Happiness.. An experimental * graphic novel

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About the project:

- about issues around young persons
- story revolves around a young girl for whom happiness appears and disappears as an imaginary bird

- she is quite content with herself till others point out lacks in her life
- story suggests that happiness is a personal construct and still it may be controlled and trapped by societal norms

Explorations in the novel :

- explores the notion of image and sound
- experiments with non-linear narrative to tell a story within a book
- how printed pages can be made sound producing using modern technology.

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• to create a feel of visual, as well as oral interaction between the reader and the narrator i.e. the story book.

Data Collection and Research:

• conversations with people

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• literature review



Problem statement:

- writing a story
- designing an interactive book for this narrative
 - offering multiple ways of reading the book
 - converging the orality (story telling), text and images

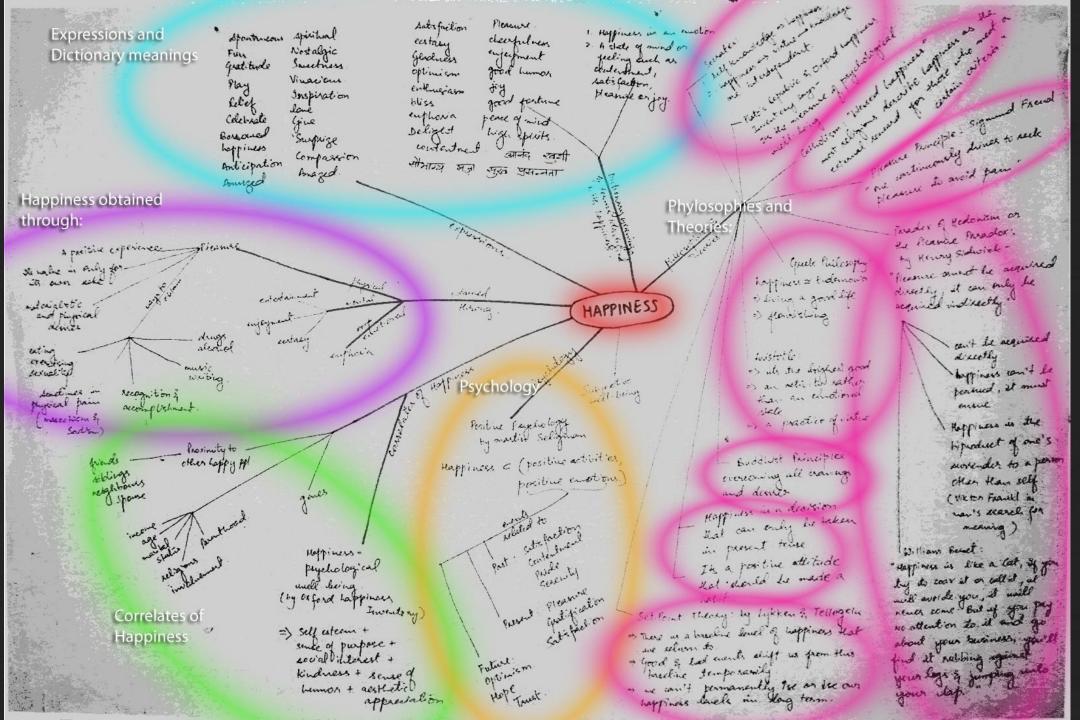
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Design process: * * * 1. framing the research into a mind map

- whole of the research can be seen at one glance
- easy to make correlations and links between different views, theories etc
- helps in later design process



Design process: 2. Initial design ideas

• a book that opens in different ways creating a new story each time

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• audio-visual motion picture with convergence of live action and animation

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These provoked the urgent need for narrative.

Design process: 3. Exploration of narratives

Story development taking different concepts from the mind-map"

Concept 1:

• with stories within a story of a little girl while is having her summer vacations

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various short stories portraying different concepts of happiness

Concept 2: 'Happiness everywhere'

- story based deep in Thar deserts.
- contrast of hash living conditions to the attitude of the people that make the place lively and colorful.

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Concept 3: 'The happiness perfume'

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- a coffee table book
- tactile experiences of happiness

Concept 4: Story of a little boy and his turtle

 Story of a boy who sells his old pet turtle for money to buy something he desired

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- an emotional drama
- emphasizes that happiness is beyond the fulfillment of material desires

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Concept 5: 'Khushi'

- story of a little girl and her mother
- mother learns to be happy and not to worry unnecessarily all the time, from the innocence of her little daughter

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Concept 6: three stories in a book

- book has 3 sections
- each section tells story about the 2 characters Khushiya (human) and Khushi (an imaginary bird in Khushiya's imagination)

- in each story Khushiya is a different character
- three stories portray different concepts about happiness

Design process: *** * * * * 4.** Developing the final narrative

- Study of narrative structures
 - theories
 - observing structures through good stories, novels and films
- Learning to write a story
- Clarification of the concept for the final story:
 - addresses young adults
 - the story of a girl of a marriageable age
 - she can see her happiness with her in form of an imaginary bird
- This resulted in the final story

Design process: 5. Media options

• An Audio Visual - Presenting the story through the convergence of Live action and Animation techniques.

- An illustrated picture book.
- A radio play supported by a book of pictures.
- A graphic Novel.

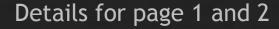
Design process: 6. Media requirement and final media selection

- story has 2 levels:
 - sequence of events that happened in the girl's life
 - when she is contemplating on what has happened in her life
- involving 2 medias (audio and visual) to show these two levels in the story

•Final media decided: 'An experimental Graphic Novel'

- attempt to break the linearity of the narrative
- offer multiple ways of enhancing the experience of this story

Design process: 7. Audio Visual layout of the story: Story boarding



Scene description Page 1 and 2

Image

Khushiya coming back to home from her friend's birthday party. She is very happy as she had lots of fun at the party and also as her younger sister Milli is coming back. She sees her imaginary bird 'Nuru' with her.



Print

Print 1: I was on my way home from my friend's birthday party.

Print 2: "Do You know why I am so happy today?"

Audio

Narration 1: I was so happy, I had so much fun at the party, I played a song on guitar that I specially composed dedicated to the birthday girl and everyone just loved it. (+ Sound of guitar and of Khushiya singing in background.)

Narration 2: Nuru, my little birdie, kept dancing and singing around me. She didn't know the answer to my question, but she knew that I was very happy today. (+ sound of bird Chirp)

Story board visuals:









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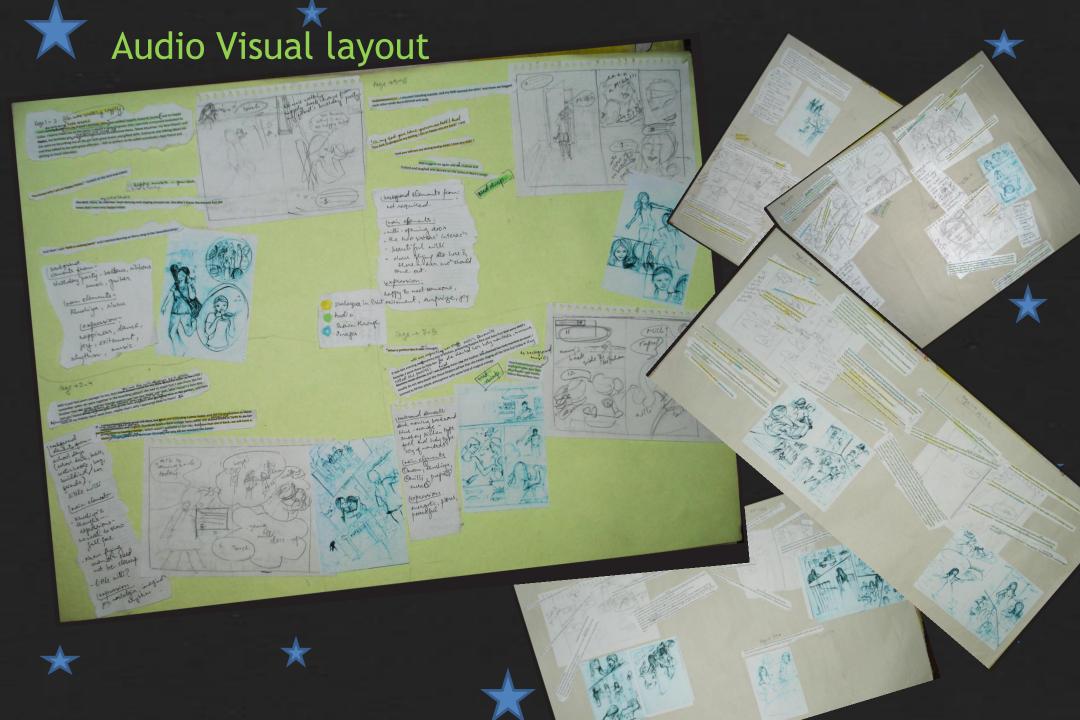












Design process: *** *** 8. Exploration of Illustration styles:

- observing illustration styles in graphic novels for young people
- decided to do away with sequential frame by frame illustrations and realistic style



















Character exploration: Milli









Character exploration: Khushiy

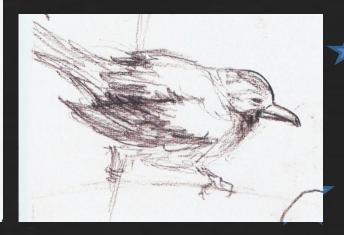


Character exploration: Nuru

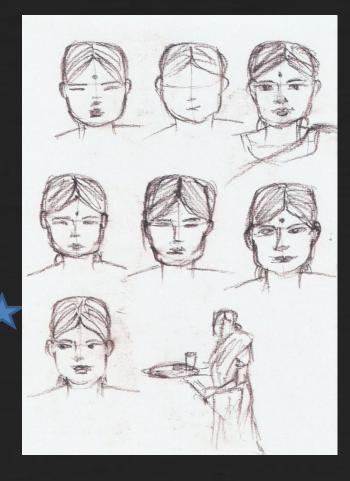








Character exploration: Mummy





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Experimentation with illustration medias and styles:



Charcoal with pencil colors on paper



Dry pastels on sand paper



Oil pastels on sand paper



Design process: 9. Final Illustration style: 3 types of illustration styles used, all on black sand paper

1. Composing parts of hand drawn illustrations digitally







2. Using the illustration directly





3. Replication the hand illustration through digital painting

Design process: \star \star 10. Designing and Composition of the pages:



The speakers made in the book produce their respective audio when touched.

Design process: 11. Sound Design:

• Sound Recording: expressive narration

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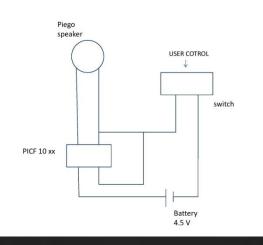
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- recording Foley sounds
- searching music for background score
- composing all the three

Design process: 12. Technology Interface:

- A common circuit (single microcontroller) fixed at the back of the book
- Each page has 1-3 switches that produce sound when touched
- Unit for each page is screen printed in invisible conductive inks thus the page thickness does not increase
- Common speakers /ear phone socket
- A rechargeable battery



Prototyping:

- Soft prototype:
 - flash prototype of the book which simulates the hard copy.
 - can also be used as an e-book (inexpensive and larger distribution possibilities)

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• Hard prototype:

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- Under process

e-book:

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Conclusion and further possibilities:

• concept of sound, text and image interactivity can be taken further to do experimental animation within a book

• as an e-book, where the images could have some animation thus further exploring the expressive power of the media.

- Great learning experience-
- narrative structures and story writing skills
- story telling
- interactivity within a book
- artistic exploration of illustration styles
- sound design
- technical knowledge
- new medias and materials like invisible conductive inks

...and lots of fun!



Thank you!

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There is no way to happiness... Happiness is the way! -Buddha