

DEGREE PROJECT III
TITLE: HUMAN REALITIES
P3

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Design in Animation

By

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INTRODUCTION

A moment of stark realization in our daily lives- about the way things have been taken for granted all along, but then reality hits as one says and perspectives and a few other things change, is the main idea for this project.

HUMAN REALITIES:

I have always been puzzled and intrigued by this one aspect of human nature- Even after knowing the inevitable- ‘the end’ in whichever context. is known, human minds counter it with denial- a part of our survival instinct perhaps, making it possible to live and get engrossed in a day-to-day existence.

However in the colloquial sense, in our daily mundanity of human lives, reality hits has an altogether a different meaning to it. One settles in the routine of daily life and fails to see the passing years and changes that relations go through. The sudden realization is both monumental and humbling as to how one failed to see it before.

When I do ponder about the realities, there are many- in varying contexts like philosophies, fiction, ideas, colloquial sense etc. Birth and Death, Suffering and Joy, Change, can be referred to getting a rough idea. The usage of the word- reality itself is varied, and is used freely in many different setting depending on the context and sometimes conspiratorially.

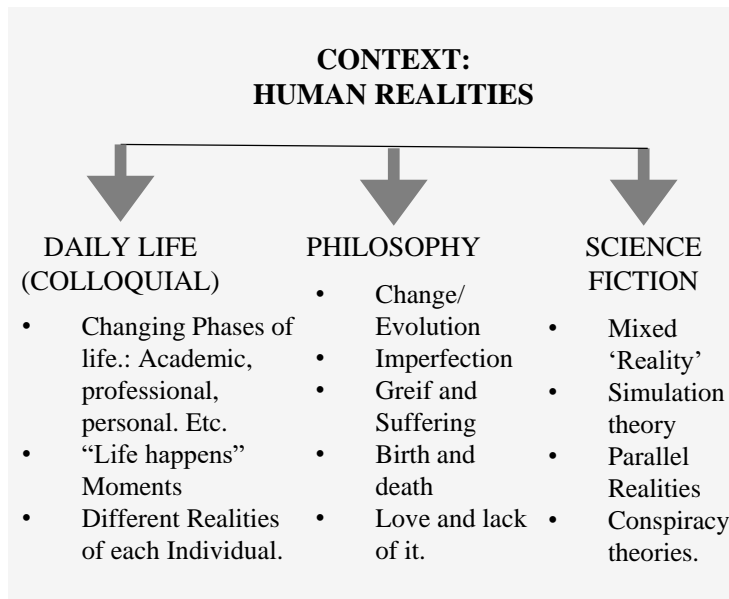
People close to us play an important part in the social structure of our existence. Facing the ‘change’ in our own lives or in the lives of people close to us, family, can be equally challenging.

The aspect of family and their inclusion in struggles of coming to terms is also an aspect that has been elaborated in this project.

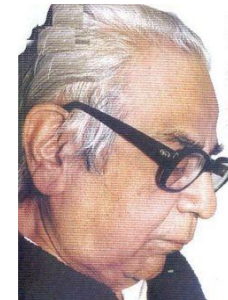
INSPIRATION:

The inspiration for ‘human realities’, began with a search for understanding the word- ‘reality’. Vague usage depending on many contexts, I was sure of one aspect of wanting to tell a story of humans who overcome their differences, the change they are facing, who overcome their unyielding ‘realities’.

A heartwarming tale, was the focus from the very beginning. A study of some of the contexts which we can try to understand reality have been charted below.



A Flowchart exploring some of the contexts where the meaning of ‘reality’ can present a unique meaning.



P. L. Deshpande



Vyakti ani valli by
P. L. Deshpande

The different realities, each our own stories, situations, as we all people together, has been excellently expressed in P.L.Deshpande’s character essays, stories and memoirs in his book, Vyakti and Valli. Especially characters like- Pestan Kaka, Raosaheb,

Each character, their quirks, or as some may say, flaws are depicted in the more adoring and careful manner to never be a caricature. The essays are gripping and the post-independence western Maharashtrian world comes alive with living breathing stories.

They weren’t easy times and nor were the people at ease, however, the warmth and study of each character inspired me greatly to work on the project Human realities.

Also, being exposed to these stories from a very tender age, I have been greatly influenced by the depths of his character study and presentation of the same with good-natured humor.

STORY CONCEPTS

STORY IDEA 01

Left Aside / Left, My Agony:

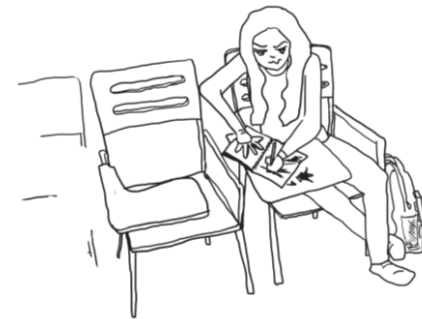
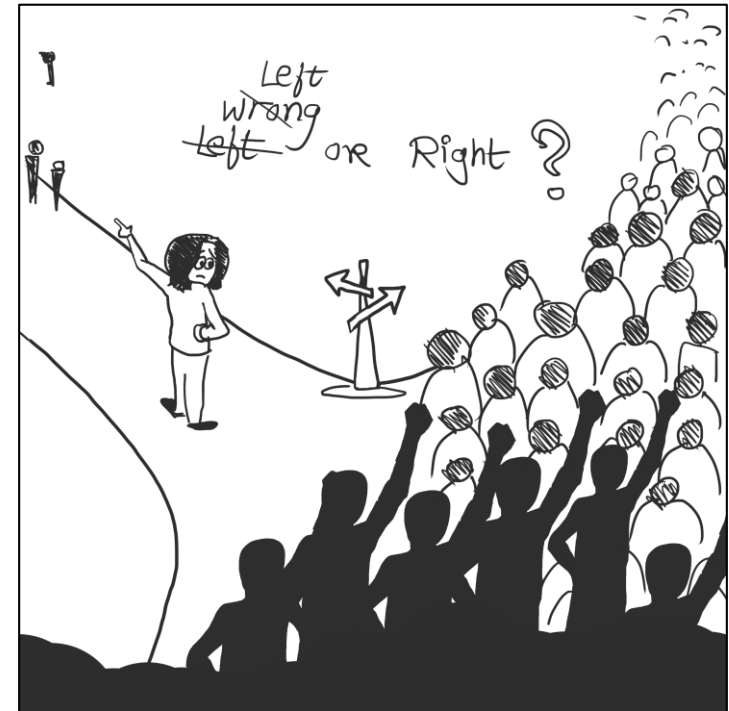
A funny tale of all the things going wrong due to the character being leftie.

STORY:

A young girl heading out for the first day of her college, only to be constantly hurdled by the random incidents, resulting from her left-handedness. Superstitions, technology, all seem to be a problem for her but in turn, helps her make friends right on the first day itself. A light hearted take on the agony of the left.

Aspects Explored:

- Personal experiences.
- Superstition and taboo: its effects on the person from early age.
- A rarity and forced conversion. Different reasons of the bias in India and Other cultures. Sinister / Dexter, Hygiene etc.
- Representation and an Awareness by means of a story.
- Slice of life, Humour and an attempt at a heart warming story



STORY CONCEPTS

STORY IDEA 02

Coming of age / Change:

Changes, in professional or the familial front too, are sometimes difficult to accept. This can create situations which are uncomfortable, with no fault of the parties involved. The story is about facing inevitable changes in everyday life.

A story of a young adult reaching a new but a very real understanding that parents too are humans and trying their best at being parents.

STORY:

The father, newly retired is still getting used to the idea of being at home among the other family members. The daughter leaving the house in a few days for education/work, wants to be self-reliant, and not wanting to bother the parent.

Aspects Explored:

- Relatable experiences for everyone.
- Beginning of emotional maturity.
- A shift in family dynamic.
- Slice of life, Humour and an attempt at a heart warming story.



An illustrated theme of the conflict in the story.

STORY CONCEPTS

STORY IDEA 03

Loss of Innocence: Reality of today.

A child recovering from a trauma- talking about everyday things but something doesn't feel right. A Story narrated from the POV of a child, a victim of an assault, and the latter proceedings. The inspiration is from a novel dealing with a crime happened to a child leading to unexpected disastrous effects on the child.

STORY:

The child is a victim of an assault and is not aware of the “reality” but only knows the incident was horrifying. The type of assault is unclear, but the focus stays on the effects on the child. The Narration is light and child-like, describing the aftermath of the incident, since the brain has blocked the memories out. the child finds everything around confusing and unreal.

Aspects Explored:

- A psychological horror aspect and also the utter disgust of how the things have taken a turn.
- Crimes against children.
- The narration from a tiny kid's voice against the horrors of the event – the contradiction shall be the focus.



An illustrated theme of the conflict in the story.

STORY CONCEPTS

STORY IDEA 04

Rigid Gender Roles:

A story from the beginning of time of humans, how the situations led to compartmentalized gender roles and a loss of respect with the differences, through time. The role of provider and the role of a nurturer, fixed roles for both.

STORY:

Beginning from the rise of civilization, till the current times of rigid differences. What must have started as a temporary arrangement began to be poisonous for the society

Aspects Explored:

- Current changing times and questioning the negative effects of patriarchy.
- Narrative: Events occurring with a fast-forwarded pace.
- An imagined time lapse of the situations leading to such rigidity in roles.
- A misinterpreted concept of patriarchy, our current conditions in our nations are harmful to man, woman and child- to all of humanity.



An illustrated theme of the story:
Vicious cycle continues.

MOTIVE OF THE PROJECT

Human realities was a project mainly undertaken for the human stories to be told. Being able to relate to a situation, empathy, is a human emotion. The challenge is to write, and animate such stories so they can still be relatable- especially the mundane in our lives.

With changing definitions of success, we largely tie down our self esteem and self worth with the positions we hold in society, family, and jobs. However when any of those things change, it takes time to cope with the new and many don't.

Such situations can be handled together as a family. The closest the person facing the change has. In case of the story for this project- the daughter has a coming of age experience when she realizes her father is trying to cope with an entirely new chapter in his life.

Personal Experience: My other motive for choosing this topic and story was drawn from observing my own parents- my father retired and my mother will soon in a couple of years. The change in their temperament and daily habits, and my own acceptance of the start of their new phase in life is personally, quite an impactful and a humbling experience. Adding to that, my sister moved to a different city after she got married and that too was quite a major change for me to accept, since I have been brought up in a nuclear family and my sister acting as a second mother to me when both my parents worked.

So, in a way, apart from the social reality that we see around, this project also is a story of my own, and my family's that I am sure shall resonate and be relatable for many others. The factor of a common situation faced by all strengthens the theme of my project, depicting realities we face in our human lives.

RESEARCH

The research for this project largely deals with observation of people around, and some introspection, drawing from personal experiences, some discussions with people about the changes their parents faced during retirement and their own accounts of adjusting to the change. Coming of age stories from fellow students and peers. The following films and books have been largely influential for the project.

Threads: *A film by Torill Kove, 2018, NFB*

A very similar theme of a parent and child, growing up and eventually leaving the nest.

Me and my Multon: *A film by Torill Kove, 2014*

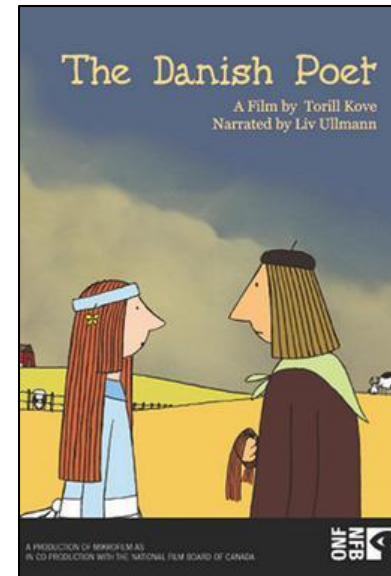
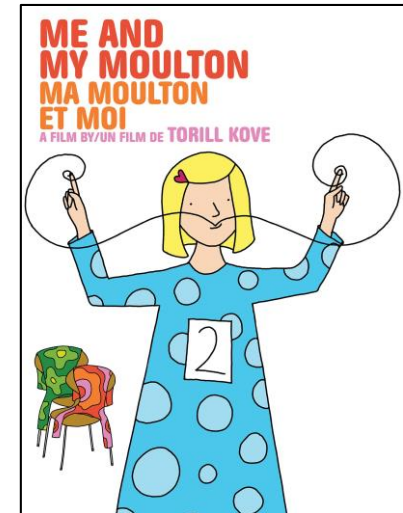
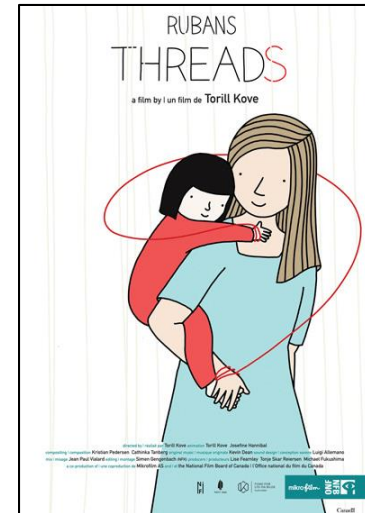
A story of accepting your parents and coming to a realization that your family is unique and perfect for you in its own way. Narrated in an anecdote-style, the movie deals with coming of age, family and acceptance.

The Danish Poet: *A film by Torill Kove, 2007, NFB*

This film too tells a fictional tale in an anecdote fashion, about how the narrator's parents met, inducing humor and nostalgia. Simplistic characters and very impactful story.

Winds of Spring, *A film by Keyu Chen 2017, NFB*

The winds of spring is a very paced simple story of a girl growing up and chasing her dreams, flying out despite her grandmother's denial. The minimal look with watercolour washes and paced run of the film was one of the inspirations.



ABOUT THE FILM:

LOGLINE:

A father–daughter duo try to come to terms with changing phases in their lives, and, with each other, with some humor, drama and tea in the mix.

TITLE: A Cup of Tea

PLOT:

A retired father and his soon-to-move-out daughter are quite happy with the free time they have to stay in the house and enjoy their last few days together, with no Work/Studies related issues.

The problem however starts when they find it slightly difficult to live in the same house with seeming inconsideration of the other person sharing the same space. A burst-out of all the pent-up irritation occurs, followed by a heart-felt realization that the other person is not perfect and is trying hard to deal with what is being served to them, leading to a better understanding between them.

SYMBOLISM:

The cup of tea in the story is significant for the bond they both share, with the warmth of the drink and the tasteless form it takes when it gets cold, both used as a metaphor for the ups and downs in a family.

SETTING:

A father-daughter bond is being depicted, in an urban nuclear family setting, in the city of Pune. The entire film takes place in the house, pitting the characters together in the space-scarcity situation.

NARRATION:

The film is narrated like an anecdote, recounting the incidents as telling a story in a cozy care-free style from the daughter’s perspective.

CONCEPT ART

A depiction of a typical weekday, with both the father and the daughter having their vacations, with cups of tea in the morning.



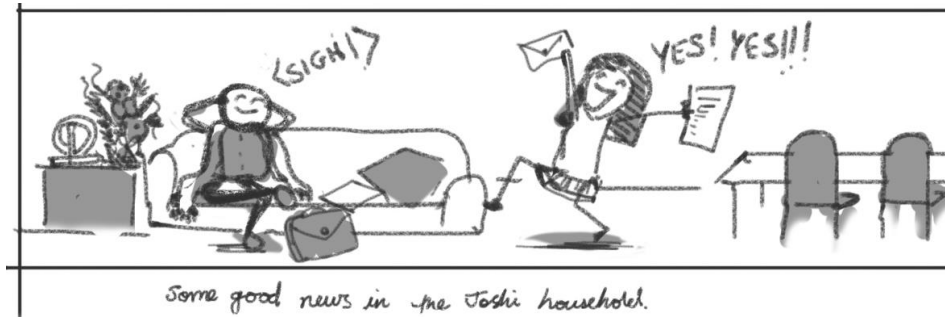
The father draping a blanket over the daughter, dozed off while watching TV, close to dawn.

STORYBOARDS:

Storyboards for the film titled A cup of Tea.



This is a story about a cup of tea.



Some good news in the Joshi household.



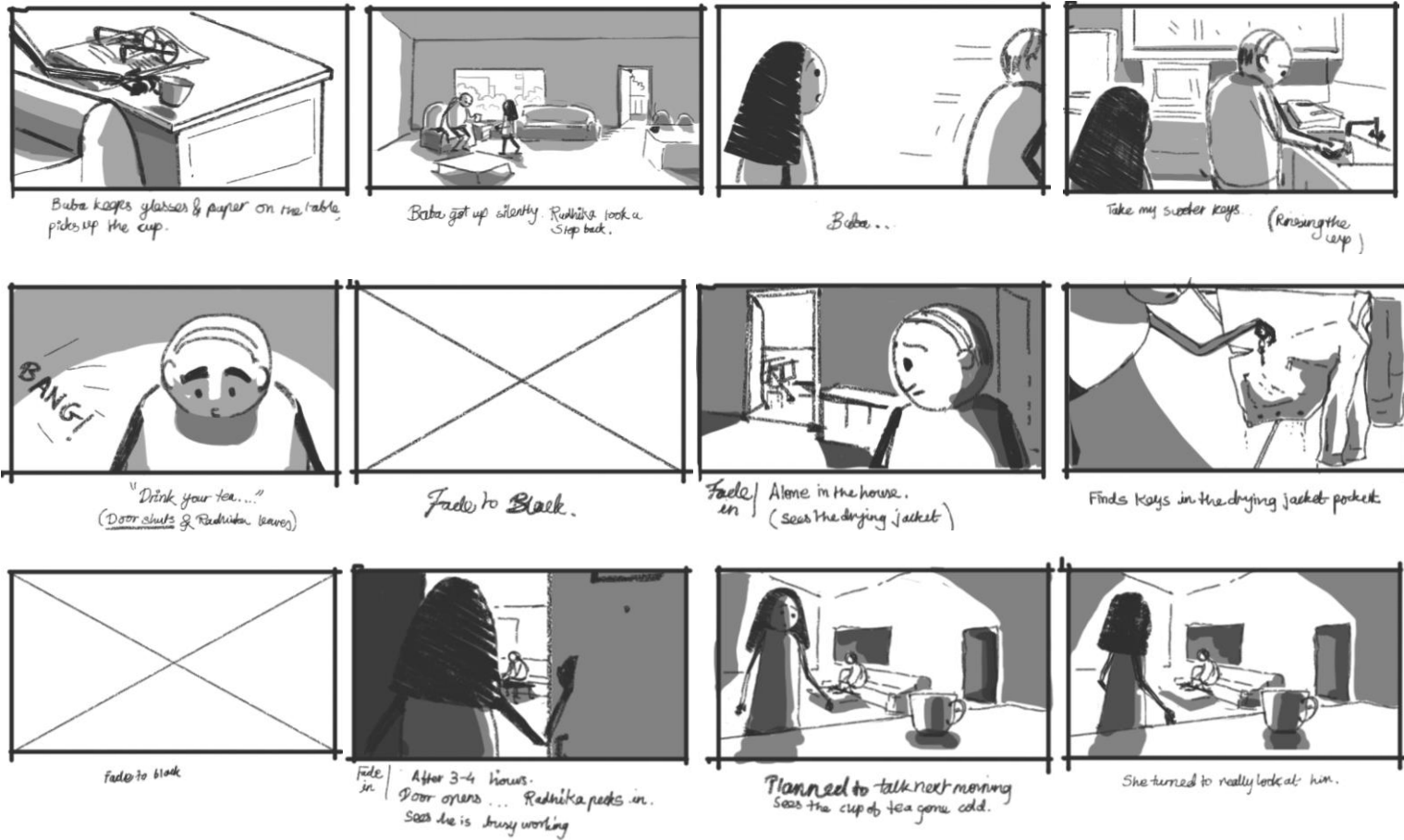
"Teatime"

1. Mr. Joshi looks confused. 2. A woman looks annoyed. 3. Mr. Joshi is at a desk. 4. A lamp is broken. 5. Mr. Joshi is reading a crossword. 6. A woman puts a jacket in a washing machine. 7. Mr. Joshi is at a desk. 8. A woman is at a desk. 9. Mr. Joshi is at a desk. 10. A woman is at a desk. 11. Mr. Joshi is at a desk. 12. A woman is at a desk.

STORYBOARDS:



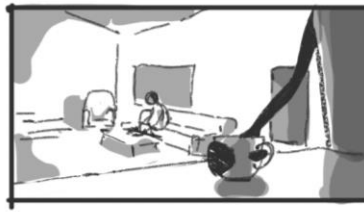
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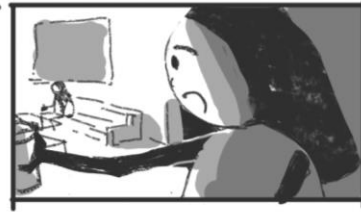
STORYBOARDS:



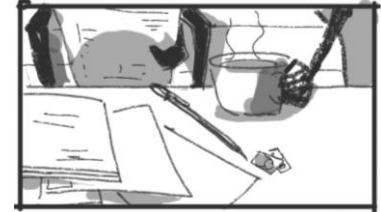
He had changed a lot.



She takes the cup to the kitchen



"I'm making tea!!!"



Places tea on the table. Silence.



Baba looks the cup.
"Baba, sorry"



Sipping tea in silence.



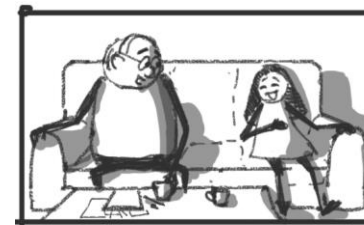
Baba keeps the paper down...
"Your keys were in the jacket pocket."



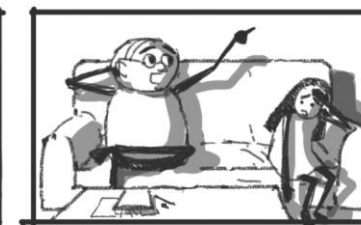
Sipping tea in silence.



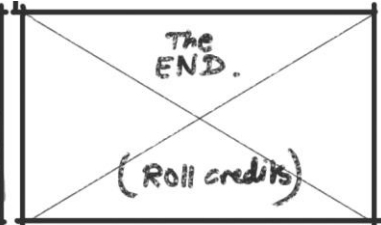
Radhika keeps her cup down.
"Radhika!"... "huh?"



"Tea was good..." keeps cup down.
Radhika smiles...



"Also... the fan..."
"Baba! please! don't!..."



Fade to black
About to banter again...
(we will let them sort...)

CHARACTER DESIGN

Mr. S. JOSHI:

Father, 58 years old.

He has been working and staying away from his parents the moment he graduated. Retired recently, has a feeling of being left out of the daily happenings in the house and decides to take up housework in order to 'help' his family and Radhika, his daughter.

- Child-like spirit.
- Encouraging and kind, with lot of patience.
- Warm hearted
- Progressive thinking and open to ideas.
- Gets quiet when angered or upset.
- A tad overprotective of Radhika.
- Bad at small-talk but very emotional- and he won't show it.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Balding, round glasses, round face and a tummy with a face always ready to smile.

HOBBIES: Likes music, listens to his Radio Transistor, Marathi crossword puzzles from newspapers, trying yoga and cooking recently

PERSONALITY FLAWS: bottling up anger at times, getting carried away with his good intentions a bit to an extreme.



RADHIKA JOSHI:

Daughter, 22 years old.

A strong headed person, still in her late-teen headspace a bit. She is about to move out of the house for the first time to pursue her further education. She is happy for the company of her retired father but the 'help' is slightly overbearing and is entirely clueless why her own schedule seems so distasteful to her father.

- Mature for her age, intuitive.
- Sensitive and smart, perseverant and active.
- Patient with her father- or tries to be.
- Has quirky habits like sitting up-side-down on beds and couches, weird sleeping schedules.
- Speaks her mind when angered- or storms out.
- Cant stay mad for long however and cools down quick.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: Lanky frame, long straight hair, wide-set eyes .

HOBBIES: Reading, music, gardening, writing, socializing with people.

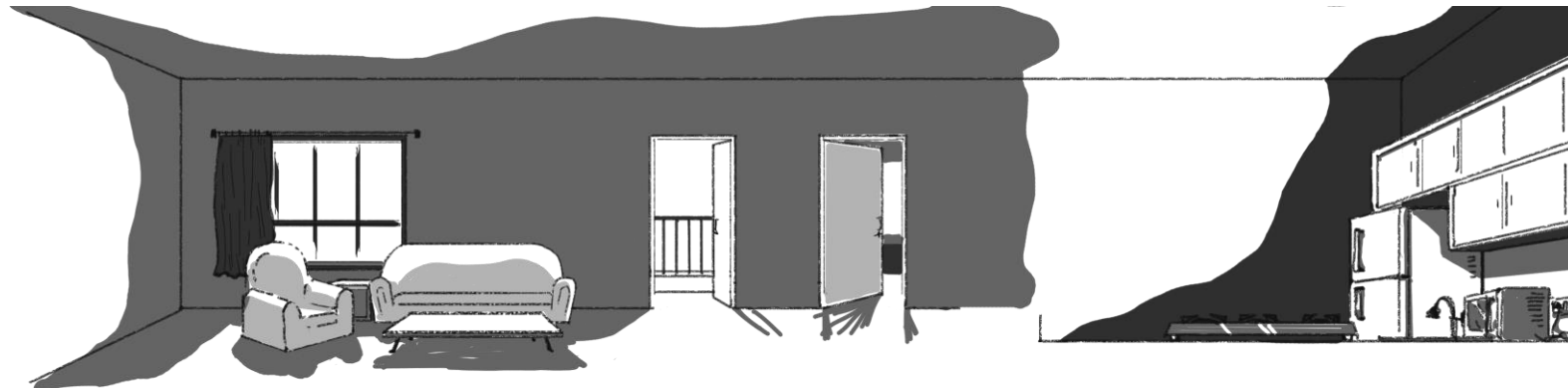
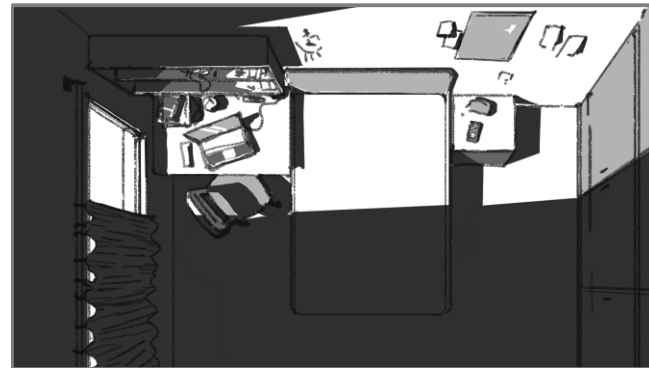
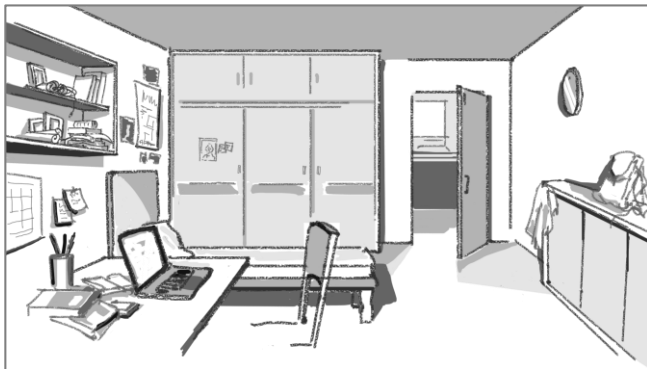
PERSONALITY FLAWS: Harsh speech when angered. Quick to anger.

ENVIRONMENT DESIGN:

The whole story is set in a single flat, in Pune city- in the month of June.

The only way to depict it was to have the light and shadows, with the chosen colour palette reflect the emotion at that moment in the story, within that space.

The living room, the kitchen and Radhika's room are depicted with different shades and angles for the narrative.



STYLE EXPLORATION

STYLE 01:

PAPER-CUT PUPPET ANIMATION

Initially, the idea was to use the Paper cut- puppet animation technique for the film. It is similar to stop motion but with 2D puppets and shooting the film frame by frame animation with this technique.

A 2 second animation clip was tested out with the father and daughter puppets, sipping tea. the characters were kept simplistic and very recognizable form.

This technique was not used for the film.

The frame by frame animation technique was used instead- Since the film dealt with both humor and drama and had to have more nuanced animation which would have been tricky with rigid puppets and limited movements.



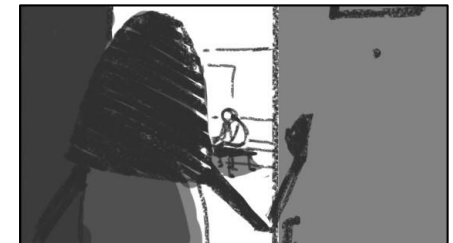
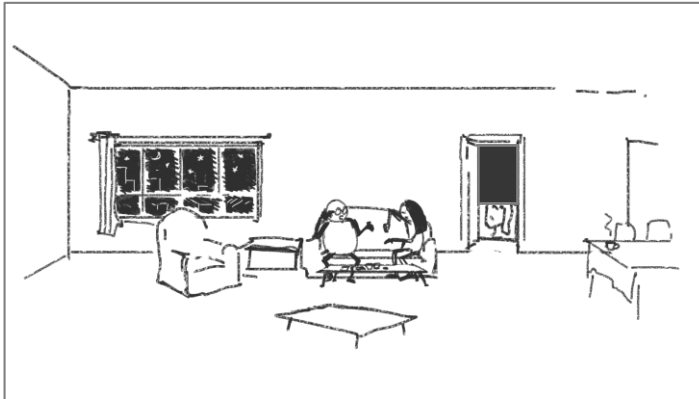
STYLE EXPLORATION

STYLE 02:

TRA-DIGITAL 2D ANIMATION:

This animation technique was chosen for this film, since the theme has elements of drama, humor and takes place in a single location- the home of Joshi household.

With the selected palette, and the Tradigital 2D technique, I feel I would be able to visually convey the story better using the positive and negative spaces, the house itself and light and shadows.



ANIMATIC:

There were few changes in the script and visuals, with a feedback about making more nuanced and detailed visuals with the narration reduced, emphasizing equally on the visuals and audio for the story to be conveyed.

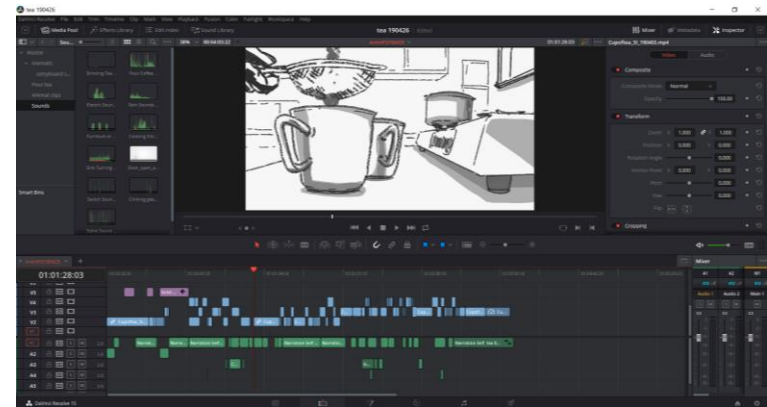
Feedback for the animatic was for the narration to be modified to tell a story via a **first person POV** instead of a Third person POV, as was the case previously.

TECHNIQUE:

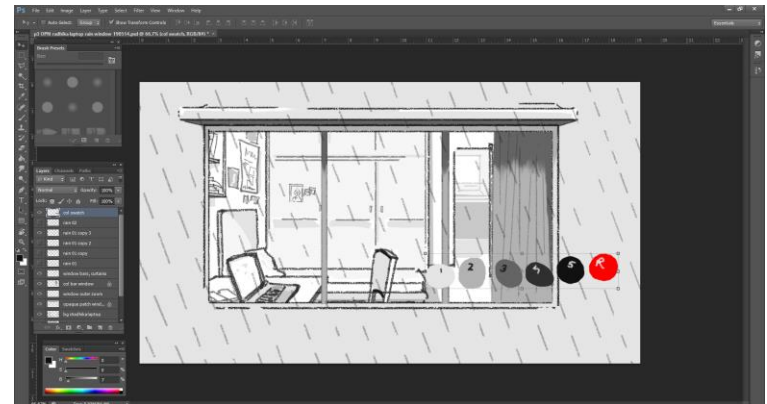
The technique for film production will be: backgrounds created on Adobe Photoshop, animation: rough and final for characters to be done in TVPaint. The compositing and editing shall be done in Adobe After Effects and DaVinci Resolve.

SOUND:

The rough narration was completed by recording on Audacity. After the changes in the script, the narration, with first person POV was rerecorded with a shortened script. There was minimum foley, while the background score, the music, still to be added.



Animatic : DaVinci Resolve



Adobe Photoshop

PRODUCTION

The production for the film began with the feedback of changed POV in the narrative. After a list of modified shots was made for better conveying the story, the production was started.

TOOLS:

Wacom Graphic Tablet: One Wacom medium for drawing all graphics digitally.

Audacity: Voice recording and editing- narration and dialogues.

Adobe Photoshop: All the visuals and backgrounds are drawn on this software.

Adobe After Effects: The animation and other transition effects were executed.

DaVinci Resolve 15.1 : For compositing the animated sequences together and for subtitling the video.

TVPaint: Enabled making rough animatics and timing the story with the audio track.

MS Office: Assortment of files, presentations and documenting the process, report making.

SOUND:

The Foley for the film was designed from royalty free music and free sounds available on the internet.

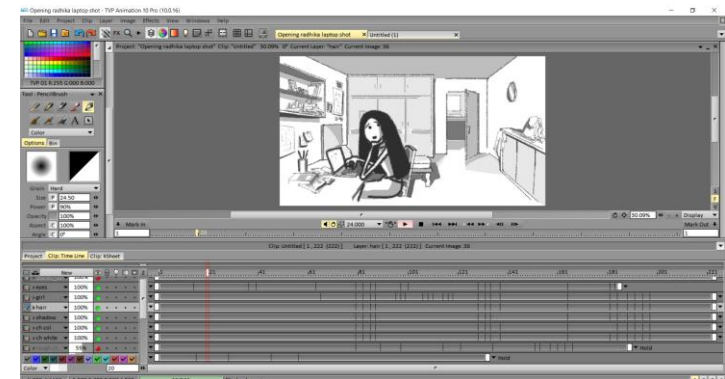
The Narration was taken up by myself with Unmesh Nayak, a fellow student at IDC, voiced for the father's character. Similarly, the background score too was created with free music available on the internet, with due credit given to the artist.

COLOUR PALETTE:

The film uses the palette below, of grey tones ranging from white to near-black. Complete black has not been used while white is used only as background and the base colour for the characters.

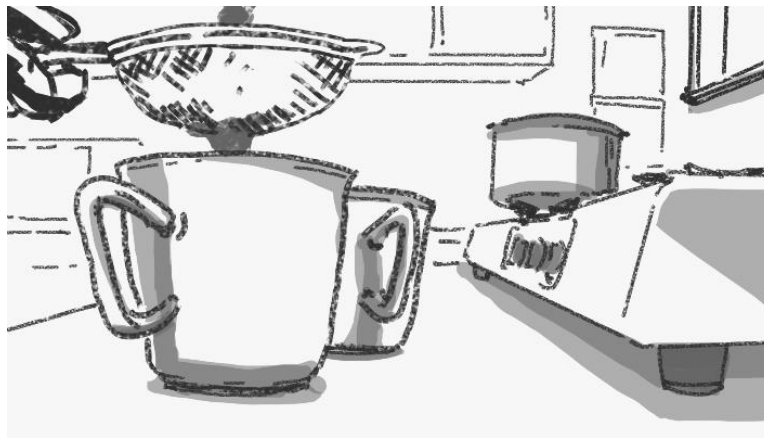
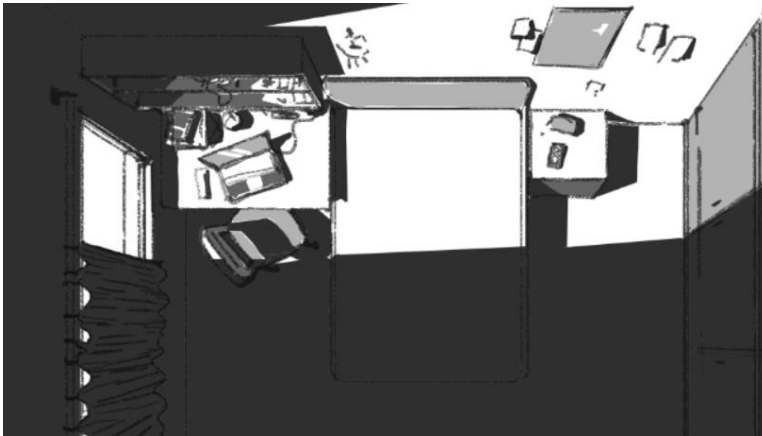


Colour Palette



TVPaint: For character animation.

MOVIE STILLS



INSIGHTS

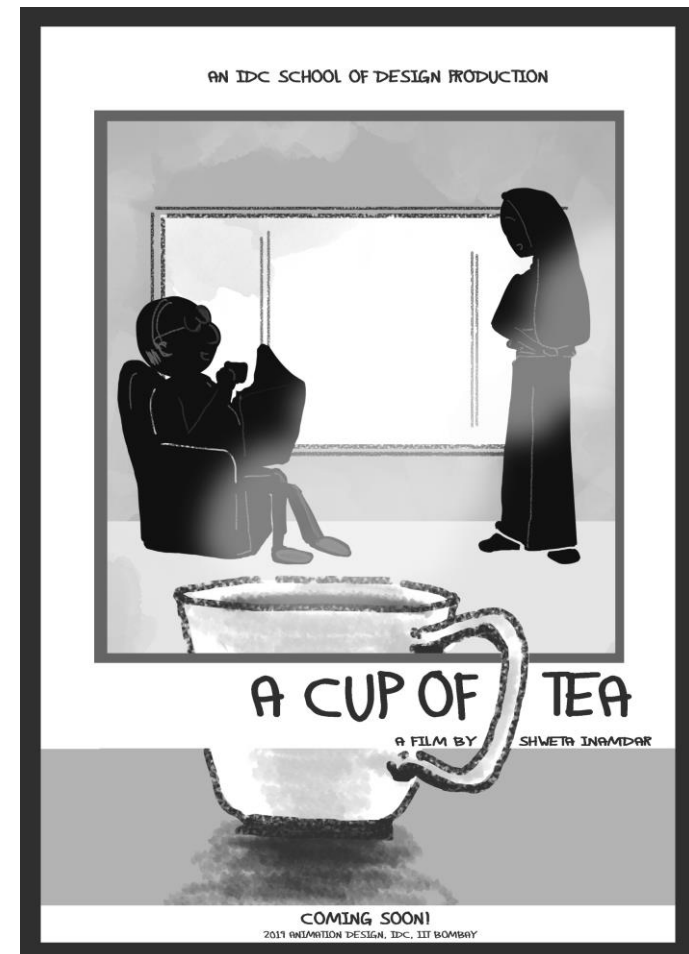
The journey of making the film was indeed full of joy and hardships, learning and growth, with an over all sense of being a step forward with a long way to go.

More than fretting about completing the film, the process itself was the highlight for me. Various iterations of the same story, the ways it can be made better, the ways it can be told better was an intriguing process making me sometimes lose the sight of the story but was always dragged back on the path with able guidance.

The greatest lesson I was being taught is time management. I can safely say that it is true for any other project too, where if time is utilized prudently, wonders can happen. I confess I have not learnt the lesson fully but I am on the way to do so.

Circumstances may ask me to go for other careers than pure animation ahead but this film has just made me realize that there are such amazing ways to tell a story other than the written word. This has definitely made my horizons widen and my experience richer, with more in my bag than before.

MOVIE POSTER



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- www nfb.ca : Movie Poster: Me and my Moulton

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