

Animation Design Project 2

Khelar Sathi

(Playmate)

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Guided by

Prof. Sumant Rao

IDC School of Design
अभिकल्प विद्यालय



IIT Bombay

Approval Sheet

The Design Project 2 Titled “ Khelar Sathi (Play mate) ” by **Sagarika Dam** , **Roll Number 216340005**, 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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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.

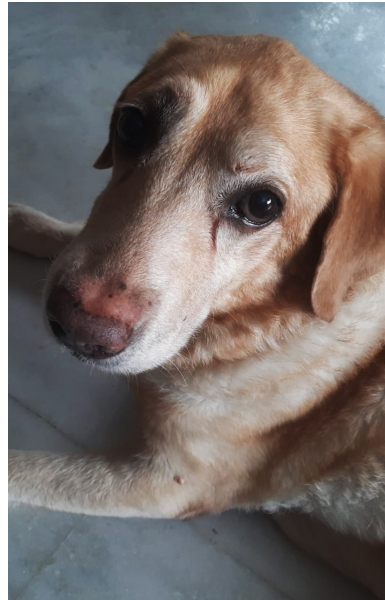
I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and may evoke penal action from the sources.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sagarika Dam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

Sagarika Dam
216340005

IDC School of Design
IIT Bombay
July 2022

I would like to dedicate this project to



My Jackie.
13 years of happiness with you,
hopefully many more to come!

Acknowledgement

This was my first animation film and while the process was exciting and novel to me, at times it got overwhelming. During such moments, it is the people around me who uplifted my spirits and showed me a new path to dive deep into the task again.

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to my guide, Prof. Sumant Rao, who patiently yet eagerly guided me whenever I felt stuck. It is his constant encouragement and belief in me which led me to come so far with the project. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my co-guide, Aditi Chitre whose ideas, suggestions and feedback helped me propel further. I appreciate all the other professors and my seniors who gave me their support throughout the project.

I would like to thank all my classmates and friends for being by my side constantly. Their daily contributions, ideas and feedback has immensely shaped the film to be what it is today. Lastly I would like to thank my friends, Vatsal and Dibyendu, my constant supporter, Rakesh and my parents and my sister for being the ever-patient audiences to the film-in-progress and giving me constructive criticism from a 'non- animator' point of view which helped me gain a new perspective.

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Introduction

The topic I chose for this 1 minute animation film was 'Unusual friendships'. Owing to the purposeful vagueness of the term, I set about asking myself a set of questions which I would like to conceptually answer before the ideas started to flow. It was crucial for me to seek and understand the answers to the following questions:

1. *What is friendship? What is 'unusual' about it?*
2. *How do I create something impactful about it?*
3. *Whom am I making this film for?*
4. *What is interesting to you about this, why do you want to make this film?*
5. *Why in animation?*

Friendship is a mutual rapport or bonding between two individuals, sparked from a place of common interest. Unlike relationships bound by blood (parents, siblings, relatives) or morality and legal procedures (spouse), friendship occurs at one's own discretion and multiple times in one's lifetime. Due to the non obligatory nature of this relationship, friendship encourages comfort and encouragement between the two friends. So, following a standardized pattern, the people we choose to be friends with are mostly the ones we share a large common ground with. This being established, I decided to analyze my topic closely.

The term 'unusual friendship' hints at the possibility of such a bond between two individuals which is deemed unlikely and falls outside the paradigms of socially accepted norms of friendships. Unconventional friendship thus can be observed between two individuals who seem to have more differences than points of commonality. Such friendships are rare and do not follow the typical template. For example, friendship between those from widely different ages, species, occupations, social, cultural and economic backgrounds can be perceived as difficult to sustain due to multiple points of conflict in their personalities. But they do occur. Strangely enough, when two such individuals who are worlds apart are brought together in a challenging scenario where they can relate, empathize, support and help each other, often such 'unlikely friendships' stem.

With this film, I want to push the boundaries of the expected forms of friendship and explore :

1. *The unlikely, mundane and often overlooked situations which spark a friendship between two individuals.*
2. *How this 'unusual friendship' affects the personalities and life of both the friends individually.*
3. *What they take away from each other in their relationship*
4. *How such friendships sustain when faced with conflicts, whether they grow or fizzle out.*
5. *What common goal or purpose that binds them together*

Since society often has preconceived notions of what 'normal friendships' are, we are often discouraged from stepping out of our comfort zone and usual circle of people to pursue friendships. Hence, when such friendships occur they are often looked down upon and thought of as peculiar from others. The stigma and taboo surrounding unlikely friendships discourage such friends to continue their relationship openly and negative emotions might blossom to further damage the bond. This ultimately creates division between groups of people in our society. But friendships stem from sharing emotions, irrespective of how diverse the scenarios may be that brought forth those emotions. And the truth is that, we all face the same problems and go through the same emotions, just under different societal masks. Hence, I am making this film to address this stigma connected to making friends outside one's bubble and restore people's faith in positive and platonic relationships.

As this film borders on the unusual and the 'abnormal' aspects of relationships, I want to explore this film in animation as it will allow me to go beyond 'normal' characters and context. I want to experiment with literary devices like metaphors which will push the visuals beyond our existing worlds, species, places and scenarios. Using animation will allow me to exaggerate the 'unusual' aspect of my film, whether seen in characters or situations.

Secondary Research

The Psychology of Friendship

We may in fact become and remain friends with others because of their singular embodiment of a categorical virtue or commitment to a social cause that we share. (Hojjat and Moyer 5)

Again, however, the depth of affect between friends may range from merely a situational, positive disposition to a lifelong devotion (Hojjat and Moyer 5).

According to *The Psychology of Friendship, 2017*, friendship has five characteristics. Friendship is a voluntary, personal, affective, mutual and equal relationship.

Therefore, in adulthood, people often become friends with others they meet regularly. (Hojjat and Moyer 5)



Studying popular friendships from pop culture

1. Marlin and Dory from *Finding Nemo*, 2003

Situation : Marlin and Dory meet by accident when Marlin is searching for the boat that took his son away in a panicked way. He tries to ask a lot of fishes but is ignored by everyone. After they bump into each other, Dory breaks away to help him. They both leave on a journey to find Nemo.

Personalities :

Marlin - over protective, anxious, reactive, jumpy

Dory - suffers from short term memory loss, optimistic, friendly, loves adventure

Take away from each other :

Marlin gets tensed easily - Dory keeps him motivated and teaches him to relax. Marlin realizes because of Dory that he should not be so overprotective of his son. Also, Dory can read - which helps Marlin.

Dory needs Marlin because he helps her remember things, he grounds her to reality.

Conflicts : Their friendship faced a conflict initially. Marlin views Dory as incapable ("The Value of Finding Nemo" 5) due to her condition and does not take her advice which leads them to trouble. He learns to be a better team player after that.

Common purpose : Finding Nemo

1. Russell and Carl Fredricksen from *Up*, 2009

Situation : Russell knocks on Carl's door to offer him his help to gain a scouts badge. Carl shuts him out but is forced into an adventure with him when Russell stows away in his flying house.

Personalities :

Russell - optimistic, cheerful, curious, excited

Carl - grumpy, rigid, cynical, stubborn

Take away from each other :

Russell and Carl have opposite personalities which balance each other out. Russell helps Carl become more accepting and open, he teaches the old the importance of letting people in. They are both lonely in their own senses, Russell has an absent father and Carl fills in that hole.

Conflicts : Being a grumpy old man, Carl refuses to let the young, excited Russell into his life. He sees Russell as a burden but as they are forced into a situation together, Carl soon sees a different and more sensitive side to Russell when he speaks about his father. Throughout the journey, they help and support each other.

Common purpose : To keep a promise Carl made to his deceased wife about going on a trip to Paradise Falls.

Primary Research

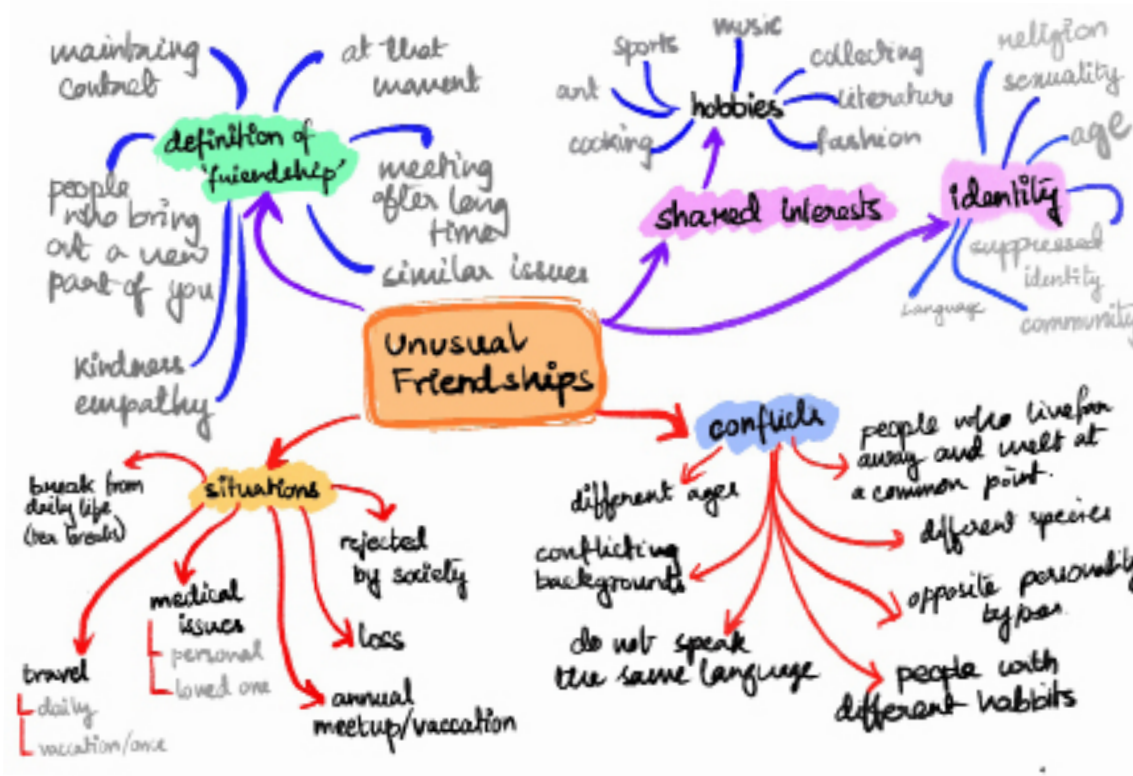
As part of my primary research, I sat down with people in groups of 3 or 4 and introduced my topic and ideas to them to encourage a group discussion. I asked them if they or anyone they knew had any such unconventional bondings or experiences with people in their lives and what triggered them. I got a lot of personal stories from people and since my topic is largely related to personal experiences, these narrated experiences helped me take away key points like emotions, situations, personalities, objects or activities related to unusual friendships. Following are the notes I scribbled down during

- unusual friendship with rickshawala - daily takes his rickshaw - same route - didn't catch one day because of late - guilty.
- 12am - chai buddies - vent out our frustrations
- during vacation sudden friends - every year
- bonded over present situation (dancing in a club), then talking - found out, each other from before (present, past)
- court - public places - friends
- movie (old) muslim guy can't find place to stay in Tamil Nadu, learned Tamil got place - language bonds people → community feeling

- Travel buddies
- local train - timetables, daily - bonding - save seats for each other - don't know names
 - shoffilm - sweater
 - no talking - just presence communication with talking
 - sports sitting in sidelines - giving advice thru 'ishara' common interest - vacuum ke fill kar raha hain - sports guy takes advice (age different?)
 - online games during lockdown talking thru PUBG, COD - COD friends.
 - unplanned sudden meeting after long time - quality of time instead of amount time.
 - meeting in hospital while waiting with someone of the same situation - one got discharged first

Mindmap

To develop a mindmap, I tried to find the factors which influence an unusual friendship. I came up with different scenarios and essentially created a story generator. Different permutation and combinations of these factors can help come up with unique unusual friendships. I also made a sticky note cluster of different phrases and questions I picked up from people during my primary research. It created an interesting collage to give a picture of what friendship means to different people.



Mindmap

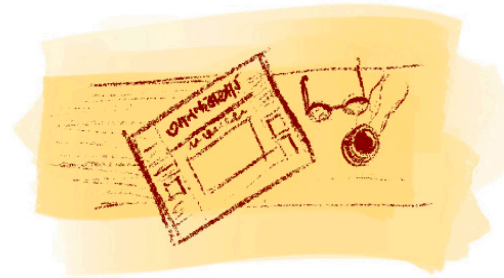


Sticky Note cluster

Initial story Ideas

Story 1: Morning Newspaper

A quiet old man with poor eyesight brings his morning newspaper to a chai wala shop and waits for his friend, a timid government office worker, who meets him during his lunch break to read out the newspaper and vent his frustrations.



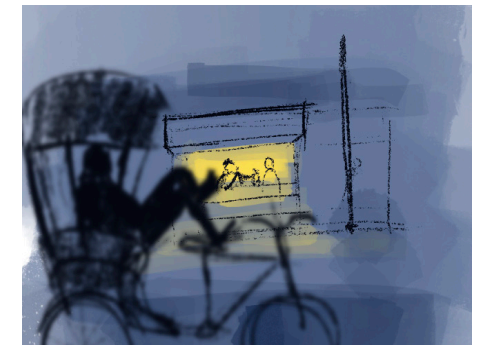
Story 2: The Boy and his Dog

After saving a dog's life, the ghost of the boy and the dog become friends till the day the dog returns his tiffin box to the boy's father, after which the little ghost boy moves on.



Story 3: Midnight

A young, quiet and mysterious rickshawala who waits 3 hours past his working hours everyday to transport a middle aged shopkeeper, who closes the shop she runs alone at midnight, back to her home safely.



Inspirational Sketches

Final Story

Set in Kolkata, a boy, Titai sits and eats his tiffin on an old abandoned tram on a road. The smell of his food, wakes up a small stray dog, Kuttush who was sleeping under the tram. As the apprehensive dog nervously approaches Titai, the boy notices Kuttush and offers him the food. But Kuttush, owing to his nervous disposition runs away at his directness. He runs out to the busy street in fear and Titai follows him to stop him before he gets hit by traffic. Unfortunately, as he just picks up Kuttush, a bus hits them. Titai dies on the spot with little Kuttush in his arms.

As Kuttush wakes up, he realizes that Titai had sacrificed his life to save him. But as crowds start to gather, he gets scared and runs away. Titai's spirit rises from his body and as he opens his eyes for the first time, Titai realizes he has died and become a ghost.

Titai roams around aimlessly and sad, lonely and upset about being a ghost no one can see. As he floats around a marketplace, he notices Kuttush again! The still hungry dog sniffs at a corn vendor's cart in search of food. The vendor shouts at the stray dog and Kuttush hides under the cart. Titai approaches the scared dog and immediately realizes that Kuttush is the only one who can see him. He steals a corn piece from the vendor easily as he is invisible to everyone else. With the corn piece in his hand, Titai flies away leaving behind a baffled vendor and with Kuttush following him. He flies through people, slowly embracing his current state.

With the food in his hand, Titai comes back to the same tram where their story started. He offers food again to Kuttush. This time, although he hesitates, Kuttush takes the food and learns to trust Titai. The movie ends with Titai and Kuttush, a ghost and his dog, playing and enjoying their new found friendship.

Storyboard



1 Boy eating in street notices dog staring at him



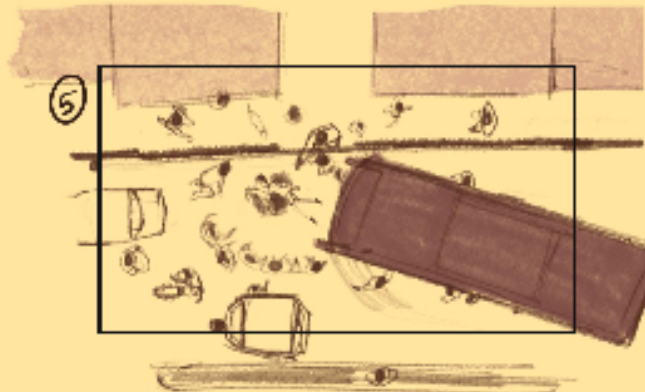
2 Boy offers him the food and the dog runs away scared.



3 The boy notices the dog running to the main street and runs after him to stop him



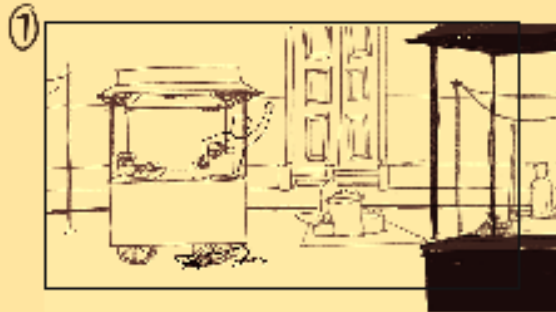
4 The boy rushes forward with the dog to save him



5 Top view of the car crash where the boy dies but the puppy lives.



6 Ghost boy sadly roams around and sees the dog in a market place



7 Ghost boy sees the dog getting scolded when the hungry dog tries to sniff food from a vendor cart.



8 Vendor starts shouting out of fear. He only sees a vada floating away.



9 The ghost boy wishes away, with a mischievous smile, knowing that he cannot be seen.



10 Camera pans as the ghost boy passes through a crowd of people, running away with the vada he stole.



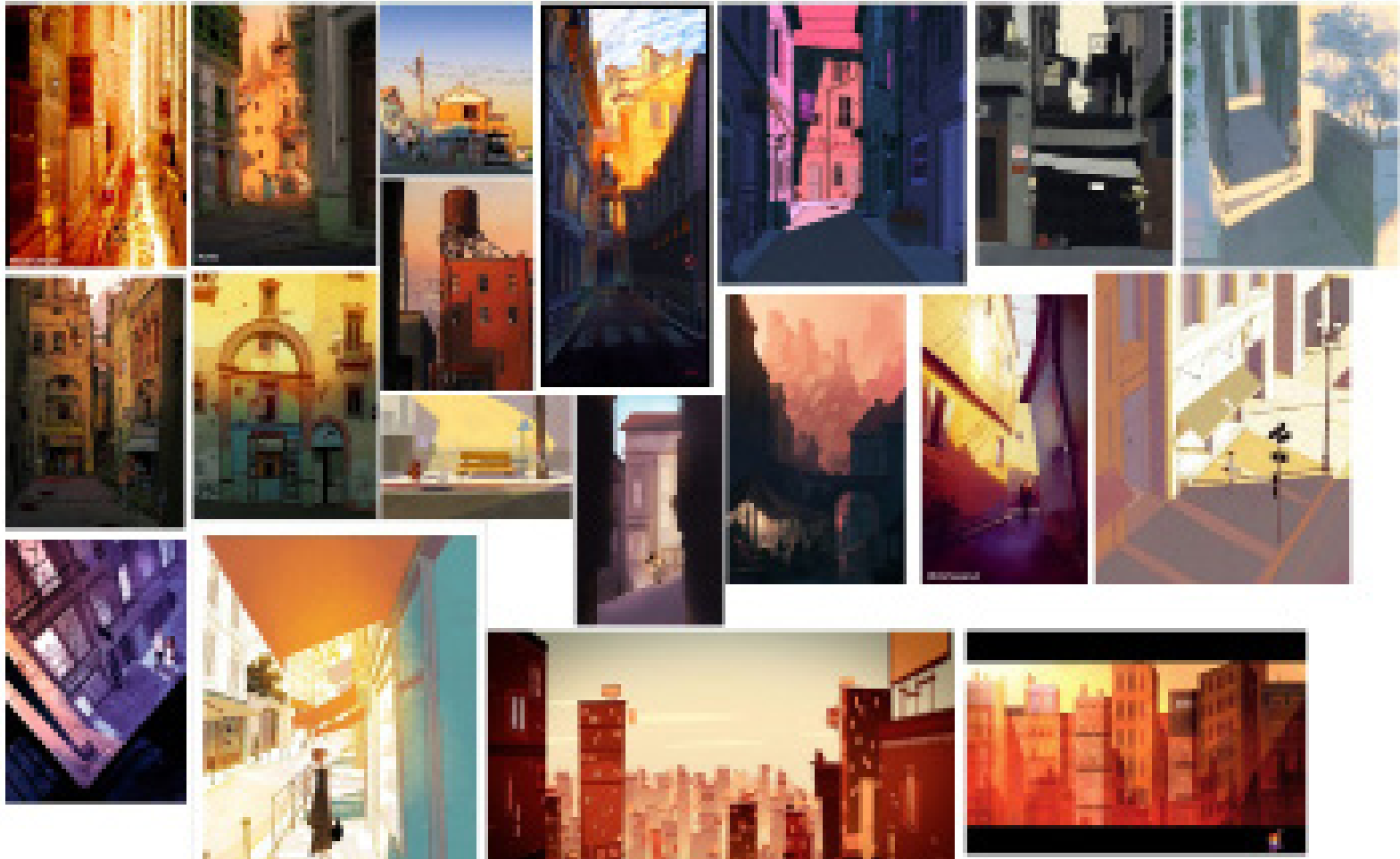
11 The boy offers the dog the food again and he takes it this time, becoming friends finally.



12 Only after dying, the boy realizes that the once sad boy and the nervous dog now are happy together.

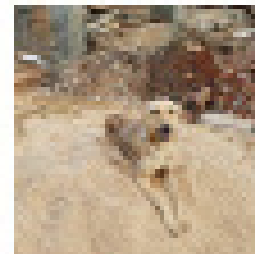
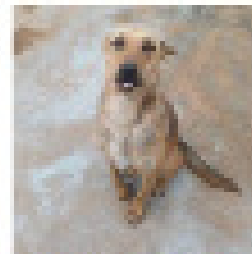
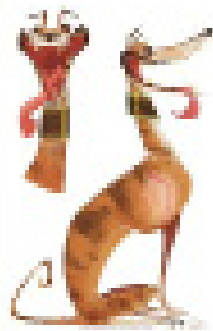
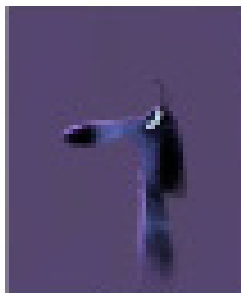
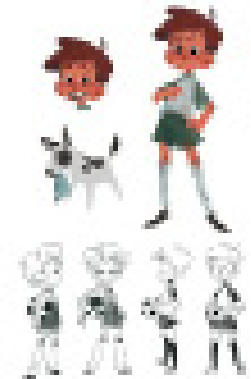
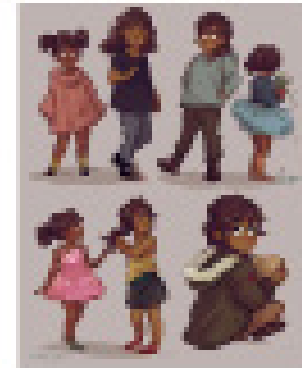
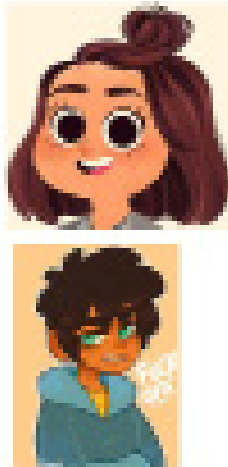
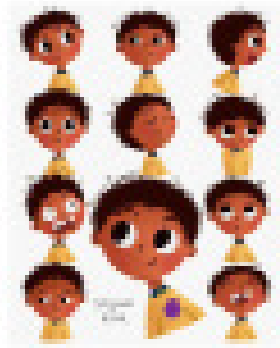
Moodboard

Visual Design

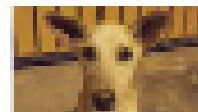


Moodboard

Character Design

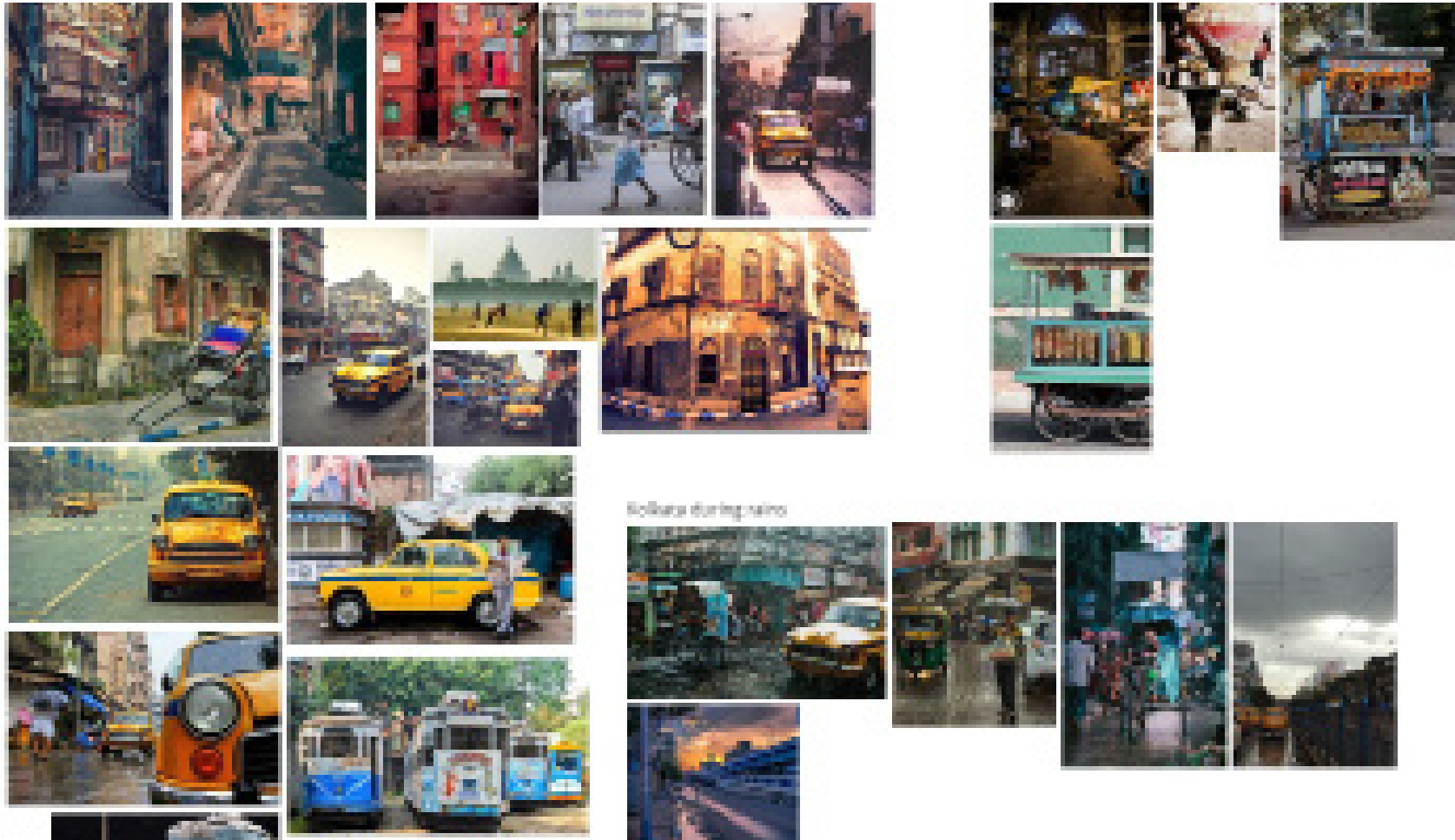


Jinny



Moodboard

Context : Kolkata



Animation Production Timeline

Animation Production Timeline (R) Project

	August		September					October				November				Completed
	Week 3 (Aug 27 - Sep 02)	Week 4 (Sep 03 - Sep 09)	Week 1 (Sep 03 - Sep 09)	Week 2 (Sep 10 - Sep 16)	Week 3 (Sep 17 - Sep 23)	Week 4 (Sep 24 - Sep 30)	Week 1 (Oct 01 - Oct 07)	Week 2 (Oct 08 - Oct 14)	Week 3 (Oct 15 - Oct 21)	Week 4 (Oct 22 - Oct 28)	Week 1 (Nov 05 - Nov 11)	Week 2 (Nov 12 - Nov 18)	Week 3 (Nov 19 - Nov 25)	Week 4 (Nov 26 - Nov 30)		
Pre-production																
Research	█	█														
Develop Story	█	█														
Scripting			█	█	█	█										
Storyboarding			█	█	█	█										
Animatic + Scratch Track				█	█	█										
Shot Breakdown			█	█	█	█	█									
Character Design			█	█	█	█	█									
Model Sheet							█									
Expression sheet							█									
Props							█									
Location Design					█	█	█									
Concept art					█	█	█									
Production																
Rough Animation								█	█							
Final Backgrounds										█	█					
Dialogue											█	█				
Reference												█	█			
Coloring													█	█		
Final Layout														█	█	
Post-Production																
FX + Compositing															█	
Color Correction															█	
Final Animation + Sound															█	

Shot Breakdown

Scene	Shot	Description	Duration (sec.)	Difficulty level	Background no.	Aesthetics				Color	Background color
						Keyframes	Clean-up of keyframes	In between	Clean-up of inbetweens		
1	1.1	Establishing shot with title		Easy	1						
	1.2	Tital offers Kuttuach food		Moderate	1						Green
	1.3	Closeup of Tital shouting		Easy	1						
	1.4	Two hitting Tital and Butta ch		Moderate	4						
2	2.0	Kuttuach scared in Tital's hands.	0.17	Difficult	NA	Green	Green	Green	Green		
	2.1	Top view of accident	0.17	Difficult	5	Green	Green	Green	Green		
3	3.1	Establishing a lot of market	0.10	Difficult	6	Green	Green	Green	Green		
	3.2	Kuttuach standing on cart and getting soaked		Moderate	7						
	3.3	Kuttuach sees ghost Tital		Easy	8						
	3.4	Tital steals vada		Easy	8						
	3.5	Tital flies away with vada		Moderate	7						
	3.6	Tital flying through people		Difficult	NA						
4	4.1	Tital gives food and they play		Difficult	1						Green

Total - 13

Difficult - 3,
Moderate - 4,
Easy - 4

Concept art

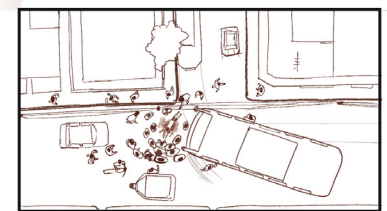
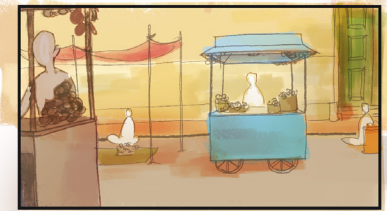
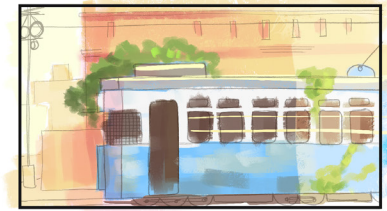
For the visual style, I wanted to go for a dreamy and soothing look. The challenge was to preserve the colonial style of buildings in Kolkata yet not have them overpower the visuals. So I chose rough thin sketchy lines to draw in the details of the buildings, with a monochromatic wash to show them as the background.

Initially I was exploring a more contrast color palette with bright pop colors. While the shadows were on a tone of purple, the highlights were yellow. This visual style, as seen in the first image, was proving to be too visually dramatic and was not going with the light hearted pace of the film.



Later, I tried a softer and lighter version of the colors and it better complimented the story and characters of the film.

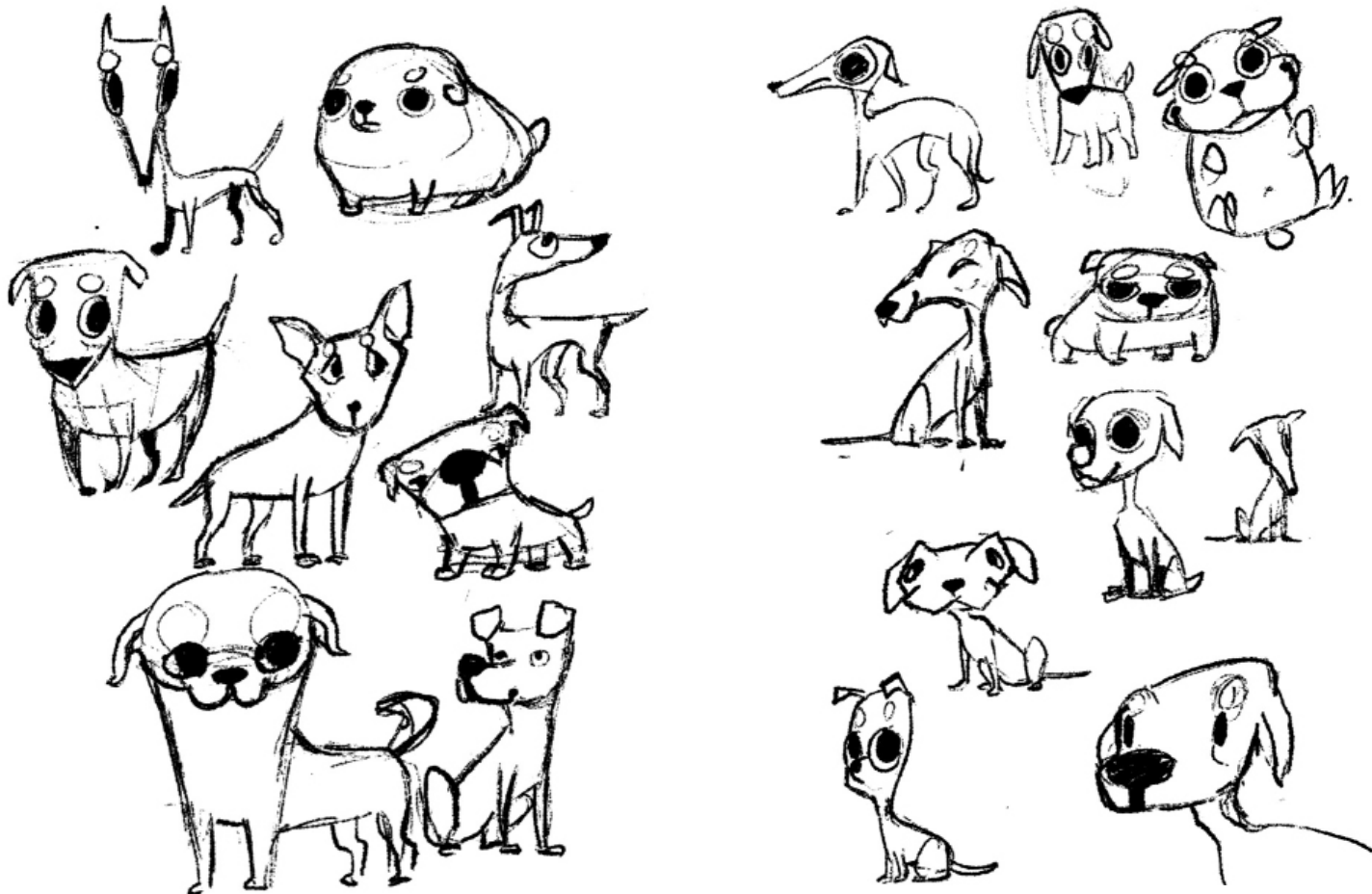
In the end, I went for textured coloring and a warm color palette to compliment the dreamy afternoon mood or setting I was aiming for.



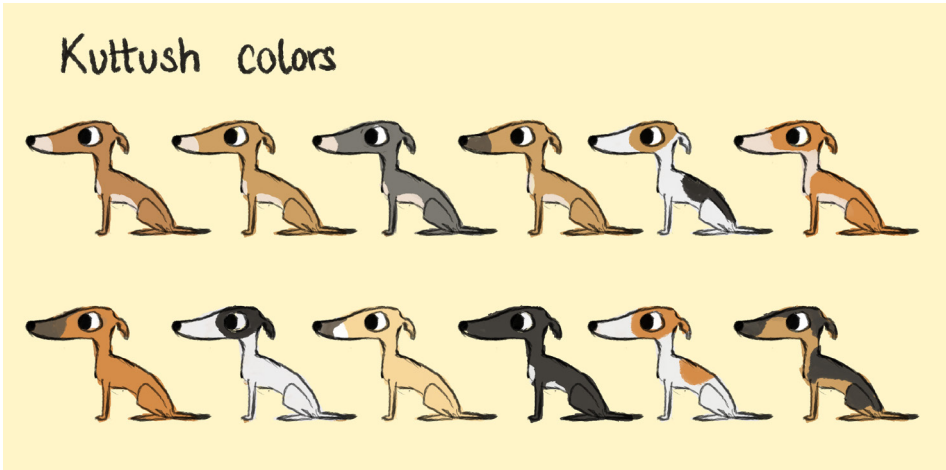
Character Design

Kuttush, the dog

Kuttush was imagined as a very thin, nervous stray dog with a small build. Traditionally, fluffy, round dogs are seen as cute. The challenge here was to create a cute stray dog. I achieved this by giving Kuttush a long snouth, with tiny floppy ears and large puppy dog eyes.



Initial sketches



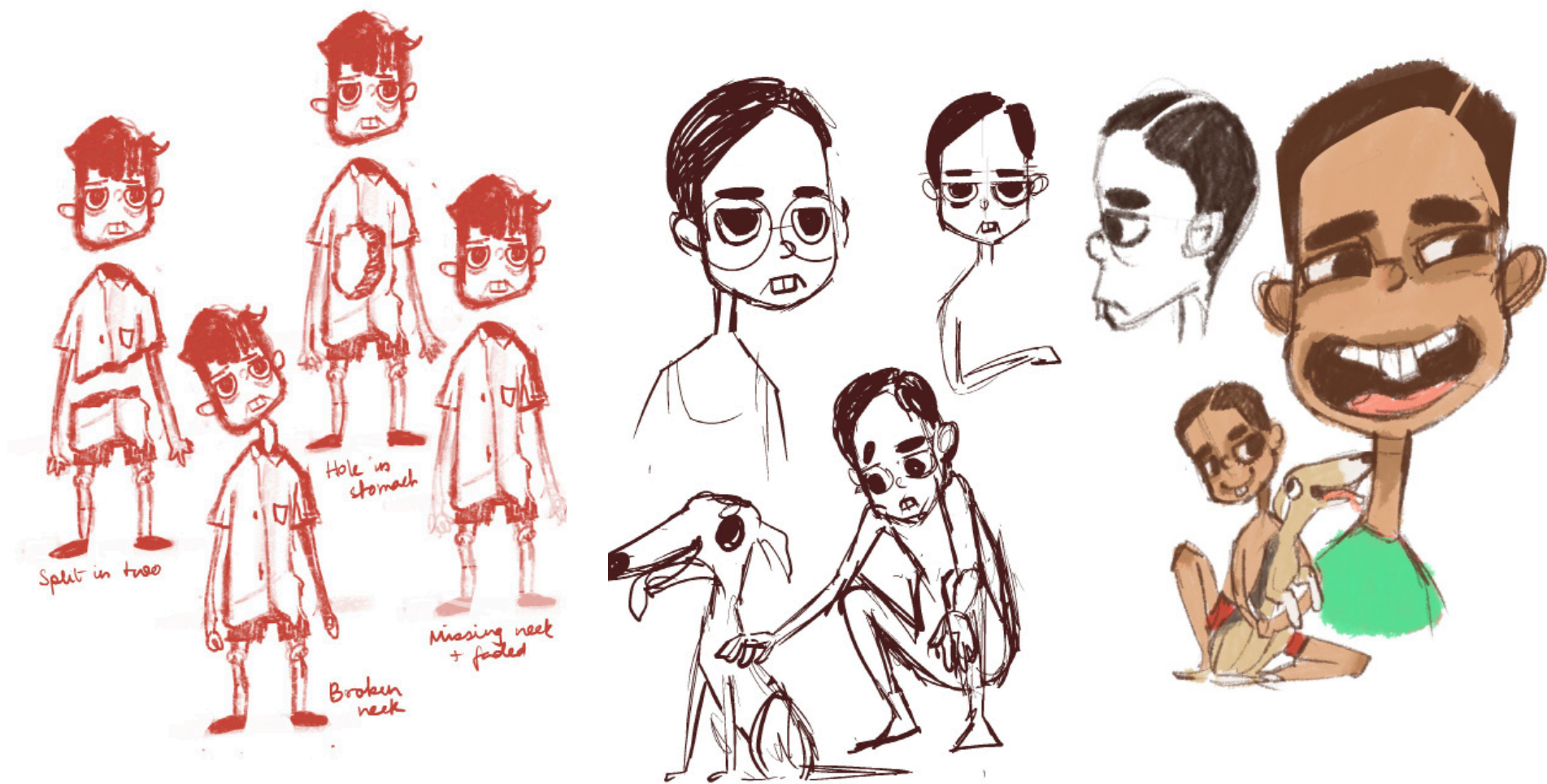
As Kuttush's form was finalized, experiments with his color and look began. I tried to give him realistic colors that one would observe in an Indian stray dog

Character Design

Titai, the boy

Titai would have two forms - one when he was alive and the other would be his ghost form. I imagined him to a very thin lanky boy of 11 years old. Initially, I came up with some mainstream ghost design characters with dark under eyes and droopy sad faces.

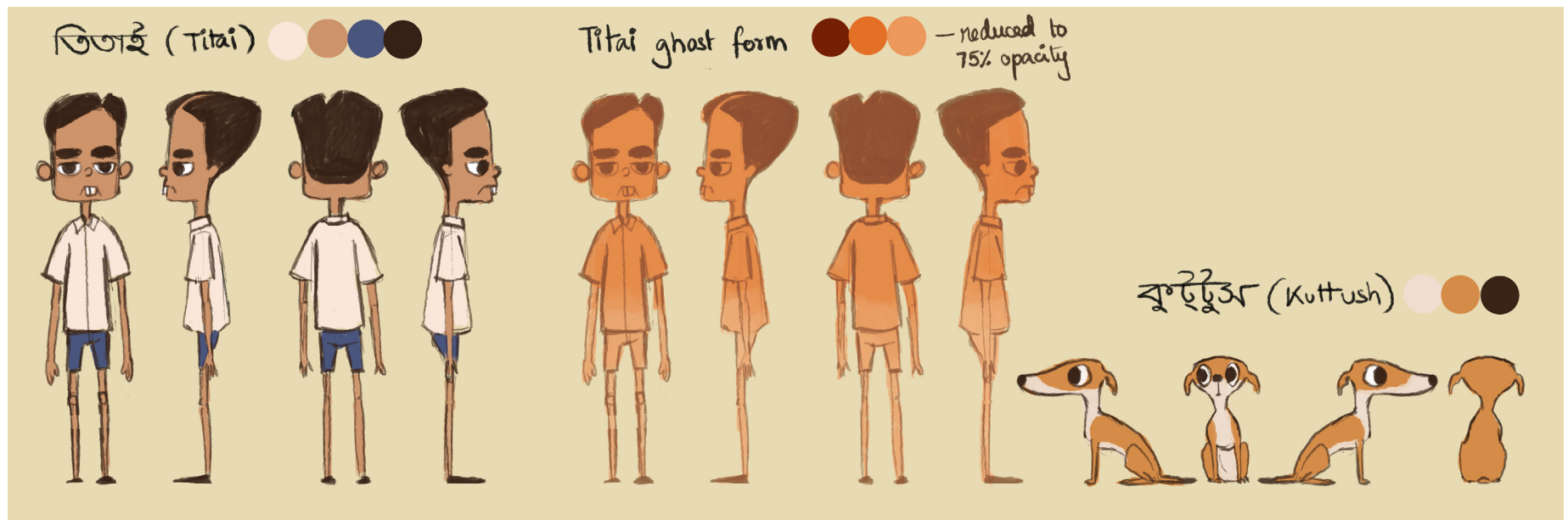




Later I struggled with how to differentiate between Titai's ghost form and human form. Without much satisfactory progress in his character design as a ghost, I started to draw him as a human first and interacting with Kuttush. That led me to see Titai from a new perspective - a friendly and mischeveous kid.

Final Character Designs

For the final character design, I settled for a simple monochromatic gradient for the ghost form with reduced opacity. Kuttush also has a complimentary color palette which goes well with Titai's color scheme as well.



Challenges

As a dog lover myself, this project was quite close to my heart. However, pertaining to my lack of expertise in this field there were some obstacles which I had to overcome on the way.

The first and most persistent challenge was to limit my story, my ideas to the given time constraint of under 1 minute. I kept having to continuously go back and rethink my story to represent it in the best way I could within a minute. Thankfully, my guide Prof. Sumant Rao was the best guide during this process.

I also faced the challenge of designing a ghost character which felt original, not submitting to cliched ideas yet something which could easily communicate as a spirit to the audience. After multiple iterations and conversations with people, I came up with a simple design I really love. Talking to people really helps!

After all, how can one make a film on friendship without the support of great friends?



Conclusion

I enjoyed the process of making this film. On the way, I learned a lot about design, animation, films and about myself also. Undertaking such a project felt daunting in the beginning, but the challenges helped me grow. It made me more open to accepting criticism and realizing that the first draft might not always be the best one.



References

The Psychology of Friendship

<https://perpus.univpancasila.ac.id/repository/EBUPT180666.pdf>