

"Companion"

Design Project 2

Guide

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Submitted by

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M.Des(Animation and film making)

Industrial Design Centre

Indian Institute of Technology

Declaration Sheet

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.

Signature: 

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Date: 19-11-2013

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Approval Sheet

Animation Design Project 2 titled "Companion" based on the theme of "Stray dogs in India" by Pratigya Beniwal is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirement for M.Des. Degree in Animation & Film Design.

Guide:



Internal Examiner:



External Examiner:



Chairman:



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I would like to express my gratitude towards Prof. Sumant Rao for his constant support and supervision which helped me in refining the project at every single stage. The project evolved and developed only because of his guidance and suggestions.

I extend my whole hearted thanks to Prof. Nina Sabnani, Prof. Phani Tetali, Prof. Shilpa Ranade and Prof. C.P. Narayan for their valuable insights and encouragement during various stage presentations.

I would also like to thank all the people I interviewed, who helped me by giving me time from their busy schedule and helped me better understand the stray dog's problems.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank all my family and friends for their constructive criticism and continued encouragement and moral support.

Abstract

It is a common sight across our streets to find a lot of stray dogs and we have all seen how most of them are constantly struggling to even survive because of several reasons including animal cruelty, road accidents and exposure to hazardous human wastes. We "humans" are on the verge of losing our humanity all because of our desire for more at the cost of others. We have forgotten the very essence of the word "human". One close look at the miserable condition of these stray animals can make anyone realize that kindness and compassion have become extinct in our species.

This project of mine is a small effort to draw the attention of people towards the tragic condition of abandoned and stray dogs. Here I have portrayed a story of a small stray puppy who is initially victimised but is saved by an old man. Since the puppy has already experienced sheer brutality, he is intimidated by the old man as well although he means no harm. By the end, the puppy realises the old man's love for him and therefore tries to comfort him in his own special way to give him some happiness in the solitude that one experiences in old age. All in all it shows that these so called "beasts" and "animals" are actually more humane than us humans and how much capable these "beasts" are of returning the love and compassion.

Introduction

The project deals with the disastrous life of stray dogs in India. These dogs are the victims of animal cruelty and high level of negligence. Overexposure to unhygienic food, garbage and water has led to various rampant and malicious diseases among these strays. Being an owner of a dog I can rightly emphasize their compassion for their masters but one look at the pathetic conditions of these stray dogs makes me shudder and feel depressed to my core. By means of this project I thought of raising my concerns for these stray dogs so that people can actually take a look at what humanity has become and what has been the toll which these poor beings had to pay for our materialism and carelessness.

I felt further motivated to work on this project under the light of an incident that recently occurred here at IIT. 3 new born puppies were found wrapped up in barbed wire in the trash by one of the students. Sadly, he was able to save only one of them and even that one puppy was not adopted for long time because people generally prefer pure breed dogs.

This film focuses on two characters. One is an old man who is kind and is at that point of life where solitude is the only companion one has. The other character is the puppy who is a victim of sheer brutality and abuse. The film stretches between the two emotional extremes of fear and compassion for his master and attempts to show that how these animals are more loving and caring than one could imagine.

Research

Making a movie on a social issue requires lots of research work so that we can get an in-depth knowledge of the situation and take proper steps. For me it was very important to understand everything related to stray dogs. To do my research work I visited many parts of Mumbai and interviewed people from all age groups about their approach towards stray dogs.

During this entire research I came to know many new facts regarding the conditions of stray dogs and I would say that the research was a very crucial part of my project.

'Stray' Animals

'Stray' is a common word given to any domestic animal found wandering without restrictions and human supervision like cows, donkeys, pigs, dogs, cats, monkeys etc. Strays depend on humans for most of their fundamental resources, such as food, even though this may be found indirectly from garbage discarded by humans. Because of this dependence on humans, stray animals are found roaming inside and nearby human settlements.

Several problems caused by stray animals

Stray animals are found in many countries like China, India, Philippines, Romania, Russia etc. and they have become a big problem because:

- They carry diseases that can be passed on to humans and other animals (such as rabies),
- they can cause road accidents,
- harass citizens
- damage property and
- pollute our environment.



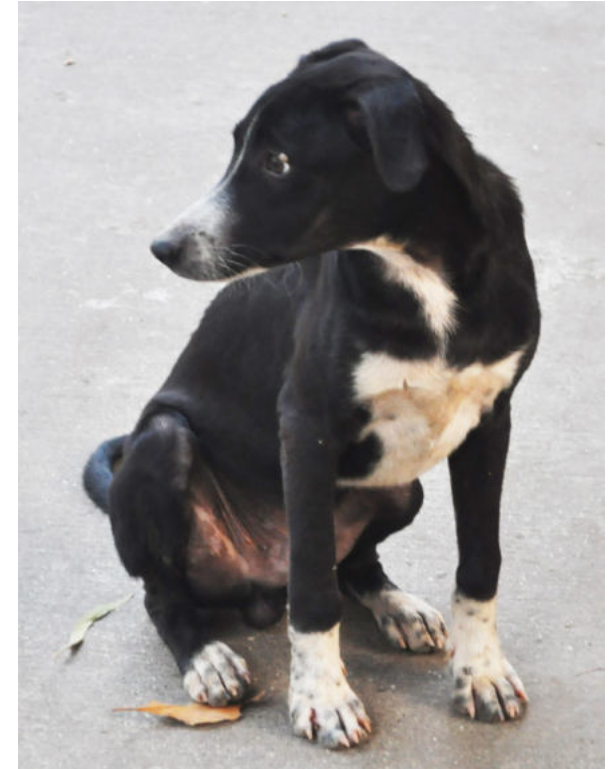
Stray Dogs in India

Population wise among all the stray animals in India, stray dogs top the list. There are more than 30 million stray dogs in India, in urban as well as rural areas and most of these free-roaming dogs belong to an ancient canine race identified as the Pariah Dog, In India the breed has existed for perhaps 14,000 years or more. Nowadays dog lovers, activists and enthusiasts use "Indogs" term for these native Indian dogs.

Quality of Indogs

In general people in India do not like "Indogs" because they consider them street dogs who are always dirty, eat garbage, smell badly and are not very good looking and that is why they don't even want to adopt these dogs. But in reality these dogs have many qualities like:

- They are extremely alert
- They are very social
- They make excellent watch dogs
- They are easily trainable
- They need Minimal "maintenance" etc.

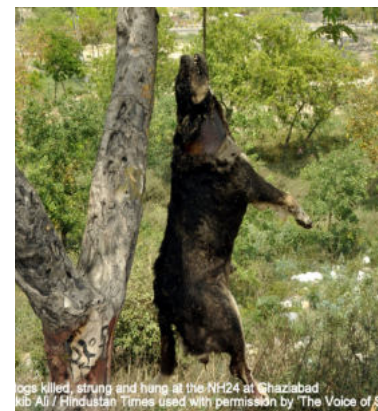


Condition of Stray Dogs in India

Condition of stray dogs in India is really very awful. Although there are some government organizations and NGOs working for them, their condition is still getting worse day by day. People find them aggressive, noisy, and unhygienic and kill them brutally and illegally.

Some recent stories of "Cruelty to dogs"

- Stray dogs being captured and killed in Kerala (January 28, 2012)
- Dogs killed, strung and hung on NH24 at Ghaziabad.(April 16, 2013)
- Three pups wrapped up in barbed wire left to die on IIT campus. (July 13, 2013)
- Stray dogs killed in Bangalore (April 6, 2007)
- PUDUCHERRY: More than 20 stray dogs were killed by unidentified people in the Union territory of Pondicherry. (August 24, 2013)
- In an act of shocking brutality, over 100 dogs were culled and their bodies buried near a pond in a village, about 20 kms from Chennai. (June 28, 2012)



Dogs killed, strung and hung at the NH-24 at Ghaziabad
kib Ali / Hindustan Times used with permission by The Voice of Str

Organisation working for Welfare of Stray Dogs

On one hand we note such cruel treatment being met out to stray animals, but on the other we find NGOs that are working for these dogs and other than these NGOs some government organisations like BMC in Mumbai and animal activists are also working for the welfare of these stray animals through Blogs, magazines, campaigns, awareness programs etc.

List of some leading NGOs in India dedicated to stray dogs:

- PETA India: India's Animal Rights Organisation
- In Defense of Animals India
- SupportaDog – NGO
- Welfare of Stray Dogs
- Ahimsa, Mumbai and many more..

How do they help stray dogs:

Some non-profit trusts are dedicated to help street dogs by:

- Sterilization
- Immunization against rabies and other diseases
- provide medical care
- Promote adoption
- Stray dogs issues and rabies awareness programs.

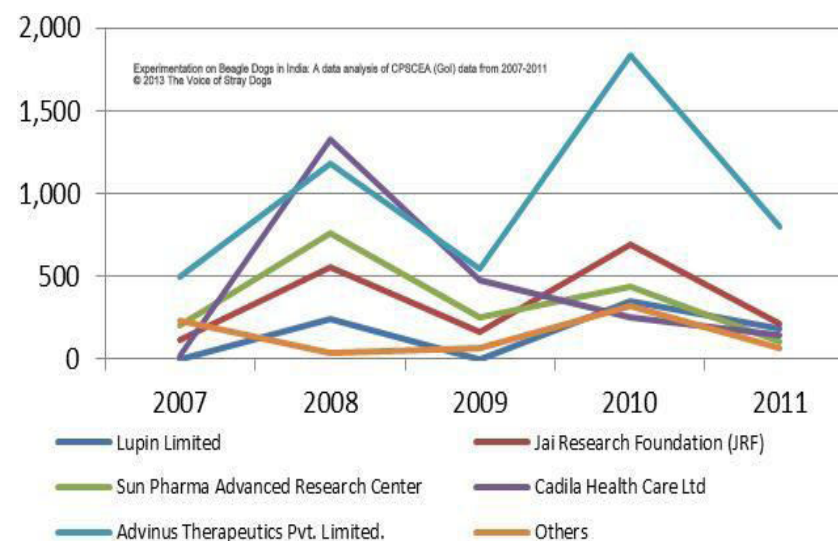


Some other facts about Stray Dogs

For my research work I decided to interview some people who are working for stray dogs and read many articles about dogs so that I can have a better understanding of the current situation.

After all this research work I got to know some new facts about stray dogs like:

- To stop the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals and to improve the laws relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals, PCA Act (The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960) was sanctioned as a national law of India.
- Unethical toxic study on stray dog.
- Gender biases in adopting male and female dogs.
- Most of the NGOs are struggling with funds.
- Nowadays stray dogs are becoming more aggressive.



Experimentation on Beagle Dogs in India – A data analysis by Rakesh Shukla for The Voice of Stray Dogs of CPSCEA (GoI) data from 2007-2011

Concept Development

After making "mind map" of my entire research work about stray dogs, everything got reasonably clear and I started developing concepts for my animation film. And there were few areas or topics in that mind map which I found perfect for concept development:

- Stray dog adoption
- Medical care
- Qualities of dogs
- Hardships of their life
- Cruelty to dogs
- Funds for NGOs working on stray dogs, etc.

Concept 1

This story is about a man (45-47 years old), who does not like stray dogs, in fact he hates them and hurts them whenever he gets a chance... like throwing stones at them, beating them with a stick and kicking them.

One night, while he was having dinner he heard stray dogs barking, he went to the window and threw a stone on them, stone hit a dog and that dog screamed in pain and ran away. After that he came back, continued dinner while watching TV and on a TV channel a Mahatma was delivering pravachans (teachings) - "whoever harms any animal becomes that animal in his/her next life and faces the same sufferings." When he listened to this pravachan he laughed sarcastically.

After sometime he switched off the TV and went to his bed. In his dream he was dead and taking in account his behaviour, Yamraj made him a stray dog...and his life sufferings started...

He had nowhere to live, nothing to eat and drink, moreover people threw stones at him and suggested their kids to stay away from him and finally a speed car hit him badly, he screamed aloud and woke up.

Dogs were still barking so he went to the kitchen and brought some food for them and served it to those poor stray dogs...

Concept 2

An old man (around 60-65 years old) was reading newspaper very carefully, suddenly he hears a loud scream of dog. To check what is happening he goes to his house and notices that a group of mischievous kids were dragging a puppy by rope tied to their cycle and because of pain puppy was crying aloud which was also fun for those kids.

It was hard for him to resist this cruel act and becomes angry. Kids run away and leave that injured puppy behind. But again he notices that a car is heading fast toward the puppy, he runs and saves puppy's life and brings him to his house and provides him medical care and feeds him milk and biscuits.

The old man is delighted to see that puppy is recovering well from his injuries but by the time he also notices that puppy keeps himself very isolated and whenever old man goes near to him, puppy hides under the table.

One day he thought if he will play with a ball may be puppy will also come forward to play (because all the dogs love playing with a ball) but after many efforts, puppy does not give any response, because he was still having fear of humans in his mind. Still old man doesn't lose hope.

On his late wife's birthday he is very upset, sitting on his sofa he is lost in memories of his beloved wife. Puppy observes everything and realizes the old man's pain, and then to make the old man happy he comes out of his fear and keeps the ball in his hand. When the old man wakes up he finds ball in his hand, he looks at the puppy and gets amazed to find that the puppy has come out of his fear to reduce the old man's sadness. He hugs the puppy and puppy starts licking his face and this is how they both become each other's "companion".

Concept 3

A poor girl (7-8 years old) who is a rag picker, finds a small puppy wrapped in a plastic bag. At first she is shocked as she thinks that puppy is dead but later she finds that he is still alive but injured badly.

She decides to provide him medical treatment but hospital is far away so she holds her in her arm and takes him to a busy road so that passing vehicles and pedestrians can help her in taking the dog to the hospital as soon as possible because the puppy was in a critical condition, but all of them refuses to help because they find it dirty, unhygienic and unnecessary.

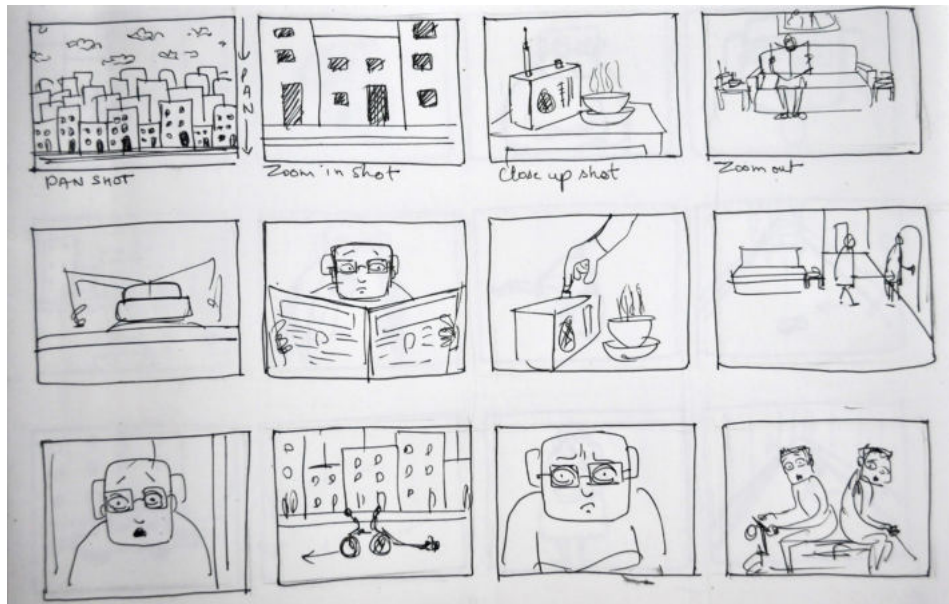
Now she finds herself completely helpless but she is determined to help him herself so she rushes to her home and apply turmeric on his injuries and feeds him healthy food...slowly his health starts to improve and after 3 days he recovers completely and starts following her when she was going to work and protects her from a stranger who tries to tease her, seeing that she becomes very happy and they both become best friends for ever.

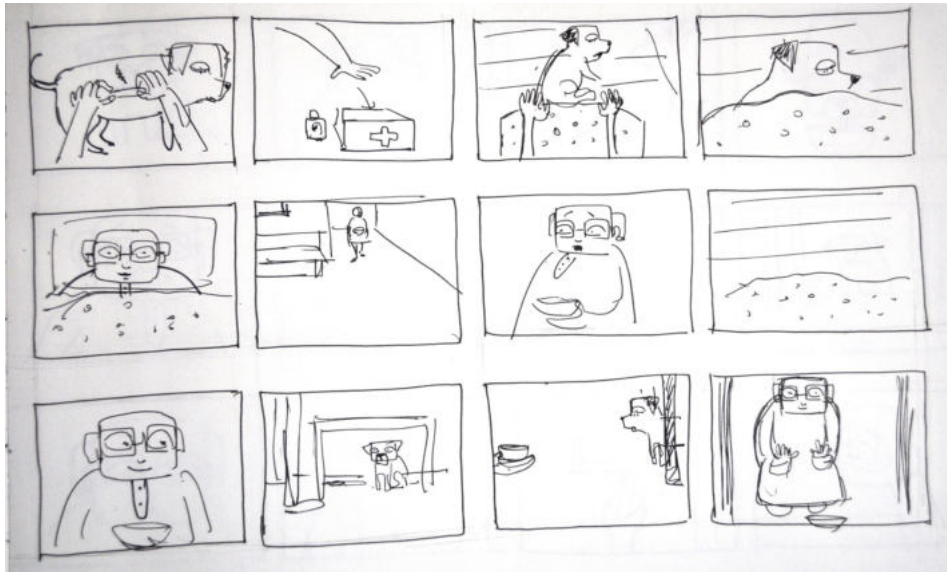
Story Boarding for Final concept

I discussed various concepts with the faculty and my guide. They most liked the concept where an old man and a stray puppy become best companions. Perhaps because this concept has the potential to touch the softer side of audience's heart. This story line was also my personal choice that is why I finalized this concept as my final concept for the film.

After finalization of concept I created a rough storyboard to visualize the scene and camera angles. I found storyboarding process quite interesting and helping because it gives a rough idea of required shots and time duration of the film. This is therefore a good preparation for ensuring good final output.

Thumbnails for Storyboard:





A NOTE ABOUT
STRAY DOGS

THE END

Character Explorations

Once my concept and storyboard were ready I started exploring various kind of characters and visual themes to finalize characters and a perfect visual style for my animation film.

In this film there are a total of 5 characters:

1st character: An old man in his 60s.

2nd character: A small stray puppy.

3rd character: Old man's wife. She is not alive in the story but he had many pictures of her in his house and imagines her presence on her birthday.

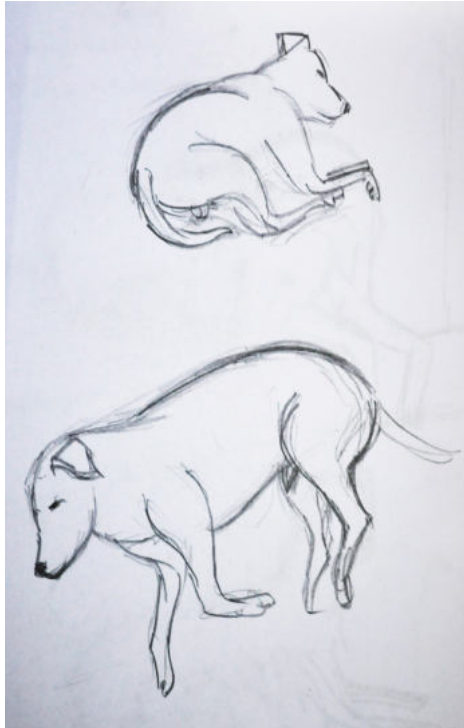
4th and 5th characters: two kids who were pulling stray puppy behind their bicycle.

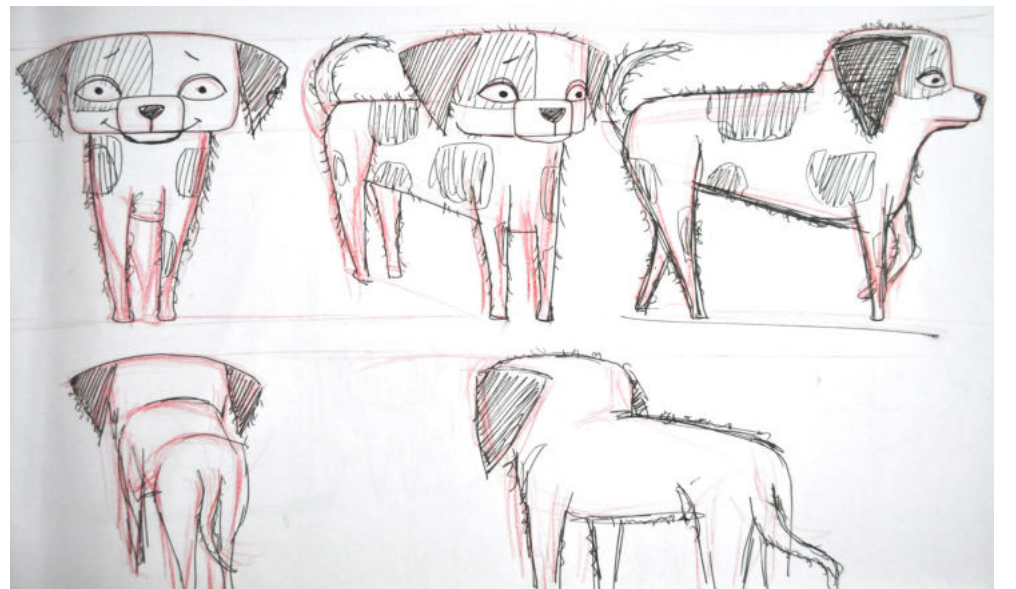
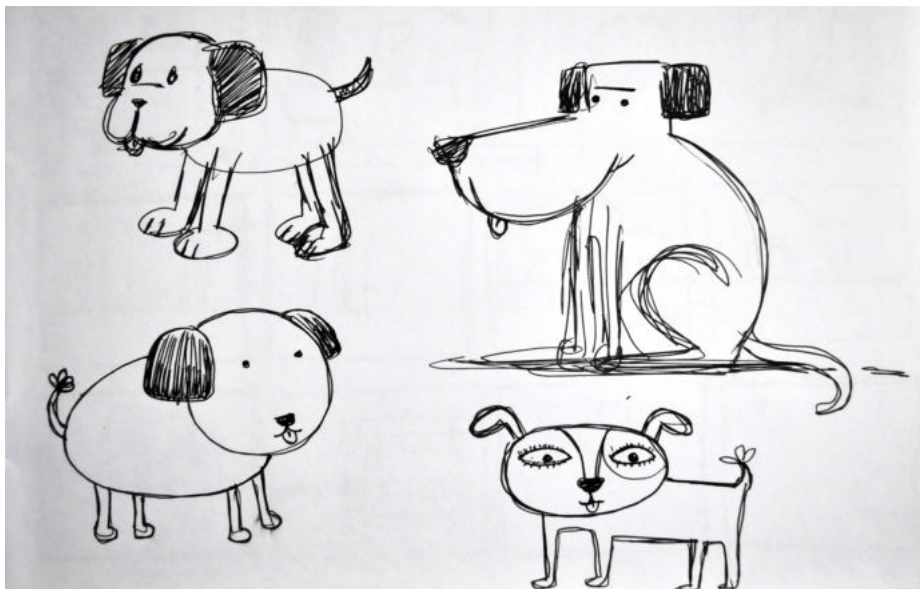
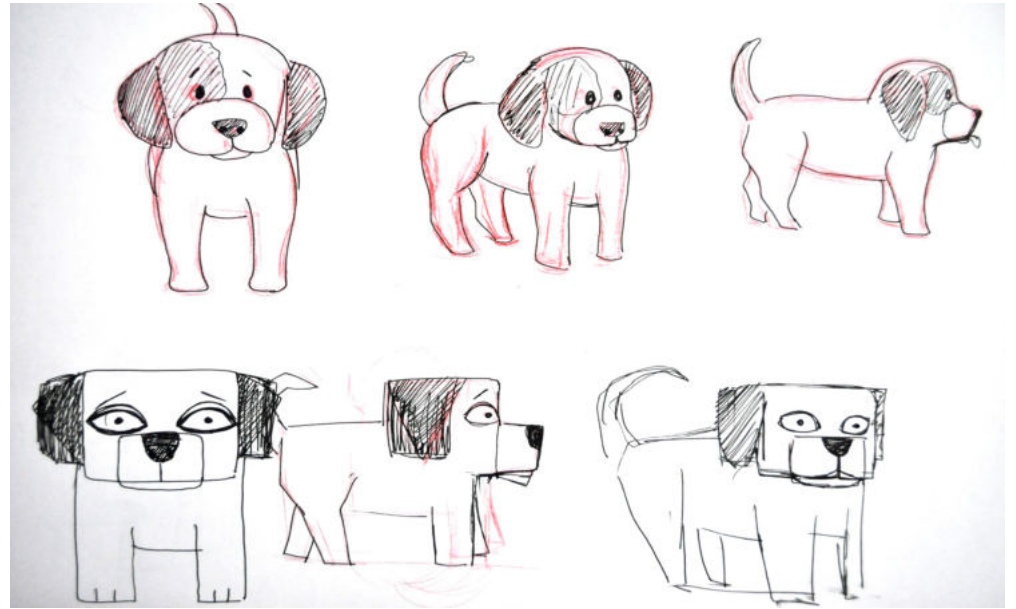
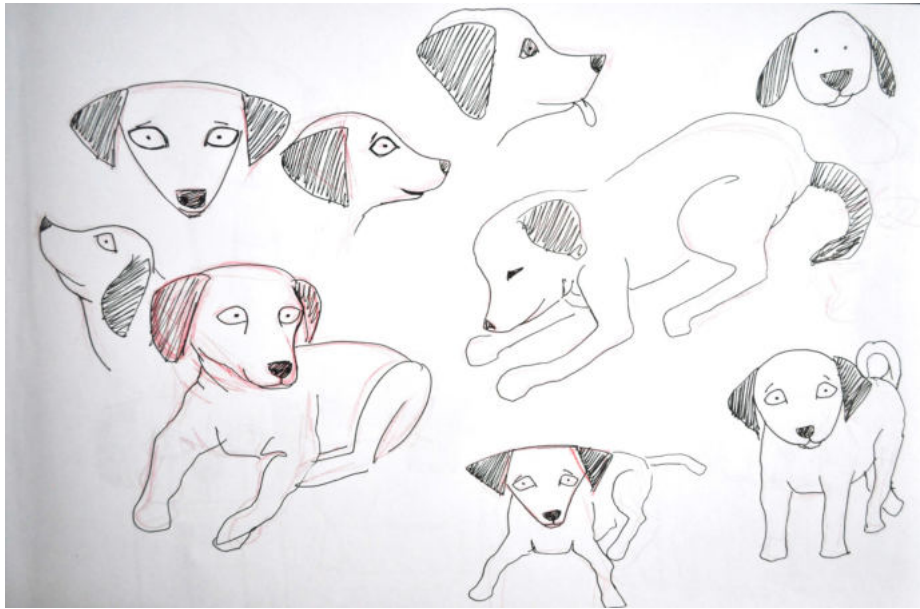
As it was my first film I was very excited to design characters for it. For each and every character I started noticing and sketching stray dogs and people of matching age group.

Explorations for Stray Puppy Character

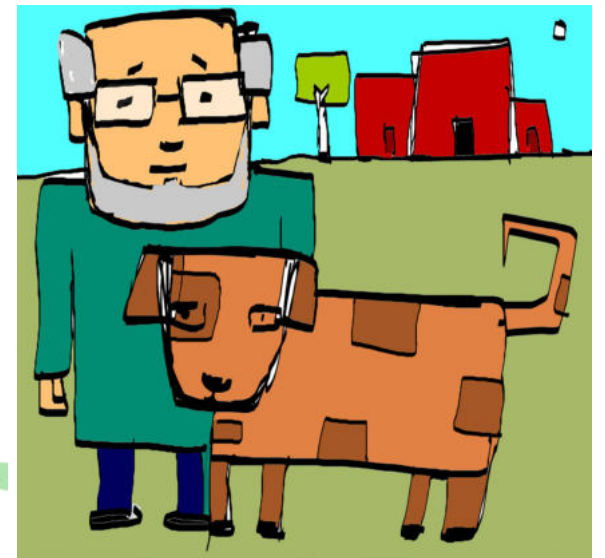
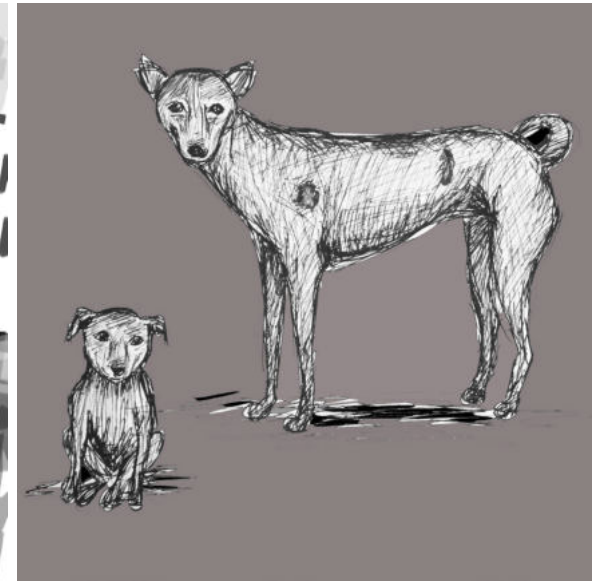
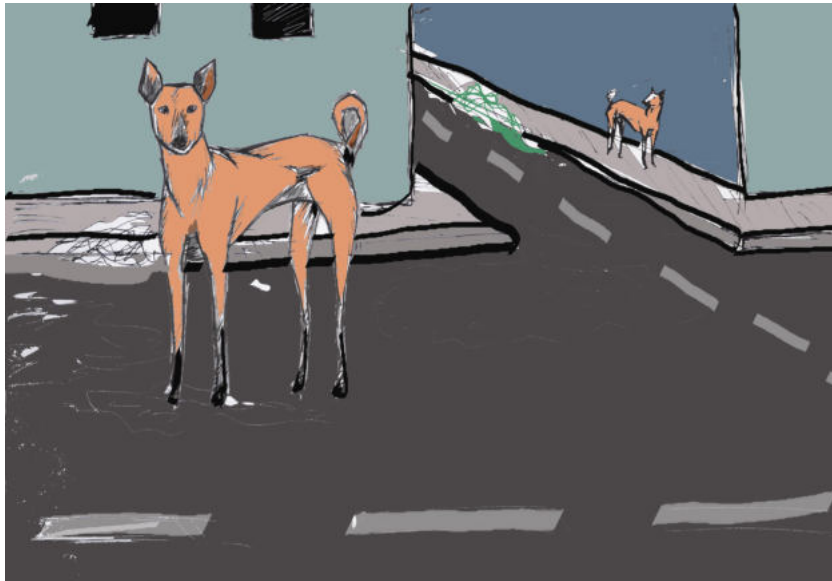
For designing a stray puppy's character I decided to do anatomy study of Indogs first because I wanted to use a stray dog character in my film.



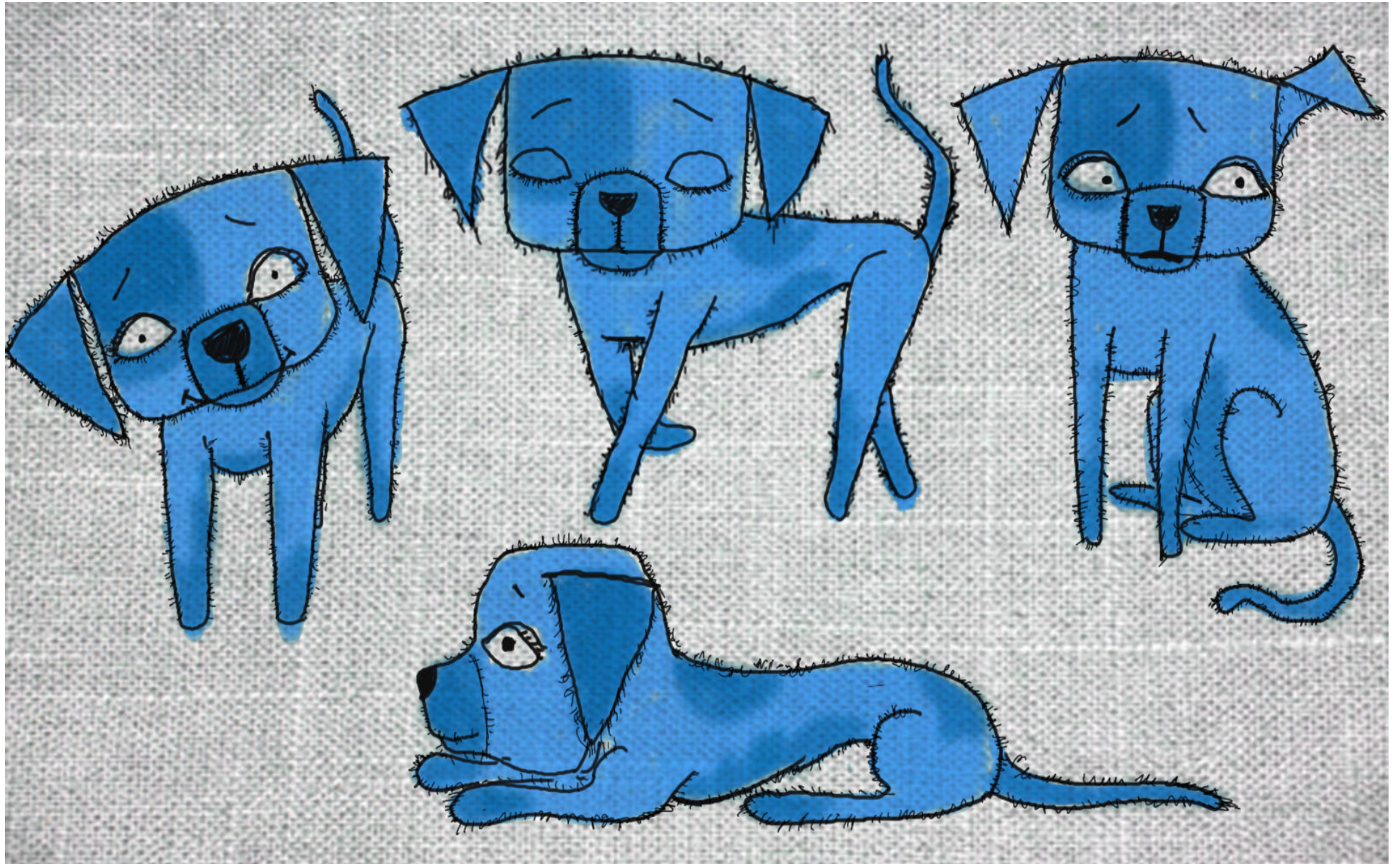




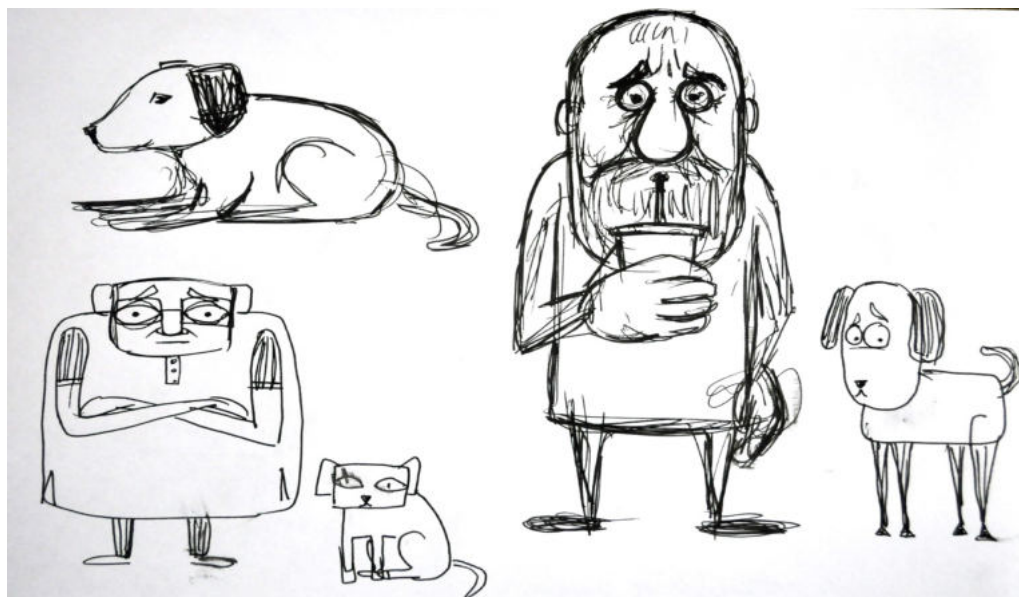
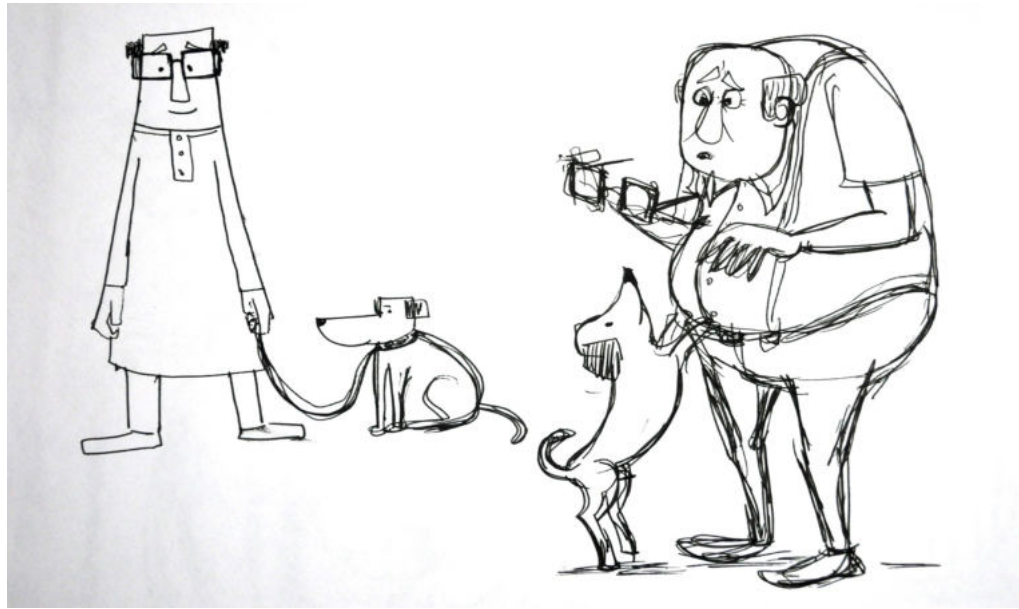
Some explorations with colour



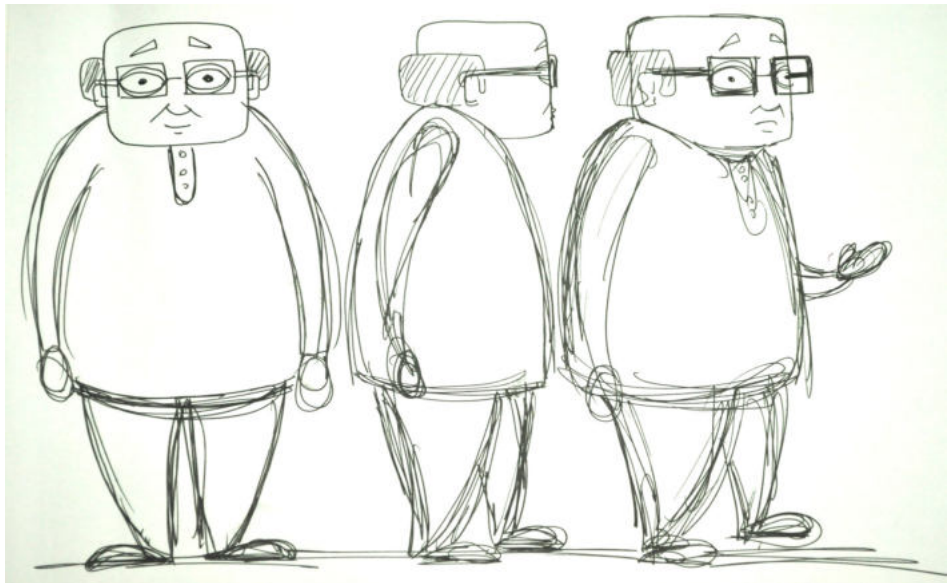
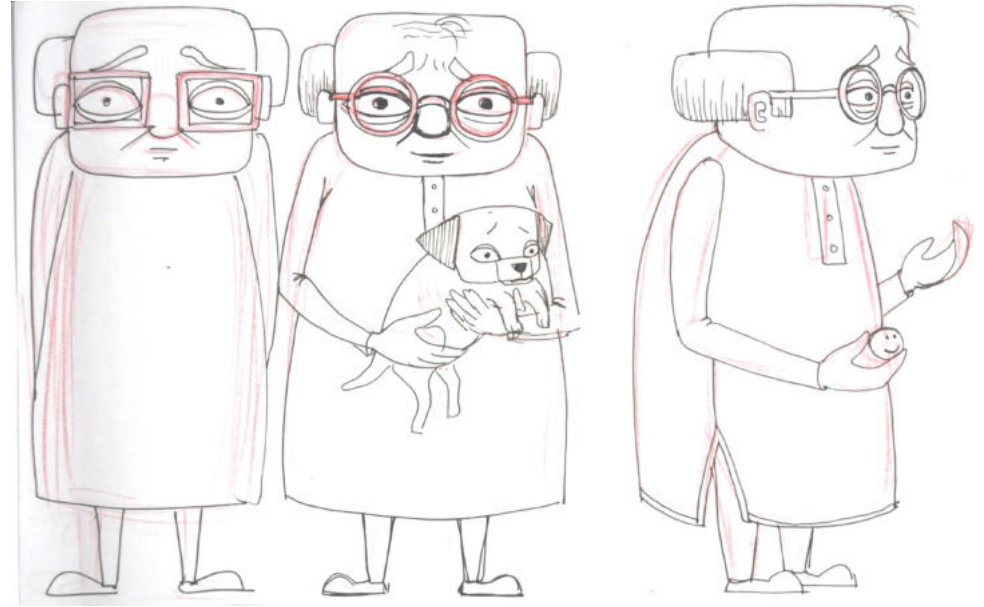
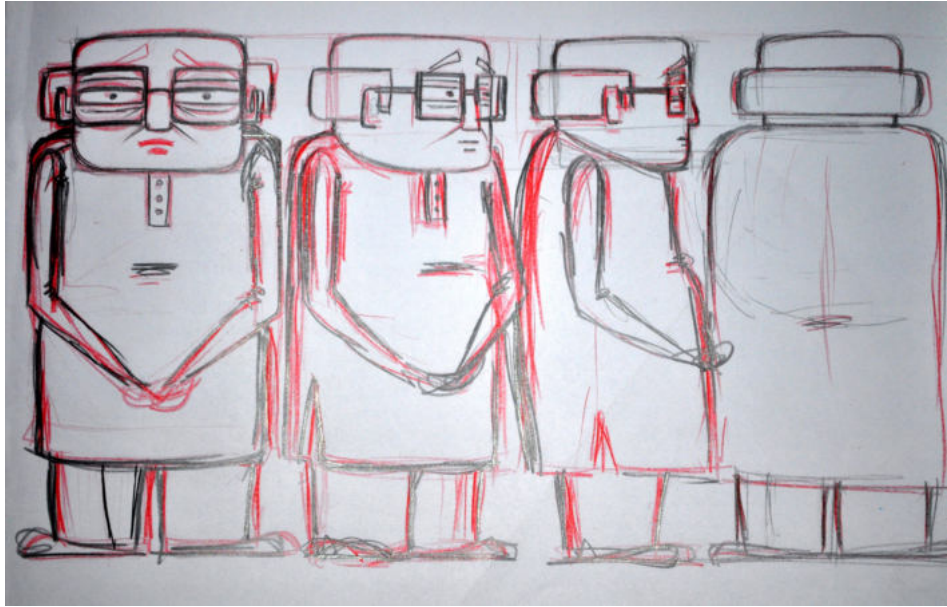
Final Character for Puppy



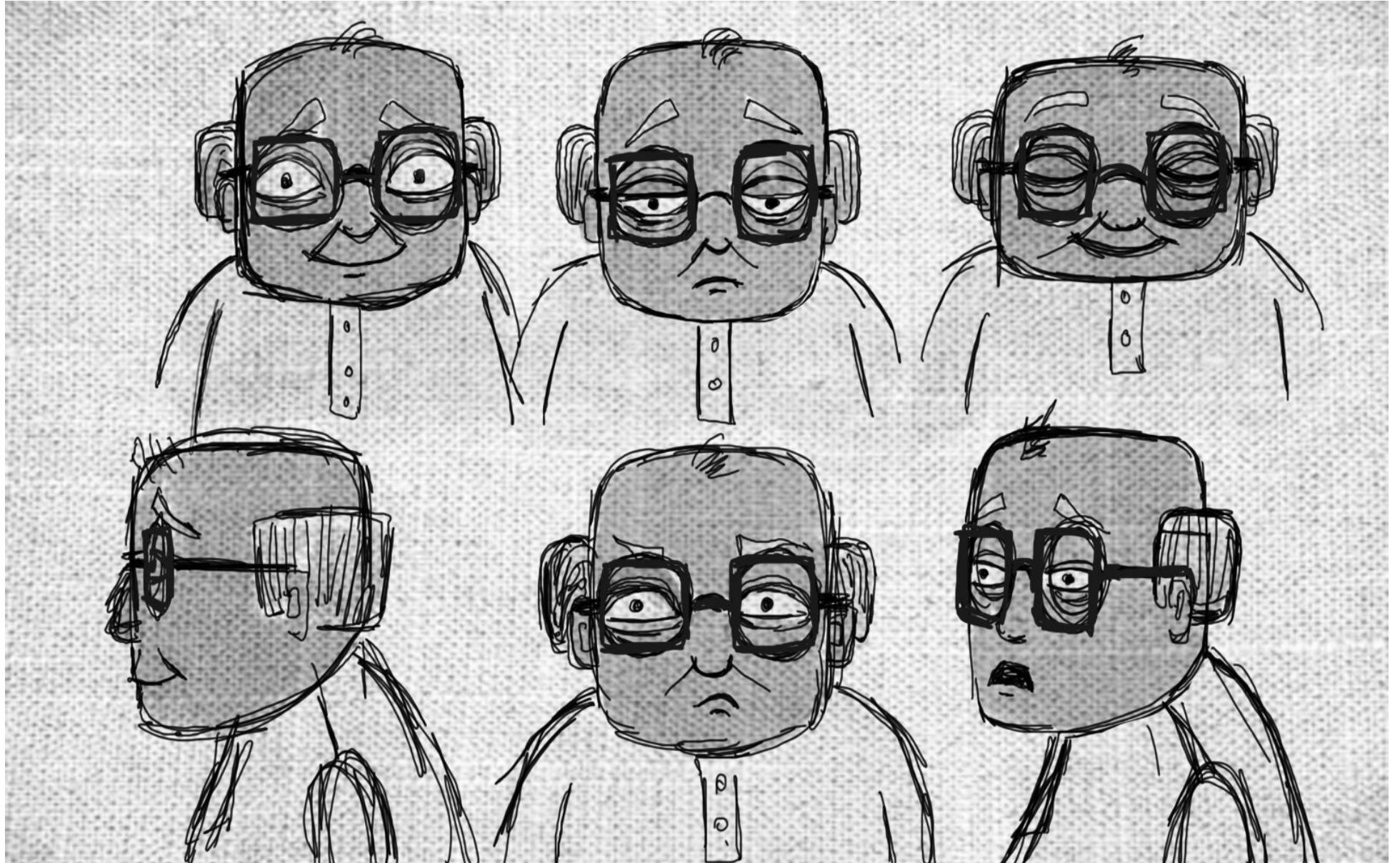
Exploration for old man's character



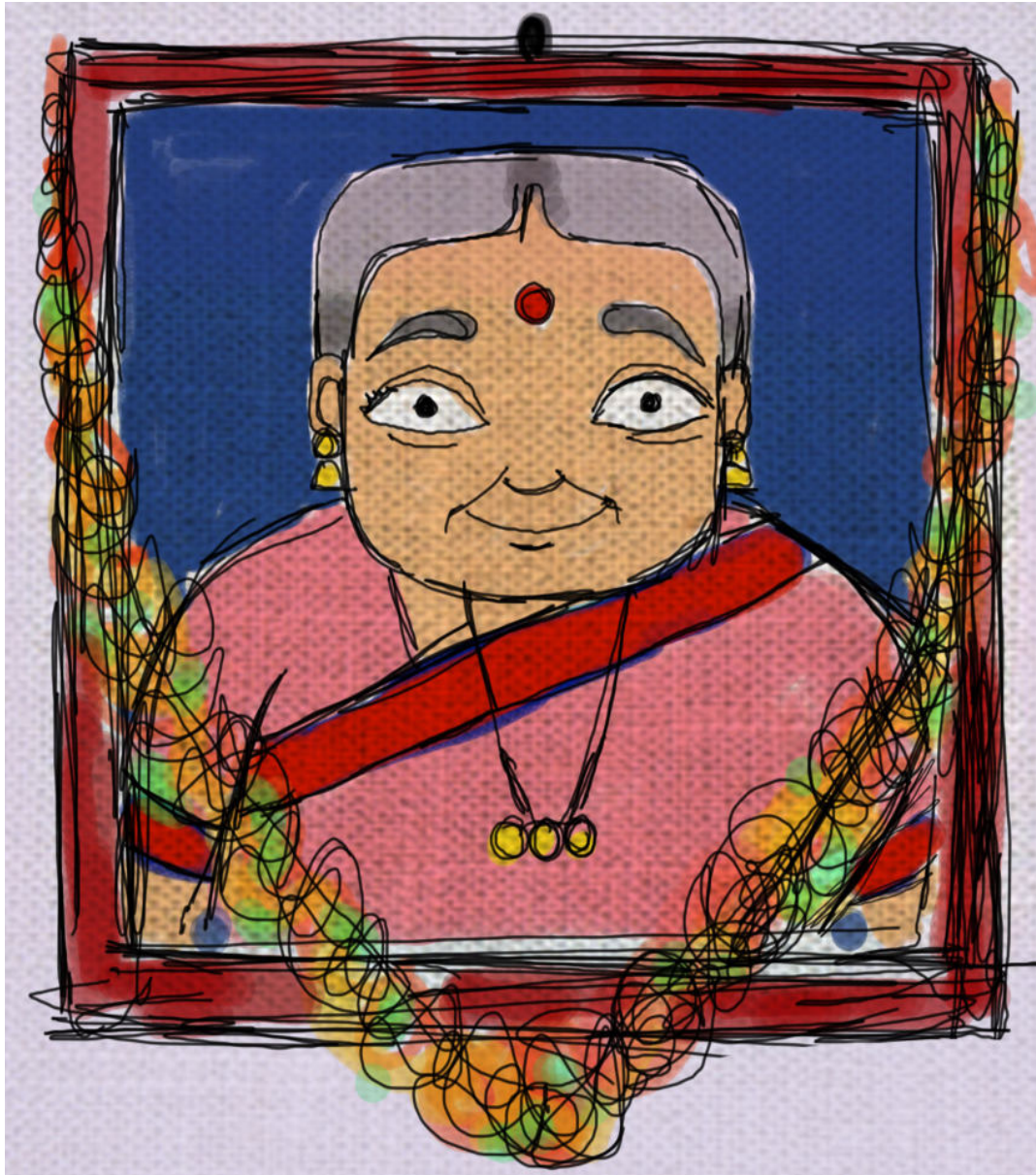




Final Character for Old Man

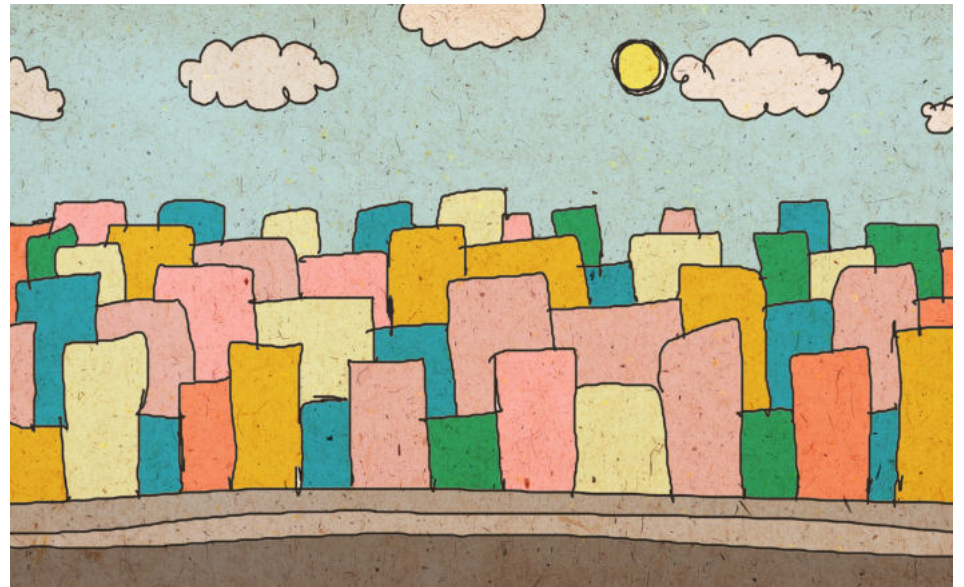
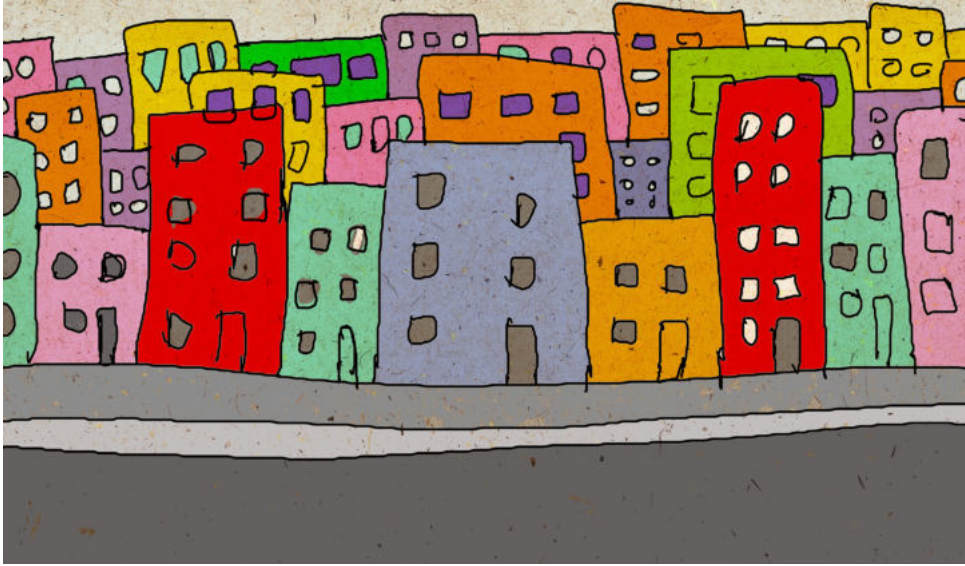


Other Final Characters

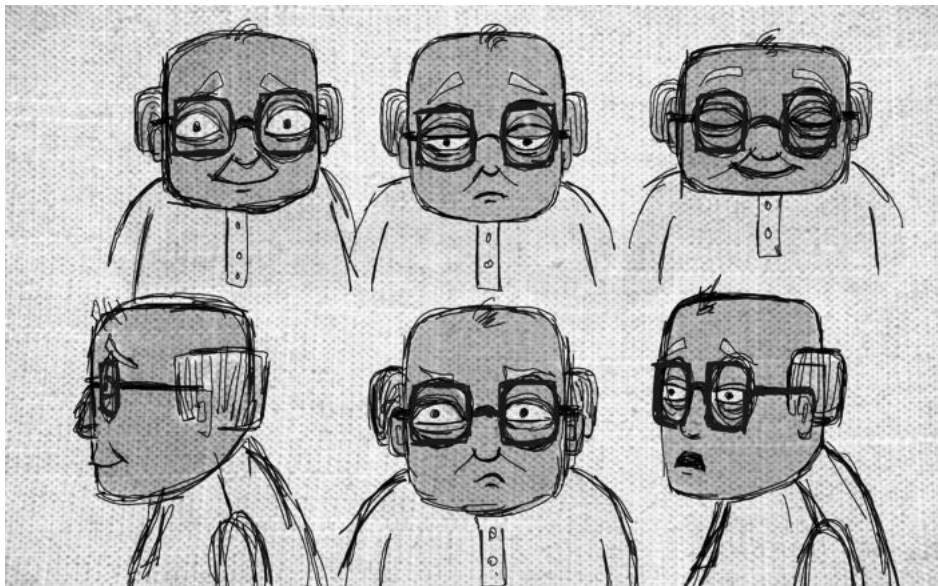
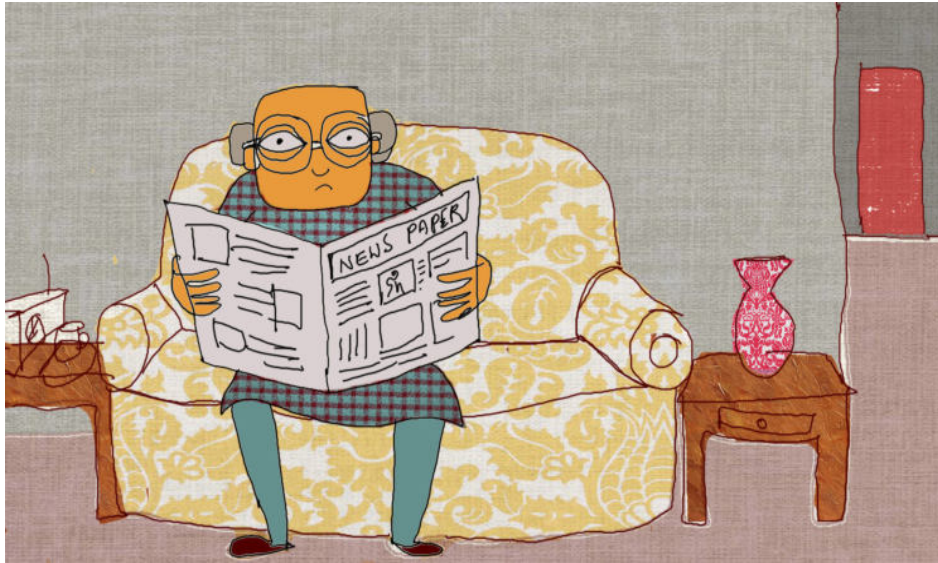


Explorations for Backgrounds

Exterior Backgrounds



Interior House Backgrounds



Final Background

Exterior and Interior House Backgrounds



Techniques and Process

Once my story board was ready I started lining up the story board and prepared a rough animatic with scratch sound and when I completed the final animatic in terms of timing I started working on shots one by one depending upon their intricacies .

I prepared a sheet and mentioned the details of all the shots and sequences like what kind of camera angle, background, props and characters would be there in particular shots so that I can animate accordingly.

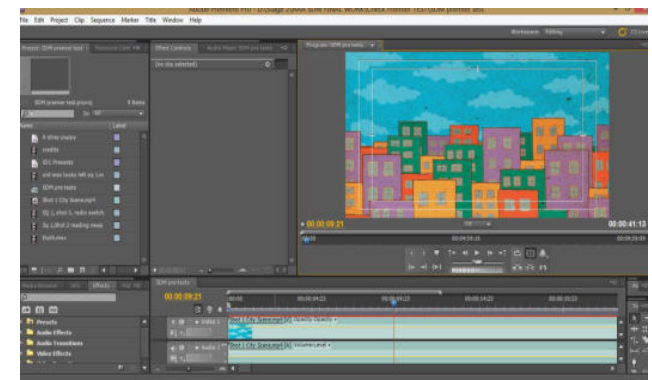
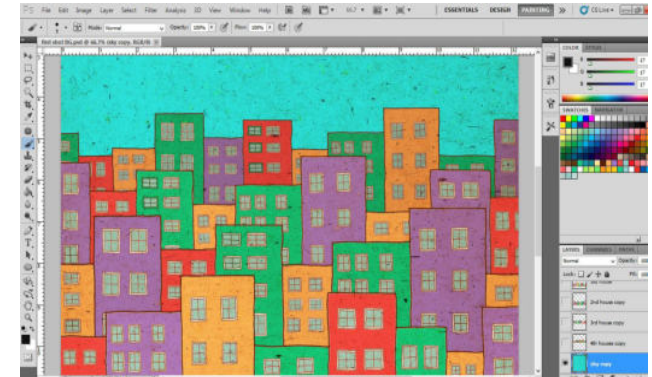
In the production process first of all I painted backgrounds in Adobe Photoshop for each shot with handmade paper texture and then imported these backgrounds into Toonboom Animate Pro and there I animated my characters and props.

These shots were then imported in Adobe after effects and the finished scene was composited with required treatment, camera angles and colour corrections.

And then these finished shots and compositions were imported in Adobe Premiere and put on to the timeline and very basic editing was done in order to match each shot with the sound that was created in the sound design process.

Sound Design

My movie had no dialogues, since only ambient sound, background music and foley sounds were needed. For animatic I downloaded some background music and foley sounds from various online sources and for the final sound design we recorded background music, ambient sound and foley sound in the sound studio at IDC with the help of C P Narayan sir and Shantanu. And once the sound was designed it was superimposed on the video to create the final film.



Conclusion

This was my first animation film project in IDC. As it was my first film, it was quite obvious that I had many doubts about storytelling style, technical aspects and overall development of the film. But once I started working on it those doubts got dissolved and a clear picture started to emerge in my mind.

Animation is a very lengthy process right from the story development to the final editing. During this Project 2, I got the opportunity to go through all the stages of animation with the help of my faculties. And it gives a kind of thrilling experience when we see the movement of lifeless objects, created by us.

This project also helped me to strengthen my software skills. Initially I had to struggle a lot with animation software but later on, I became familiar with them. So overall in a conclusive statement I can state that this project has given me an amazing amount of confidence and satisfaction.

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