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# Treads of Toil

Communication Design Project 2

Year 2023




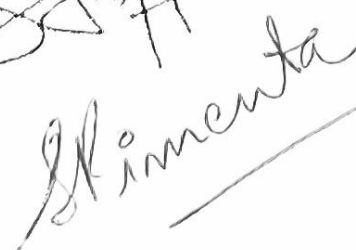
# Approval Sheet

This project report entitled 'Threads of Toil" through Parallax Scrolling Comics' by Biswajit Das, 22M2271, is approved for partial fulfilment of the requirements for Masters of Design Degree in Communication Design.

Guide 

Chairperson 

Internal Examiner 

External Examiner 

Dated - 24.11.23

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## ● Declaration

I certify that the written work I have submitted reflects my thoughts in my own words, and that I have properly attributed and referenced any instances in which I have borrowed ideas or language from others. Additionally, I certify that I have followed all standards of academic honesty and integrity and that no notion, data, fact, or source in my submission has been falsified or misrepresented. I am aware that breaking any of the aforementioned will result in disciplinary action from the Institute and may also result in legal action being taken against the sources who were improperly cited or from whom permission was not obtained when required.

*Biswajit Das*

Biswajit Das

22M2271

Dated - 24.11.23

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## ● Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Prasad Bokil for his invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and belief in the concept of this project, "Threads of Toil." His mentorship has been instrumental in shaping the narrative and bringing it to life. Professor Bokil's encouragement and willingness to invest time and effort in refining the story have been instrumental in elevating the project to its current form. His constructive feedback and suggestions have played a pivotal role in shaping the characters, plot, and overall narrative arc.

I also thank Prof. Sudesh Balan, Prof. Jayesh Pillai for their valuable feedback throughout the stages. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my fellow batchmates for their unwavering support, valuable advice, and encouragement during the formative stages of this project, "Threads of Toil." Your collective contributions have been instrumental in shaping the story and providing the necessary motivation to see it through.

# Abstract



"Threads of Toil" is a compelling narrative that delves deep into the human spirit, revealing its unyielding resilience in the face of adversity. At its core, the story showcases the remarkable strength that can be found within individuals when they are driven by shared dreams and the unwavering pursuit of a better life.

This project is a testament to the enduring power of hope, resilience, and the human spirit. It reminds us that no matter where we come from or what challenges we face, our dreams and our capacity for friendship can illuminate even the darkest of paths. It underscores the idea that the threads of our shared humanity are unbreakable, weaving a tapestry that connects us all in our pursuit of a better life.

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# INTRODUCTION

# Context

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Threads of Toil is a compelling narrative that unfolds in two disparate worlds - the bustling streets of Chennai, India, and the vibrant neighborhoods of Singapore. It revolves around the lives of two young protagonists, Arjun and Raj, who, despite their contrasting backgrounds, share a common dream: to break free from the cycle of poverty and provide a better life for their families. As they navigate the relentless challenges of their respective lives, their paths unexpectedly intersect in a perilous smuggling operation, leading them on an extraordinary journey of survival, friendship, and ultimately, transformation. This is a story of resilience, unlikely bonds, and the enduring human spirit that transcends boundaries.



# Objective



It underscores their daily struggles and the sacrifices they make to support their families. *Threads* can be seen as a metaphor for the various threads of life - the challenges, dreams, and opportunities that weave together to form the fabric of their existence. An attempt to showcase from their perspectives.

To highlight how s, despite their differences, they share the common experience of toiling to provide for their families and also seek a foreseeable future. Reflecting the bond of Friendship. Highlighting the spiritual aspect that the main characters bestow unknowingly.

# Objective



It was chosen as a topic because it encapsulates timeless themes, offers an opportunity for cultural exploration, and provides a narrative that is both emotionally resonant and thought-provoking. It aims to connect with a wide audience by touching on fundamental aspects of the human experience that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

# STORY DEVELOPMENT

# Scope



## **Experimenting on Diverse Settings -**

Two lifestyles in two totally different cities. This diversity allows me to explore and depict a wide range of visual elements, from the vibrant and chaotic streets of Chennai to the modern and cosmopolitan atmosphere of Singapore

## **Character Development -**

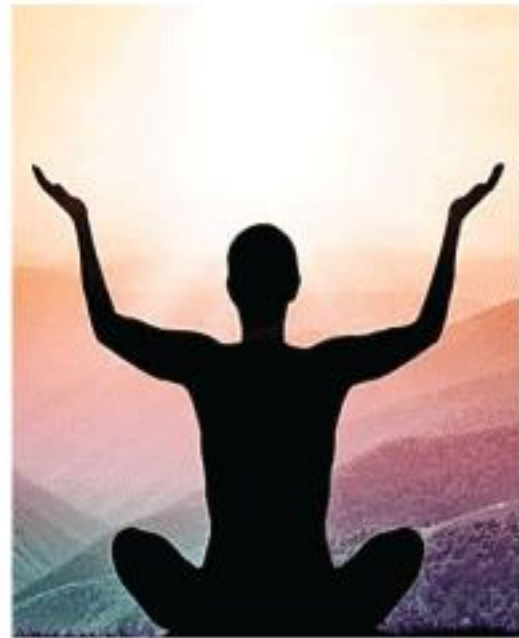
Arjun and Raj are complex characters with unique backgrounds and journeys. Visualizing their evolution throughout the story provides me to experiment with character design, showing their growth, emotional struggles, and the impact of their experiences.

# Scope

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## Symbolism and Metaphor -

The story contains elements of spirituality, destiny, and the interconnectedness of lives and can be creatively represented through visual means, adding depth and layers to the design.



# Scope

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## **Action and Suspense -**

Visualizing the intense action sequences and building suspense through my designs was excitingly challenging.

Overall, it provides an opportunity to create visuals that resonate with the audience emotionally, culturally, and artistically, making it a rewarding project.



## About the Story



Arjun, a mural artist in Chennai, and Raj, a tech enthusiast turned into the world of crime, share a dream of breaking free from poverty. When a smuggling operation goes awry, they escape onto a container adrift at sea. Amidst the struggle for survival, their differences fade, and a deep bond forms, fueled by shared dreams and unwavering determination. As they face harrowing challenges, their friendship becomes their lifeline.

Despite initial differences and hardships, shared goals and mutual determination can forge strong bonds and drive people to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges. The narrative underscores the resilience of the human spirit, emphasizing the strength found in unity and friendship during trying times.

# PROCESS

# Understanding Parallax

## Studying the aspects

In order to better understand the complexities of creating motion comics, particularly the use of parallax effects and dynamic sketch-style art, I went on the hunt for similar projects or assets that could provide insights into the entire creative process, from storyboarding to execution. Among the countless motion comics accessible, one effort, *Mahabharata - Gods and Heroes*, piqued my interest due to its effective use of these components.



# Understanding Parallax

The motion comic *Mahabharata - Gods and Heroes* serves as a compelling example of blending artistry and technology to narrate an ancient epic in a visually stunning manner. The creators adeptly employ a dynamic sketch style, which combines hand-drawn elements with digital animation to convey the timeless tale of the Mahabharata.

The technical finesse exhibited in executing the parallax effect within this motion comic is commendable. The seamless integration of layers, motion, and depth enhances the storytelling, immersing the audience in a visually engaging and emotionally resonant experience.



# Script



In the reworked versions, the script underwent significant changes. The first version honed in on subtle dialogue and showed emotions rather than explicitly stating them. The emphasis shifted to illustrating the characters' emotions through actions and nuances rather than explicit descriptions. This version aimed for a more nuanced portrayal of the characters' inner states.

The second version focused on streamlining the narrative, trimming excess dialogue, and refining the pacing to enhance the story's impact. It retained the core elements of survival, friendship, and resilience while refining the storyline to create a more engaging and impactful narrative.

Overall, it provides an opportunity to create visuals that resonate with the audience emotionally, culturally, and artistically, making it a rewarding project.

# Script

## Script 1

*In the midst of a perilous sea, Arjun and Raj, both battered and soaked, found themselves adrift on a container that had saved them during a smuggling operation gone awry. Yet, their survival was far from assured. The initial clash of their personalities, one shaped by the rough realities of daily life in Chennai, India, and the other molded by the precarious world of illicit activities in Singapore, had led to conflict. Arjun, forged by years of hardship in India, was fiercely self-reliant, trusting no one but himself. His survival instincts were sharp, and his trust was not easily*

*.As days passed on the drifting container, their disputes seemed increasingly futile. The harsh conditions, relentless sun, and bone-chilling nights gradually wore them down. The scorching sun and frigid nights took a toll on them both. They came to understand that their survival rested on cooperation. Raj, the Singaporean with dreams of providing for his struggling family, began to experience vivid and terrifying nightmares. These dreams depicted the suffering of his mother, four siblings, and hardworking father, Rajan, all trapped in a never-ending cycle of poverty and despair.*

*These nightmarish visions were a torment, filling Raj with guilt and responsibility. The weight of his family's hopes rested heavily on his shoulders, and he couldn't bear the thought of abandoning them to a bleak future. One day, as Raj trembled in the corner of the container, haunted by another nightmare, Arjun, who had been keeping his distance, noticed his distress. Concerned, he inquired,*

*What's troubling you, Raj?*

*After some hesitation, Raj opened up to Arjun. He shared his family's story, the struggles of his mechanic father, and the sacrifices made by his mother. Arjun listened with empathy, realizing that they shared a deep love for their families and a burning desire to uplift them from poverty. As they continued to share their stories and struggles, a profound bond began to form between Raj and Arjun. They recognized each other's strengths, with Raj's resourcefulness complementing Arjun's resilience and determination. Together, they found a renewed sense of purpose.*

*to be continued...*

# Script

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## Script 1

*Scavenging what little supplies remained, they rationed their meager food and water. Using scraps of cloth, they created a rudimentary signaling system in the hopes of catching the attention of passing ships.*

*In the darkest moments, when hope seemed to fade, Raj's nightmares served as a haunting reminder of their mission - to return home and change their families' lives for the better. Arjun became a wellspring of strength, helping Raj confront his fears and maintain his spirits.*

*Their journey was grueling, but as they spotted a distant cargo ship on the horizon, they clung to the resilience they had discovered within themselves and their newfound friendship. Weak but alive, they were rescued, their tale of survival a testament to the power of empathy, understanding, and the enduring human spirit.*

*Back on solid ground, Raj and Arjun, now carrying not just their scars but a profound friendship, were determined to return to their families. They were armed with the lessons learned during their time adrift. Together, they were resolved to break the cycle of poverty and forge a brighter future for those they held dear.*

# Script

## Script 2 (Finalised)

*In the heart of Chennai, India, lived Arjun, a young boy from a struggling family. His father, Ramesh, toiled as a mason working on buildings making plasters and small works, while his mother, Meena, suffers from depression and mental problems making hard for arjun to hold the family together along with his additional 2 younger brothers and 1 sister. Arjun joined his father at the construction site each day, where he worked tirelessly to make ends meet. But amid the harsh realities of life, Arjun discovered solace in his creativity. Whenever he could steal a moment, he would sneak off to abandoned buildings and paint vibrant murals on their walls. These moments of artistic expression brought him not only peace but also a sense of self-motivation, a belief that life held more for him than the dusty construction sites.*

*On the other side of the world, in Singapore, a boy named Raj lived a similar life. His father, Rajesh, worked tirelessly in a car repair shop as a mechanic, fixing autos and tuk-tuks, and his mother, Priya, managed their modest home. Raj had a passion for science, constantly experimenting with gadgets and contraptions.*

*Raj, with his innate talent for science and technology, often found himself engrossed in online tutorials, creating small mechanical wonders. But the weight of his family's financial struggles pushed him into the shadowy world of illicit activities. Yet, to supplement his family's meager income, Raj secretly took up various odd jobs, some more illicit than others. He smuggled cigarettes, peddled banned medicines, and occasionally worked with gangs involved in the illegal trade of exotic animals and artifacts. Raj's ambitions reached a tipping point one night when he heard of a grand opportunity - to be part of a daring operation involving stolen artifacts from a Singaporean temple.*

*Both Arjun and Raj, despite living in different countries, shared a common dream - to lift their families out of poverty. However, their paths would cross in the most unexpected and dangerous way.*

*to be continued...*

# Script

## Script 2 (Finalised)

*One evening, Raj stumbled upon a lucrative opportunity. He was asked to join a group smuggling cigarettes and banned medicines to make quick money. His desire to provide for his family led him to accept, but he kept these activities hidden from them. Around the same time, Arjun was facing a dire situation. His family's debts were piling up.*

### **Main Event -**

*One fateful night, Raj found himself standing at a clandestine rendezvous point in the dimly lit backstreets of Singapore. He had been offered a proposition that promised riches beyond his wildest dreams. The mission: to smuggle stolen artifacts from a Singaporean temple, bound for the hands of an Indian gang. Unbeknownst to Raj, Arjun was also present, albeit for a different reason. Arjun had been hired as a lowly helper in the loading and unloading of cargo for the smuggling operation. Little did he know that this night would change his life forever. As they went about their respective tasks, the tension in the air was palpable.*

*The smugglers, growing increasingly suspicious of each other, began hurling accusations about the authenticity of the precious artifacts. Tempers flared, and a heated confrontation erupted among the smugglers, each one vehemently denying any wrongdoing. Arjun and Raj, sensing the imminent danger, discreetly retreated behind a towering cargo container. There, they huddled together, their hearts pounding, praying fervently that they wouldn't be discovered amidst the chaos. Suddenly, the tranquil night was shattered by the ominous silhouette of an Indian Navy ship on the distant horizon. Panicked shouts among the smugglers filled the air. The navy issued a stern warning, a final chance for the smugglers to abandon their illicit cargo.*

*However, the criminals, driven by desperation and greed, responded with gunfire. The naval ship, a formidable force, retaliated with a deafening barrage of bullets and heavy artillery.*

*to be continued...*

# Script

## Script 2 (Finalised)

*Chaos reigned as the enemy vessels were torn asunder, sinking into the abyss. Amidst the mayhem, Arjun and Raj clung to their hiding place behind the colossal container, their lives teetering on the precipice.*

*Miraculously, the container shielded them from harm's way, its sheer bulk providing an unlikely sanctuary. After the tumultuous battle subsided, they cautiously emerged from their refuge, their hearts still racing from the adrenaline-fueled ordeal. They gazed around in disbelief, finding themselves adrift at sea on the very same container that had saved them during the firefight.*

*Amid the wreckage of a smuggling operation gone awry, Arjun and Raj found themselves in a dire situation. The container they had hidden behind during a firefight was now adrift in the open sea. As they clung to the battered container, gasping for breath and soaked to the bone, their initial differences began to surface. Arjun, with his rough upbringing as a daily wage worker in India, was hardened by years of struggle. He had learned to be fiercely self-reliant, trusting no one but himself.*

*Survival was his primary instinct. In contrast, Raj, growing up in Singapore, had always lived on the edge of legality. He had navigated a complex web of illicit activities to support his family. He was quick to take risks, often relying on his charm to get by.*

*In the heart of a chaotic scene, Arjun, from Singapore, found his path blocked by a frantic crowd, and the sound of gunfire filled the air. Desperation etched into his face, he swiftly navigated through the chaos, narrowly avoiding obstacles created by the wreckage that now littered the area. Every step took him closer to the bridge that would lead him back to his own ship, the Chennai-bound vessel that had become his only lifeline.*

*As Arjun fought his way forward, he stumbled due to the sudden barrage of gunfire. It was then that Raj, also caught in the turmoil, noticed Arjun's perilous situation. Raj had been on the brink of reaching his Chennai-bound ship, the one he so desperately needed to return home.*

*to be continued...*

# Script

## Script 2 (Finalised)

*With the bridge trembling beneath him due to the sheer weight of the panicked crowd, Raj glanced back at Arjun. He watched in shock as Arjun, weighed down by a rope wrapped around his arm, dove into the water. Raj knew that Arjun wasn't a strong swimmer, and the frantic act puzzled him. A gnawing suspicion clawed at the back of his mind. In an instant, Raj abandoned his pursuit of the ship and followed Arjun into the water. Panic gripped him as he struggled to stay afloat, and it wasn't long before darkness threatened to claim him. But just when all hope seemed lost, a massive container emerged from beneath the water, lifting them up like driftwood in a storm.*

*With their last reserves of strength, they lifted their heads, witnessing a thunderous bolt of lightning that illuminated the entire sky. In that electrifying moment, the monumental figure of Lord Vishnu seemed to materialize before their eyes. It was as if the divine presence itself had come to their rescue. pared to bid a substantial amount at the auction. The Navy arrived just in the nick of time, saving them from the watery abyss.*

*The scene transitioned to the perspective of a mural, depicting a scuba diver retrieving a mysterious artifact from the depths of the ocean.*

*Years later, Raj, now a celebrated architect, received news of a remarkable discovery - the very same Vishnu idol they had risked their lives for. Excitement coursed through his veins as he prepared to bid a substantial amount at the auction. However, his hopes were quickly dashed when a mysterious bidder entered the scene, offering a sum far beyond Raj's means. As despair washed over Raj, the auctioneer began raising the stakes. Then, a booming voice from behind echoed the exact words Raj had once spoken to Arjun on that fateful night, "5 million." The entire hall fell silent, all eyes turning toward this unexpected bidder. Raj couldn't believe his eyes when he realized the voice belonged to none other than Arjun. With a sharp smirk, they shook hands. The auctioneer, taken aback by the turn of events, announced, "SOLD."*

*to be continued...*

# Script

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## Script 2 (Finalised)

### **End Credit Scene -**

*In the end, as the credits rolled, it was revealed why Raj and Arjun had been so desperate to acquire the Vishnu idol. It wasn't just a valuable artifact; it had saved their lives in a way that felt almost supernatural, glowing with a spiritual power when they were on the brink of drowning that fateful night. It was a symbol of their resilience and an unbreakable bond formed in the face of adversity, a bond that had led them to success and a shared destiny.*

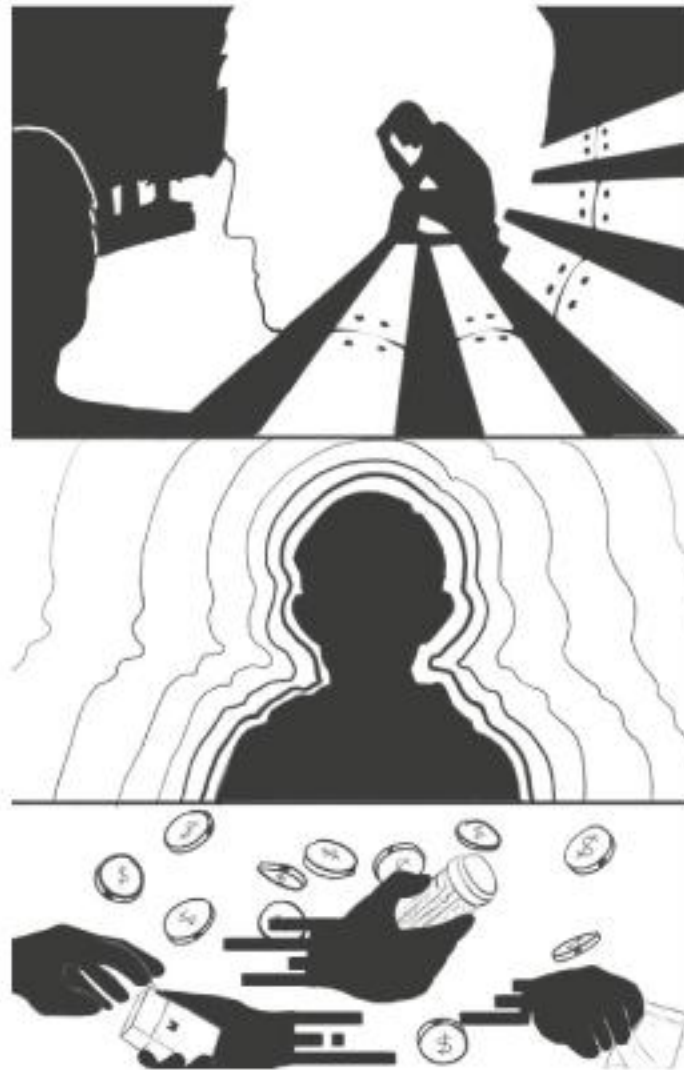
### **Moral -**

*The moral of this story is a testament to the enduring human spirit: In unity and empathy, we find the strength to overcome adversity, and in shared purpose, we discover the potential to create a brighter future not just for ourselves but for those we hold dear. Raj and Arjun's journey serves as a reminder that compassion and connection are the guiding lights that can lead us through the darkest of times, illuminating a path towards hope, resilience, and a better tomorrow.*

# Storyboarding



# Storyboarding



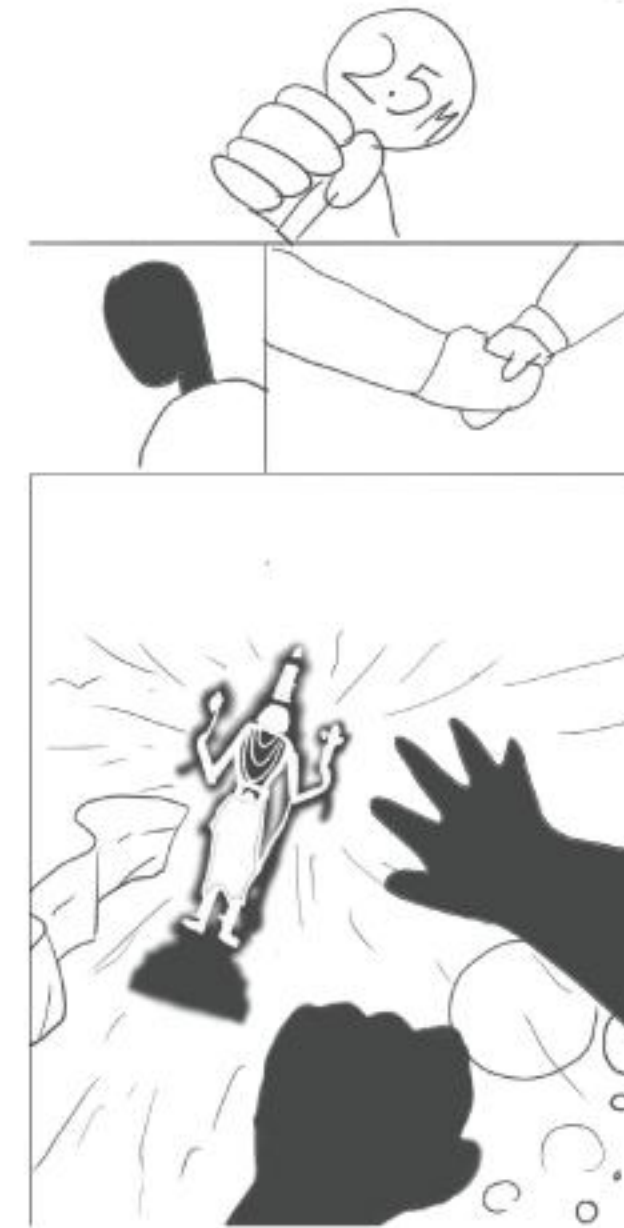
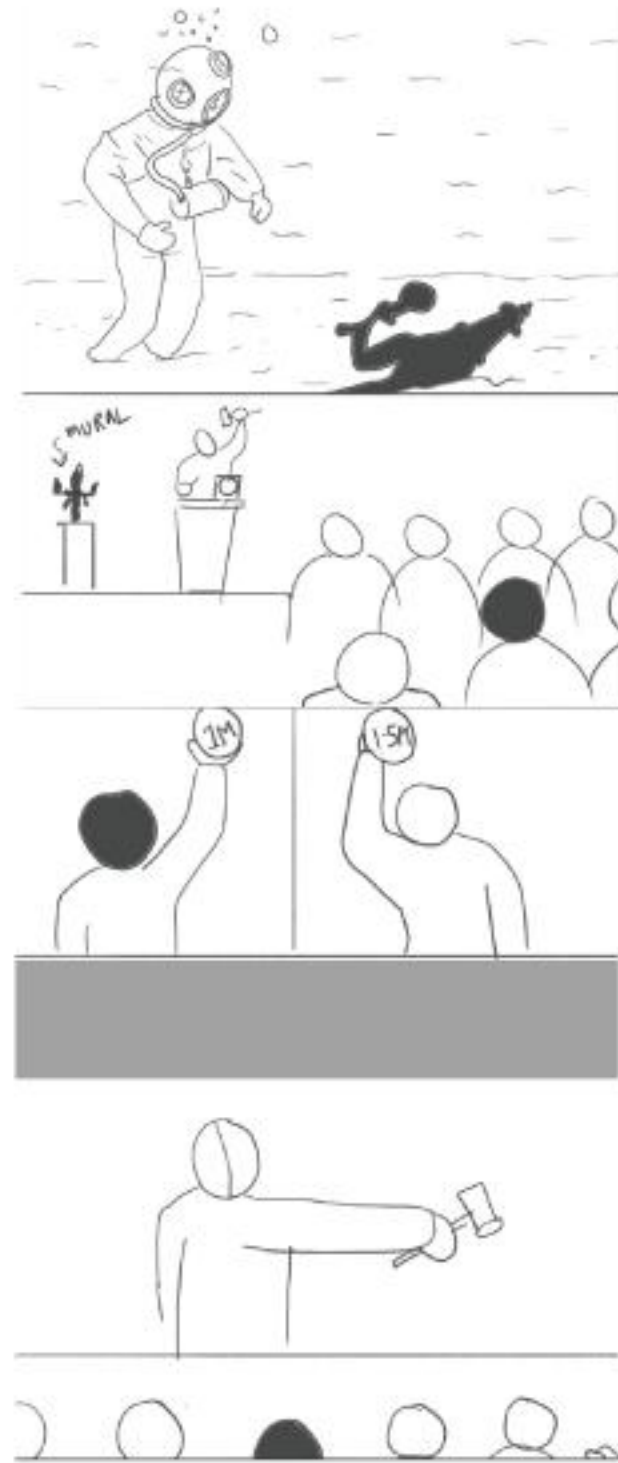
# Storyboarding



# Storyboarding



# Storyboarding



# Storyboarding



Storyboarding serves as a visual blueprint for a narrative, providing a sequence of illustrations or images that outline the key scenes, actions, and composition of a story. In essence, a detailed storyboard acts as a roadmap, guiding the creative process while ensuring coherence, clarity, and efficiency in translating a narrative from script to visual form. It is an indispensable tool that allows storytellers to craft compelling narratives across various mediums

# Storyboarding

## Final Frames

The final frames also exhibit a distinct fusion of traditional and modern artistic techniques. The incorporation of digital artistry and traditional hand-drawn elements creates a captivating visual amalgamation, offering a unique and immersive viewing experience.

Moreover, the frames ingeniously employ a mix of perspectives and visual compositions to convey the emotional landscapes of the characters. Whether it's Arjun finding solace in painting murals or Raj navigating the complexities of his environment, each frame encapsulates the characters' inner struggles and aspirations.



# Storyboarding



# Storyboarding



# Applying Parallax

Parallax in *Threads of Toil* intensifies the story's emotional moments, like firefights and character confrontations, by creating depth and movement in the images. This effect heightens urgency and tension, drawing audiences deeper into the story. Moreover, parallax aids seamless scene transitions, ensuring fluid narrative flow between settings and characters. This technique maintains story coherence while adding visual appeal.



*Layer wise execution of elements and moved as per the focal length*



*Compiled elements*

## Scroll Sync



The scroll-based movement of frames syncs with the audience's interaction, creating a dynamic storytelling experience. It adds depth and immersion to pivotal moments, ensuring that users actively engage with the story's progression. The synchronized movement of elements with the user's scrolling action serves to intensify emotional sequences and heighten the impact of crucial scenes.

I sought advice on breaking the story into parts or turning it into a video, but I wanted to maintain its essence. Consulting schoolmates in software engineering, we devised a solution. We exported the animation as a sequence of JPEG images and used HTML, JavaScript, and CSS. This synced the images with scrolling, preserving the parallax effect and storytelling experience without compromising quality.

# TAKEAWAYS

# Learnings



Firstly, this project highlighted the importance of storytelling depth. I discovered that an immersive narrative, when coupled with parallax scrolling, can elevate engagement and captivate the audience. Through this, I learned the significance of not only a compelling story but also the presentation method to enhance its impact.

Additionally, collaboration played a pivotal role. Engaging with peers, seeking advice from seniors, and collaborating with software engineers led to innovative solutions. The amalgamation of creative storytelling and technical expertise was key in overcoming challenges and achieving the desired outcome.

Moreover, the project emphasized the importance of adaptability. Initially considering different methods, I realized the significance of preserving the project's essence without compromising its quality. Adapting the animation to sync with scrolling allowed us to retain the parallax effect seamlessly.