

# **BRINGING LIFE TO MADHUBANI PAINTING**

VISUAL COMMUNICATION PROJECT 3  
VCDP-384

BY

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GUIDE

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY  
2017**



## Approval Sheet

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This Visual Communication project report entitled “Bringing Life to Madhubani Painting” by Vidya Bhushan is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Design degree in Visual Communication.

Project Guide:



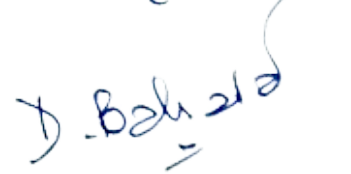
Chair Person:



Internal Examiner:



External Examiner:



Date:

30.6.2017

Place:

## Declaration

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I hereby declare that this written submission submitted to IDC, IIT Bombay, is a record of an original work done by me. This written submission represents my idea in my words, I have adequately cited and referenced the original source. I also declare that i have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misprinted or falsified any Idea/ fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

*Vidya Bhushan*

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## Acknowledgment

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&

My family and friends, for being an unconditional pillar of strength and support throughout.

*Vidya Bhushan*

## Abstract

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The Project is an exploration in the possibilities of animation using Madhubani Painting style. The moments in animation are achieved using digital puppet. The narrative content is inspired from incidences of Ramayana like Taadka's Vadh and Sita's swayamwar. Thus the project share the same spirit of Madhubani Painting by adopting the commonly painted Ramayana's theme.

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## A study of Mithila/Madhubani Art

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### Introduction: A brief history

No region of this great country is untouched with the creativity of the women. We see the example of *phulkari* in Punjab, *warli* in Gujarat, *chikan embroidery* in Lucknow, *weaving* in the North-east, *kantha* in Bengal, *miniature paintings* in the state of Rajasthan, *kethari, sujani* and of course *mithila paintings* in the Mithila region of Bihar.

The Mithila painting is one of the living creative activities of the women of this region. It is a famous folk painting on paper, cloth, ready-made garments, movable objects etc., mainly by the village women of Mithila. Originally it is a folk art, practiced by the women of all castes and communities, including the Muslims, on walls and floors using the natural and vegetable colours. Later some people took interest in it and motivated the women to translate their art from walls and floors to the canvas and now the new form has given this a very distinct identity in the art world as well as in the market. This folk art has a history, a cultural background, women's monopoly and distinct regional

identification. Where is Mithila? What is the cultural and historical significance of this land? Why is it that this art is that special in Mithila? These are the few questions that deserve an answer before anything can be written about this art form.

Far away from Indian big cities and the modern world lies a beautiful region once known as Mithila. It was one of the first kingdoms to be established in eastern India. The region is a vast plain stretching north towards Nepal, south towards the Ganges and west towards Bengal. The present districts of Champaran, Saharsa, Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Supaul, Samastipur etc., and parts of Munger, Begusarai, Bhagalpur and Purnea of Bihar cover Mithila. It is completely flat and free from rock or stone. Its soil is the alluvial silt deposited by the river Ganges, a rich, smooth clay dotted with thousands of pools replenished by the monsoon, the only reservoirs until the next monsoon. If the monsoon is late or scanty, the harvest is in jeopardy. But if the rain god is kind, the whole plain bursts into green from October to February, dotted with man-

made ponds where beasts and peasants bath beneath ancient vatvrikshas. Madhubani is the heartland where the paintings are more profuse than elsewhere. "The region's rich vegetation so impressed ancient visitors that they called it Madhubani, 'Forest of Honey' (Vequaud, Yves 1977)", the name of the most acknowledged district for this painting. In this mythical region, Rama, the handsome prince of Ayodhya and incarnation of the Vishnu, married princess Sita, born of a furrow her father King Janaka had tilled. Mithila is that sacred land where the founders of Buddhism and Jainism; the scholars of all six orthodox branches of Sanskrit learning such as Yajnavalkya, Bridha Vachaspati, Ayachi Mishra, Shankar Mishra, Gautam, Kapil, Sachal Mishra, Kumaril Bhatt and Mandan Mishra were born. Vidyapati, a Vaisnav poet of 14th century was born in Mithila who immortalized a new form of love songs explaining the relationship between Radha and Krishna in the region through his padavalis and therefore the people rightly remember him as the reincarnation of Jaideva (abhinavajaideva). Karnpure, a classical Sanskrit poet of Bengal, in his famous devotional epic, the

Parijataharanamahakavya gives an interesting account confirming the scholarship of the people of Mithila. Krishna tells his beloved Satyabhama, while flying over this land on way to Dwarka from Amravati,

*"O lotus-eyed one behold! Yonder this is Mithila, the birthplace of Sita. Here in every house Saraswati dances with pride on the tip of the tongue of the learned"*

Mithila is a wonderful land where art and scholarship, laukika and Vedic traditions flourished together in complete harmony between the two. There was no binary opposition.

The tradition of wall paintings as well as surface paintings for beautification of dwellings and ritual purposes in Mithila is believed to have survived from the epic period. The women artists, according to the old age tradition, are the sole custodians who practice this folk painting passing down for generations from mother to her daughter. They have been retaining this great art form in the region since time immemorial. The

girl learns to play with the brush and colors at an early age that finally culminates in the kohabar, which acquires great sanctity in the social life. All religious ceremonies relating to the marriage are performed in the kohbar.

The present form of Mithila paintings, also called Madhubani paintings, are the translation of the wall paintings, floor paintings and terracotta idols onto paper or canvas<sup>23</sup>. This experiment is not very old. In the late sixties, twentieth century, in order to create the job opportunity for the women to face the cruel challenge of the terrible drought, some women were approached to translate their art from walls, floors and other form of creativity to the paper or canvas. They did and it worked miraculously. At first when the ritual was fixed on paper it had a very small audience at the receiver's end but it certainly opened a new world of art appreciators and also potential buyers of their artworks in the world. This was a great success and a ticket to trade. Since then the painting medium has diversified. Wall paintings were transferred to hand made paper (which was of poster size) and gradually it laid the way for

other mediums and motifs like greeting cards, dress materials, sun-mica etc.

Madhubani painting is an emblematic expression of day-to-day experiences and beliefs. As such, symbolism, simplicity and beauty hold them together in a single school of traditional art. The symbols that these Maithili painters use have their specific meanings as, for instance, fish symbolize fertility, procreation and good luck, peacocks are associated with romantic love and religion, and serpents are the divine protectors. Characterized by vibrant use of colour, underlying symbolism and traditional geometric patterns supporting the main theme, the Indian folk art form of Madhubani succeeded in creating a place for itself in the international house of fame and now recognized worldwide.

## **Symbols or motifs and their meaning in Madhubani Painting**

Madhubani painting is a symbolic expression of day-to-day-experiences, feelings and thought. The symbols, those are used by Maithili painters, have their specific meanings. For instance, **fish symbolize fertility**, procreation and good luck, **peacocks are associated with romantic love** and religion, and **serpents are the divine protectors**. The paintings are characterized by vibrant use of colour, natural and geometric motifs, religious and secular figures.

According to stylistic point of view Madhubani paintings can be classified into different categories like bharani, kachani, gem, gobar, godna and tantric. Among these bharni, kachani and godna styles are very popular in Mithila region. Line paintings or kachani are done by Kayastha women. In those paintings artisans use maximum lines rather than colours. They depict village or religious scenes in their paintings. The godna painting which is done by Harijan women came forward in the 1980s. The women of the Dusadh and the Chamar are doing all forms of traditional

paintings and art forms for ritual purposes and also for decorating their dwellings. Their pictorial alphabet began to include lines, waves, circles, sticks and snails, opening the way to stylization and more abstraction.

Thematically, Madhubani paintings are mostly based on religion and mythology. In the paintings of little tradition, local deities like Raja Salesh, Buddheshwar, Jutki Malini, Reshma, and the likes occurs in abundance.

Great tradition is a tribute to the Hindu Gods like Krishna-Radha, ShivaParvati, Ganesha, Maa Durga, and the likes. However, natural scenes of villages, everyday life, flora and fauna which are so much a part of life of this school of painters also entered the domain of godna paintings.

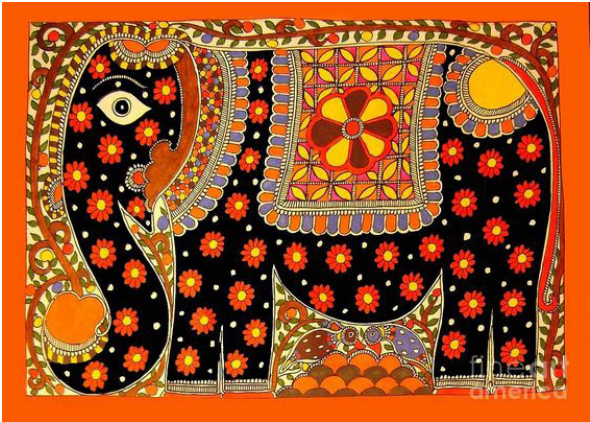
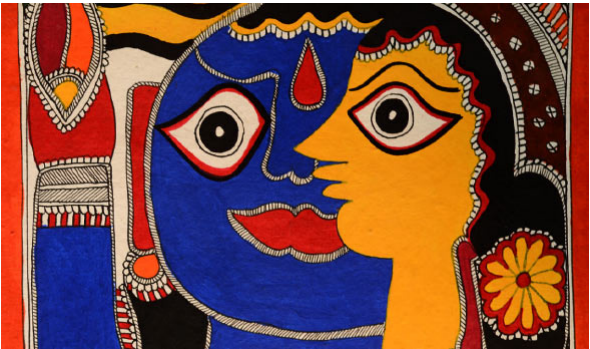
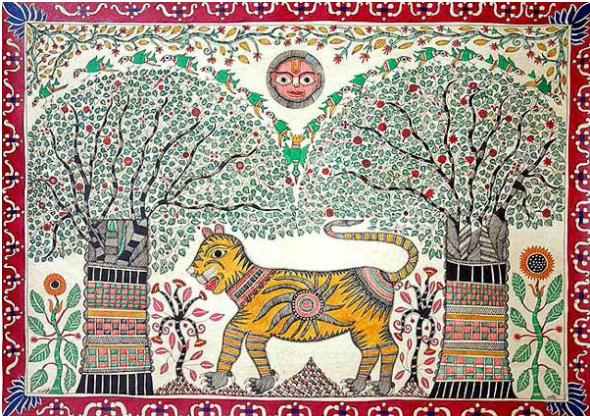
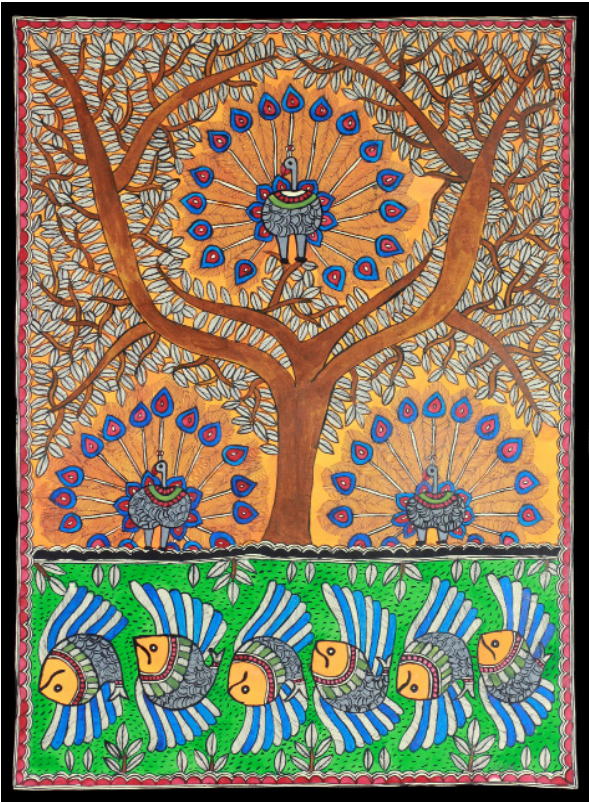
Everybody knows that Mithila is the birthplace of Sita and so that the artisan visualizes several scene of Ramayana in their canvas. Besides abstract human figure the motifs and design are seen in Madhubani painting such as; flora and fauna, curve linear devices, circle in series, series of short lines, peacock, fish, flower, birds, animal and other natural life. The central theme the Madhubani paintings is the Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

A large number of paintings reveal the life incident of Rama and Sita. The artists follow the following line as the subject of painting.

### **“Kali Durga Radhe Shyam Gouri Shankar Sita Ram”**

Sometimes the outline of the painting is usually left uncoloured in order to create a visual depth and aesthetical taste. It can be noted that while religious painting include various God and Goddesses, secular and decorative paintings contain various symbol and prosperity and fertility such as elephant, horse, lion parrot, turtle, bamboo, lotus, flower, purania leaves, pana flower, creepers, swastika, sanl<ha etc. The human figures are mostly abstract and linear in forms and the animals are usually naturalistic and are invariably depicted in profile.

Examples of Madhubani Painting



All image source: Google images

### **Depiction of mythological figure:**

Mythological figures like Goddess Durga, Kali, Saraswati, Shiva-Parvati, Rama-Sita and Radha- Krishna are depicted in the painting. The mythological scenes like Rama hunts the Golden deer, Krishna subdues Kaliya, Krishna the Cowherd, Krishna resting in a Tree, marriage of Rama and Sita etc are illustrated in those paintings. Clothing is highly decorated with geometrical, floral patterns. Head dresses are decorated with very stylized pattern. Sometimes floral motifs and dotted lines are used in head dresses. For beautification, the figures are fully ornamented with different ornaments. To depict ornaments fish motifs (nose pin), circles (ear ring) etc are also used. Halo is given behind the head of religious figure.

### **Depiction of human figure:**

Figurative motifs play an important role in Madhubani Painting. Secular figures and religious figures are the central theme of the painting. The human figures are mostly abstract and linear in shape. The figures are

two dimensional in nature. The faces usually include sharp noses with bulging eyes. Single line as well as double lines are used to draw the shape of figures then filled with designs of various motifs. The designs of costume are made with intricate lines and no shading is given.

### **Depiction of Lotus:**

In the painting of Madhubani the most common flower motifs that is the lotus. In Mithila Painting, lotus flower is symbolic of female. Sometime it is seen as pedestal of mythological figure and some time it is used as design of the painting. This flower also represents the sexual organ of bride. In the kohbar-ghar the most prominent image looming largest on the walls are the bamboo-tree and the ring of lotus, called *Purain*.

### **Bamboo tree:**

Bamboo tree symbolizes male figure. In the painting of kohbar the bamboo trees are stylistically painted complete with birds.

### **Fish:**

Fish is a very auspicious theme of Mithila Painting. According to artisans fish is symbol of good luck and holiness. Fish also symbolize water. It is very popular and common theme of Madhubani painting. In the painting of kohbar they also apply fishes. They believe that it is the emblems of fertility and holiness. The fishes are drawn in a very decorative manner. There is extensive use of geometric linear designs in the entire body of fish. Those are curve line, straight line, and zigzag lines. To depict scale of fishes curved lines are used.

### **Swastika:**

The swastika is very auspicious symbol in Indian culture. The Sarvatobhadra symbol of the Vedic literature later come to be known as swastika. The word swastika signifies happiness, pleasure and good luck. The four sides represent the four arms of lord Vishnu in his abhoyadana pose.

### **Parrot:**

Parrots symbolize love birds in this painting. Parrots are usually drawn with trees. The birds are also two-dimensional in nature. Out line drawn with thick brush and the entire body filled up with geometrical design of single lines.

### **Snake:**

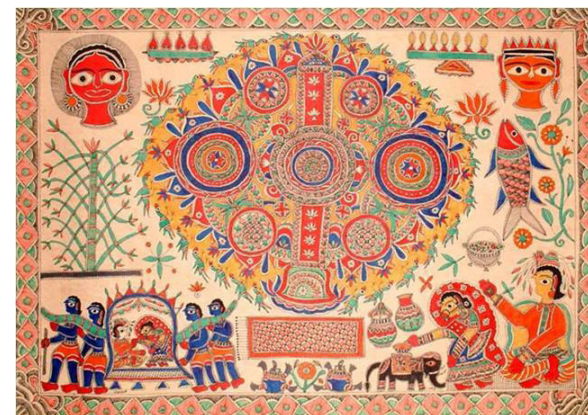
Snakes are very commonly painted across all Maithili dwellings. Maithili's not only worship snakes as deity, but also consider them a fertility symbol.

### **Kohbar Ghar:**

On the first night after the wedding, the bride and the groom enter the kohbar-ghar (nuptial chamber) where they are asked to perform several entertaining rituals and games that serve as icebreakers that generate lots of laughter from family members who crowd into the room. After this introductory play, they worship Goddess Gauri every morning for the next four days. On the fifth day, certain wedding rituals are repeated and the groom again applies vermilion in the parting of the bride's hair. Elaborate local

symbols are also painted on the walls of the kohbar-ghar. Four shapes of Naina Jogin (protective one-eyed veiled goddess) are drawn on the four walls to protect the newly-weds from the evil eye. Other symbols, said to promote the couple's fertility and longevity are also drawn. These include a large central mandala (spiritual symbols) surrounded by six smaller mandalas and several other figures and abstract forms. These paintings are full of auspicious signs and symbols of love, fertility, sensuality and spirituality. There are depictions of bamboos, betel leaves, banana trees, pairs of frolicking parrots (symbols of love), fish, serpents (power of regeneration), elephants (symbols of strength), peacocks (symbols of eternity), tortoises (symbols of longevity), as well as the sun and the moon. The bride honours the kohbar artwork by offering vermilion, and leaving a print of her turmeric-dipped hand on the kohbar.

Rituals performed in the kohbar-ghar have tremendous magical significance. The mysterious concept of naina-jogin itself, as well as pictorial rendering and ritual enactment of it, are peculiar to Mithila. The connection with Kamakhya of Kamarupa is interesting.



Kohbar Painting, *Google images*

### **Naina-Jogin**

Significantly, naina-jogin literally means 'eye-goddess' and kamakhya the 'goddess with charming eyes'. In the pictorial depiction of naina-jogin in the kohbar-ghar, the entire face is shown covered by a veil except one eye, which is prominently depicted, almost at the centre of the face. There is a deep-rooted belief amongst the women of Mithila in the magical powers of the goddess Kamakhya. It is said that several women in Mithila practice black magic to cast spell and the evil eye on their victims by initiating themselves in the mantras and tantrik practices related to

Kamakhya. Such women are known as dayan, or evil spirits. Several tantric texts include Kamakshi (Kamakhya) among the deities, invoked for the destruction of victims, or to drive away enemies or evil spirits.

In Mithila the word jog is used to connote a spell or charm. Jog songs are sung throughout the course of wedding ceremony to evade the influence of the evil eye and harmful spells on the bride or groom; as such, the naina-jogins would appear to personify the goddess Kamakhya herself, whose presence in the four corners of the kohbar-ghar is meant to guard the bride and groom from any possible harm.



Naina-Jogin by Sita Devi, *Google images*

### **Present scenario of Madhubani Painting**

The present Madhubani practice has reached to its saturation. However, it has gained worldwide fame but modern commercialization has caused serious harm to this art. The women and men are learning this art from the markets in towns and metropolitan cities. The trainers themselves do not know the essence and aesthetic beauty of this folk art and they teach their students in utter ignorance. Some of them do not know the colour combination, obtaining the colour from the nature, preparing the background, relationship between rhythm, colour, songs, rituals, dance and the art of painting. The themes and designs of the paintings are, now, in most of the cases decided by the buyers. The buyer-centric approach has caused serious threat to the originality of colour, design, motif, and sensitivity of this great art form. Commercialization of this art has created the interest of several males in it. They have been now also painting without knowing the significance of women in it. For them it is an industry that can easily provide a job opportunity for them. They are willing to paint anything as per the requirement of the buyers in the name of Mithila painting.

However, there are only few artists, who still practices this art with sincerity. There are only few who understand the true grammar of this traditional art and paint with contemporary themes without losing the Madhubani essence.

## Primary Study

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As this project is a continuation of my earlier project (Visualizing Contemporary Bihar through Madhubani Painting). Hence I was already aware of the style of painting and its basic elements. So for the primary study my goal was to talk with artists who were practicing Madhubani Painting since long and understand the possible behaviour of this painting if being animated. Two artists whom I interviewed were Santosh Das and Shantanu Das. They are Contemporary Madhubani artists and based on their inputs several inferences were listed which focuses on the characteristics of the animation.

*"It is this pattern and repetition of patterns which makes Madhubani Painting live. I see these lines waving and moving, patterns scaling up and down, all vibrant colours keep changing and characters blinking their eyes because its the only element which talks to me." – Santosh Das*

*Characters of Madhubani Painting follow geometry. They comprises of the basic shapes like circle, semi-circle, line, dash, dot, plus sign, minus sign, cross hatch, and comma. I see these patterns moving like a fluid. They are the blood of the painting which creates the visual drama and harmony. The other Characters seems as a puppet with movements as if they are pinned or pivoted." – Shantanu Das*

However these were the artists impression of animation possibilities which gave me a certain insight of possible animation behaviour. Based on these inferences and further talks basic character of animation was drawn. Elements like shadow, fire, air, clouds, and powers were discussed. How one can visualize these elements in Madhubani Painting style that was the most important question. Shadow is never drawn

in Madhubani Painting hence a question was there, what if its needed to draw shadow. however these were artists individual decisions and style of representation. But the insight which both of the artists gave me was all related to pattern and elements of nature.

## Secondary Study

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*"Books aren't made of pages and words. They are made of hopes, dreams and possibilities."*

*–Harliquin*

*"Animation is about creating illusion of life. And you can't create it if you don't have one."*

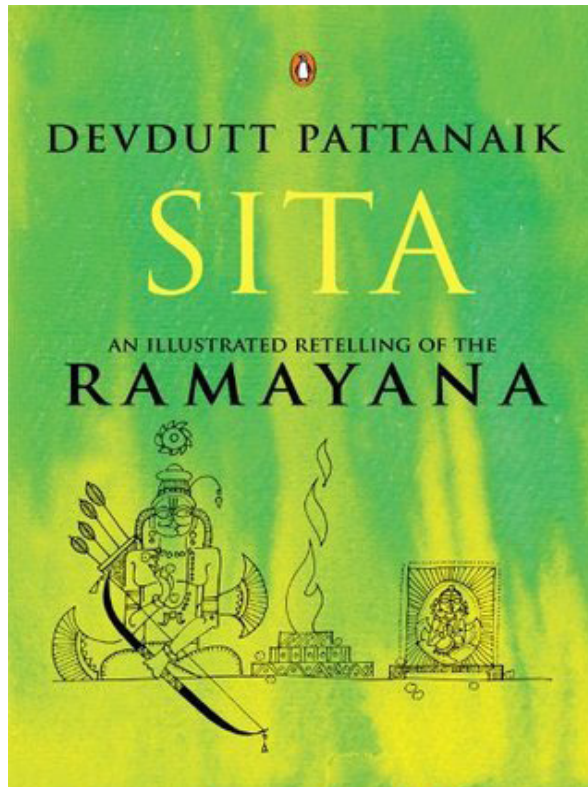
*–Brad Bird*

Animation is the powerful medium to communicate messages. However with my project the aim is to animate Madhubani style of Painting and see the possibilities in it.

Nevertheless, as a part of secondary study and prepare myself for the storytelling and animation part of the project, I read couple of Books and watched some movies.

## Graphic Novel

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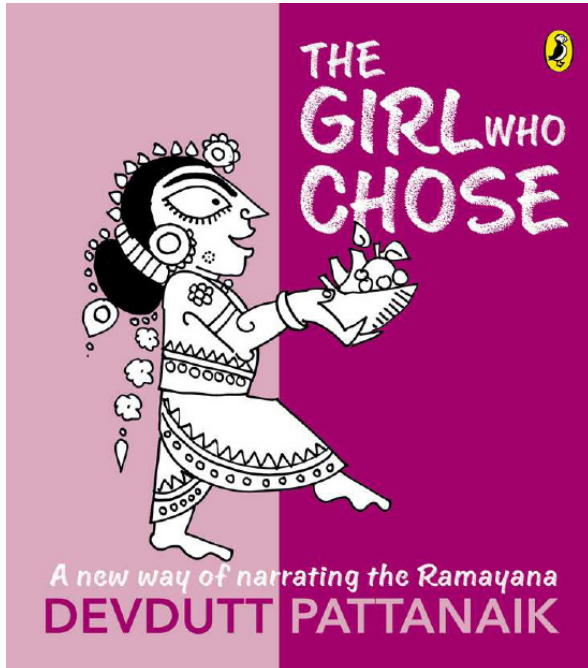


### **SITA: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana | Devdutt Pattanaik**

Devdutt Pattanaik's Sita seeks to provoke thought, to inspire, to expand one's mind and realise one's potential. The author points out the fallacies of human nature – humans value things over thoughts, judge instead of understanding another's point of view, live in fear not faith. What is implicit in the epic is made explicit.

In Devdutt Pattanaik's 'Sita', Sita is not a victim. She has grown up listening to the sages discuss the Upanishads. She lifts Shiva's mighty bow with ease, and kills Ravana's twin in a fierce battle. She is wise and strong. A single mother to her sons, she is independent, not abandoned. It is Ram who is seen struggling to come to terms with what he must do as king. He remains devoted to Sita, and walks into the river Sarayu chanting her name.

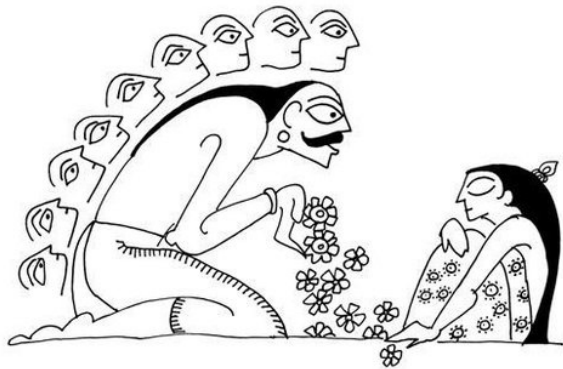
The kind of detailed environment which Devdutt Pattanaik has imagined and described is really beautiful. This book helped me in imagining the social aspects of life in Janakpur during that time. The kind of environment during Sita's swaymwar and the way through which Rama and other characters have been imagined and portrayed is of great importance to learn from.



### The Girl Who Chose: A New Way of Narrating the Ramayana | Devdutt Pattanaik

“The Girl who chose” is about Sita and her five choices and how they impact Ramayana and everyone else in the story. This isn’t Devdutt’s spin or take. It is just an interpretation given what happens in Ramayana. It is about sometimes things being planned out even before you can think about them or about the choices actually that you make and its consequences.

This book is about Sita for sure, but it is also about the other central and not-so-central characters of the Ramayana. The illustrations by the author himself make the book something else. Devdutt’s illustrations are simple. They are easy to comprehend and perhaps one doesn’t even need text while deciphering them. The illustrations speak a language of their own.



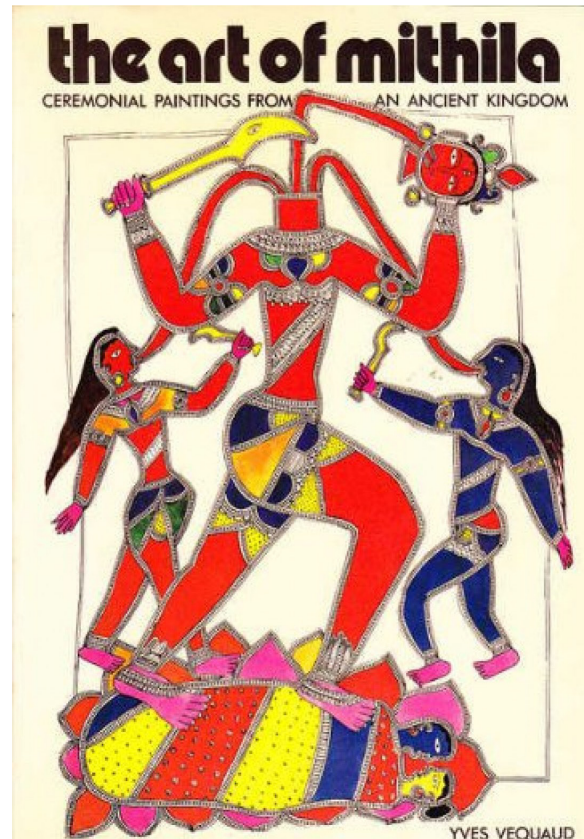
## Book Study

### The Art of Mithila

*Yves Vequaud*

The Book includes 88 Madhubani paintings done by women of Mithila region in Bihar. It starts with a brief history of this traditional art form and explains the rituals and stories behind various types of paintings.

The images are done in various styles with bold colours and fine line styles. The abstract representation of human body in paintings are extra ordinary.



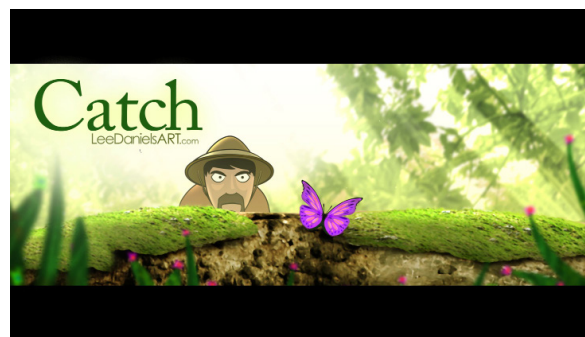


## Films

### Sita Sings the Blues | Nina Paley

Sita is a goddess separated from her beloved Lord and husband Rama. Nina is an animator whose husband moves to India, then dumps her by email. Three hilarious shadow puppets narrate both ancient tragedy and modern comedy in this beautifully animated interpretation of the Indian epic Ramayana. Set to the 1920's jazz vocals of Annette Hanshaw, Sita Sings the Blues earns its tag-line as "the Greatest Break-Up Story Ever Told."

The animation is, like the rest of the movie, bursting with life. There are four styles, each used for a different story thread - a cardboard-cutout style for the narrated bits and hallucinatory interludes; a scratchy, Richard Condie-like style for the autobiographical bits; a Mughal miniature-like style for the traditional Ramayana bits; and a tweening-heavy vector graphics style for the song-and-dance Ramayana-meets-the-Jazz-Era bits.

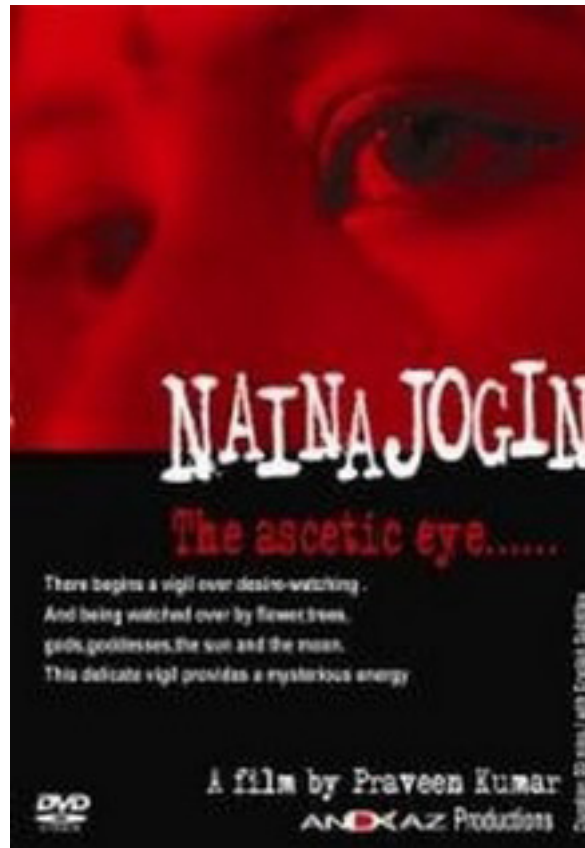


**Puppet Animation short films by independent film makers**

**Series of films by LeeDanielArt.com**

These are short films of not more than 2 minutes. The entire environment and character rigging is done digitally using After effects and Illustrator programme. The entire animation is 2D but the way several layers of environment are superimposed in each shot that gives a sense of depth and idea of possible compositions.

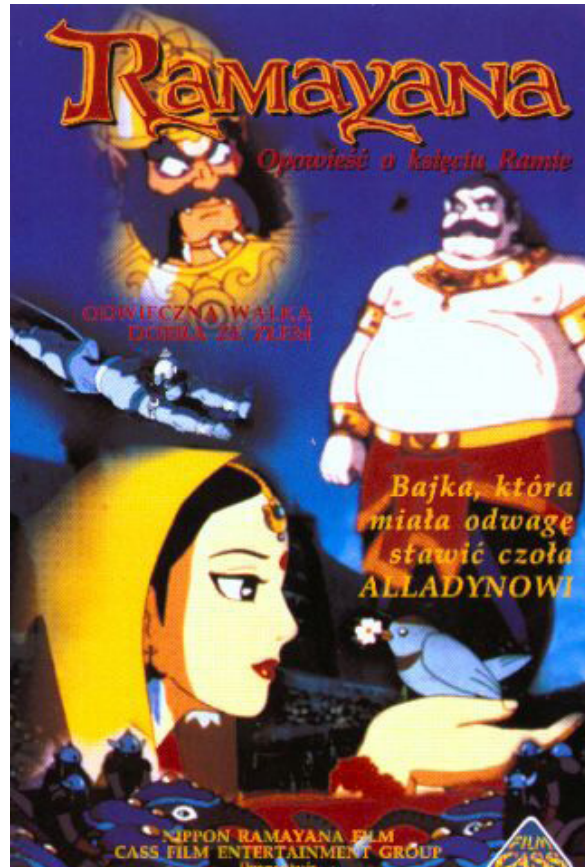
These short films helped me in looking into minute details of 2D animation which make things believable.



## **Naina Jogin (The Ascetic Eye)**

*Praveen Kumar*

In Madhubani, people struggle against trying circumstances to eke out a living. Many have taken to painting to survive. They paint the traditional motives (erstwhile painted on cow dung textured walls of huts and closely associated with ritual) onto paper. These paintings are then sold in markets in India and abroad. While many painters repeat certain traditional motives other artists boldly expand the scope to include contemporary themes. The film is about these painters, their circumstances, their inspirations and their works. The film grows to completion by a criss-crossing of narratives stitched together by sights and songs of the milieu that births these artists. The central line of the film is the Kohbar ritual in which a newly married couple spends three days and nights in the painted Kohbar Ghar before they may consummate their marriage. This vigil over desire provides the film with a mysterious energy...



### Ramayana: The legend of prince Rama (1992)

Based on the Valmiki's Ramayana, this film explores the FUSION style of animation that consists of three different schools of animation-Manga from Japan, Disney from the US and Ravi Varma from India.

The film helped in visualizing the place of Sita's swayamvar. It has widely detailed environment of Janakpur where swayamvar happened.

## The Process

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**“To Practice any art, no matter how well or badly, is a way to make your soul grow. So do it.”  
—Kurt Vonnegut**

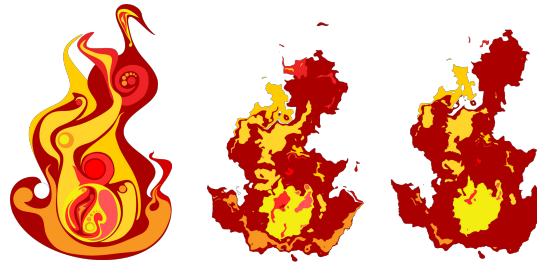
This project is a continuation from the learnings I had during the earlier project which focuses on image making in Madhubani Painting style. Through that entire process of learning and image making and then taking it one more step ahead by animating those style of images, involves lots of learnings.

This entire journey of animation could be broadly divided in two phase i.e. **pre production and production phase.**

The **pre production** or first phase was to go through the primary as well as secondary study and based on that come up with a story which full-fills the desire of this project. The next step was to make storyboard and the animatic to know about a rough idea of the film length and sequences. This phase involved multiple sketching and iterations. Decisions like camera angle, scene

compositions, frame transitions were made during this phase. There were other decisions and questions during this phase like, How will the patterns animate? What kind of treatment in terms of camera movement should be incorporated? How will the characters behave in terms of walking, talking and other actions? What kind of colour treatment the film should have? Usually Madhubani Painting is very detailed in terms of background hence it created a problem of point of interest. How these problems could be solved were the major concern during this phase.

Based on the primary and secondary study final decisions were taken. For character behaviour it was decided to create different layers for all the body part and then create a hinge joint for it. around which the character will move. This creates a puppet like motion



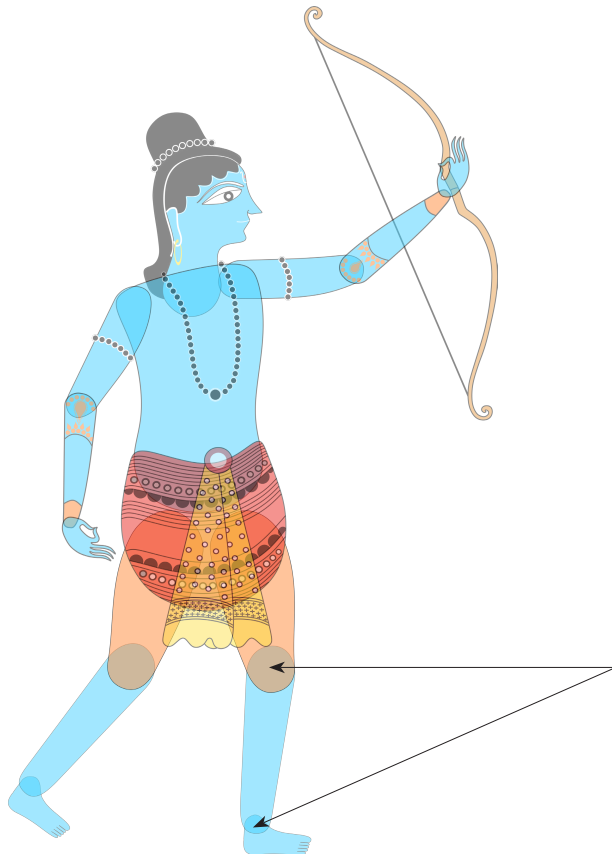
*Various stages of fire animation. Each layer of the fire has given some amount of turbulence and wavy effect.*



*Smoke with a circular swirl pattern. Its opacity and scale keeps decreasing with time.*

*Joints were overlapped and the axis of rotation was placed in the middle of the overlap to create free movements*

*Each of the body part was created in a separate layer with independent axis of rotation to control the character behaviour.*



Character design for animation

but as every joints were hinged the character motion had certain rigidity which i decided to keep as it is. This little rigidity in the character gives the feel of actual puppet. Once the character was properly layered in illustrator. It was further rigged in after effects using plugins like DUIK and IExpression. Both of these plugin has multiple scripts for various kinds of puppet behaviour. Based on our requirements

Elements like fire and magical powers were decided to have wavy motion with rich pattern in it. For smoke, simple circles and swirls were used with different opacity over time. It gives a sense of smog.

The second and the most time consuming was the **production phase**. It was time consuming as it involves learning of new software and animation skills. As i was interested in animation hence the most of the time went into learning to animate the various elements which support Madhubani animation such as animating birds, animals, patterns, and many other element. Before going for animation the detailed vector illustration were made using Adobe Illustrator and Inkscape software. Some of the backgrounds were created in Photoshop.

As the shots were already broken down into sections in the animatic, so a chart was prepared to highlight the duration of each shot based on that animatic. This helped me in identifying the exact time for each shot. Based on this chart shots with different difficulty level were marked and days were planned accordingly.

Apart from animation **sound design** was another aspect of post production. Hence looking for sounds and background music in the context of Madhubani culture and the story of the film was another important aspect of post production.

# Story

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## Approach to story

After accessing all the information from primary and secondary research, I began working on the story part of the film. I put down the major narratives and topics around which Madhubani Painting has been widely painted and it happened to be the mythology like Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Then the first thought was to take one incidence from these mythology and just animate them so that i could explore the animation behaviour and possibilities. But later on the idea shifted towards a new direction where the importance of story and uniqueness came into play. It was then thought why not to weave a fictional story between two major incidences of Ramayana and keep this fictional story linked to the original mythological characters without disturbing the actual narrative of Ramayana. The idea was quite vague hence to come up with an incidence i looked into the stories related to Madhubani Painting and its beginning. After that various stories related to the different kinds of paintings were studied. Naina Jogin and Kohbar being the most

interesting one which inspires me to weave a story around its associated beliefs.

## Plot Structures

### ***Plot-1***

A Grandmother tells a story of a tantrik who makes tantra to kill people and consume their power.

One day he hears about Rama who killed Tadakaasur. So he thinks to kill Rama and consume his powers too.

A tantrik friend of Tadakaasur tries to bound a powerful spell on Rama to kill him during the ceremony.

The Tantrik has the powerful boon by goddess Kali.

Goddess Parvati knows this. she comes to attend the ceremony and save Rama by stopping the tantrik completing his Tantra.

The furious tantrik again uses the most powerful tantra of his own to kill Rama.

But Before that Parvati protects Rama and Sita by drawing Naina Jogin, the Ascetic eye.

This Powerful tantra by Parvati kills tantrik and saves Rama and Sita.

### ***Plot-2***

Story starts from the fight scene of Deva and Asura then to Rama and Taadka.

Rama kills Taadka.

Tantrik then takes an oath to kill Rama and take the revenge of Taadka's death.

The story unfolds in the same manner as earlier.

The story ends with the real footage of a lady coming out of the house and making madhubani painting.

## Final Plot

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The way the story starts in the first plot is the most straight and simple way of storytelling. Its the old and very unique way of unfolding a story by making grandmother as a narrator. This style of narration was plain as it didn't contain any layer within in. Hence the idea of the first plot was dropped.

Whereas I found plot-2 more interesting as it starts with a fight scene among deva and asura and then the killing of demoness Taadka by Rama which then introduces the Main Protagonist character. Hence this story has more drama and layer. The story ends with a live action footage of ladies involved in Madhubani Painting.

## Story Narration

देव और असुरों के युद्ध की कहानियाँ नयी नहीं है।  
कभी लोभ में तो कभी क्रोध में,  
असुरों ने किया है हिंसा, सदा प्रतिशोध में।

यह कहानी भी है एक ऐसे ही असुर तांत्रिक की।  
घने जंगलो में रहने वाला, दुष्ट और कपटी,  
लोगो को अपने जाल में फँस उनकी जान ले लेने वाला,  
असल में वो था बस ताकत का भूखा,  
स्वयं माँ काली से उसे वरदान जो मिला था,  
एक जादुई तंत्र-

“वह तंत्र तेरे मंत्र से, जो पूरा हुआ अगर,  
सब होगा तेरी मर्जी का, कोई चले किसी भी डगर।”

वह कोई भी वापस नहीं लौटा जिसने तांत्रिक को देखा।

फिर एक रोज...  
कपटी दुष्ट ने जब जादुई गोले में ताड़का का वध देखा,  
हाथ में धनुष लिए उस वीर योद्धा श्री राम का मुख और प्रचंड  
स्वर देखा,  
सोचा- जिसने ताड़का का वध किया वो कितना प्रबल होगा...  
अगर मिल जाए उसकी शक्ति मुझे, फिर मुझ सा न कोई मानव बल  
होगा।  
कर संकल्प भगवान राम को मारने की,  
तांत्रिक निकला जनकपुर को।

सजी धजी जनकपुर की नगरी, स्वयंवर मनाने को,  
वहीं इकट्ठे सब खड़े थे दिग्गज, सीता से ब्याह रचाने को।

फिर काले साए सा वो तांत्रिक आया,  
चुपके कदमो से वो काले तंत्र लाया,  
छुप कर वहीं एक कोने में, श्री राम पे उसने नजर लगाई,  
फिर हाथों में लेकर लाल स्याही,  
चतुर्भुज तंत्र की पहली कड़ी बनाई।

दूर वहीं कैलाश पे, देखा जब गौरी ने सबकुछ,  
कहा शिव से- जो पूरा हुआ ये तंत्र चतुर्भुज, राम पे संकट आएगा,  
जाना होगा गौरी को जनकपुर, तभी ये तांत्रिक मंत्र टूट पायेगा।

पहुँच जनकपुर गौरी ने जब दर्शन अपना साध्य किया,  
खुश हुए जनक और लोग सभी, झुककर आदर सत्कार किया।

देख तांत्रिक साए को, गौरी ने विचार किया,  
एक छाया अदृश्य खुद का ही, राम की रक्षा को साकार किया।

रची तांत्रिक ने जब माया, पहले तंत्र से,  
कुछ यूँ मची हलचल उस मंत्र से,  
काले साए छाने लगे,  
मानो उजाले को निगल वर्चस्व अपना बढ़ने लगे।

लोग सभी अनजान,  
अचानक घबराने लगे,  
बदलने लगी प्रवृत्ति उनकी,

जो तंत्र के बादल छाने लगे।

अदृश्य गौरी ने वही एक चमत्कार किया,  
कुछ रेखाओं की रचना से,  
इक दिव्य अल्पना को आकर दिया,  
यूँ निकली फिर दिव्या किरणों,  
काले साए सिमट गए,  
टूट गया वो मंत्र तांत्रिक,  
और डर से तांत्रिक वापस लौट गया।

बैठ गुफा में दुष्ट अकेला,  
समझ गया गौरी की चाल।  
पर शक्ति और लोभ की चाह में,  
वापस रचने लगा एक नया जाल।

जीवन तंत्र, जो वरदान मिला था माँ काली से,  
अचूक था उसमें जीवन तंत्र।

पर जो हुआ यह तंत्र असफल, तो ले लेगा तांत्रिक की जान।

राम की शक्ति पाने को वह सब भूल तंत्र बनाने लगा,

इधर जनकपुर की नगरी में,  
गौरी को सब समझ आने लगा।

भेजा राम और सीता को कोहबर घर में,  
द्वार था जिसका सजा हुआ,

## Storyboard and animatics

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अल्पनाओ के रंगों से, हर कोना कोना पटा हुआ ।

फिर दीवारों पे गौरी ने,  
कुछ सोच समझ एक जोग बनाया,  
औरत सी थी जिसकी काया,  
घूंघट से ढकी,  
ऐसा की बस एक आँख नजर आता था,  
मानो सभी पे नजर रख रही हो ।

पर आँखों में पुतली नहीं थी,  
इसलिए जोग में जान नहीं थी ।

और इधर,  
जैसे ही तांत्रिक का तंत्र बन्ने लगा,  
कोहबर को गिराने वो मचलने लगा,

पर जैसे ही गौरी ने पुतली बनाई,  
जोग हुआ पूरा और नैना जोगिन में जान आई ।

एक दिव्य प्रकाश बहुत तेज हुआ,  
मानो सूरज ने अंधियारा निगल लिया हो ।

Live action footage of women practicing  
Madhubani Painting.

The next step was to do storyboarding for animatic. Hence the entire narrative was broken down into major shots. Around 45 shots were identified which were further put into a time-line with a voiceover narration to get a proper idea of film length.

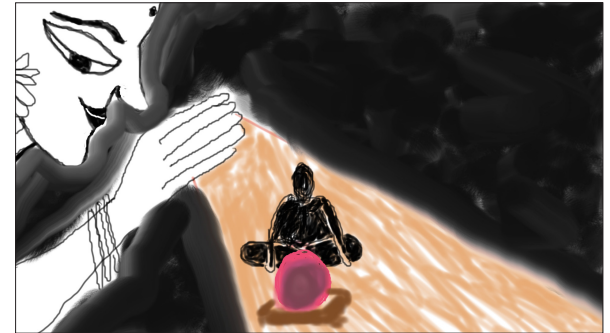
## Storyboard and animatics



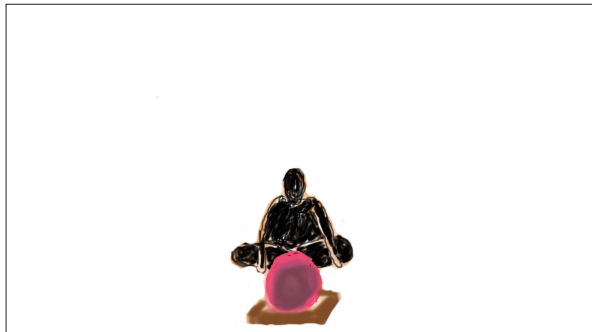
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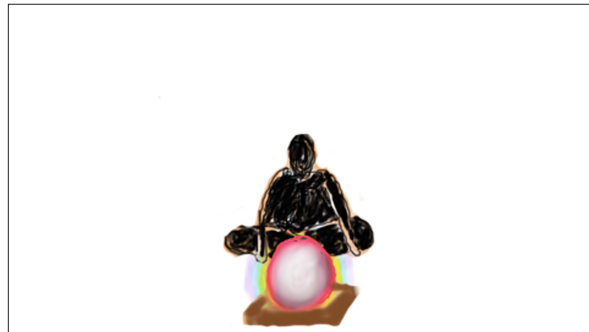
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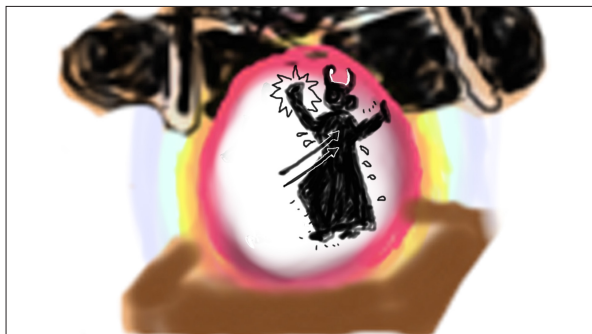
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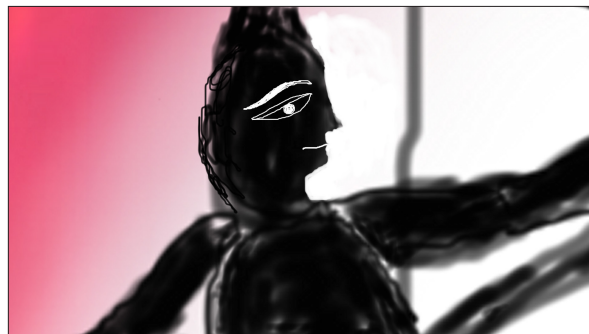
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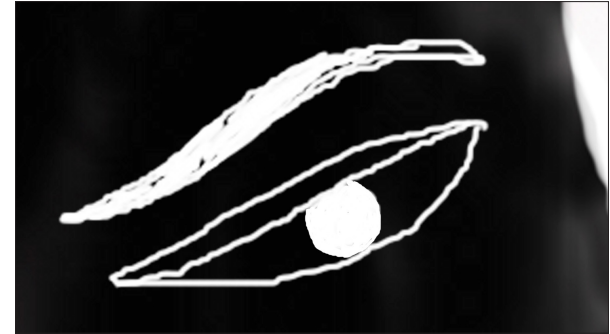
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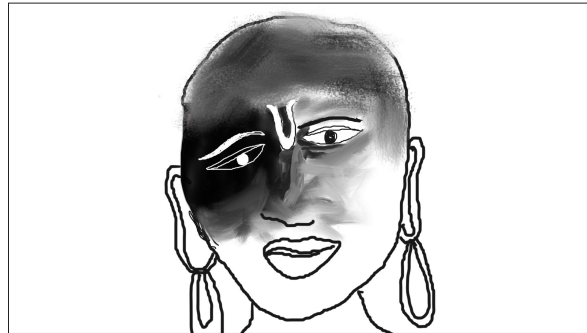
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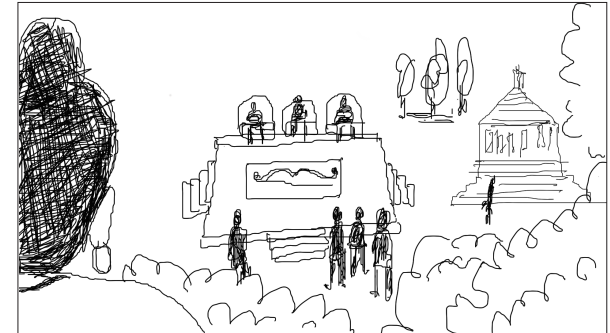
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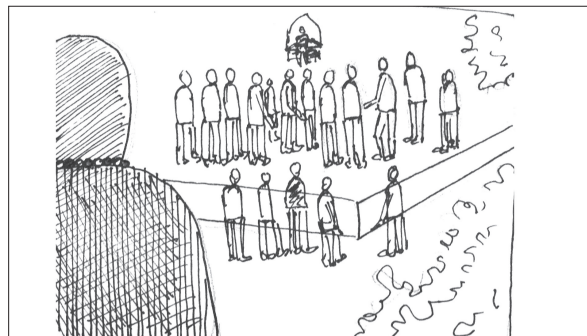
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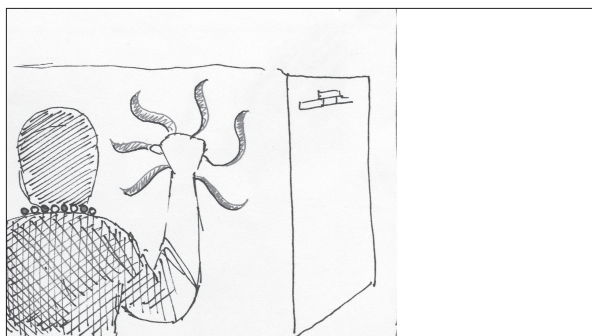
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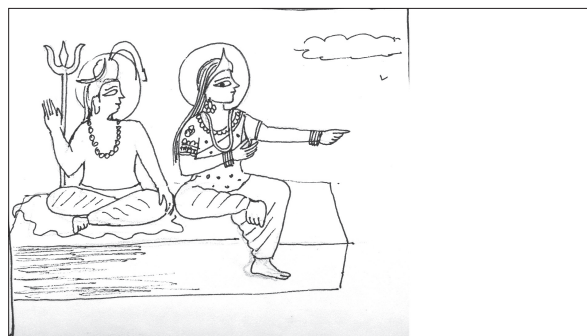
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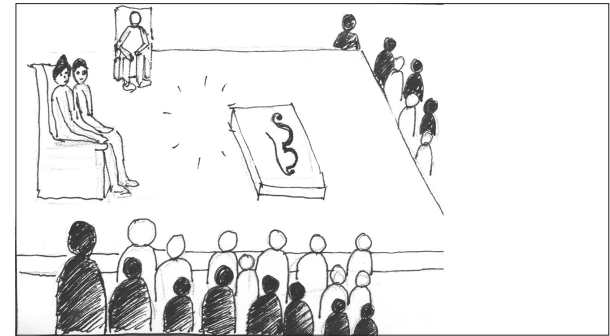
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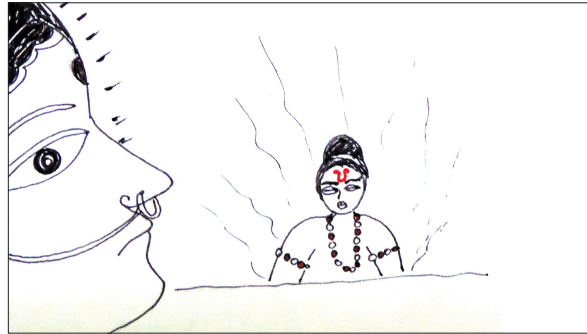
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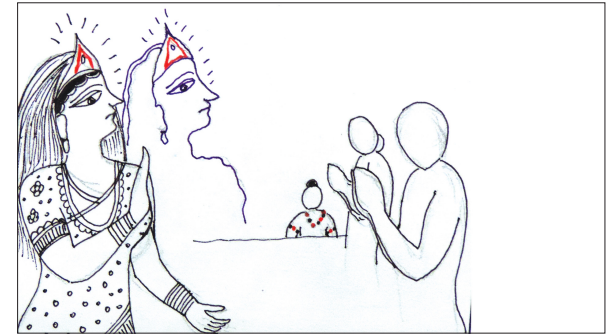
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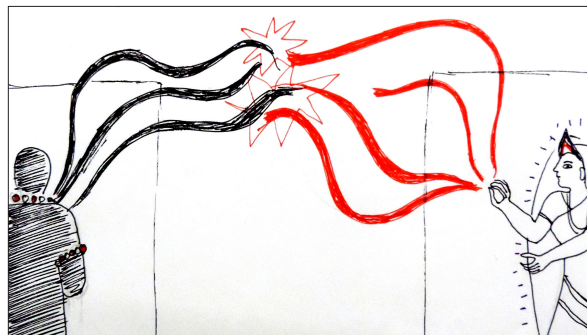
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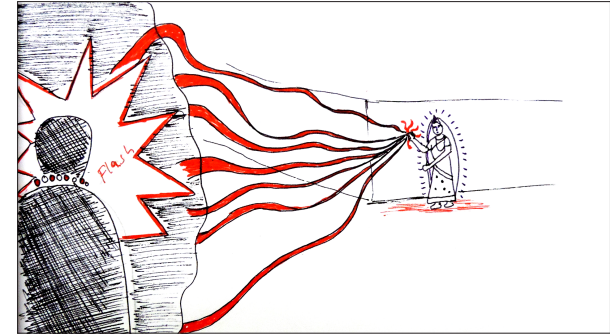
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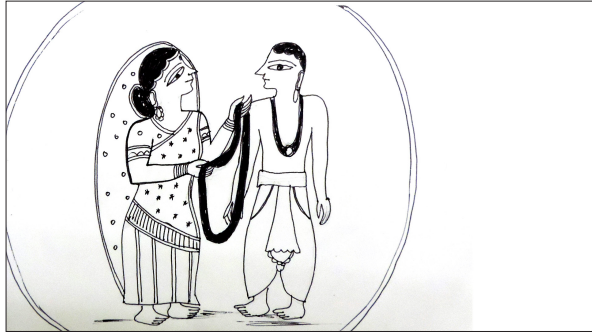
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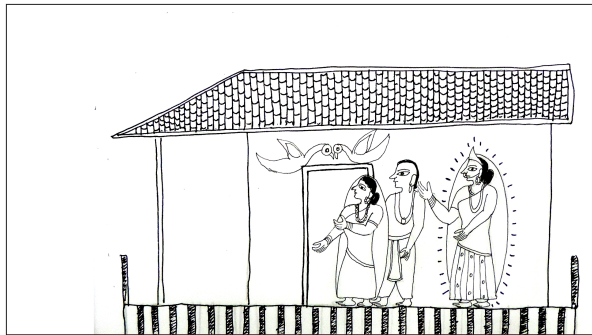
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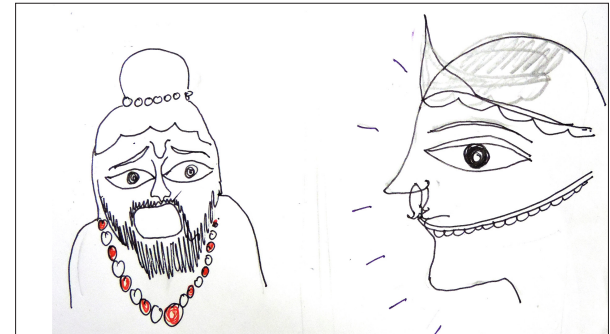
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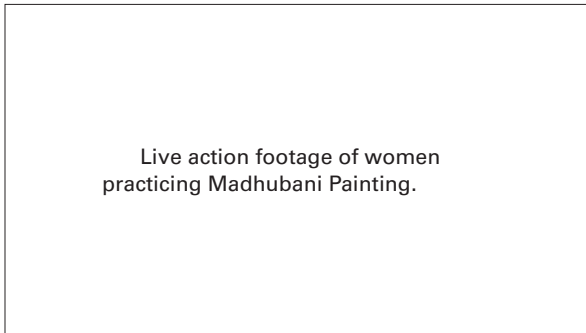
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## Character and Environment Development

Once the story and storyboarding was done the major next step was to work on style and character development. As Madhubani Painting is a very rich, colourful and vivid style of painting the very first style is to do a hand drawn painting for each character and then animate it. However in the previous project i had already explored the hand drawn style which is in a way very time consuming process. Hence this time i decided to go digital because of time constraint. Apart from time constraint factors like line quality, clean and smooth look, freedom of pattern generation and colour variations also forced me to choose digital option. The Initial sketches of characters were further developed and then were traced digitally on Adobe Illustrator.

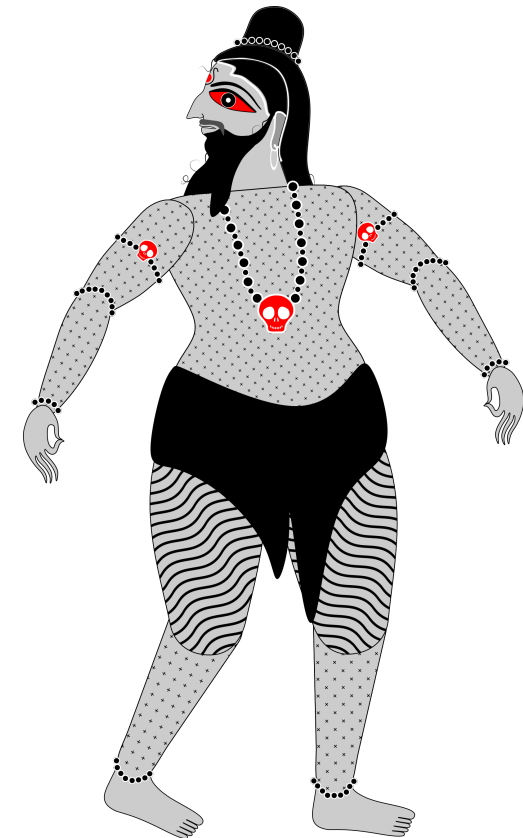
Usually Madhubani Painting involves lots of elements in it. Each and every space is filled with either patterns or flora and fauna. Which makes the painting rich. Hence the number of character that has to be drawn reaches many in order to create a rich and vivid environment. There were shots like the one of Sita's swayamvar which involves lots of people, natural backdrop, and elements

like elephants, floral pattern, celebration decorations and many more. Hence completing one scene with all of its elements was time consuming.

The major characters in the movie are

1. Taantrik
2. Taadka
3. Rama
4. Sita
5. Paarvati/Kali

1. **Taantrik**-The character has dull grey shade which gives a sense of dark and ugly look. It has glowing red big and bulging eyes. He wears a rudrakcha with small skull in it which symbolizes dark power practices.



2. **Taadka**- She is a demoness who owns a jungle and kill sages. Like the taantrik her body colour is grey too but it has a dark tint in it. Her eyes are red like blood and has teeth coming out of the mouth, two horns, open hairs and big giant body.



2. **Rama**- He has light blue colour body which gives a sense of a supernatural character. Holds a bow in his hand, a smiling face with big eye.



3. **Sita**- Sita is one of the lead character of this film. Hence more focus was given to her dress and the jewellery. She has wore rich dark maroon colour saree with gold necklace and bangles.



2. **Parvati**- She is a goddess hence certain elements like her long hair, big eyes, dressing style, her goddess crown, and a glowing halo behind her head was given more importance to make her stands out in the film.



## Environment

The movie starts with a black and white high contrast background scene of fights amongst the Gods and demons. As the backdrop narration unfolds the story the entire background slowly turns colourful.

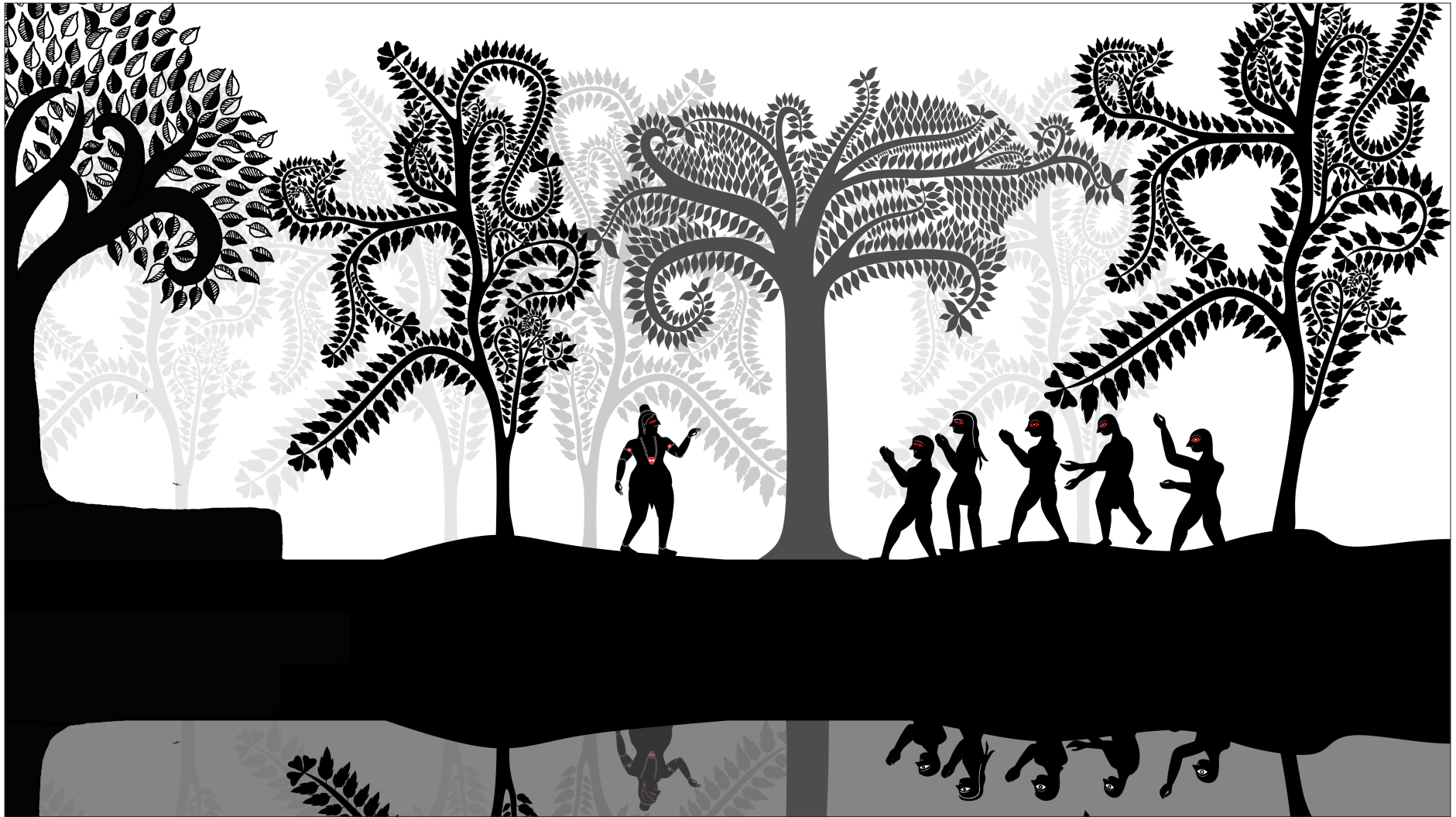
The very basic problem while designing the background was to keep the point of interest in focus. As Madhubani Painting has backgrounds full of detailed motifs and various elements hence keeping one thing in focus becomes problematic. In the process of film making this was very important to keep the subject into focus without losing the details of Madhubani element.

This problem was resolved by using subtle colour and opacity behaviour of the software. Subjects with prime focus were kept in high contrast colour while rest of the canvas has subtle animation and pattern movements which barely distracts the viewer. In this way it adds motion and life into the canvas.

Next page has some of the still shots of the in-between movie scenes.



Intro scene of the movie with black and white high contrast BG.



Shot-2 of the film, establishment of protagonist



Protagonist Character (Taantrik) in his Dane



Demon's attack on village



A scene which shows all the character and colour treatment used for the film.

## Conclusion

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The project has been a very interesting journey throughout each processes that it involved. I got opportunity to learn animation as a medium of communication. There were things i planned to execute but as the process of animation film making is very time consuming and tedious i had to leave those ideas. Apart from that i developed a new skill in software and storytelling.

The overall learning experience was joyful for me. I saw my imaginations taking shape and being live.

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