

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

## Master of Design, Animation

### Project 2 Report

Topic: Individual and Society

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## Table of Contents:

Introduction ...	1
Background ...	1
Concept ...	6
Constructing rhythm ...	8
Conclusion and further work ...	10
Inspirations ...	11

## Introduction:

How individual and a society connect with each other, how does an individual shapes a society and the ways in which society affects an individual. There are various branches within this broad spectrum, such as identity, conformity, social violence, oppression, gender bias, caste based discrimination.

Talking about this tendency we see in India majorly, of not caring about another's suffering while protecting and loving our family. Elements in our society that are looked down upon in apathetic manner such as beggars, construction workers, manual scavengers. I wanted to work on something that can point out this tendency clearly and to create a need in the viewer to look at the world in a saner way. To respect every individual and to understand that they are going through the same stream of life, to break these walls of social class and status and show a commonality in every life.

They are you, you are them.

The same emotions everyone feels. Same relations everyone has. If we can see this sameness, through our differences, we maybe will be softer in our minds. They have close ones too, they are helpless too. They are trying, struggling in their own way. In this world. Simultaneous lives, real lives, as real as you feel.

Part of the same society, same world, but another individual, can you see them?

Their lives, their margins, things which we see so clearly, errors which we see, we know, they are living inside them.

I want to make the viewer try and get a sense of their walls of closure, limits of knowledge and ability and decisions springing from it, in an attempt to see them up close, and through this see our society and ourselves.

## Background:

My works seem to gravitate towards this topic and I find this area very necessary to be addressed. Towards how we think as a society and how as an individual our every action is linked to the larger society we live in.

In my internship(May-July 2017) I interviewed three families who had faced caste based violence, and made a story *book* on it. Through this I came to understand first hand, the lives and constraints of poverty, social violence, laws and how people's lives revolve around court cases.

From one of the stories covered in the internship, concept for the film was constructed. The story as written in the book is -

Rekha. 20 years old. Her world is silent. She sits at the back of the room with her brother on one side and her cousin sister on the other, playing a game on a mobile phone. She is happy and she has forgotten, no trace in her eyes, there is but happiness that dances in them which is joined in by her smile. She looks at her mother who is tensed, talking something, she doesn't know or knows but doesn't want to know. She is back in her game. She is very elegant, I didn't seem to believe she was mentally ill.



Her mother looks back at her with affection and protection, which Rekha even in her ignorance, acknowledges. Her mother looks at us, her eyes have a determination, a blazing question, not painted with the feeling of victimhood, but with a determination to make that question visible. She talks so boldly, that the surroundings around her quiver. The house around us, a humble and plain house transforms into something strong, it is built by this woman who is claiming herself in this space and in this time. She looks at us, saying something as her brows flinch, there is pain but not at the mercy of the world. Then when the words slid by, we hang on, one two seconds still, holding onto her gaze, that pierces through us and neither asks nor answers but stays with the echo they cause. Then reality colours in and we are back.





She has the power and humility only love can afford and grant. She has a look that she cannot and would not fear, the confidence only a person who has stood up can have. I gazed around the room, there was a lady at the door, listening to her very keenly, with compressed eyebrows and fingers to her lips, she felt the pain as the woman was reciting, she plugged in reactions which we were too decent to blurt out. On her right, against the wall sat Rekha's father, he didn't utter a single word, all the while we were there, he sat looking at Rekha's mother, with a complex look, with his hands frozen and a book in it, I didn't ask which book. Both her parents worked as paid labourers, under no scheme, they scurry away their finances, and feed their children, wanting to educate them. At any cost, in fact cost doesn't even feature in this decision.

As we pass around our city and pass people on a construction site or opening up a gutter, do we think of them as people with feelings, hopes, kids? Or as just another body amongst the great squirming mass. I was sitting here, in a construction worker's home, in a small room but I saw them a human. I felt their angst and pain and the cost of asserting justice in a land pest-ed with money and favours. It is the same around us too, we have accepted it, what a tragedy. We have accepted it so much that sitting here, the word 'rape' cannot make us shiver, the mind goes blank after that word, but the mother refused to leave it blank, she told us, that they took her kid to the fields, were beating her to death when a man heard them, that is when they fled, she was unable speak, see, hear. Disoriented. Bleeding. Can you imagine, losing your beliefs in an incident, losing the fragility of trust that we function on every day? To be betrayed so powerfully by life? She sneaked a glance at her child, and continued, what would be dwelling in her heart while saying all this, I cannot imagine. She said her daughter was so frightened, she used to lock both doors, check multiple times and only then would sleep. She and her husband would let Rekha do it, wouldn't question or stop her.

She says, her daughter breaks down in every four to five days. An unbearable pain swells up in her head, which didn't use to happen before this incident. Rekha cannot bear talking about it. While entering the house, Rupali Tai had told us to not expect Rekha to sit with us during the interview, she cannot bear to hear about the incident.

Her mother said she could have taken this ahead if only she had had education, if she could read and understand. She is dependent now. On people around her. Even though she doesn't know how to read or write, she says, she has a human sense.

There were kids cluttering up to peep in my sketchbook, chattering, giggling. Then someone would scold them and they would run off, only to return and start piling up again. For such a grim reality, the atmosphere was flooded with innocence of kids. There was a lady who stood by the door, selling gajra(a garland of flowers that women pin up in their hair), all women in the room, broke the conversation, were putting up gajras silently, some enjoying the scent and Rekha's sister helping her with tying the gajra. Everyone helping each other. No words were spoken in those few moments, no class, no past, no future. Smiles, scents, flowers and a human happiness.

There were threats to her, Rekha's mother continued, from unknown people, even women asking her to step down, claiming the incident has happened, it is over, now what can be done. She said she will take it forward, anyhow, anyway. So that this should not happen again, the women who say all this, if the same thing would happen to them, would make them kill themselves wondering how could they have said this- to ask another girl forget a crime and live on as if nothing happened. The crime was done by people of another caste as Ruplai Tai mentioned, crimes against a different caste are more heinous and gruesome.

Rekha's mother said she felt the pain, she saw and she heard, her kid screaming in pain, her kid not coping with the very life that the mother gave her. How does she stop talking about this and putting ahead a crime that is not only done by two people, but a crime of a society, every mindset, every inaction adding up to it. Rape as a crime, why is it seen as a crime against a girl? It is a violation of another human being, it is so low, so beastly, where you cannot see the pain in someone's eyes or their screams mean nothing to you. A society where rape is so common, what does this say about the society? About you? That we have accepted it. The one who suffers does suffer anyhow, but where does it end? Where does the boundary close off? What went into the mind of a person to plan a rape with his friends on a mentally ill and a handicapped girl? And she is in front of me, smiling, with gajra in her hair, and shine in her eyes. I won't say she has beaten her culprits, that is delusional. I am saying life will exist and will be happy and sad whatever. But does that mean such gruesomeness should exist. Let's start by sowing humanity in our very hearts, to not reduce another being to an object who has to serve us, but as a creation, as beautiful as we are, as creations of the same abode. Can we light up the humanity in us, and see in its light, everything around us?



### Concept:

Initial idea was to make a rhythmic collage of various events strung together, to give an experiential feeling, like a first hand view of apathy that surrounds us everywhere. Events which I have personally seen along with the incident of visiting Rekha's family. Rekha's story to be used as a setting towards this introspective flow. Like a poem, experiences of society, beaded together. I was trying to invoke empathy by showing vulnerability of everyone of us. This concept further down progressed into showing of loss of beauty and the ugliness that we see around us. Various questions came up at this stage with regards to my role in the film and the treatment of the subject.

What is the third person narration thing, it comes from two people talking about a third person. What is the camera? Who is it? How do I enter a sphere, an environment without intruding. It is a past I talk about, like I am sitting in a group of people and telling them a story, and repeated versions of it makes me remove myself from it, it appears that the character in my story is acting on her accord, because I never add the word "I". Should I or should I not?

I studied and compared filmmaking styles of directors I liked, such as Hayao Miyazaki, Ozu, Andrei Tarkovsky, Abbas Kiarostami, Akira Kurosawa, Makoto Shinkai, Satoshi Kon. Understanding the differences in approaching a topic. I also was collecting strong experiences of my life to be put into this string. I liked the visual style and darkness portrayed in Caroline Leaf's works.

### Explored different media:



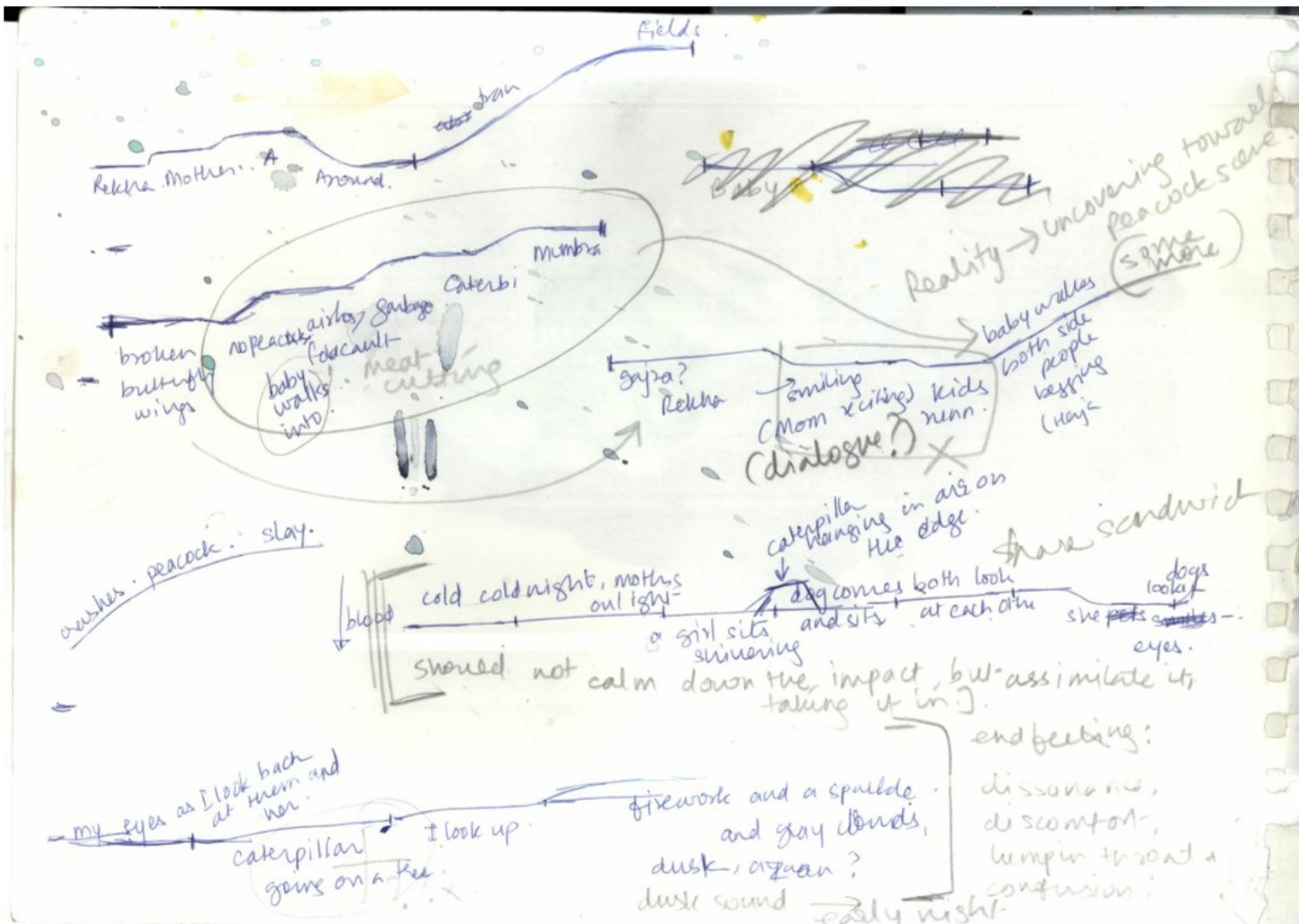




Explored more by [animating](#) in different styles.

## Constructing rhythm:

Various versions of the collage was tried, it turned to be incoherent, and lacking a binding factor. I prepared the sound track first and then added visuals on it. Then decided to design it, in terms of intensity of a scene, like composing the whole film. Following is an attempt towards that:



Here is the corresponding [animatic](#). Following are some shots from the animatic and some concepts towards it.









#### Conclusion and further work:

Later developments suggested it is better to work on a smaller scale, so the story was trimmed down to have only Rekha's story, being narrated by her mother, to a person who is not shown on screen. We had the original audio of the interview, I edited it, to form a base soundtrack, on which visuals will be drawn.

Rekha's mother is recollecting Rekha's condition, her own struggle and her stances towards the society in this [soundtrack](#).

Going ahead, we need to fit in the visuals and audio to create an atmosphere that reflects the mundane and also gives us a peek into the terrible realities. Also to capture the psyche of the characters engrossed in their world. Challenges faced during the process till now was to understand my mind and its expression, to understand the rift between thought and final output and to redesign the film script accordingly. Also got a feel into different ways in which a story can be constructed.

Inspirations:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau  
George Orwell  
Ayn Rand  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe  
Henry David Thoreau  
Ruskin Bond  
Kurt Vonnegut  
Hayao Miyazaki  
Andrei Tarkovsky  
Abbas Kiarostami  
Makoto Shinkai  
Akira Kurosawa  
Joanna Quinn  
Satoshi Kon  
Caroline Leaf - The Street  
Osamu Tezuka - Jump  
Man who planted trees movie  
Requiem for a Dream movie  
Feet of Song- Erica Russell  
Baraka movie  
Waltz with Bashir movie

end