

Midhun Mohan
Communication Design



A Belli- gerent Being



Icons and Symbols

Icons and Symbols

A book on 2D Form Explorations for Fighter Fish

Content

Introduction 09

Anatomy study 11

Simplifying form 15

Essense of fighter fish 17

Explorations

Shape play 21

Lines and texture 27

Geometric forms 31

Dual colour 39

Cluster of forms 43

Fitting into shapes 51

Incomplete shapes 57

Abstract ideas 61

Conclusion 71

Introduction

This explorative project is intended towards understanding the intricacy of creating simplified visual representations of a selected entity while being sensitive towards the qualities of form and varied levels of abstraction possible.

Further, the project explores translation of abstract ideas and non visual characteristics associated with or complements the entity into visuals inspired by its form.

The entity that was chosen for this form exploration was a betta fish, popularly known as the fighter fish. It was chosen based on personal fascination towards them and the challenge of visualising something that has a changing form.

This booklet contains form exploration specifically for male half moon (HM) and over-half moon (OHM) variants of fighter fishes.

Methodology

1. Research

Understanding the fish and its way of life was an important aspect of the initial study which gave directions for explorations with form.

2. Anatomical study

Observing the anatomy of the fish to understand its various features, movements and forms it makes while moving about.

3. Refining

Simplifying the anatomical sketch into line drawings with varied level of details to identify the essential characteristic features.

4. Concept

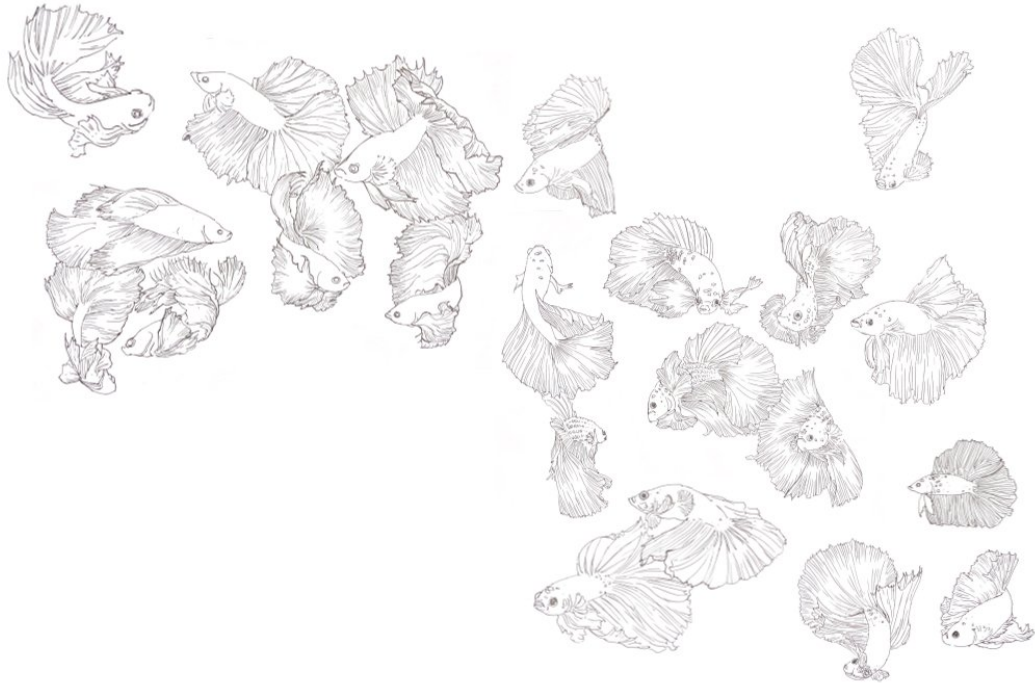
Visualising attributes that are, as well as not associated with the fish: its innate nature, the way it moves in water, colours, geometric form etc provided cues for visual exploration.

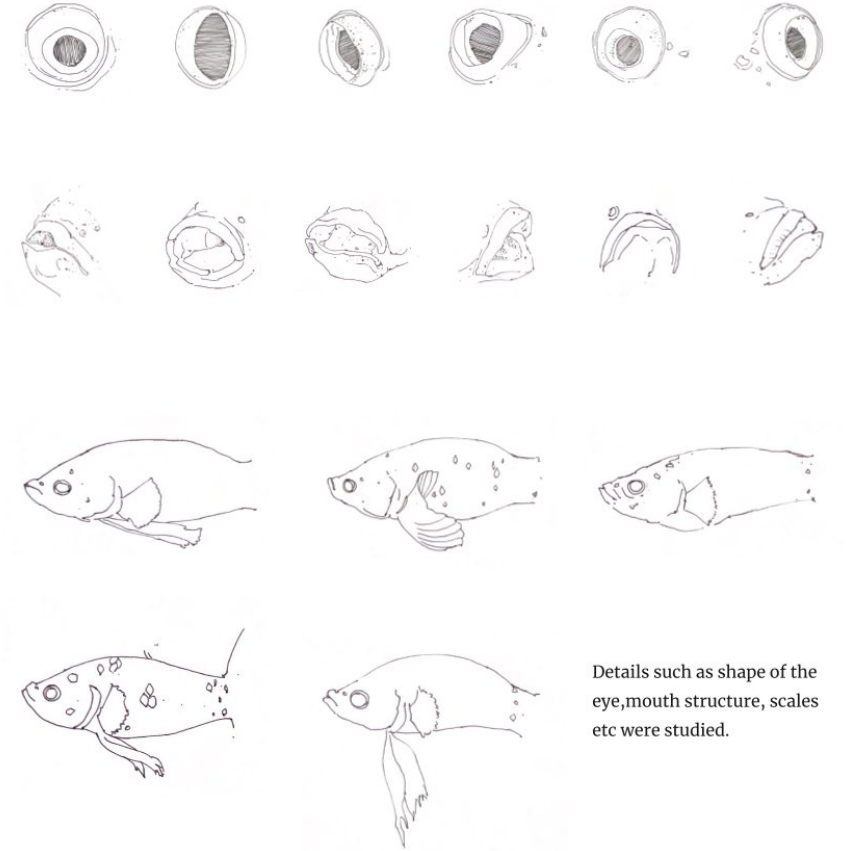
5. Abstraction

Selecting abstract ideas which complements the fish's nature and explore on their symbolic representations inspired from the fish's form.

Anatomy study

The anatomy of the fish was observed closely and sketched down to get a good understanding of its various body parts and their qualities.

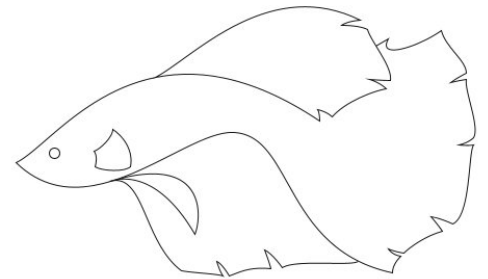
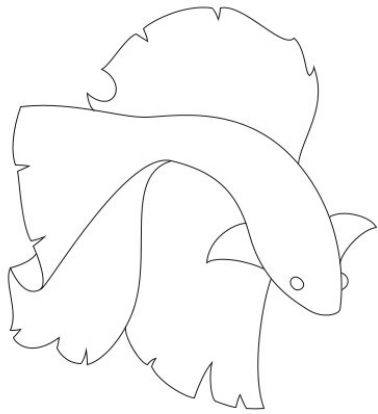




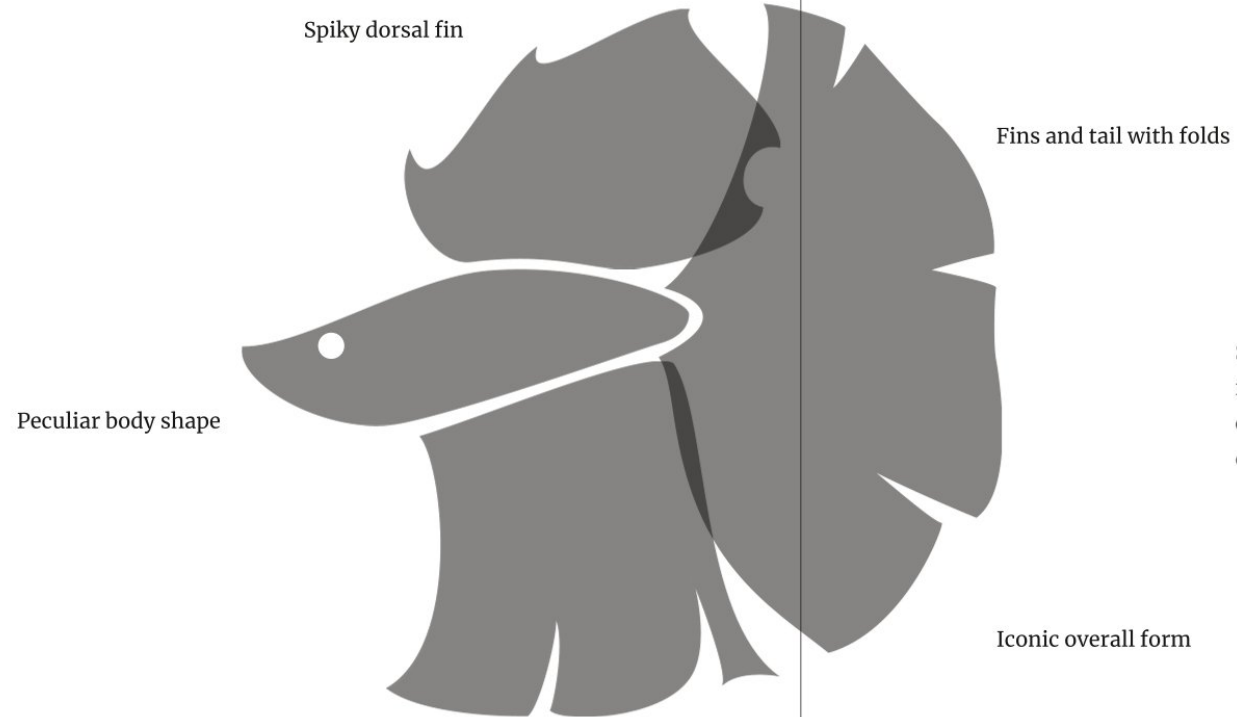
Details such as shape of the eye, mouth structure, scales etc were studied.

Simplifying form

The realistic sketches were simplified by reducing details to understand the underlying basic shapes and flow of lines.



Essense of a fighter fish



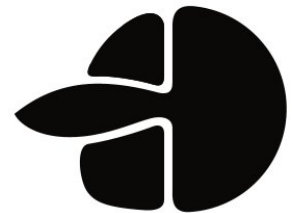
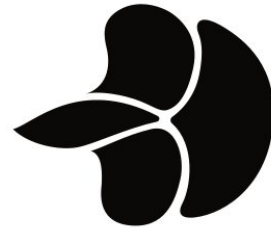
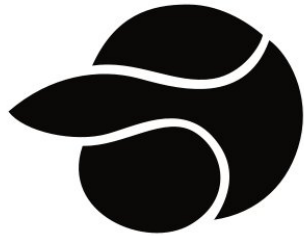
Simplifying the form by reducing details helps to identify those specific characteristic features that captures the essence of the fish. These features differentiates the fighter fish from other fishes.

Explorations

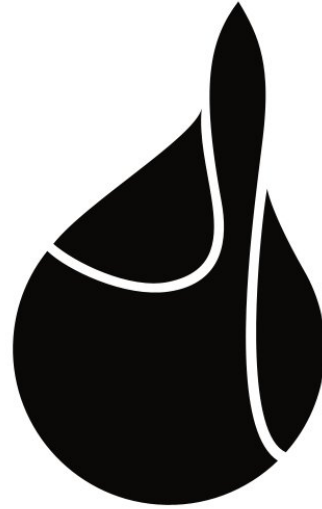
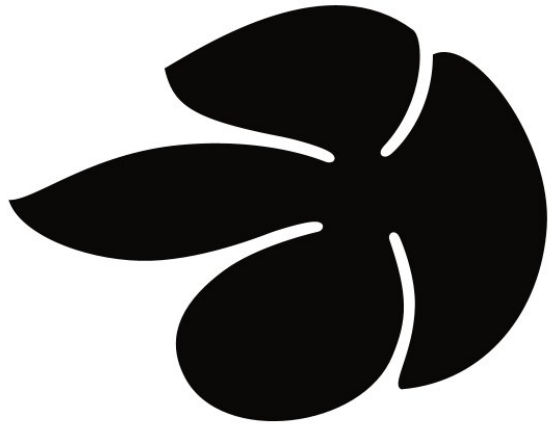
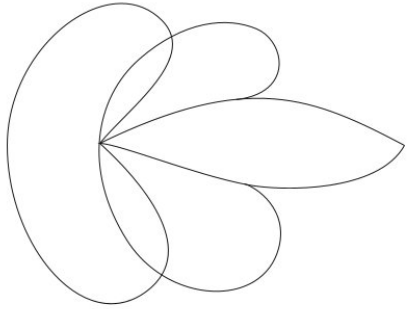
Based on the characteristic features identified, graphical representations of the fish were created using various techniques and levels of abstraction.

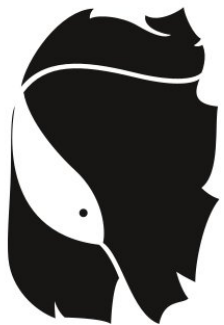
Shape play

If we look at the body of a fighter fish, it can be seen that there are certain prominent shapes created by the cluster of body, fin and tail. These shapes were imagined in a variety of ways by joining and further dividing them.



Further explorations with
shapes with various levels
of complexities.





Visualising the fish using their fins and tail alone.



Adding more characteristic details to the fins and tail, figuring out ways to visualise their folds and overlappings.





Lines and textures

The following explorations use lines to visualise the details of the fins and tail cluster. Variations in line quality created interesting textures that makes them visually richer .

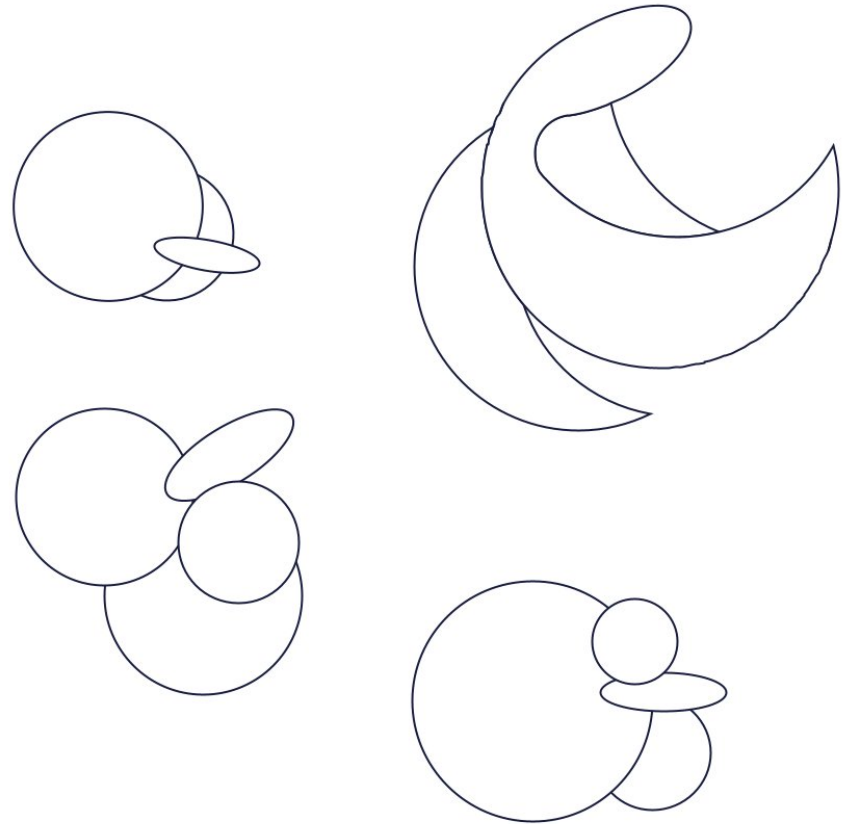
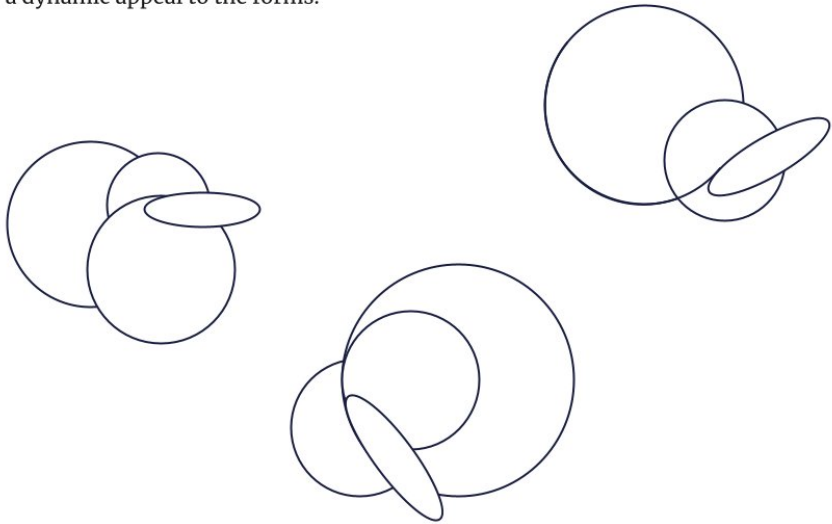
Various line qualities such as even and tapering were tried out to understand their visual impact with the patterns and textures they created .

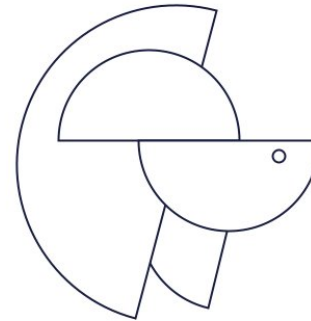
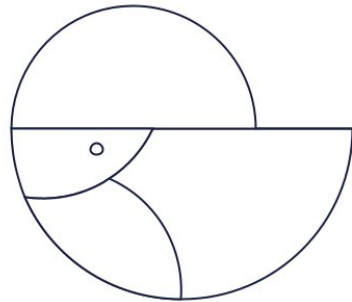
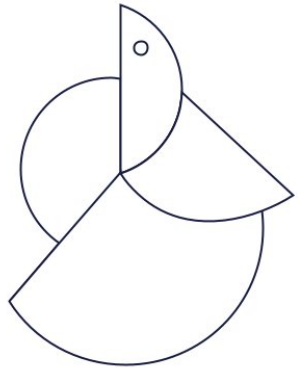
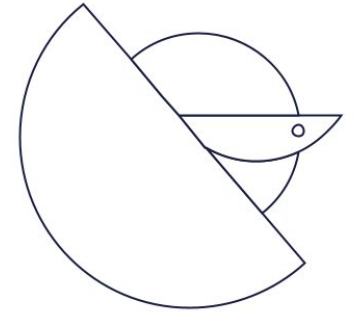
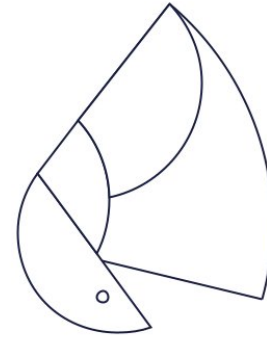
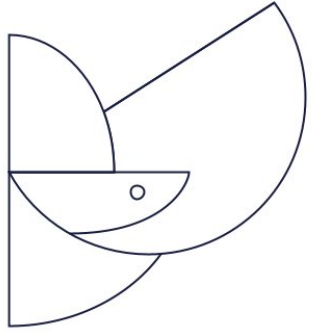




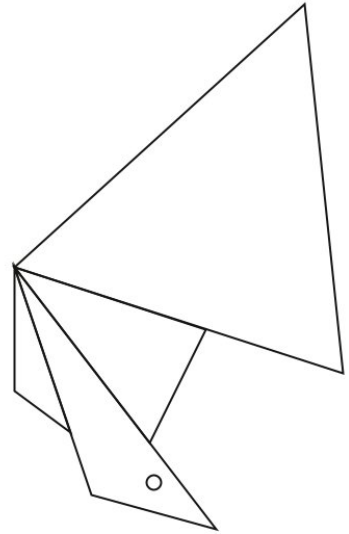
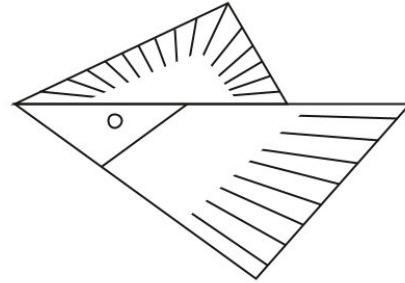
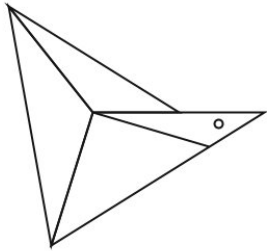
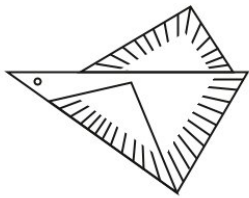
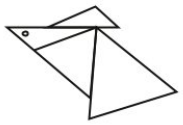
Geometric forms

The fish having a seemingly free flowing organic form when visualised with rigid geometric lines and blocky forms gives interesting results. The static and stable quality of geometric shapes are played around with different orientations to give a dynamic appeal to the forms.

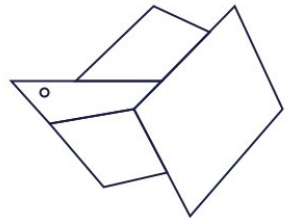
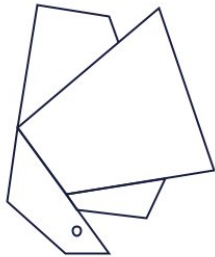
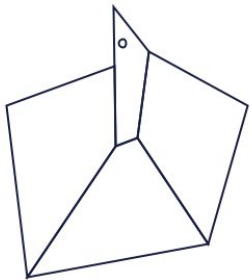
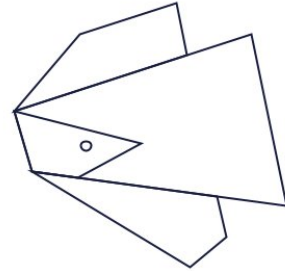
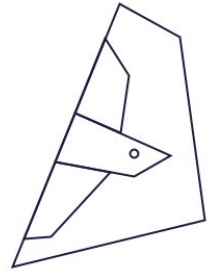
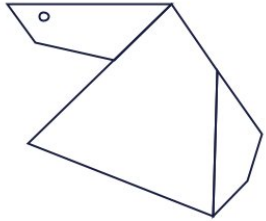
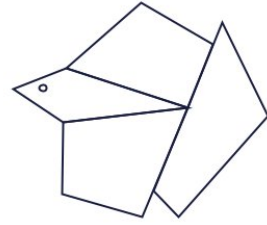
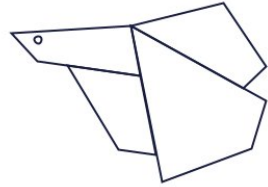
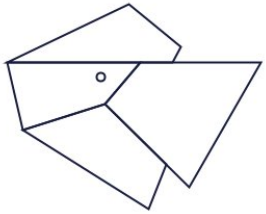




Form explorations using
only wedge shapes.



Form explorations using shapes limited to triangles.



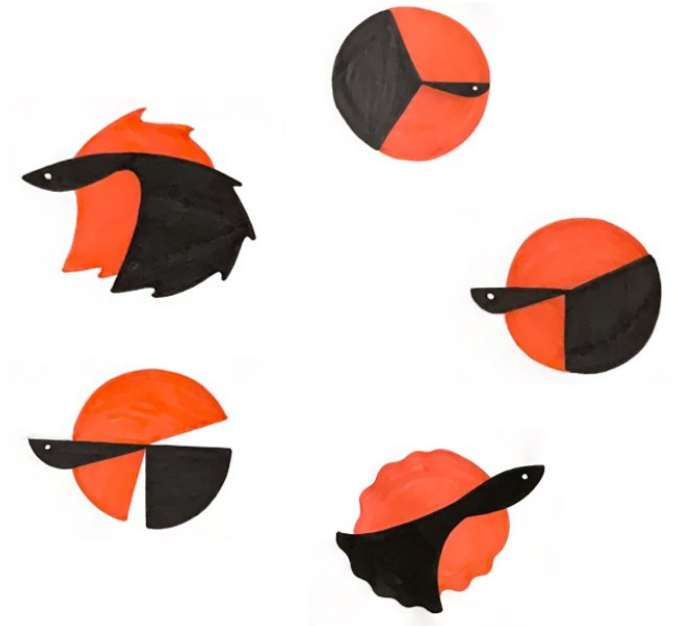
Form explorations using
quadrilaterals to represent
the fish.

Dual colour

Colour being one of the main striking feature of the fish, iterations with more than one colour were explored to understand the impact it creates. It can be seen that the use of colour, brings out the essence of the fish even more compared to previous versions.

Another aspect of using colour is that it helps to visualise overlappings of fins in a more simple yet prominent way.





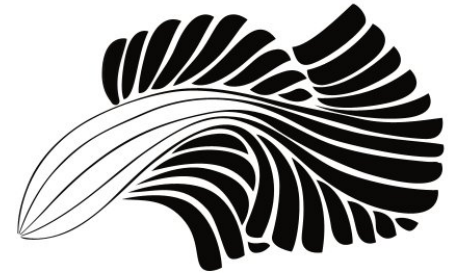
Dual colour iterations also explored various styles to add details to the fins, with variations which are closer to realistic as well as stylised forms.

Cluster of forms

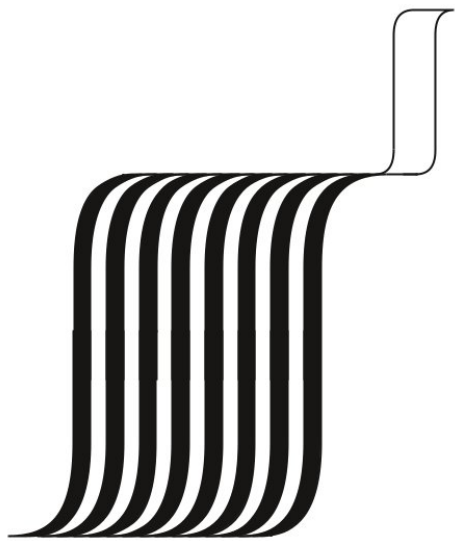
The fabric like fins of the fighter fish is one of its distinct features that helps one identify the fish. This very detail of folded fins need to be retained to capture the essence of the fish so that it becomes easier for the people to perceive it as a fighter fish.



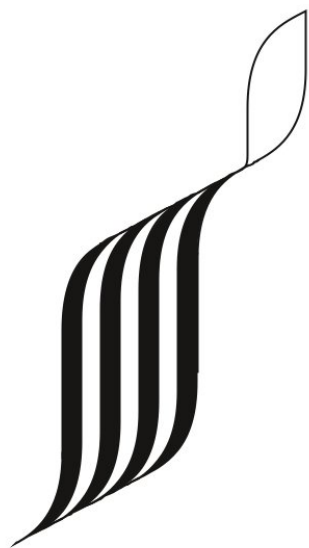
Forms of varying qualities were explored to get an understanding of the appeal it creates and the ideas they convey. Depending on the form, the fish can be made to appear friendly or aggressive.



Free flowing forms complement
the actual appearance of the fish.



Here the form is more similar to that of a rooster than a fish. Let's see how it be tweaked to look more like a fighter fish.



Applying an angular tension to the form makes it look more like a fish. But then, it looks like a guppy than a fighter fish.

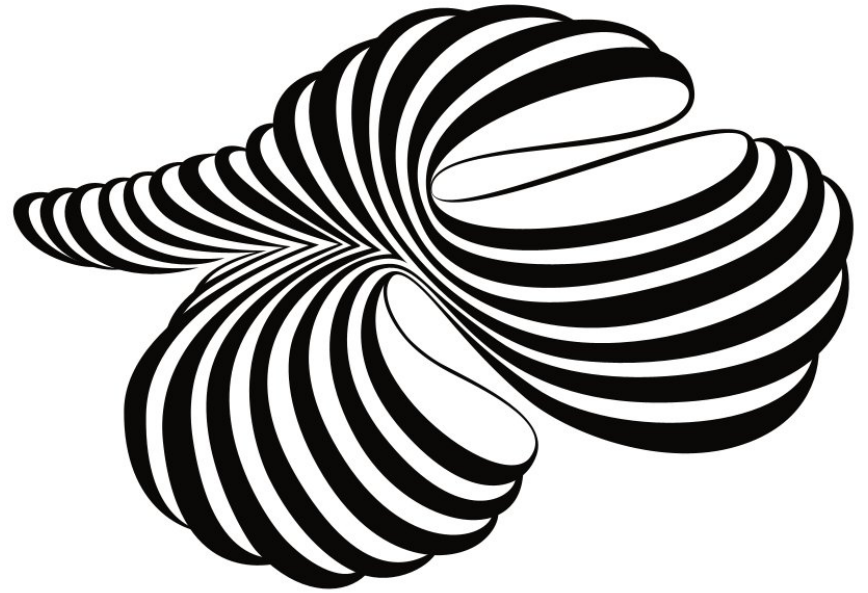


With broader tail and a fin, the form now is much more closer to a fighter fish.



Adding details of fold to the tail to give a stronger indication of a fighter fish.

Lines are modulaed to give an impression of volume, creating the various clusters of fins and tail. Here, parts of the body is used to indicate the entire fish.



Fitting into forms

The form is simplified by removing certain details and retaining only those essential ones that helps identify the fish. Varying degrees of abstraction were explored to understand the its impact on perception.



Fitting the fish's form into rigid shapes, here in circles, helps to break away from the generic and explore new ways of visualising the otherwise familiar form.



Here is a series of transformation from one posture to another, where the form is fit into partial circles.

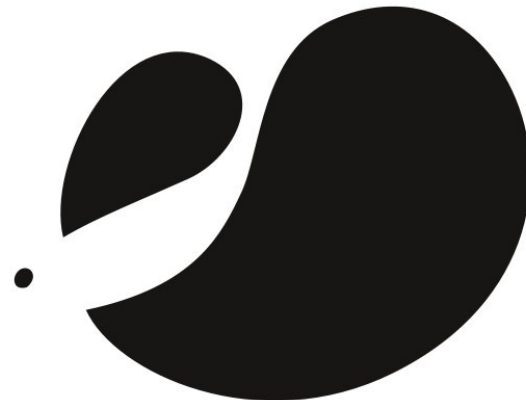
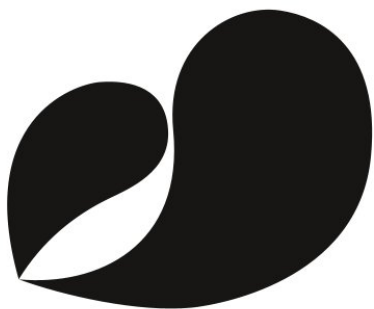


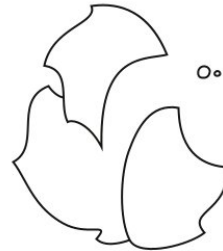
Combination of techniques were explored to create unique forms.



Incomplete shapes

Playing with positive and negative spaces to explore interesting forms with iconic postures of the fish.





Combinations of techniques such as incomplete form, line work and fitting into shapes.

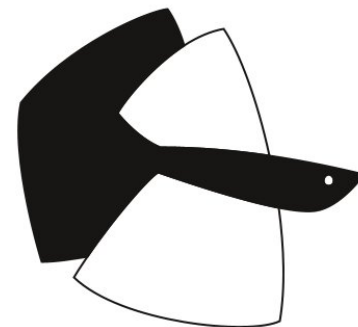
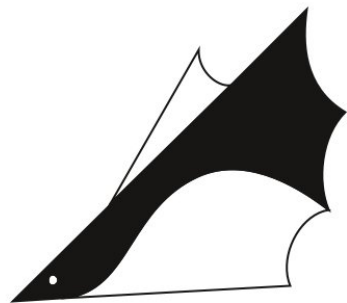
Visualising abstract ideas

Even though mesmerisingly beautiful, he is a fighter who wouldn't think twice when it comes to asserting his dominance in the space he lives. This contrasting characters when visualised leads to interesting forms.

The belligerent character of the fish is visualised with the help of pointy form and lines of different qualities.



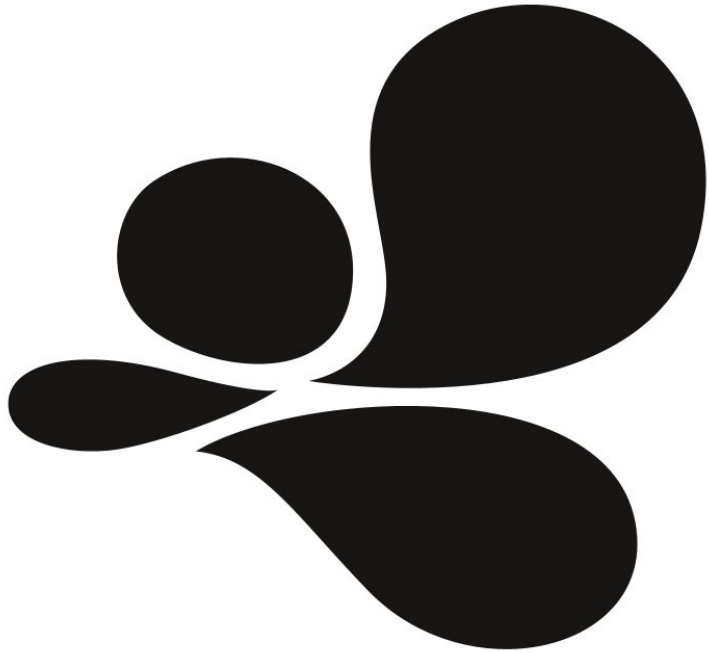
Parts of the fins and tail with its free flowing quality is used to represent the whole fish.



Pointy features are used to give a 'not so friendly' appeal to the fighter.

Be like water..

Visualising the source of life of the fish as inspired by its form.



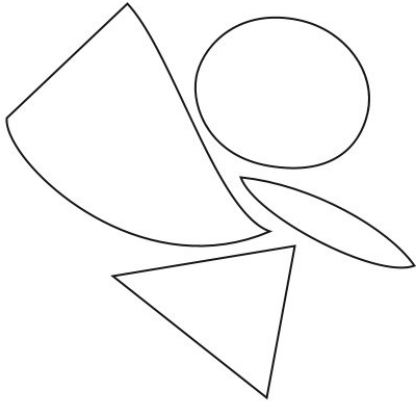
The form of the fish is used to visualise a splash of water.



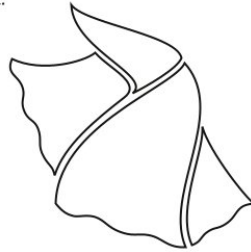
Changing..indefinite

The flowy form of the fish keeps changing based on how it moves in water, either gracefully or in agitation. This indefinite nature of forms created by the fish's fins are visualised to evoke an appeal of continuous change.

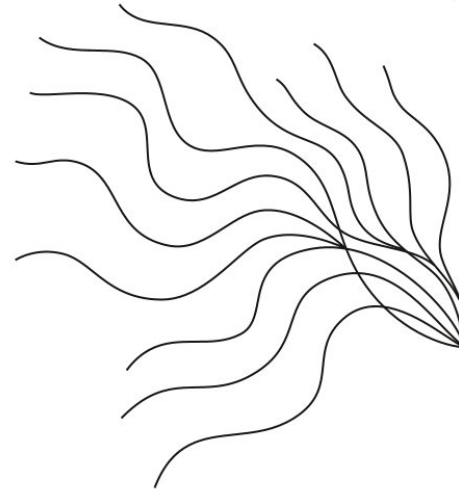
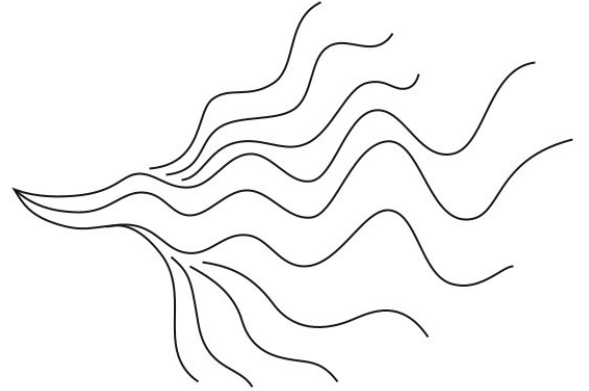
Here the cluster of forms are visualised as if spreading in all directions to create a sense of movement.



Using different shapes to indicate the body, fin and tail cluster.



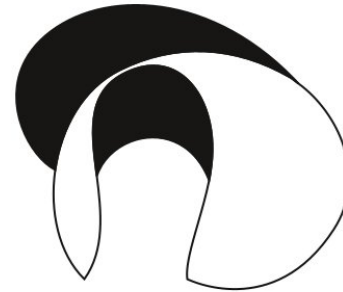
The rapid wiggles in the fins when the fish moves about quickly in water is visualised using line quality. The sharp form towards the head adds to it's agressiveness.



Changing the quality of lines by making them smoother creates a more graceful appeal to the form. Here, the form of the body complements the intended visual appeal.

Balance

Belligerent and beautiful, a balance of contrasting characteristics visualised using smoothly flowing forms that grows from a pointy lean head and curls around. Colour used adds to the sense of balance.



Conclusion

It is fascinating to explore the semantic dimensions of form, how its quality and characteristics can lead the viewer to create a certain meaning out of it. To have control over how a visual will be interpreted is a task not to be taken lightly.

This project helped to be more sensitive of form and how even miniscule changes can affect the way it is perceived. It also helped to develop an eye for details and to look at things in a more analytical way.

I would like to thank Prof. Prasad Bokil for his guidance and support throughout the project with invaluable inputs, directions and nudges.