



Industrial Design Centre
Indian Institute of technology

The Floating Seed


Project III Report

June 2015

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Degree Project
Animation Film Design
IDC
Project Advisor: Prof. Shilpa Ranade

Declaration

I hereby declare that the project work done in relation to my graduation film and submitted as a written report to the Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay is a record of the original work done by me under the guidance of Prof. Shilpa Ranade. Unless otherwise stated, the contents of this report in the form of text and images are entirely my own. The views expressed in the document as part of the written submission of the project are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay.


Sreelekha S
June 2015

Approval

The Report Committee for Animation Design, Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report on:



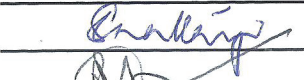

The Floating seed

By

Sreelekha S

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Approved by

Project Advisor : 
Internal Examiner : 
External Examiner : 
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Acknowledgment

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Shilpa Ranade for giving me an opportunity to work under her and for her invaluable guidance, support and inspiration all throughout the development process of my film.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Professors of Animation Department of IDC for their guidance and support.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my friends for their support.

I am grateful for my family, who are my guiding force.

My sincere gratitude to the almighty for the blessings.

Sreelekha S
June 2015

Abstract

With ages, the mankind is moving towards the fast world. We are witnessing the mechanical way of lifestyle where the years goes like months, the month goes like days and the days like minutes. Between past and future there is present and most of us live either in past or in future. It is high time we needs to reemphasize our age old practices so as to be conscious, to enjoy and to know the purpose of life.

The best amongst old practices are "The Zen"- the path of paradox. Going into the present moment means to become conscious oneself. All kinds of meditations and spiritual practices are aiming to become present. To center ourselves in the present moment we have to get the past out of our head and stop projecting to the future. What remains is now. Then all of our attention flows into the present moment.

The subject of my film is an attempt to make the viewer to realize the value of consciousness. To be mindful, to be in the present, to be an extravert, to develop calmness within and to visualize the silence around us.



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“Zen is not a religion, not a creed. Zen is not a quest, an inquiry; it is non-philosophical. The fundamental of zen approach is that all is as it should be nothing is missing. This very moment everything is perfect.”

OSHO

Introduction

“The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, or not to anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.” Buddha

With ages the man kind is moving towards the fast world. We are witnessing the mechanical way of lifestyle where the years goes like months, the month goes like days and the days like minutes. Between past and future there is present and most of us live either in past or in future. It is high time we needs to reemphasize our age old practices so as to be conscious, to enjoy and to know the purpose of life.

The best amongst old practices are “The Zen”- the path of paradox. An attempt is made to make the viewer to realize the value of consciousness. To be mindful, to be in the present, to be an extravert, to develop calm ness with in and to visualize the silence around us.

*“Zen born in India, grew in china and blossomed in Japan.
Seed in India, soil in China and blossomed in Japan.”*

“When the word Dhyāna reaches china it become ch’an, when ch’an reached japan it became Zen. ”

Research and Story Development

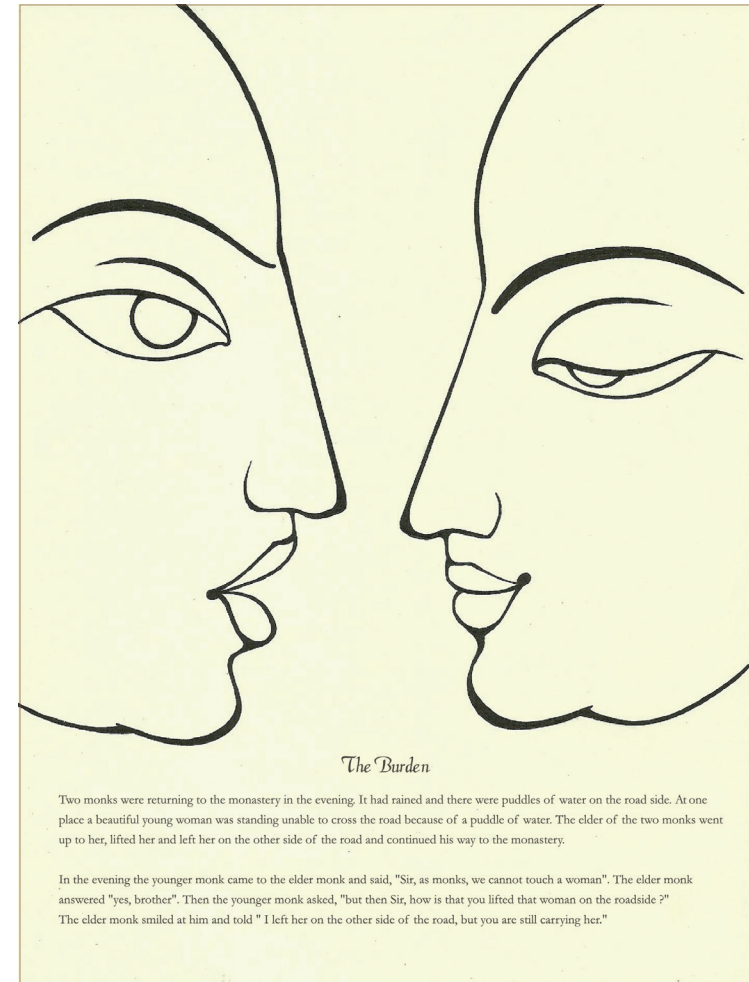
Research

My initial idea is to make an animation film based on the 101 Zen Stories. These short stories convey a lot of wisdom and awareness of understanding the reality.

Part of my final year undergraduate project was with Zen Tales, where I have illustrated some of the Zen stories. While doing the project I have gone through good number of Zen stories and I was fascinated with the Zen stories.

However my knowledge about Zen was very less, I started to read more about Zen from various books and was trying to understand the meaning of Zen.

Zen is just small anecdotes and believes in the essentials. It is a condensed and crystallized teaching, but a person must be prepared for it. The only preparation is meditative awareness. Zen is like a telegram - the more condensed the meaning, the more striking. The more spread the meaning, the less impressive.



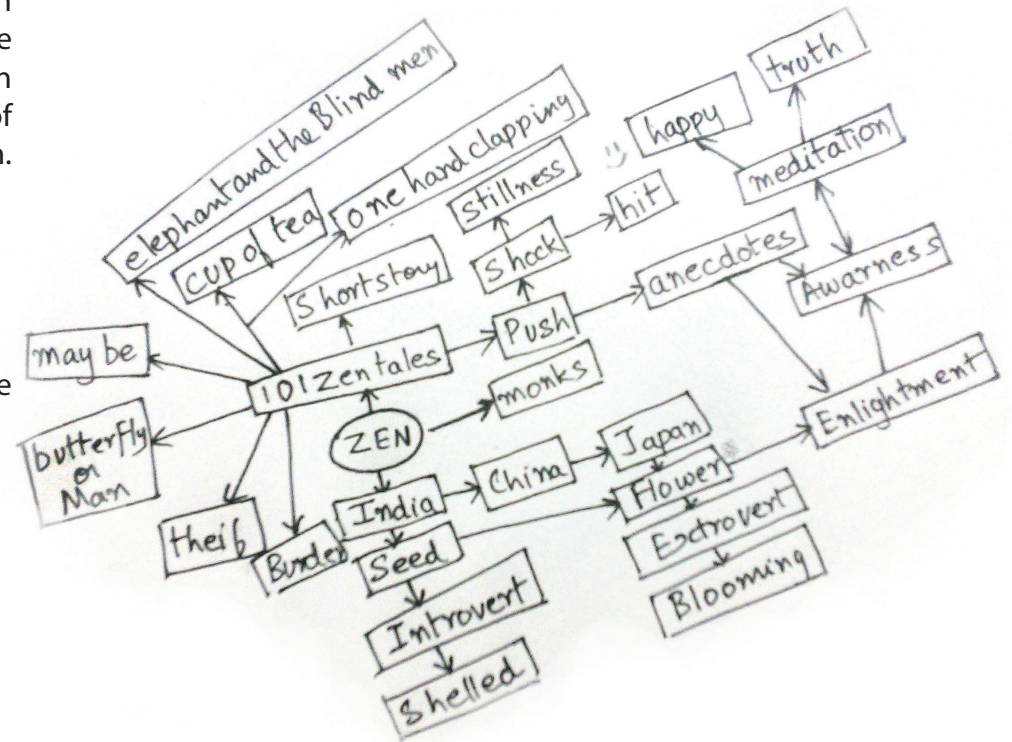
Final year UG Project

The one book that I was constantly referring was 'Zen, Its History and Teachings' written by 'Osho'. This book gave in detail about the history of Zen. How it originated in India, developed in china and finally flourished at Japan.

From my research the concept of Seed to Flower is one of the main ideology in Zen which I felt very important message. The seed is introvert Phenomenon, which conserves energy inside. So when the seed become a flower there is a total shift, as the flower is more extrovert and releases its fragrances and energy. The history of Zen is also like the transformation of the seed to flower, like the Seed of Zen formed in India, grown in China and finally flowered in Japan.

"Zen is the ultimate flowering of consciousness"

Form all the information gathered I did my Mind Map with the initial research.



The initial stories were developed on the messages shortlisted.

Story 1 - Enlightenment

A man sitting in a garden was trying to meditate to attain enlightenment. With his thoughts on the past and the future he was not able to focus, adding to that a fly was distracting him with its sound and flying, sitting around his face and finally trying to enter his ear.

When the fly try to enter his ear, he was at total shock and that moment he could realizes that his mind was clear and he could visualize enlightenment and he started to laugh with joy.

The story was dropped as it doesn't convey multiple messages.

Story 2- Mindfulness and the seed

A man sitting in a park, full of plants with beautiful flowers and ponds, thinking about bad and worst events of the past. All in his mind are worries and burden that he is carrying within himself and he was not able to enjoy the beauty of his surroundings. The sounds of birds, the fragrance of flowers, the touch of wind. A seed dropping from the tree hits the head of the man that put his thoughts still, clear and push him towards thinking of the seed- "The Present". To be extravert unlike the seed which is introvert, loneliest, caved in, and most isolated thing in the world.

The story was also dropped, though it conveys multiple messages, as the story doesn't had more visuals to illustrate.

Story 3 - God and Silence

A young man meets a master as he wants to become a disciple so as to find God and Silence. The master dragged him into a river and plunged his head under the water. After holding him for a while, in-spite of his struggling, the master pulled him out and asked him what he wants when his head was under the water. The man replied "Air". The master asked him to come back when he wants God and Silence as much as Air.

The young man returned home thinking what master said. He saw an old man carrying heavy weights and he started workingwith him in planting trees and cleaning the garden. He started living with nature in the process experiencing happyness, the silence was pervading him. Now the master visit the young man and ask him to join as his disciple. The young man answered that he had found the presence of God and silence. The master smiled at him.

Initial stories developed weren't satisfactory as it was missing out the essence of Zen.

Again I went with my secondary research.

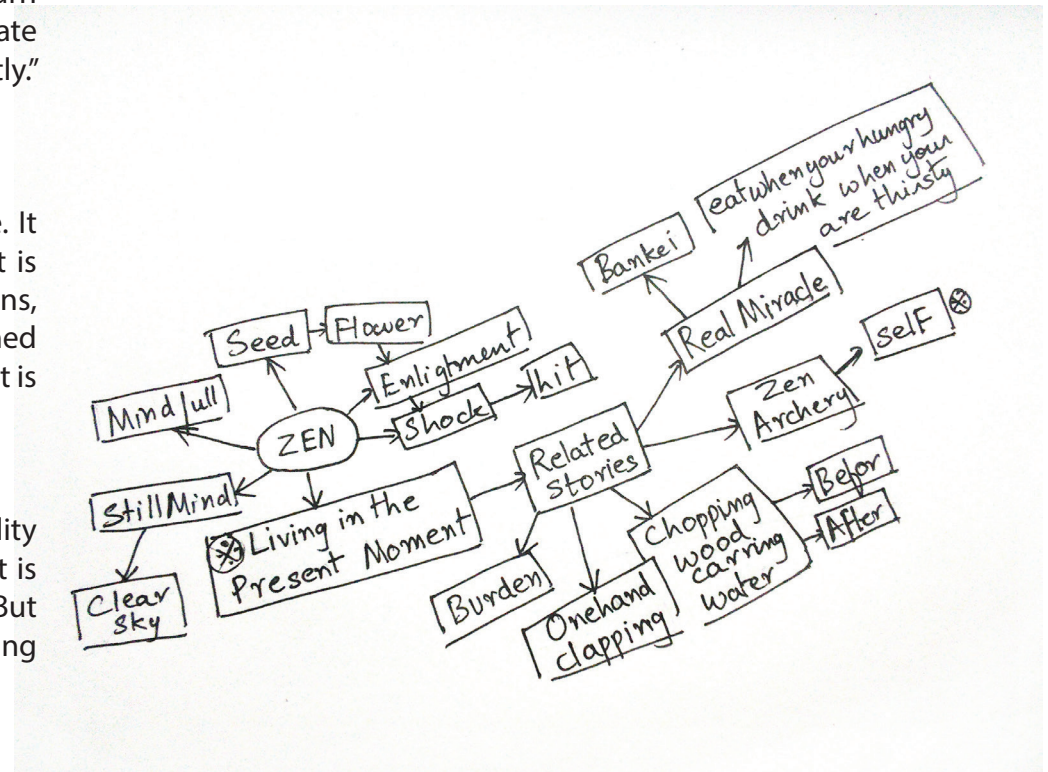
During this time I saw that I was missing out the most important message 'Living in the Present Moment'. So I started gathering information of what is living in the present moment.

"The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, or not to anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly."
~ Buddha

The present moment is the only thing where there is no time. It is the point between past and future. It is always there and it is the only point we can access in time. Everything that happens, happens in the present moment. Everything that ever happened and will ever happen can only happen in the present moment. It is impossible for anything to exist outside of it.

Therefore it is obvious, that past and future don't have a reality on their own. They are just mental concepts in our heads. Past is the thinking of memories while future is the projection ahead. But anything can really happen only in the present moment. Nothing else regarding time really exists in reality.

Going into the present moment means to become conscious oneself. All kinds of meditations and spiritual practices are aiming to become present. To center ourselves in the present moment we have to get the past out of our head and stop projecting to the future. What remains is now. Then all of our attention flows into the present moment.



From the information gathered I collected Zen stories which are related to the topic "Living in the Present Moment". One of most important story that related to the topic was

1 'The Real Miracle'

When Bankei was preaching at Ryumon temple, a Shinshu priest, who believed in salvation through the repetition of the name of the Buddha of Love, was jealous of his large audience and wanted to debate with him.

Bankei was in the midst of a talk when the priest appeared but the fellow made such a disturbance that Bankei stopped his discourse and asked about the noise. 'The founder of our sect,' boasted the priest, had such miraculous powers that he held a brush in his hand on one bank of the river, his attendant held up a paper on the other bank, and the teacher wrote the holy name of Amida through the air. Can you do such a wonderful thing?'

Bankei replied lightly: 'Perhaps your fox can perform that trick, but that is not the manner of Zen.'

My miracle is that when I feel hungry I eat, and when I feel thirsty I drink.'

This story lead me to a lot of other stories which were related to the Living In the Present Moment.

2 The Burden

Tanzan and Ekido were once traveling together down a muddy road. A heavy rain was still falling.

Coming around a bend, they met a lovely girl in a silk kimono and sash, unable to cross the intersection.

'Come on, girl,' said Tanzan at once. Lifting her in his arms, he carried her over the mud.

Ekido did not speak again until that night when they reached a lodging temple. Then he no longer could restrain himself.

'We monks don't go near females.' He told Tanzan, especially not young and lovely ones. It is dangerous. Why did you do that?'

'I left the girl there,' said Tanzan. 'Are you still carrying her?'

3 One Hand Clapping-The Sound of One Hand

The masts of Kennin temple was Mokurai, Silent Thunder. He had a little protgé named Toyo who was only twelveé years old. Toyo saw the olds disciples visit the master's room each morning and evening to receive instruction in sanzen or personal guidance in which they were given koans to stop mind- wandering.

Toro wished to do sanzen also.

'Wait a while,' said Mokurai. 'You are too young.'

But the child insisted, so the teacher finally consented.

In the evening little Toyo went at the proper time to the threshold of Mokurai's sanzen room. He struck the gong to announce his presence, bowed respectfully three times outside the door, and went to sit before the master in respectful silence.

'You can hear the sound of two hands when they clap together,' said Mokurai. 'Now show me the sound of one hand.'

Toyo bowed and went to his room to consider this problem. From his window he could hear the music of the geishas.

'Ah, I have it!' he proclaimed.

The next evening, when his teacher asked him to illustrate the sound of one hand, Toyo began to play the music of the geishas.

'No, no,' said Mokurai. That will never do. That is not the sound of one hand. You've not got it at all.'

Thinking that such music might interrupt, Toyo moved his abode to a quiet place. He meditated again. 'What can the sound of one hand be?' He happened to hear some water dripping. 'I have it,' imagined Toyo.

When he next appeared before his teacher, Toyo imitated dripping water.

'What is that?' asked Mokurai. That is the sound of dripping water, but not the sound of one hand. Try again.'

In vain Toyo meditated to hear the sound of one hand. He heard the sighing of the wind. But the sound was rejected.

He heard the cry of an owl. This also was refused. The sound of one hand was not the locusts.

For more than ten times Toyo visited Mokurai with different sounds. All were wrong. For almost a year he pondered what the sound of one hand might be.

At last little Toyo entered true meditation and transcended all sounds. 'I could collect no more,' he explained later. 'so I reached the soundless sound.'

Toyo had realized the sound of one hand.

4 Archery

After winning several archery contests, the young and rather boastful champion challenged a Zen master who was renowned for his skill as an archer. The young man demonstrated remarkable technical proficiency when he hit a distant bull's eye on his first try, and then split that arrow with his second shot. "There," he said to the old man, "see if you can match that!" Undisturbed, the master did not draw his bow, but rather motioned for the young archer to follow him up the mountain.

Curious about the old fellow's intentions, the champion followed him high into the mountain until they reached a deep chasm spanned by a rather flimsy and shaky log. Calmly stepping out onto the middle of the unsteady and certainly perilous bridge, the old master picked a faraway tree as a target, drew his bow, and fired a clean, direct hit. "Now it is your turn," he said as he gracefully stepped back onto the safe ground.

Staring with terror into the seemingly bottomless and beckoning ABYSS, the young man could not force himself to step out onto the log, no less shoot at a target. "You have much skill with your bow," the master said, sensing his challenger's predicament, "but you have little skill with the mind that lets loose the shot."

"When an archer is shooting for nothing, he has all his skills
If he shoots for a brass buckle, he is already nervous
If he shoots for a prize of gold, he goes blind or sees two targets
He is out of his mind
His skills has not changed but the prize divides him
He cares
He thinks more of winning than of shooting
And the need to win drains him of power"

Chuang Tzu

About Zen Archery

Archery is one of the main philosophy in Zen. When the archer raises his bow he will begin a process familiar in Zen meditation. There is moment of absolute concentration and can only be achieved with perfect posture, balance and stillness. When shooting the arrow the archer find the self in the target. This is the spiritual development which will lead to the ultimate truth and the discovery of the self. The control of the breath and the mind generate the spiritual powers similar to what one finds in meditation. The immediate effect is increased attention in the sensation of thoughts, the final emptying of mind for one brief moment as the arrow is released.

Narrating a story with an archer practicing archery found to be the apt storyline.

From the secondary research I started to develop stories combining one or two Zen stories to form the script for the animation film. But still I thought the essence of Zen was still missing in the stories.

Story 4 – Living in the present and mindful

In a dense forest a monk with his only pupil was practicing meditation and the archery. Thinking about what master was meditating upon, the pupil in spite of regular practice was not able to hit the target and got frustrated.

The days went on like every day, the master meditate and the pupil practice, but was not hitting the target.

Every time he pulls the sting of the arrow he was thinking about how painful his hands were feeling, how his legs were cramping and how the birds and butterflies distract his concentration. On the eventful day the pupil practicing archery saw a tiger is coming close to his master who is meditating. Without thinking he targeted his arrow over a fruit just above the master's head. The arrow hits the fruit and the master comes out of his meditation and the tiger ran away.

The master laughed at the pupil and said, he had finally attained mind fullness and was in "the present".

The story was also dropped though the message "living in the

present and mindfulness" are more appropriate, as storyline is not more effective.

Story 5 - Silence and mindfulness

The bear-archer, the tortoise- the master and the monkey - the pupil were together practicing their respective arts in a dense forest.

The bear practicing archery fails to hit the target as his mind was on the fishes splashing in the stream next to it. The bear dreaming of gliding with the fish and enjoying eating them.

The master tortoise meditating and monitoring the bear archery. The monkey, the pupil approaches the master for learning the art of silence and the master ask the monkey to find answer for one hand clapping.

The monkey tries and come out with the sound surrounds him as the sound of one hand clapping. The master rejects series of his answers. The monkey tries all his ways to find the answer for one hand clapping. He hangs on the tree with his tail, he stand on with one leg, jumping, meditating, but without any answer.

The bear dreaming of fish and practicing archery.

On the eventful day the tortoise meditating, the bear could see a snake going near to his master. The bear without thinking, aims and hit the fruit that hangs just above the snake and the falling fruit hit on the hood of the snake. The master comes out of meditation and smile at the bear the success of being present and mindful.

The monkey returns back to master and says with all his attempts he couldn't find nothing with one hand clapping. The master says there is the answer in the monkey's reply that he could find nothing but silence from one hand clapping.

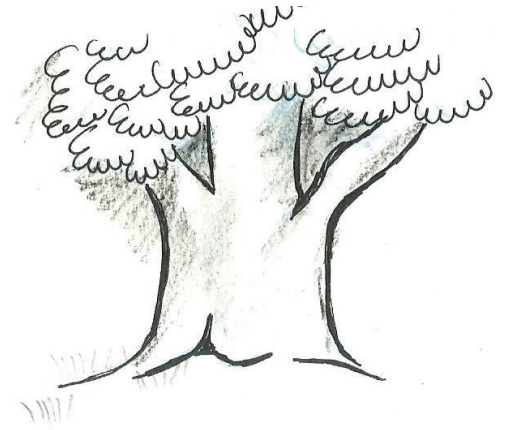
The bear could hit most of the attempts the target and the monkey could visualize the silence within and around.

The master peacefully meditates.

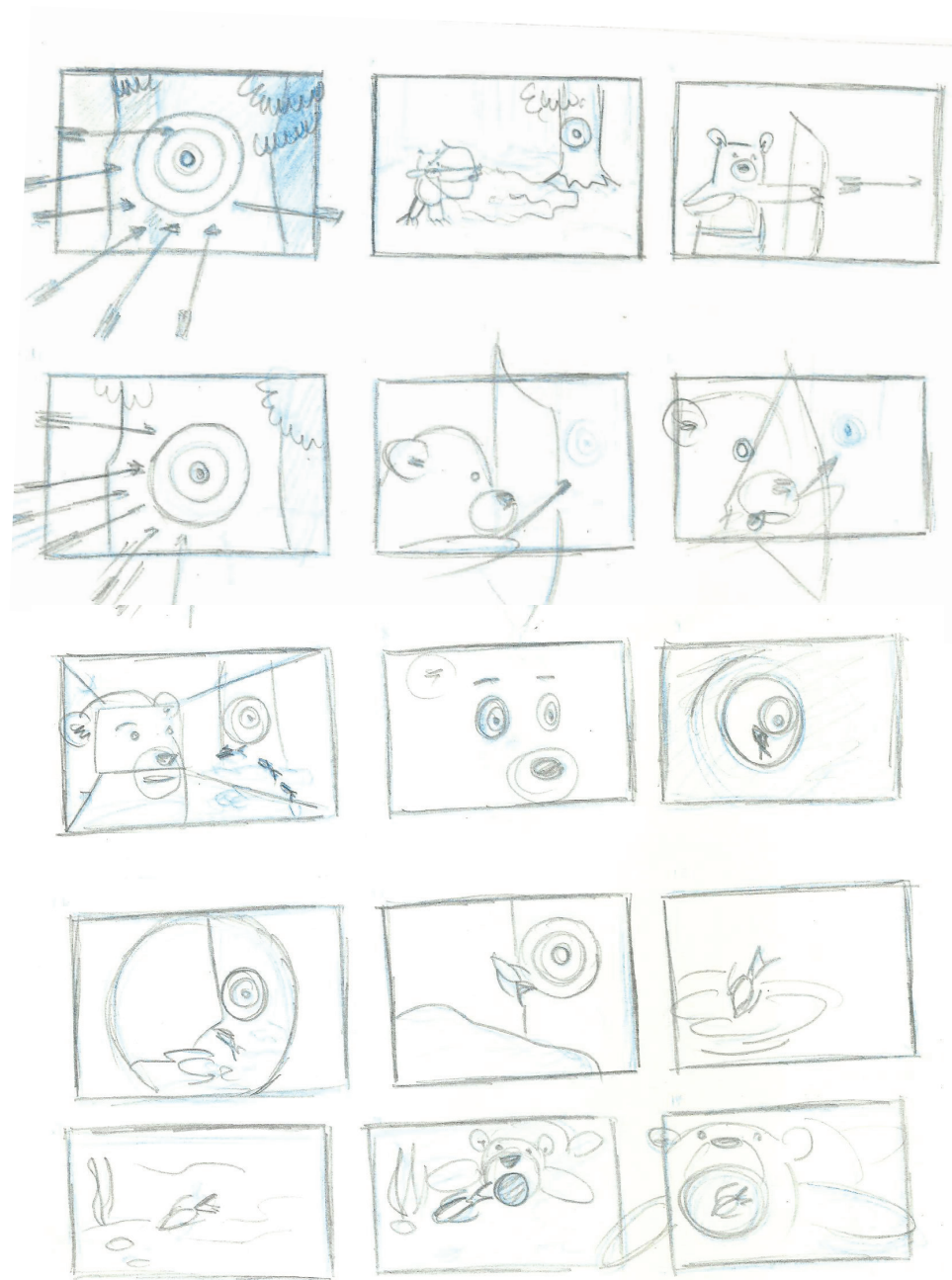
Though this story was illustrated in the stage two presentation the story was also dropped as the story line was not very effective.

Character Sketch done for story 5





Concept Art



Story Thumbnail

*Your mind is a Garden,
Your thoughts are the seeds,
You can grow flowers or
You can grow weeds.*

-William Wordsworth

Final Story

The final story combined the primary research with the secondary research. Bringing out my initial ideas of seed, flower, Living in the present moment, concept of shock and stillness all combining with the story of Zen archery.

The Floating Seed Final Story

It is a story of an archer practicing art of archery.

An archer was living in a hillock and daily he comes down from the hillock and practices archery at the main land. Daily the practices continues but he fails to hit the target. The archer couldn't find the reasons for his failure.

On the eventful day when he was coming down from the hillock he accidentally hit a rock on the path and stumble down on the ground. When he gets up, a floating seed, land on his hand and a sudden flash of thought comes to his mind, he recognize that his mind is also like the floating seed, which is mindless and floating aimlessly. The shock brings him to his consciousness which helps him to realize the present moment.

Suddenly he could feel the beauty of his surroundings, he could hear the sound of breeze, he could sense the fragrance of flowers, and he could see the beauty of flowers, birds, water fall & fishes splashing on the stream. As he enjoys the journey he reaches his practicing field.

He could feel total calmness within himself and the surroundings and he just aim the target with calm deep breath and the arrow shoots out like a lightning and hit the target. The archer could feel the flowering of his consciousness. His skill of archery.



The Metaphorical Connection and Ideas in the Final Story

Metaphoric connection between a floating seed and the mind - To convey that the archers mind is also like the floating seed,

The Transformation of Seed to Flower

The Concept of Shock- Emptying of Mind

Living in the Present Moment

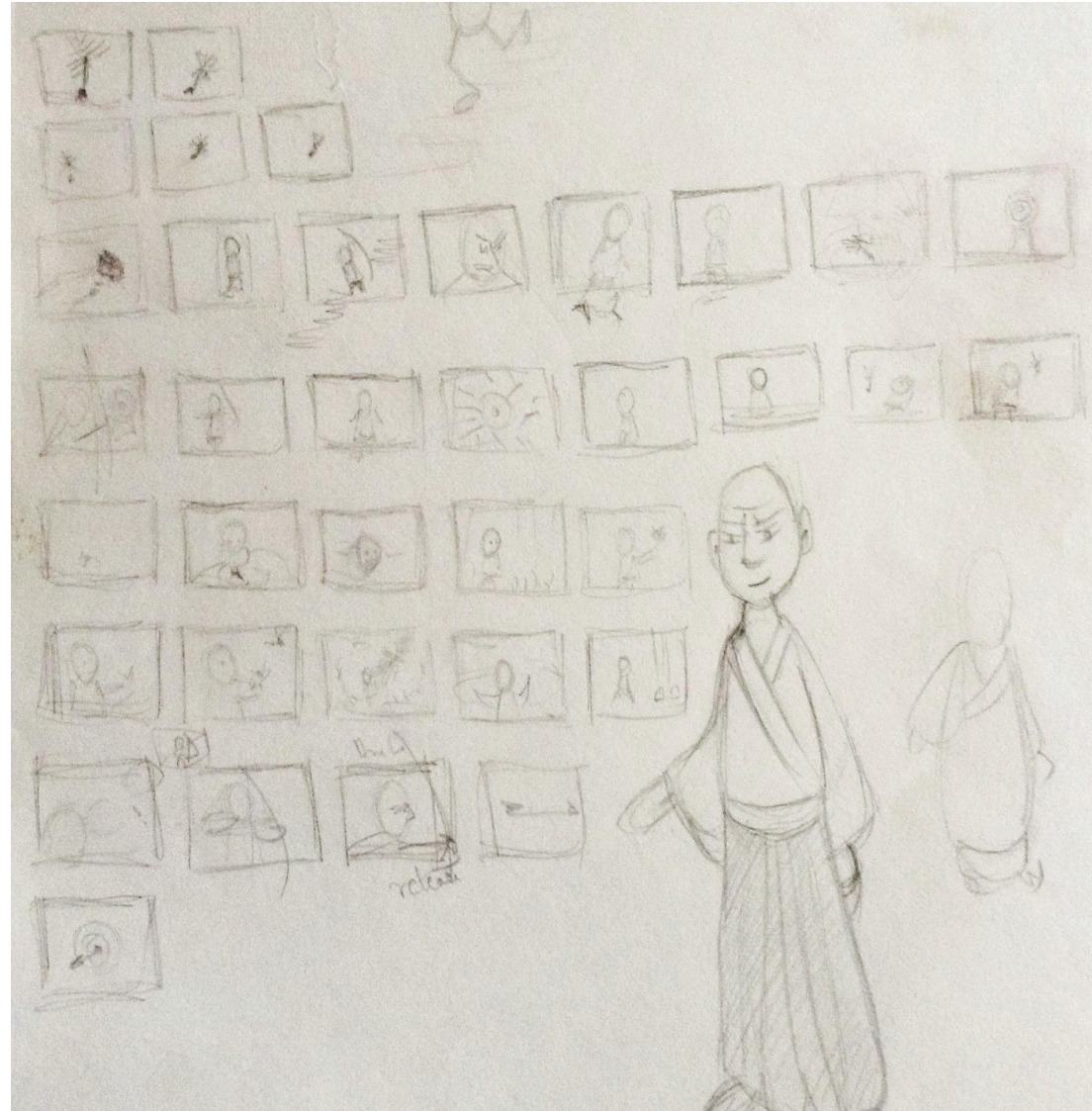
Stillness of Mind and Soul

Discovery of Self

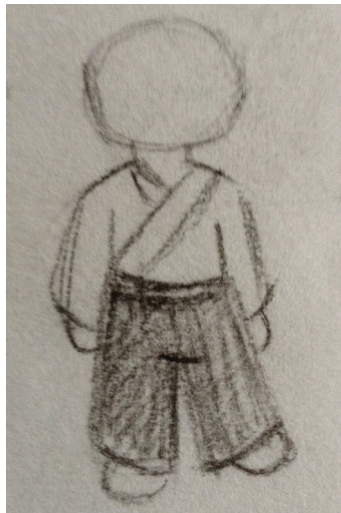
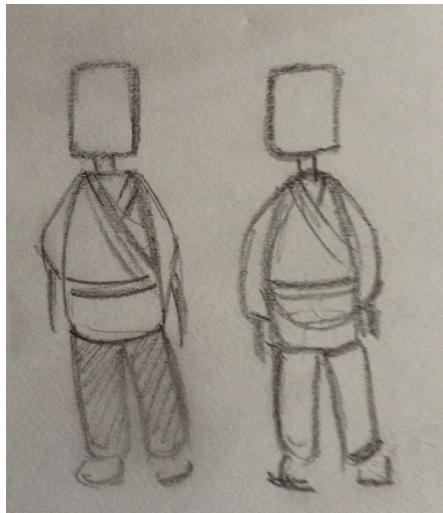
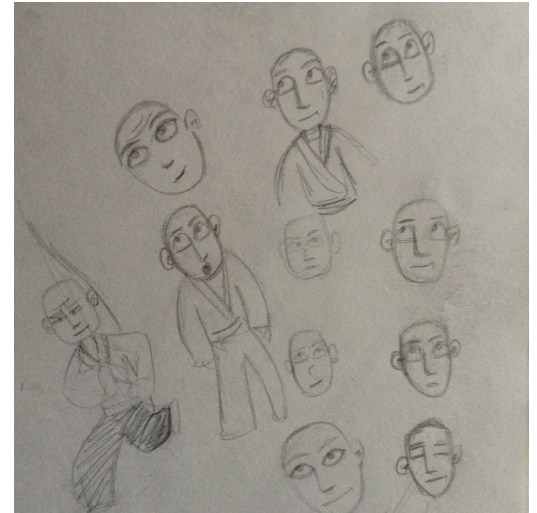
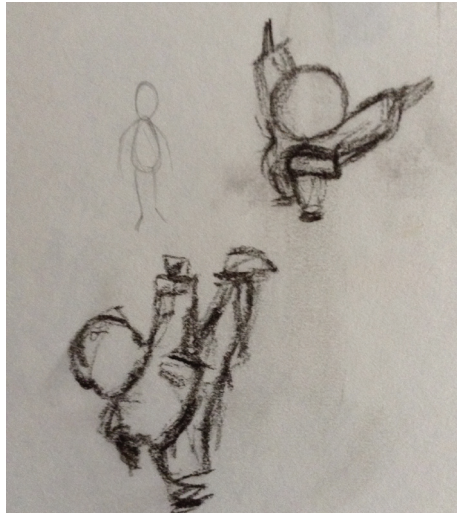
Combining all with Archery story



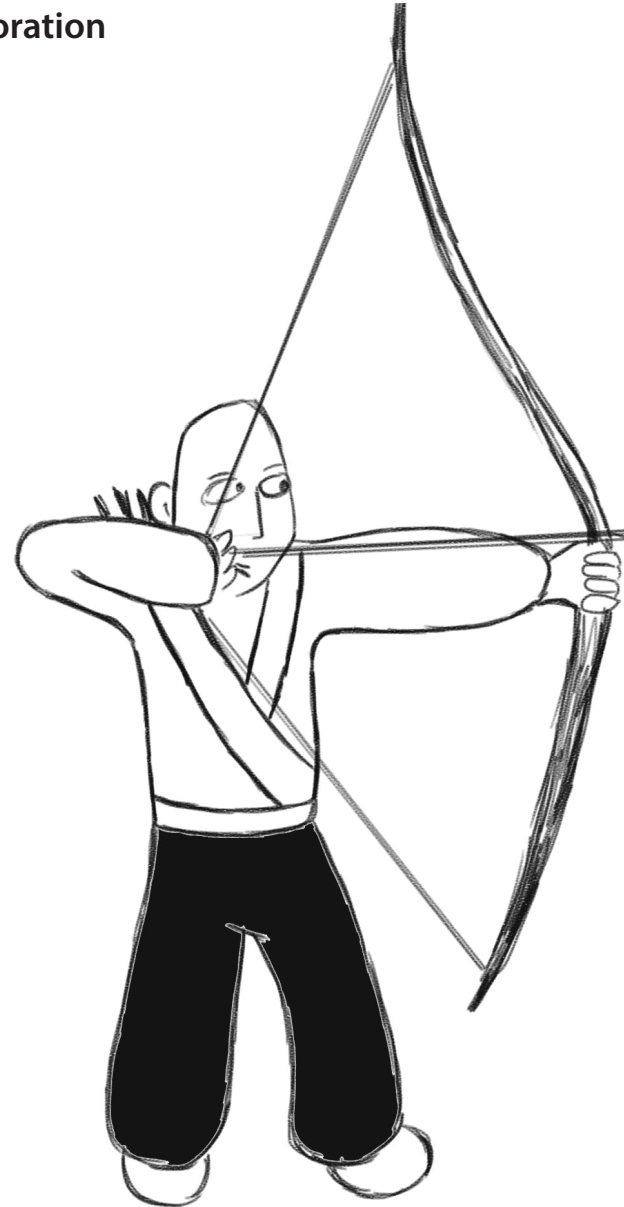
Story Thumbnail



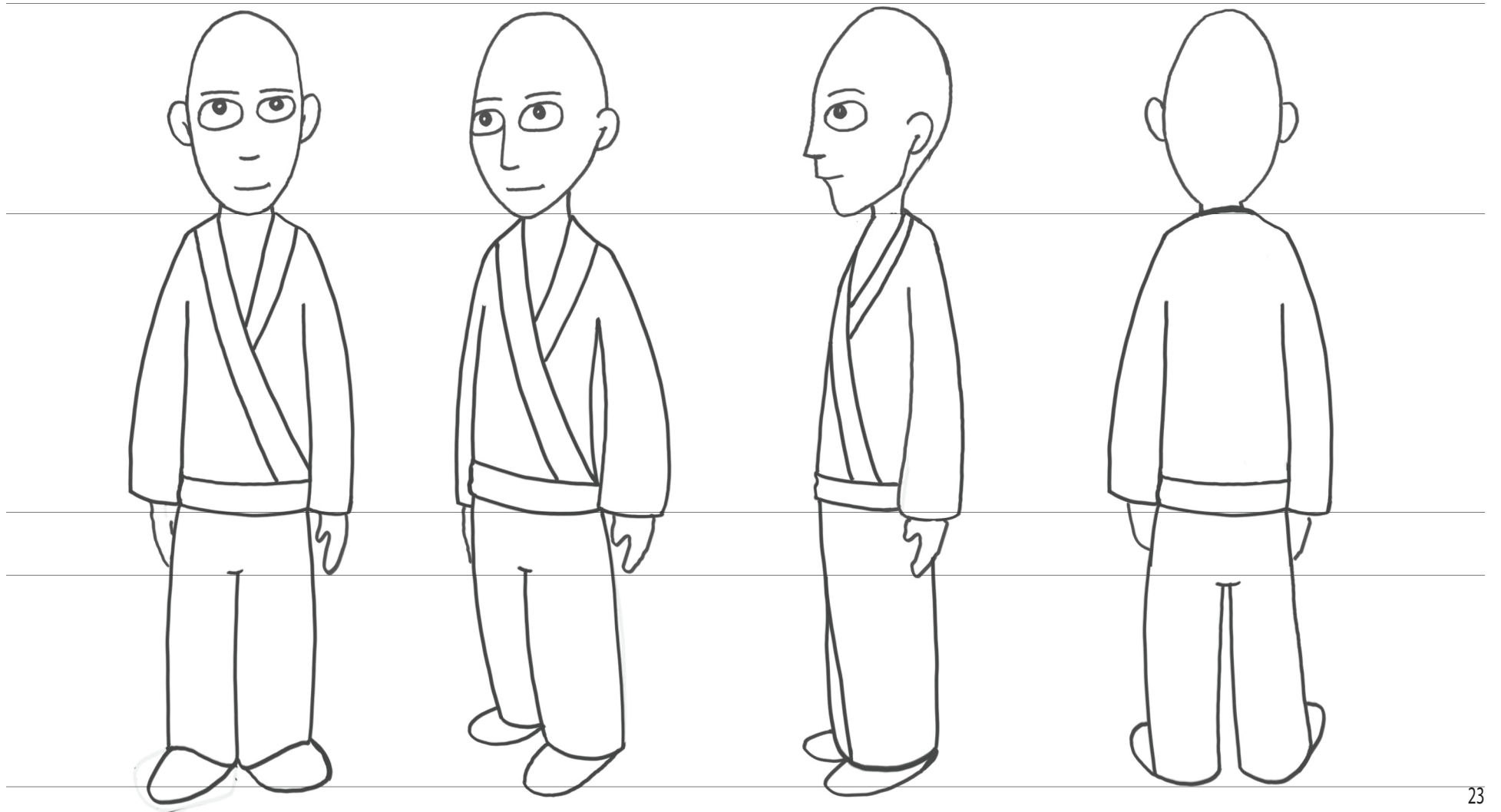
Rough Character Exploration



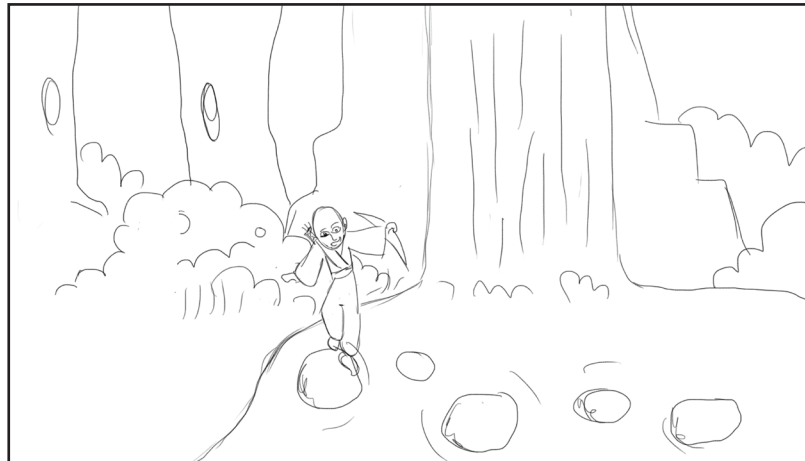
Character exploration



Main Character Model Sheet



Rough Visual Style



Rough Visual Style



Final Visual Style



Final Visual Style



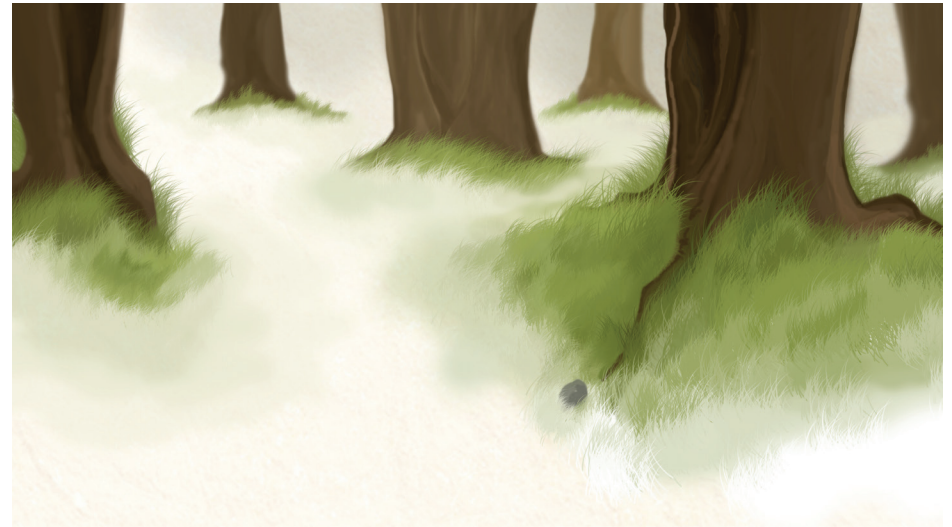
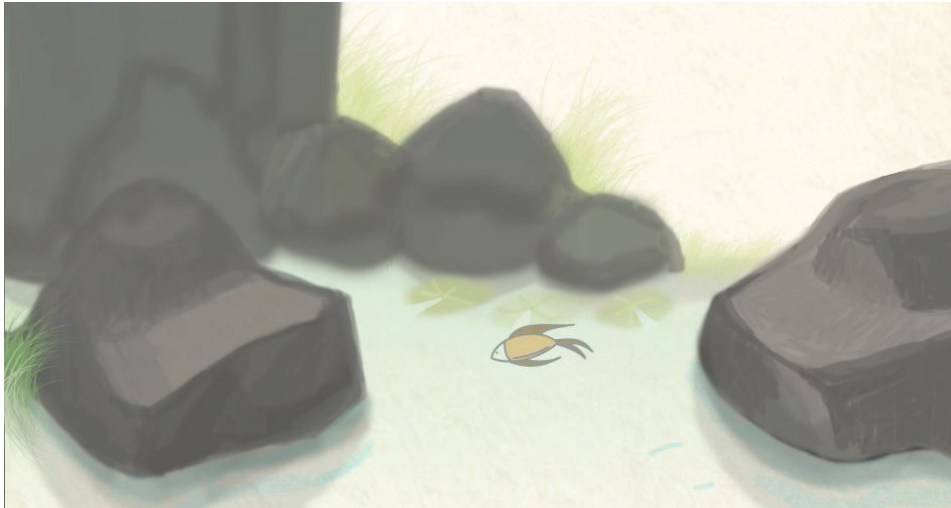
Backgrounds



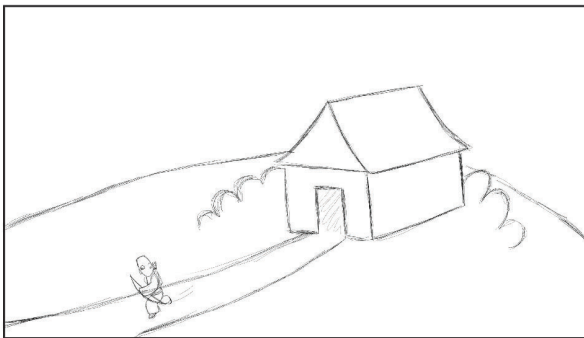
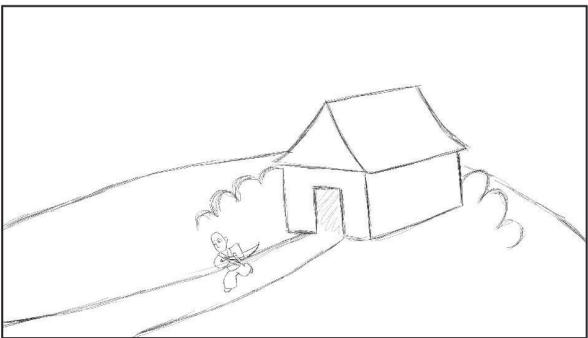
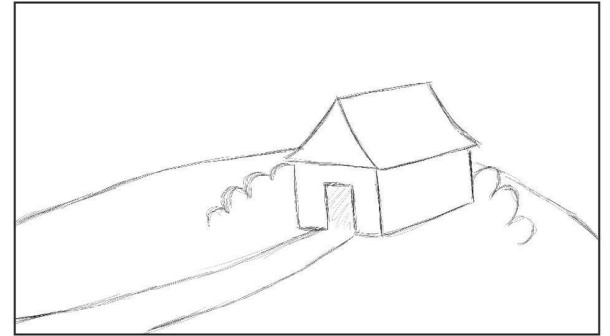
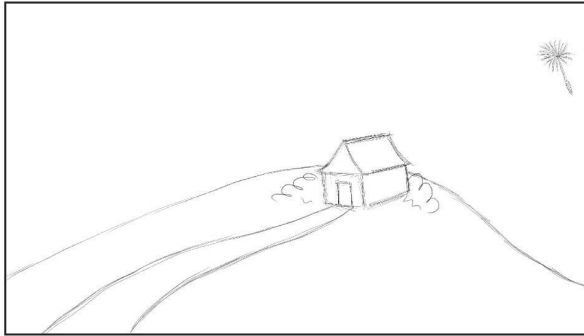
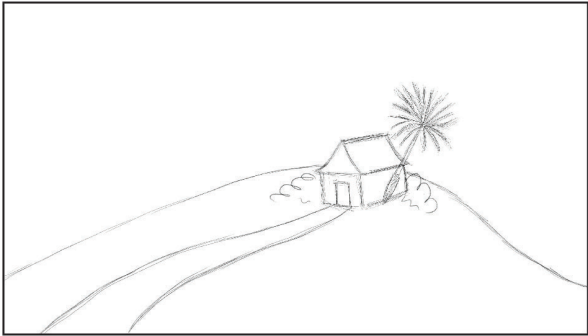
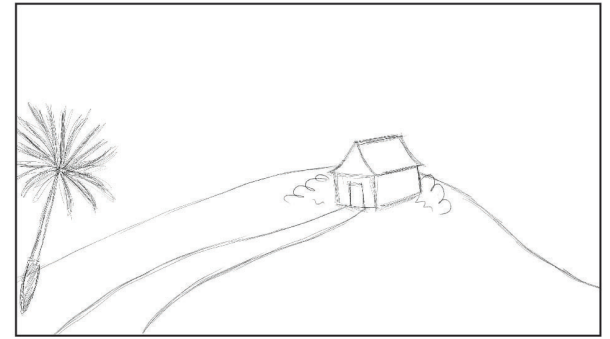
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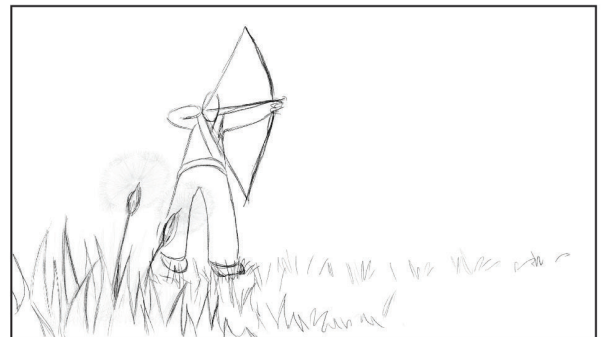
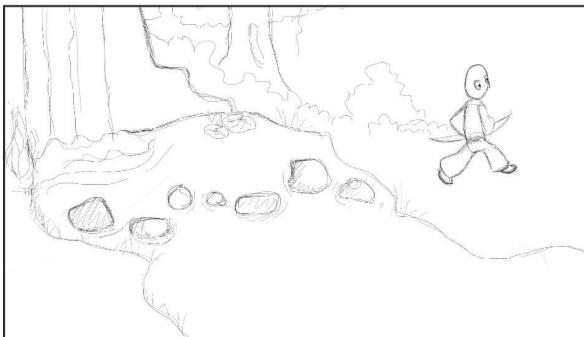
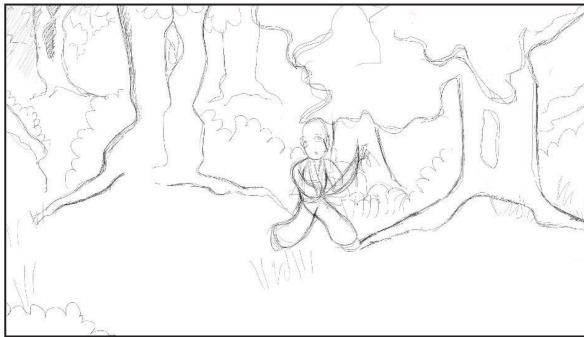
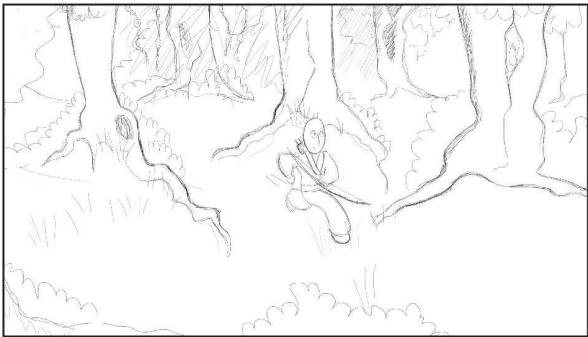
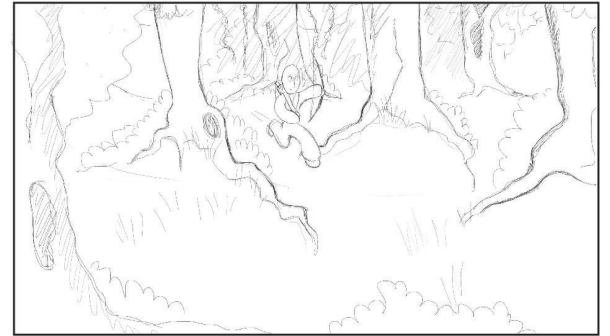
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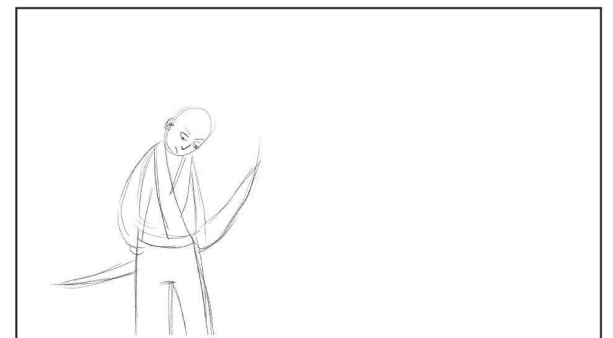
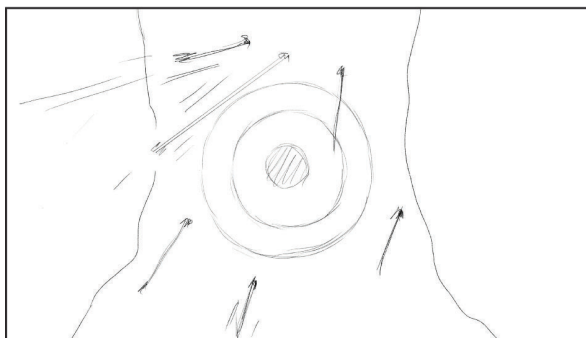
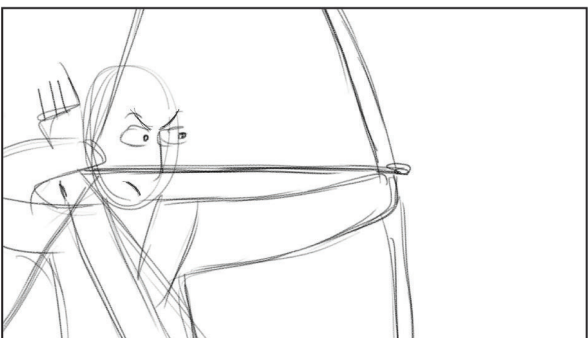
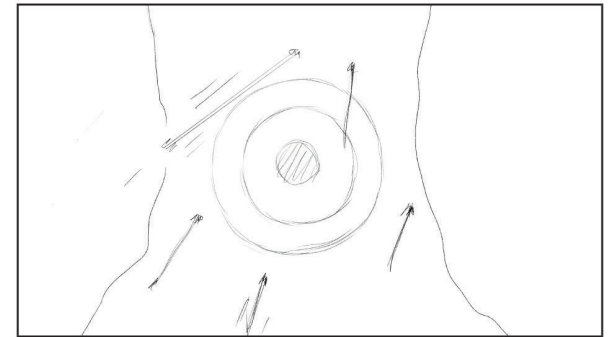
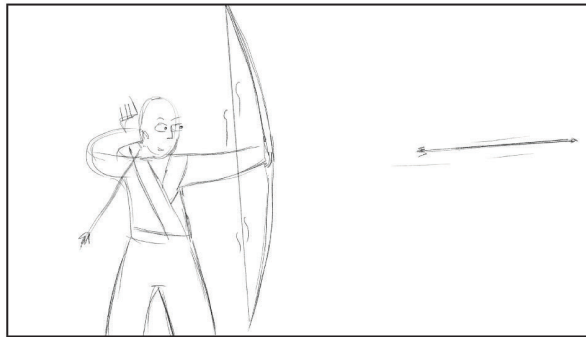
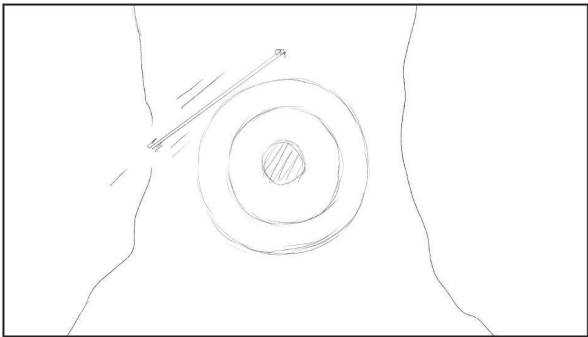
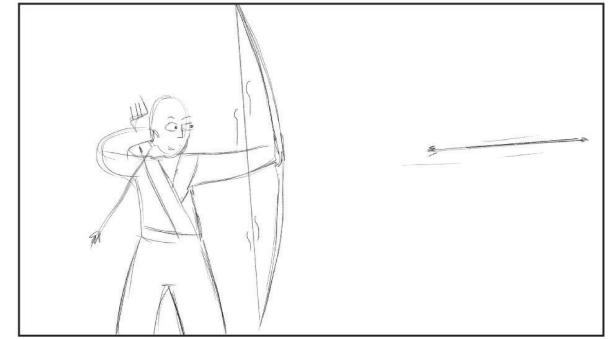
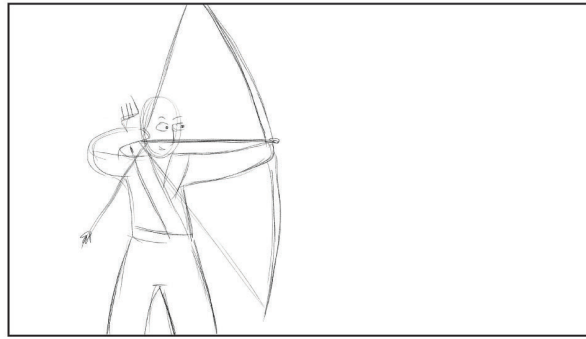
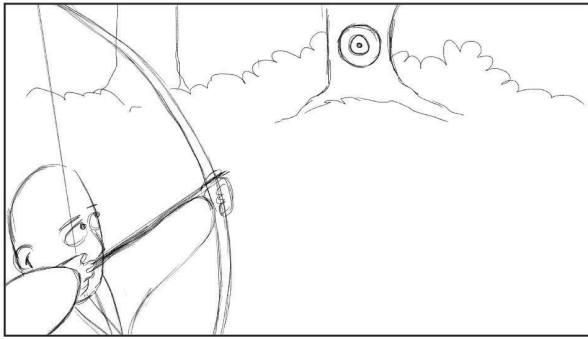
Story Board



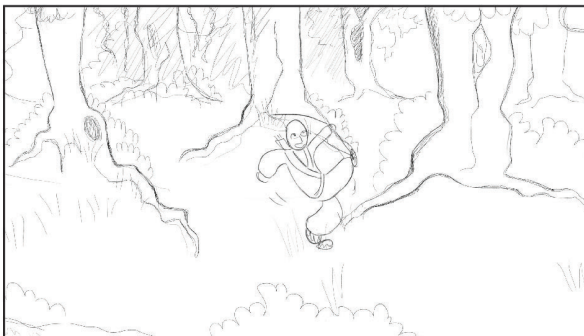
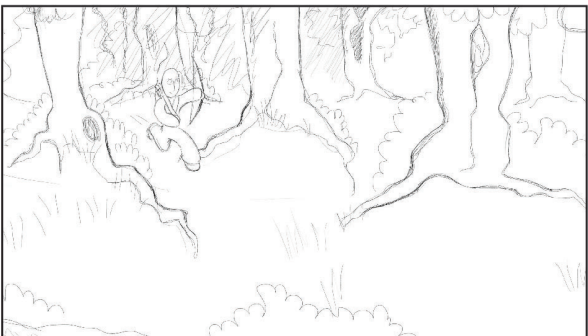
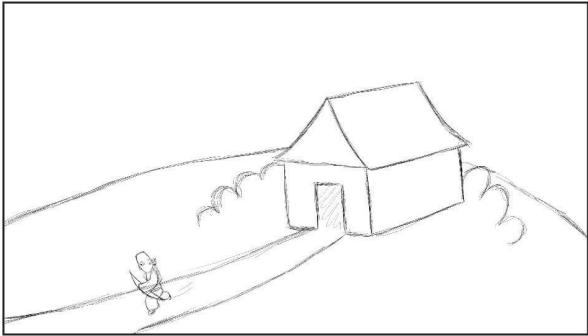
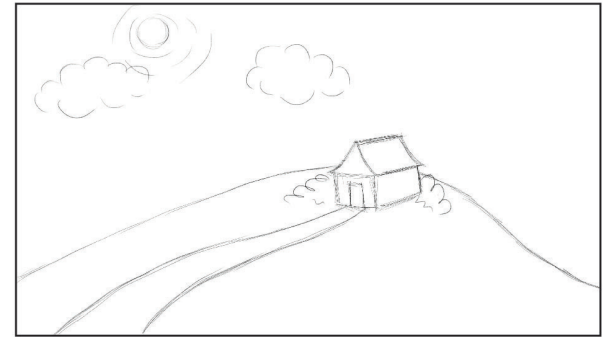
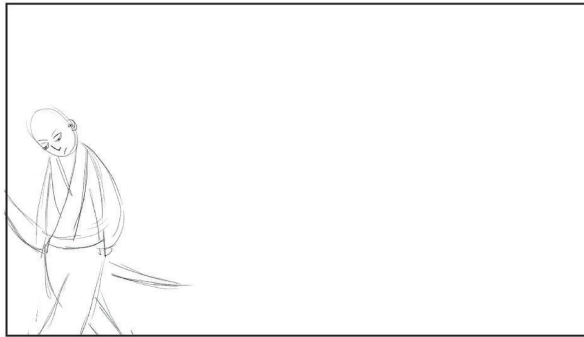
Story Board



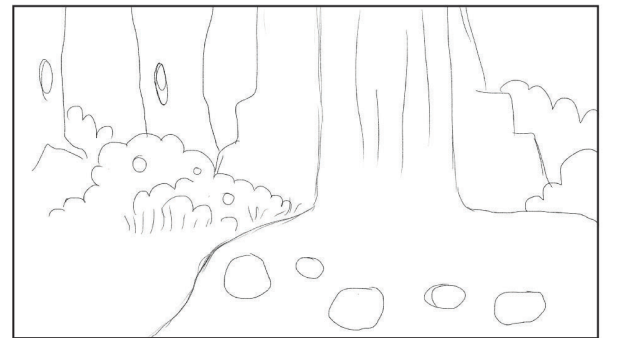
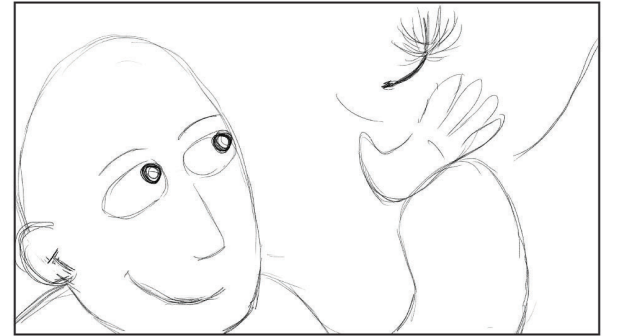
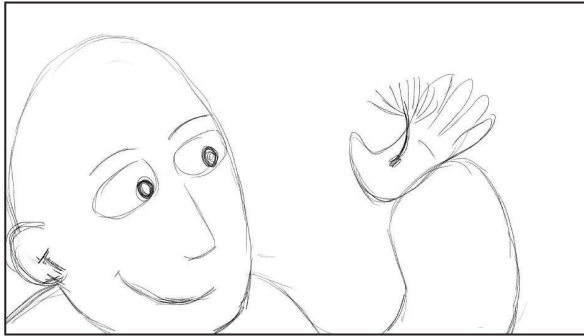
Storyboard



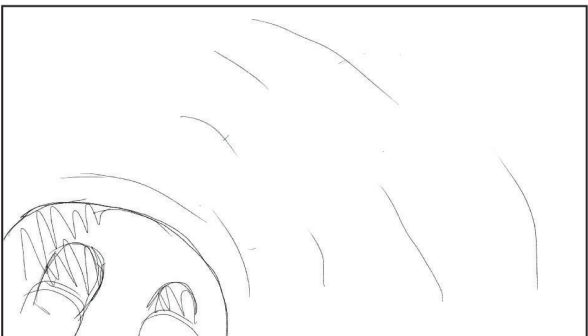
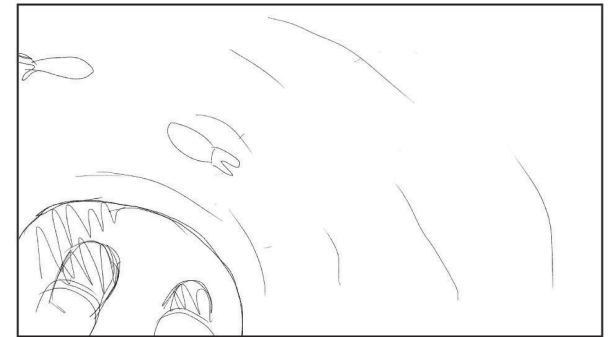
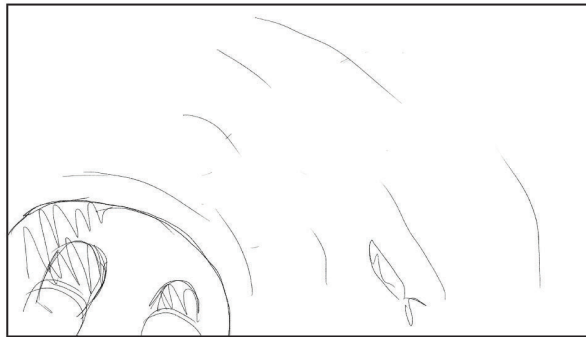
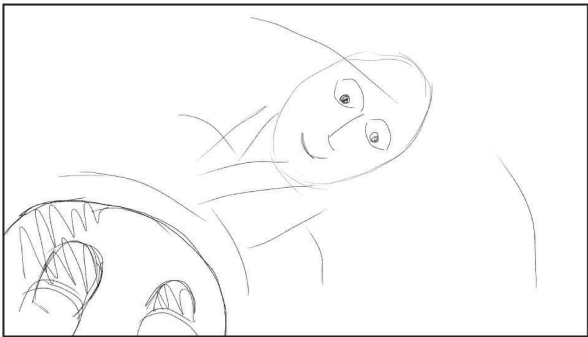
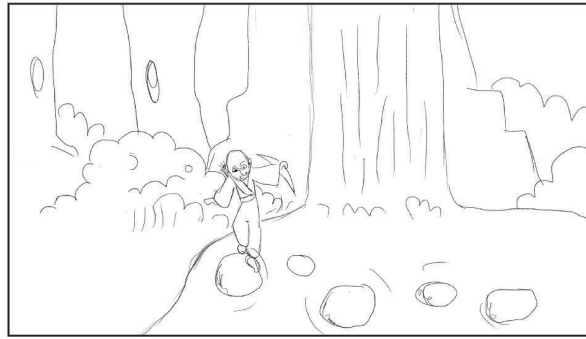
Story Board



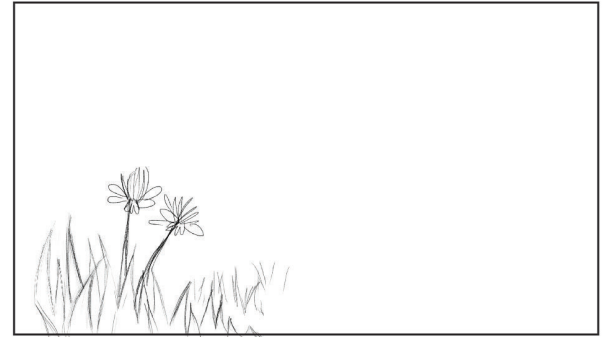
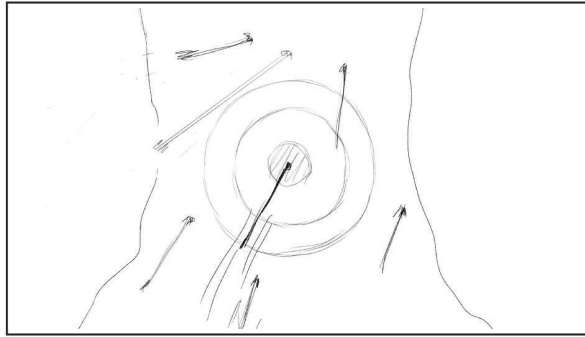
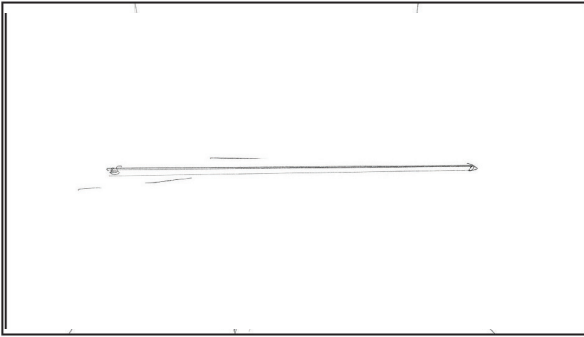
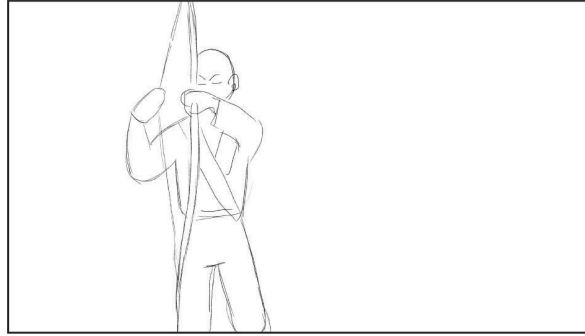
Story Board



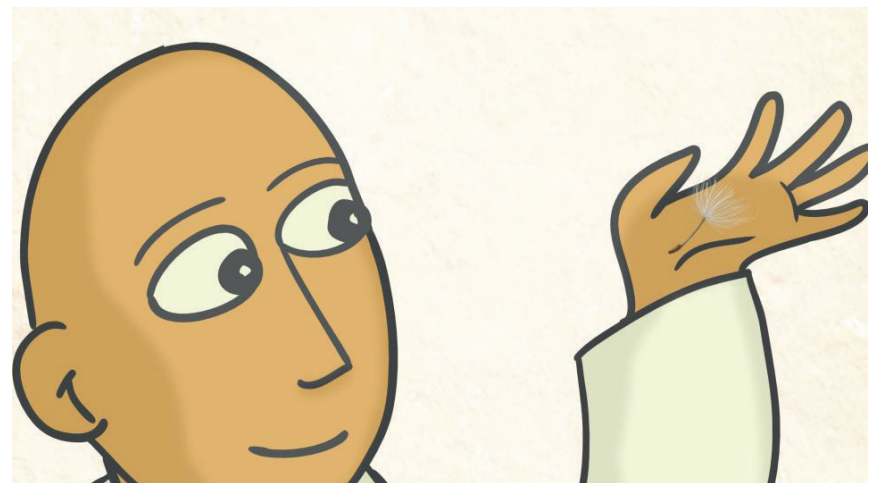
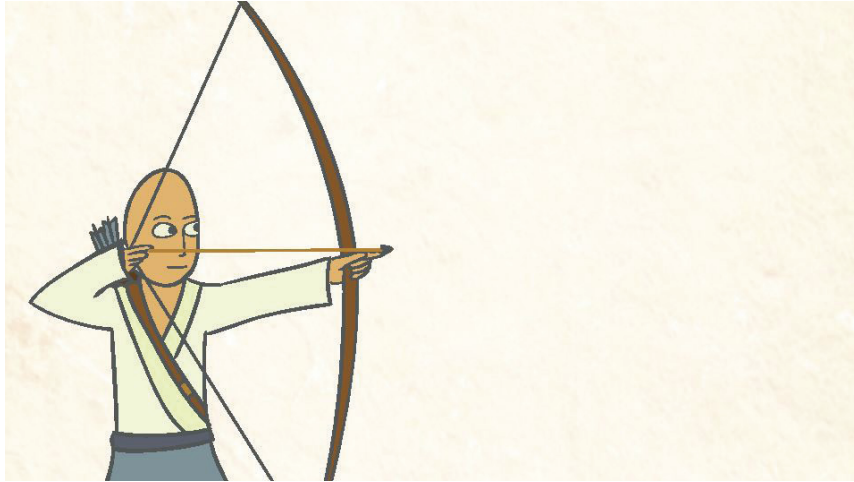
Story Board



Story Board



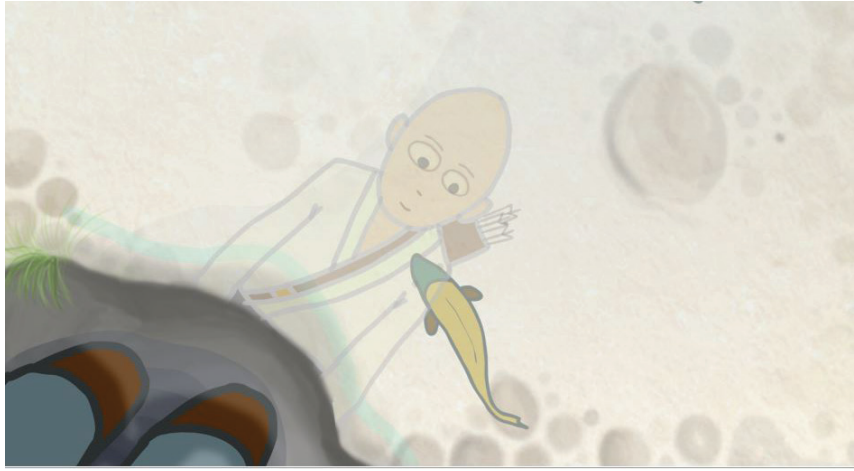
Scenes from the film



Scenes from the film



Scenes from the film



Making of the Film

For the Background style I was inspired from traditional Japanese art, where most of the backgrounds are of paper texture with minimalistic art style. So for my background I used textures to give the papery feel, The backgrounds were done digitally using Photoshop. For the making of the animation I have used Toon Boom Animate Pro and this was my first experience with the software. The whole composite was done in Adobe Premier.

References

Books referred:

Zen, Its History And Teachings - Osho
Zen Garden - Subroto Bagchi
One Hand Clapping a collection of zen stories
The Way of Zen - Alan Watts
Zen Shorts - Jon J Muth

Youtube links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9uBtuxjwU> Zen | Life of Master Dogen
<http://vimeo.com/86930632> Yoga Noga Reyoga
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDW9AyxajAI> Ten Bulls of Zen in Animation
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5TsLr0BP30> Kung fu Panda - today is a gift, that is why it is called a present
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXHIXTmWNRI> chop wood carrying water
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJRYpp_y52M Karate Kid being Still
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU7vKitN4Ro> life is right now - Jon Kabat Zin on mindfulness
You can heal life - louise hay video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5w3_7j65Kc peaceful warrior movie

Stories

<http://users.rider.edu/~suler/zenstory/wantgod.html> wanting god
<http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/eng/library/stories/book9.html> two moon storie
<http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/eng/library/stories/index.html> zen short stories
Osho - Miracle of ordinariness
Osho - real miracle
You can heal life - louise hay video
<http://www.zentails.com/links.htm> zen stories website
http://rum1.aarch.dk/uploads/media/Eugen_Herrigel-Zen_in_the_Art_of_Archery_01.pdf
<http://www.myrkothum.com/what-is-the-present-moment/>

“The future of humanity will go closer to the approach of Zen, because the meeting of east and west is possible only through something like Zen, which is earthly and yet unearthly”.

OSHO