

# The Boy and his Umbrella.

Explorations in children stories



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Submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirement for  
the Degree of Master of Design in Animation.

IDC, IIT Bombay.

## Approval Sheet

The Project III titled 'Exploration in Children Stories.' by Sukhada Rahalkar is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirement for M.Des Degree in Animation.

Guid:

Chairperson:

Internal Examiner:

External Examiner:

## Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

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# Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my guides Prof. Sumant Rao for his support, guidance and encouragement throughout my project.

I am also grateful to Prof. Nina Sabnani, Prof. Shilpa Ranade, Prof. C P Narayan and Prof. Phani Tetali for their feedback.

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## Abstract:

The short film *"The boy and his Umbrella"* is an exploration of relationship shared between a small child, his grandfather and a huge umbrella. The film is about a boy who is completely enthralled by the size of his grandfather's umbrella and is eager to take it out in the rains, and the various events that occur while he is carrying out this mission.

The film revolves around emotions of love, affection, disappointment, attachment and attraction and the ups and downs that one experiences with subtle overtones of humour.

Style and treatment used. Since the roots for my project were my childhood I used the classic black and white editorial style illustration. The film is looks like moving illustrations.

## Introduction:

I have always been interested in working in the children's stories sector. I believe in writing stories that teach them values by hinting at them rather than being a moral based story. Children like meeting people that are similar to them, treat them as equals by talking to them at their level and do not keep correcting them etc. The idea was to tell them a story they can relate to themselves.

For the project I did not start writing the story directly. To be able to connect with my audience, I revisited my childhood and listed out the things I liked to watch, the things I liked to read, the activities that I cherish till date.

I did not want to make any philosophical statement or use the plot to give the viewer a lecture on morality. My aim was to keep it simple. For those viewing it, I wanted children to be able to relate to the story and adults to watch

it and revisit their childhood. I wanted the film to be experience oriented.

As a Mumbaikar, the rains have always held a peculiar fascination for me and to go with the rains are the umbrellas that everyone pulls out. What makes an umbrella stand out? Is it its color? Its size? Its shape? Maybe all of these. As a child I, too was obsessed with my father's big traditional black umbrella, with an orange handle. These days one rarely gets to see such umbrellas. It is now considered old fashioned to be seen with one of these. However, my memories of the umbrella are as strong and unforgettable as ever.

While writing this story, nostalgia struck me and my own emotions are part of this story.

## GATHERING MEMORIES AND INSPIRATIONS:

### STORIES AND BOOKS

The strongest memories that I have of my childhood are the Anmol Prakashan publications that my parents used to read out to me. Those were published in Marathi and were very small, perhaps about fifteen to twenty pages.

Their printing was also done in a low cost manner to keep the books priced at roughly ten Rupees per book. The language and narration of the book struck me and have impressed me with their style of animated narration. Mostly, those stories revolved around magic, adventure and mystery. There were hardly any illustrations, but, when present they were most interesting. They were usually black and white, not colored with more than two colors.

The hardest task was looking for shops that still sold these books. I was not even sure if they were still being published. My search took me all the way to Pune. It was rather difficult to select books, since I didn't remember which stories I liked. I bought around twenty books and I kept reading them. The idea was to use a story adapted to suit a movie or to write a story on my own based on the same characteristics, like style and narration.

Simultaneously I was also collecting other reading material that I used to read as a child, like poetry, articles and other short stories. Earlier, my family used to get the Marathi newspaper, "Loksatta". It had some weekly magazines that used to come along with it. Every Sunday there was a supplementary paper named "Bal rang", which was targeted at kids.

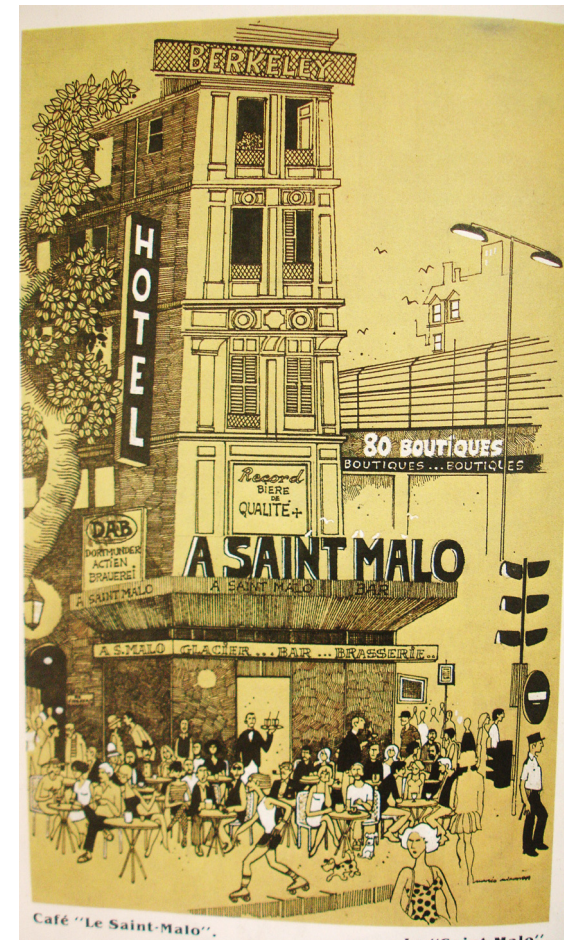
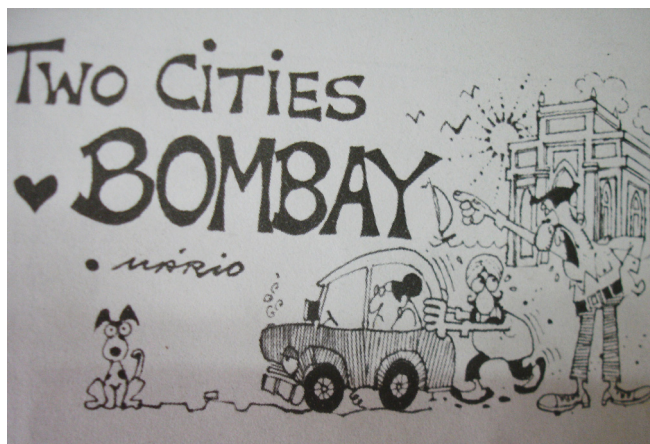
It was mainly funny stories and poems for kids. This was another thing that my parents read out to me.

While Anmol Prakashan's stories were more fantasy and adventure based, these stories were light hearted, humorous and witty. I was reading many stories from both the sources. While reading I felt a little disconnected from the stories of Anmol Prakashan but the other still made me smile, laugh.

Illustrations were my major source of inspiration for both, the style and the story. Mario Miranda, S.D. Phadnis, Pundalic Vaze and some Loksatta illustrations have been my inspiration.

# GATHERING MEMORIES AND INSPIRATIONS:

Illustrations by Mario Miranda.



# GATHERING MEMORIES AND INSPIRATIONS:

Illustrations by S D Phadnis.



# GATHERING MEMORIES AND INSPIRATIONS:

Illustrations from Loaksatta:



## DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT

While sifting through some old stories that I had collected to read, I came across one about a boy who gets his very first pair of shorts with pockets and doesn't want to wear anything else, but those shorts.

He is so excited he wants to put everything in his pockets. He shows off to his friends that he can carry chocolates in his pockets. From his kitchen he takes some food, "Khau," in his pockets, to the ground. After playing, he sat on the ground. Slowly, he realized that a lot of ants were crawling all over his shorts. When he tried to brush them off they started biting him. His priority was to take off his favorite pair of shorts and they were suddenly no longer his favorite.

This story inspired me to come up with a film about a child, inspired by my own childhood incident. I started writing memories from my

childhood, like my relationships with people, my favorite people, my best friends, my sworn enemies, my little sister and anything else that came to mind.

I also asked my parents to tell me more about my childhood so that I could use some of those instances as a base for my story. While doing so I was told that when I was a child, unlike other kids I refused to wear a rain coat I had an umbrella of my own and I would carry it everywhere I went. My parents had those traditional non-folding umbrellas and I liked to copy them.

This incident grew on me and I thought about using an umbrella as the protagonist for my film. This is why I came up with a lot of ideas and plots with either the umbrella or the child as the protagonist. In some, the umbrella was old, in others proud, in some others friendly. While writing a story I also had to consider its

application as an animation film. I had to analyze the character design and behavior of the umbrella to suit an animation film.

My final story had a grandfather, an umbrella and a little kid living in the heart of Mumbai. The boy belongs to a city and its a take on the monsoon season. I have used similar sort of environment that I had grown up in which was a middle class Marathi family in a very humble apartment in Mumbai. I have tried to bring out my roots and my influences while making this story, with the help of illustrations I have used, the treatment I have given and the music that I have used.

## DEVELOPING THE STORY

### Stage 1

#### *THE BOY AND HIS UMBRELLA*

In a small chawl of Mumbai lived a little boy named Chotu. One day his grandfather from a small town/village comes to visit their house.

He looks at the big black umbrella his grandfather is carrying with him and falls in love with it. He just can't wait to use the umbrella and flaunt it in front of his friends. Looking at the kids fascinations for the umbrella, the grandfather gifts it to him and leaves for home.

This made the umbrella very mad. He felt cheated and abandoned. He had been a faithful companion for 20 years.

The umbrella was also very old and tired and he simply disliked the enthusiasm the young

kid was showing. The kid was so excited to get the umbrella, though he was only half as tall as his brand new umbrella he would carry it everywhere, dance with it, play with it, sleep with it and eat with it.

It was so big for him to handle, so he would keep tripping, falling, bumping into things and the umbrella disliked him more and more. So the umbrella decided trouble back the kid by not cooperating. One day it began to rain and Chotu ran outside his house to use his beloved umbrella.

But the umbrella was in no mood to work. So the umbrella decided to be mean to the kid. The umbrella thought that if the kid gets drenched in the rain the kid would never take him outside and he can peacefully rest in the house. So the umbrella did not open when

Chotu took him out in the rain. Chotu struggled and struggled to open the umbrella but nothing worked. His friends who had gathered around to see his new umbrella started to laugh at him. This made Chotu very sad and he started sobbing.

The umbrella was watching all this and felt very guilty and selfish. After all Chotu has loved him so very dearly. Suddenly the umbrella popped open and this brought back Chotu's spirits. He held his big black umbrella in front of his friends. None of them laughed at him anymore. Chotu very proudly flaunted his umbrella in front of his friends and went back home. That night Chotu kept the umbrella next to his pillow and slept holding it close to him. This made the umbrella realize what a big mistake he had made and he decided to never fail Chotu ever again.

**Obstacles:**

- 1- It was becoming too lengthy. The roles of the characters were not defined.
- 2- The humor used was slapstick.
- 3- The interaction between the characters seemed a little forceful. They were used as props in the story and were not fully exploited.

**Stage 2**

Chotu is an ordinary kid, around 5 years old. He copies everything adults do. The story begins with a scene where Chotu is getting ready and is doing exactly what his father does. When his father combs his hair, Chotu also combs his hair. Chotu buttons his shirt when his father is doing the same. His father picks up an umbrella, puts on his chappals and leaves the house. Chotu also pulls out an umbrella from the bucket kept next to the door, wears his slippers and follows his father.

Both of them are waiting near a bus stand on the wet streets of Mumbai. They see an ST bus approaching them. Chotu's father starts walking towards it. The bus stops in front them and the door pops open.

An old man steps out of the bus, but Chotu is

not interested in his grandfather who has come here to meet them in the city. He is looking at the big black umbrella that his grandfather is carrying. After initial hesitation, the boy runs towards his grandfather but hugs the umbrella instead.

Chotu is back in the house with his grandfather and father. He is so excited by the umbrella, that he starts playing with it in the house. The size of the umbrella amazes him. He tries to lift it, open it, swirl it around and in his excitement he hardly notices the injuries he is causing by hitting and poking people.

His fondness of the umbrella slowly starts irritating his parents. After tolerating him for some more time, they snatch away the umbrella from him and hang it on a hook which he cannot reach. Disappointed, he goes to a

window and sits there, staring outside.

Suddenly it starts raining, the boy gets very excited to see the rains. The first thought that comes to his mind is to use the big umbrella in the rains. He goes to his parents to ask them to give him the umbrella. But the both his parents are still annoyed with him and refuse to do it. The grandfather watches this and feels bad for Chotu. Finally in the afternoon when both his parents are sleeping grandpa calls Chotu to the living room and gives him the umbrella to enjoy the monsoon showers which are still pouring.

Chotu is very excited and goes down stares to play in the rain. As soon as he reaches the bottom and gets ready to open the umbrella he realizes that there is something missing. He looks up and notices that it has stopped rain-

ing. Chotu gets very disappointed. He goes back to his house dragging his feet. Grandpa feels very bad looking at Chotu's sad and disappointed face. He starts to wonder what he can do to cheer Chotu up.

His grandfather comes up with the perfect plan. He goes to Chotu and whispers something in his ear. Chotu is under his umbrella happily jumping in water, sticking his hand out and plying with the water trickling from the umbrella. Chottu looks up to the grandfather. He is holding a bucket in his hand and splashing water on Chotu. They are shown having fun playing in the water but is not rain they are in the bathroom standing under a shower. His grandfather saves the day.

### ***Obstacles:***

1- For a 3 minutes film the first two paragraphs were not very necessary. The idea was to bring out the chemistry between the characters that the initial script lacked.

2- Therefore it was important for me to have only those elements which are absolutely necessary for my storytelling, and that was about a boy, his grandfather and a big umbrella and his struggle to use it in the rain.

3- Hence on second thoughts the initial 2 paras seem like an accessory of the story rather than any essential part without which it seem incomplete.

4- Also instead of including any random funny events I wanted to include those situations

my viewers can relate, have fun while they are watching the film. I realized I had still not reached there.

5- Though overall plot seemed fine I was still not happy the way it looked. Therefore I continued working on the script.

### **Stage 3- Final script:**

The story begins at the small house of a chawl in Mumbai. The story starts with a tap on the door. A small boy peeps out of a room to see who is on the door. He sees there is an old man standing at the door. What holds his interest is the umbrella the man is carrying.

After identifying the man as his grandpa he runs towards him. Grandpa very pleased to see him bends down in an anticipation of hug. But he finds the boy hugging the umbrella instead of him. He bursts out laughing and pats on the boy's head and agrees to give his grandson his faithful old umbrella.

Here in the house rest of the family members join grandfather. They are enjoying hot tea when grandpa looks over at the boy who is

busy playing with the umbrella. He is standing in front of the mirror and giving different poses and admires himself in the mirror. While he is doing all this outside it starts raining.

This excites the boy and without wasting any time he runs outside to play with his umbrella in the rains. But by the time he goes outside in the open, all he gets is a bright sun and the last few drops of the rain. Disappointed he returns to the house.

Now the boy is waiting for the next rain to come. Some days pass. One day dark thick clouds spread in the sky promising a nice long rain for the boy to play with his umbrella. Finally it starts raining and it's rather heavy rains. But the boy is so excited to see it raining again without any other thought in mind; he picks up his umbrella and runs down stairs.

This time he doesn't miss the rain and therefore he runs very fast. He is running so fast that he hardly notices anything that lies ahead of him. By the time he realizes it's too late. He is in so much of a speed he finds it difficult to stop and the wet and slippery floor beneath only spoils the situation even more. Unable to stop the boy loses his balance and falls off the last few stairs of the building right on the road. But instead of getting hurt he simply finds himself in the midst of water.

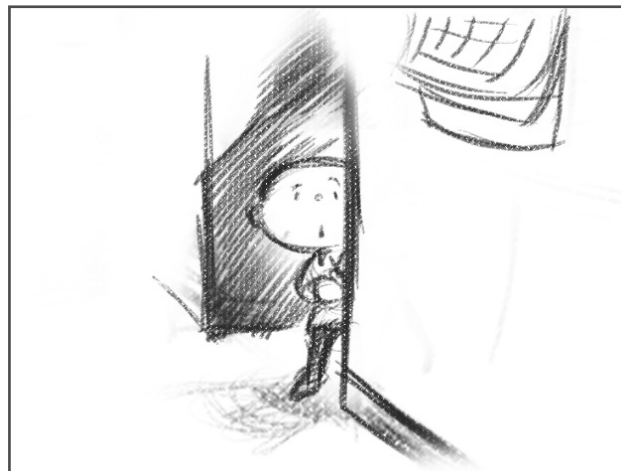
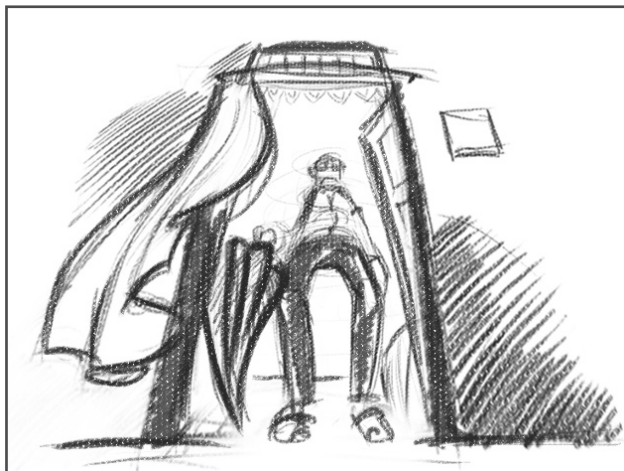
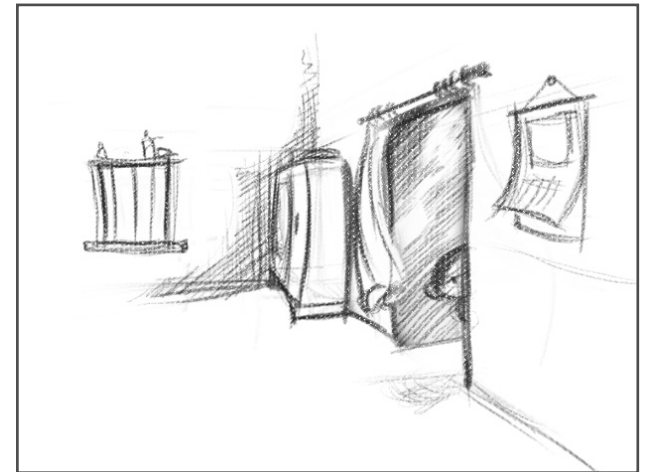
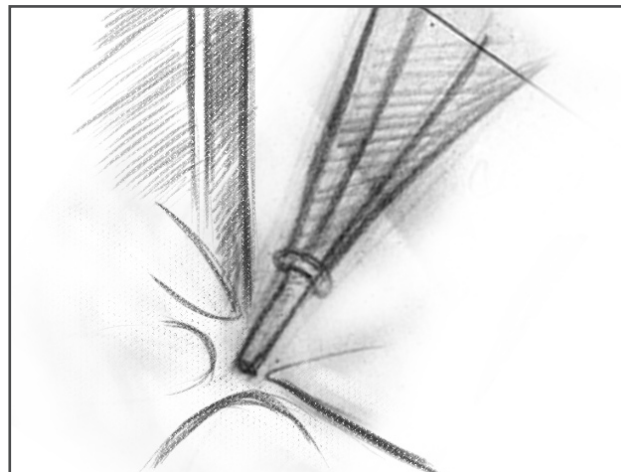
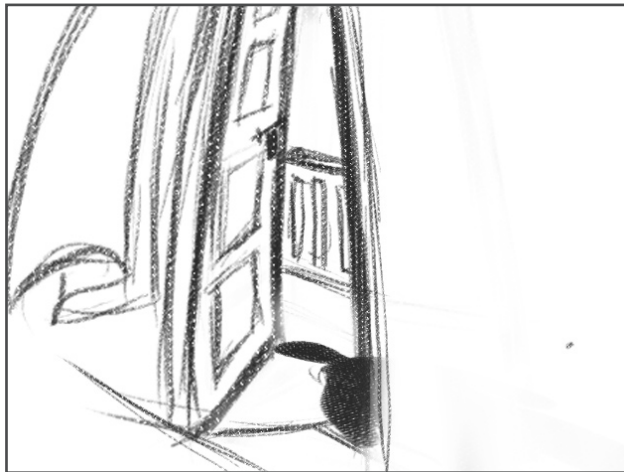
With a shudder he climbs back out of the water and looks around in horror. There is rain water flooded everywhere. After realizing that this rain is also not suitable for him to play he returns to his house with a very disappointed heart.

His grandpa sees him all soaked with a sad face

and barely dragging his feet in the house. He knew how much his grandson wanted to play in the rains so he decided to plan something that would cheer him up. He goes to his grandson and whispers something in his ear.

The boy is under his umbrella happily jumping in water, sticking his hand out and playing with the water trickling from the umbrella. The boy looks up to the grandfather. He is holding a bucket in his hand and splashing water on the boy. They are shown having fun playing in the water but instead of rain they are in the bathroom standing under a shower. His grandfather saves the day.

# STORY BOARD



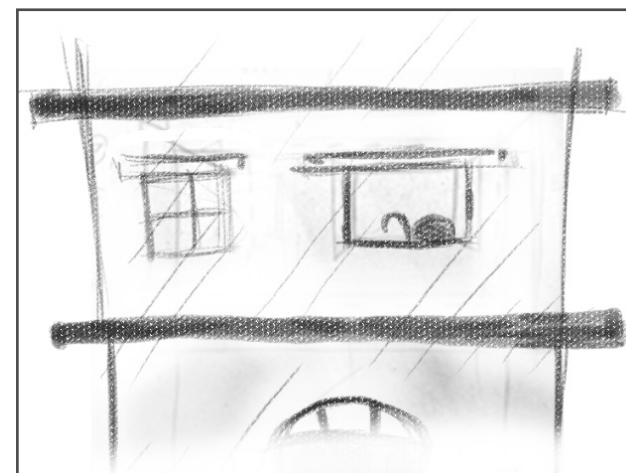
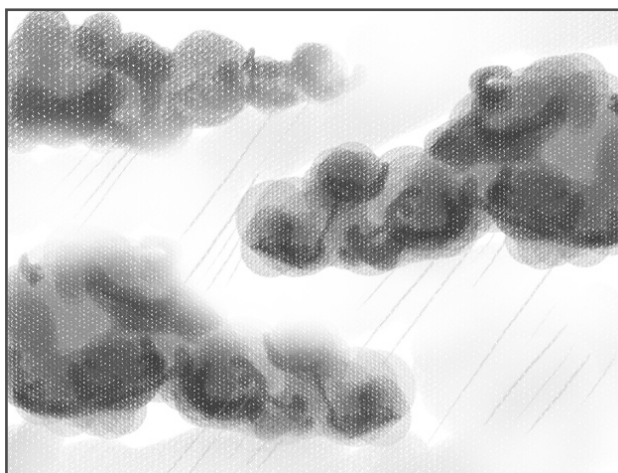
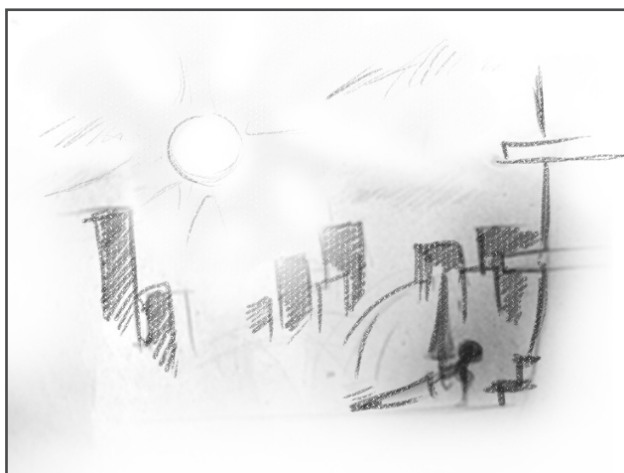
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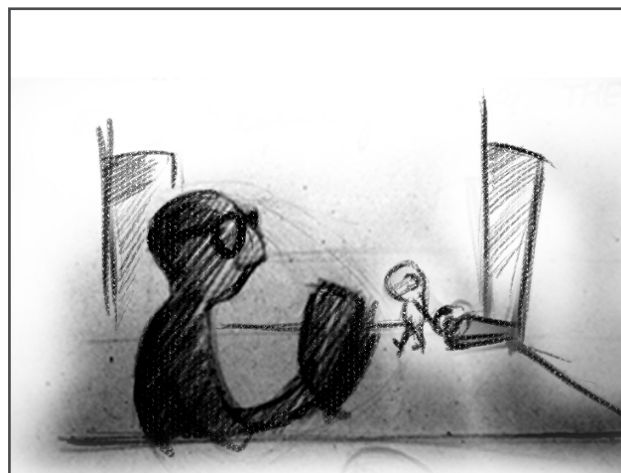
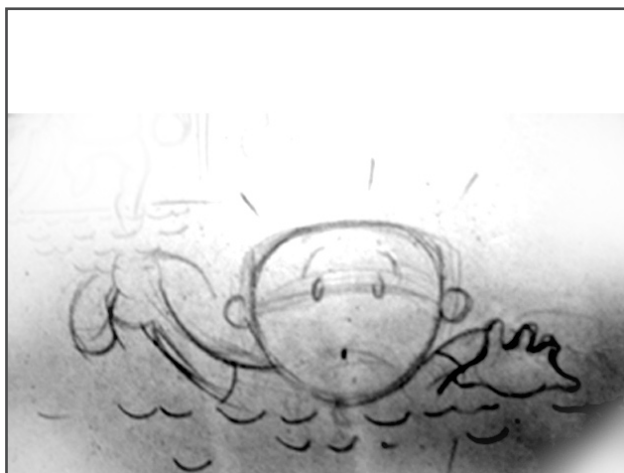
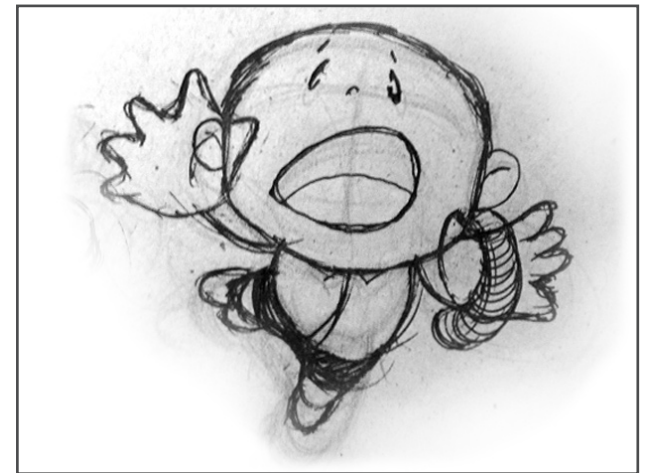
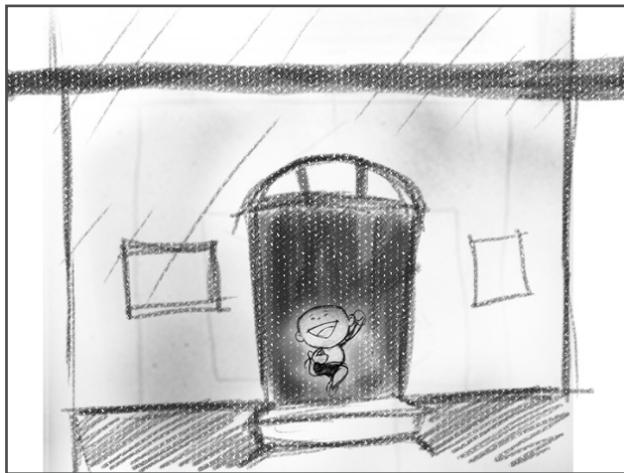
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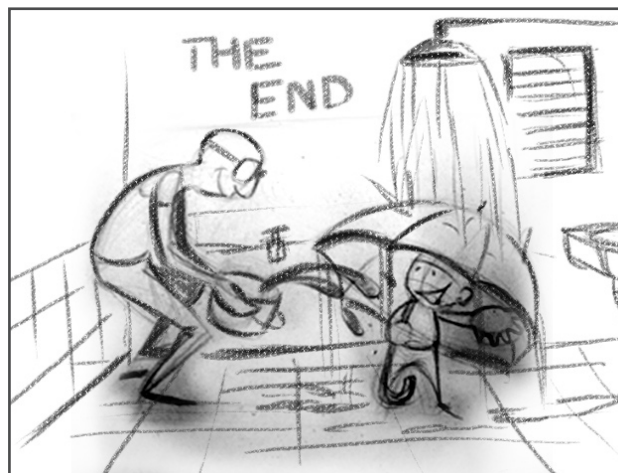
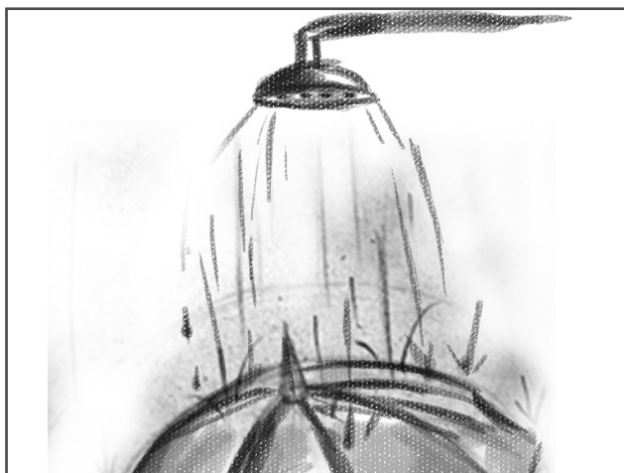
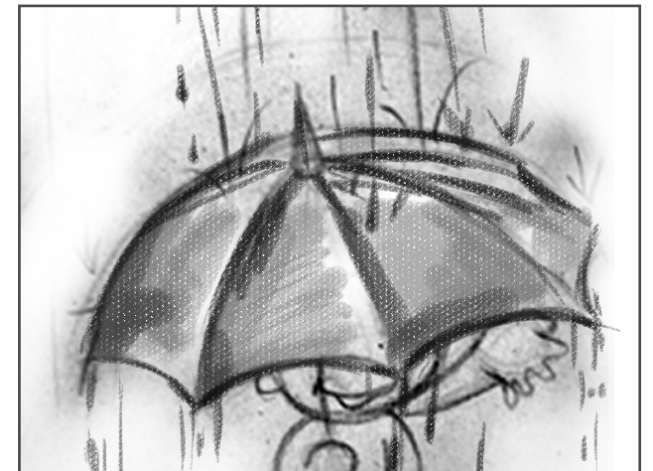
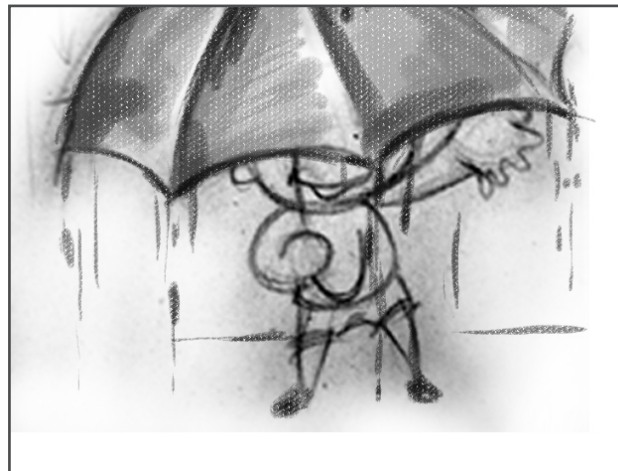
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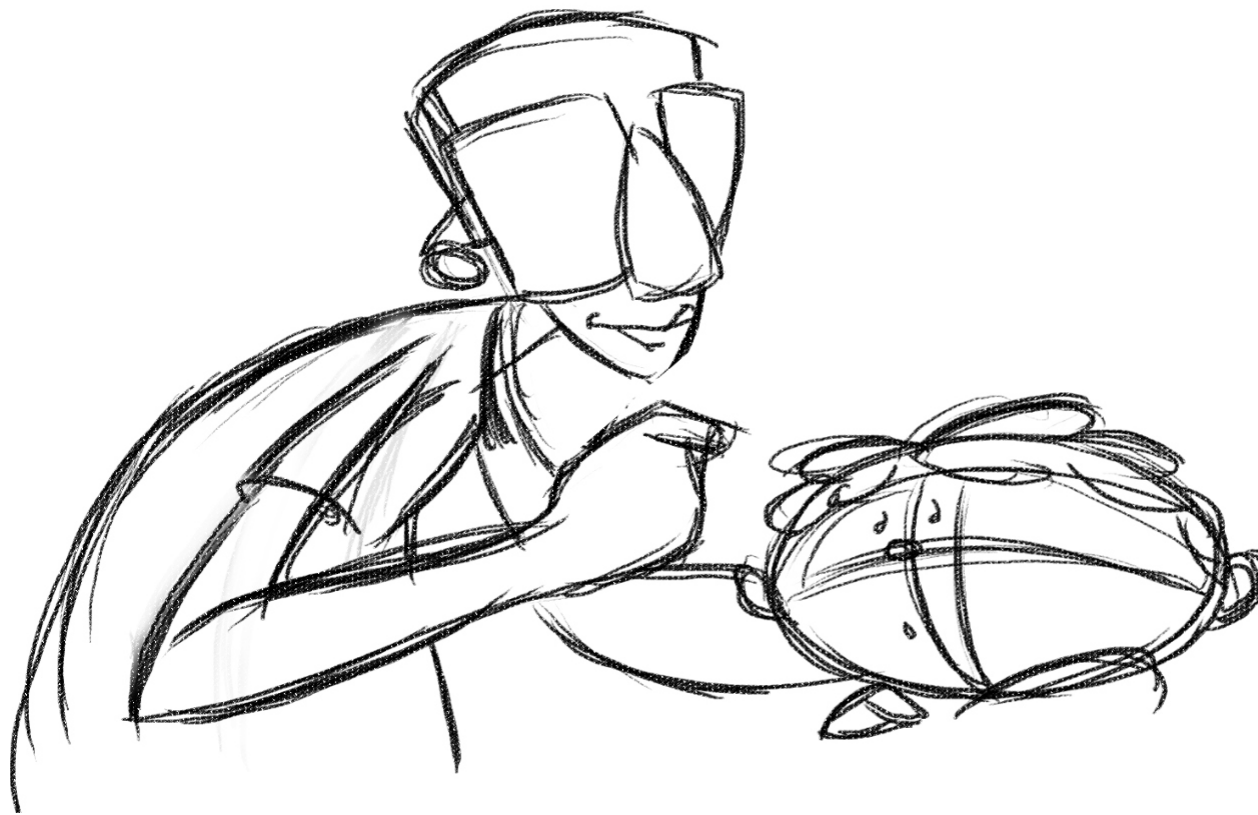


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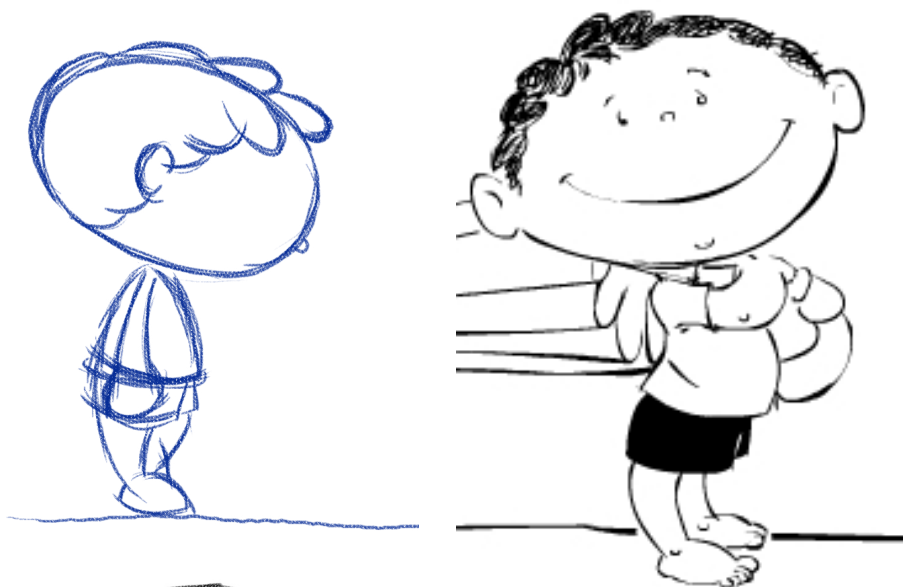


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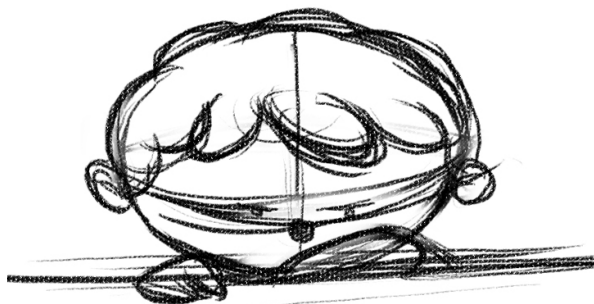
## CHARACTER DESIGN



It is simplified with exaggerated body proportions. To maintain consistency with the illustration style, I have chosen to make a black and white film. I have used thick and thin lines to resemble the strokes of a krusvil nib. I have taken some photographic reference of my family members while designing the characters.

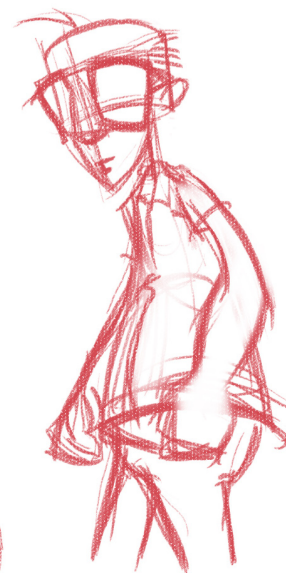


The Boy





**The Grandfather.**

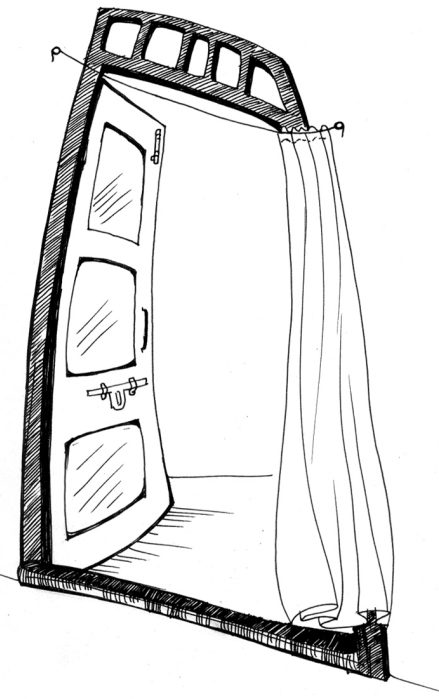


## BACKGROUND AND TREATMENTS

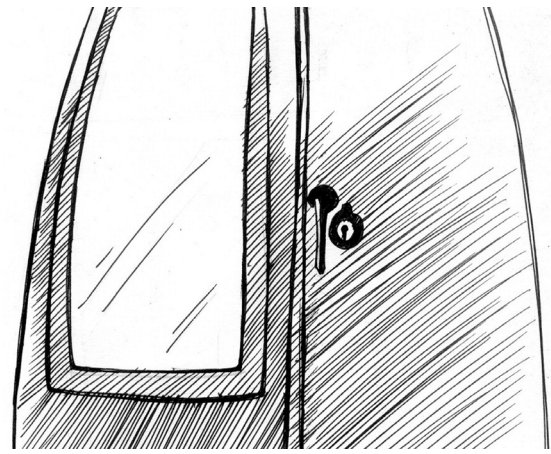
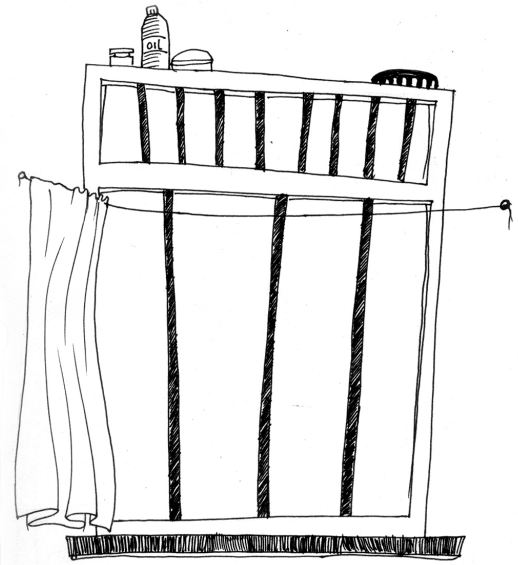
**T**raditional editorial illustration which I remember from newspapers and magazines always inspired me. I always enjoy going through them in my free time. However, they are fast disappearing. Hence, I was always keen on incorporating this style in my work. As soon as I finalized my topic for the film, I decided to use this style since it was best suited for the topic. Fortunately for me, it also happens to be something that I hold very close to my heart. I have tried to bring out a nostalgic feel through my film, since my film revolves around a kid and his experiences which could remind anyone of their childhood.

# BACKGROUND INSPIRATION





# BACKGROUNDS



## SOUND DESIGN

In keeping with the minimalistic feel of the animation, I wanted to keep the background music simple and cyclic so as to avoid any interference with the flow of the film. I have avoided the use of sound effects to the greatest extent possible.

The music is designed to make the audience feel nostalgic, to transport them back 40 years, into the era of black and white illustrated books. Considering the Indian, and specifically, Mumbai based story the instruments are also mainly Indian. The music in my film is an instrumental version of the Marathi song, "Ye re ye re pausa." The same tune is repeated with different tempos to reflect different emotions.

## LEARNING EXPERIENCE

This was a great learning experience for me. Through this process I got to know about many factors that go in making a film which I could not recognize as a film viewer and appreciator. every step in the precess was addition to my knowledge, experience and understanding about film and animation medium.

Along with immense research and hard work, making a film needs a lot of patience, faith and equal amount of commitment till the very last minute of the film.

“You have to really love your film for others to love it”

***Thankyou!***