

GROUND WORMS

*Written by
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The Rain Is Coming

Concept

Worms are often overlooked as creatures, due to their simplicity and abundance around the world. But in this animation they are the protagonists, demonstrating that it is possible to give life and character even to a crawling noodle with animation.

Concept

Worms often pop out of the ground after the rain, as they know when it is raining due to underground vibrations. Birds, such as Seagulls, often tap their feet on the ground to trick worms that have been raining, so they come out and get eaten by the birds. (The Earthworm society of Britain, 2024).

Story

This story will start underground, where worms will feel the vibration of rain and get ready to go outside. At the exit of the tunnel there is a guardian worm, which pops its head out as soon as the vibrations start, and quickly pops it in again, to tell the others that it is not safe to go outside but without success, as the worms just run him over due to the excitement of getting out.

Once outside the worms do not see any rain, but two duck-like feet, it is a Seagull! Which will start to feed on the stubborn worms like they have been served up on a plate, until lightning will scare the bird and the rain will save the remaining worms.

Style

Ground Worms has two styles of 3D animation; The first is underground as it explores their habitat and behaviours in a Looney Tunes cartoon style. The Second is overground, where there will be a more realistic look to it.

This change in style will add to the story, as underground they are protected and comfortable in their own world, which allows a more fun and childlike style. But when they venture overground the style changes as they are out of their comfort zone and in a dangerous world where they are at the bottom of the food chain.

Target Audience

The target audience will be mainly pre-teens and early teenagers, from 9 and above, when a few worm parts flying in the screen is not considered traumatic anymore but could be

enjoyable or cool. Plus, there is a little moral about listening to authority when they know what they are talking about, something that could be useful in those ages.

Characters

Umbrella Worm

This worm is part of the Umbrella cult, which predicts when the next rain will arrive for the colony to start its migration. He shows up in a market stall at the beginning of the short, announcing that soon there will be rain.



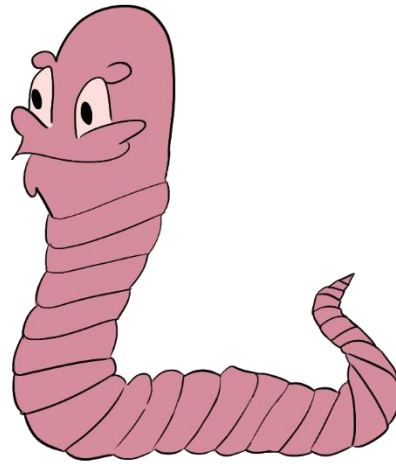
Guard Worm

This worm is in charge of guarding the entrance of the colony, without his approval nobody can go in or out. He is more skeptical than the cult worms as he must see before believing in anything, one of the reasons he was placed in the security section of the colony, sometimes can be caught sleeping on the job due to his long night shifts, but is always ready when action calls.



Basic Worm

Regular everyday worm, inoffensive when alone but fearsome when in groups.



Big Bad Bird

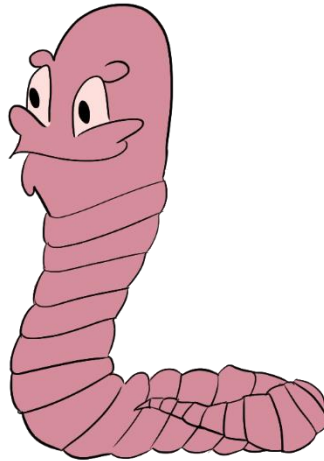
This seagull is always hungry for more, it is also a skillful ballerina.



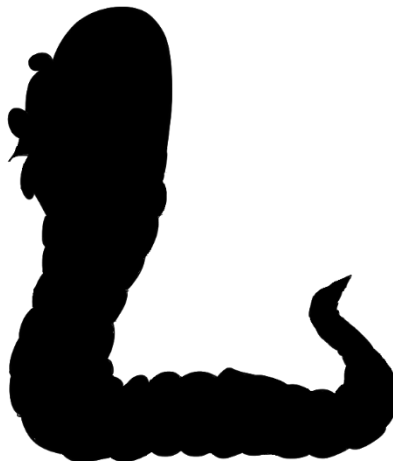
Character Silhouette

When designing a character is important to be aware of how its silhouette will look like, as it makes it more readable for the audience.

This was my first design of the worm:



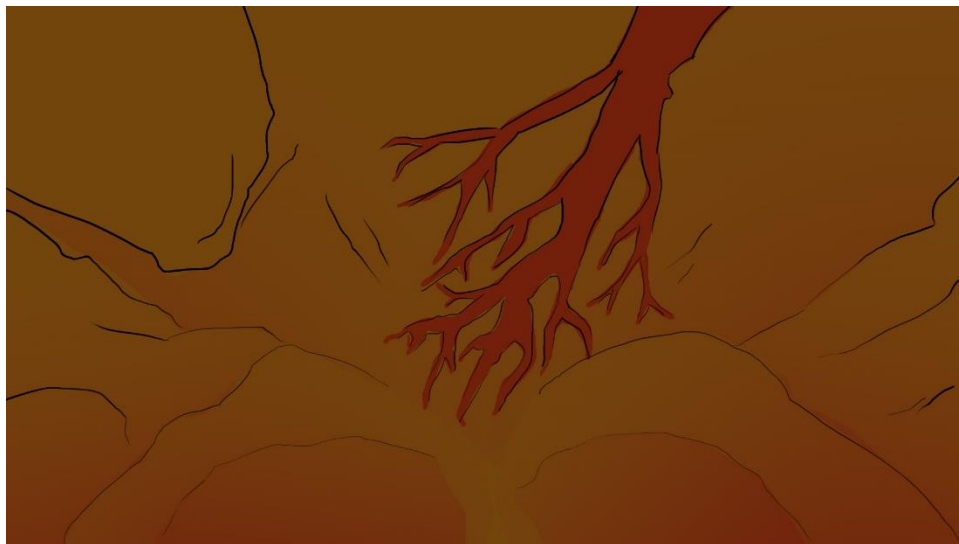
Doesn't seem like there is much difference, but his tail being bend this way make the character harder to read in silhouette for, so I redesigned it to make it more readable

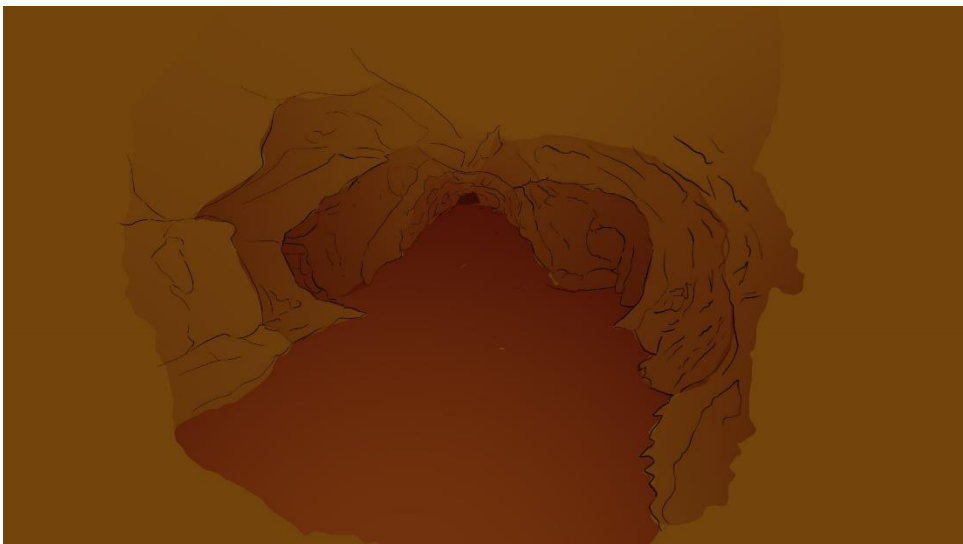
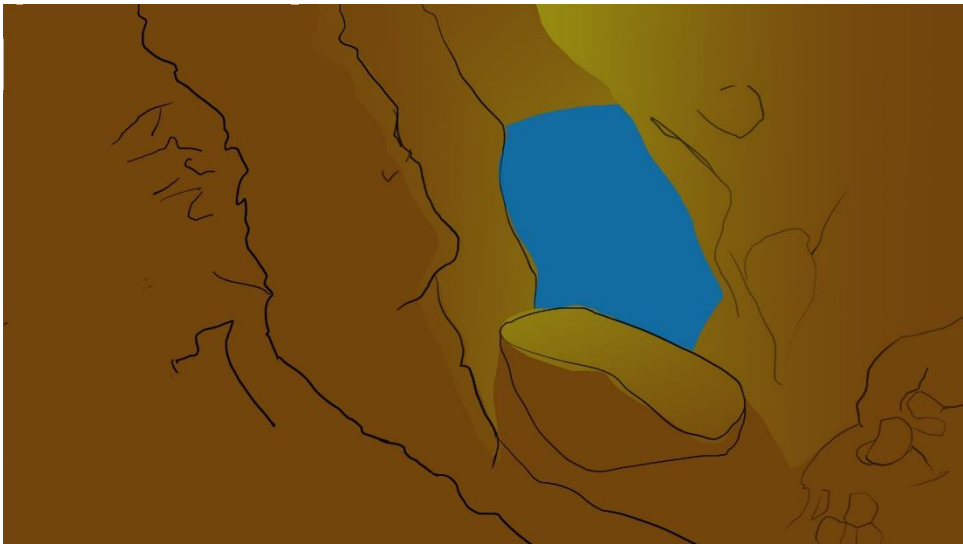
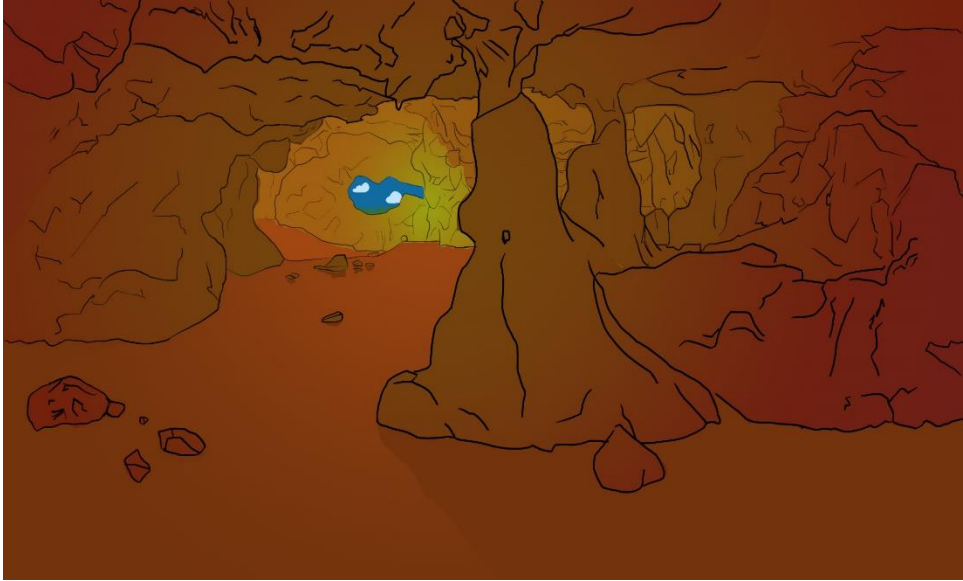


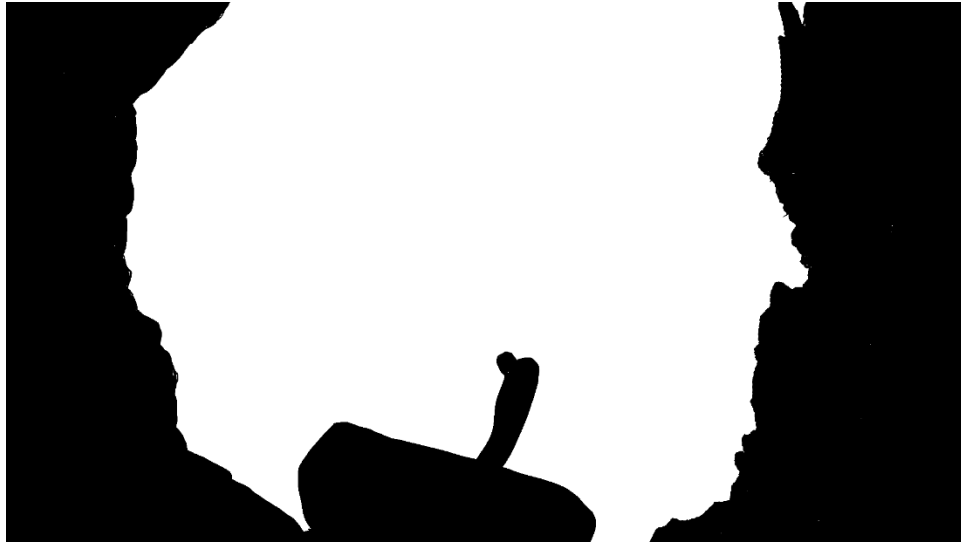
Backgrounds

For the backgrounds I have tried to visualize create the spaces, so that when it is time to create it in 3D there is a clear reference image.

I have tried to showcase where the light comes from, trying to show the depth of the underground tunnels and the colour palette.



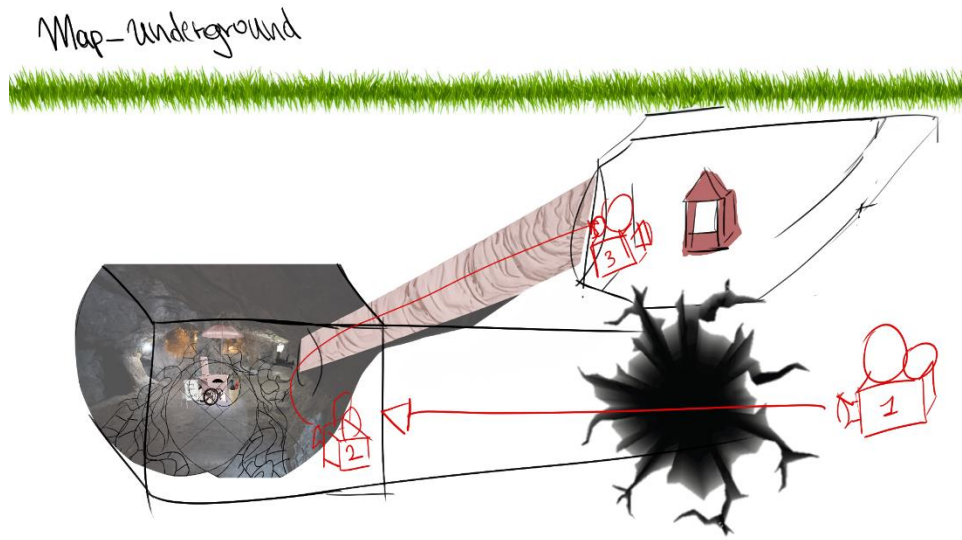




The backgrounds in scene 3, when the worms are out of the tunnels, is generated with the help of AI to show the change in style from cartoony (when they are inside the tunnels) to more realistic (when they are outside).

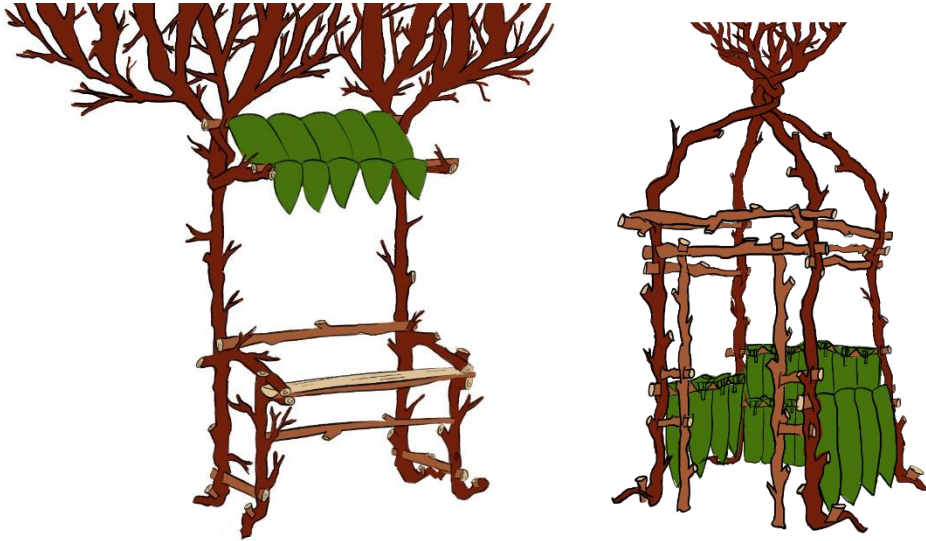
Underground Map

To have a better understanding of the space I have created a map for the camera



Assets

When creating the assets I thought about which materials are available to these creatures to build with, and this is what I came up with.



These worms create structures with roots and sticks, as it is abundant in the place where they live. The darker wood bits are roots still alive, and the worms being underground the roots are on the ceiling, so the worms have to grab it from there and pin it down to the ground. These parts still have new sprouts as these roots are still alive, while the sticks are of a lighter colouration are already dead and used to keep the structure in shape.



When designing the structure, I imagined it like a real structure, putting special care on where the sticks should be in order to maintain the structure standing. Leaves are mainly used as decoration.

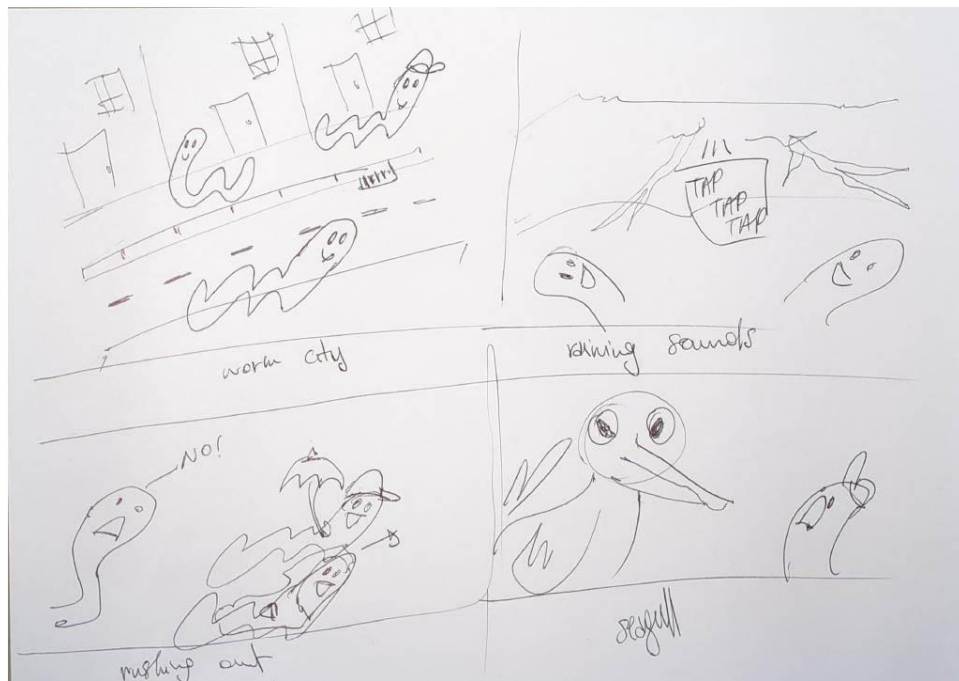
Colour Test

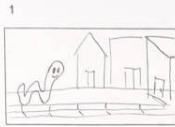
Also run some colour tests to see which palette works best together and ask a couple of friends for their opinion.



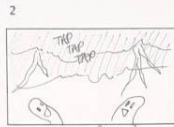
Early Concepts

Here are some early concepts I have designed before the actual storyboard





worm city



rain sounds from above



worms getting ready to go outside



Protagonist does not want worms to go out



Protagonist say it is the seagull but the others don't believe it



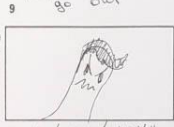
Protagonist get angry



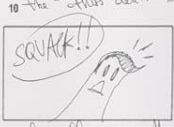
Protagonist wants to prove others wrong



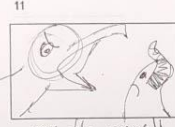
Protagonist goes out



Look around angry



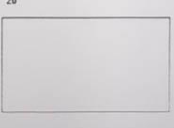
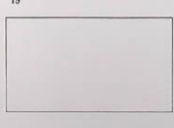
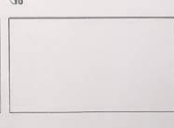
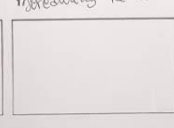
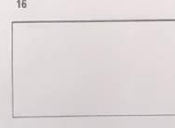
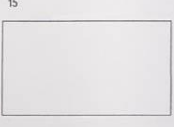
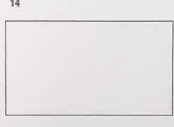
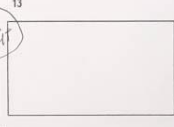
hear the seagull



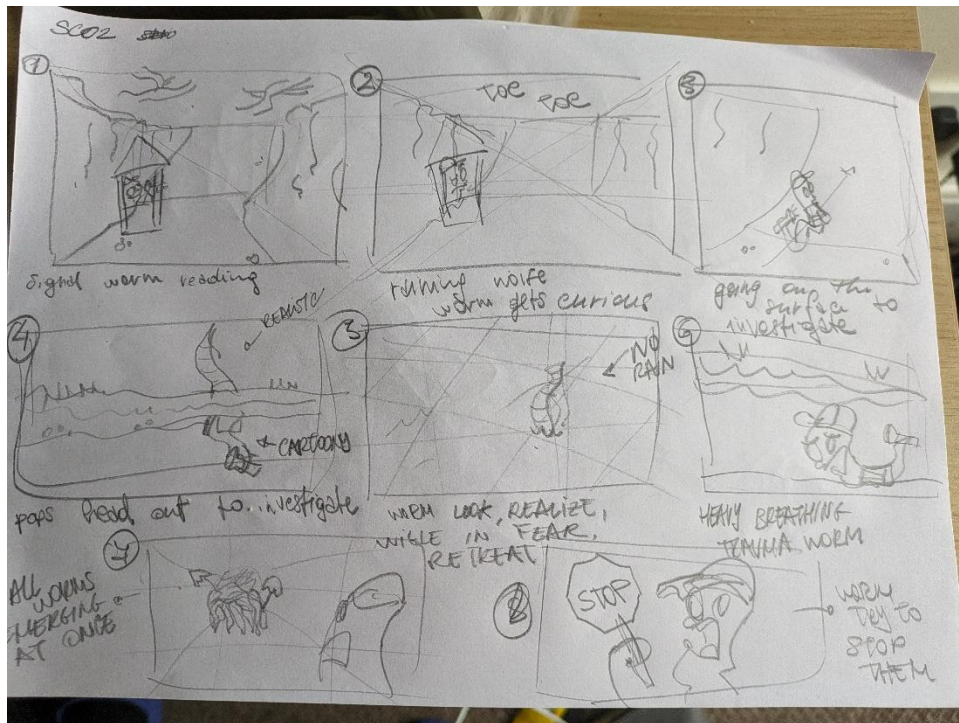
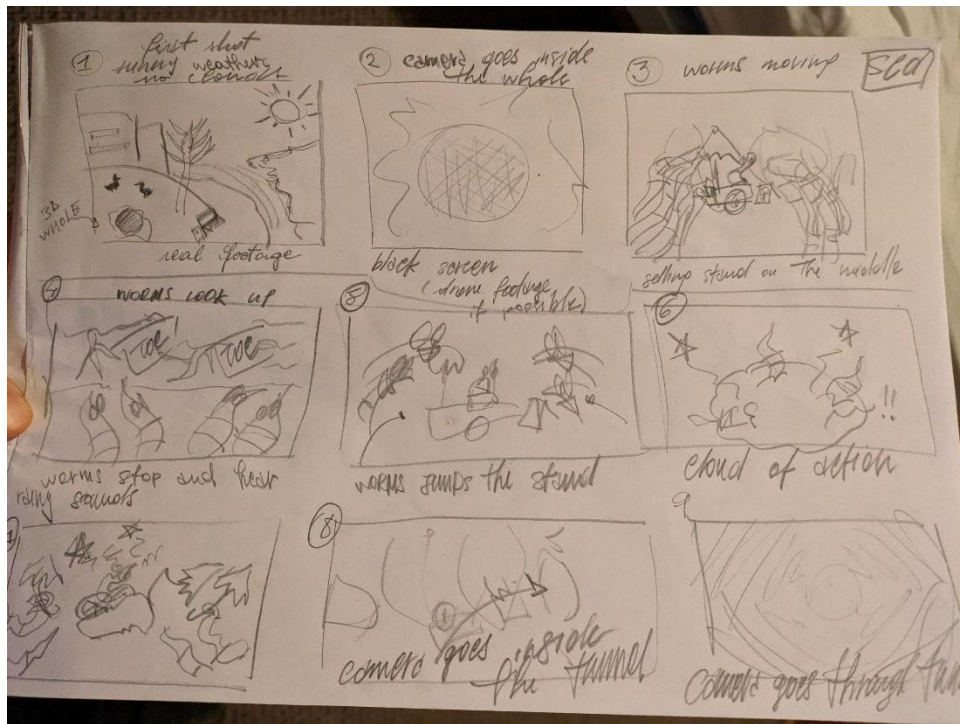
sees the seagull



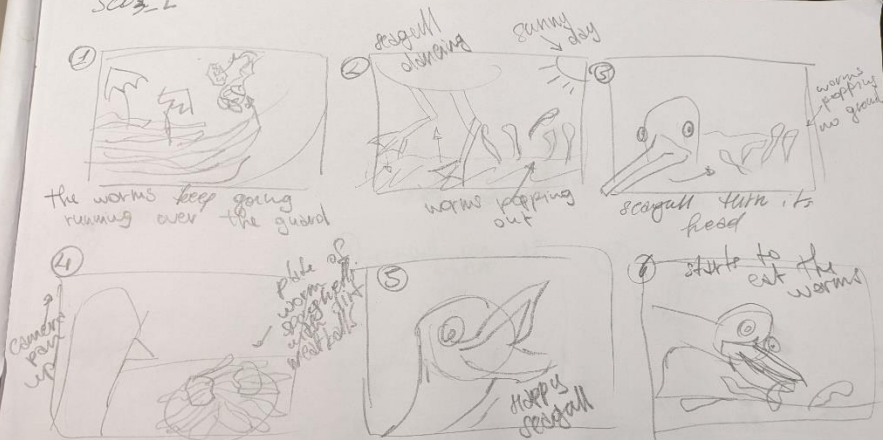
The Protagonist get caught by the seagull, realizing he was right



Storyboard

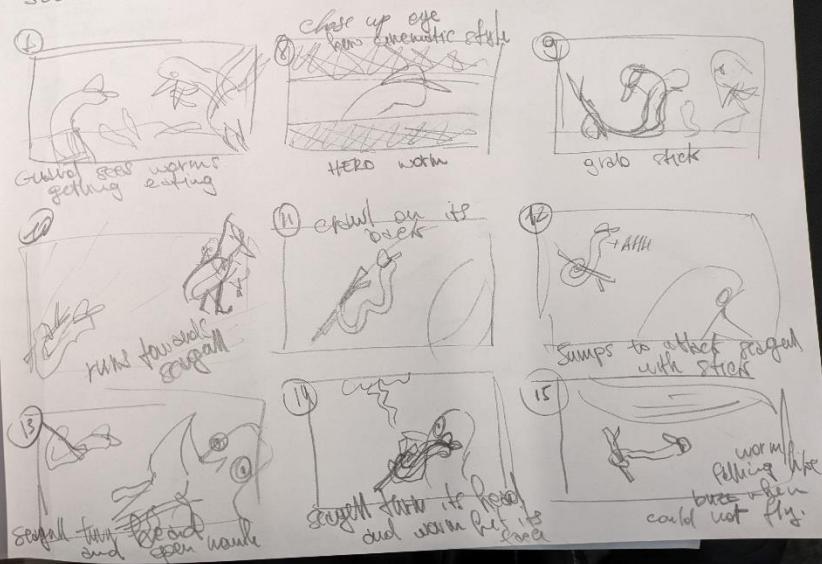


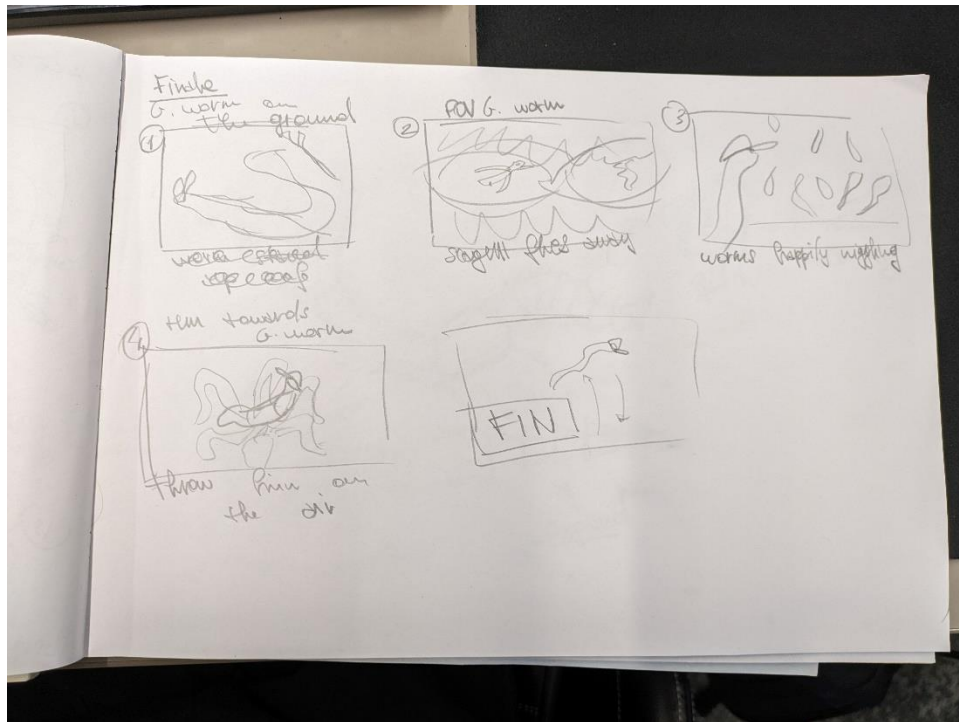
SC03-1



during the SC03 the Lighting will gradually change from sunny day to rainy.

SC03-2





Audio

For the water drops I have created a drum pattern on Fruity Loops as I could not find the right sound online, with the addition of effects such as reverb and compression I was able to get the desired sound.



Screenplay

TITLE: Ground Worms

EXT. ON TOP OF TUNNELS - DAY

On a quiet warm day, the two seagulls present in the scene are sluggish and almost immobile. The title is present on screen.

CAMERA: dolly downwards inside the ground

INT. MARKET STALL TUNNEL

There is a market stall in the middle of the frame communicating that rain is coming.

Umbrella worm is dressed in a green coat behind the stand while numerous worms crawl around it forming a wiggly cylinder of worm meat.

UMBRELLA WORM:

Rain! Rain! Ra....

Umbrella worm gets interrupted by the sound of something hitting the top of the tunnel.

All the worms crawling around the stall stop and look at the ceiling listening to the rain.

GROUP OF WORMS:

Rain! Rain! Rain!

The worms jump the stall to grab the umbrella, forming a cloud of action.

CAMERA: tracking shot moving towards the tunnel and going through it.

INT. EXIT GUARD BOOTH - DAY

The guard worm is having his afternoon nap when it gets rudely awoken by the sound of rain.

Remembering the reason he was there, the Guard Worm heads to the exit to check what is happening.

Reaching the exit, the Guard worm pops its head out, when his head is outside it changes style from cartoony to realistic.

CAMERA: pan to the left following an arc.

Guard worm is terrorized by what he has seen, and with no time to recover, notices an enormous clew heading in the exit direction, with umbrellas at hand ready to migrate to greener pastures.

The only thing the Guard could do was able to signal them to stop, but was completely ignored as the clew rushed out and dragged the Guard Worm with them.

EXT. OUTSIDE IN THE OPEN - DAY

Worms are flowing out of the hole like water when emptying a dam.

CAMERA: zoom out

The two duck-like feet that now is in shot are doing a strange dance, when it suddenly stops, also the noise that was assumed to be rain goes quiet.

CAMERA: Pan up

It is revealed that it is a seagull making all that noise, it turns its head and notices the clew, which the seagull sees as a plate of spaghetti, awaking its appetite.

As the seagull devours its fellow colonist, the Guard Worm comes back to its senses after being dragged out, and looking at what is happening it feels like it is his responsibility to save the colony.

CAMERA: Extreme close up of the eyes

The Guard Worm finds his weapon, a sharp trident-like stick that looked like it was waiting for him, and by using a leaf as trampoline, the Guard is able to jump extremely high towards the bird's eye.

When the Guard is about to reach the bird, a lightning strike in the distance scares the bird which leaves before the Guard can reach him, making it fall and lose consciousness.

When he comes back, all the colony is celebrating his victory, as there was general panic and confusion the only thing that matters is that whatever the Guard Worm did saved the colony, and he will be remembered for generations for his courage and altruism.

Mood Board

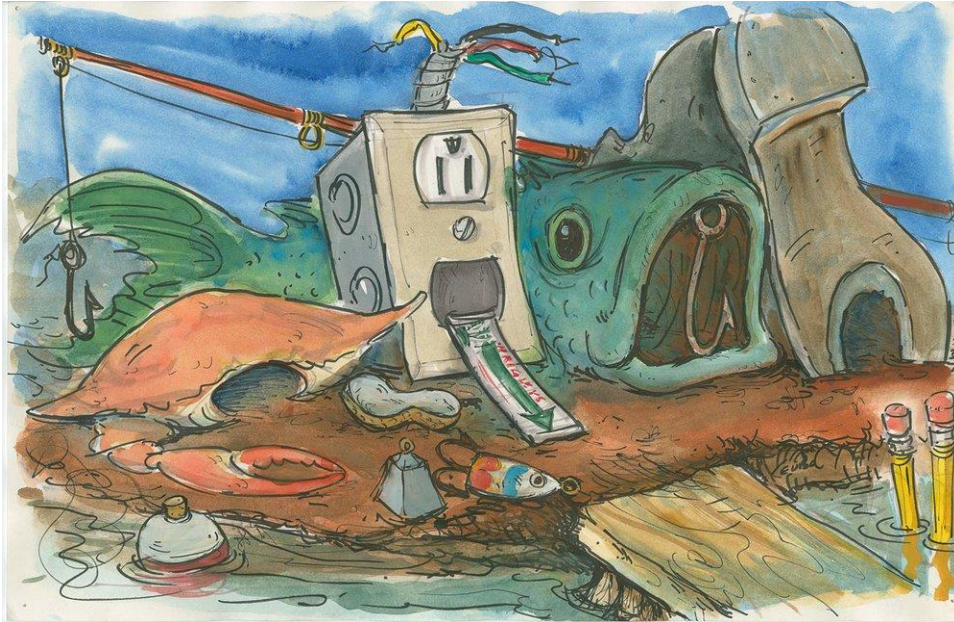
To create this story I've used a variety of sources:

Backgrounds

To create the drawing of the backgrounds in SC01-02 I have used pictures of Derinkuyu, an ancient underground city in Turkey, and modified them using the AI tool in photoshop.



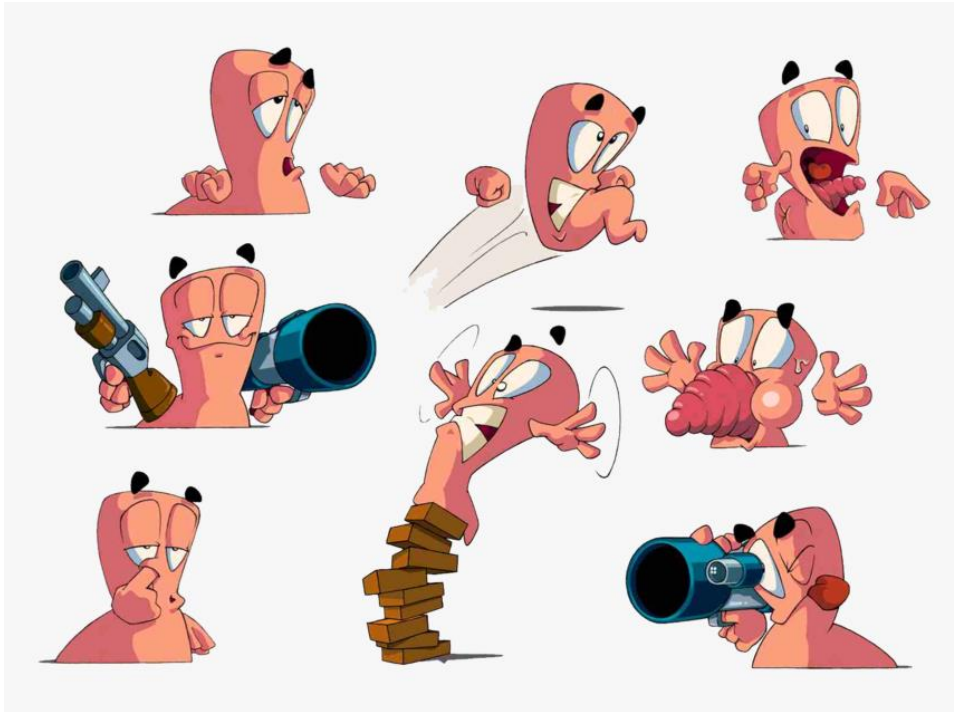
I have also investigated pre-production work of other animation movies about bugs such as *A Bug's Life* and *Antz* and in games such as *Worms 3D*.



A Bug's Life. (1999). Walt Disney Pictures.



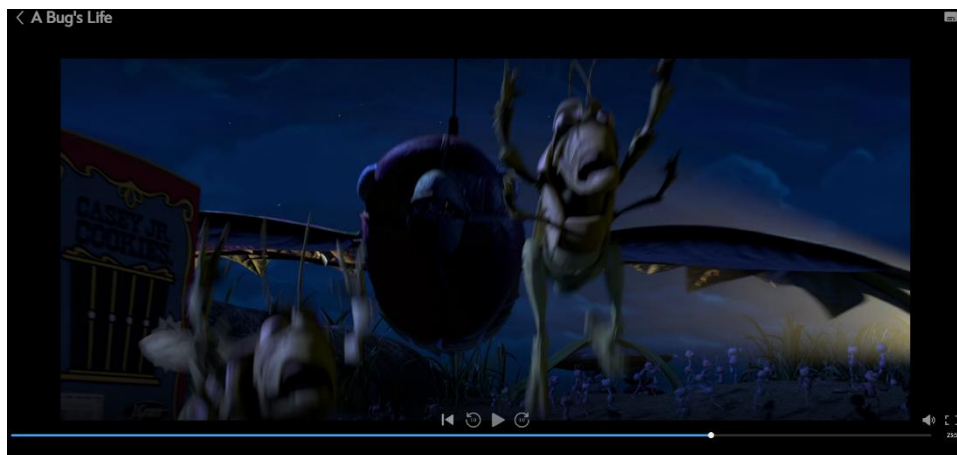
Antz. (1998). DreamWorks Pictures.



Worms 3D. (2003). Team 17.

Shots

Inspiration for the various shots come from a variety of sources such as:



A Bug's Life. (1999). Walt Disney Pictures.



The Good, The Bad and The Ugly. (1968). United Artists.



Looney Tunes: Bell Hoppy. (1954). Warner Bros.



Genndy Tartakovsky's Primal. (2019). Adult Swim.

Bibliography

A Bug's Life. (1999). Walt Disney Pictures.

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Looney Tunes: Bell Hoppy. (1954). Warner Bros.

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The Earthworm society of Britain (2024). *Why do earthworms come out when it rains?* |

Earthworm Society of Britain. [online] www.earthwormsoc.org.uk. Available at:

<https://www.earthwormsoc.org.uk/FAQrain> [Accessed 20 Mar. 2024].

