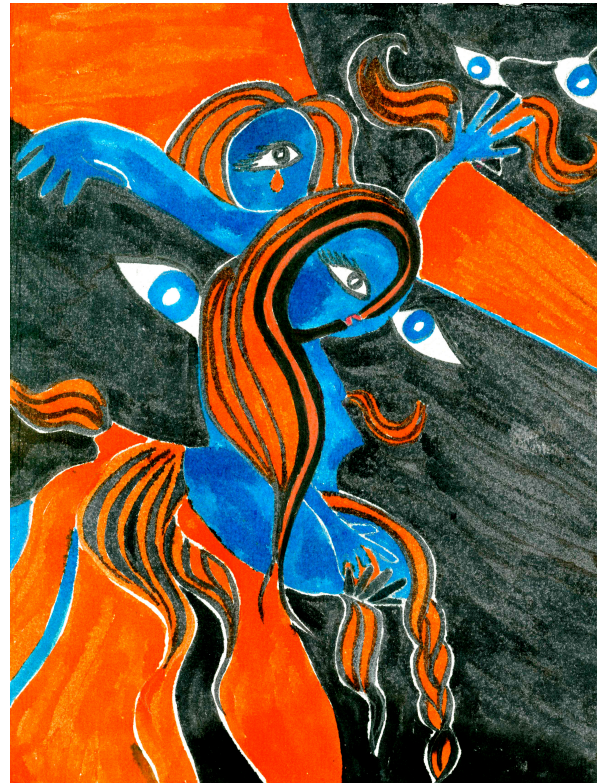


This was the first painting I made. It shows my intention to use green and red to in combination. To me this combination implies love and lust. Red appears pure like blood while green seems to compete with it to bring in the negativity. A man holding the naked woman in his hands the way he is, suggests his intentions towards her. She has her hand around his neck since he appears to be looking at her with a lot of empathy. But his real eyes are behind him which are full of lust. Which means he is pretending to be concerned when he really wants only one thing from her.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



A woman who is satisfied only by a number of men. The men are all looking at her with lust and seem to be wrapped around is her hair. While she is reaching out to all of them simultaneously, she seems to be particularly interested in one of them. Standing behind is her other eye, her friend, who is unhappy and depressed looking at her state of being. But she stands there looking helpless.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Sitting in her window she is staring outside hopelessly. The atmosphere is grim to show that she is sad and longing for something. Her house is in a dilapidated state. It looks like it is held in place by a weak stick, which depicts hope. A climber outside her house feels for her and finds her adorable. He tries to reach for her and surround her with his love. Blue colored flowers bloom.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



A woman trying to reach a flower on the tree. Longing and greed are the two strong emotions shown in this painting. Her body is clad with the same flower in abundance but she is still wanting to grab that one unreachable flower on the branch. It is also the human tendency to not see what they have and keep wanting what they don't.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

The Final style of illustration



After a lot of work on the paintings, and a lot of sketches, I came to a fairly satisfactory way of illustrating. I think its original, unless I am unaware of the various artists that have influenced me till now. I have continued drawing with this style throughout the animation. Over a period of time it has started to come to me naturally. I think if I continue I will come up with more interesting work over a period of time with practice. I used photo paints to color while I inked the drawings with water proof ink. The other detailing in ink was done with Rotring Isographs, 0.3 and 0.6 points. The paper is Rusticus, machine made paper.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

The protagonist



She is represented as a black figure. Her body is negative while her facial features, hair etc are in positive. She has been drawn with a charcoal pencil on the same paper as the backgrounds. She also appears to be drawn like a rough drawing made with a pencil, unfinished. This is to show the way she feels about her body, impure and unimportant.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

T Process till the final treatment...

The protagonist



Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

The protagonist



Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

The protagonist



Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

The protagonist

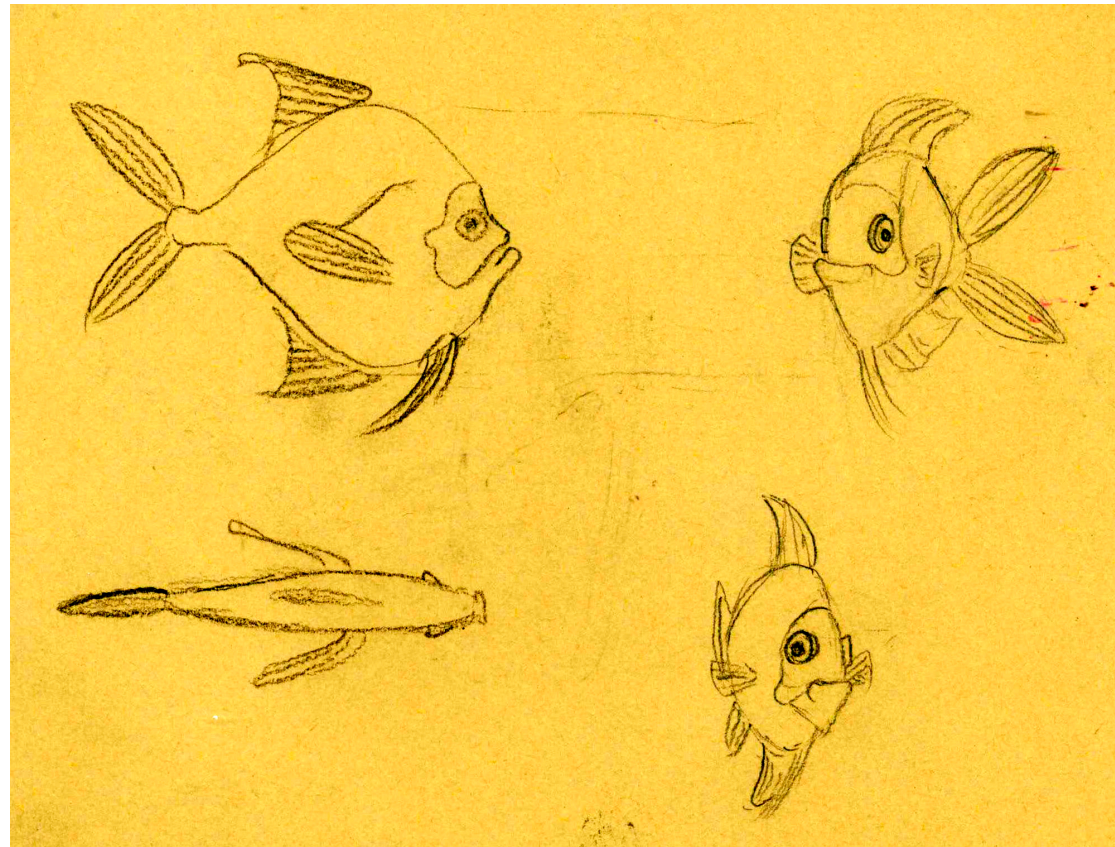


Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

Her fish



Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...

Her husband



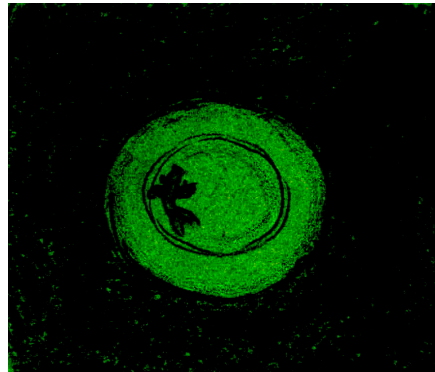
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

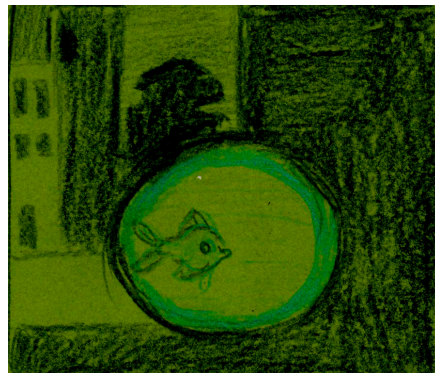
Process till the final treatment...

The final story board with animatic

I decided to avoid the direct translation of the script onto the visual. A fresh set of scenes and plots were thought of for the animation which obviously tell the same story but with a more indirect approach. The story board describes these scenes to gauge the behavior of the characters in particular frames. Though in the actual animation the way they are drawn, the way they behave, will be very different.



Its late in the night and the fish in her fish tank keeps going round and round.



The circle of the fish tank morphs in her bangle

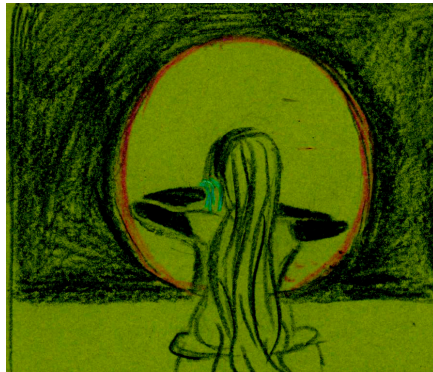
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She gets herself new bangles and stares at herself in the mirror.

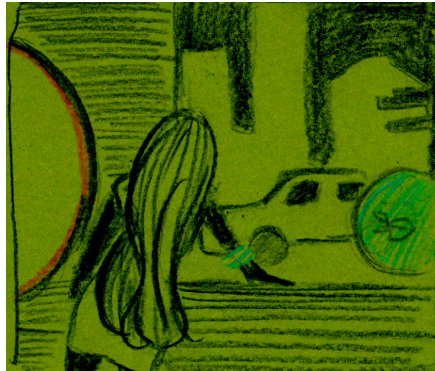


She hears the honk of a car.

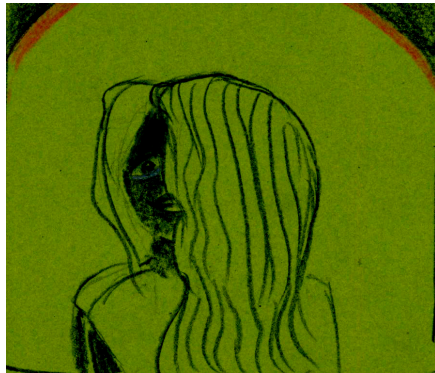
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Goes towards the window to find a car waiting for her. She goes out and sits in the car and it moves away.

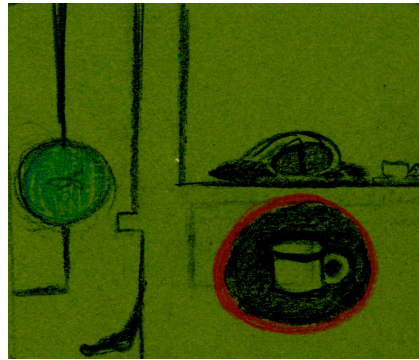


She loves the way she is looking and she admires herself in the mirror.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Back in the morning, she walks inside her house. Reflection of the door can be seen in the mirror, where you can see her.



While having coffee she takes a nap on the table, starts dreaming.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



In her dreams she sees herself as a married woman with a sense of respect and stability, staring calmly at her.

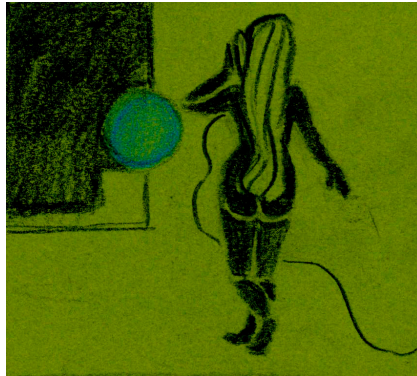


She gets up with a slow ascending phone ring.

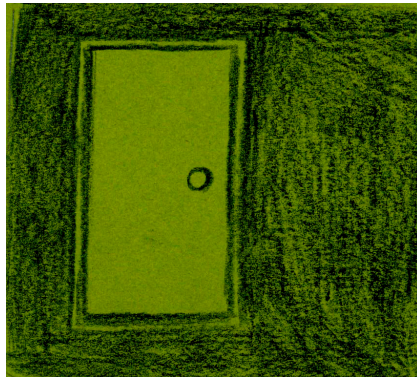
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She laughs and giggles in a flirtatious tone while she speaks on the phone.

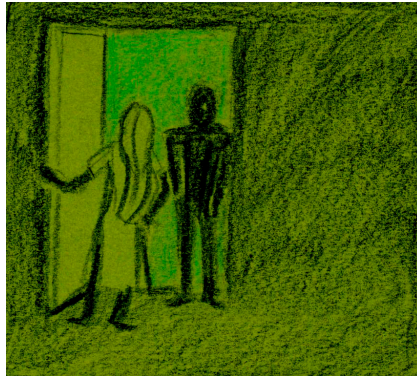


Someone knocks on her door, she continues talking for some more time.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She gets dressed and opens the door. A stranger stands there, a little awkward. She stands there confident and relaxed.



The reflection in the mirror shows that he suddenly starts undressing her in the door.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Hurriedly she takes him inside another room and the living room seems empty for a while. As if the mirror is standing there in isolation.

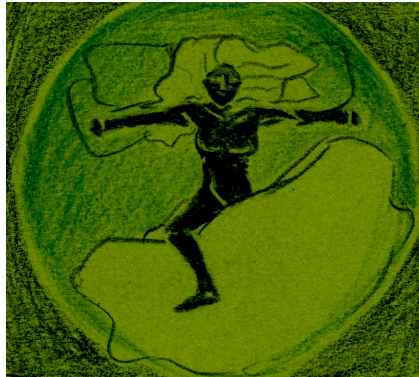


He hands her the money and leaves while she is lost in her own world lying on the bed.

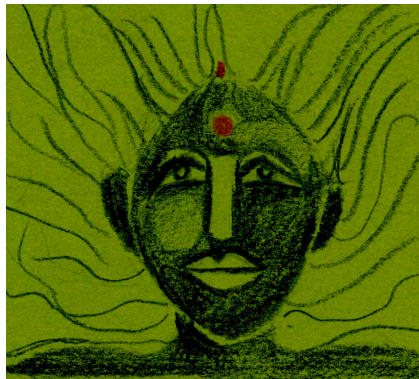
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Relaxed on the bed she is staring at the ceiling unaware of the man who just left her.

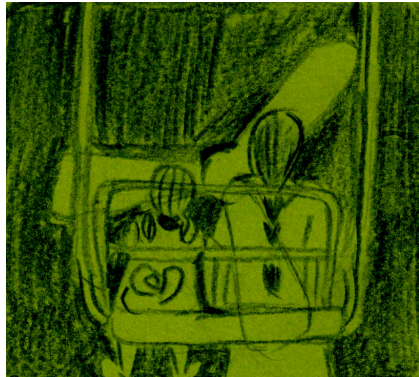


She appears to look like a bride just out of her wedding night, staring intently towards the ceiling. As if she can see something on it.

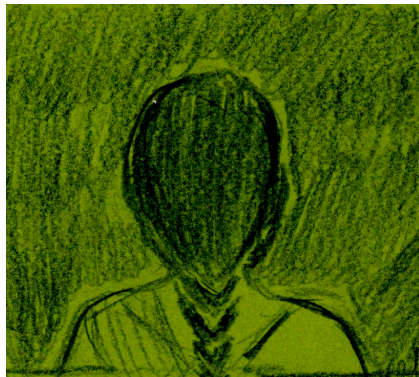
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



The ceiling fan is going round and round giving a sense of a cycle. She can see a mother and daughter sitting on a swing from the back.



She stares at the mother's head with affection and fond memories.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Suddenly turning back the mother gives a very unpleasant look. As if she is angry and unhappy. A sense of disgrace is felt.

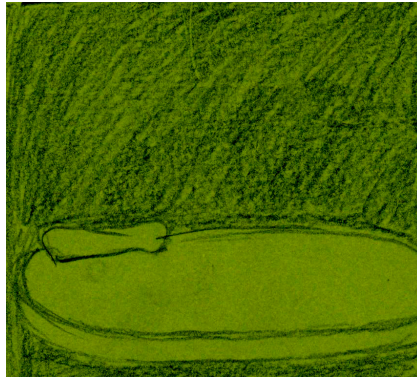


She gets disturbed and hurt. And gets up to sit on her bed, appearing defeated.

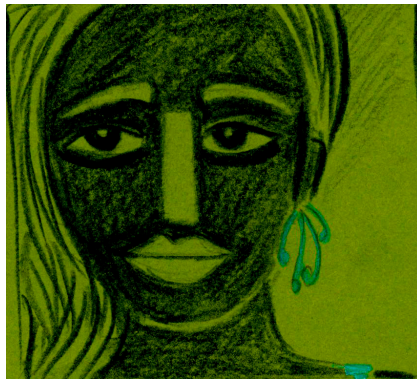
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She gets up from her bed at once and starts walking away. The bed appears to lie there in isolation for sometime. Giving a sense of loneliness.



Though she is going through a bad day, she decides to dress up and go out.

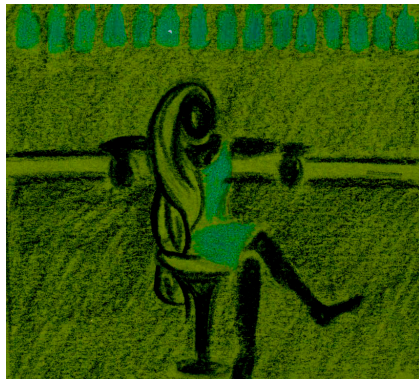
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She is looking stunning today in her sea blue cocktail dress and her hair left loose.

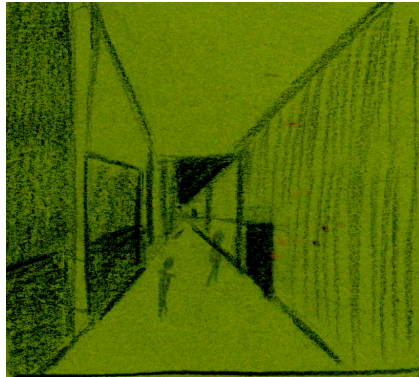


Next she is in very noisy bar sitting and relaxing. Almost doing nothing. Sitting idle.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Suddenly we are outside the bar, hearing the music faintly till the door opens and she comes out. The music gets louder.



Immediately after her a man leaves the bar and starts to follow her. She behaves like she is unaware.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She decides to play hide and seek with him, which shows that she thinks of him as only a boy or a novice. He tries to find her.



They play this game all the way to her house, but she lets him find her way to it. The mystery draws him towards her more.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



And then they make love. Almost like they have never made love before.



In the morning he refuses to leave, as he doesn't understand why he has to. She throws him out of his house.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



He is puzzled. He stands outside her house looking at her stand in the window. She looks back at him, without an explanation.



What can she tell him, why does he have to leave? There is no verbal explanation to his question that she can give.

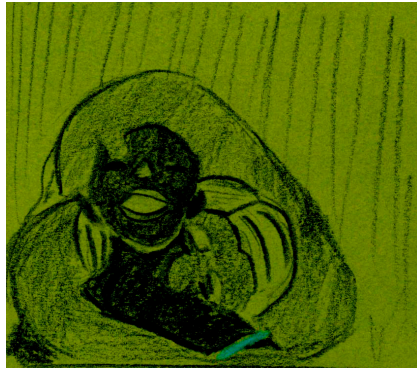
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



A man appears from behind and starts to kiss her. She is still looking at him.



Till she is lost in the pleasure that she is feeling. Both of them move away and disappear into the space behind them.

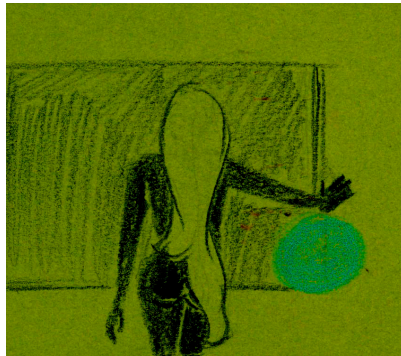
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Like always she is left alone and naked on her bed. But this time she is thinking. Inquisitive to know if he is still standing outside her house. Though she knows that he must have left knowing who she is.

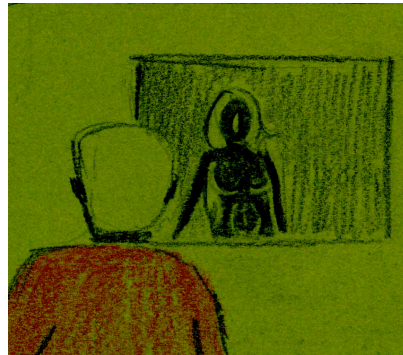


She goes to the window with apprehension. Naked as though there is nothing more left to hide.

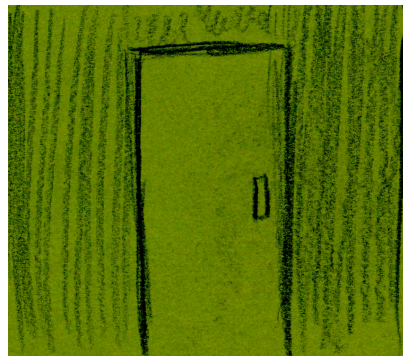
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



And to her surprise he is still there. This is her moment of truth and she hopes for him to still, stay.



He walks inside her house again.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



They appear to be in love. They open the door and leave it behind as if never to return again. She is laughing with joy.

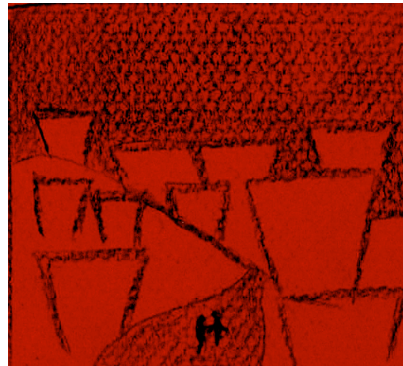


As they walk flowers bloom and everything in their path starts to turn red.

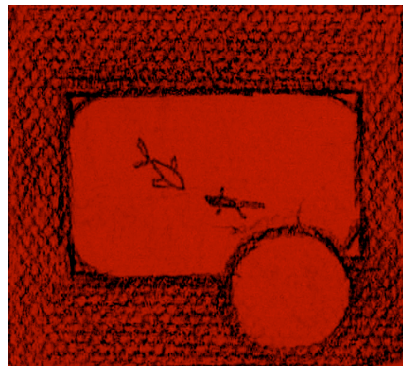
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Everything around them turns red as he takes inside a jungle of houses.



She pours her fish in his fishing tank and they start living together.

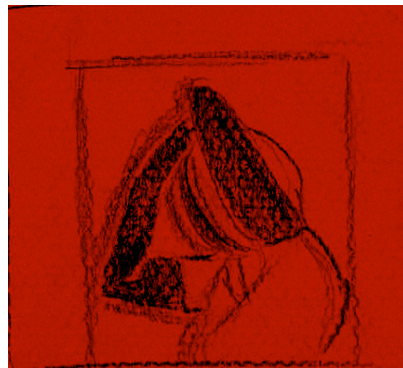
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



Life seems perfect and she seems to have everything she wanted. Everything she thought would never come true.

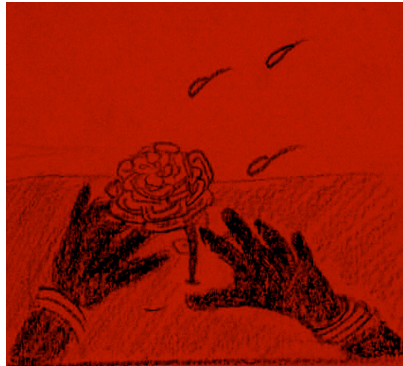


She takes pride in dressing up like his wife and finds things to do to make him happy.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She plants a flower in the garden.

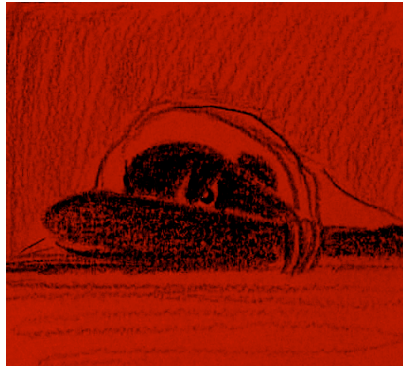


As it rains on the plant, it grows to show passage of time. Then the flower turns black.

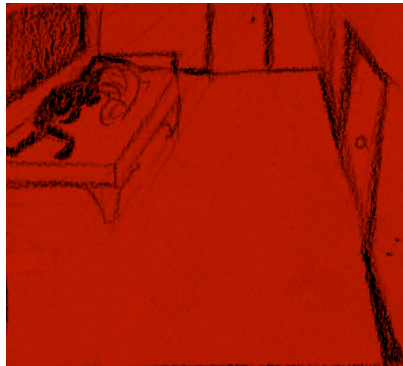
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



In one corner of the room she lies. Staring blankly.

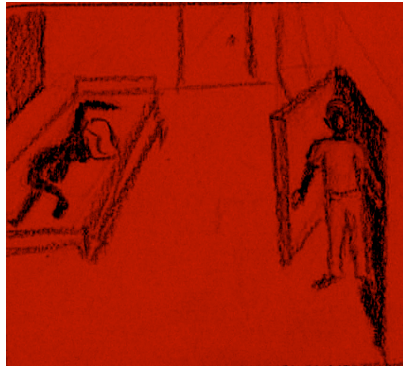


Almost lifeless she lies on the bed.

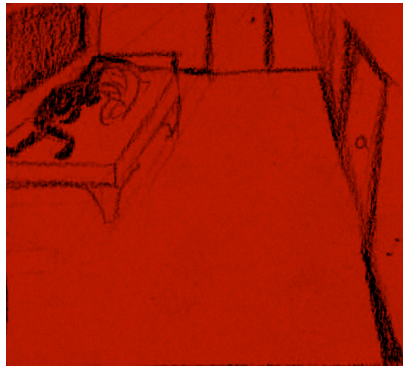
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



He comes to the room, but she is indifferent. She does not bother to see who it is.



He goes from one room to another, without noticing her.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



He comes closer to her bed, but she is still undisturbed.



He turns her around and she smiles meekly.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She lying beneath him. She seems sad and longing for something.



She starts crying, almost howling with pain and agony, but he seems unaffected.

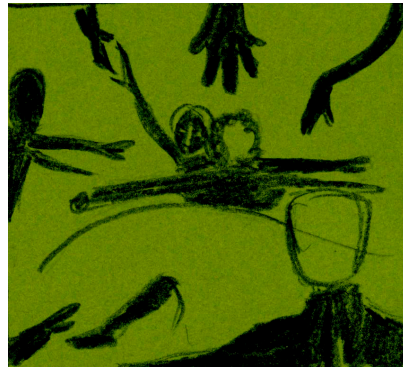
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



She struggles for sometime, but then starts looking peaceful. She starts thinking of other men, and he starts to move away, static.



He can see her inviting other men to their bed though not in reality but in her imagination. He moves further away.

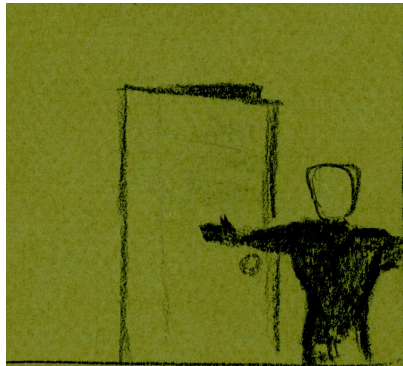
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



He is standing outside the door and sees many men making love to her.

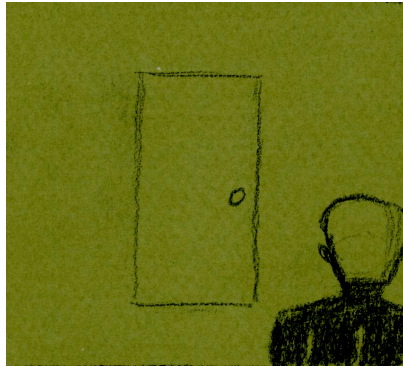


In spite of being aware of the situation, he still stays.

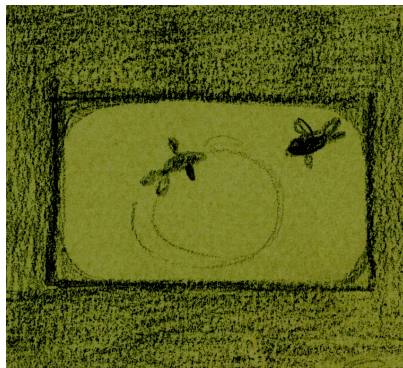
Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

Process till the final treatment...



He only shuts the door behind him.



Amongst the two fish one is still moving in circles.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The Music...

Why did I choose Hindustani classical music?

Since the animation is not very realistic in approach, a proper song would seem a little crude. So I had decided to use instrumental music. I have been listening to Hindustani classical music for a long time now, since my mother is a hindustani classical vocalist. Though I have not been trained in it, I have been exposed to a lot of it since childhood. My mother promised to guide me in this arena, so I was confident that I could use it effectively.

Analyzing the moods in the animation

The mood in the animation overall is quite serious, except for a few scenes when it gets light and playful. Also there is sense of longing throughout the animation. Sometimes it gets sensuous. The infinite possibilities that Hindustani classical offers, allowed me to choose Ragas suitable for all the moods in the animation. Further these ragas have a spread within themselves which can suite a very precise feeling. There are also moderations in the way the Raga is sung, which can suite the pace of the visual. With the guidance of my mother I could make these choices.

The choice and study of Ragas

Raga Hamsadhvani - Merry with a sense of playfulness.

Raga Ahir Bhairav - A sense of longing, or loss.

Raga Yaman - Sad and depressing. A feeling of longing with hopelessness.

Raga Basant Bahar - Festive. Gives a sense of celebrations.

Raga Gaud Malhar - A unique raga with a mix of happy and sad shades depending on its application.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The Music...

A 'khyal' is a way of spreading a Raga while singing. It also has a long 'vistaar'. A 'vistaar' is the spread. 'Dhrut' is the fast part in the vistaar, while 'vilambit' is the slow one.

'Dhrut' part of the Khyaal of ragas like Hamsadhvani, Basant Bahar can show a joyous events with fast happenings. It can also be used in places where there is a need to show excitement or a rush of joy. For ragas like Yaman, Ahir Bhairav the 'Dhrut' part of the Khyaal can show sadness which is unbearable and violent.

'Vilambit' Khyaal of ragas like Yaman will show excruciating pain and longing. While that in Ahir Bhairav will be a little milder.

After listening to these ragas over and over again, I identified some parts which can enhance the sentiments in some scenes. I have tried to use these appropriately.

Treatment to the music

The voice is that of the renowned singer Kishori Amonkar. No treatment has been done to the original tracks, as they were fabulous in their raw format. The music keeps running constantly in the background at a low pitch, except for some places where it really picks up. This was done to accelerate or boost the emotions at that moment.

Why did I avoid a voice over?

A voice over just like a song would seem very crude for the animation. Nothing in the story can truly be explained verbally. It has a lot to do with experience and empathy. Besides it has always been an ideal situation if the visuals don't need any other aid to tell the story.

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



Her dressing table and mirror

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



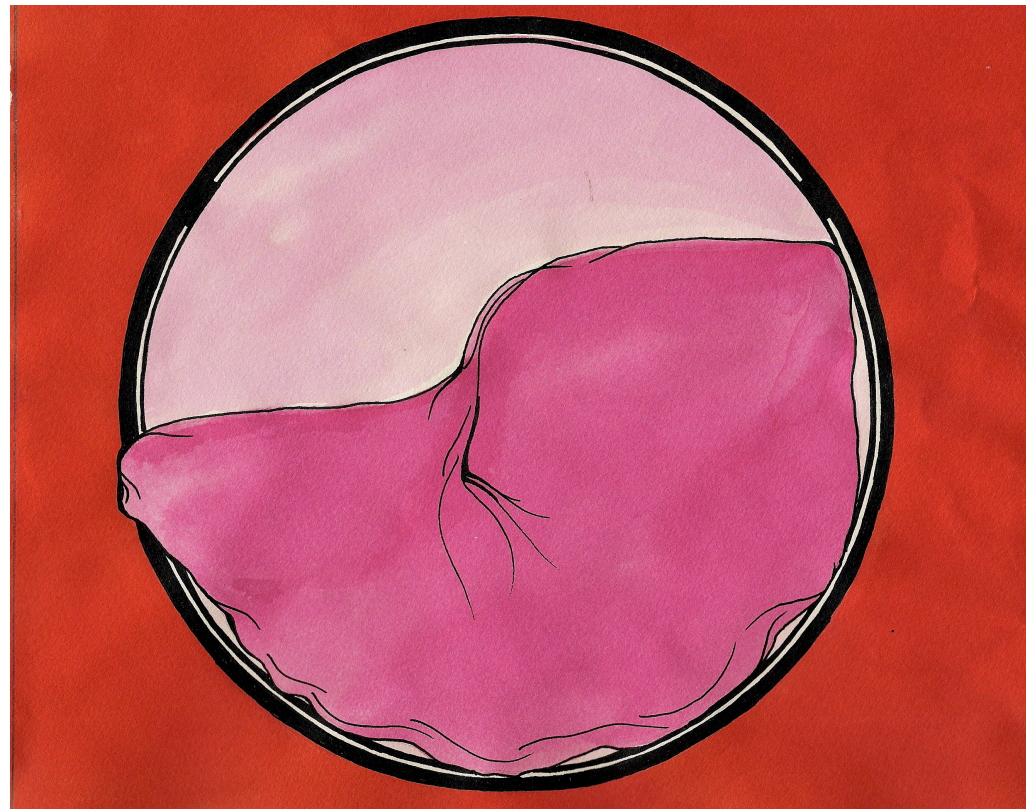
Her kitchen counter

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



Her bed

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



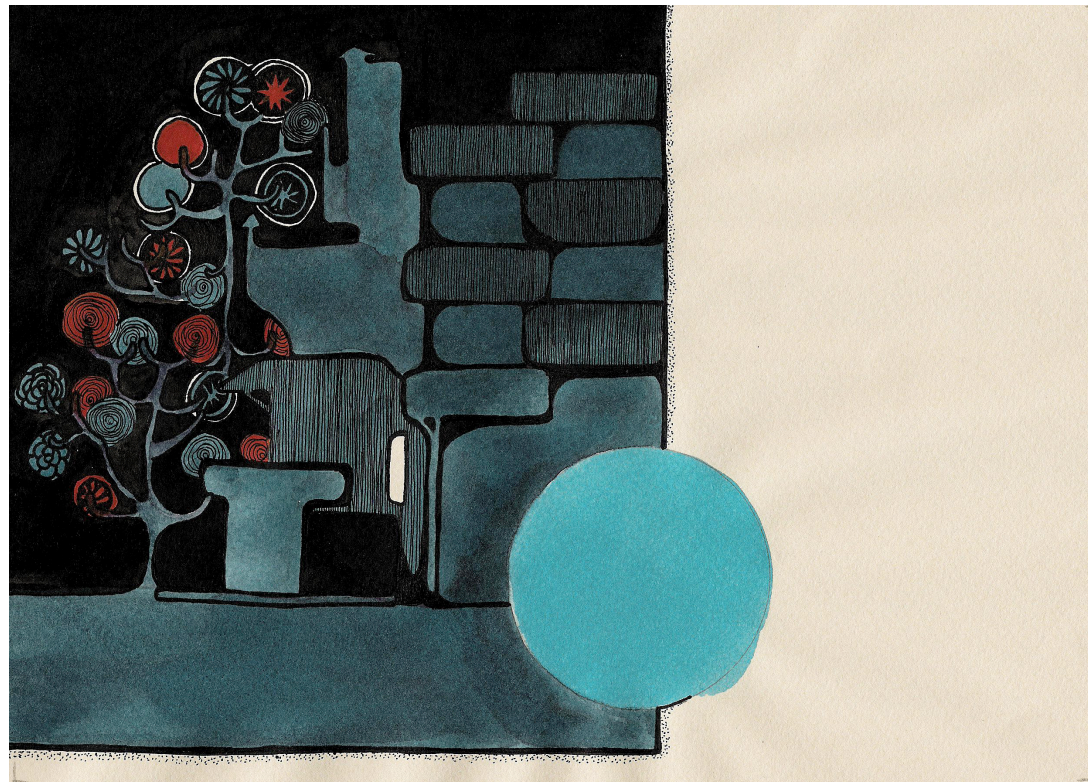
Her bed

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



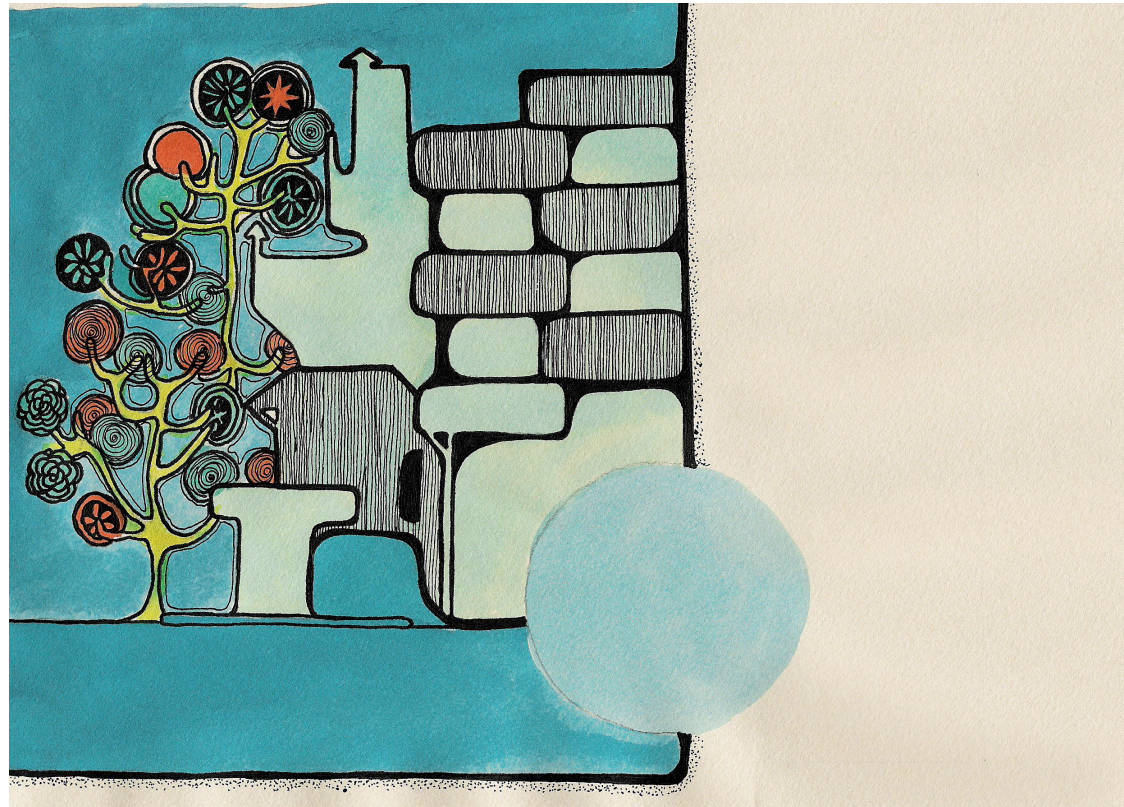
Her window with a fish bowl at night

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



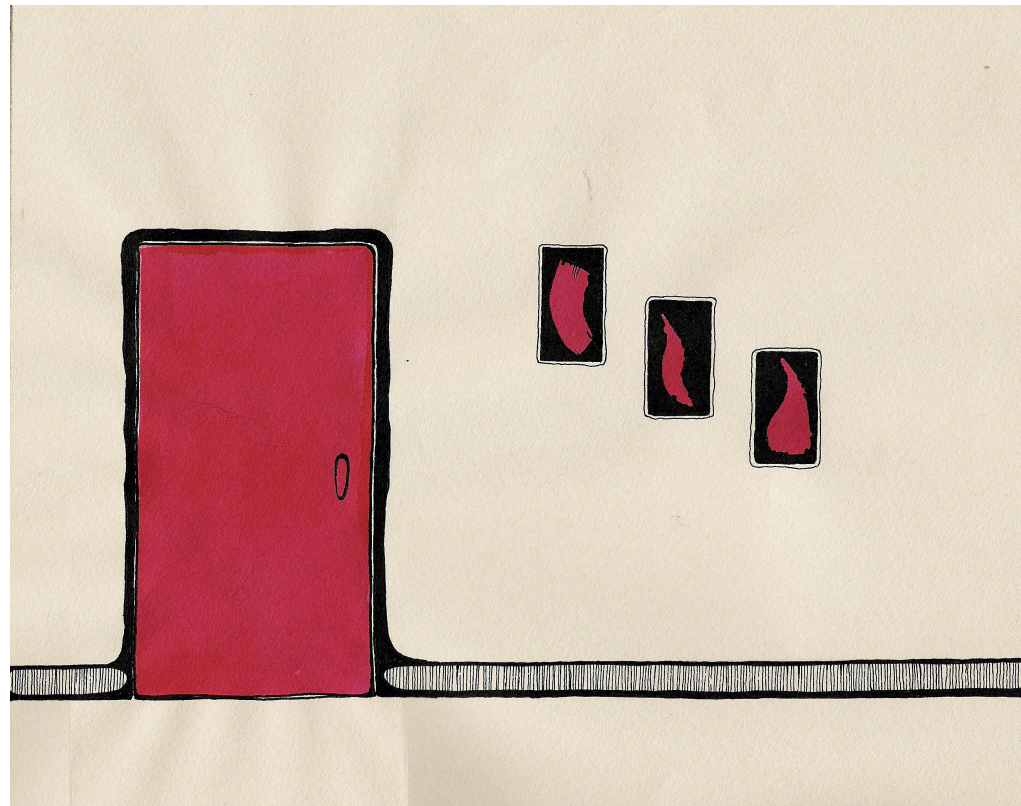
Her window with a fish bowl in the morning

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



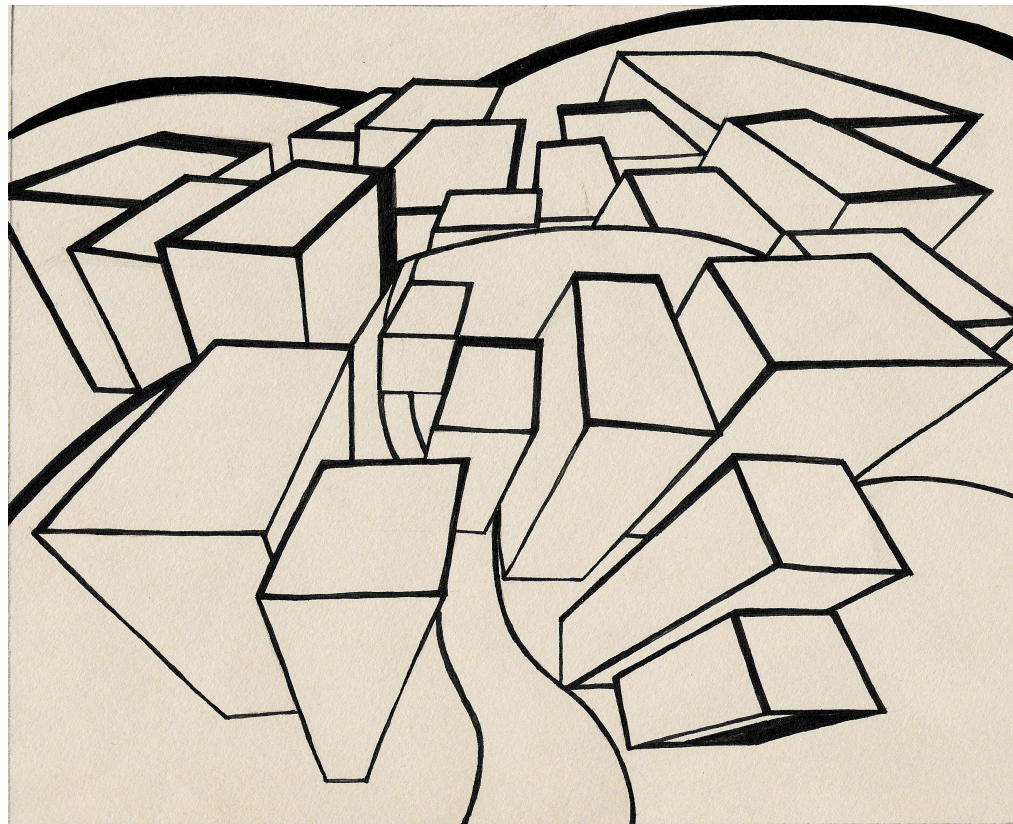
Her home door

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



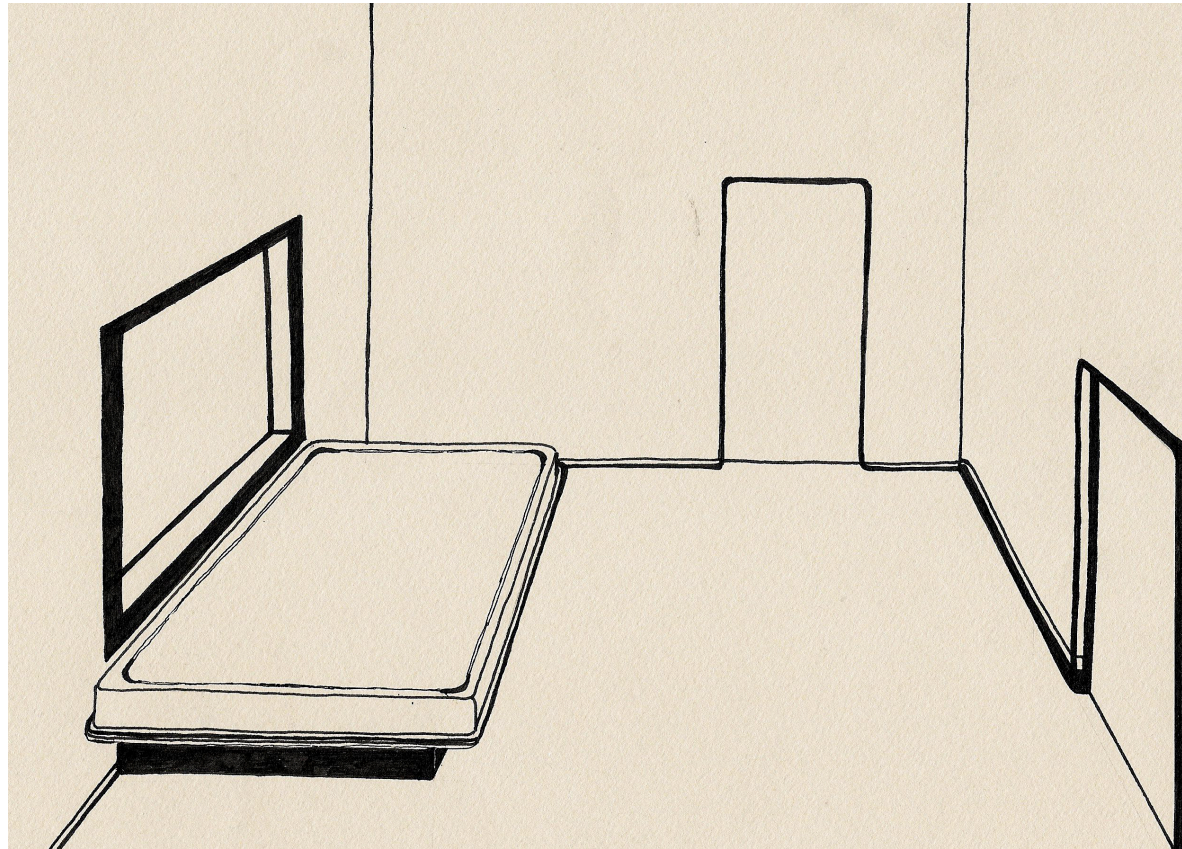
An urban jungle

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



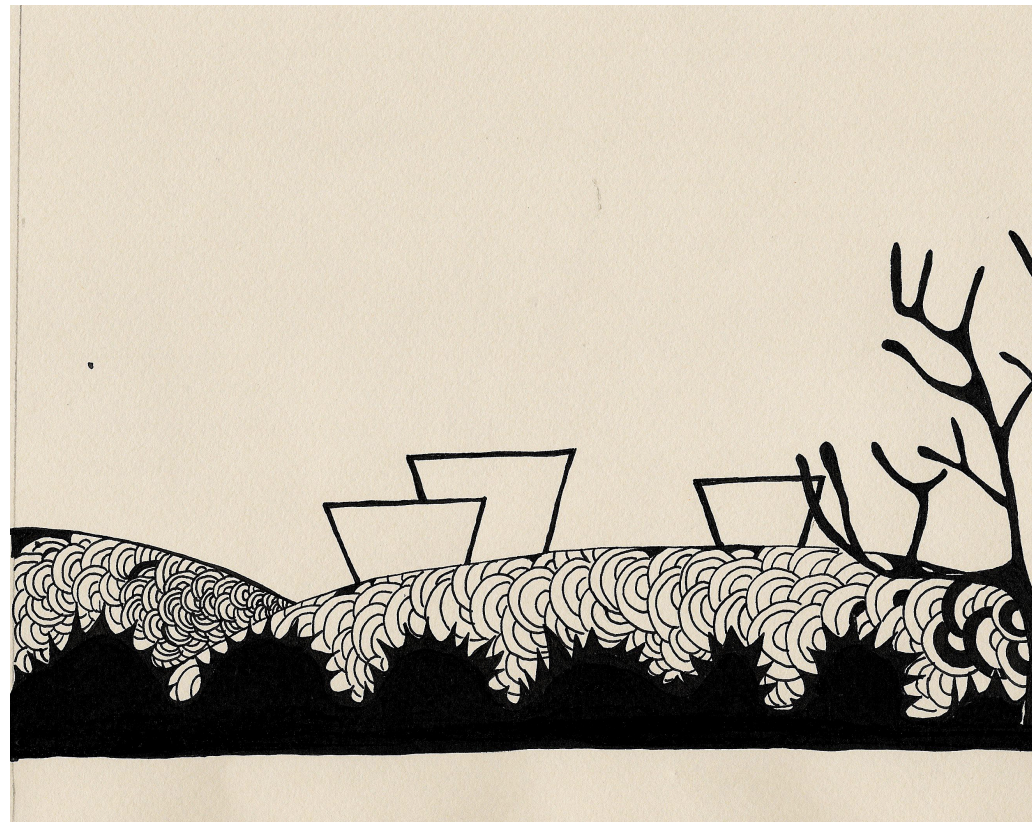
His house

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



Along the street

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



Along the street

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



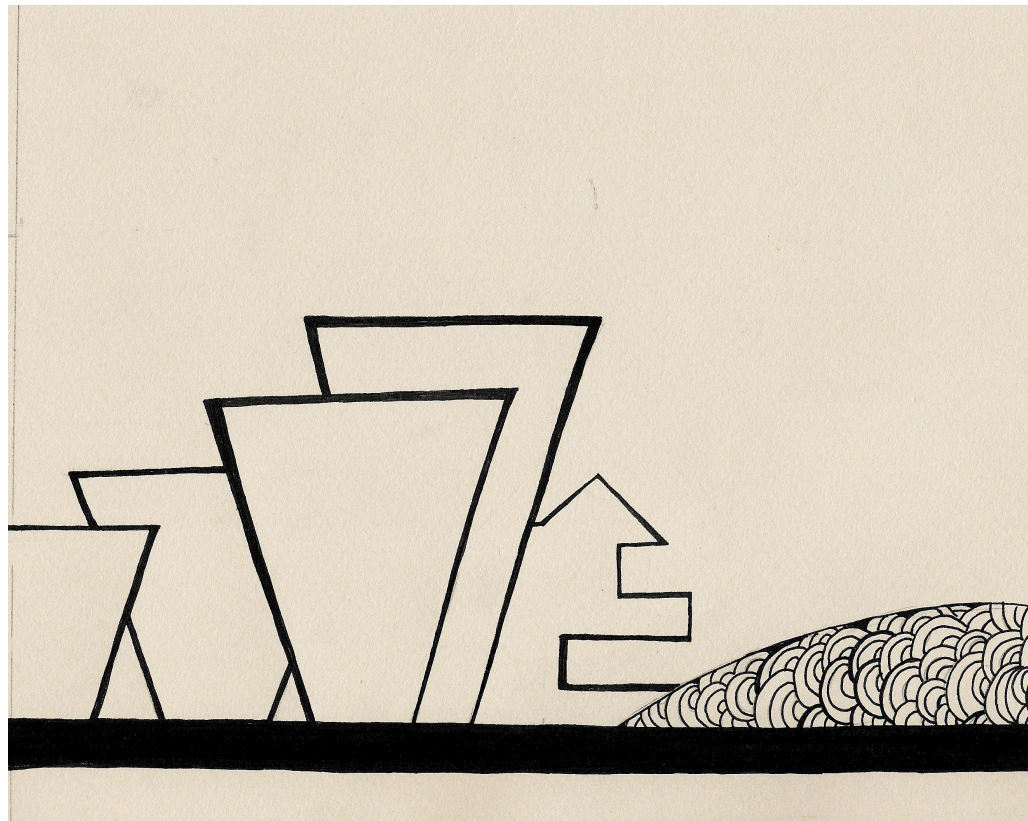
Along the street

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



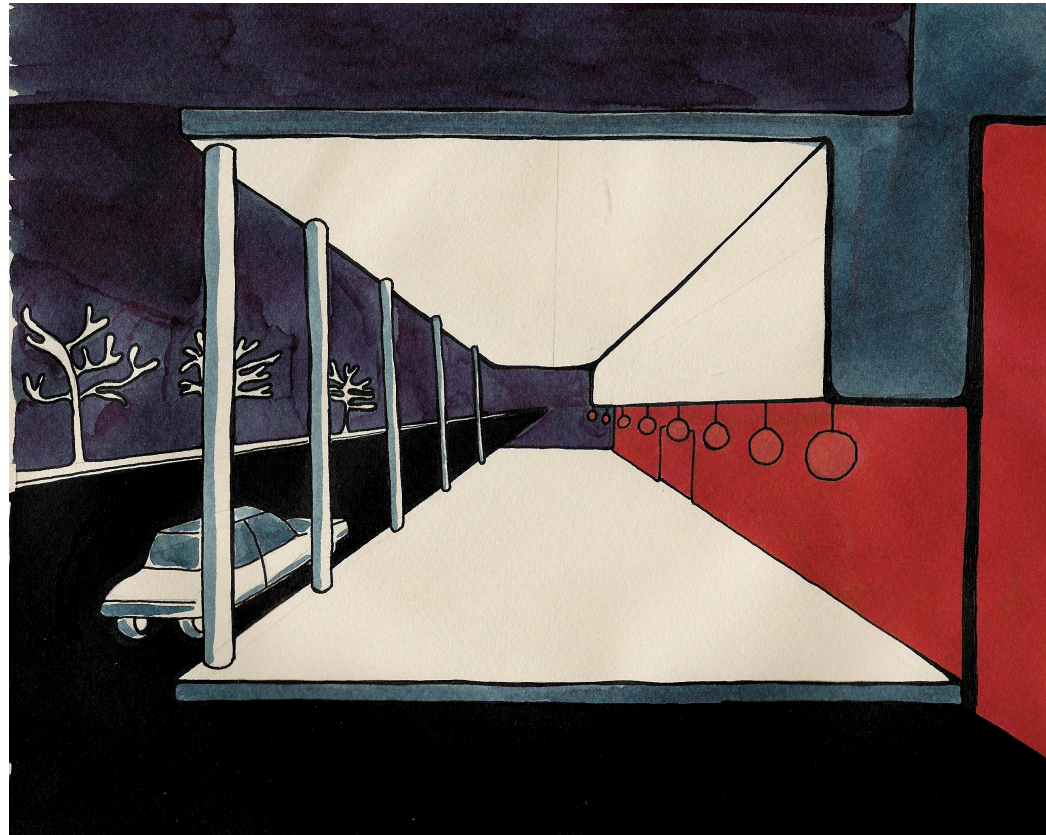
Along the street

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



Outside the bar

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



A bench in a park

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



Her apartment window from across the road at night

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



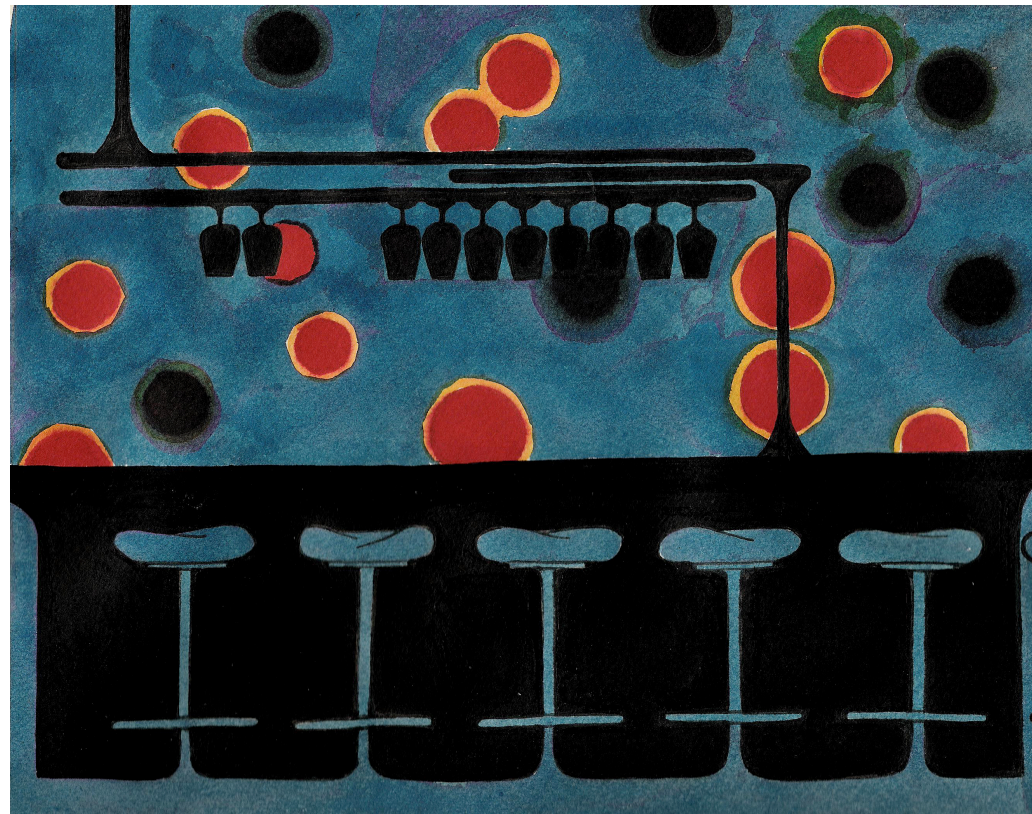
Her apartment window from across the road at dawn

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

The complete animation...

The frames



Inside the bar

Understanding sexual morality

Project 2, an animation short.

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