

# Karma

**Design Project 3  
Guide  
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## Approval Sheet

This Animation Project entitled 'Think before you think' is approved in partial fulfillment of the Masters In Design in Animation & Film Making.

Signature: Date:

Guide:

Internal Examiner:

External Examiner:

Chairman:

Place:

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY: 2012-2014

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# 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

My sincere gratitude to my guide Prof. Sumant Rao, for his immense support and guidance throughout the project.

I also would like to thank to all my Professors, Prof. Nina Sabnani, Prof. Shilpa Ranade, Prof Phani Tetali & Prof. C.P. Narayan.

I thank my friends and family for being supportive all the time and making it successful.

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# Abstract

*“Don’t waste your time on revenge. Those who hurt you will eventually face their own karma”*. This is a quote on karma by Buddha. Karma is an animation film inspired from the Mahisha Jataka tale depicted in Ajanta paintings.

The story elaborates on the concept of Karma. Inspired from one the jataka tales i.e. Mahisha jataka. The film throws the light on the consequences of good and bad deeds. Research included studying the Ajanta paintings and reading jataka tales. The film is a story of a crow and her three chickens. Among those three, one is chicken is selfish, a bodhisattva buffalo and wicked monkey. The story revolves around them on their good and bad deeds. As my film also tell about karma, and it is about when you do bad or harm or harass someone for reason or no reason you have to face the consequences for that.

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# Research

Ajanta is situated in Aurangabad district in Maharashtra, India. It is the home to rock cut Buddhist cave, which is built from 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. to 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., under various kingdoms. Ajanta is known for the unique architecture, paintings and sculptures. Here, for the Buddhist monks use to pray in Chaityas (chapels) and in Viharas they lived and taught. There are about 30 caves in which 9, 10, are stupa hall of chaityagrihas and 12, 13 and 15A are viharas and 19, 26 and 29 are chaityagrihas .In many caves there is detailed carvings on the walls, pillars and entrances as well as wall paintings.

The caves were constructed over a thousand years, started under the backing of Satvahana rulers in 2<sup>nd</sup> century B. C. during Thervada Buddhism (also known as Hinyana period) and were carried further by Vakarakas after a pause of 400 years. The later stage of the development was carried by the followers of Mahayana Buddhism, and is remarked as the Golden period of Ajanta. All paintings shows heavy religious influence and centre around Buddha, Bodhisattvas, incidents from the life of Buddha and the jatakas. The caves include paintings and sculptures, which are masterpieces of Buddhist religious art, with figures of the Buddha and depictions of the Jataka tales. The word Jatakas refer to a voluminous body of literature native to India concerning the previous births of the Buddha. These are the stories that tell about the previous lives of the Buddha, in both human and animal form. The future Buddha may appear in them as a king, an outcast, a god, an elephant—but,

in whatever form, he exhibits some worth that the tale thereby inspire.

In Ajanta the paintings and sculptures are as storehouse of information about the civilization of the period and tell us about their art, preparation of the ground, execution of painting with the sense of perspective, line, space – division, colour pallet and the pacing of the narrative being depicted. In the caves there is division of the art between ceiling and wall murals, into geometric design and narration. The pillar has been used as partition of the painting as story narration in a beautiful way. Ajanta painting influenced the religious art of the whole Asia. Through the painting and sculpture they painted the life around them.

## Painting Techniques

### *The basic painting techniques*

First, the rough-stone surfaces were primed with a thick coating of paste made from clay, cow-dung, animal hair and vegetable fibre. Next, a finer layer of smooth white lime was applied. Before this was dry, the artists quickly sketched the outlines of their pictures using red cinnabar, which they then filled in with an undercoat of terre-verte. The pigments, all derived from natural water-soluble substances (kaolin chalk for white, lamp soot for black, glauconitic for green, ochre for yellow and imported lapis lazuli for blue), were thickened with glue and added only after the undercoat was completely dry. Thus the Ajanta paintings are not, strictly speaking, frescoes (always executed on damp surfaces), but tempera.

Finally, once dry, the murals were painstakingly polished with a smooth stone to bring out their natural sheen. The artists' only sources of light were oil-lamps and sunshine reflected into the caves by metal mirrors and pools of water (the external courtyards were flooded expressly for this purpose), a constraint that makes their extraordinary mastery of line, perspective and shading – which endow Ajanta's paintings with their characteristic other-worldly light – all the more remarkable.

Paintings contain decorative and secular forms. They fill up all the available space on the ceiling, pillars, etc. by mythical birds, floral design, geometrical design and animals.

Composition of the painting over the period is an interesting part.

In these paintings narratives proceed from scene to scene and from act to act harmoniously.

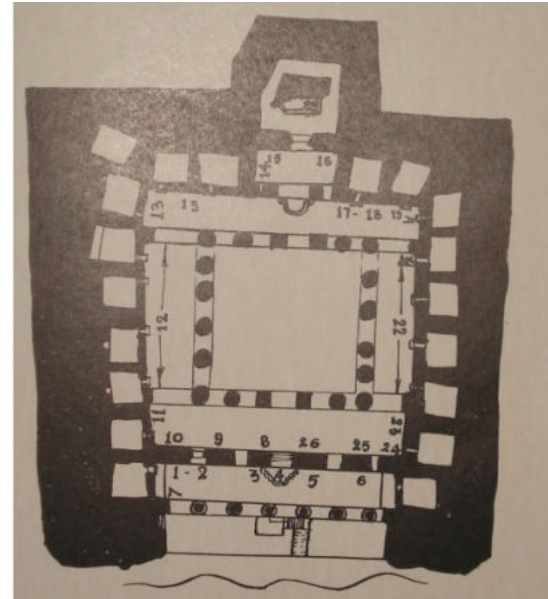
The colours used for Ajanta painting were made from pebbles and vegetable. These were crushed and mixed with glue. The colour used in Ajanta painting is a major medium. It helps to express the emotions and moods through manipulating colours, their density, tones, light, shades, tones etc.



## Jataka Tales

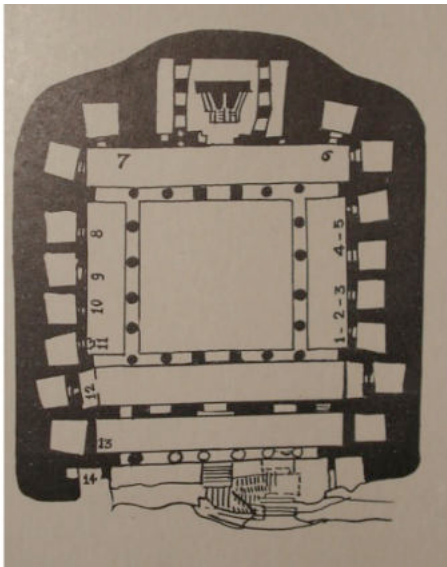
### *Lisit of jataka paintings in Cave XVI at Ajanta*

- 1.The Dream of queen Maya.
- 2.The Visit of the sage Asita
- 3.Siddhartha At school and his Practice of Archery.
- 4.Scenes from the life of the Buddha; the four signs.
- 5.The Offering of Trapusha and Bhallika: The Offering of Sujata
- 6.The Buddha Preaching to The Congregation.
- 7.The Visit of Ajatasatru to the Buddha
- 8.Flying Apsarases; the Buddha in the teaching attitude.
- 9.The Manushi Buddha's.
- 10.The Buddha's Visit to Kapilavastu: nanda's Coronation: His Conversion.
- 11.Dying Sundari.
- 12.The Maha-Ummagga Jataka.
- 13.The Hasti jataka.
- 14.The Buddha Preaching in Tishita heaven.



### *Lisit of jataka paintings in Cave XVII at Ajanta*

- 1.Scenes from the Visvantara Jataka.
- 2.Flying Indra And Apsarases adoring the Buddha.
- 3.Flying Indra And Apsarases.
- 4.The Manushi Buddha.
- 5.Gangharvas And Apsarases adoring the Buddha.
- 6.The Taming of the Furious Elephant Nalagiri.
- 7.The Wheel of Samsara.
- 8.The Shad-danta jataka
- 9.The Mahakapi jataka.
- 10.The Hasti Jataka.
- 11.The Hamsa Jataka.
- 12.The Visvantara Jataka.
- 13.The sutasoma Jataka
- 14.The Buddha preaching in the Tushita Heaven.
- 15.The Buddha Yasodhara And Rahuta.
- 16.The Miracle at Sravasti.
- 17.The Sarabha jataka.
- 18.The Matri-Poshaka Jataka.
- 19.The Maatsya jataka.
- 20.The Syama jataka.
- 21.The Mahisha jataka.
- 22.The Simhalavadana.
- 23.The Sibi jataka.
- 24.The Mriga jataka.
- 25.The Riksha Jatak
- 26.The Nyagrodha-mriga Jataka.



## Ideation of Story

As my project is based on Ajanta paintings, after doing research I thought taking one of the Jataka tales and animate it. I read many Jataka tales and from that I shortlisted a few of them like Nigrodhamiga Jataka, Mahis Jataka, Shaddanta Jataka, Mahakapi Jataka and The Golden Swan. After going through all the shortlisted tales, I finalized Mahisha Jataka. Mahisha Jataka there are two characters namely, Bodhisattva Buffalo and wicked monk that tells about Karma. So I thought instead of telling same story why not add one more story to it and narrate it. And add another lesson to the story about greediness. Because of this in a single story we can convey two messages (karma and greediness). For teaching lesson about greediness I have added two more characters, which are Bodhisattva crow and wicked chicken. My target audiences are young children, reason behind is, in younger age if we explain children regarding karma and greediness they will understand it and will be helpful for their behavior throughout their life. And also they will be able to differentiate between good things and bad things.

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## Original MAHISHA JATAKA

Once, the Bodhisatta was born as a buffalo in Himava. He was dark and dirty looking. Though born in the animal-state he believed in righteousness; and exerted his best to uphold the value of a good conduct. In the same forest there lived a wicked monkey, who used to tease and bully him. Sometimes he would leap upon the back of the sleeping buffalo. Sometimes he would obstruct him from grazing the grass. Sometimes he would climb on his head by holding his horns and swing down by holding his tail. Sometimes he would mount on his back with a brandishing stick to counterfeit Yamaraja – the lord of death. [It may be noted that in the Indian mythologies buffalo is said to be the vehicle of Yamaraja]. The gentle animal bore all the unbecoming behaviour of the monkey to practise the virtue of forbearance.

In the same region there lived a yaksa, as a spirit of a tree. He resented the monkey's acts. So, one day he advised the buffalo to punish the monkey by using his greater strength. The gentle buffalo declined to do so by saying,

"Inflicting grief on others to overcome one's own discomfort is no virtue..

As the result of such acts shall not bear the fruits of true happiness."

Yet, he added that one day the monkey would have his lesson; but then he would be saved from the guilt of inflicting any pain on the other.

Indeed, a few days later, when the gentle buffalo was away, a

savage buffalo came and stood on the same spot. The wicked monk thinking him to be the same buffalo jumped on his back and tried the same games. The other buffalo in no time shook him off on the ground and pierced the horns straight into his heart and trampled him with his hoofs. The monkey was thus killed in no time.

(Source: *Mahisa Jataka, Jataka Pali* NO..278; *Jatakamala* No.33; *Chariyapitaka* 2.5 | <http://mythologystories.wordpress.com/2014/02/15/jatakas-28/> )







## The final story is as follows,

Once, the Bodhisattva was born as a crow and buffalo. They were helpful and kind in nature. They used to live under one bushy tree and it was their favorite place. A crow used to stay in her nest with one chicken, a newly born baby and a egg.

It was a usual morning, the chicken was hungry and started making sound, crow's mother noticed that and started feeding the chicken and while feeding the elder chicken, younger chicken also started making sound. So after feeding elder chicken she fed younger one too and went in search for more food for her chickens. After that, both chicken settle down and started eating their food.

The elder chicken was having food slowly and calmly while the younger one just finished of his food within seconds. The younger chicken started searching for more food, he looks around and sees his elder brother is still having the same food so he thinks of grabbing his food and eating it. As he does so, the elder chicken looks at him strangely in shock. The younger chicken finishes it off quickly and after that he still looks for more food but doesn't find anything. Then he looks at another side and there he sees an egg. His greedy mind starts thinking that, what if the another egg hatch and baby comes out of it, if it happens so, then we all have to fight for food and in that fight he won't get a single piece of food to eat. After having this greedy thought in his mind he thinks, let's push down this egg so that there won't be any more problems for food. He (younger chicken) starts pushing down the egg, while doing so; the elder chicken notices that and tries to stop him. But at the end instead of trying to stop him, younger chicken manages to push down elder chicken along with the egg. Meanwhile, as the mother crow searching for food she notices that one wicked monkey is harassing the Bodhisattva buffalo without any reason. She sees that monkey climbs on the buffalo's head by holding his horns and swing's down by holding his tail and again starts jumping on his back. After watching this, the crow tries to help Buffalo by poking monkey. Monkey gets annoyed and leaves. After that Bodhisattva buffalo and crow takes a peaceful breath. And the mother crow now starts collecting food i.e. insect from buffalo's body. While doing this they hear chicken shout and they look up. In no time mother crow flies off to help her elder chicken and egg. After saving both of them, she looks at her nest, she sees only younger chicken is left and that chicken is passing cruel laugh. She looks questioned and at that time the same wicked monkey arrives there and snatches the chicken and starts jumping on one of the tree branch. As monkey starts jumping on the tree branch, the branch breaks down and both of them fall down and get bump on their head. Looking at this

scene, the buffalo, mother crow and the elder chicken starts laughing on them. And story ends over here.

Moral of the story is, as we see that wicked monkey and younger chicken is carrying bad karma. And in karma it is said those who do bad things to other, bad things happen to them. And also, younger chicken is carrying bad karma as well as greed in him. For his selfishness he tried to kill elder chicken as well as egg.

So, the final statement is a do-good thing for others and you will get good results in return. Don't be selfish, live your life by sharing and taking care of others as well as of yourself. Like they say, *" Aache karam karo, phal ki chinta maat karo"*

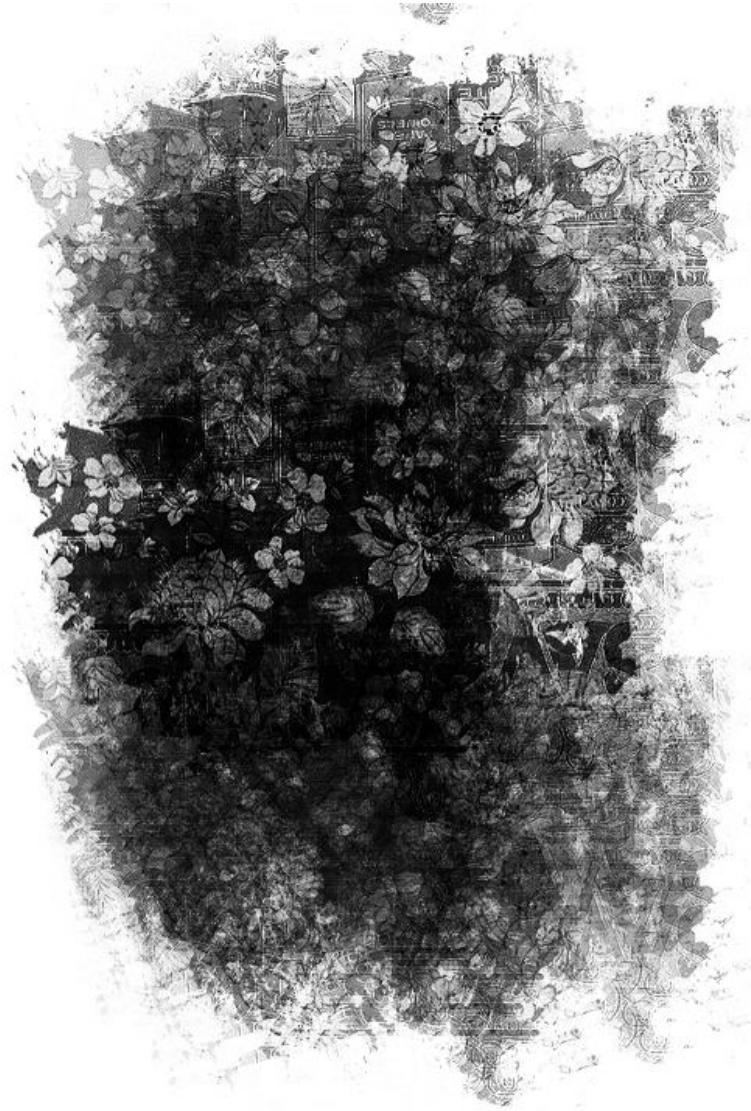
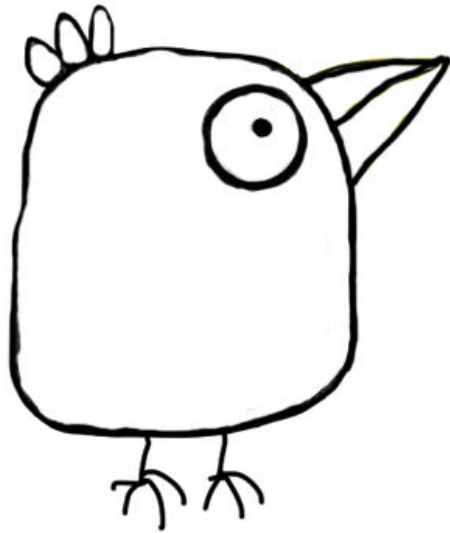
## Illustration

My illustration style is more of simple, basic shape. For colouring I have used texture brush in that I have designed and that brush contains floral pattern, which is inspired from jataka background look. I have always been curious and passionate about drawing. Illustration to me is the basic shape transfers into intricate work. I'm inspired by nature, culture, and old tradition of art form to create my illustration. I basically use a simple tool that is black/ blue pen on paper if necessary I add one or two colours in it to make it look dominant.

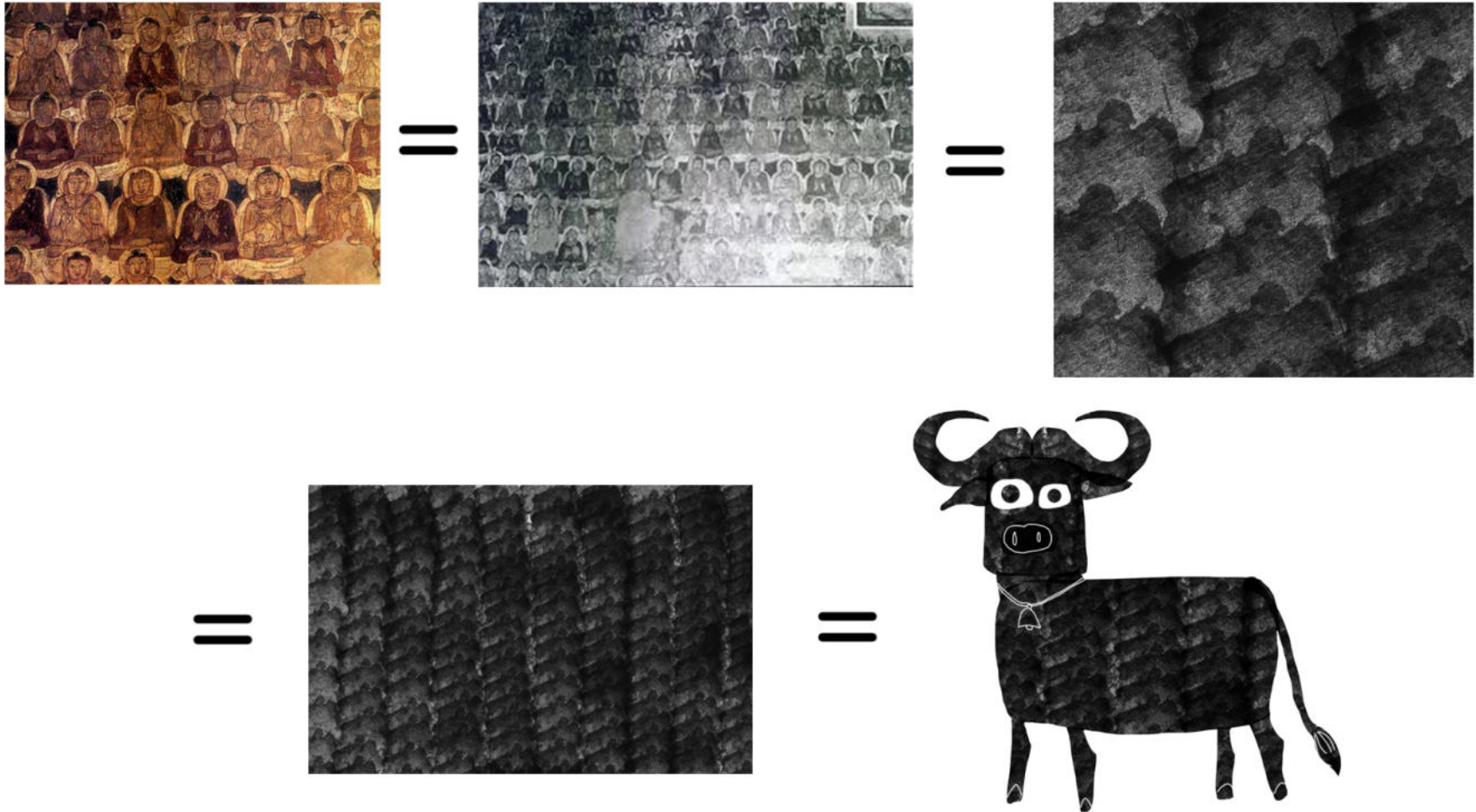
I like to explore different style. Styles of illustration were inspired from the little things that I notice every day. I try to add different elements into it which creates a unique style. Trying to discover a new style by using objects that may not seem a part of the living world, it is imaginary.



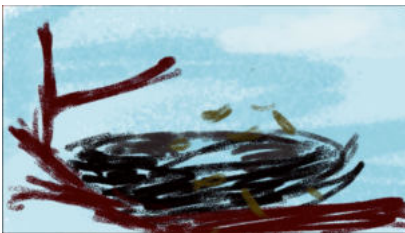




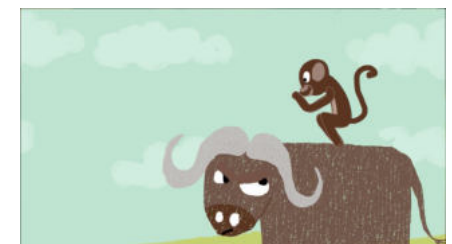
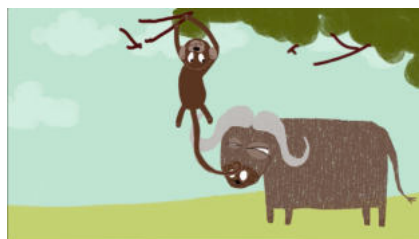
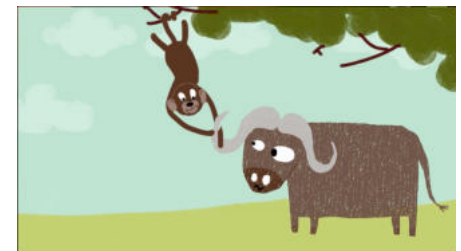
Texture styling



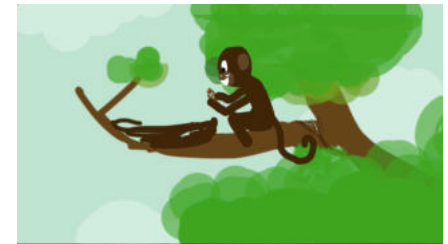
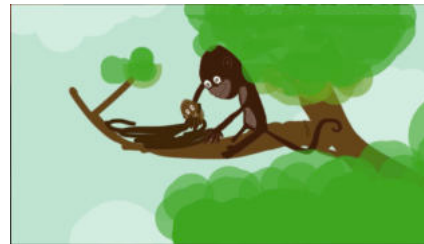
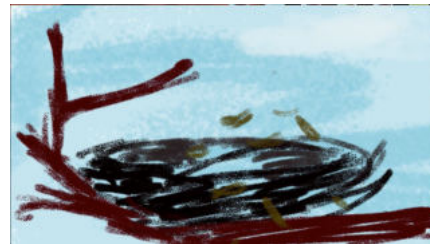
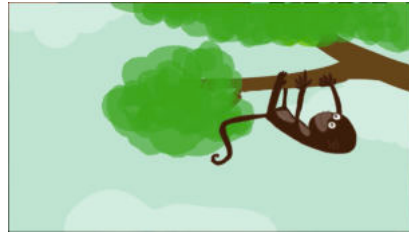
# Story Board







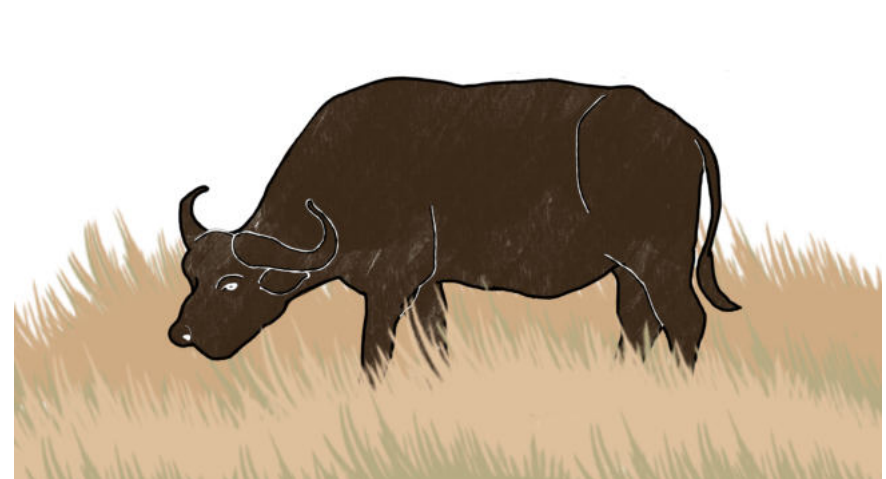
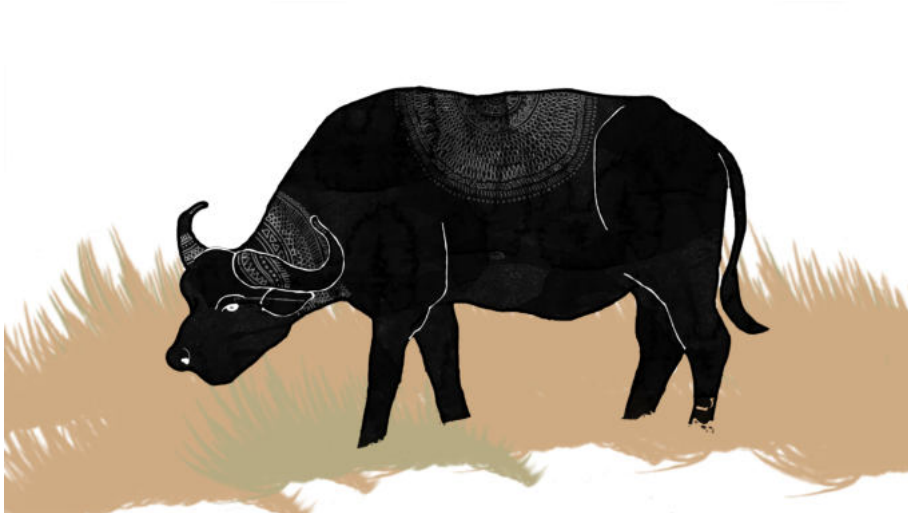








# Character Design







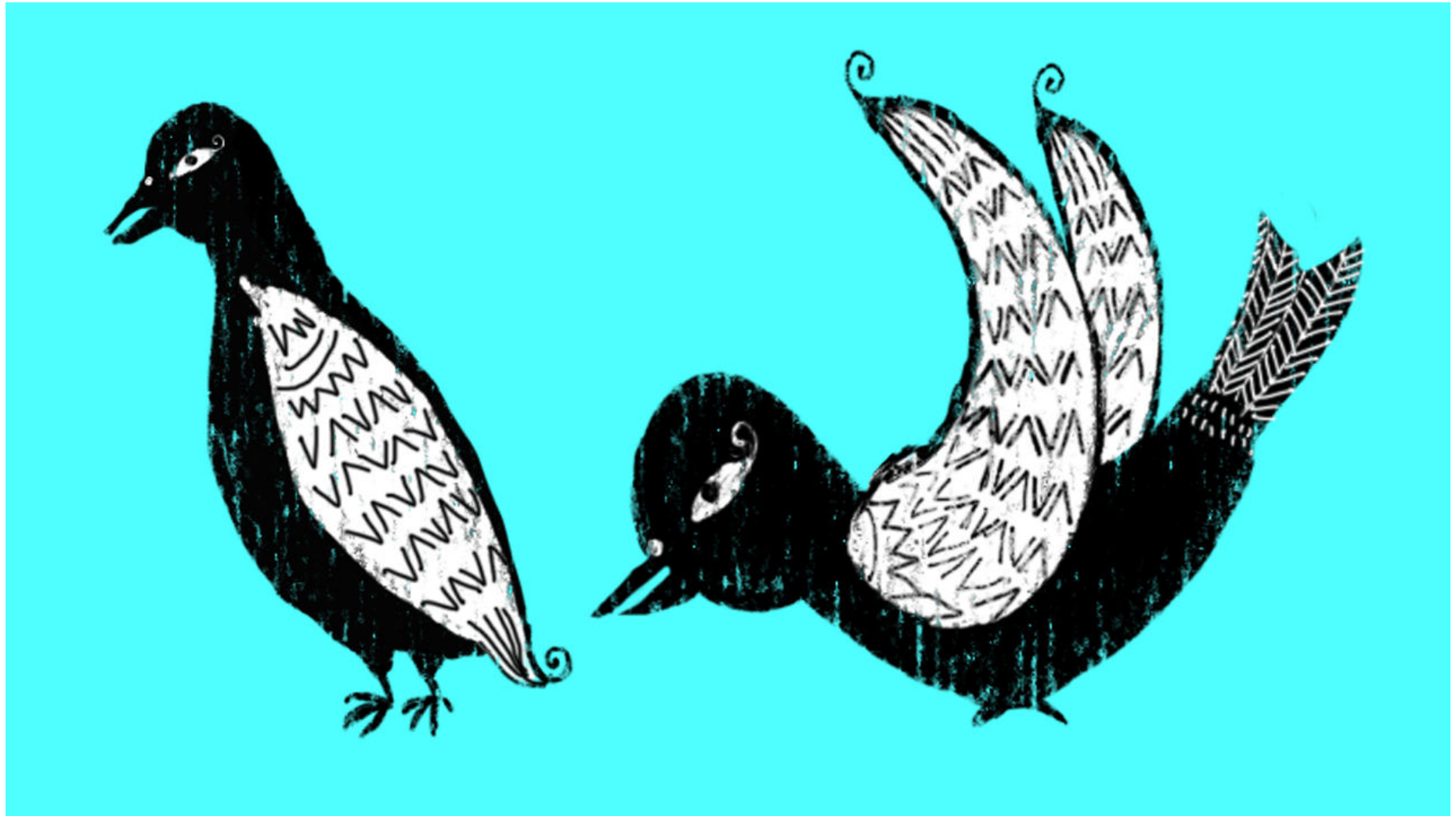
Final Buffalo Character

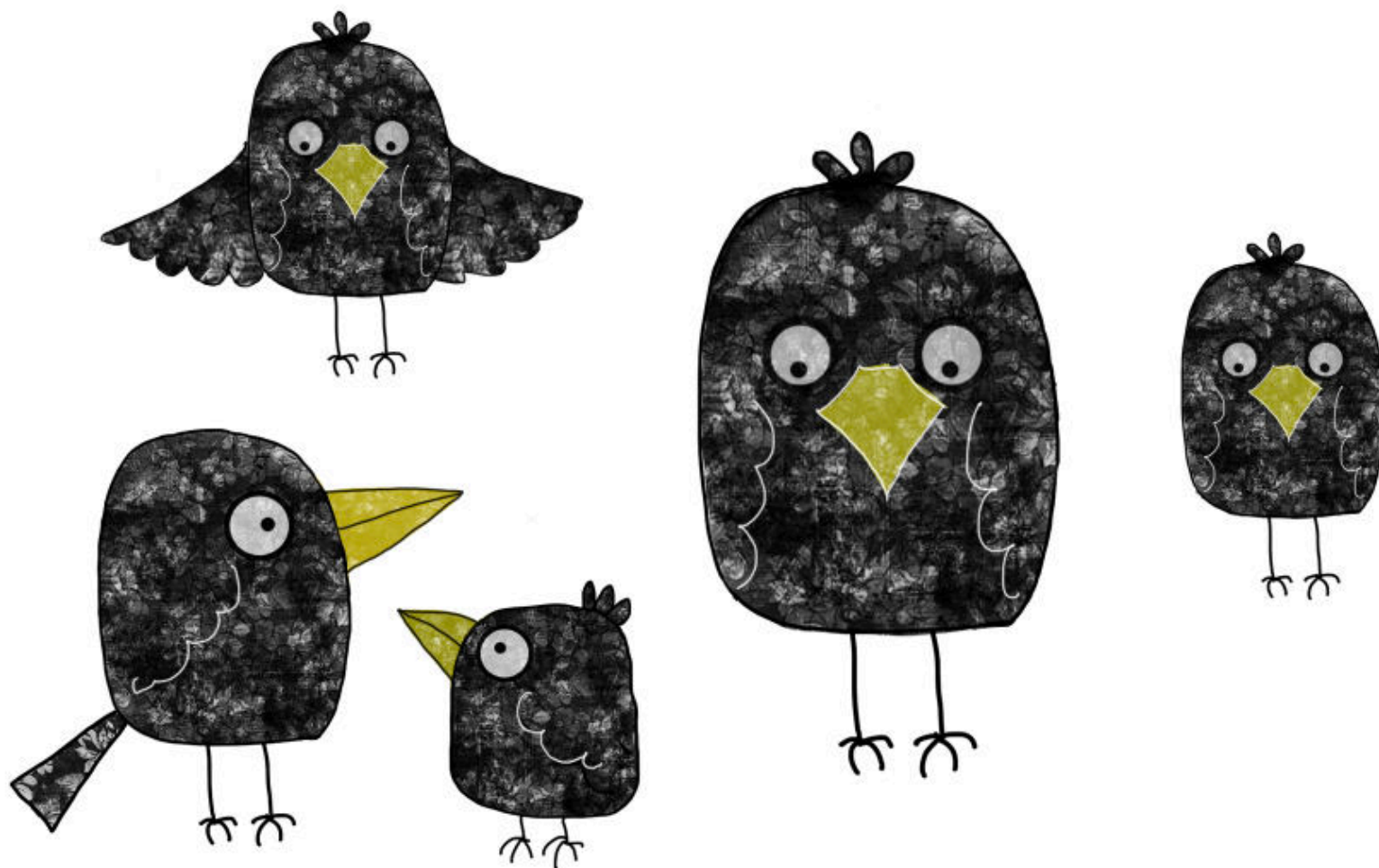




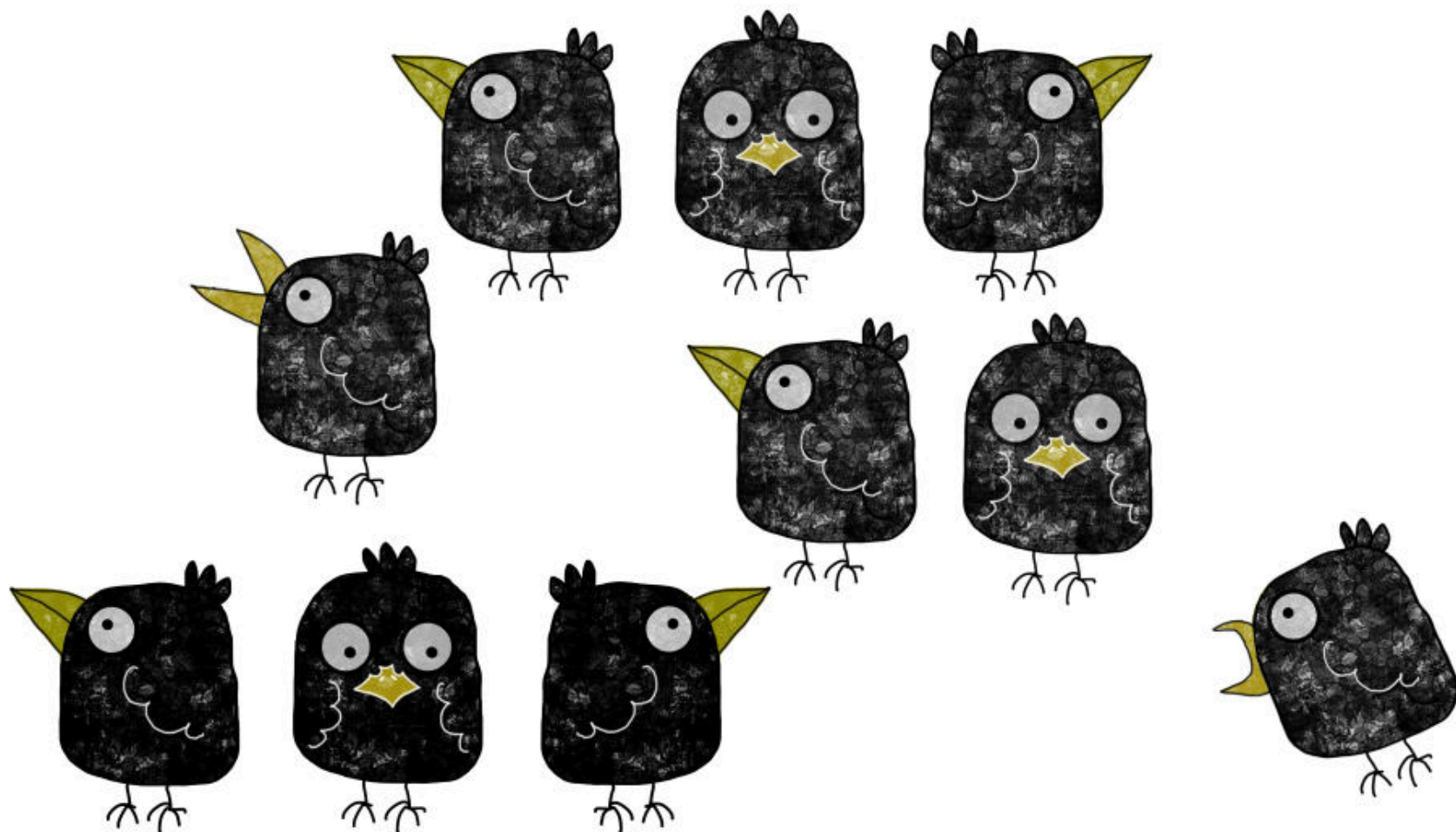


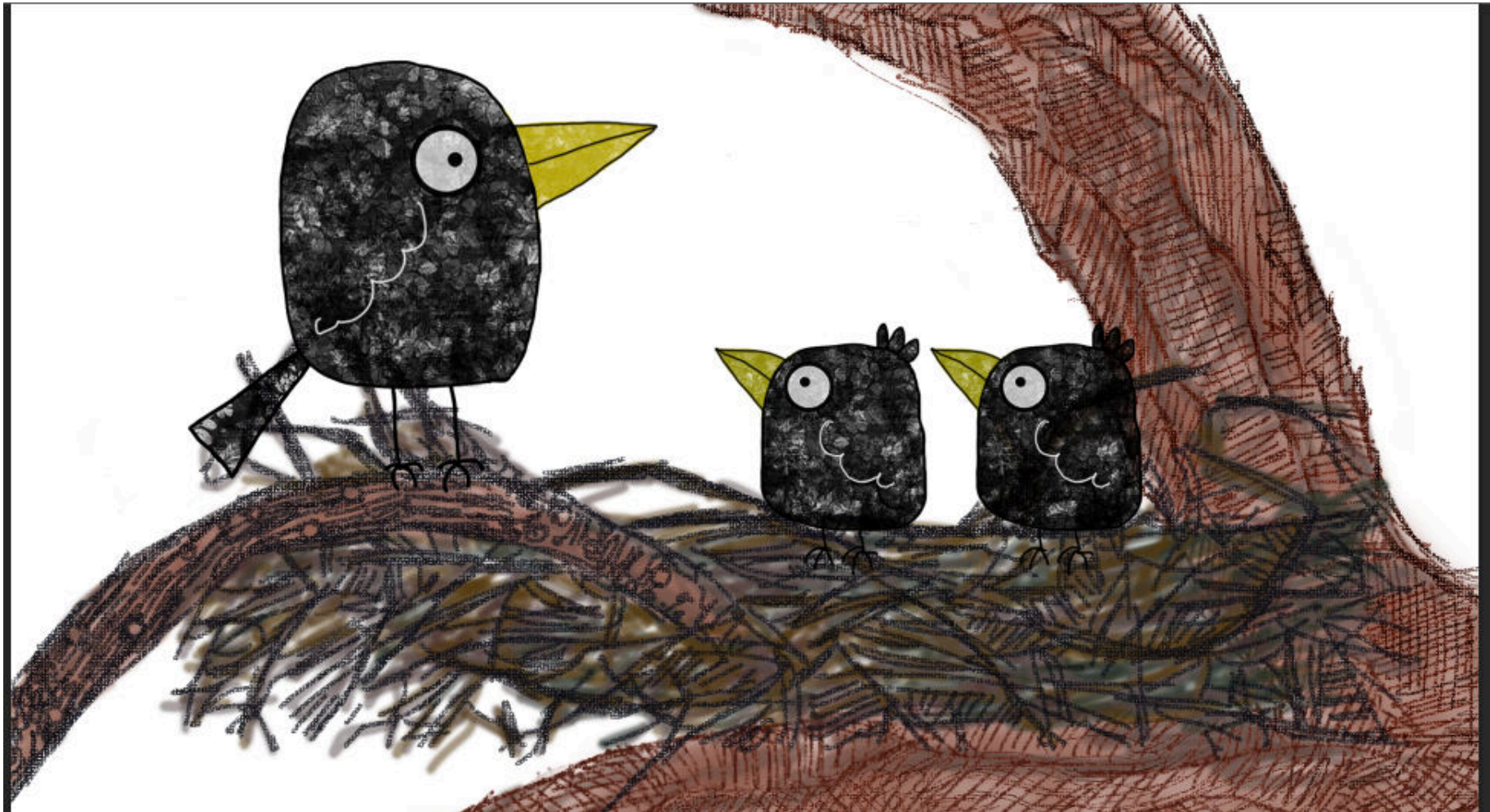






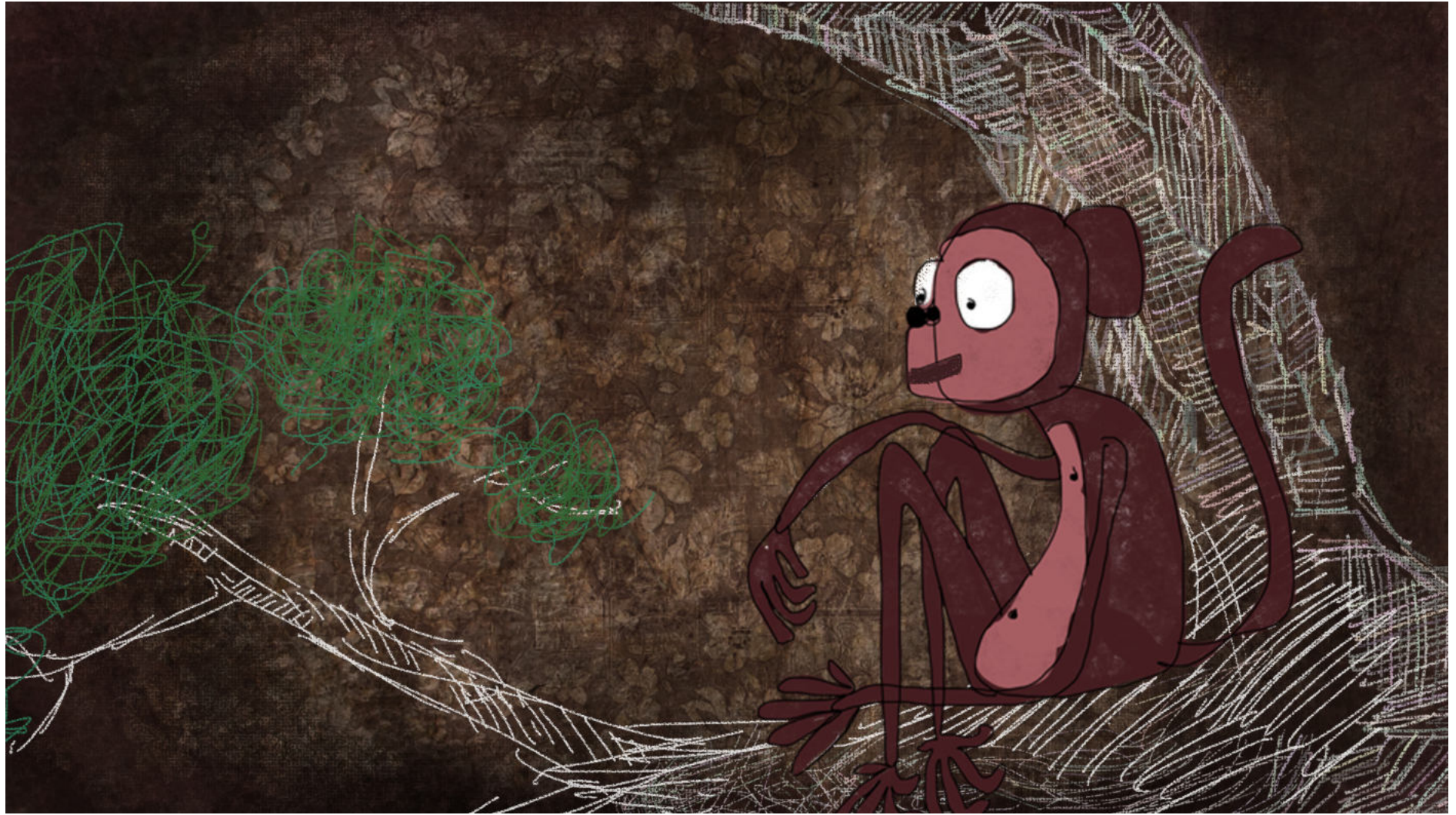






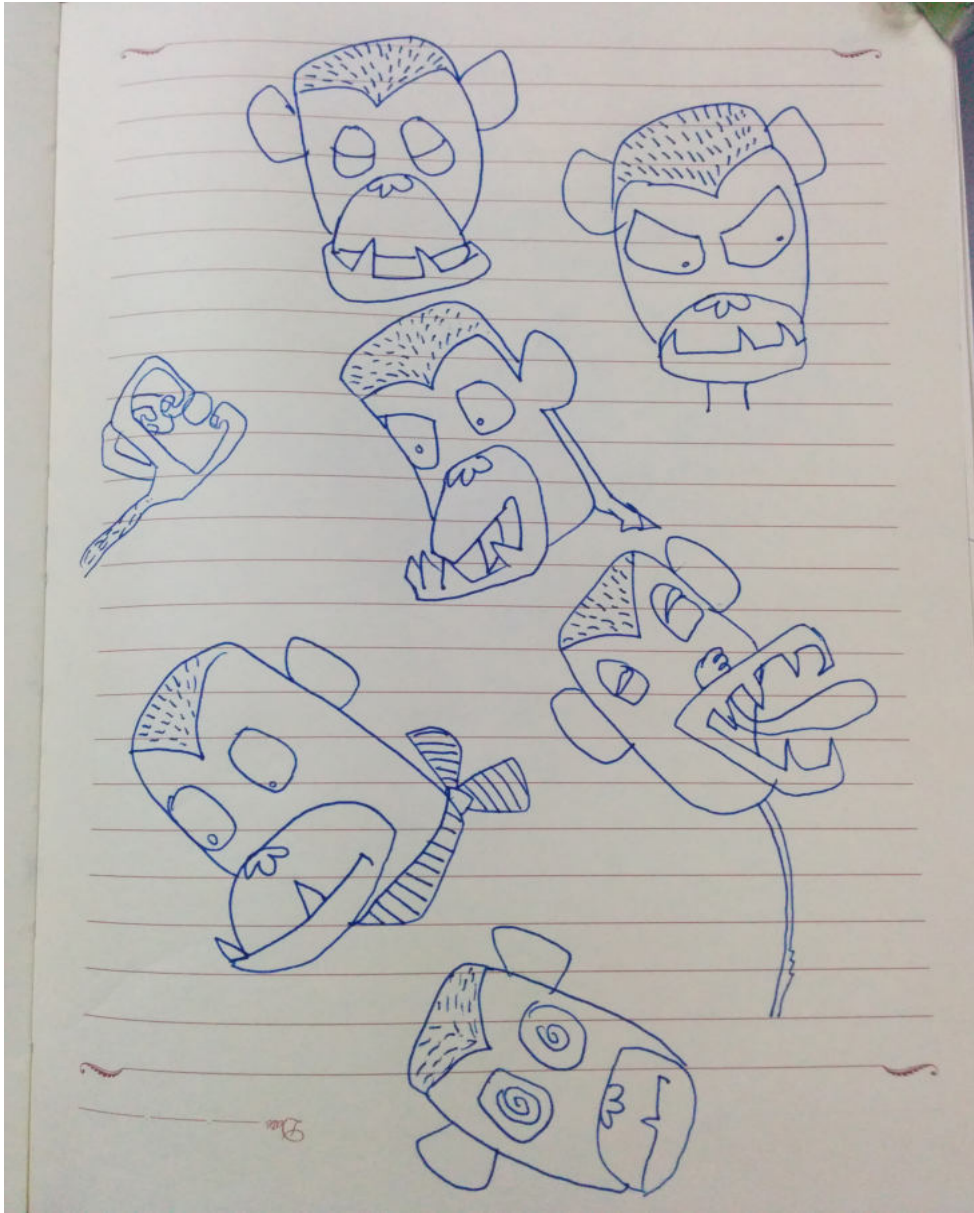














## Look and feel

I wanted to give a hand drawn, sketch effect in the film. The colour scheme is earthy and also have used few bright colours too. Colours are selected from the actual paintings of Ajanta. In the background I have used floral pattern, which is also inspired from Ajanta Painting. I have also used cloth and rusty wall texture to the background.

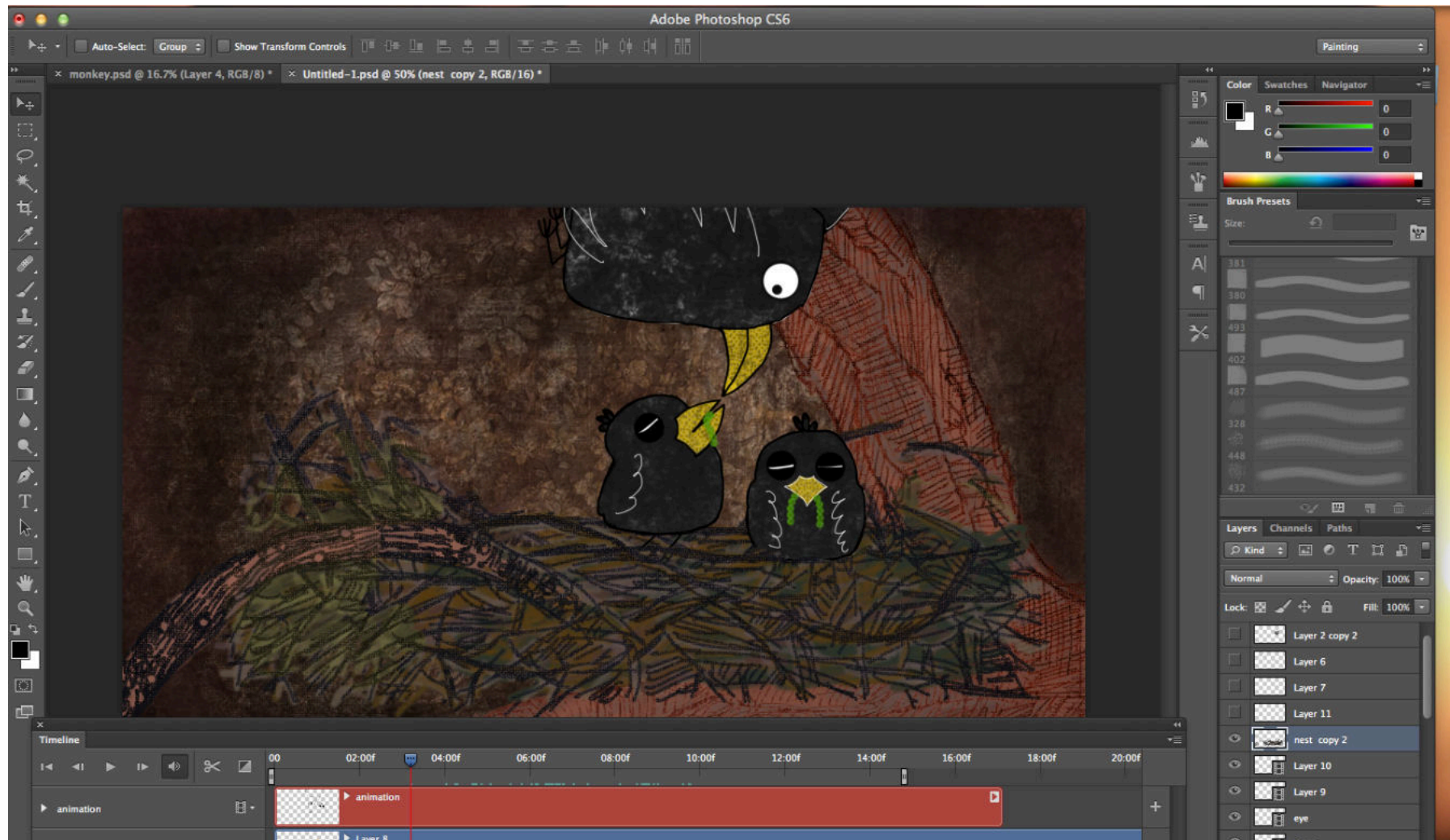




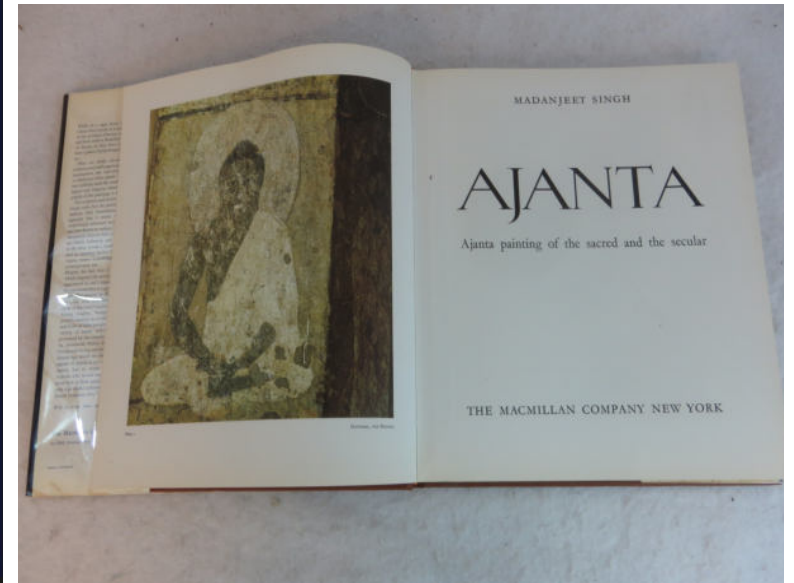
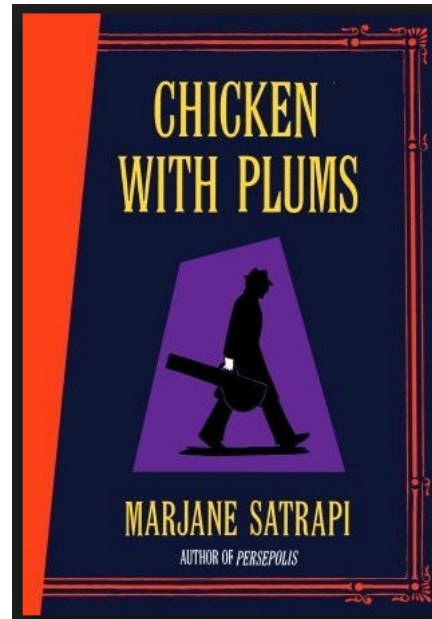
## Production Technique

I'm drawing frame-by-frame rough animation and colouring it in Adobe Photoshop. Timing & animating in Adobe After Effect and for compositing I'm using Adobe Premier Software. Following are some of the images while working.





## Inspiration



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Research -

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#### BOOK

The cave paintings of Ajanta by MADANJEET SINGH