

# अगम्य

Agamya

A SHORT ANIMATION FILM

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M.DES (ANIMATION)


IDC, IIT BOMBAY

## APPROVAL SHEET

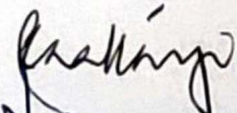
The Animation Project 3 entitled "Agamyā" under the theme "Ajanta" by Tanushree Paul is approved in partial fulfilment of the Master's Degree in Animation and Film Design.

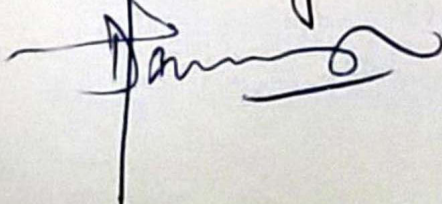
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## DECLARATION

I Tanushree Paul hereby declare that the written submission represents my ideas and have adequately cited and referenced the original sources wherever they have been used. I have not fabricated or falsified any data or sources 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 permissions has not been taken when needed. My project report entitled "**Agamy**a" is an original and honest work done by me for my Project 3 at IDC, IIT Bombay, 2014.

Signature



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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I owe my sincere gratitude to my dear friends who had always encouraged me and had been ever helpful. I would like to dedicate this project to my parents to provide me the moral support to achieve my goals.

## ABSTRACT

The presence of Buddha is in oneself, Buddha is the environment, he rises and subsides in every being. ***Agamyā*** is a story which revolves around the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Ajanta, when the heritage was lost from the eye of general mass and was spending its days in exile, preserved by the forest. ***Agamyā*** is a journey of a man who while chasing his prey (his desire) gets trapped in the ancient cave. Here two time periods are walking on the same plane to attain what is inaccessible, the stories of lost heritage and the lost wisdom and conscious.

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# IDEATION

## *AGAMYA (अगम्य)*

Ajanta being one of the oldest preserved sites of India, represents the early state of Art and Architecture, it is also a good source of anthropologic and ethnographic studies. The information stored in these caves can mesmerise common man other than archaeologists and researchers. But the point is, whether the monastery which was used to serve people centuries ago, can be that important and effective years later?

While starting the research, I initially had a basic understanding about the development of Indian pictorial arts, which covers the aesthetics and origin of Indian form. The paintings, undoubtedly portrays the best of the bygone era, but why would a layman be interested in these caves. Hence, I started focusing on the substructure of its creation, which was in the preaching of Buddhism.

Mostly, the stories painted in the walls of Ajanta are graphic representations of Jataka tales, which deals with the former births and life experiences of Buddha, before his enlightenment. Buddha believed that SAMSARA, the cause of our active consciousness, paddles the cycle of existence, which in-return endows us with infinite sufferings.

The second most important aspect of coming close to the paintings, is to know how to read the visual information. When I visited the caves, I already knew about the stories being depicted, but the graphic information was scattered. Soon after I read a research paper written by Ms.Vidya Dehejia, which covers her studies of the style of narratives being used by the artists in Cave 17 of Ajanta, it helped and guided me to make the connections between the stories. Thereafter, I focused my research on Cave 17 and build upon my story.

I came across John Smith's discovery of Ajanta while I was hunting for my own story. Major John Smith has been credited for rediscovering Ajanta. His accounts of visiting the beautiful labyrinthine cave is very nostalgic. I took a reference of his accounts and accidents which led to Ajanta and planned my own story surrounding a local tribe who resides near the caves.

**AGAMYA** the title of my story, means inaccessible. , which stands in regards to the caves, which were not accessible for many centuries and also for the conscious soul which remains inaccessible to the human beings. Buddhism states that the three poisons - ignorance, attachment, and aversion are the primary causes that keep sentient beings trapped in Samsara leading to the creation of karma, which further leads to rebirth and a non-terminating cycle of sufferings.

Through my story I have tried to draw a connection between two realities, one which is evidently history (of Ajanta) and one being lived by the protagonist, who is trapped in Appekhitta (Desire), but lastly concurs with the noble house of enlightenment with the Buddha and Ajanta.



# DATA COLLECTION

## THE HISTORY OF AJANTA

Ajanta is situated in the Sahayadri hills, about 99 kms, from Aurangabad in the state of Maharashtra. Ajanta is the home to rock cut Buddhist caves, which served as monasteries from 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. to 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., under various kingdoms. Primarily, Ajanta is known for the unique Architecture , occupied with the majestic paintings and sculptures of the bygone era. Here for the Buddhist monks, the artisans built Chaityas (chapels) for prayer and Viharas (monasteries) where they lived and taught. Many of the caves have the most exquisite detailed carvings and magnificent paintings on the walls, pillars and entrances.

The works in these caves provide a panorama of life in ancient India and are a source of all kinds of information. They reflect the political and social development of Central and Western India. It was from this collection of classical Indian art that a particular style was formed that travelled with Buddhism to many parts of the world, was later rediscovered under the Bengal Art School.

The paintings and sculptures provide a practical example of canon of Indian Arts, mentioned under Chitrasutra of Vishnu-dharmottar puran, which documents the principles and guidelines for an artist to create an image.

The caves were constructed over a period of thousand years, started under the patronage of Satvahana rulers in 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. during Thervada Buddhism (also known as Hinyana period) and were carried further by Vakatakas after a pause of 400 years. The later stage of the development was carried by the followers of Mahayana Buddhism, often remarked as the Golden period of Ajanta.

## THE CAVE 17 OF AJANTA

The Cave 17 of Ajanta, a Vihara cave (Monastery) was patronized by a Rishika prince, who was a feudatory of the famous Vakataka King Harisena.

<sup>1</sup> His inscription tells us that he made 'this jewel of a monolithic temple, which is majestic and contains within a shrine to the muniraj (Buddha)', that he constructed it 'when Harisena was ruling', and that he made this 'incomparable shrine, expending profusely upon it, such that the poor cannot even grasp in imagination'. ***(Gupte and Mahajan, 1962)***

Most of the paintings in this cave are still preserved and hence provides great deal of information about the subjects, contents, patrons, artists and about the era. This cave is also home to many famous Jatakas namely:

Vessantara Jataka \* Simhala – Advana \* Sibi Jataka

Chaddanta Jataka \* Hamsa Jataka \* Sudasa Sutasoma \* Syama Jataka

Nigrodhamiga Jataka \* Ruru Jataka \* Nalagiri Jataka \* Mahakapi-1 Jataka \* Mahakapi-2 Jataka

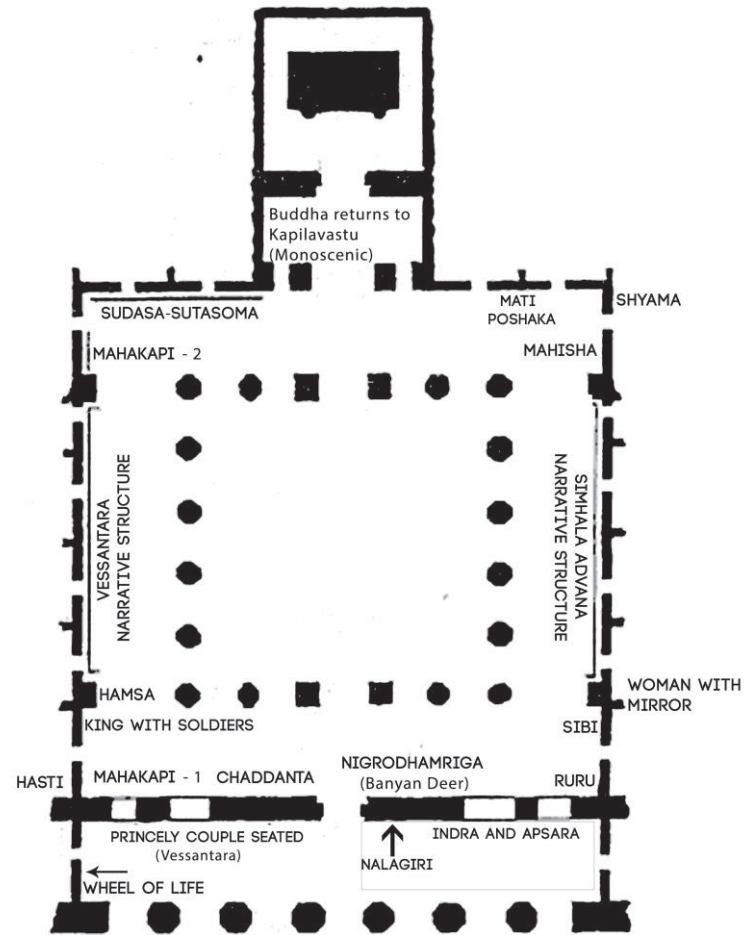
Mahisha Jataka \* Hasti Jataka \* Matriposhaka Jataka \* Kinnara- Kinnari \* Return of Buddha

### **Paintings on individual subjects**

Wheel of Life \* Indra with Nymphs \* Musicians & Dancers \* Apsara \* Woman with a mirror

<sup>1</sup> *Dahejia, V. (n.d.). Retrieved from On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art.*

## A PLAN OF CAVE 17 WITH THE LOCATION OF NARRATIVES



Plan of Ajanta Cave 17 cited from *On modes of Visual Narratives* by Vidya Dehejia and locations of paintings from other external studies

## The Stories of Ajanta – *Jataka*

The Jatakas are the stories and parables which communicate the previous lives of Buddha, as Bodhisatva. It is said that Buddha, before taking birth as the awakened one, was born on earth several times, as every living being possible from a deer, swan, snake, King, destitute and to many more. Jataka stories are considered as the religious literature because of the morals and preaching of Buddha.

*According to E.B. Cowell, noted Sanskrit professor and Historian,* The Jātakas themselves are interesting as specimens of Buddhist literature; but their foremost interest to us consists in their relation to folk-lore and the light which they often throw on those popular stories which illustrate so vividly the ideas and superstitions of the early times of civilisation. In this respect they possess a special value, although much of their matter is unique to Buddhism embedded with it an unrivalled collection of Folk-lore. They are also full of interest as giving a vivid picture of the social life and customs of ancient India.

According to the different time periods of development of Buddhism, Jataka was also evolving with different ideology and purposes.



<sup>1</sup> Ayyappanikkar. (n.d.). *The theory and practice of the narrative in India*. In Ayyappanikkar, *Indian Narratology* (pp. 1-10)

## THE THERAVADA JATAKA TALES

The oldest and largest collection of Jataka Tales is in the Pali canon.<sup>1</sup> They are found in the Sutta-pitaka ("basket of sutras") part of the canon, in a section called the Khuddaka Nikaya, and they are presented there as the record of the Buddha's past lives. Some alternative versions of the same stories are scattered about in other parts of the Pali Canon.

The overall purpose of the Pali Jatakas is to show how the Buddha lived many lives with the goal of realizing enlightenment. The Buddha was born and reborn in the forms of humans, animals, and superhuman beings, but he made a great effort to reach his goal.

The caves 8, 12, 13, 15A (viharas), 9 and 10 date back to the 2nd cen. BCE to the 2nd cen, which belong to the Thervada or Hinayan Buddhism. Here representation of Buddha is symbolic, here he was symbolised by the stupa, Bodhi tree, foot print or wheel of the Dhamma.



Cave 10: Portion of Sama Jataka, Hinayana phase  
image courtesy :Archaeological Survey of India

<sup>1</sup> <http://buddhism.about.com/od/sacredbuddhisttexts/a/The-Jataka-Tales.htm>

## THE MAHAYANA JATAKA TALES

Mahayana Jataka stories are also called the "*apocrypha*" Jatakas, indicating they come from unknown origins outside the standard collection (the Pali Canon). These stories, usually in Sanskrit, were written over the centuries by many authors.<sup>1</sup> The ***Jatakamala*** ("garland of Jatakas"; also called the ***Bodhisattvavadanamala***) probably was composed in the 3rd or 4th century CE. The ***Jatakamala*** contains 34 Jatakas written by Arya Sura. The stories in the ***Jatakamala*** focus on the perfections, especially those of generosity, morality and patience.

The caves 1, 2, 16, 17 and 26 belong to the Mahayana Buddhism. They were more interested in anthropomorphic Buddha statues influenced by Hellenistic culture. Statues were reminiscent of the teaching of the human dimension in Buddhism. They were not meant for mere worship.



Cave 1: Mahajanak Jataka, mahayan phase image courtesy: intromeditation

<sup>1</sup> <http://buddhism.about.com/od/sacredbuddhisttexts/a/The-Jataka-Tales.htm>

# THE STRUCTURE OF JATAKA STORY

The Jataka stories may be analysed as follows

- <sup>1</sup>Contextuality of the story ( Pacchuppanna – vatthu) the occasion which necessitated the Buddha to narrate the story.
- Narrative of the past (Atita-Vatthu) , which depicts the narrative of the previous life of the Bodhisatva.
- Recitation of the original Jataka verse (Gatha) to accentuate and impart the moral of the story.
- Explanation of the verse (Veyyakarana).
- Identification of the characters of the stories at the time of the narrator ( The Buddha).

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<sup>1</sup>*Diem, N. T. (n.d.). Animals , Buddha nature and Jatakas. The Role of Animals in Indian Buddhism with special reference to the Jatakas, 94 - 156.*

## THE BUDDHIST METAPHYSICS

The material world is seen as *mithya*, an illusion. It is desires and attachments that keep one bound to this ephemeral world. One has to lift the veils of the material world and look beyond to the eternal.

To know Ajanta, It is essential to know the substructure on which the creation was carved, which is within the philosophy and prelude of Buddhism. Accordingly, Buddha identifies the sufferings, the cause of the sufferings and path to the eternal liberation from the pain of life, which he mentions in his first teaching of the four noble truths.

- The first insight of the first teaching of Four Noble truths is **Dukkha**. Life is Dukkha. It has varied synonyms namely suffering, pain, the desire for more even if one has sufficient resource for their living. The desires shall not be quenched. We always crave for more happiness.
- The second truth teaches, the pain of life is caused by **Tanha**. Our attachments and selfish grasping after pleasure.
- The third noble truth asserts that a complete release from attachment and dukkha is possible. The liberation from pain and rebirth.
- The fourth noble truth shows the way of Nirvana, the extinction of the pain of existence, following the Noble eightfold path.

Another main teaching of Buddhist metaphysics is known as the <sup>1</sup>**Three Marks of Existence**.

- **Anicca** : All things are transitory. Nothing lasts.
- **Anatta** : No self or No soul. The entire idea of self is seen as an illusion, which causes immeasurable sufferings. The false idea gives rise to the consequent tendency to try to protect the self or ego and to preserve its interests, which is futile.
- **Dukkha** : All kinds of existence are form of suffering and unsatisfactory.

## SAMSARA: THE WHEEL OF LIFE

*Samsara* which is a synonym of the word life. The "wheel" also happens to be a synonym of *samsara*, as it can also mean "cycle" or "rotation". By *Samsara (bhavachakra)* all existences that are conditioned by: ignorance, suffering and the unexplainable flow of time, often represented by Yama holding the wheel of life. *Nirvana*, on the other hand, represents the world unaffected by negative emotions, which by definition is the nature of true happiness.

**Desire**

**Hatred/Jealousy**

**Ignorance**

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.tamqui.com/buddhaworld/Three marks of existence](http://www.tamqui.com/buddhaworld/Three_marks_of_existence)

## JOHN SMITH'S DISCOVERY OF AJANTA

It was a typical Indian summer afternoon. The heat was almost unbearable. The great striped orange beast that we had been trailing for hours had finally given us a slip. Tired, and desperate to escape the unrelenting heat, I trekked through the forest looking for shelter. Then I saw it. It looked like some sort of cave. As I went closer, I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me. It was a possibility, with the heat, the damn heat! The cave was man-made!! Someone had built a cave in the middle of nowhere. The sight that greeted me when I stepped inside was not something I could describe. As I struggled to take it all in, I noticed the perfect dome of what looked like some sort of crypt. And the pillars! The pillars were painted red and blue and yellow.....delicate motifs and graceful figures....

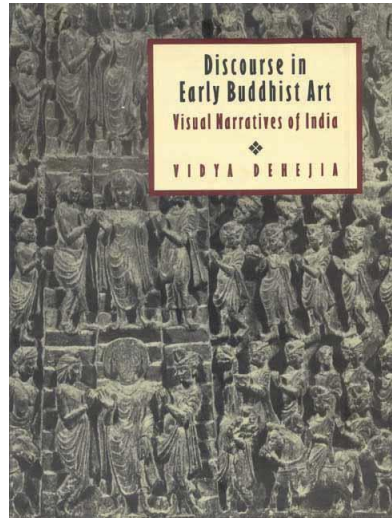
I had never seen anything like this sight before. I was afraid that it would all vanish if I left, that I wouldn't be able to find it again, that no one would believe my story. Without another thought, I took out my knife. When I was finished, the pillar read –John Smith, April 1819, 28<sup>th</sup> cavalry. I heard a sepoy calling me just as I walked out.

<http://areavolume.tumblr.com/post/87084878343/john-smiths-discovery>

The above key statements article initially triggered the base of my story.

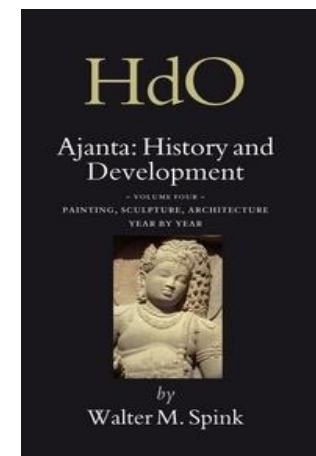
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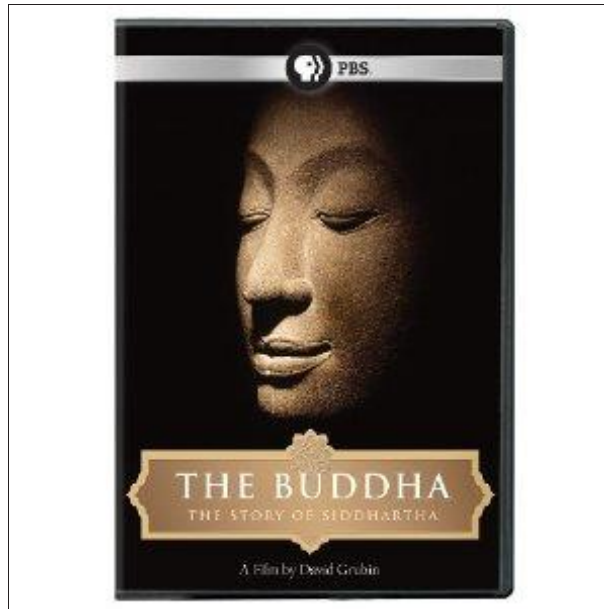
## MEDIA RESOURCES



*Discourse in early Buddhist Art*, a book authored by eminent Art Historian Vidya Dehejia, discusses the various modes of Narration used in Ajanta as well as in different other sites of India, during the commencement of Buddhist Art.

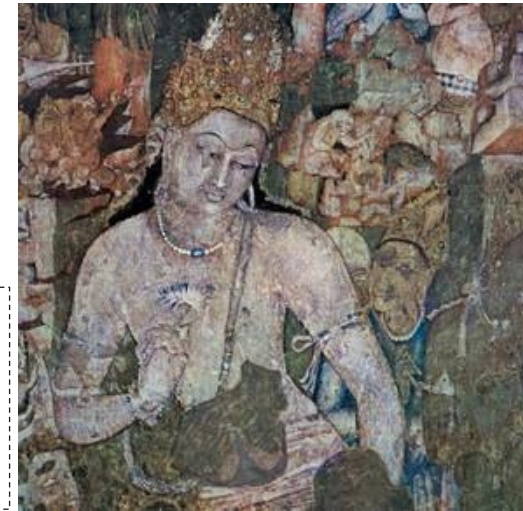
Art Historian and Writer Walter M. Spink's Series on the rise and fall of an Art, Society and Culture following with series of articles and Journals on Ajanta - *Ajanta : History and Development by Walter M. Spink*





A semi Animated Documentary on the life and philosophies of Buddha – ***The Buddha, PBS Documentary***

Eminent Art Historian and Photographer Benoy K. Behl's short documentaries reconstruct the history and explains Development of a Religion and its Art - ***The Story of Buddhism by Benoy K Behl***



# STORY

## **Jars A.** *(The First Draft)*

A man paddling a boat which blows like soft winds in the surface of water. His boat stands still for a while and the man takes a look in the deep water, the water is still, he gazes at his own reflection and suddenly a fish past by. Without waiting much he throws his small net into the water and catches the fish. He opens a jar , out of many jars which already accompanies other fishes, and quickly stores the fish in that Jar. Caps it tightly and starts paddling towards the land.

A fish catcher, who collects fishes to sell it for aquariums, does his day job and heads for his house nearby the river.

It's a unique market full of Jars all around. People sell their products campaigning 50-60% discounts today, buy Happiness. Some sell houses, some sell land, some fate and some sell time, stored in these Jars. Bhikhu, the fisherman sells fishes in the respective market. He who is famous for his vast collection of varied fishes, with his trade expansion exorbitantly desires for more.

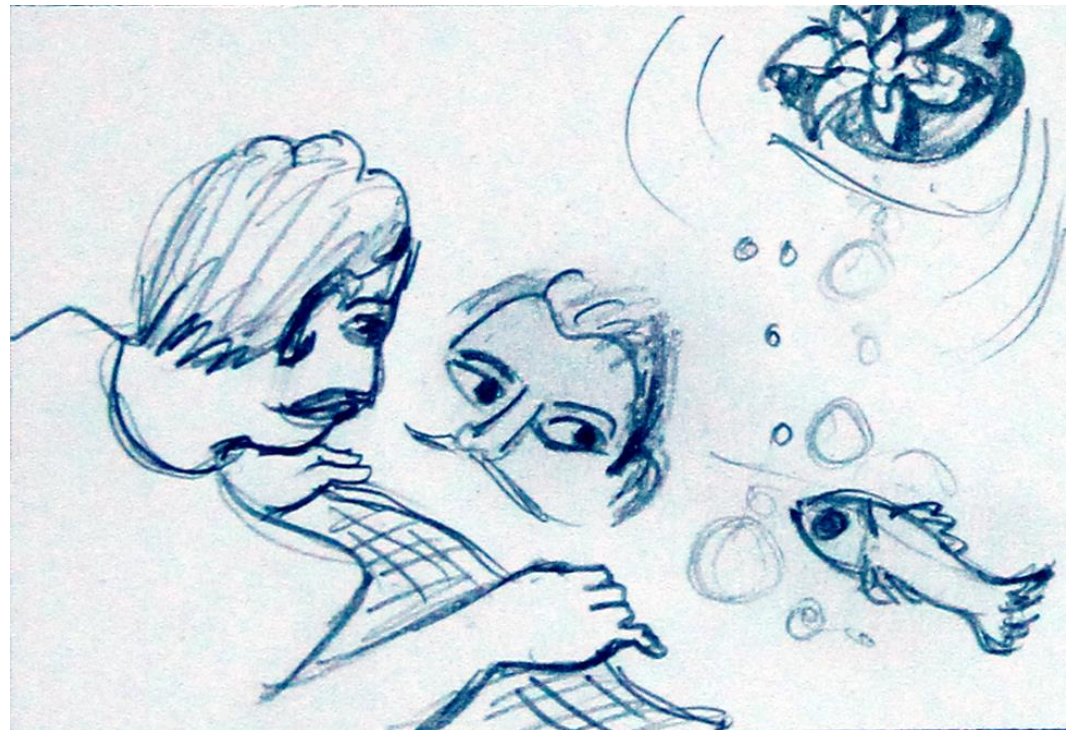
Bhikhu had this belief, that whatever he owns is not sufficient for him. To quench his thirst for more he use to spend a lot of time in the river. Once while on his boat , when he was looking inside the water, he saw a strange beam of light flashing within. The moment he saw this, he straightaway jumped into the water with his net.

He finds the resplendent being with radiant scales, such bright and big that it leaves him blind for a moment. He follows the fish to grab it and dives deeper. He finds 2-3 Glow fishes, which tempts him to dive even deeper and finds 10-12 glow fishes, within a second there are dozens of them surrounding him, and he tries to grab all of them, but cant.

The fishes together form a jar and captivate Bhikhu within, who miraculously transforms into a fish. He flounder in fear, lashes his fins, tries to smash the wall, but nothing works. He get tired failing from escape , pauses and pleads for mercy . Meanwhile, a fishhook falls in and he gets hooked to it.... Screaming loudly..... he wakes up ,and finds himself in midst of people pumping water out of his chest.

He wakes up, and stares at the jars still stacked in his boat. One by one he opens up all the jars and flushes the fishes into the river. He feels gloomy initially, but then everything goes well. He feels happy as had never before.

He comes in terms with the desire which he kept enclosed in the jars , are free and so is his soul felt light and burden less. Next day he took all his empty jars in the market and stacked them in his store with a banner showing 100% happiness.



## Jars B.

The hypnotic ring of those celestial anklets , completely occupied the realm of Siddheswar's conscious.

Ta thai thai tat..... ta thai thai tat....

The lovely dancers ,enticing him, throwing mystic smiles and expressions, their gestures subjugating his only left asset that is, his soul. They grow gigantic , laughing diabolically , Siddheshwar gets entrapped between their giant feet which still kept dancing on the thap ..

Ta thai ..tirkita dhuumm .... And he gets squelched

Astonished, he wakes up while his aaram chair is still swinging, with a jar on his lap, stuffed with jewellery. Those golden anklets had some strange similarities with the one he had. He wakes up in his room full of jars, some filled and some half filled with his securities, all the tangible matter that human race desires for - land, buildings, luxury, gems and jewellery , time , which shall never quench the thirst , stored inside those jars.

He quickly places that jar on the nearby table. Quiet sceptical, he picks up another jar, this time buildings stored in them, holds it tightly and tries to look through the glass . For a while , it remains stable but the next moment , he watches few elephants, running towards the buildings and thrashing them to debris ..

.. disgusted and disturbed by the sight again, he moves on to the 3<sup>rd</sup> jar filled with water and goldfishes, which again simultaneously takes him to the journey where few beautiful women transform in ogress ...

shocked with the sight he drops the jar . His heartbeat increases. Each fragment of the broken jar reflects his face, dismantled, while the fishes struggle to gather their last breathe.

Siddheshwar , keeps staring at the pieces for a while , he lifts his head and finds all the jars in the room are reflecting him, as if he himself got trapped in the glass cell, the glasses were piercing him , and he screams in agony, his reflections were suffocating in the jar , so was he urging to escape out of this condition ...

Blackout

A loud scream and everything numb and silent.

The chair swings softly, Siddheshwar is not seen anywhere in the room.

Jars are not stacked anymore in the room. Only the broken pieces are scattered.

But that doesn't intrudes the peace .

A Lotus is kept in the chair where Siddheshwar use to sit , close to a book with a familiar portrait of the lotus bearer .

Ajanta, then and now.



## THE SELECTIONS AND REASONS FOR DISCARDING

I started my first story, keeping in mind, the structure of Jataka. It was loaded with problems like the un-satisfaction of the protagonist, who wants more and the materialist society whom he serves. In the end, he is given a lesson, hence a moral is passed down and the Boddhisatvas are identified as the fishes. While working with this story, I never felt a connection with my subject, most of it was superficial and was only about copying the structure of the fables. But, from the first story I took a symbolic reference of Jars, where all the materialistic desires were captured. I somehow felt that each of us are having an invisible Jar, and we are in quest to fill it up. I took forward the concept to Story 2 , where a man (a representation of humans) is sitting in an unidentified space with all his dear Jars surrounding him. Each of the jar has some element of desire placed within, which eventually converts in some scary evil thing co relating with the paintings of Ajanta. The only way to attain peace is by demolishing or loosing the jars, which happens when the protagonist awakens. In Story 2, I found that only I was ( or the one who know Ajanta) connected to the scenes, symbols and consequences, which was failing my attempt to connect to layman and communicate on subjective front. Perhaps, after a lot of chunking I came up with Agamyia, a story I found connection with and decided to carry forward with the corrections and valuable feedback from my Guide.

### **Story 3- AGAMYA** *(Final story)*

In the midst of a summer afternoon, a poacher roams in the forest to hunt down the tiger he had been searching for long and soon he tracks the tiger near a water body.

On the other end, the big wild cat calmly slurps water, unknown to the presence of the poacher. In a moment he senses danger noticing the un-resting bushes on the other end of the river and runs off to a hill. The poacher finding his prey moving out of his reach starts chasing him, crossing the river , ascending the hill and finally catches a glimpse of his prey heading towards a giant cave like structure. The poacher quietly follows the tiger until the animal dissolves itself in the darkness of the mysterious monument.

The poacher, waits for a while, recollects himself and enters the dark and damp cave with minimal reflecting day light, that one's eye could hardly catch. He keeps his steps carefully, alerting his conscious. He looks around and stops before a painting on a wall, of a Demigod surrounded with graceful women who were seemingly staring at him with their mysterious glares. Meanwhile, a lady amongst them, holding a flute, turns her face towards him and starts playing her instrument.

He couldn't believe this. It appeared as an incomprehensive dream.

Suddenly he catches a glimpse of the tiger who pass by him, and reaches to an another corner of the cave, supported by pillars. The poacher alarmingly raises his bow , to attack the tiger ( in the Background the music of cymbals and flute ascends with his action)but unexpectedly three more women from the adjacent paintings steps down the floor , camouflaging the tiger. (Simhala)

They lift their arms in the air gracefully , moulding and shaping their bodies, dancing with the rhythm of the wind. Their feet rise like ocean waves, crashing onto itself, thrumming each veins of the poacher.

The more the poacher comes close to the dancers, stringing him with this heavenly delight, the more the dancers grow their height and size illusively, till a point where he stands tiny before the giant dancers. Finally, they rise their feet like a high tide only to crush him, and expose their wickedness , but soon he gets rescued by a monkey who eventually jumped out of the painting to save his life. He holds up the poacher and drags him inside the painting.

Appalled by this action the poacher stretches his bow to attack the monkey who saved him, consequently the monkey leaves him alone. Astonished, he crosses the woods and walks towards (an another painting ) a scarce city. Stark, faded portraits of phantom appearance framed within their small windows. As the poacher moves ahead and starts crossing the wall, he feels someone whispering on his ears. The portraits next to him, appear in a gleam one by one and lures him about the missing tiger. Some say “look around right.. No look towards the left .. here it is just in front of you”.

The deluded poacher stretches his bow and starts shooting almost everywhere he can see an illusion of the tiger( Background: hasty playing of cymbals) , left, right, back , almost everywhere, until he finds the actual tiger pass by him and stands next to a giant Buddha.

The impassive tiger stares the poacher, as if he'd accepted to take his arrow on his chest, whereas, the poacher takes out his last arrow and stretches it upon the bow. He concentrates into the eye of his pray, deep within, he stares, and finds his own reflection.

Slowly, he drops his bow and arrow and moves towards the stupa.

Black Out.

----- After few decades -----

An Officer from the British regiment climbs up the same hill following a tiger and enters a cave.

## DERIVATION OF THE STORY

The story has been created in the backdrop of cave 17 of Ajanta, which is a Vihara cave , and I found a large number of narratives painted here are quite popular in Jataka, secondly, a lot of research works had been done on this cave, related to the style of Art and variations in the visual depiction of narratives.

My story revolves around 2 different time and space, but the protagonist is juxtaposing two different periods in a given space, so that I could establish a connection between the fables and the living character.

I've sought the real story of the rediscovery of Ajanta as its base. On April 1819, a British officer visits a forest in Ajanta for hunting, and he traces down a tiger , following him eventually led to the rediscovery of these monuments which were lost in time. I've tried to build my story placing it few decades (end of 18<sup>th</sup> Cent.) before the rediscovery by John Smith.

A tribal man from the adjoining village goes on his usual endeavour for hunting where he finds a tiger (placed as an object of desire), whom he follows to the caves, yet undiscovered. He comes in contact with the paintings (esp. cave 17.) which are alive in the walls of the caves and then begins the upheavals in his labyrinthine journey, till he sought refuge in truth and peace, leaving behind his object of desire.

Though the model of narrative network (Narrative Modes in Ajanta caves by Vidya Dahejia) has been one of the favourite way of depicting stories in Ajanta by the Sutrakars (Chief Artists) of Vakataka dynasty.

Features of the narrative network:

1. Interlaced sequences, producing a narrative of labyrinthine complexity.

2. The protagonist is repeated in several scenes
3. No clear depiction of temporal succession and spatial movement, instead it moves across the wall in an unpredictable manner.
4. Within each of these segments of the paintings- right, left and centre - the action moves in crisscross fashion and no specific pattern emerges from the most painstaking study of the painted wall.

I tried to cultivate nearly the same structure into my story. The protagonist (poacher) starts his journey to achieve what he desires, then he gets entrapped in the cave where he is linked to various characters representing their own stories. I incorporated three segments of the cave as well as a journey inside and outside the paintings, creating an uneven space.

The protagonist first experiences the painting in the entrance of the cave, that of Sakya (also known as Indra) the Demigod with other Apsaras and musicians and then this thread joins with a small part of Simhala Advana Jataka (inside the cave) where the ogresses dressed up as beautiful dancers try to seduce the protagonist who is still searching his prey (the Tiger). As the ogresses succeed in charming the hunter they try to kill him (as they did in the Jataka Sinhala), but the enchanted hunter is rescued by the Great Monkey (Mahakapi) who leaps out of the wall painting and drags him into the painting, the poacher awe-struck and unable to identify his generosity, tries to kill him in return<sup>1</sup>. Astonished, from the poacher's act, the monkey leaves him. The poacher heads towards the next painting of Vessantara Jataka. When he crosses the city and gets lured by the people peeping through their windows, who are framed watching the renouncement of Vessantara. Here the characters serve a personal purpose of luring the greedy poacher, rather serving for the real story. They perplex him whispering in his ears and distract him giving an account of the false location of his prey, thus he shoots the illusory perception of the tiger. His arrow

hits other known benevolent characters of Jataka but leaving alone the tiger. The tiger run towards the giant statue of Buddha and stands beside him with no signs of fury or fear in his face .Here, the poacher identifies the real tiger and stretches his bow with the last arrow, but his impassive glare leaves him astound. When the poacher finds his refection in the animal's tranquil eyes, he drops his arms and walks towards the statue and diminishes, hence leaving behind his fantasies and pleasure, he takes his step towards wisdom.

I figured out the actual locations of the paintings in cave 17, so that it becomes easy to lay the foundation of the chain, which builds within the story, hence trying to build my own narrative network from multiple stories etched in the cave.

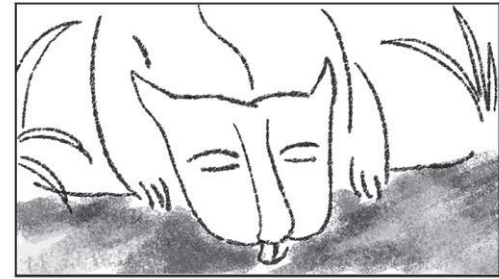
# STORY BOARD

Long before the rediscovery of the famous Ajanta caves, many poachers use to wander around in the forest near the caves, but only few of them were ever successful to step into it, but unfortunate to ever return back. These recurring incidents, put the local tribal communities in quandary.

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This story is one among those many incidents, where in a midst of a summer afternoon a poacher chases its prey and ends up in a labyrinthine journey of self-discovery.....

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A Tiger slurps water in the bank of a river



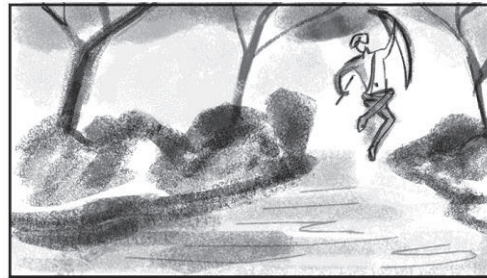
The tiger senses danger noticing the un-resting bushes on the other end of the river



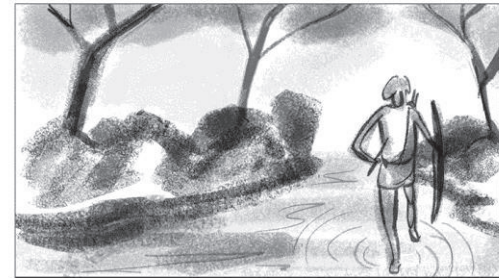
a poacher roams in the forest to hunt down the tiger he had been searching for long and soon he tracks the tiger



Twatful and alert of the coming danger, he whips towards the hill

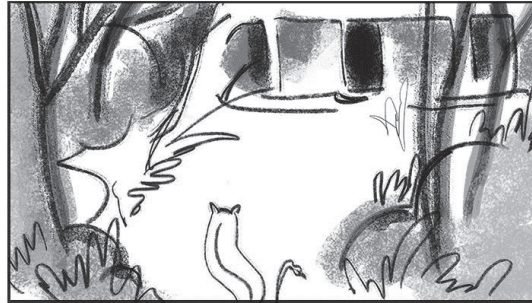


The poacher finding his prey moving out of his reach starts chasing him, crossing the river

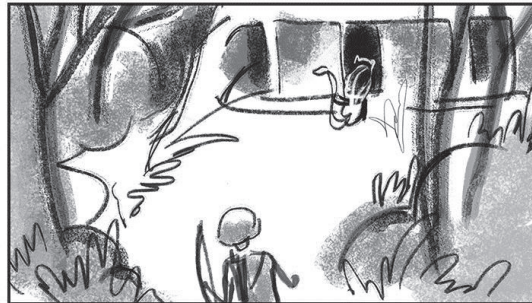




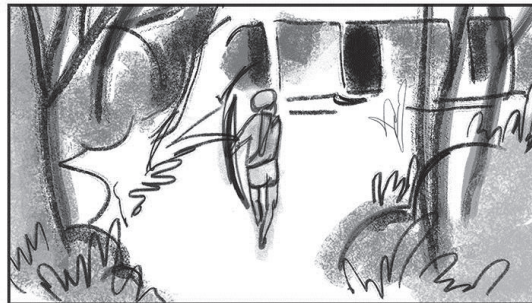
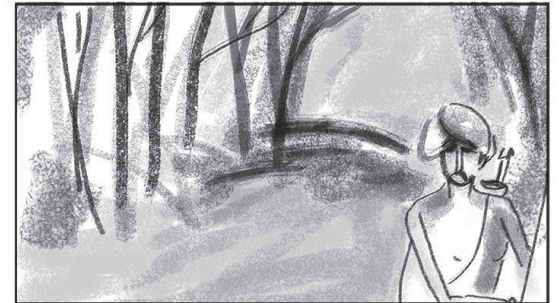
The Tiger runs off to a hill, whereas the poacher starts following him



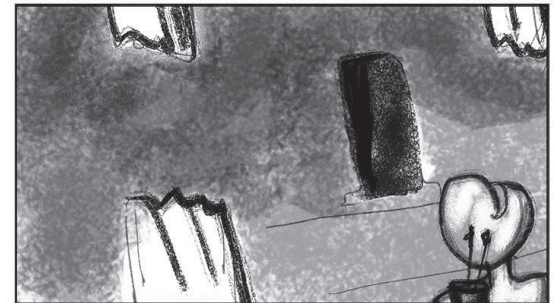
The tiger heads towards a giant abandoned cave

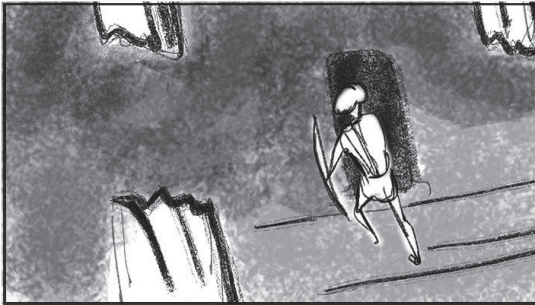


The poacher quietly follows the tiger until the animal dissolves itself in the darkness of the mysterious monument



The awstruck poacher, pauses for a while then starts walking towards the cave

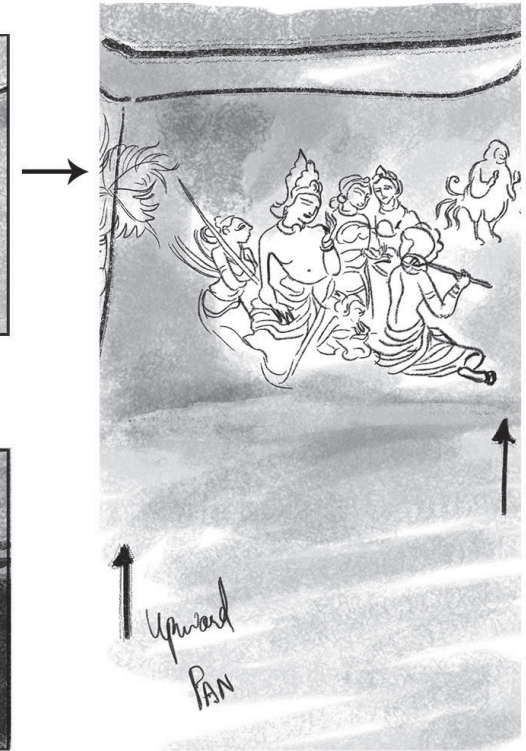




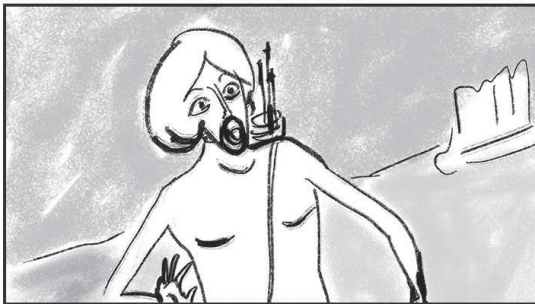
. He keeps his steps carefully, alerting his conscious. He looks around and stops before a painting on a wall



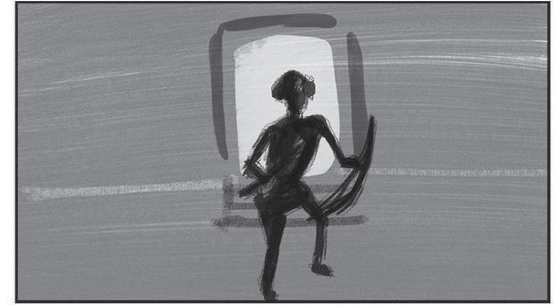
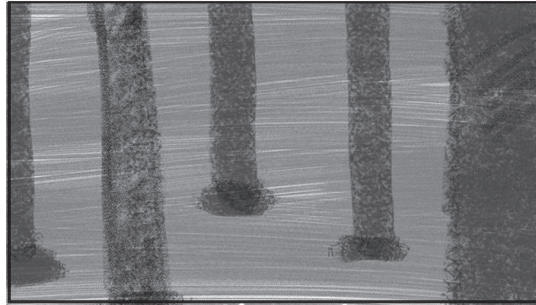
Suddenly, a lady in the composition, holding a flute, turns her face towards him and starts playing her instrument



Demigod surrounded with graceful women, staring with mysterious glares



Surprised and worried, he runs inside the damp and dark cave



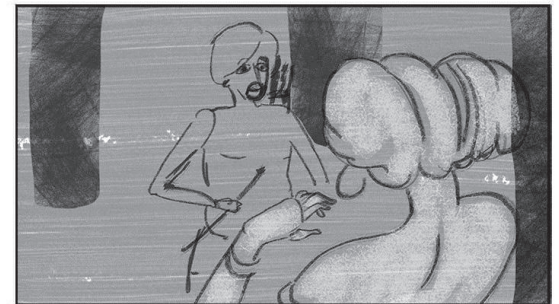
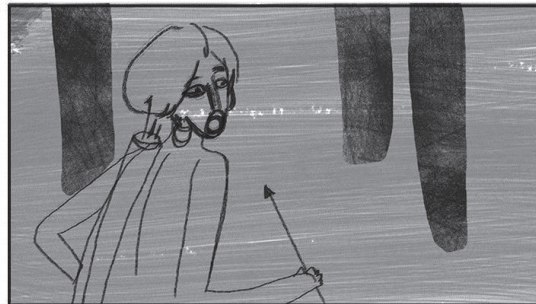
he entered the cave with minimal reflecting day light, that one's eye could hardly catch



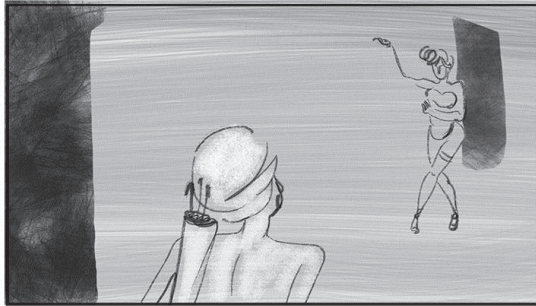
He keeps his steps carefully, alerting his conscious



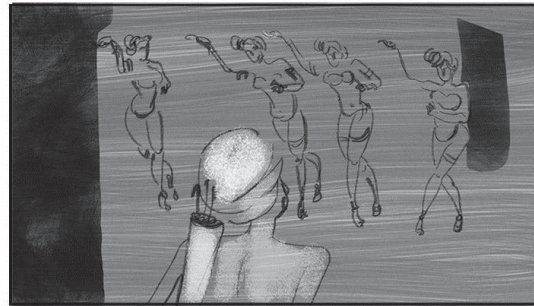
He hears the sound of footsteps, mistaking it for the tiger, but he finds a woman hiding before a pillar



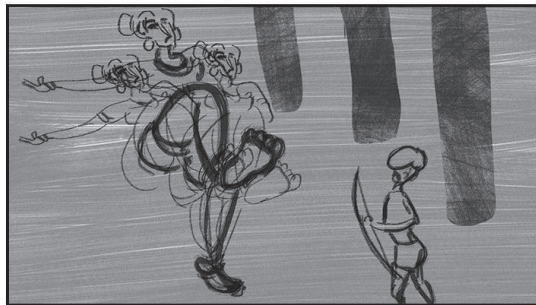
with her beautiful mudras (gestures) of dance she soon entices the poacher



she lifts her arms in the air gracefully , moulding and shaping her body



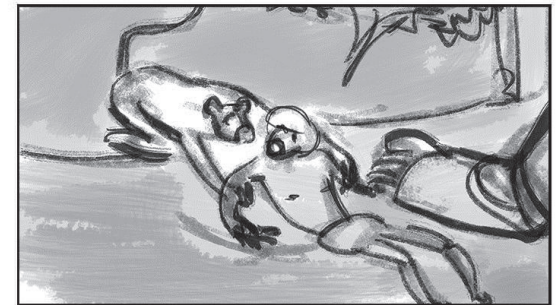
The more the poacher comes near her, the more she grows her size



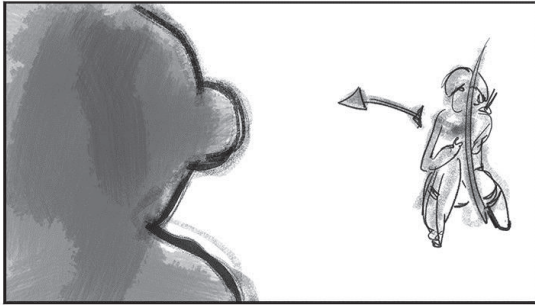
the mesmerized poacher unaware of the evil dancer's intention, sticks to his place



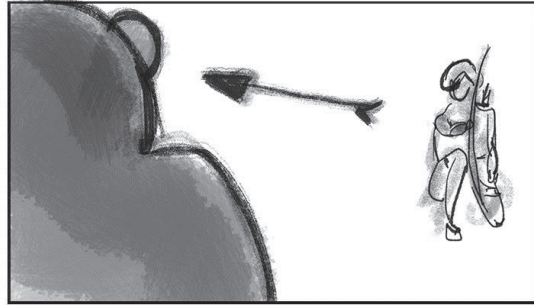
The mahakapi, in the nearby painting, watches all this and jumps out of the painting to drag the poacher inside, saving his life



the horrified poacher , unable to understand the action of Mahakapi, stretches his weapon to kill him



the poacher stretches his weapon to kill Mahakapi



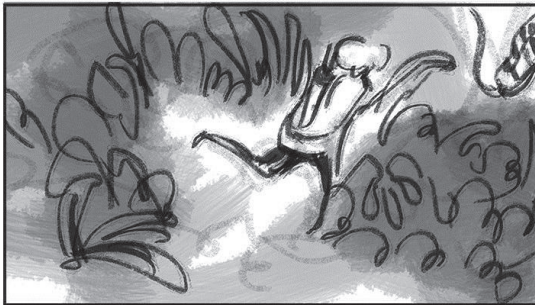
Mahakapi, escapes it by climbing a tree, saving himself



poacher leaves the place and heads on to another painting



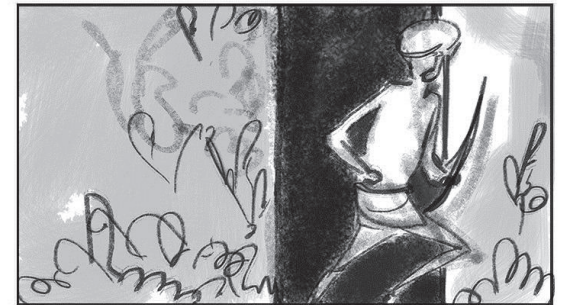
wandering around, he traces back the tiger

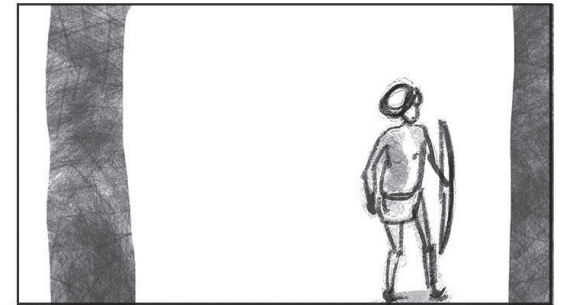
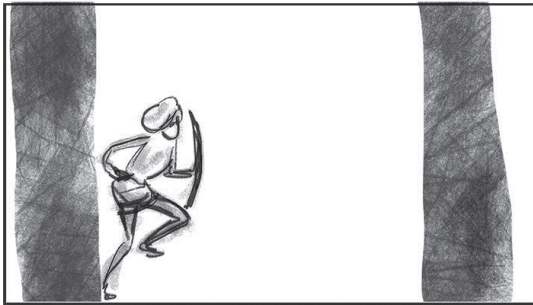


and runs after him

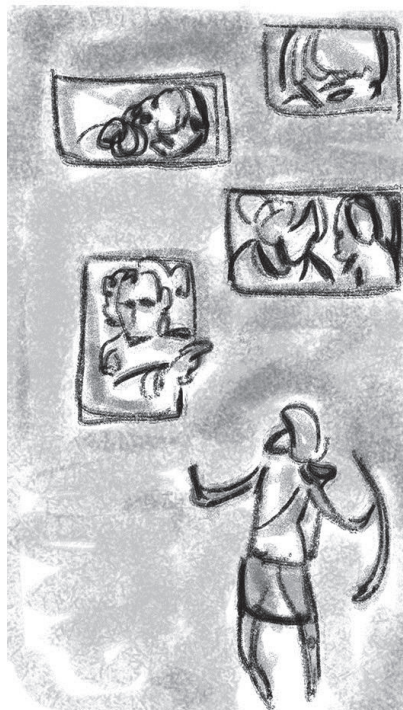


the tiger jumps into a heap of bushes , and comes out of the painting , followed by the poacher





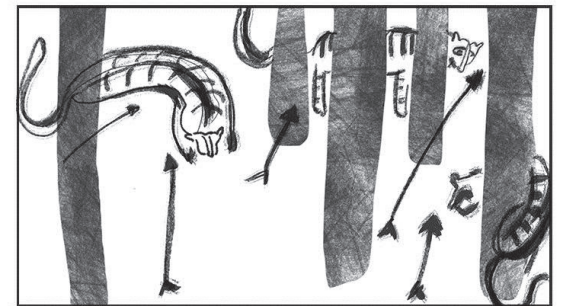
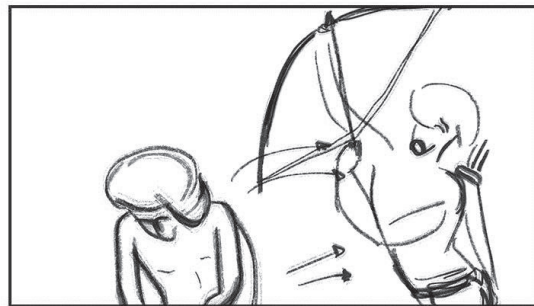
He looks around to search his prey



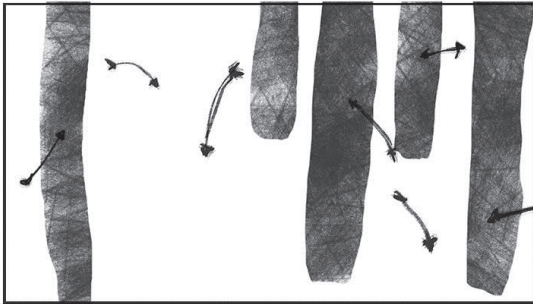
Suddenly he hears some sound of murmurings.....



The people from the paintings behind, distract him by giving directions of his prey, leaving him utterly confused



He stretches his bow and starts shooting wherever he sees illusion of the tiger



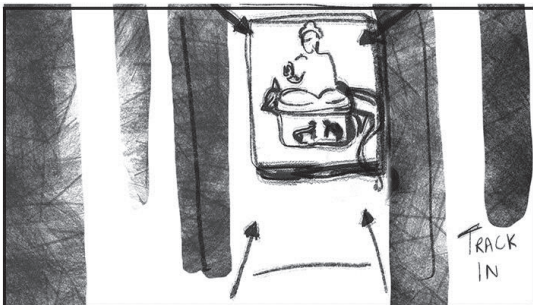
He ends up shooting everywhere



but doesn't really find his prey, he halts for a while



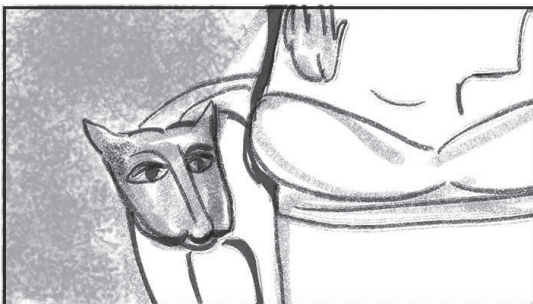
soon the real tiger, passes before him and enters a room adorned with a big statue of buddha



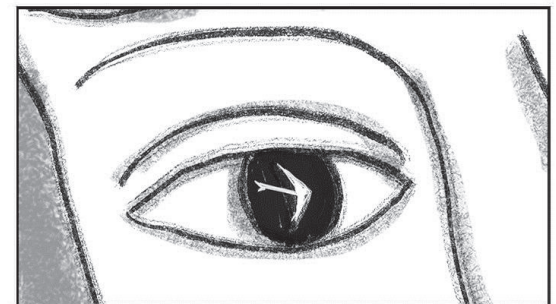
the tiger walks in and stands behind the statue, facing the poacher

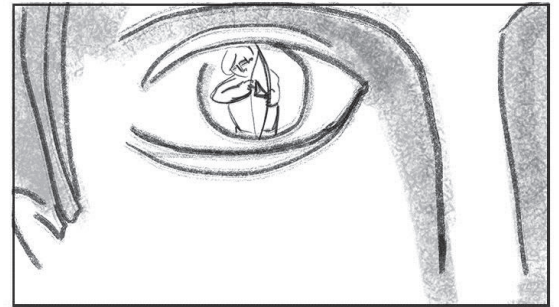


the poacher aims his bow, finding it the perfect opportunity to kill him



He concentrates in his prey and stares in his eyes





he finds a reflection of him ready to shoot the himself- the poacher moves when he observes this darn reality, and merges himself in the pacifying eyes of the tiger



he loosen up his arms



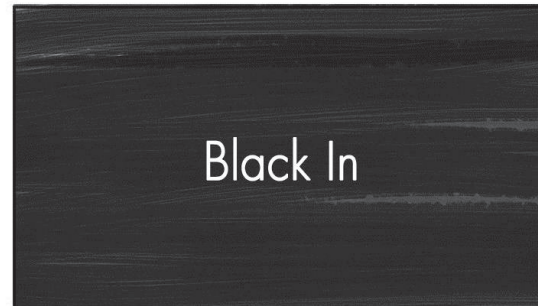
and takes his weapon down



he drops his weapon in the floor



and walks towards the room, sacrificing his will



Black In

Few decades passed

John Smith,  
An army officer from the British regiment was in his usual hunting trip, chasing a tiger in the Waghora Valley.  
In order to defend himself, the tiger rushed inside the caves, and the officer continued to follow him, until he reached the monument, hence which led to the re-discover of Ajanta.

About the missing poacher!!  
He might be still in a journey, in that part of the cave which has not been found yet.



A tiger slurps water in the, in the bank of a river



John smith, aims his gun at the tiger



the tiger, smells the danger, run towards the hill and elopes in the cave

THE END

# CHARACTER EXPLORATIONS

## THE POACHER

The story takes shape in the backdrop of 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The character of the poacher belongs to a local tribal community near Ajanta. Hence, I stucked towards a simple and skinny character, yet robust tribal man, whose only accessories are his arms (Bow and arrow) and a Pagdi(Turban), similar to what Bhils of Maharashtra ornate themselevs in.

## THE TIGER

The Tiger is the part & parcel of the story, who carries the flow. While designing the Tiger, I tried to simplify its features, but added rhythmic flow to its contours, so that it carries a small percent of the beautiful rhythmic line drawings of Ajanta. Overall, it is a character which gives a flavour of folk.

## MAHAKAPI-THE MONKEY

Mahakapi is a boddhisatva, who comes to life from a painting inside the cave. The character follows the same rhythm and feeling as that of the tiger, simple and harmonic rhythm of the contours.

## THE DANCER

The Dancer is a seductress, who charms the poacher with evil intensions. While designing this character I tried to remain close with the real character of Ajanta. Her attire represents the 5<sup>th</sup> century. She assimilates her beautiful gestures with her mischievous glares, to trick the poacher.

## CHARACTER EXPLORATIONS

### POACHER





MAHAKAPI



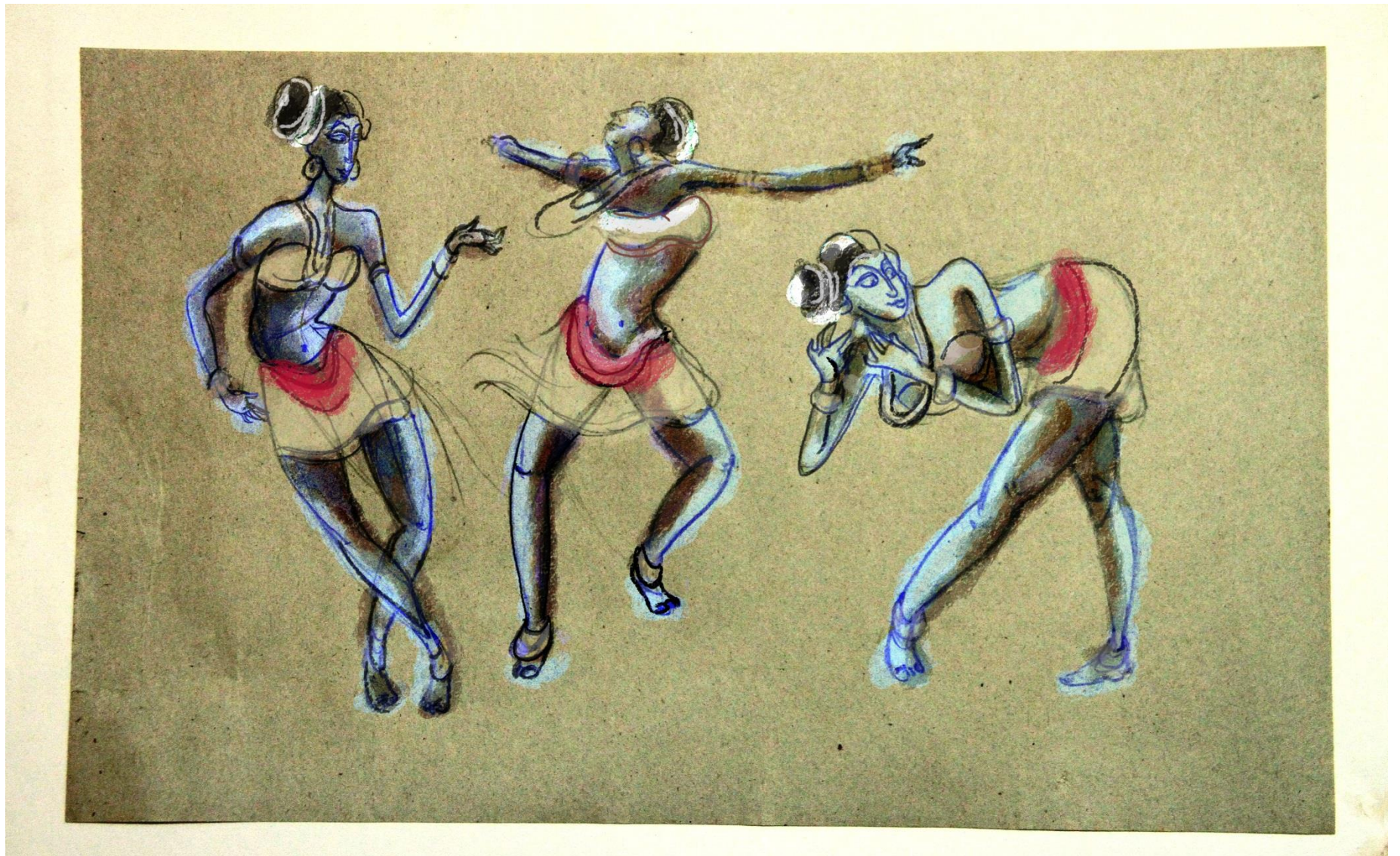


TIGER





DANCER





## TREATMENT



I initially started experimenting with water colours, to match the look and feel of Ajanta. I tried to roughen the contours and deliberately tried to show careless application of colours. The overall look is inspired by Ajanta but the feel is that of the modern Fauvist works, which I tried to bridge between the present and past. I used the news print sheet as my base texture, over which I drew and blend it together with Digital colouring in Photoshop. The animation is carried out through Photoshop. Both being Vector and Raster software provided their pros and cons, but the vivacity and roughness which I wanted in my lines was finally achieved by Photoshop.

## PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE

I started exploring my Characters , Backgrounds and their appearance, parallel to the story. I finished my Story board after completing the concepts and then started out with the Animatic. I worked a lot on the Animatic to get the shots and timing in order, thereafter, animation started.

To start with the animation, I figured out the scenes and shots breakdown, so that it could simplify the process and I got a good understanding of sequences arranged in order. I started completing the shots chronologically.





I executed my Animation , from Drawing to Painting in Photoshop and Artrage and thereafter, composited it in After effects. After compositing, I edited the final shots in Adobe Premiere, to line them in sequence and match them with sound.

## SOUND

I tried having an experimental take in the selection of sound. Though the film doesn't have any narration, I've tried to command the emotions in aural language through traditional and folk musical instruments. The story joints two different time periods for which there were an array of instruments, but I mainly focused on the Indian traditional percussion instruments syncing Pakhawaj with the African percussion Udu . I also experimented with the ektara, mostly used by the tribal communities as there string instrument and merged it with Jew harp to create a balance between the classical and folk.

## CONCLUSION

Ajanta profused a lot of patience in me, which is certain of a heritage been created with utmost sophistication and dedication. There are multiple areas and potential to come up with amazing stories but that vast dimension also causes confusion. Ajanta is structured on Buddhist philosophy, with that it doesn't only highlights the religious context but carries a panorama ranging from Paintings, sculptures, Way of living, clothing , ornaments, politics etc. In my project I marked the possibilities on what subjects I can work with. Miraculously most of the areas I touched were already linked with each other, everything is chained and undergrounded, pivotal of the Buddhist metaphysics.

In those days of blues, and a suggestion from my inner Buddha, I only ponder upon the stories and studies which I already gone through but paid little attention that a story can be built on an existing story and a good theory.

Project 3 was loaded with Trial and error. Most of the stories reached to its final pre- production stage and was halted considering the structure or other loopholes.

Pre- Production, Production and Post-Production, each stages of animation provided a lot of insights into the real time filmmaking. Also understanding Sound had been equal to know the fact that it serves almost 50% of the film.

Moreover, the journey had been amazing working with equally enthusiast people around, with whom we shared every problem and cracked solutions in the process.

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