Animation Design project- II

BHEED

Rahul Dileep | 216340012
M.des Animation design (2021-2023)

Guided by **Prof. Mazhar Kamran**
Prof. Abhishek Verma

IDC School of Design अभिकल्प विद्यालय IIT Bombay

Approval Sheet

The Design Project 2 Titled " Bheed : Animated short film " by **Rahul Dileep** , **Roll Number 216340012**, is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the 'Master of Design' in the Animation and Film Design at Industrial Design Center, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

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Date : 06-07-2023

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Declaration

I declare that this project report submission contains my own ideas and work, and if any pre-existing idea or work has been included, the original author(s) have been adequately cited and referenced. I also declare that I have adhered to all the principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misinterpreted, fabricated or falsified any idea, data, or fact source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and may evoke penal action from the sources.

Rahul Dileep 216340012

IDC School of Design IIT Bombay

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Acknowledgement

I sincerely extend my gratitude to Prof. Mazhar Kamran and Prof Abhishek Varma for their invaluable support and guidance through the course of the project. I would also like to thank Prof. Sumant Rao, Prof. Prosenjit Ganguly, Prof Aditi Chitre, Prof Shilpa Ranade and Prof Swati Agarwal who helped me get over crucial stages in between the project. I would like to thank Prof. Nina Sabnani for lending an ear to my project and for her valuable feedback.

To my classmates , seniors , batchmates and everyone who showed concern and gave suggestions, I extend my gratitude for providing the support which crucial to this project.

Lastly I thank the multitude of random Mumbaikars who have lent their voices as background and foley and the unruly spirit of Bombay that inspired this project.

Index

1. Introduction
2. Inspiration and research
3. Mind Map
4. Story and concept
5. Mood board
6. Inspirational sketches
7. Storyboards
8. Characters and assets
9. Production
10. Challenges
11. Reflections
12. References

Introduction

This short movie is inspired from a personal experience of getting lost in the riotous crowd of Mumbai. A crowd is an overwhelming and suffocating experience for most people, add to it the unruly madness of Bombay and you get a very terrifying experience. Living all my life in Kochi which has less than a fifth of the population of Mumbai, it was a sudden shock when I boarded my first public transport. However after a few weeks I felt the “Bheed” of Bombay had an innate synergy in how it functions. I aim to make a film that captures the disorder of the crowd, how it can be suffocating and confining but also moves and flows through the city.

Inspirations and research

Secondary Research

News articles

Crowd related tragedies surfacing in the the post covid life, like the Astroworld tragedy, overcrowding incidents in Kerala and, Halloween stampede in korea were some of the incidents that lend gravity to the topic.

South Korea Halloween stampede: How and why do crowd surges turn deadly?

World News

Published on Oct 30, 2022 04:19 AM IST

While movies that show crowds desperately try to flee suggest getting trampled might be the cause of most of the deaths, the reality is most people who die in a crowd surge are suffocated.

Investigators inspect the scene where many people died and were injured in a stampede during a Halloween festival in Seoul, South Korea, October 30, 2022. REUTERS/Kim Hong-ji TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY(REUTERS)

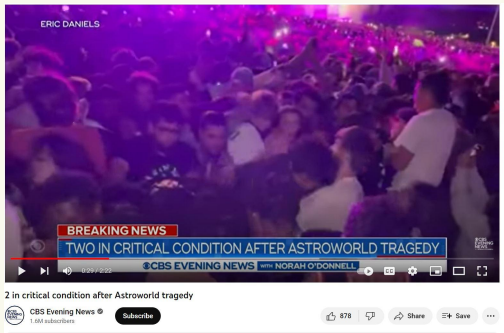
Source
https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/south-korea-halloween-stampede-how-and-why-do-crowd-surges-turn-deadly-101667083370793.html

Video: Crowds Cling To Escalators As Hundreds Swarm Kerala Mall For Event

The people came to HiLITE Mall in Kozhikode to attend a promotional event of Thallumaala, an upcoming Malayalam film directed by Khalid Rahman

Kerala News | Edited by Debanish Achom | Updated: August 11, 2022 11:02 am IST

Source
https://www.ndtv.com/kerala-news/crowds-on-floor-stairs-escalators-hundreds-swarm-kerala-mall-for-event-3245034



Source
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97WqiEua4Xg&ab_channel=CBSEveningNews

Secondary Research

A multitude of films both animated and live action acted as references and inspirations for the visuals as well as the movement and pacing of the film.

Good morning Mumbai (2012)

The student film directed by Rajesh Thakare and Troy Vasanth, inspired a lot of the visual styles of the film

Source :https://youtu.be/cTxJ6nekr_A

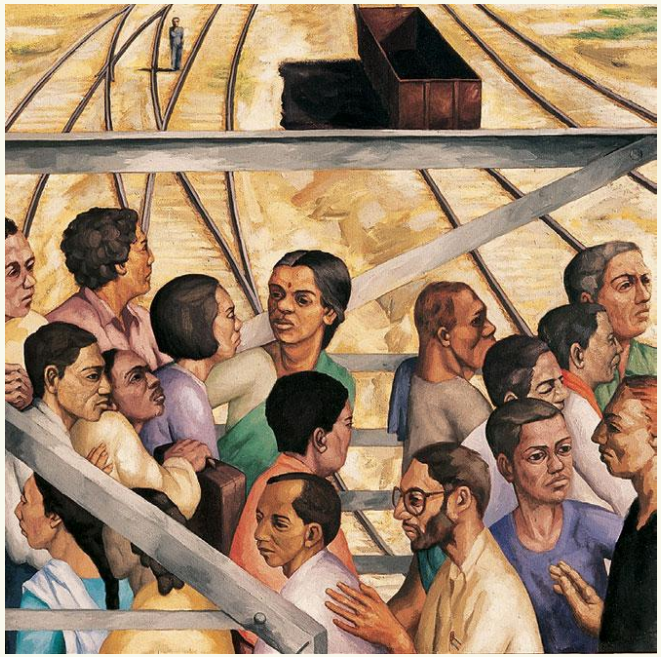
Train of Thought (1985), Night club (1983)

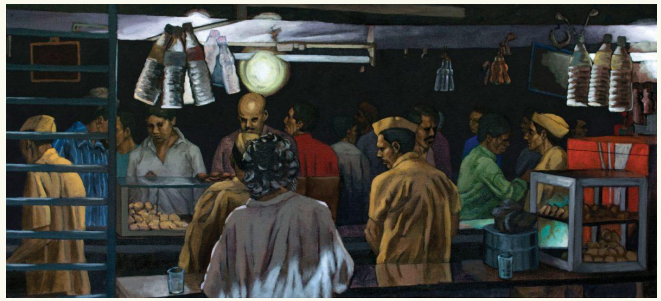
Graduation projects by Jonathan Hodgeson, served as inspiration for the feelings of isolation and being lost in a crowd.

Source :http://ukanimation.blogspot.com/2010/12/jonathan-hodgsons-night-club.html

“Mumbai as viewed on a Sudhir Patwardhan canvas”

The beautifully busy canvases of Sudhir Patwardhan depicting the hustle of Mumbai.





Source :https://openthemagazine.com/art-culture/sudhir-patwardhan-the-peoples-painter/

Inspirations and research

Primary research

The primary research involved a lot of photographs and recorded audio from around the city procured during the days prior to and around the time of The Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali and on random working day commutes.Since traveling in the local train is quintessential part of Mumbai life a lot of narrated experiences from my classmates and professors about their travel in the Mumbai Suburban rail also added to the project.

Personal notes from a commute

27.08.2022

Observations

"*Took a trip from Kanjur marg to Dadar ,which was bustling with the pre- Ganesh Chaturthi crowd. Took a few reference videos for local train travel , recorded ambient noises of crowds and percussionists practicing.*

On weekdays the intensity of the crowd in the city Plummets during the morning hours of 8;30 am - 11:00 am and from the evening 06:00 pm till the trains stop.

Policemen are stationed at stations and at bus boarding points, however the crowds assume a sort of a self regulatory mode.

The nature of the crowd that throngs to get into different modes of public transport has a unique attitude. The crowds for the Share cabs who comfortably fit themselves into the seats . The crowds for the metro , who wait for the doors to close. The crowds for the bus that wait for the bus to halt to jump into the back door. And then the crowds for the Local train that doesn't even wait for the train to stop, to ensure a foot space in the 2nd class compartment."

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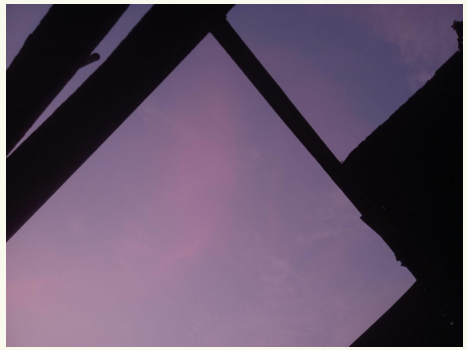
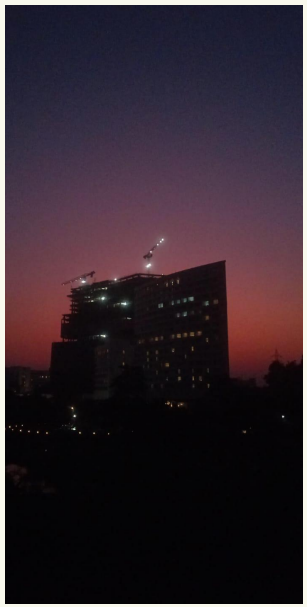
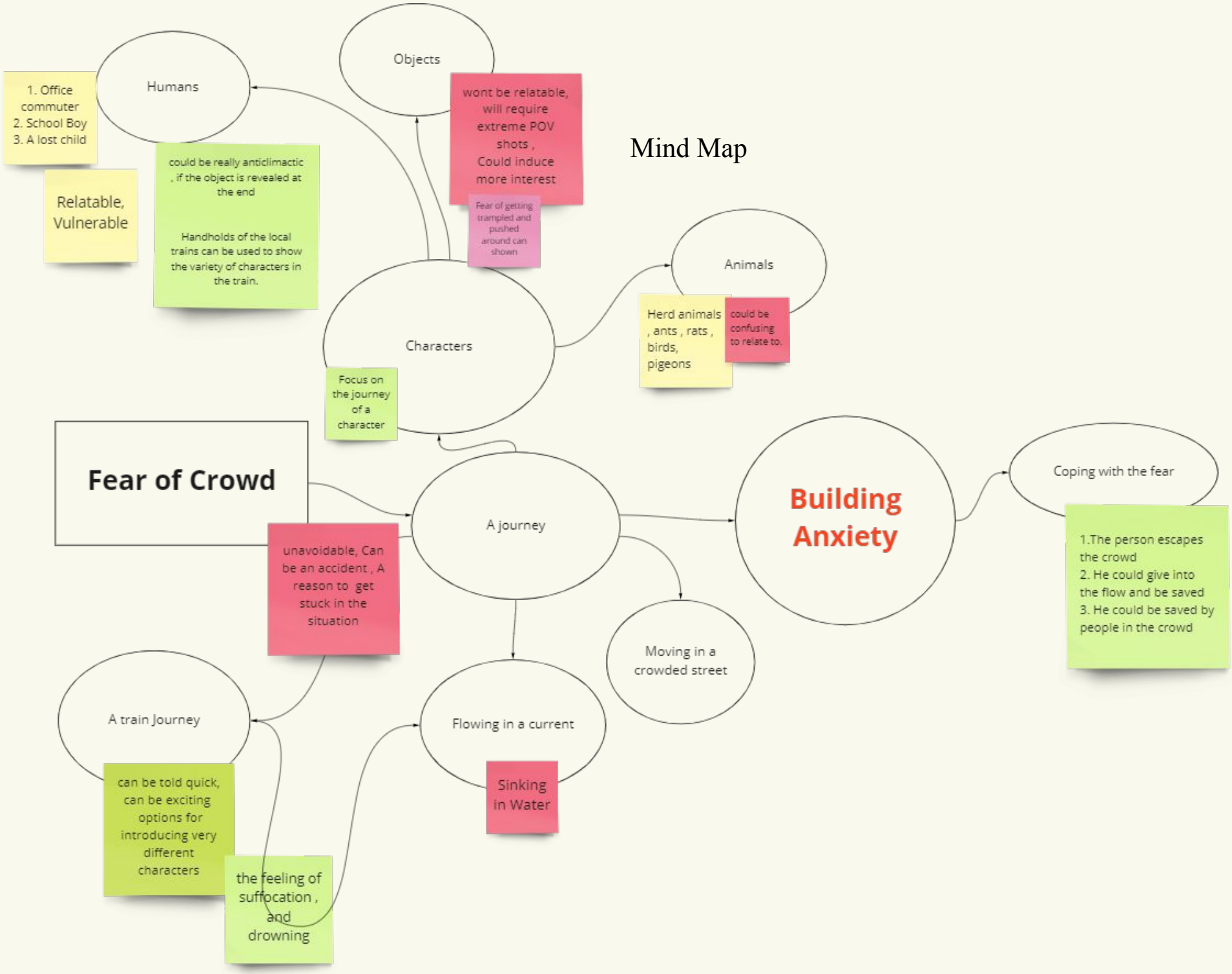



beauty
KITCHEN HOUSE

Mind Map


Fear of Crowd
Characters
Humans
1. Office commuter
2. School Boy
3. A lost child
Relatable, Vulnerable
could be really anticlimactic , if the object is revealed at the end
Handholds of the local trains can be used to show the variety of characters in the train.
Objects
wont be relatable, will require extreme POV shots , Could induce more interest
Fear of getting trampled and pushed around can shown
Animals
Herd animals , ants , rats , birds, pigeons
could be confusing to relate to.
Focus on the journey of a character
A journey
unavoidable, Can be an accident , A reason to get stuck in the situation
A train Journey
can be told quick, can be exciting options for introducing very different characters
the feeling of suffocation , and drowning
Flowing in a current
Sinking in Water
Moving in a crowded street
Building Anxiety
Coping with the fear
1.The person escapes the crowd
2. He could give into the flow and be saved
3. He could be saved by people in the crowd

Story and concept

Initial story ideas

"Central line"

Getting off at Dadar station, a novice to Mumbai is forced to board the slow train along the central line. He is overwhelmed by the throng of people who got in 2 stations before his stop. He now has to Swim against a raging current of people trying to force his way out of the door.

"Bus ride"

A 8- year old boy has to get on a crowded bus with his mom. We see a suffocating world from the level of a small child.

"City Surfing"

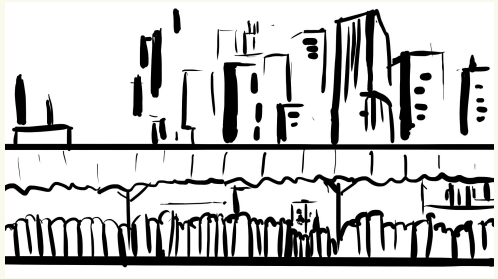
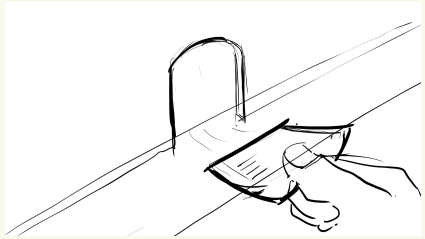
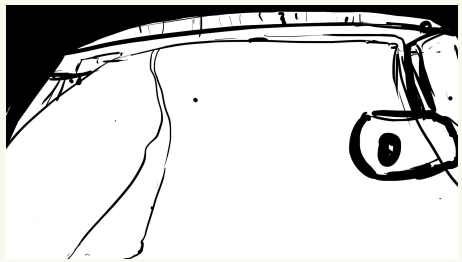
While thinking about moving through the crowd, I feel like comparing it to water and drowning. It might be because I personally have a fear of drowning, but I find it interesting that just like swimming in water is easier if we go with the flow, moving in a crowd becomes easier if we go along with it .

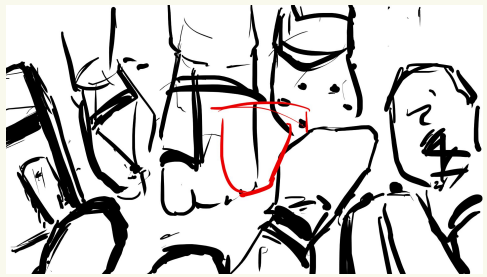
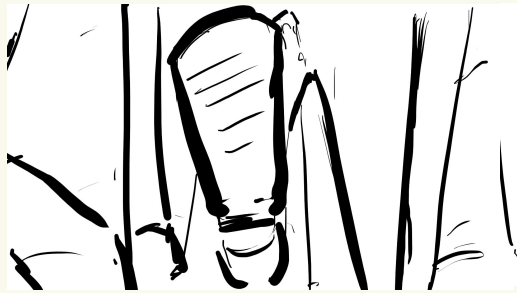
Story abstract-1

"Dadar Return"

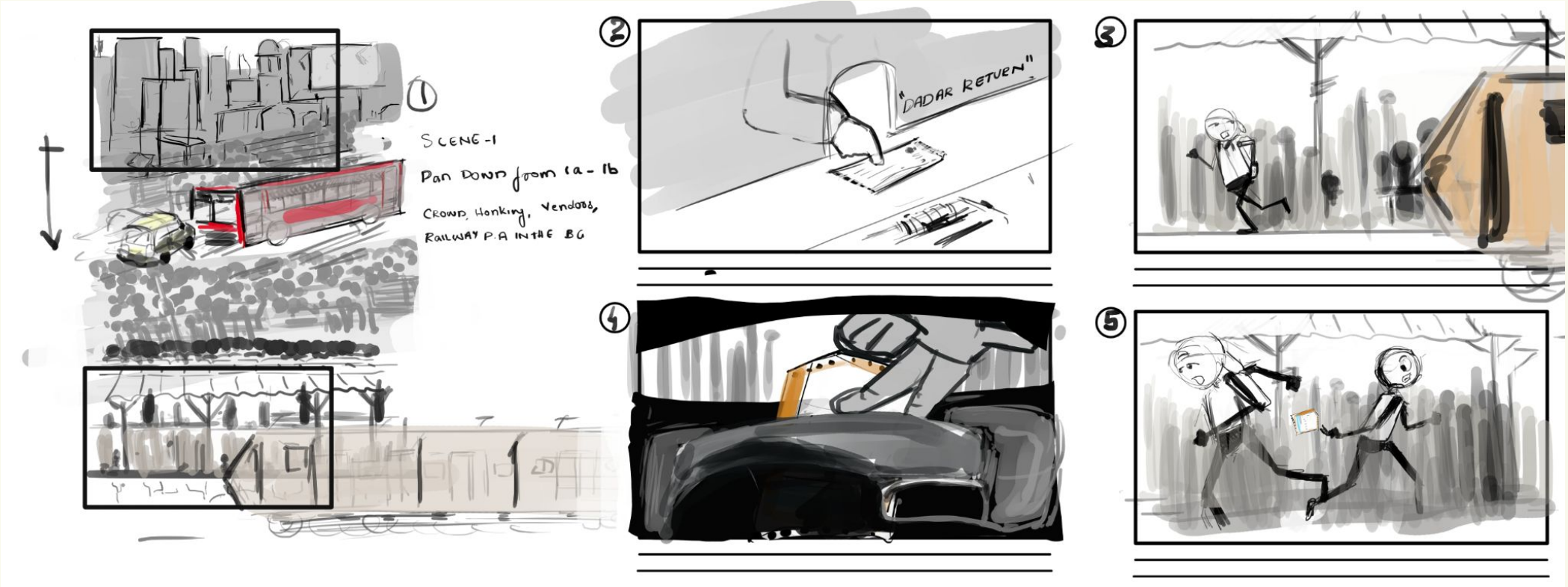
A Railway ticket booked from Thane, gets lost in the train due to an unsuccessful pickpocketing attempt. Striving to get back to the safety of a pocket, the ticket traverses a maze of falling feet , squeezing bellies and smelly armpits to try and reach the owner.
However just before it gets to the owner a gust of wind blows him out of the train. Once outside, the ticket gets caught in a disorienting cycle of buildings wheezing past but eventually if comes to see with clarity the city and the people from a different perspective. He flies up in between Chawls and skyscrapers to finally get lost in the sky. A return ticket that gets lost in the crowd.

Rough thumbnails (For “Dadar Return”)

Storyboard for ‘Dadar return’



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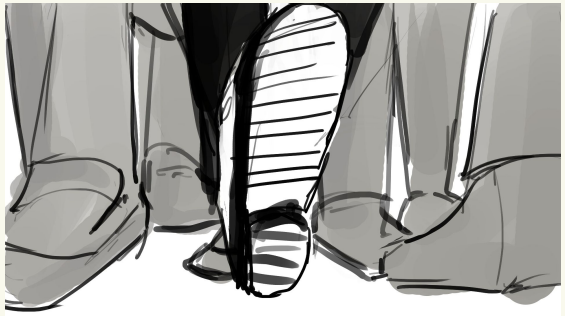
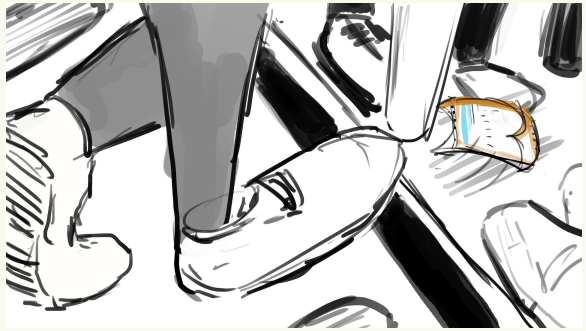

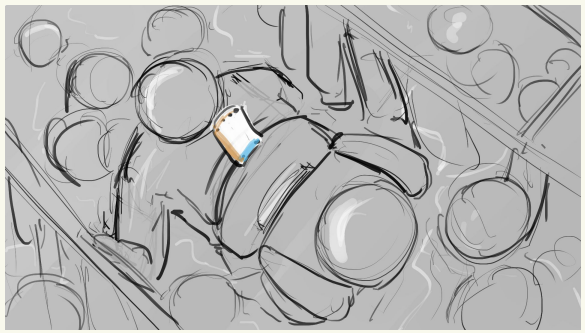
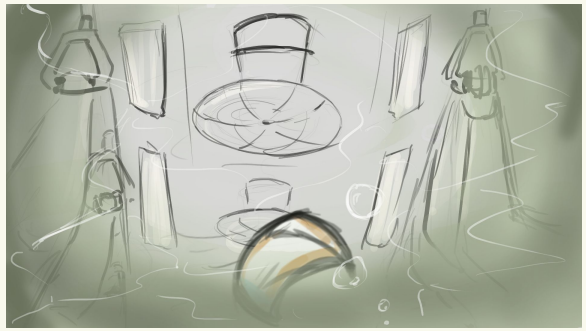

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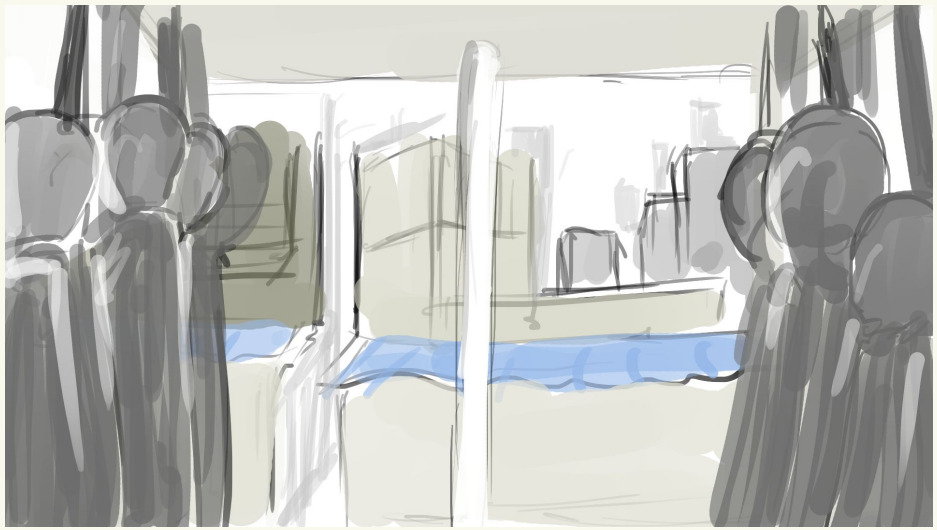
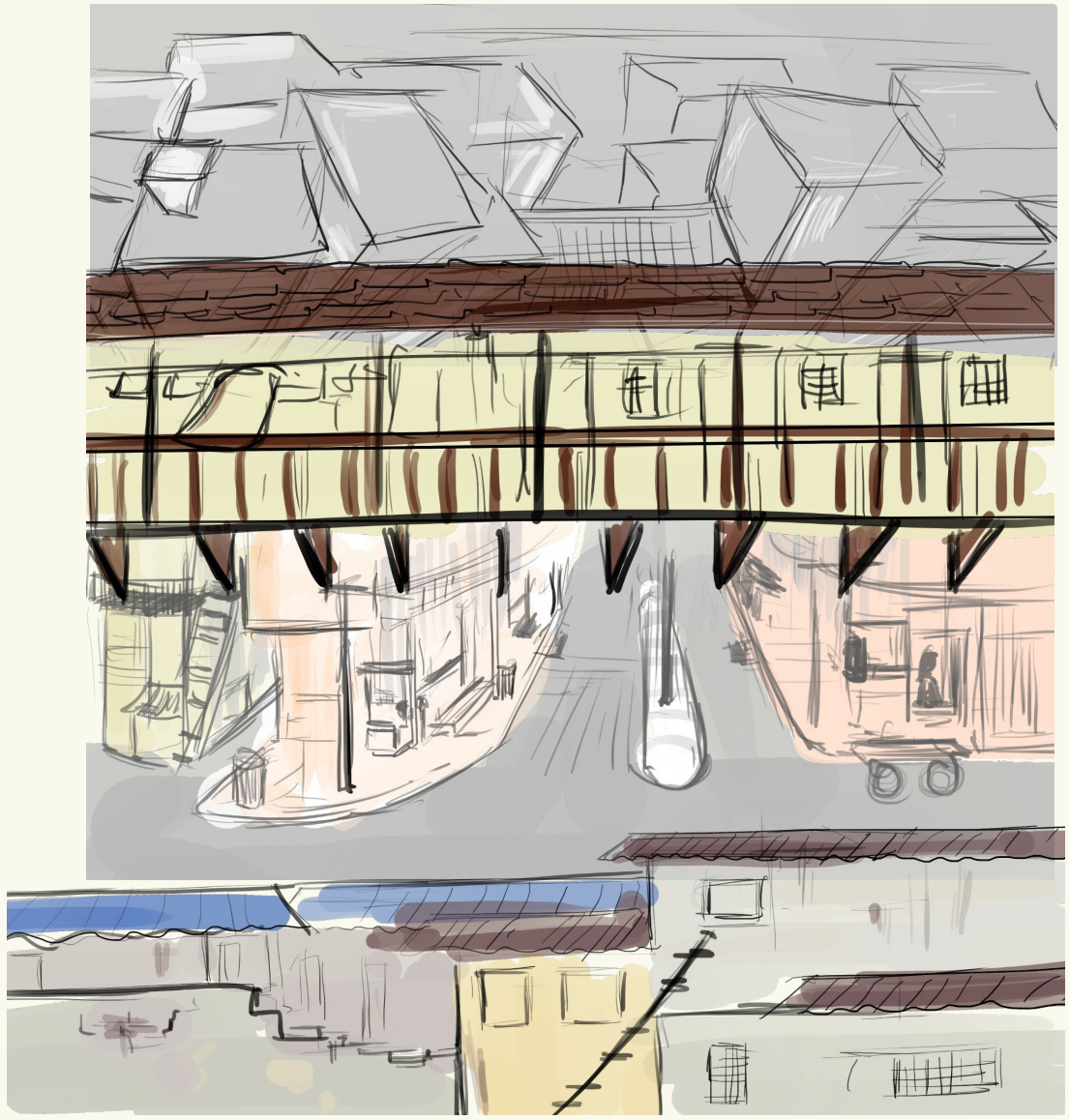




Story and concept

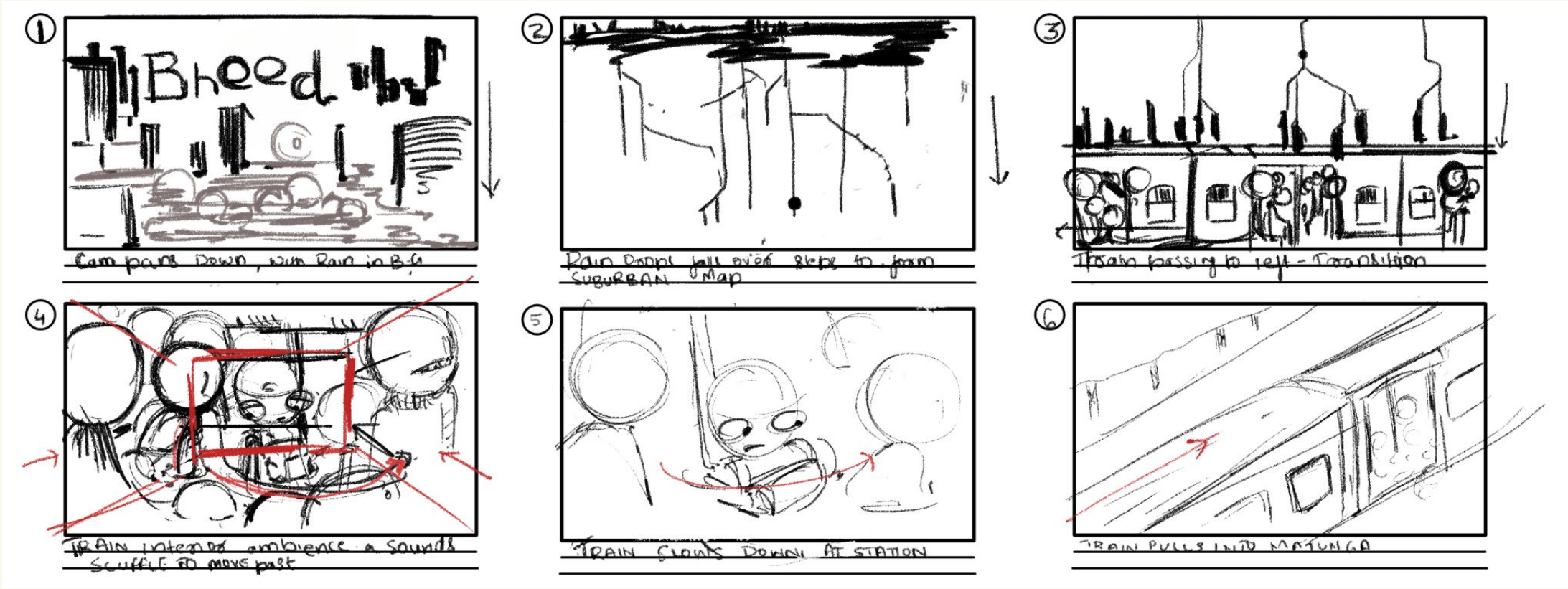
Final Story

"Bheed"

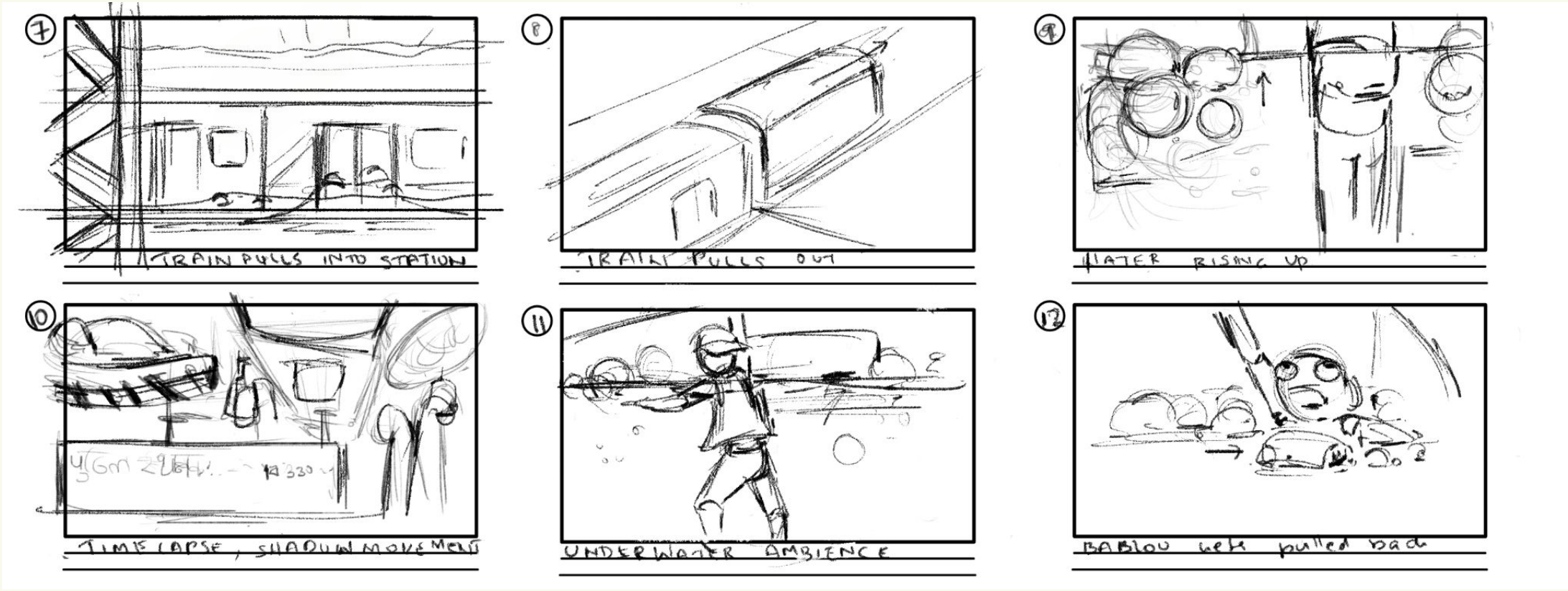
In a rainy day in Mumbai the crowd pushes on like a marsh pit. Blended together like a swamp.We find Babloo stuck in the said swamp inside the compartment of a train.The short stops at each station gives the swamp life as it moves out of the train in a current dragging Babloo slowly away from his handhold of safety. At Dadar the swamp froths into a bubbling mass, that starts building pressure and flows towards the door. Finally at Dadar it attains its release as it surges out onto the platform dumping a visibly shaken Babloo onto the platform

A short incident with a character going through an experience that ends swiftly was the approach taken considering the stipulated duration of the film. An adult human character was fixed after considering an inanimate object like a ticket, an animal like a pigeon and even a child. This decision was arrived to establish the weight of the fear of crowds on a regular commuter.

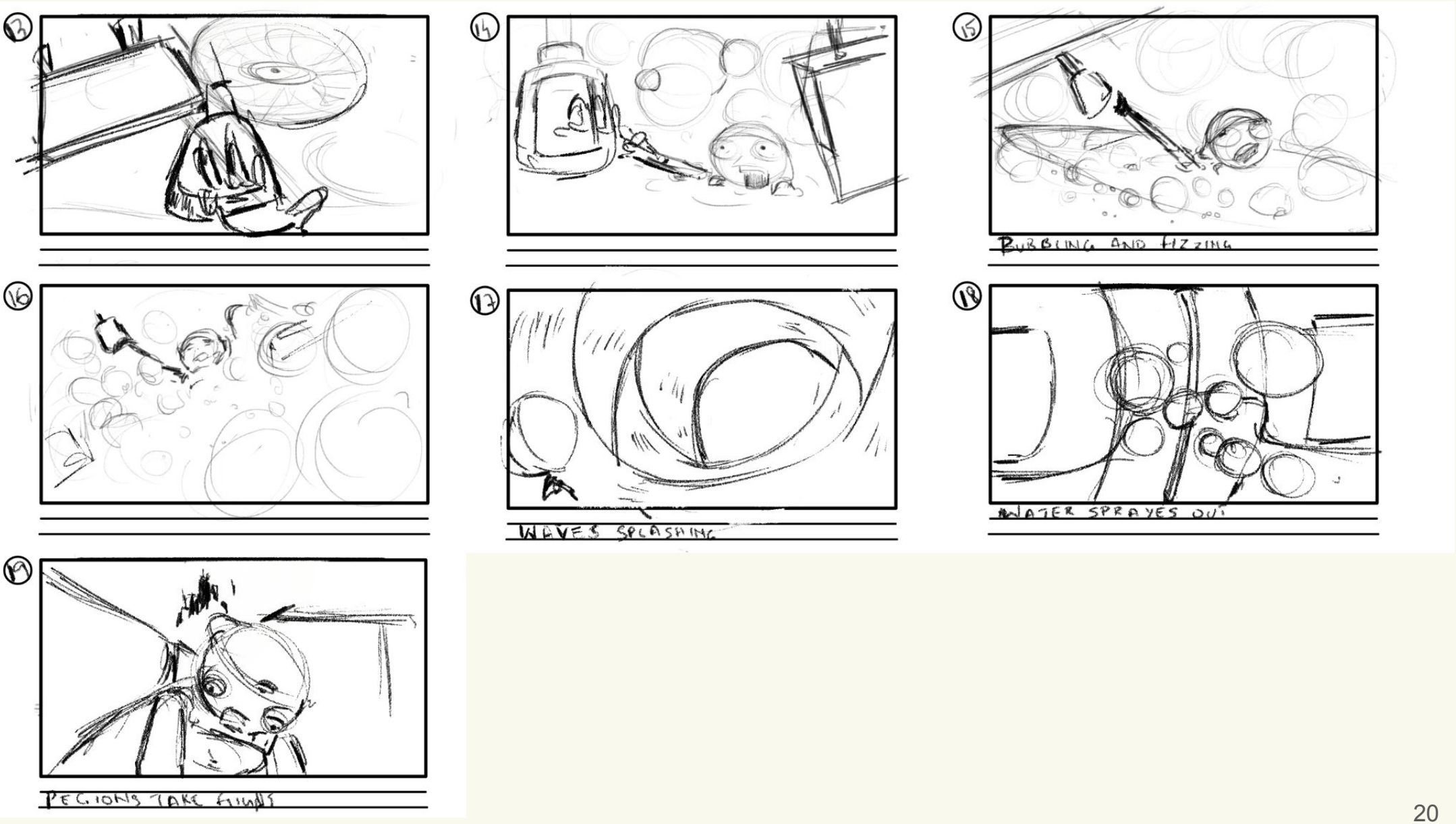
Storyboards 1/3



Storyboards 1/3



Storyboards 1/3



Mood Board

Keywords

Crowd

Chaos

randomness

overwhelming

drowning

suffocation

forest

thickets

swampy

murky

turbulent

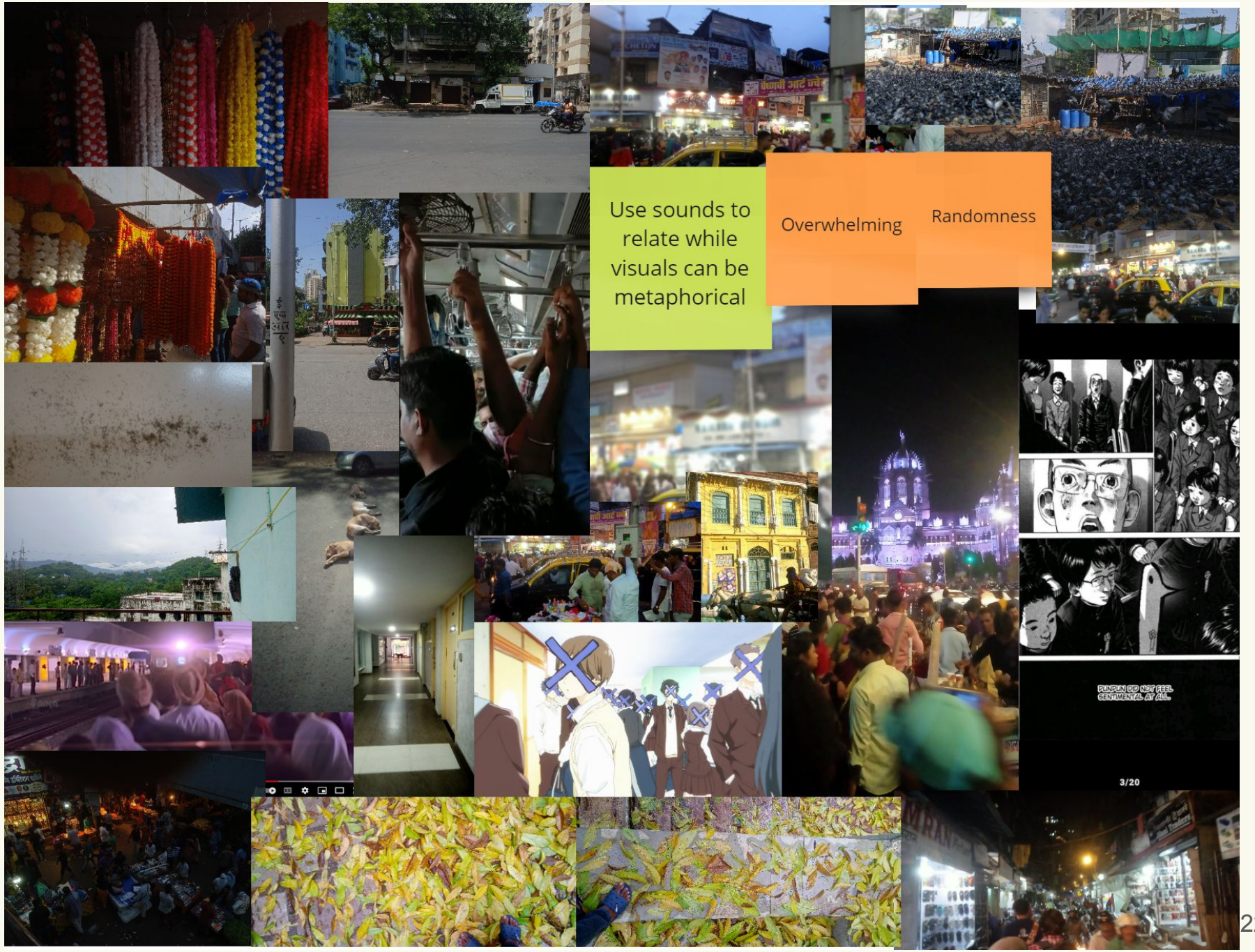
soup

intimidating

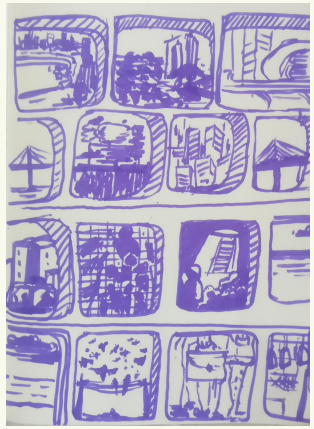
Disorienting

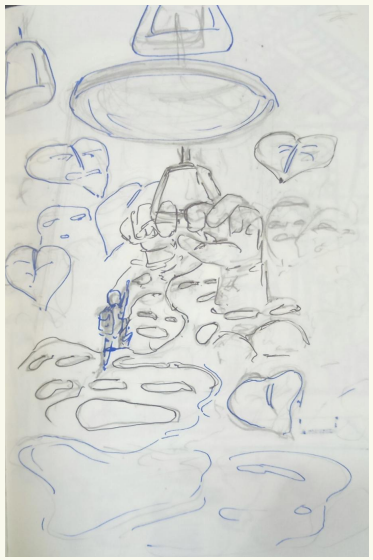
Blending

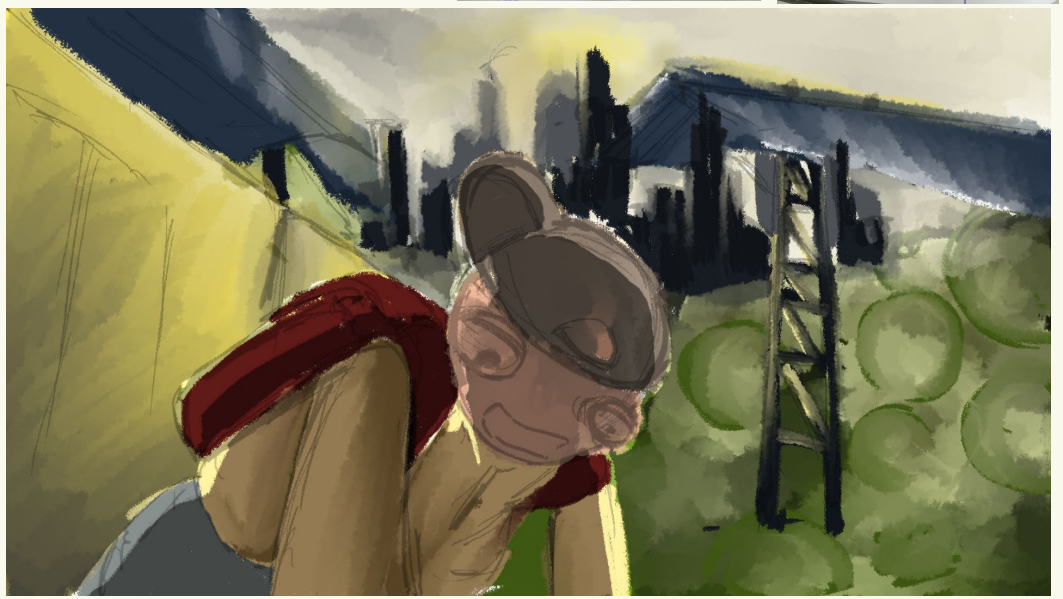
Sound


Use sounds to relate while visuals can be metaphorical
Overwhelming
Randomness
PUNPUN DID NOT FEEL SENTIMENTAL AT ALL.
3/20

Inspirational Sketches







Concept art

Characters explorations

Babloo

Babloo is a young hipster who has big hopes for his new life in Mumbai. But being overwhelmed by the throng of people he looks wary and concerned. Babloo feels like oil in water unable to mix with the crowd. Having heard stories of thieves and pickpocket babloo carries his bag in the front,where it is safe from prying hands. The bag also adds to a perpetual haunch in his posture

The crowd

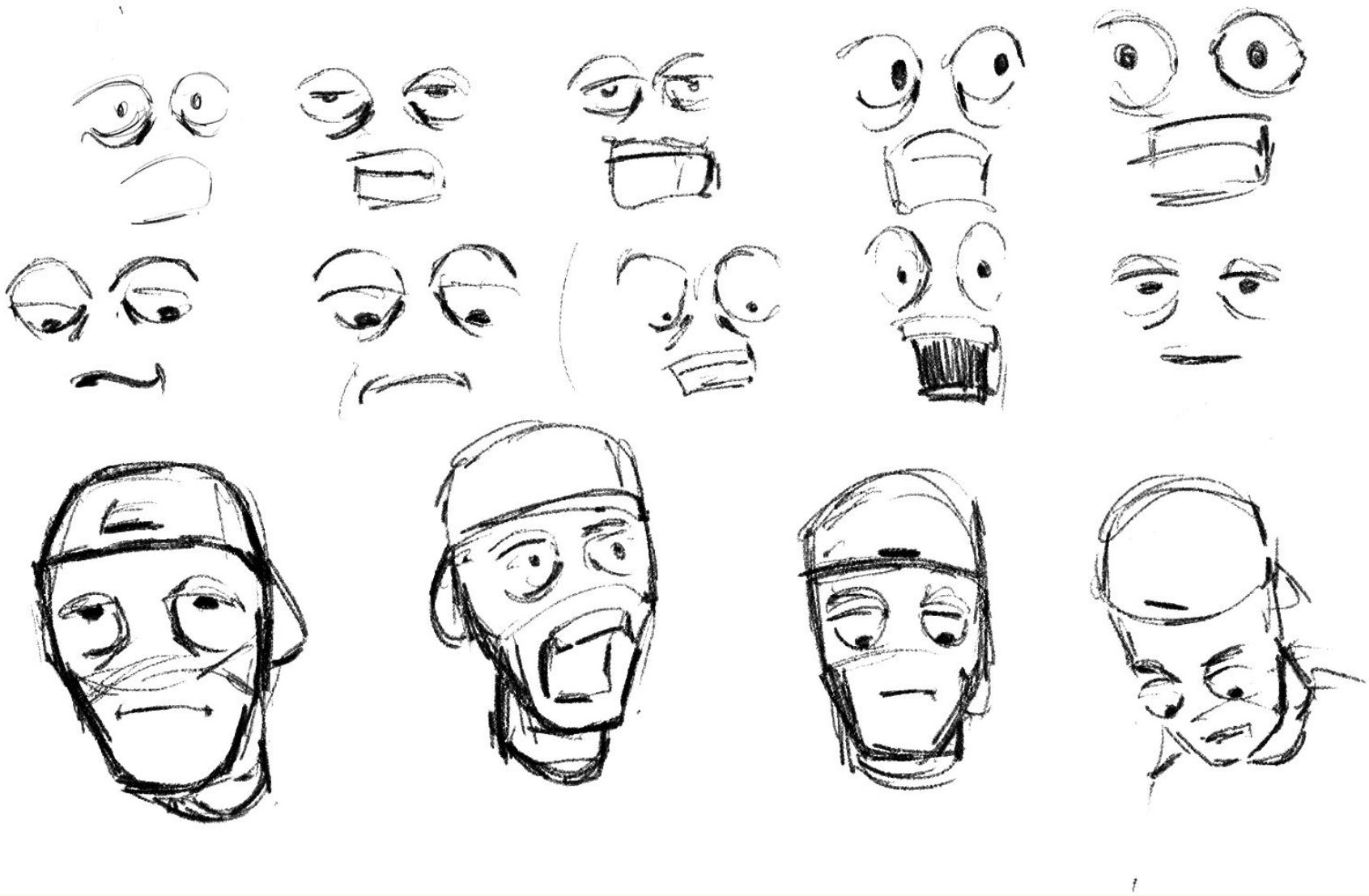
The crowd is an extension of the swamp, with bubbles popping up at random points capable of behaving as a liquid and as a current when required

Characters explorations

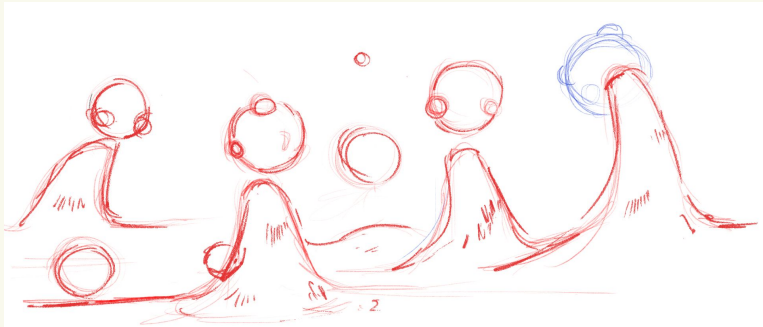
Characters explorations

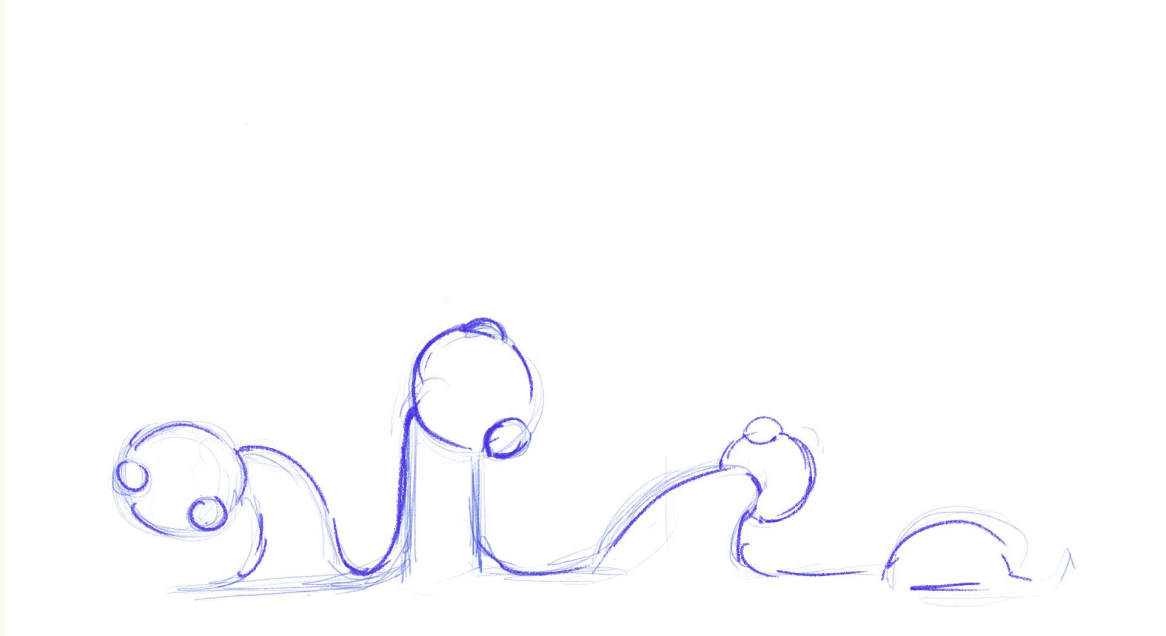
Characters explorations

Characters explorations

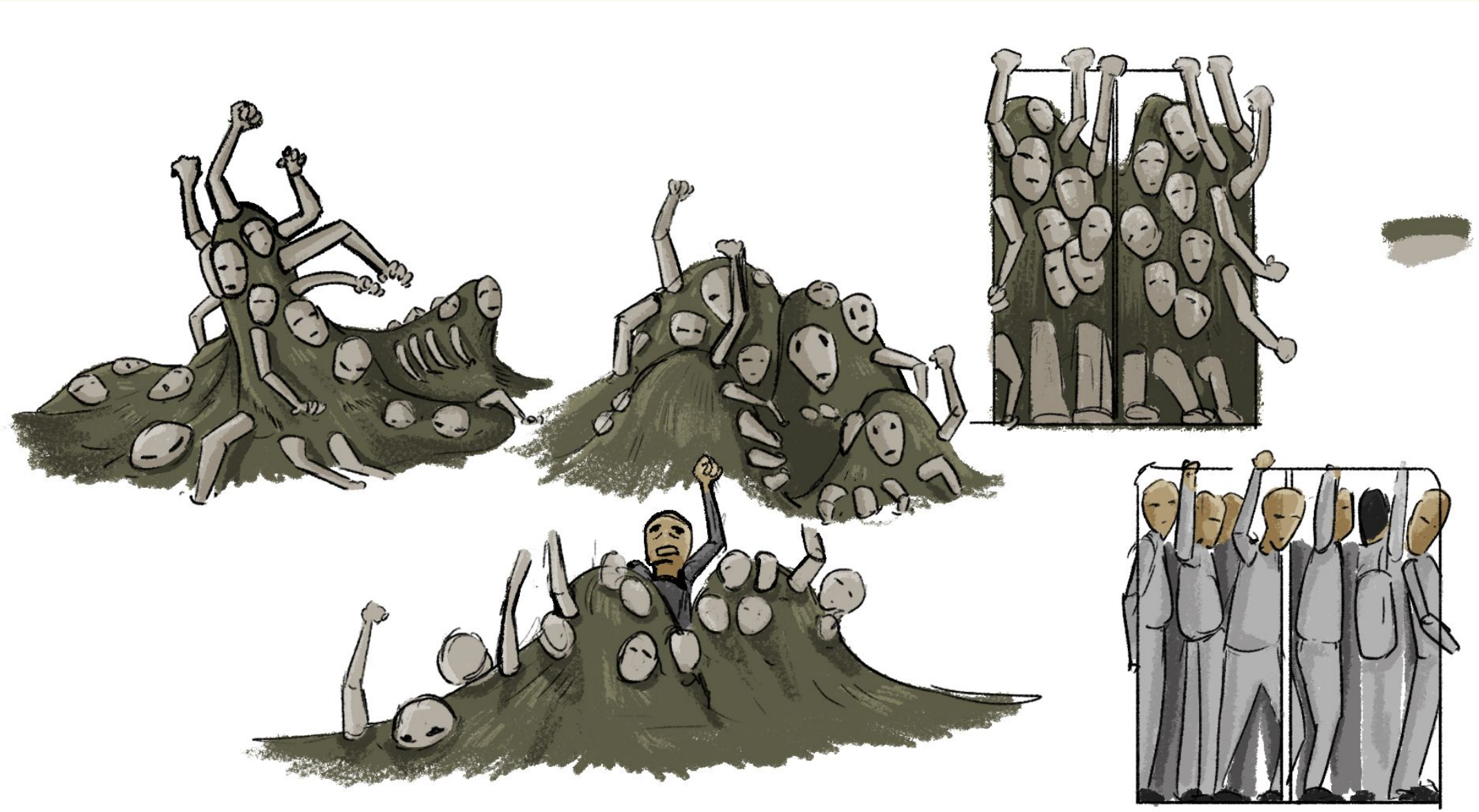


Characters explorations





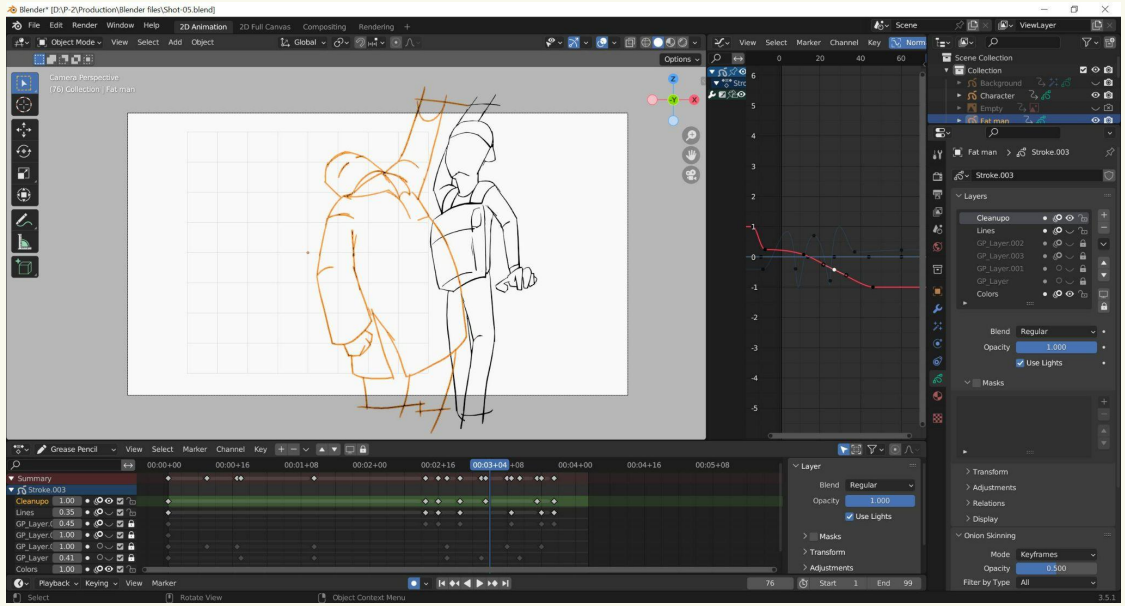
Characters explorations

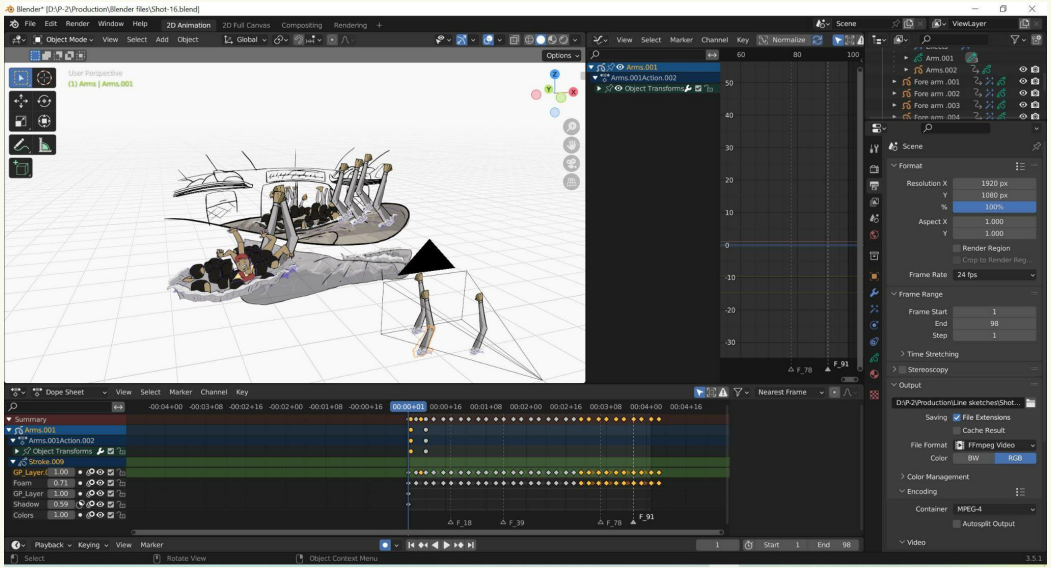


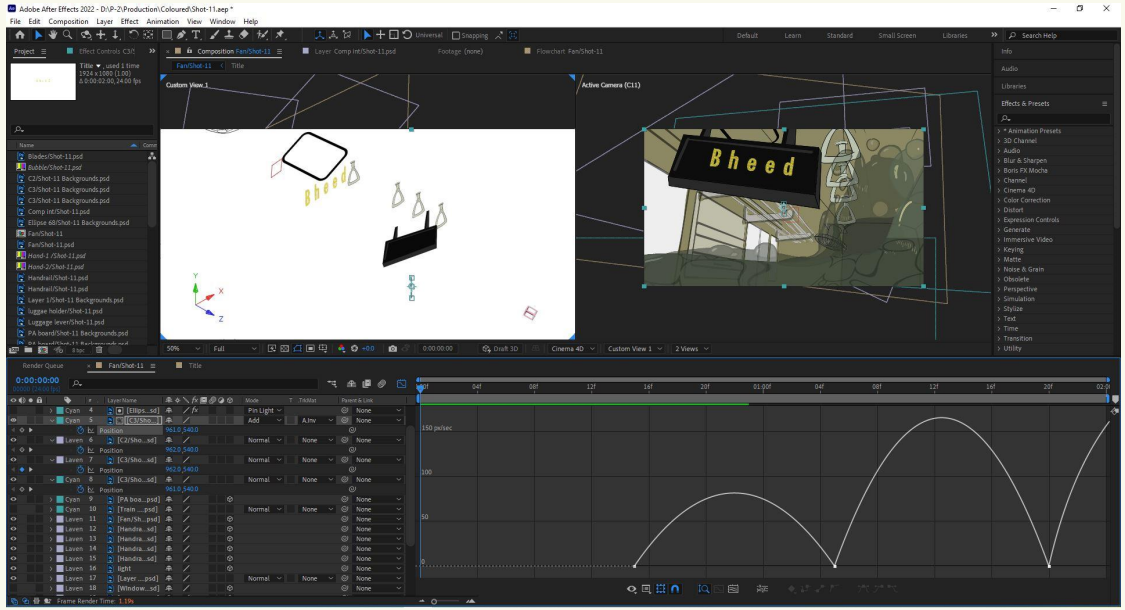
Production

Animation

The animation was done primarily on grease pencil. The approach was to have a limited animation style. The crowd because of its highly dynamic nature was animated in 2D frame by frame , while environments and effects were keyframed or composited in Adobe After Effects.



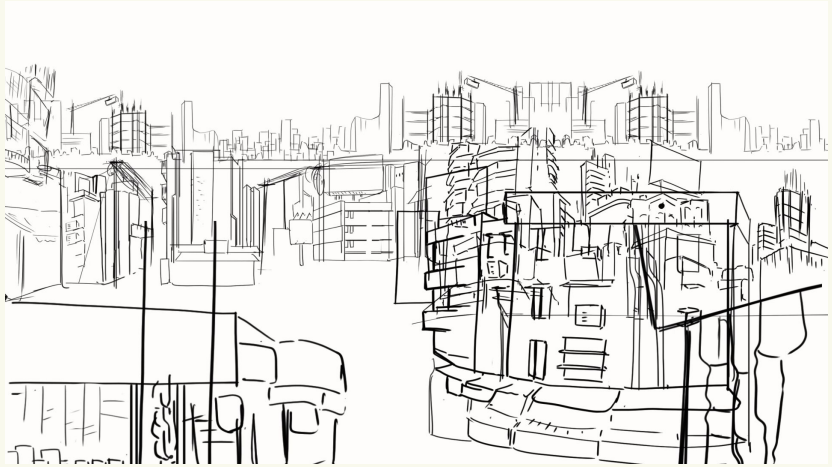


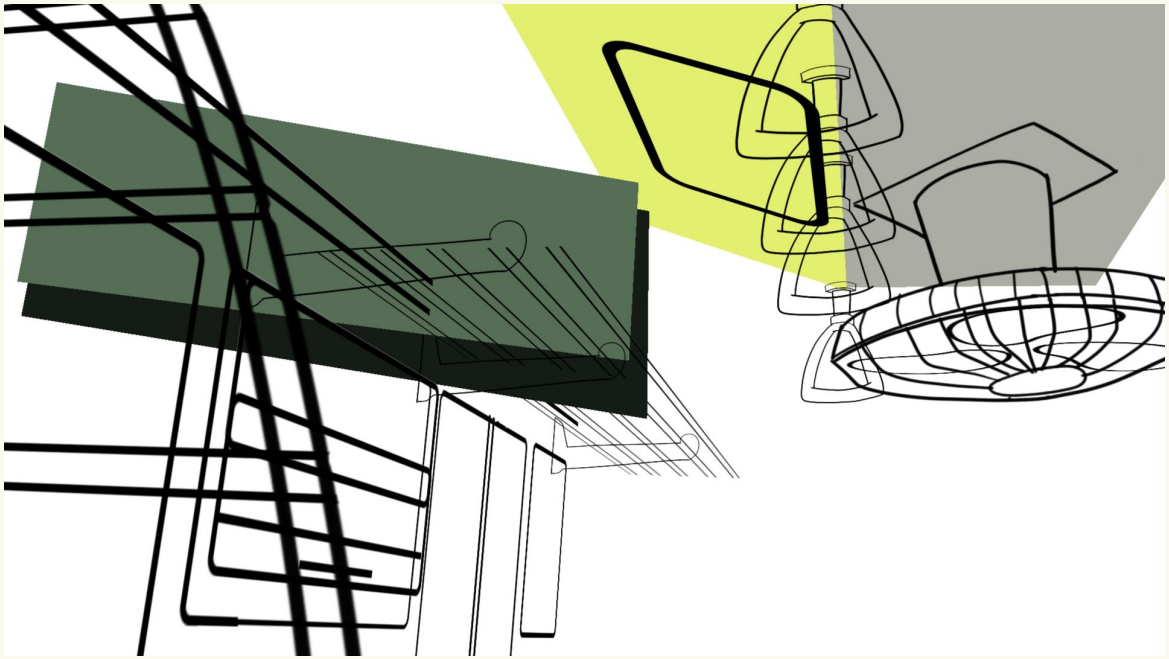


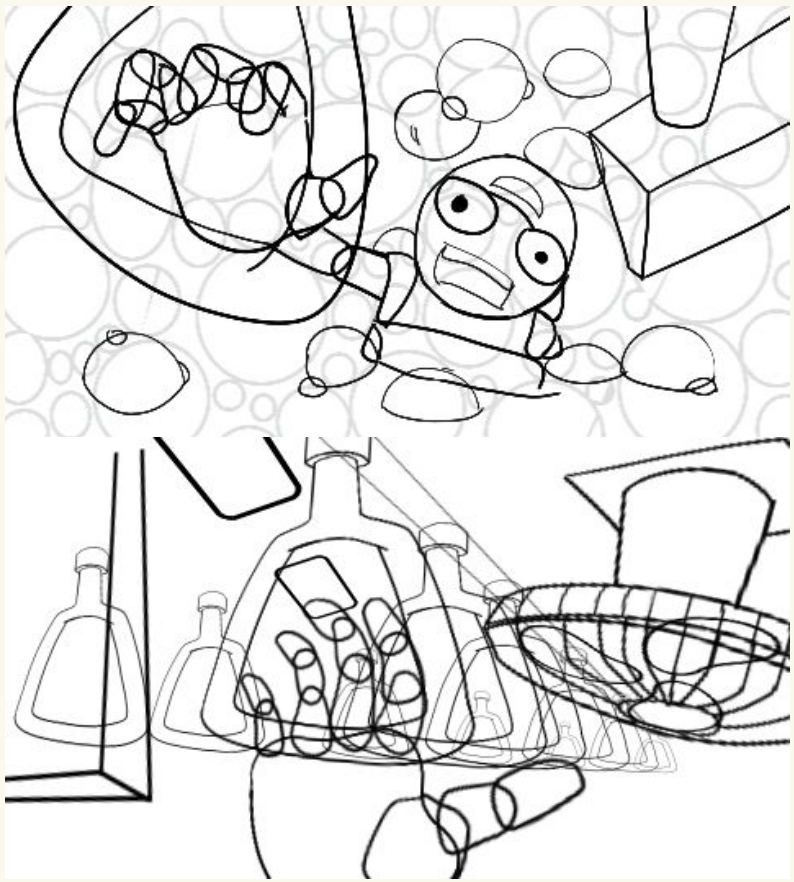
Production

Asset creation

All background assets and characters were made on Adobe photoshop and dynamically linked with After effects. The assets are 2D png layers drawn with the storyboard as the reference. In some instances were the composition was set in after effects and the backgrounds were drawn.



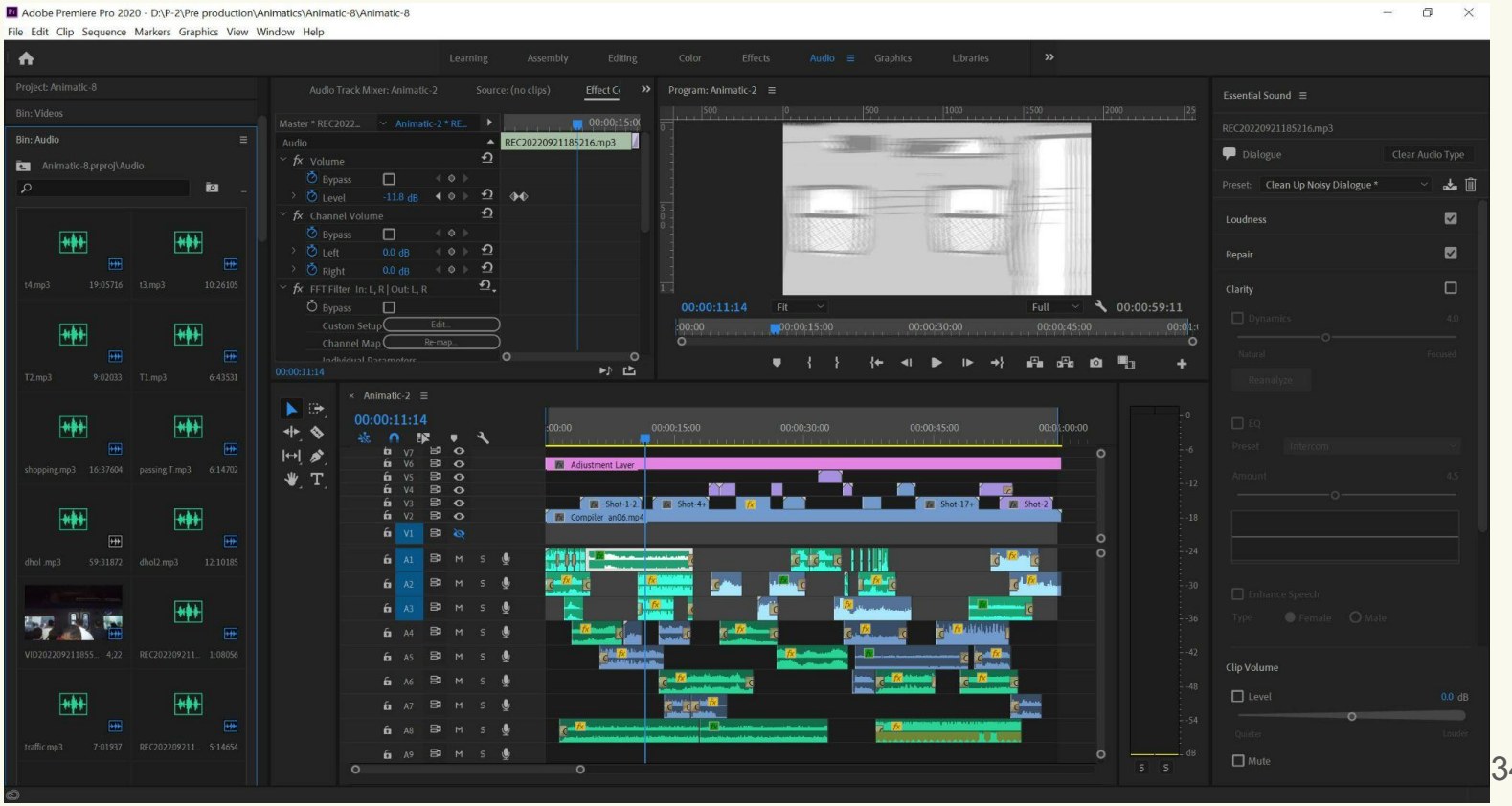




Production

Sound Track

The sound track is an inseparable part of the film. Most of the audio used in the soundtrack is recorded from different parts of the city. This brought with obvious problem of noise and its removal. In the last stage of the editing process all clips were stitched together along with audio on adobe premiere pro.



Challenges

Challenges in the production of Bheed began from the conception stage of the story. I felt lost in the process to filter out a story as much as I felt lost in a crowd. But just as my character in the story, I sort of got pushed out before my destination owing to the pressure of a deadline. Once in the production stage there came a need to create a seemingly three dimensional world using two dimensional layers , which led me to explore dynamic perspectives to enhance a feeling of motion and to alleviate the flatness. Initial animatics were haphazard and lacked communication and the predominant feedback was that “ too much things were happening, at to short of a time”. This led to multiple edits of the same animatic to finally arrive at the current one.

The production pipeline went relatively smooth with the dynamic link between photoshop and after effects helping with the making quick edits and colouring. There were frequent glitches in the software with the file being too heavy to process to some instances where the media encoder failed to connect.

Showing a 3D movement with 2D layers were a big challenge that called for repeated iterations by fixing camera and then compositing moving layers in front of the camera followed by drawing the stable backgrounds to in the right perspective. To show a fluid motion and it to do justice to the visual style was the next challenge. Bringing in a 3D rendered object would seem jarring in the composition and would be too difficult to control. Workarounds such as staggerin the vertical motion and masking techniques helped in working around the problem.

Reflections

‘Bheed’ started out as an exploration into the the fear of crowds or “enochlophobia”. It resonated with me being a novice in the city, the daily commute was a cause of anxiety, However with time I learned to navigate the currents of humans, weaving in and out of oncoming bodies. The fact that I coped with my anxiety of being in a crowd did very little to help me in the project. I felt a disconnect in coming up with a sequence to depict a phobia , but I became increasingly fascinated with the crowd. The lessons I learned from Bheed are enormous, which ranges from simply paying attention to naming a file to documentation and adhering to a workflow.

Looking back I could find a whole lot of thing I wish I could change, including the process and methods I used to fix a narrative. Adding to that, taking too long to fix a narrative only made matters worse by doubling labour as I kept moving in circles in and out of stories. At this part I only wished I would have been more keen on getting feedback from my guides, a lesson learnt too late. Once I got into production I felt more motivated to work since I was seeing a clear progress.

In conclusion , I would have approached Bheed very differently the next time around, but to be given an opportunity to undertake a project in an institution such as IDC school of design is in itself a great privilege. In the course of this project, I learned that the inception of an idea and to execute it exactly as you envision is no small feat. I learned to push myself, I learned to ask for help, I learned to be patient with myself and also learned a bit of humility.

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