

Animation Design project- III

The Mundu and The Malayali

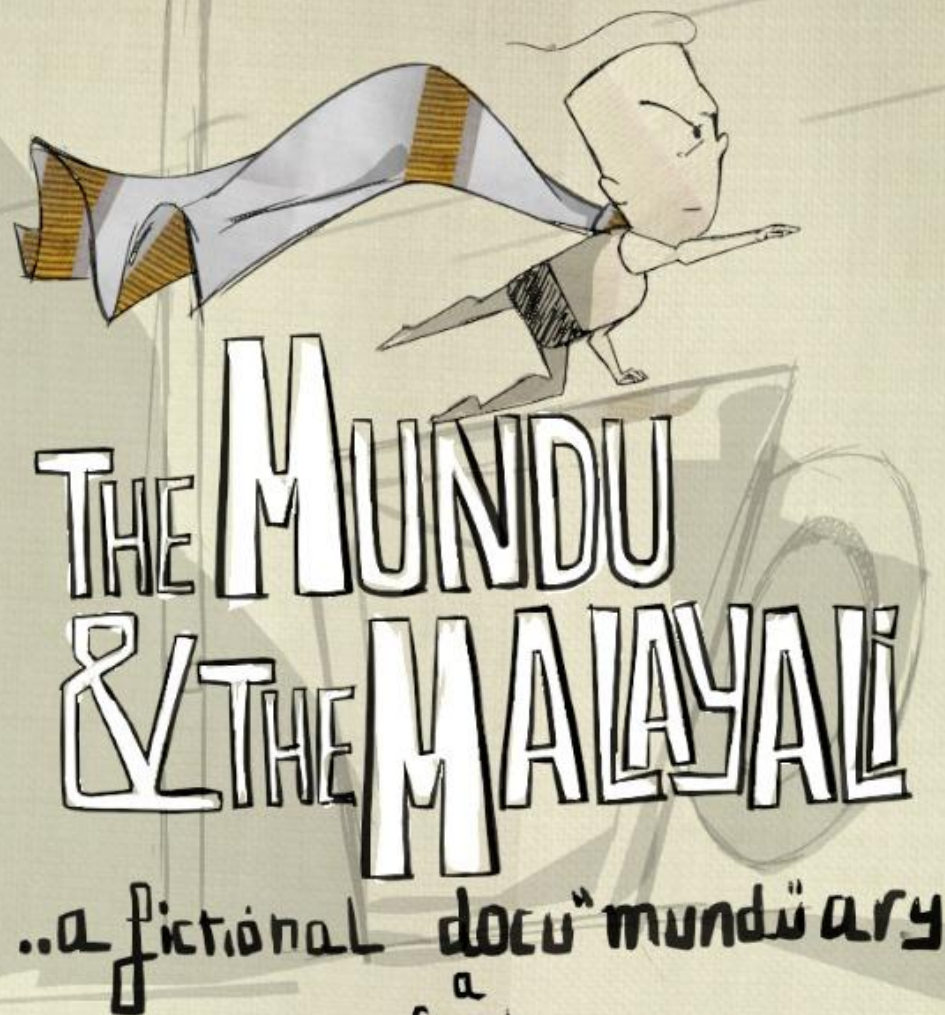
A fictional docu'mundu'ary.

Rahul Dileep | 216340012

M.des Animation design (2021-2023)

Guided by **Prof. Sumant Rao**
Prof. Prosenjit Ganguly

IDC School of Design
अभिकल्प विद्यालय



a
film by

Rahul Dileep

IDC SCHOOL OF DESIGN
अभिकल्प विद्यालय

STUDIO
113

Approval Sheet

The Design Project 3 Titled “ THE MUNDU AND THE MALAYALI ” by **Rahul Dileep** , **Roll Number 216340012**, is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the ‘Master of Design’ in the Animation and Film Design at Industrial Design Center, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

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Declaration

I declare that this project report submission contains my own ideas and work, and if any pre-existing idea or work has been included, the original author(s) have been adequately cited and referenced. I also declare that I have adhered to all the principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misinterpreted, fabricated or falsified any idea, data, or fact source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and may evoke penal action from the sources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rahul Dileep', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Rahul Dileep 216340012

IDC School of Design IIT Bombay

June 2023

Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude towards the IDC animation department, under whose guidance the project was made possible. The project was literally pushed into completion with regular monitoring and discussion with my project guide Prof. Sumant Rao. For teaching the discipline required in animation, at the same time giving enough room to spread my wings, I remain forever grateful. To Prof. Prosenjit Ganguly I owe a lot of the ideas that saved the project from dead ends and kept the story crisp and concise at the editing table. To Prof. Abhishek Varma I owe a lot of the breakthroughs made in writing the project and invaluable feedback and writing tools added to my arsenal. To prof Aditi Chitre I owe a lot of the visual explorations and confidence to push the project and myself into the visual style I involuntarily arrived at. To the rest of the faculty, Prof. Shilpa Ranade, Prof Mazhar Kamran, Prof Swati Agarwal, Prof Nina Sabnani, I thank them for all the valuable feedback and always lending an ear to this monologue of the mundu.

I would like to thank my peers and the team christened “studio.113” that came together like a family to motivate and support one another. At the short duration of maybe a year the animation studio created a lot of memories and experiences.

I thank the numerous people who had lend an ear to the script, shaped the project during pre-production and contributed to the project.

Index

1. Introduction
2. Research
3. Analysis
4. Skeletal structure
5. Script
6. Design
7. Storyboards
8. Concept art and characters
9. Production
10. Challenges
11. Reflections
12. References

Introduction

The politics of the “mundu”

The lungi/ dhoti , when it comes to the southern states of Kerala , Tamil nadu and karnataka becomes a Mundu. The Mundu is a still thriving attire because of the sleek, minimal design. Still in wide use among the population still today, albeit restricted to ethnic days of campus and office functions. Nevertheless there is a huge population that still uses the garment on a day to day basis. What sets a mundu apart from all other forms of garment is that it is a fabric with context. The flexibility it offers to convey emotions ranging from, showing aggression to offering respect, the ability to adapt to situations like prepping for a fight to fleeing from one or being an icon of political might to being a clothing of the common man. The Mundu transcends socio- economic barriers , gender and age. The mockumentary aims to establish the supremacy of this seamless piece of fabric in the annals of fabric history.



Research

Secondary Research

News articles

Even with the mundu being a very common apparel in south, time and again the mundu has been used as a political statement in pop culture and even in international relations.

Source :

1. <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/ambedkar-savarna-attire-malayalam-writer-unni-r-s-new-book-courts-controversy-167007>
2. <https://www.arre.co.in/culture/walrus-moustache-mundu-metal-watch-vanishing-style-malayali-man/>
3. <https://indusscrolls.com/modi-in-mundu-a-big-hit-in-social-media>
4. <https://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/society/over-accessorise-as-it-will/article7582658.ece>
5. <https://english.mathrubhumi.com/movies-music/news/clad-in-mundu-dhanush-showcases-indian-culture-at-the-grayman-premiere-1.7712127>



 www.thenewsminute.com

Ambedkar in 'savarna' attire: Malayalam writer Unni R's new book courts controversy

Donning a white shirt, mundu and a shawl with golden borders, revolutionary Dalit leader Dr BR Ambedkar relaxes on a wooden easy chair. On his side sits a kindi, a traditional pitcher typically found in old Kerala houses, more often than not the savarna...

 www.arre.co.in

Walrus Moustache, Mundu & Metal Watch: The Vanishing Style of the Malayali Man

The virtuous austerity of Malayali men is the formal middle style - conceited neither in flamboyance nor in simplicity; serious but not boorish; casual but not loose. The middle style is a time-honoured Malayali respectability, alas one waning under a g...



 english.mathrubhumi.com

Clad in mundu, Dhanush showcases Indian culture at 'The Gray Man' premiere

Kollywood star Dhanush has made heads turn at the grand premiere of his Hollywood film 'The Gray Man'. The 'Asuran' actress showcased Indian culture in style by making his appearance clad in white mundu and shirt. Interestingly, he was in the spotlight



 indusscrolls.com

'Modi in mundu' a big hit in social media - Indus Scrolls

A photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi clad in South Indian attire 'mundu', posted from Port Blair, Anadamans, on his Twitter handle on Saturday evening has gone viral on social media. Modi shared the picture on his official Instagram account with...

Story ideas and concept

A reservoir of stories and situations were written during this period of brainstorming. Most of which were from anecdotes and lived experiences of people including myself.

14.01.2023

10.30 am 1996

a child shy of a month old is being named. Wrapped in prison made by a white fabric , rendered immobile resembling a Kozhukatta (an afternoon snack resembling a ball). Little does this little one know he would grow up to become the master of his cage and wear it when he comes of age and then be knighted as a functional mallu.

But for the time being we'll let him sleep Thottil (cradle) made by the same mundu.

12:00 am. 2002 saturday

The subject is fiddling around with a bath towel. He seems to have taken a special liking to it. In the imagination of a 6 year old , what could he be thinking?

He wears it around his neck like a cape, strikes a pose. Not quite pleased, he takes it and wraps it around his head, then proceeds to bowl an imaginary leg spinner at the leg post of the bed. Rips it off from his head. Hmm... seems like the delivery went over the ropes. He holds up the towel at eye level, swings it over his shoulder and wraps it around his belly. He then proceeds to look in the mirror dip one shoulder , fold the mundu again and say " Ithente puthiya rayban glass" (a popular dialogue by a character called Aaduthoma , who is an rowdy engineer turned lorry driver)

01:00 am Saturday

An eager kid awaits the return of his grandfather and the promise of lemon drops , that he securely carries in a pouch formed by the tail of mund. He artfully tries to snatch it from his pouch but gets caught in the act , when change slips onto the ground. A moment of affection passes as his grandpa hands him the lemon drops. His mothers voice is heard off screen as she chastices the kid for school work, she does not notice the father pop in from work for lunch. The father takes off his shirt and hangs it on the nail on the wall , when he asks the kid about his grades. Then proceeds to whip out his belt from his Khaki trousers as the kid hide behind his grandpas mundu.

10:00 am Lecture Hall CET

The student leader bangs on the table " We will not stand and see injustice as if folds out before our eyes, SO WE "REQUEST" you to comply and follow us in solidarity. He looks over his shoulder at the lecturer clad in a formals pick up his laptop and exit. The young turk fold his mundu and the throng of supporters follow suit. Outside the university headquarters the barricades are being set by uniformed policemen. The pan Indian youth leader clad in a starched and ironed stiff white Mund and beige Khadi shirt wraps up the charged speech from the traffic island in the junction. He exits awkwardly from the stage and into the vehicle from talking to our Student leader "...Comrade, I like the turnout, you can feel the heat of the revolution here down south. I see why you guys wear this Lungi. Anyways they'll be cooling off in a few minutes , I believe you bought your swimming trunks". As he exits the scene the police charge as if on queue. The long trousered authority did not differentiate nor did the water cannon that were aimed at the revolutionaries; all the apparels had their laundry done that day

09.02.2023

Snippets from the wake for K. P Paramashivan master

Comrade Cuba Mukundan

Paramu maashu is a name all GMHSS vennala alumni can never forget. A teacher , a comrade, a representative of the people. During the emergency Paramu maashu faced trousered policemen, lived underground, Tightened the mund along the waist and sated hunger by ingesting air. Truly a loss...

Ex- M.P K.G Pothuval

Even though we differed in ideology, Paramu maashu was a close friend. I remember the cold Republic day of '89 in Delhi. Clad in a mundu and with only a sweater to fight the cold, maashu stayed true to the party ideology of minimalism. Me who lavishly rocked a two piece suit for the meeting was sidelined as All the union ministers were obviously taken to maashu and his warm personality. I was outshone yet again. Later I remember asking maashu , if he had premeditated this to gain favor, he replied by saying “ Comrade I tried wearing the pants ,but there was a huge hole behind it”.....

Headmaster GMHSS Vennala (Former student)

His open and warm demeanor , the lightness of heart , not holding himself on a pedestal , staying grounded on reality. There would always be lemon drops on the makeshift pouch in his mund that he would magically award to you when you got the answers right. A cane under his armpit that he would brandish to maintain discipline. The crispy white mundu that was a sign of warmth and comfort today cowers his face as he embarks on his last journey.

The Mundu maintenance

A straight starched stiff mundu is a symbol of pride for the average man. The crew behind the rejuvenation of the saggy mundu is strangely a one man armynamely Amma.

Today she will be walking us through the process of making starched mundu.

Throws soap at the camera ...

Ahhh..Ammme

Behind the scenes ..

Since I'm imparting wisdom, why don't you go ahead and start us off, after this leave me alone and stop annoying me ...

First Strain the kanji (Rice gruel) from the night before. Why , because it has starch ..you dumb 5th std biology failure. We mix starch and water is a 1;5 ratio. Thinner the mix , the looser the mundu will become . Raise your left arm to the sky, arch your back 60 deg forward , lean your weight with your right hand on the edge of the bucket , bring down the left hand and mix anticlockwise for 5 sec and clockwise for the next. Repeat 5 times.

Put your back into ituhh..move back i'll do it, useless fellow.

Now it's ready...ahhh docu voku my foot ...don't even know to mix ..see now look how the clumps are gonehmmm.. anyways . It's time for Mundu to be subjected to some abuse. Stretch it with both hands. Dip , pull!!! Squish !!!! pulll ... drag!!! Now thrash.. Soak ..rinse and reprise ..!!.

In this incredible peak of human physical excellence we witness a moment akin to the making of a porotta. Leaving me speechless this is ...majestic. Truly majestic.

Throwing me the other end of the mundu she demands ..

Stop gawking and start pulling.

The trick to getting a stiff mundu is to pull the starched mund diagonally, so that the outstretched mund resembles an x . So u and ur partner both pull the right side at the same time and vice versa. The fibers of the mundu will stretch to a point till they start screaming bloody murder . It is at this time that the starch attacks the exposed fibers and strengthens the mundu from the inside.

All that is left now to dry under the shade of a coconut tree , in medium breeze for 2 hr , before two quick pulls with the ancestral Coal powered Istri (iron) to get a mund so stiff it may even be bulletproof.

Conflict Resolution

No society is complete without its forums of public debates and the Moral police to keep its peace and pass Judgement. Chandrans tea stall was the place where the dominance of the mundu was put on full display in its most primal and raw might.

P1- I do consider myself a progressive thinker , but what you did in your personal space A.K.A your household does not seem to be culturally appropriate ,my good sir.

P2 _ I hear your concern, and I humbly dismiss your opinion as i feel you may need to re-evaluate your progress.

*P-1 : *Sips tea* I will surely be re-evaluating some things, but you may also want to re- evaluate the physical well being of thyself.*

*P-2 : * Subdued laugh* Oh my, didn't know there was an eclipse today, even the worm seem to be curious enough to peek out of the ground*

P-1 : We'll see who'll be peeking out of the holes , ones I'm through with you...

P-2 : You Threatening me you pleabeian.

P-1 : Oh look who's understanding common tongue now... You troglodyte.

*P-1 : *Bangs on table* What you wanna piece of this, Coconut Head*

*P-2 : * Is already up ...The mund Folds * Bring it on , Broomstick Mustachio*

*P-1 : * Re tightens Mund higher **

*P-2 : * The crawls up **

We watch in awe as the two men of culture dish out the culture as the mund and the tensions rise. There is no coming back now . Its do or die , we have been granted the rare sight of two glorious machismos stake out their dominance in a battle of two knotted mund. Somebody needs to do something before the universe implodes fro.....

Shop owner chandran throws a bucket of water on the two.

Chandran : gentlemen ..your culture is showing

Abashed , they unfold the mund, shake hands and part ways ..

Ah ...that was..underwhelming ...

The naming ceremony.

Kunji is 28 days old . From today Kunji ceases to be Kunji. Today Kunji is getting christened.

Well Technically not christened cause ,it's a hindu ceremony...but you get the gist of it.

Kunji is my sisters first child, my niece. As I crouched behind the bronze lamp capturing cinematic shots on my brother-in laws DSLR which I have been cordially handed over to for the documentation of this mundu-mentry , the uncle in me took a backseat and the research plummeted forth.

Kunji was laid out on my mothers lap like a shawarma roll as my mother covered Kunji's left ear and whispered her official name .Which 16 years time will hopefully be plastered on the papers for the procurement of a full A+ .

Kunji was bawling her throat out, just like the last couple of nights which was sleepless because of the endless screaming which the entire house was subjected to except my father who can sleep through the Kurla express , if it passes over his nose....oh sorry i may have digressed.

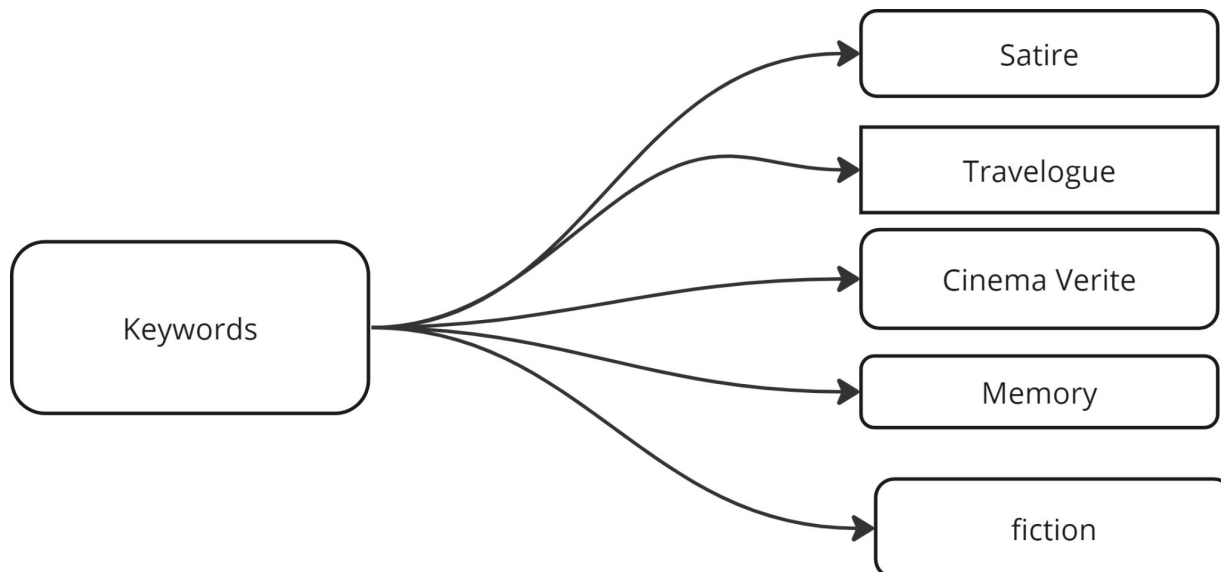
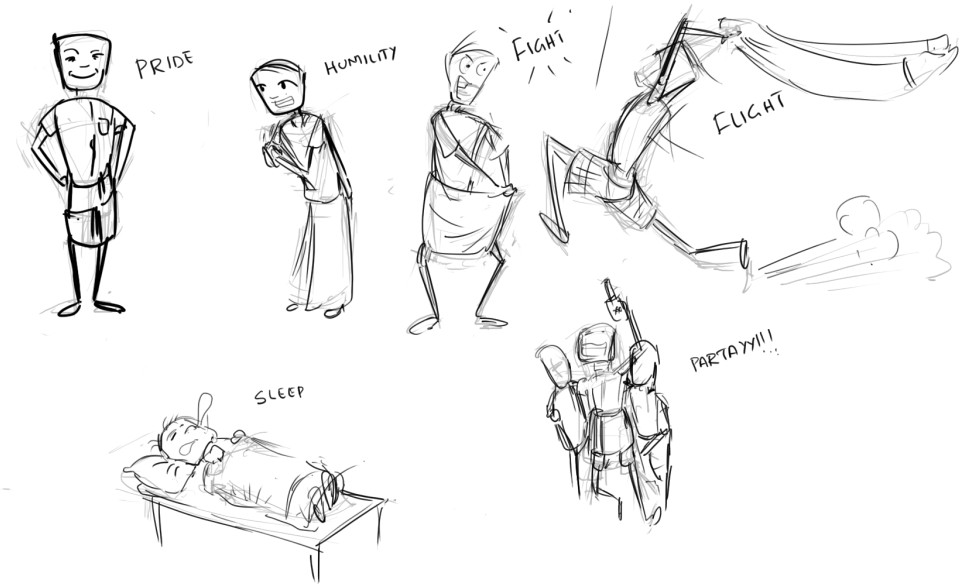
But what happened ? did she not like the name my mother pick out. How could an infant judge that? I don't remember voicing my disapproval when my own parents picked out the most generic name for a kid born in the 90's.....hmm pardon me I digress again.

This time around i notice the object of Kunji's dysphoria. The villain is the kasavu Mundu she is wrapped up in. to her the hedonic apparel restraining her freedom of movement. I notice the prejudice of the mundu in the flesh. Surrounded by people who have mastered the kasavu mundu like my mom and dad who can do things from riding a bike to doing cartwheels wearing a mundu. To my sister and brother who still struggle to get up and require assistance from the union workers when getting up from padmasana...and then you have me the prodigal son who displays mastery beyond my age, an anomaly of my generation a true prodigy of the mundu ...ha..again i get carried away.

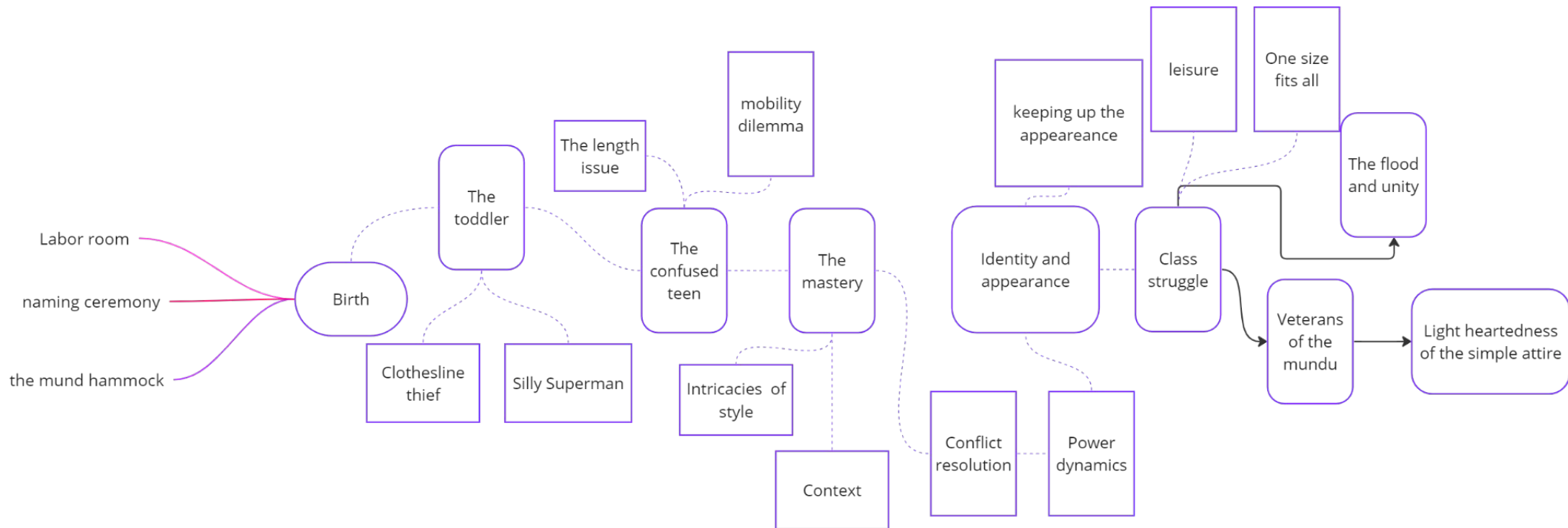
The point is ,as a malayali we are born into the mundu , like it or not. Like kunji we fight to break out from the bonds and expectations set by the family and society. As she journeys through life she will master the mundu and it will be an identity something she can wear proudly for life defining moments like her graduation ,wedding , her children's wedding , meeting the president of India ,office Onam parties walking the red carpet when her uncle wins an oscar...

Analysis

Keeping up with the design of the mundu , the animation also aims to be flowing and minimal. Taking inspiration from the works of Bill Plympton (25 ways to quit smoking) and Studio Eeksaurus (The art of aping), the obvious choice for the medium was 2D digital animation. The script was written as a collection of instances woven together to segway from one instance to another, keeping in lieu with the spirit of the script the storyboarding was done envisioning minimum background and the usage of transitioning scenes to keep the movie visually flowing and lively.



Skeletal structure



Miro board link

https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVPuk8oLM=?share_link_id=818892511819

Script

Final Story

The bond between the mund and the malayali is a sacred union between man and fabric that transcends the folds of time. They become acquainted at birth, rolled into a shawarma, he fights the restraints of a kasavu mundu as he is being called by name. Life begins as he embarks on a road to attain mastery over the mund.

(kid runs through, interrupting the shot)

Narrator: “ hey.. Hey.. you, hold up ”

Kid: ‘ Nope can't wait .. I'm superman ”

Narrator : “ What's Superman doing with a mund ? ”

Kid: “ Isn't it obvious , Superman is just a dude who's got his mund mixed up with a cape, that's why his shorts are showing .. ”

Teenager : “Or maybe Superman played it smart, have you tried riding a bike in a mund ”

Mobility is in fact a problem when it comes to the mund. But it is a barrier that must be crossed, because as a malayali you can be expected to ride anything ranging from a bicycle to an elephant while rocking a mund.

The mastery over the mund starts creeping in as he begins paying attention to the intricacies of “mund etiquette”. Even seam bowlers have an easier time figuring out the line and length. The confidence that exudes from a geometrically perfect mund allows the user to spread out the contextual applications for social interactions.

A civil discourse for conflict resolution is the cornerstone of any society. As tensions rise , so does the mund. The folded mund indicates the social hierarchy. A portrayal of dominance and respect. An assertion of power. This versatility of the mund is what attracts politicians to it. The mund offers approachability and commands respect.

The mund acts as an identity in our representative democracy, while the proletariat who goes to work in a mundu. The mundu smooths out the class struggles as it does not differentiate between people , one size fits all. After a day spent at the desk, manual labor or even if you find yourself in the International space station, a malayalis day is not complete until he reclines back in a lungi, loosening the fold to accommodate a second helping of black tea and Parippu (dal) vada. One thing is for sure, with the mundu life is never mundane.

As he passes each milestones in life , the attainment of mundu nirvana is near, it becomes an extension of his body, as if another layer of skin. He eases into this role of a wise old man imparting wisdom while crouched over a mathrubhoomi paper at the local tea shop, the mund still keeping him grounded. Well even after he literally becomes grounded , the mund accompanies him in the journey to the afterlife.

Script

Script-00

The Mundu intro

INT. dressing table [a folded mundu on a table]

Narrator (V.O)

The bond between the mund and the malayali is a sacred union that transcends the folds of time.

The mundu is getting unfolded

int. the labor room

The doctor passes the child to the Nurse who wraps him in a mundu before handing it to the mother

Narrator (V.O)

They become acquainted at birth as he is being rolled into a shawarma. He fights the restraints of a kasavu mundu when being called by his first name, 28 days later. Life begins as he embarks on a journey to attain mastery over the mundu.

The hammock pulled from right to left

ext. playground

The child runs across the screen, wearing the mundu as a cape

Narrator (V.O)

Hey! yo kid, hold up.

kid

Nope, can't wait, I'm Superman

Narrator (V.O)

what's Superman doing, wearing a mundu?

kid

Cause he has to fly!! Dumbo!

Narrator (V.O)

The child does in fact make a fair point. That fact is obvious to anyone who has tried to ride a bike in a mundu.

ext. junction

Narrator (V.O)

Mobility is in fact a problem when it comes to the mundu. However, it's a barrier that every malayali has to cross as he is expected to ride anything ranging from a bicycle to an elephant rocking a mundu.

int. bedroom (mirror on the wall)

The young man in the process of wearing the mundu

Narrator (V.O)

The mastery over the mundu starts creeping in as he begins paying attention to the intricacies of mundu etiquette. Seam bowlers have an easier time figuring out line and length. The confidence that exudes from wearing a geometrically perfect mundu allows the user to expand the boundaries to fiddle with the contexts of social interactions.

int.chandrans tea stall

The mustached goon places his arm on Baldie's shoulder.

baldie

I'll give 3 secs to take your hands

mustached goon

I'll...!@#IU&*##*#@&*(#&*...Beeping.

Narrator (V.O)

The cornerstone of civilization lies in conflict resolution through civil discourse. As tensions rise so does the mundu. The folded mundu asserts dominance. On the contrary, the unfolded mundu portrays humility and respect. It is this versatility of the mundu that attracts politicians to it.

ext. the stage

The audience starts clapping when the Neta steps out from behind the podium revealing the mundu.

Narrator (V.O)

The mundu commands respect at the same time offers approachability. The mundu is an identity in representative democracy. The mundu irons out the class struggle binding together the masses as one size fits all.

ext. the construction yard

laborers digging a hole.

Narrator (V.O)

A day of toil on the site, a hard day at the desk, even an astronaut in space. If he is a Malayali, a day is not complete until he reclines back in a lungi loosening the tight mundu to accommodate another helping of Dal vada and chai. One thing is for sure a malayali's life is never

mundane.

ext. the verandah

The old man leans over the newspaper.

Narrator (V.O)

The mundu and the bearer pass through life. The fabric becomes an extension of his body as if another layer of skin. He eases into this role of the wise old man imparting wisdom while crunching over the Mathrubhumi paper. The mundu keeps him grounded..... Well till he actually becomes grounded, as in splayed out on the ground the accompanies him covering his face as he journeys on in the afterlife.

**The Mundu and The Malayali _A fabricated
documentary _Final Script**

The Mundu intro

**INT. HOSTEL ROOM. THE MUNDU IS BEING UNFOLDED
AND IRONED.**

Narrator (V.O)

The Mundu and the malayali

A garment that binds the malayali in a union

Life begins in a mundu.

The mundu is getting unfolded.

The mundu unfolds and covers frame to labor room

INT. THE LABOR ROOM

The Nurse takes the child from the Doctor and
wraps him in a mundu before handing him over..

Narrator (V.O)

Rolled into a Shawarma, mere seconds from birth
his path to mastery over the mundu has only
begun.

Closing off the left ear, the mother calls out
his name in the right,

Mother

Usual Name for Native In Kerala (U.N.N.I K >
Nair...)

the child is gently rocked in the crib

INT. BEDROOM.

Narrator (V.O)

With a road longer than a double mundu in front
of him, the child retires to...

The mother puts the child to sleep in the mundu
hammock, The older child sneaks in a pulls the
mundu off the clothes peg

Mother

Come back, here you little....

Voice trails of, frame is pulled away

EXT. BACKYARDS NEAR WASHING AREA

The cape flutters brilliantly in the wind, dips down revealing the toddler on an old washing machine in the backyard.

Kid

(Munpeenu maareda..Prakana kandoode ?)

Get out of the way , I'm flying here..

Narrator (V.O)

(Oh kshemikya.Allyeo manushyarashiyude rekshaka
...ang purapettalum)

Oh pardon my intrusion, please proceed with

Saving humanity.

Jumps off washing machine, lands as superman.

EXT. Bus stop

The people in the bus stop start laughing at Superman, sneaking out of the frame.

Narrator (V.O)

Mobility in a mundu is an age-old question, the answer to which unlocks abilities ranging from riding a bicycle to an elephant while rocking a mundu.

INT. VITRUVIAN MAN

Narrator (V.O)

A novice Mundist is extremely self conscious. A fine line separates the vogue from the vulgar. The metrics of the mundu have been puzzling great minds for centuries. Even seam bowlers have an easier time figuring out line and length.

The ball is hit for a 6 and crosses the boundary

EXT. BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Baldie and the veteran are fighting. Over the boundary

Veteran

(Enthaanu Adhirthiyil oru Nuyanjukayattam)

G'day friend , what's this infiltration into my border ?

Baldie

(evde ? njan onnum kaananillalla)

Pardon me, sir. I digress.

Veteran

(Dho..Dha chedi vare ente parambaanu)

Look there..That plant is within my LOC.

Narrator (V.O)

Conflict resolution through civil discourse is the cornerstone of any civilization. As tensions rise so does the mundu.....until someone on the higher rungs of the social ladder steps in.

The politician uses the feuding men as stepping stones to climb to the podium.

EXT. THE STAGE

Comrade incites the young revolutionaries

Comrade Pappan

(Ooripidicha vaalu alla , churutti pidhcha mushtiyum , madakikuthiya mundumaanu innu university padikkal ani cherunnathu..)

The youths across Kerala have assembled at your behest hon.Minister with their folded fists and folded mundus...

The mob starts raging, Police charge.

water cannon bursts THE screen cut to black

EXT. THE STAGE AFTERMATH.

Narrator (V.O)

The starched mundu of the leader survives, but
The revolution of the folded mundu went limp
before The trousered authority.

water rises to the guys neck

EXT.FLOOD RESCUE

The guy swims on th water and grabs onto the mundu

Background SFX- Chetta a mundill pidicho !!!

Narrator (V.O)

To stay strong in the face of adversity. The mundu offers refuge indiscriminately.

EXT. MARKET

The mundu irons out the differences

The walking man reaches home, opens the gate
latch. Hangs up his mundu.

INT. SPACE STATION

Narrator (V.O)

The Malayali relaxes in a mundu. Even major
Thommi approves. Ground control, to Major
Thommi,

(Major Thommi , Avde inda??)

you there??

Major Thommi

Major Thommi, Over Over. didn't catch you
...cause here am I floating in my lungi, far
across the void. The vada might be cold, but
there's always room for more.

Major Thommi plants a flag on the moon.

EXT. BACKYARDS NEAR WASHING AREA

The Child plants a flag near the machine and
runs inside as he hears grandpa coming.

Narrator (V.O)

Clad in a mundu he floats through life, the
fabric becoming an extension of his skin. Wisdom
comes late in life, as does the mastery over the
mundu. But it comes with a humility that keeps
him grounded...Hmm as I said "Ground-dead".

A life that begins and ends in a mundu is never
mundane.

Design

The Mundu and the Malayali was written as a documentary , detailing the journey of a malayali through life while donning a mundu. At every stage of the film from the script to the sound design the spotlight was reserved for the Mundu. Being a fictional documentary the narrative is neither character driven nor plot driven, but driven by the mundu that becomes the hero. The challenge in the project was to see how far the mundu could be stretched.

Script

Following the journey of a single character might have proven to be monotonous with major breaks in the timeline that could lead to the viewer feeling disconnected with the aforementioned character. In order to tackle this, the writing process for the film consisted of a group of short stories and situations with some of them being anecdotes and lived experiences of the characters. This method of writing helped in giving the narrative a feeling of being found data and hence gives credibility to it being a documentary.

Narrative tries to piece together several instances seamlessly segwaying into one another. The graph of the movie was set from being loud and funny , making the use of slapstick tropes for the first few scenes , as it went well together with the infancy and boyhood arcs. The graph falls down as the teenage years begin because the character begins to self doubt. Adulthood starts with the introduction of conflict followed by revolution and then overcoming adversity. Towards the end the character and the audience are eased into the leisure with the very much likable Major Thommi. Major Thommi, a middle aged malayali male who has found his comfort zone, is nonchalant about appearance and leisurely strolls into outer space.

Design

Visual Style

The film needed to highlight the mundu in every aspect, the feel needed to have a sense of tangibility that people can feel and relate to. If nothing else the film needed to feel malayali. The use of textures, minimal backgrounds, simple characters based on primary shapes helped in reducing clutter and drawing attention to the mundu. Inspiration was found in the works of Studio eeksaurus namely the short films like : “The art of aping” and the infomercial series made for the rotary club. Using a specific texture to highlight the mundu in every frame helped to direct the viewer. Even when using still frames the mundu was animated on a separate layer with a boil.

The characters were all inspired from simple shapes considering the ease to animate as well as improving communicability. The two extremes can be found in Unni and Grandpa, while Unni looks round grandpa is blocky and angular. Major Thommi was inspired from Chris Hatfield singing space oddity in the international space station. Major Thommi was an attempt to recreate this mix of adventure, uncertainty and confidence.

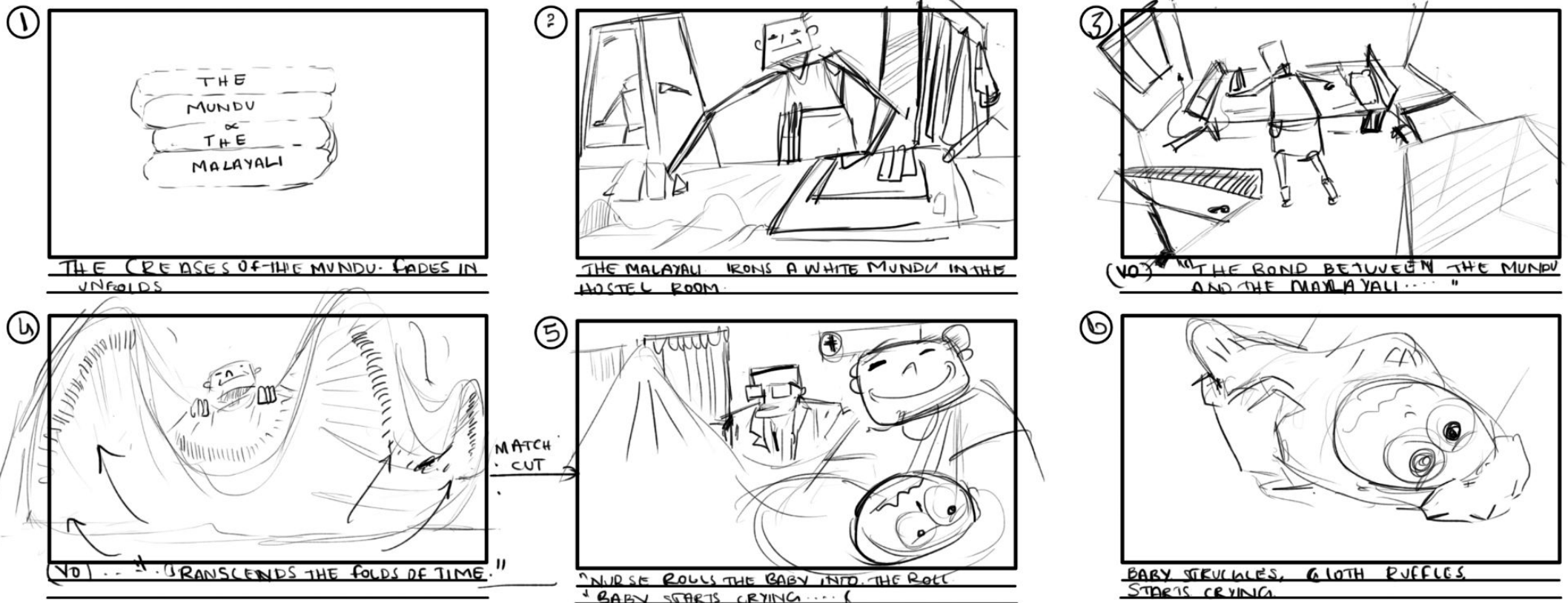
Sound

A scratch audio of the entire monologue was recorded to determine the timing for the animatic. Changes to the scratch audio were later made in a iterative process where pauses and foley were added. A soundscape consisting of foley and narration was added to the animatic. The sound scape was then worked on exclusive to the animatic in an attempt to lend more power to the narration and audio, considering the docu-fictional nature of the project.

It was at this point that “ Space Munditty” sung by Major Thommi was recorded. The parody to Dawid Bowie’s Space Oddity inspired the rest of the background music. The background score and music were recorded on a Ukulele which attempts to set the mood lively and rustic.

Storyboards

The story board went through repeated iterations, to fix the scenarios and later connect them together by providing transitions and morphs to make the video feel like one continuous fabric like the mundu.

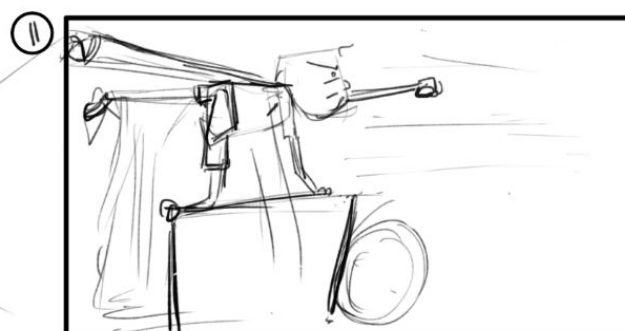
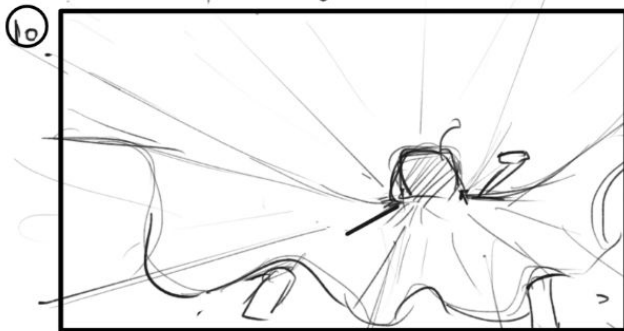
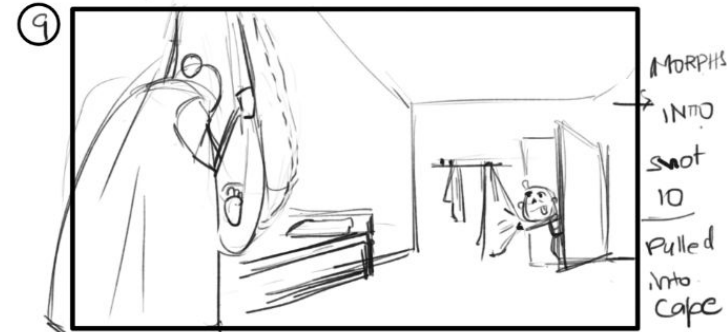




vo. the residents of a kasavi mundu.



BABY STARIS OSCILLATING UP AND DOWN
AFTER 3 SEC.



THE WIND DIES DOWN, CAPE DROPS.



GET OUT OF MY WAY!!



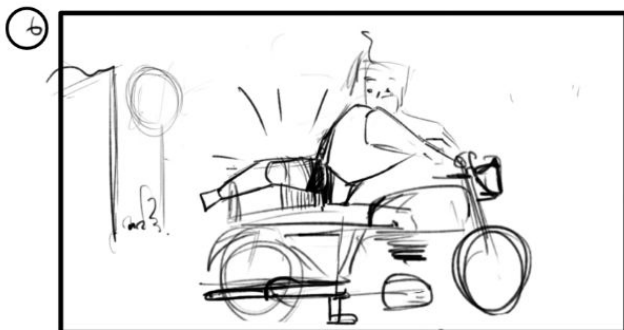
JUMPS UP INTO THE AIR



LANDING SOUND- BY SPANDERS GASP



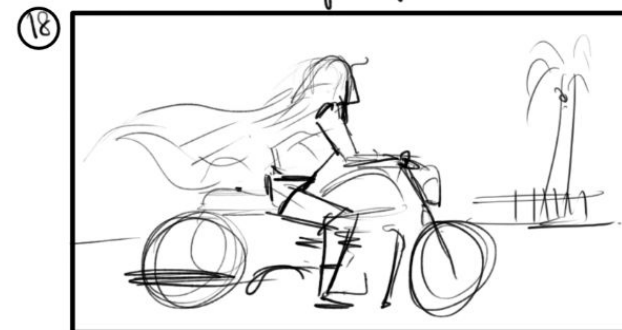
Subdued Laughs Chatters up with mundu.
Sneak out u of the frame



GRIPS ON START BIKE - fall

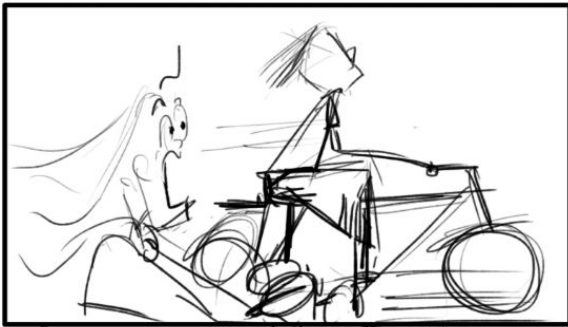


Smiles in a mundu



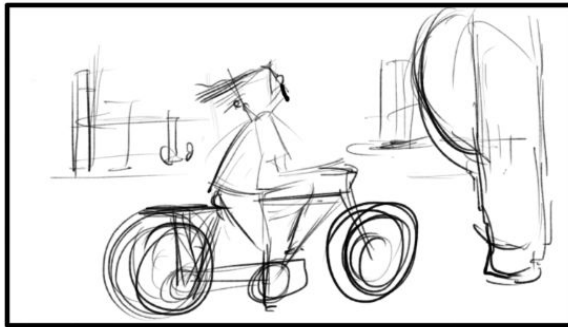
rides away...

19



Cycle fast pedalling sounds

20



Stumble Anthem - Chan dishing

21

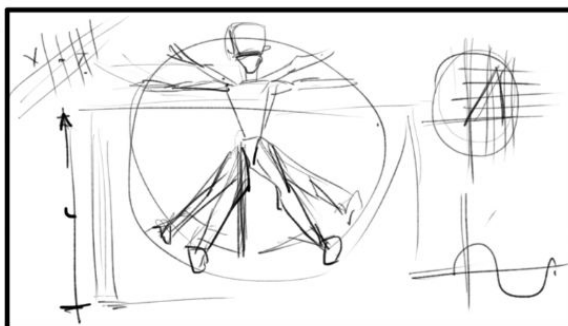


Elephant chuffing

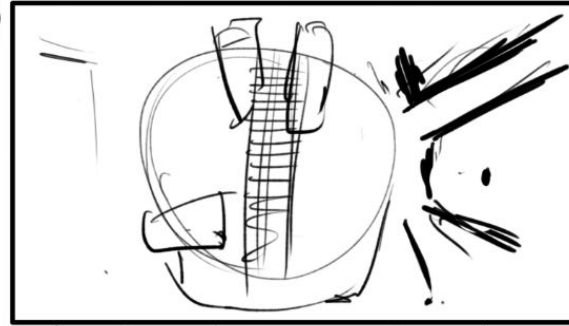
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24

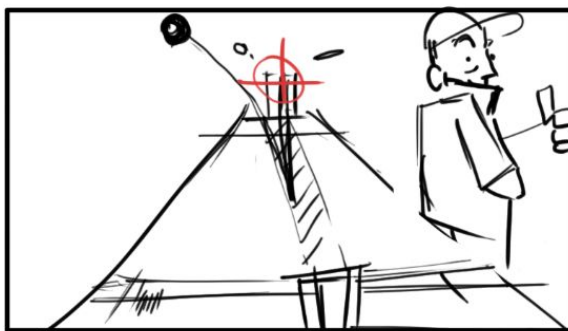


Cricket Commenting in the background

25

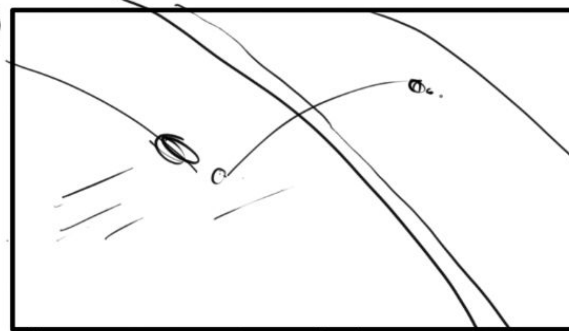


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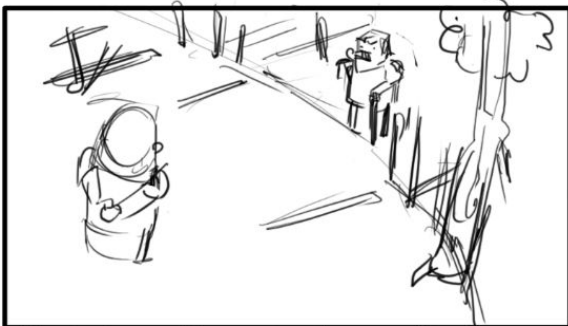
Balls knocked off

27



Bat on Ball, crowd cheers

28



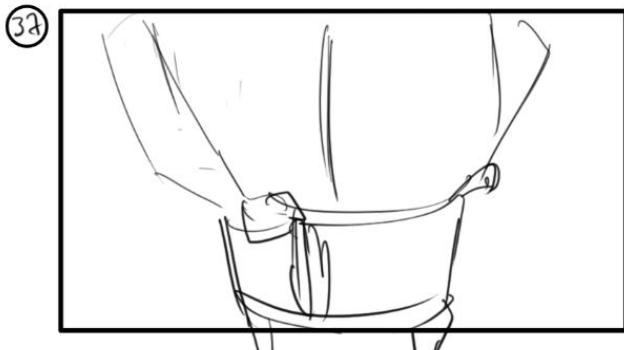
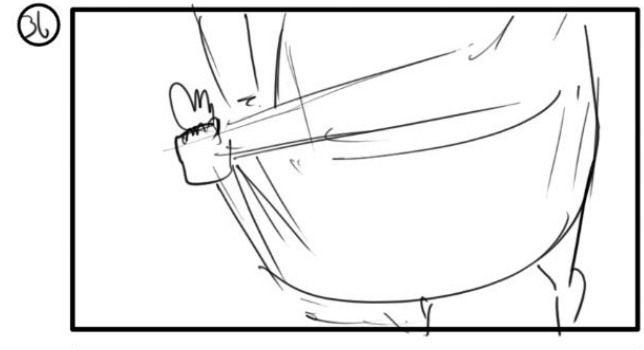
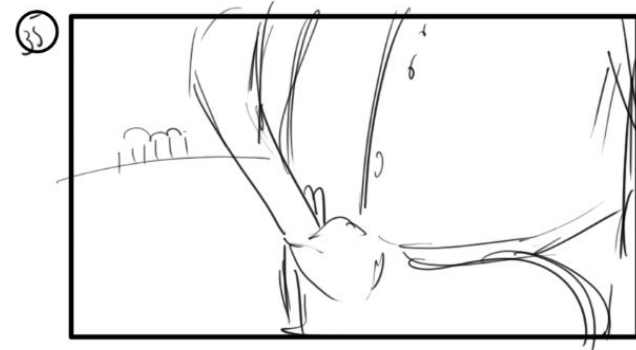
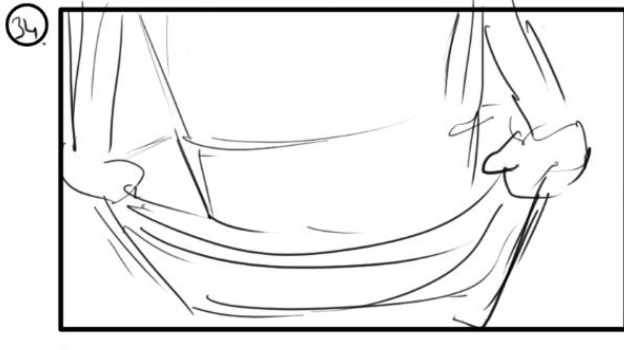
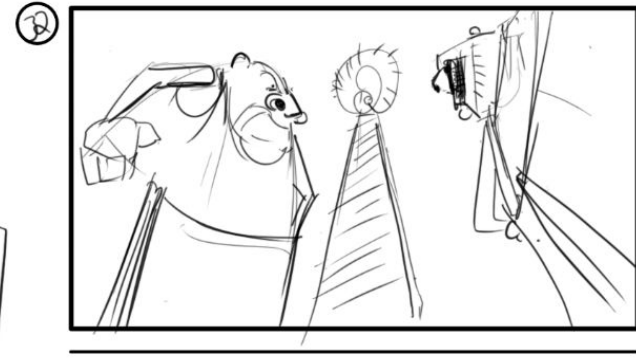
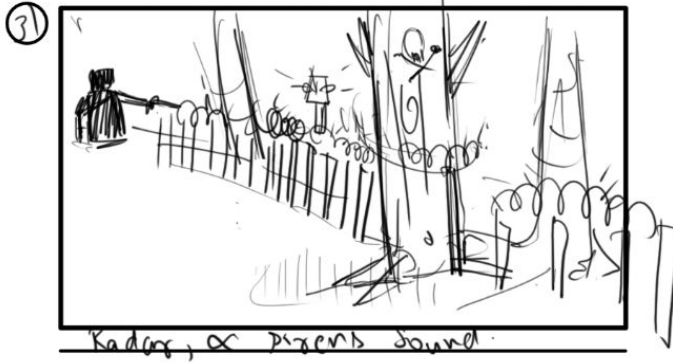
War sounds, a photo gets

29

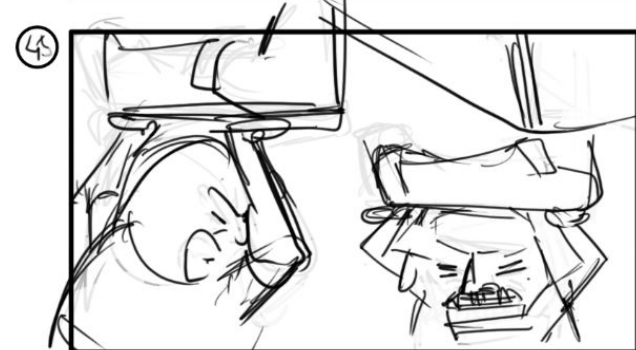


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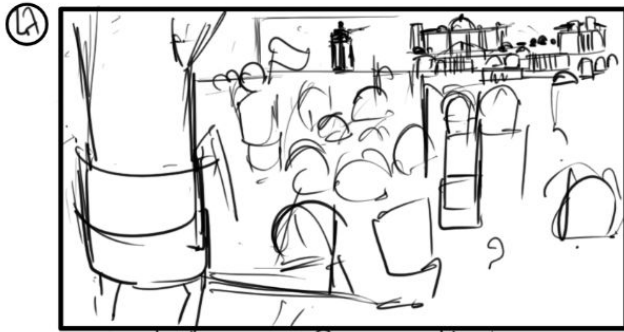




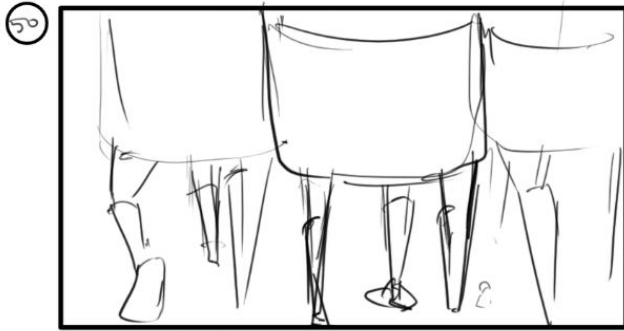
cut to
black.



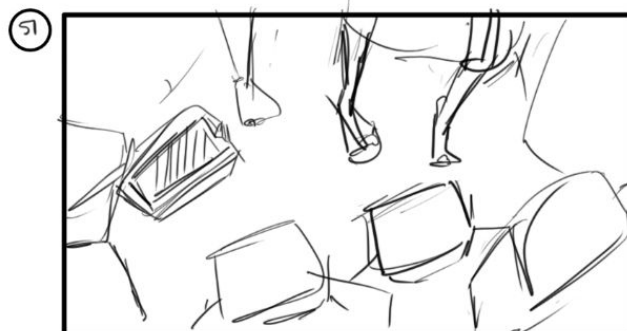
Cramp Applause - "Iguillab Simfabon"



Sundhagar - Papain Sakhai



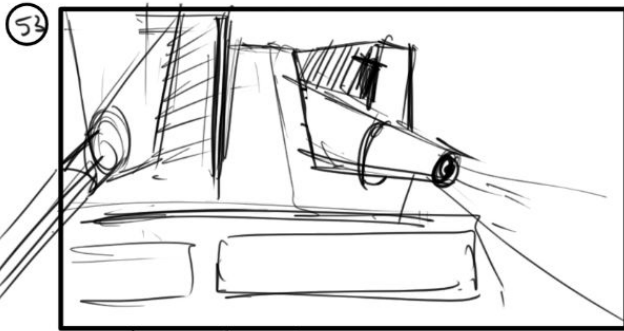
Mos, pushing



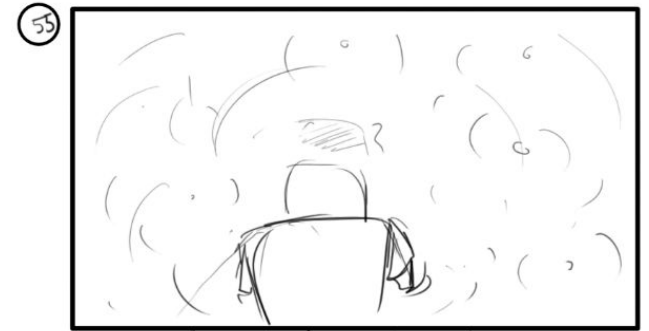
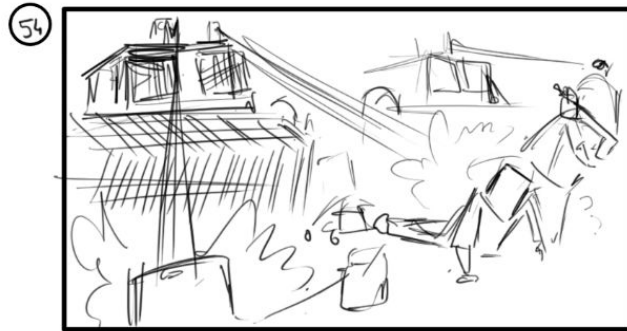
Crowd footsteps



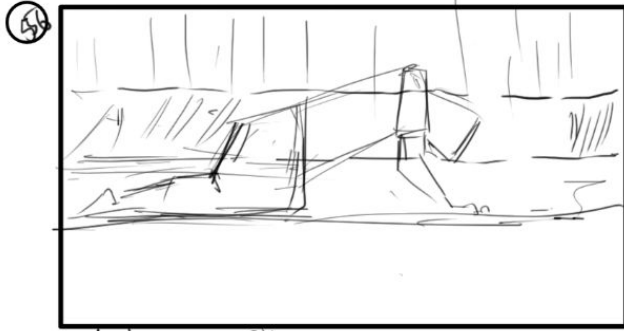
Glass shattering sound - change !!



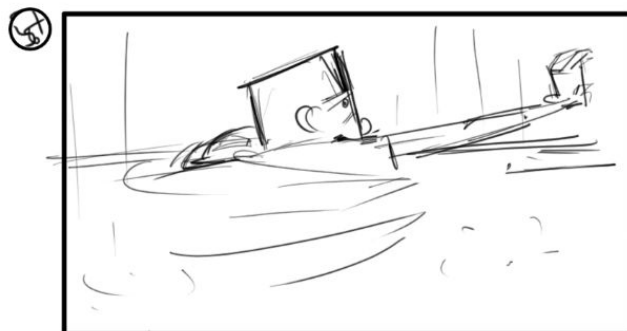
water jet spray spayer



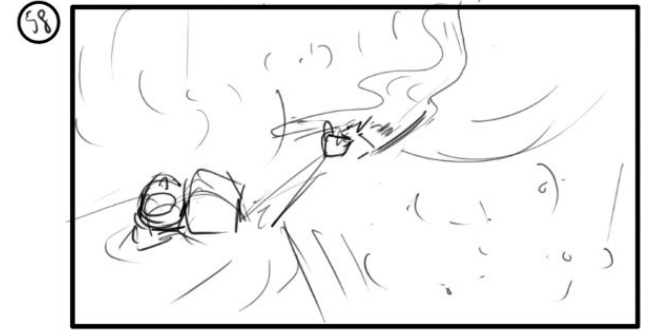
silence - thunder, rain



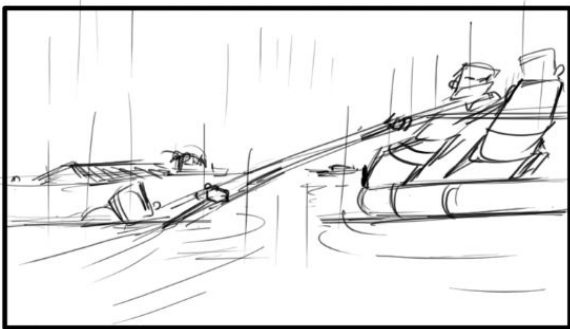
Intense rain



water, wading

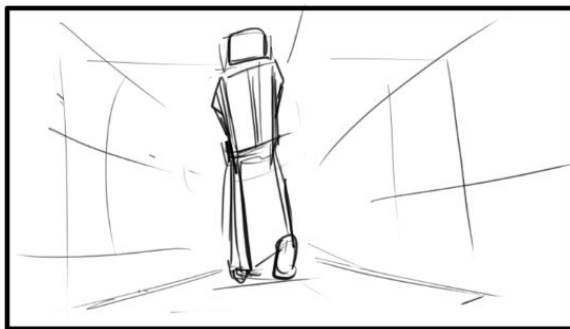


59



Rain, rope pull, water

60



61

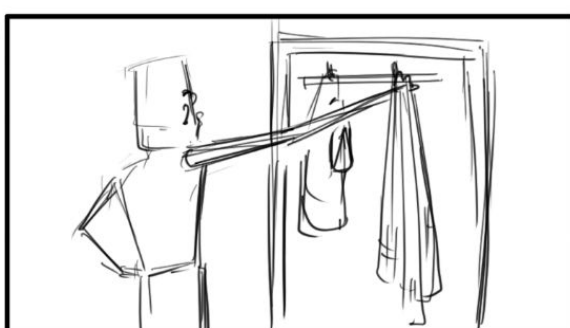


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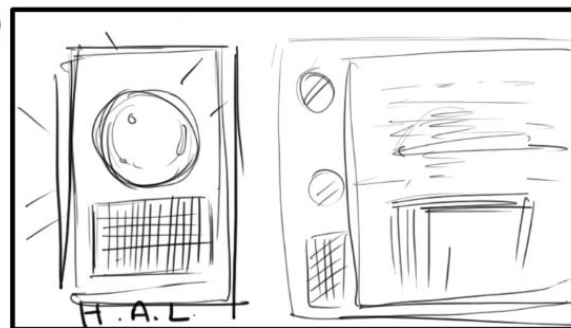


Clinking sound - Latex opening

63

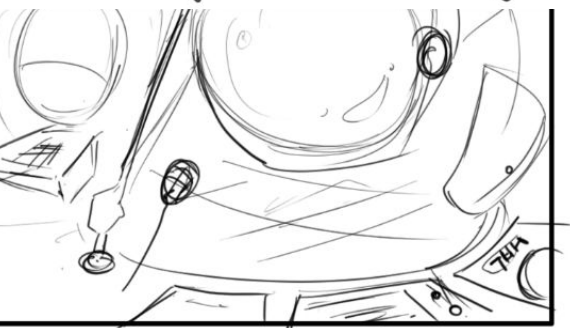


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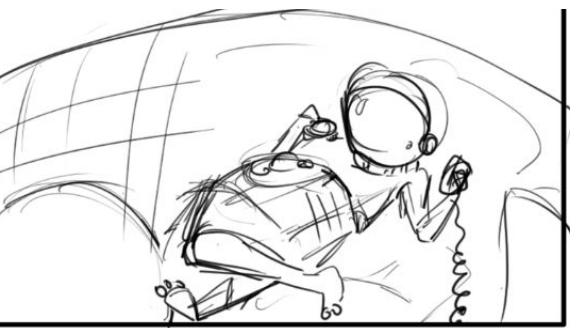


Voice over through -> Radio

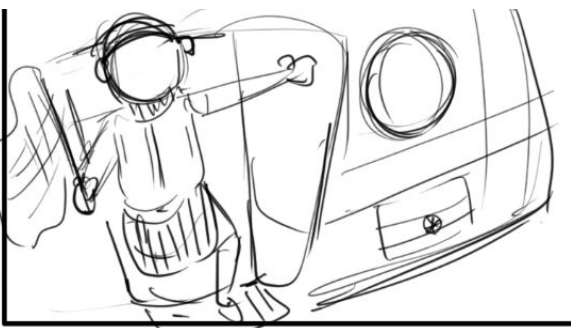
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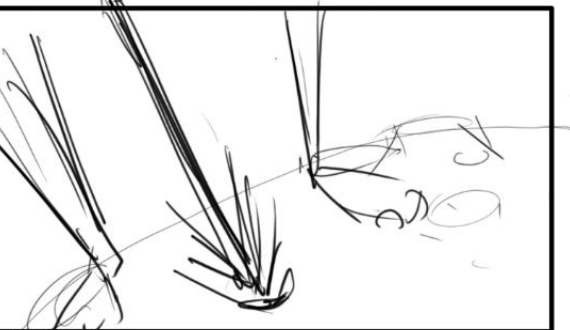
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67



68

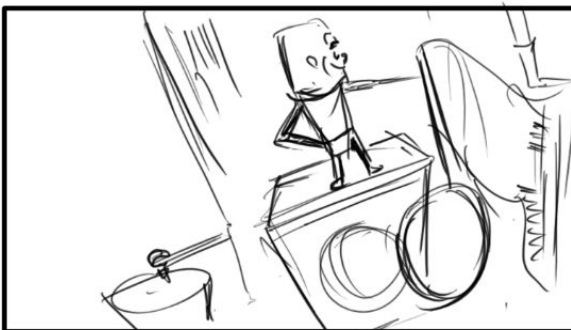


69



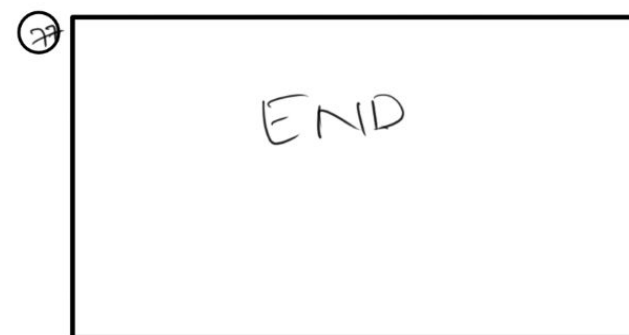
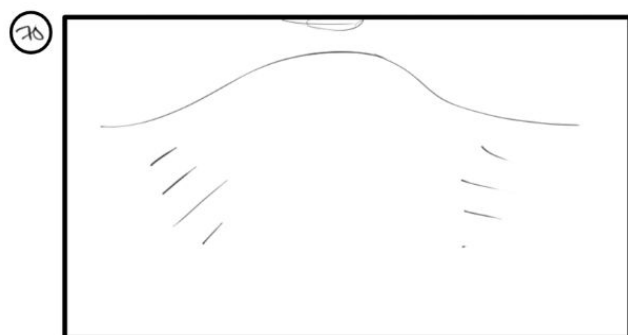
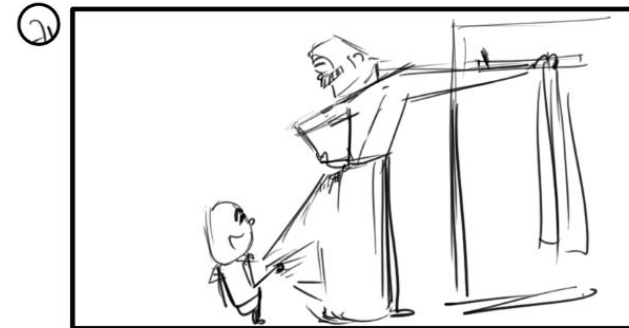
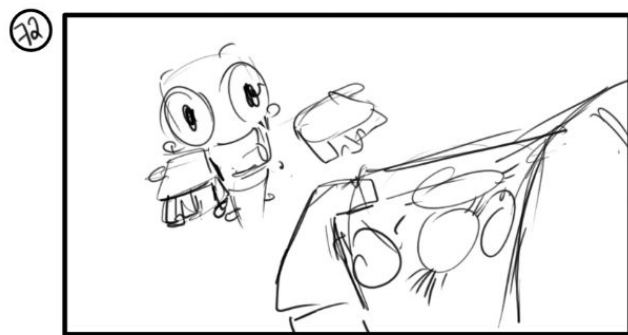
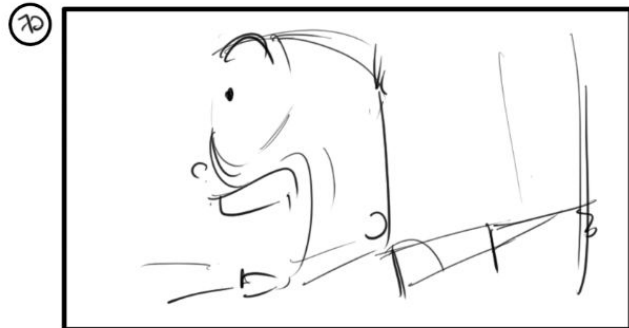
Blur into

70





S.F. x

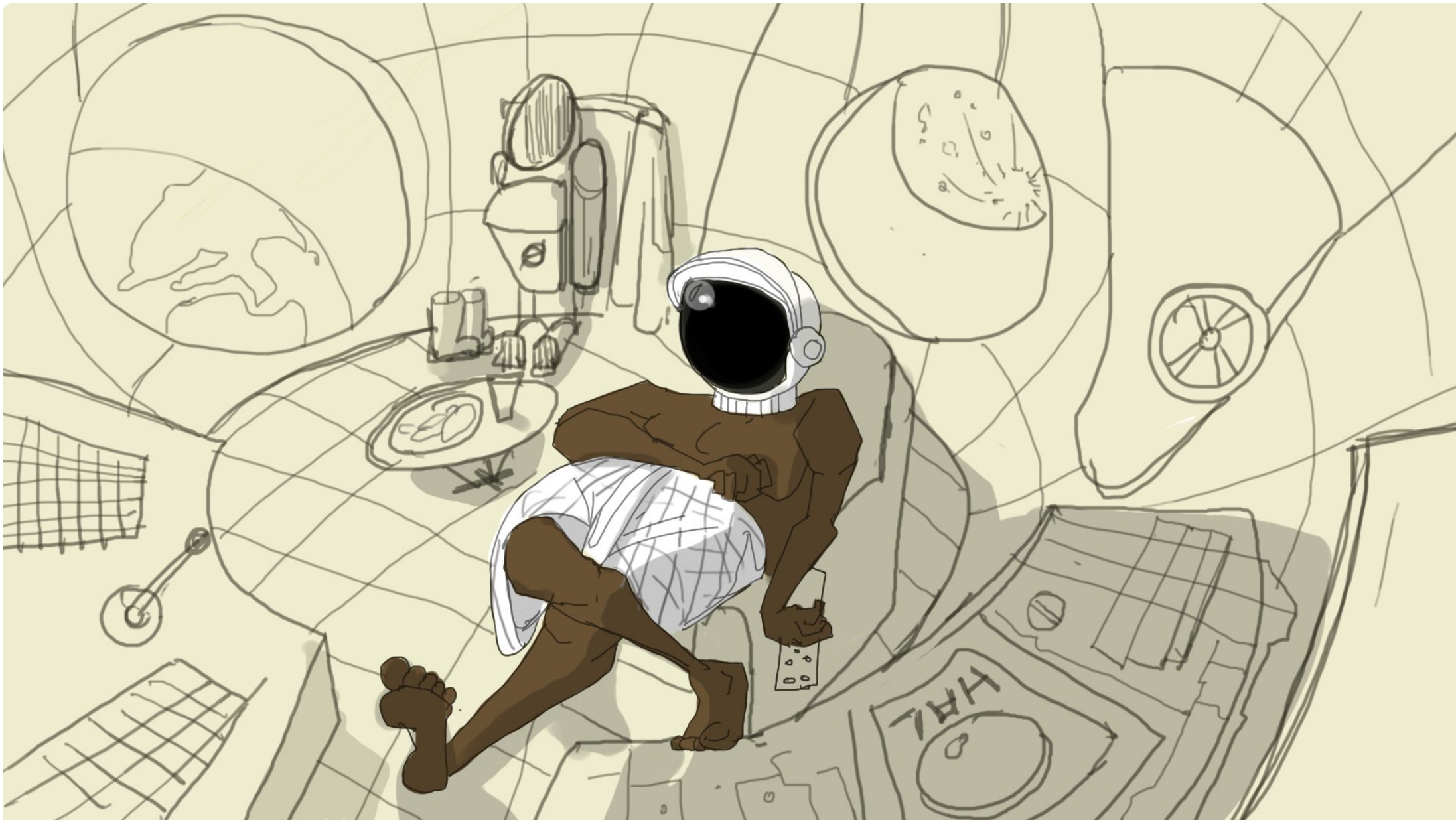


Concept art and characters

The concept art explorations were all centred around, keeping the emphasis on the mundu , This meant making toned down and desaturated backgrounds, and then using bright colours for the mundu. The final visual style was arrived at by using fabric backgrounds with contrasting mundu texture to highlight the mundu. Later Shadows and highlights were used to create depth.







(concept art for Major Thommi, the mallu astronaut in space at reposing in his seat)

The characters were largely made by using basic shapes, for the ease of animation and the complexity of the characters depended on the complexity of the animation.

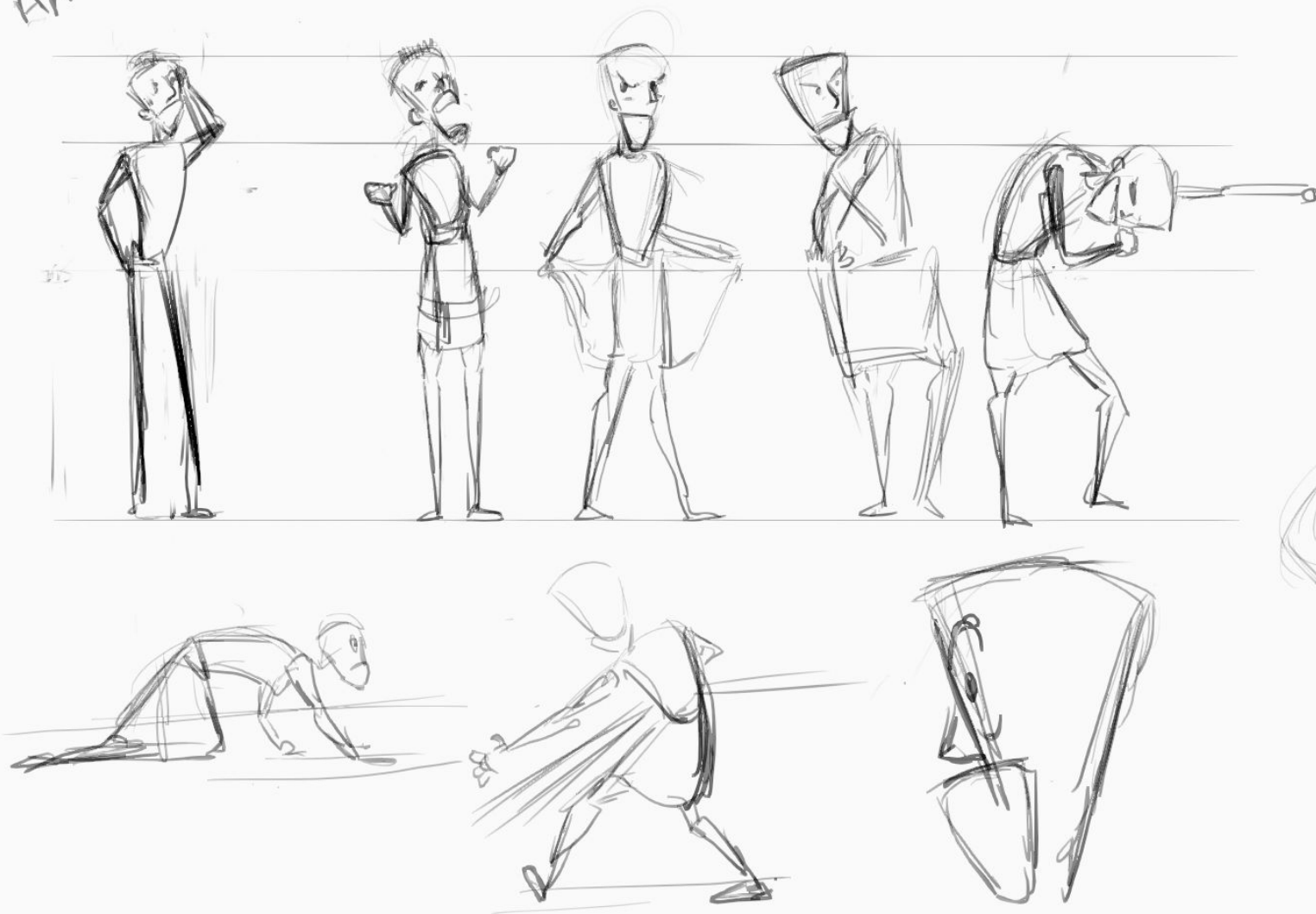
The character of the baby was among the first to be drawn. The shawarma roll had a lot of complex movements that were made easier by the tubular shaped roll.

The character of the veteran grandpa was blocky and angular, enhancing his no zero tolerance attitude. The character design helped in subverting expectation from the rigid, stubborn attitude to the cartoonish looney toon.

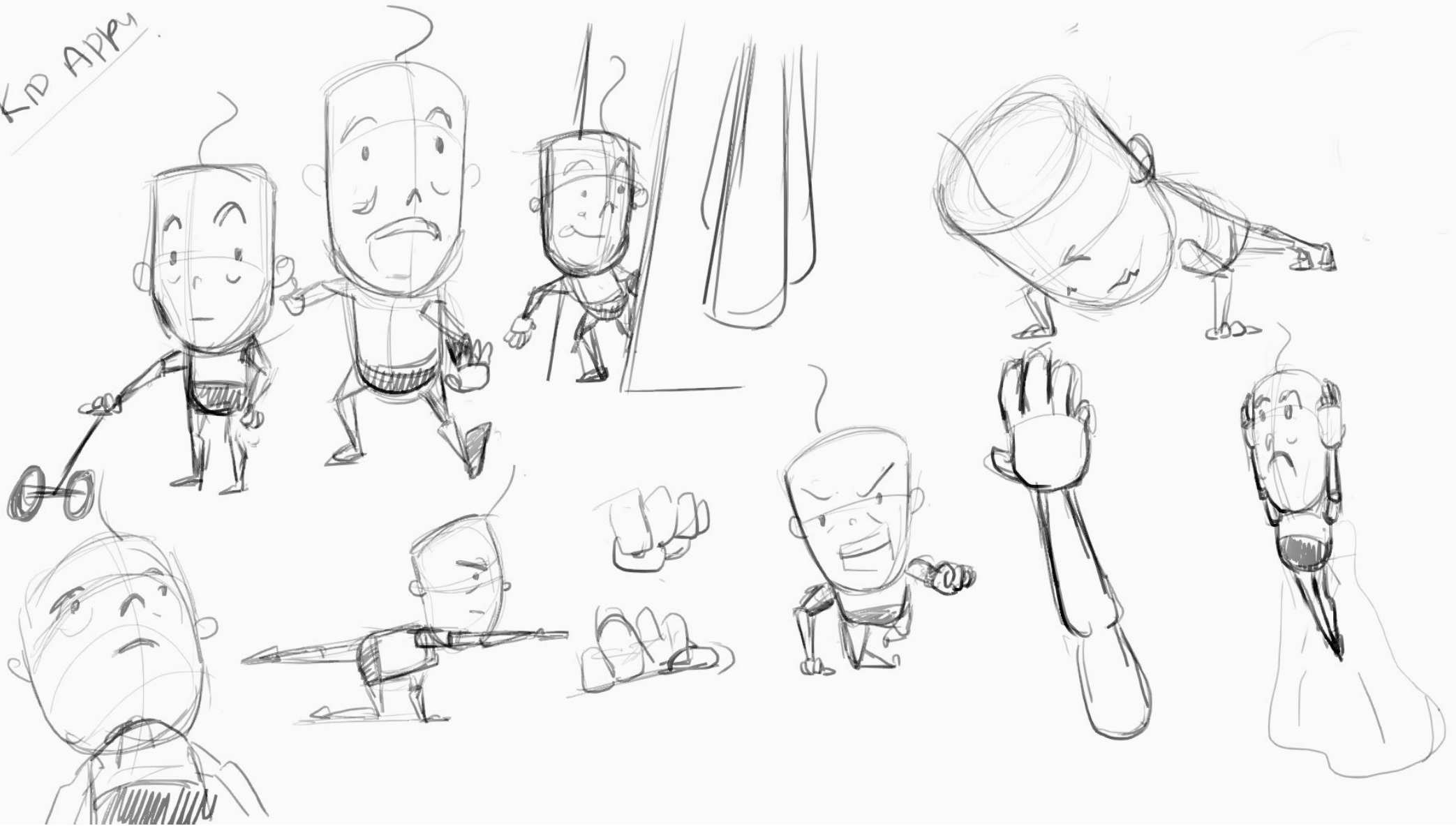
The toddler with a capsule for a head and the noodle hair, had to establish a roly polly and playfulness of the character.



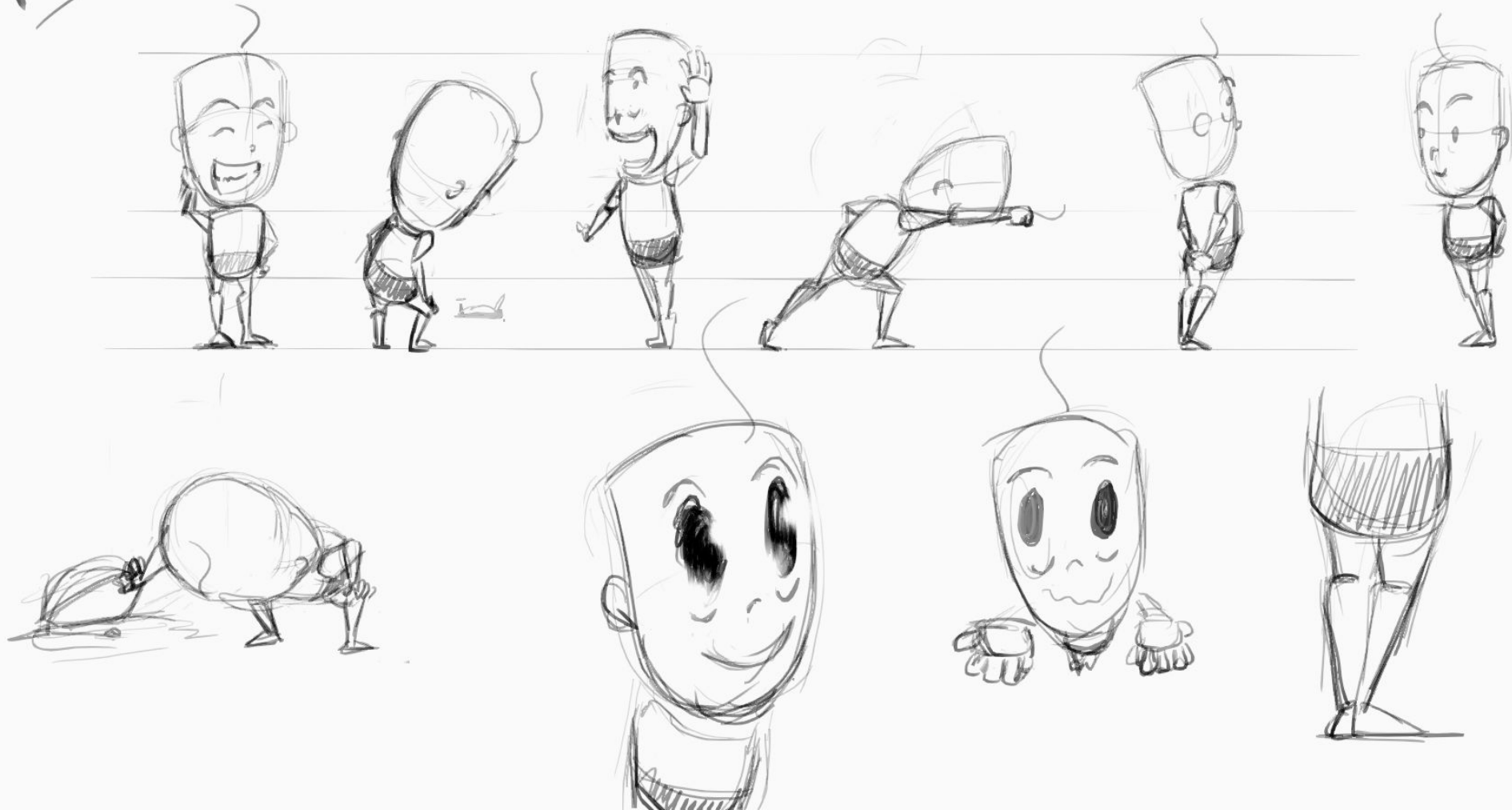
Appu.



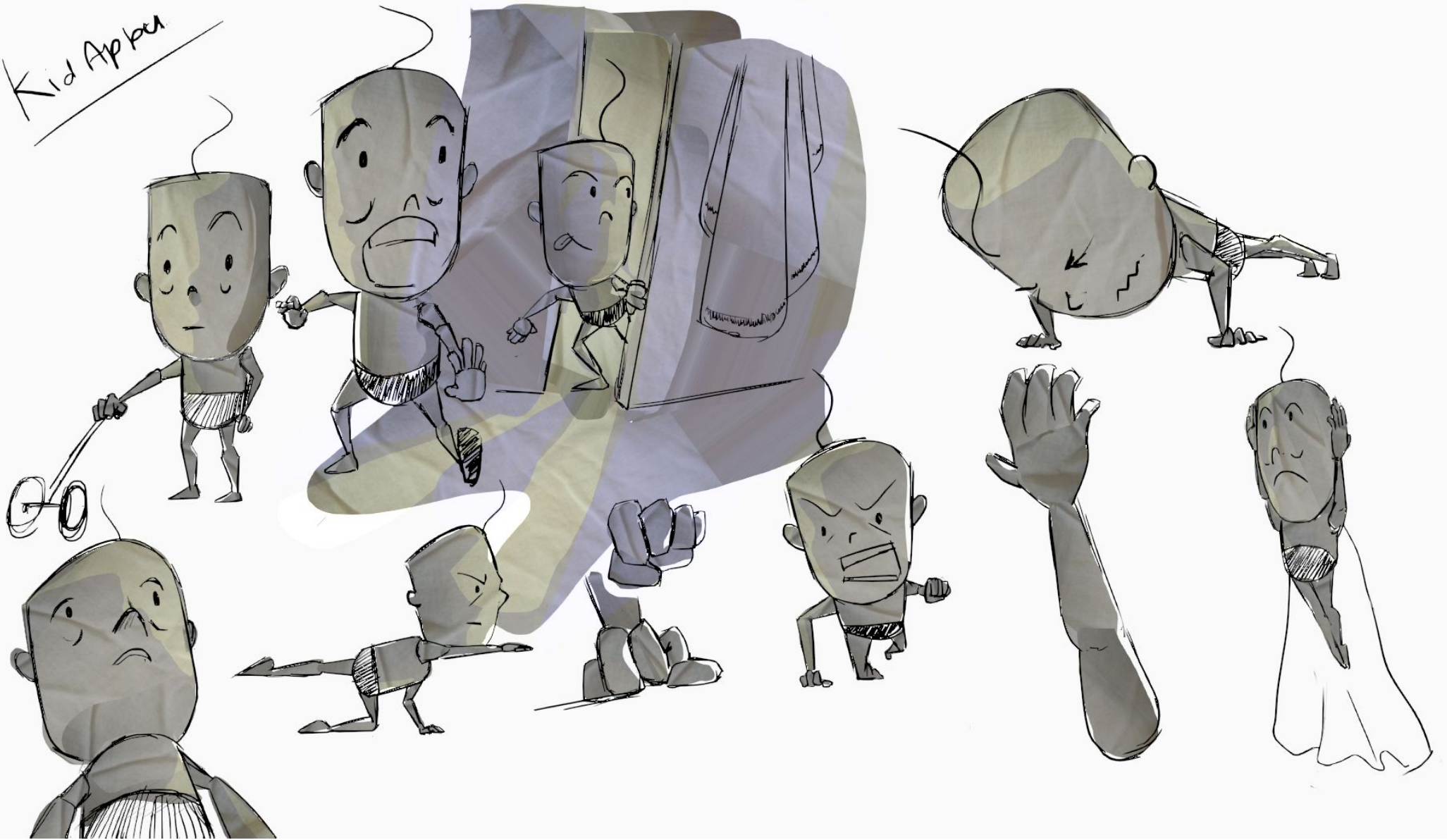
KID APPY



Kid Appu



Kid Apba



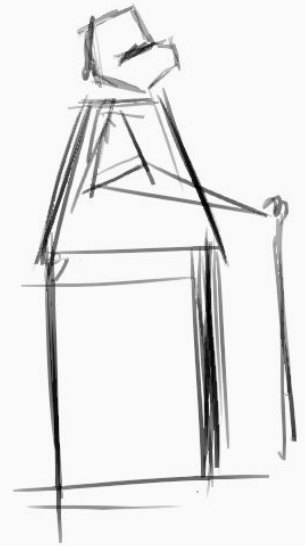
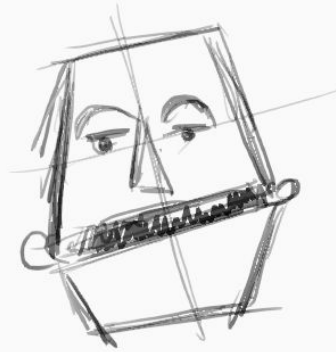
Majos Thommi



Sister Mini



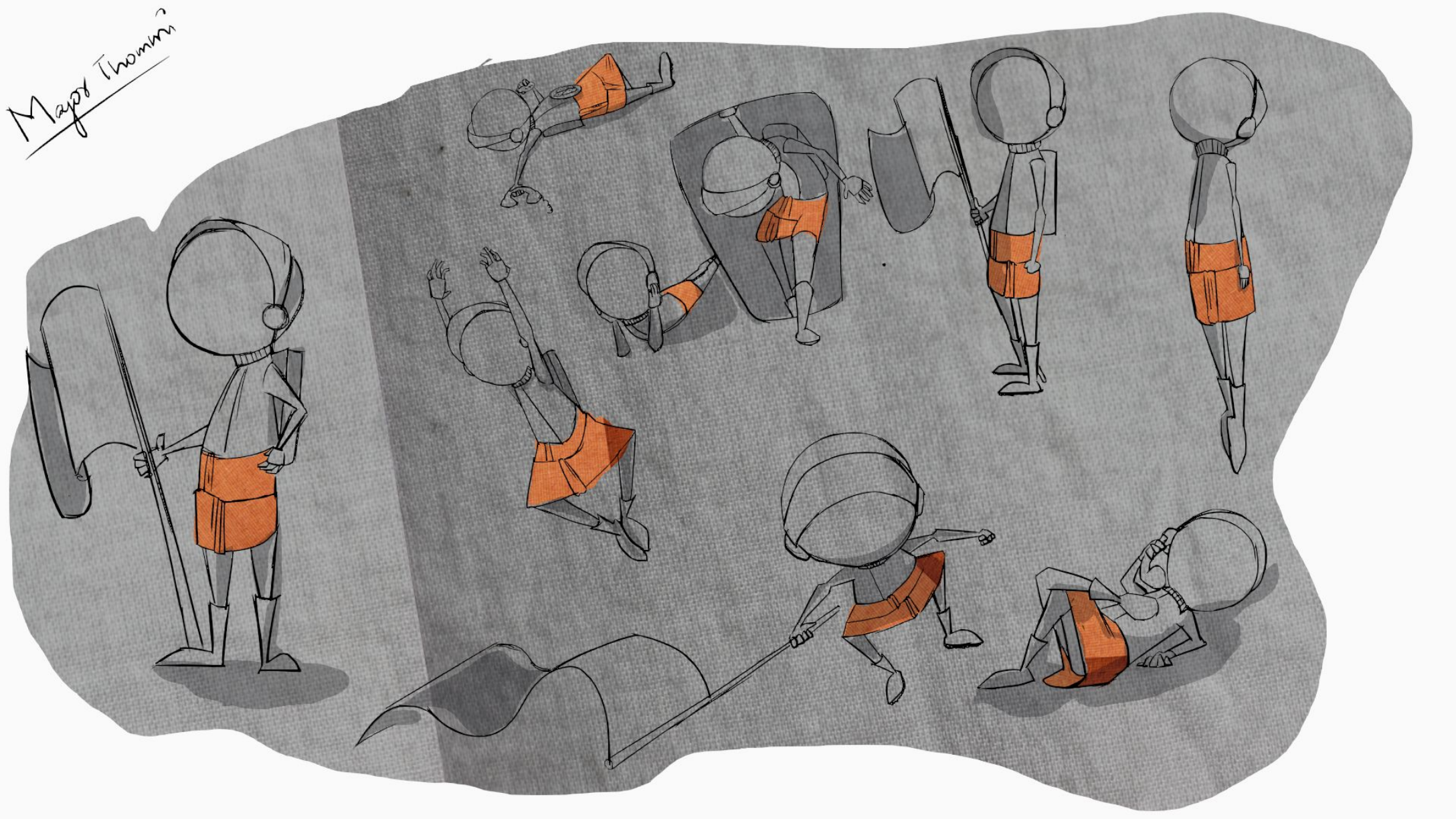
Veteran - Appu







Major Thomin?

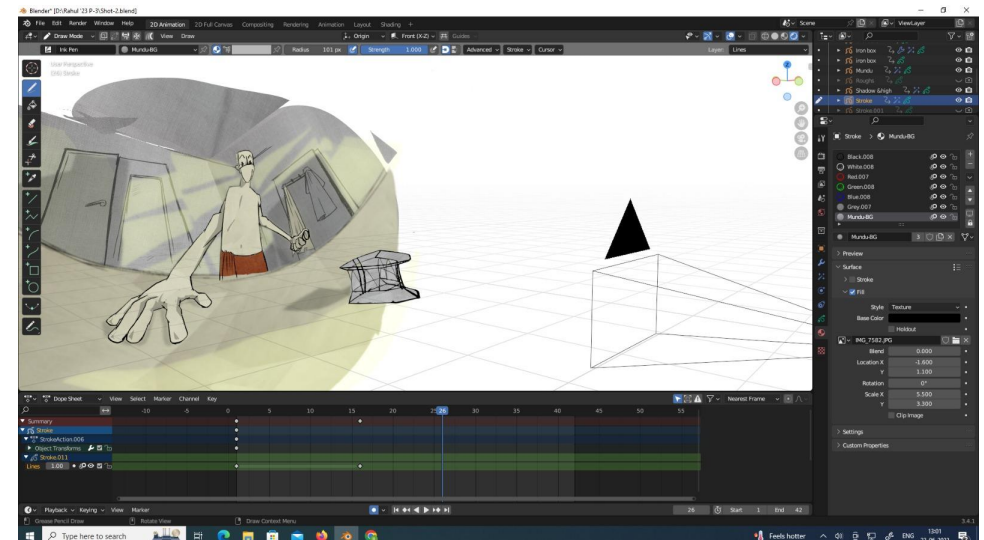


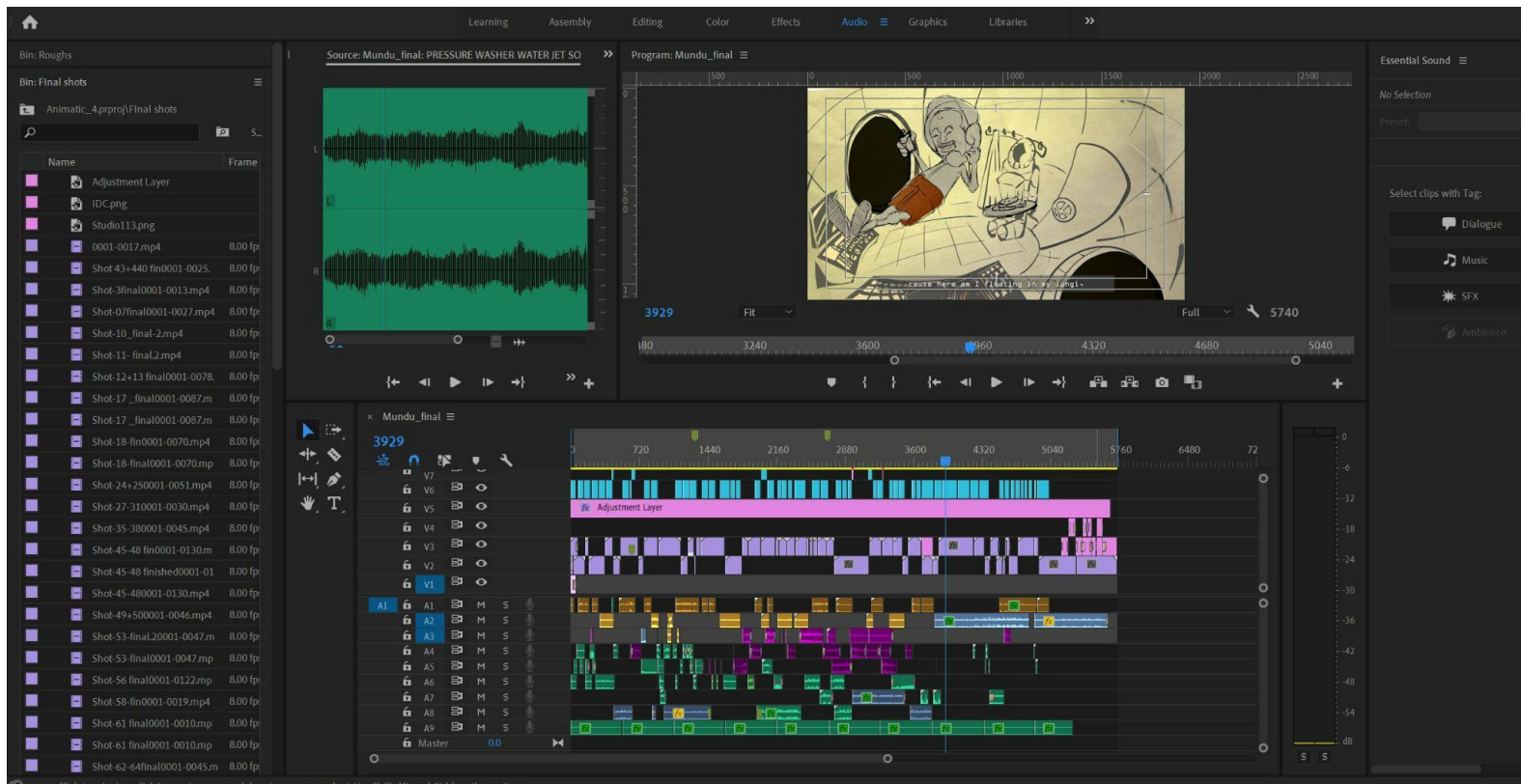
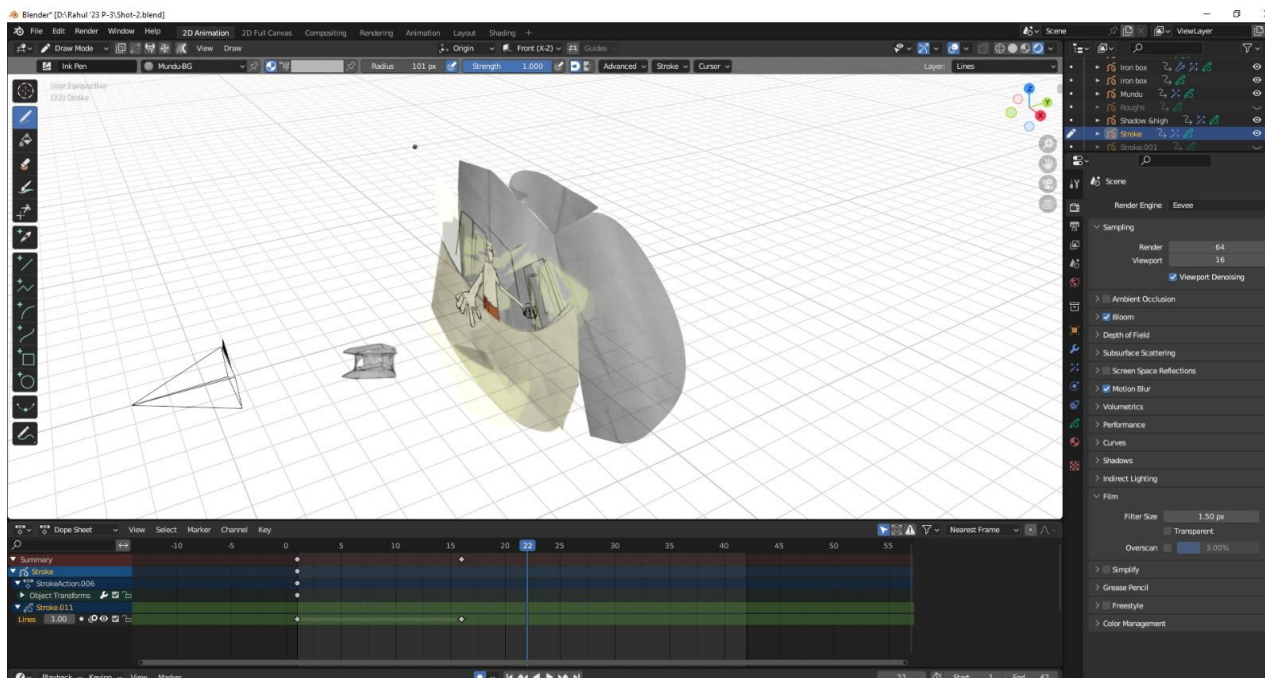
Production

The production was entirely done in blender - grease pencil, by making use of a 3D workspace and a dynamic camera. The project led to a detailed exploration of the 2D tool in blender. The 3D workspace allowed for directly compositing in the animation workspace. The animated layers could be blocked and moved in 3D space using keyframes, which helped in animating shots which had multiple characters and more control on their movements. The availability of the camera and a depth of field was also advantageous in experimenting with perspectives and dynamic angles.

The project was planned with a textures feel for the backgrounds and the mundu. The availability of solid brushes, whose colours could be swapped with textures (in png/ jpeg) format allowed for quick colouring and better control on the palette , which could be changed at will.

3D asset creation, toon shader and solid brushed were some of the features of blender grease pencil that aided in better visualisation and execution of the project within the specified time. One very industrious feature of grease pencil that was deliberately avoided in the project was the automatic in-between feature. While the feature might have reduced the labour of the project the more traditional and amateurish approach towards animation and the rough line quality complemented the mood of the film.





Challenges

The project was undertaken to push myself to do better character animations and understand the 2D workflow. It was hence not a surprise the biggest challenge in the project was the sheer number of characters. The entire muster call tallying in at 25 different characters a fair share of exploration went into character design. The task of animating and timing the characters to fit the pace of the narrative was the next challenge. To stitch together the scenes placed at very different settings without losing continuity and momentum was the next challenge. Using transitions in between the scenes was the counter to this problem. Maintaining the line quality of the grease pencil was an issue. To preserve the vitality displayed by the rough animation in the cleanups was the objective. A solution was duplicating the layer and using blending mode hard light to give a strong dark pencil like finish. Most of the lengthy and difficult shots were finished in the beginning of the project while the shorter simpler animations were finished at the end.

This resulted in stark differences in line quality and the animation using much more limited frames. Most of the roadblocks and challenges encountered during the project were overcome with simple explorations and acting out references in front of a mirror or recording. The simplicity of 2D animation pipeline and the control it offers as long as we keep exploring different approaches became evident. The key at the end was to squeeze out the maximum number of rough animations at the most limited amount of time.

Reflections

The mundu and the malayali did not begin as a very ambitious project. The points it wanted to make came from very homely and modest emotions. The Mundu was never intended to be a dream project but it somehow worked out to be better than a dream. This was also a project where more than three notebooks were filled with stories and doodles of anything that came to my mind. The project was the first experience in developing something from scratch, to bring a story together. The attempt was to create a humorous and witty fictional piece akin to the likes of “plymptoons” and “Kanduttund” In the more recent works. To invoke a sarcastic, self aware and innocent humour like Basheer was the aim during the writing process. The project was the result of a lot of guidance and suggestions from the faculty. Being open to suggestions and a genuine attempt to execute them actually broke the tunnel vision that can get into the execution of a project. The Mundu and the malayali was an exploration of not just the mundu but a peek into the life of a malayali.

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[Good Vibrations](#)

[アニメーション「就活狂想曲」](#)

[Nuggets](#)

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Vikram Seth _ The golden Gate and other works

reports and news

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