

# Through the Crack - An Animation Project

“An Abstract Journey Of Growth”

*This report is submitted as the fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Design in Interaction Design  
at the Department of Design, Delhi Technological University*

Submitted By

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I am writing to express my gratitude to **my parents** for their kind cooperation and encouragement in completing this project.

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I perceive this opportunity as a big milestone in my career development. I will strive to use gained skills and knowledge in the best possible way, and I will continue to work on improving to attain my desired career objectives.

Hope to continue co-operation with all of you in the future,

Sincerely,

Anshika

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anshika". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

# CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this report, titled “**Through the Crack - An Animation Project**” and the work presented in it are my own.

I confirm that :

This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for the **Master of Design** degree at **Delhi Technological University**. Where any part of this project has not been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this project is entirely my work. I have acknowledged all main sources of help. Where the report is based on work done by me only, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.

Anshika

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## CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the Project Dissertation titled “**Through the Crack - An Animation Project**” which is submitted by **Anshika**, Roll No: **23/MDID/02**, **Department of Design, Delhi Technological University, Delhi** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Design, is a record for the project work carried out by the student under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, this work has not been submitted in part or full for any Degree or Diploma to this University or elsewhere.

Place: New Delhi

Date:

**(Prof. Varun S.)**

## ABSTRACT

"Through the Crack" is a brief experimental animation that uses abstract visual storytelling to examine the idea of non-linear personal development. The video, which has its roots in personal experience, figuratively depicts the process of self-discovery that occurs during design school. Inspired by the resurrection plant (*Selaginella lepidophylla*), which dries out and blossoms again depending on changing conditions, the animation uses the image of a crack as its key motif to track stages of disruption, collapse, and final resuscitation.

The all-black-and-white animation takes its visual cues from pieces such as Ian Fontova's *Eyes of Closeness* and SHAED's *Trampoline* MV. It eschews language and characters in favour of symbolic components that are timed to beat changes, such as flashing eyes, spiky forms, flowing sand, and trembling walls.

"Through the Crack" is a brief experimental animation that uses abstract visual storytelling to examine the idea of non-linear personal development. The video, which has its roots in personal experience, figuratively depicts the process of self-discovery that occurs during design school. Inspired by the resurrection plant (*Selaginella lepidophylla*), which dries out and blossoms again depending on changing conditions, the animation uses the image of a crack as its key motif to track stages of disruption, collapse, and final resuscitation.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Project Name: Through the crack - An animation project

## 1.1. GENESIS

I was initially exposed to animation as a subject in the prior semester, which is where Through the Crack got its start. I hadn't thought about the expressive possibilities that animation offered me until that point. However, after completing my first animation project, I became aware of how effectively this medium could express mood, thought, and emotion without relying on direct narrative. The germ of interest was sown by that event, but it was guided by one specific reference.

In one of our lessons, our teacher showed us Ian Fontova's Eyes of Closeness, an experimental black-and-white animation that used movement, rhythm, and abstract visual language to convey the emotion of love. Despite lacking words and a prominent character, the video had a profound emotional impact. The thought of designing something that works similarly, not by telling a tale literally, but by evoking a similar emotion in the viewer, has captivated me ever since.

This endeavour is an extension of that aspiration. It blends my passion for rhythm, movement, symbolism, and abstract narrative. My goal with this project is to use animation to convey the non-linear emotional journey I've experienced while in design school, emphasising the internal, frequently invisible uncertainties, changes, breakdowns, and gradual rebuilding that take place.



Despite having no characters, the story is full of presence. A crack that is an opening rather than merely damage.

## 1.2. TOOLS & SOFTWARE

For the creation of *Through the Crack*, the project leaned heavily on two primary tools: Procreate and VN Video Editor.

### 1.2.1. PROCREATE

Procreate served as the primary animation tool. Its frame-by-frame animation assist feature enabled me to draw and sequence visuals with control and fluidity. Procreate was perfect for creating textured strokes and accurate transitions while maintaining the concept's emotional and unvarnished tone because of the project's black-and-white look and abstract visual language.

### 1.2.2. VN VIDEO EDITOR

This program was used to sequence animated clips, precisely sync them with the audio track, and apply final edits, fade-ins, and timing tweaks. Its user-friendly interface made it simple to experiment with pace, particularly when matching images to musical beat alterations and mood changes.



*Fig 1.2.1.: Procreate*



*Fig 1.2.2.: VN Editor*

## 2. RESEARCH

The conceptual and visual foundation of *Through the Crack* stems from layered research that merges abstract aesthetics, symbolic emotional storytelling, sound design, and personal narrative.

In order to create a non-linear story with a foundation in symbolism and emotional rhythm, this project incorporates elements from a variety of visual, conceptual, and cultural study sources. The resurrection plant (*Selaginella lepidophylla*), one of the main metaphors, represents growth through hardship and reflects the highs and lows of individual development. The animation's structure was poetically anchored by its capacity to resurrect from a withered state.

The abstract music videos *Eyes of Closeness* by Ian Fontova and *Trampoline* by SHAED, which employ synchronised motion and abstract shapes to elicit strong emotions without the use of actors, served as inspiration. Simon\_'s 'Black and White Party Visuals' playlist served as the inspiration for the black-and-white look, which substitutes motion and contrast for actual narrative in favour of sensory immersion.

Impact was increased by explicitly linking visual changes to auditory cues through additional research into emotive editing and rhythm synchronisation. Research on human perception and visual culture has shown that abstract animation can evoke strong emotional responses in viewers when its rhythm and symbolism are consistent.

The approach was also influenced by modern design storytelling, which uses rich metaphors rather than straight narrative to convey personal journeys. These realisations combined to form the project into a symbolic and sensory depiction of creative development.

## 2.1. VISUAL AND STYLISTIC RESEARCH

One major source of inspiration was Simon\_'s "Black and White Party Visuals" YouTube playlist, which is renowned for its abstract, high-contrast, rhythmic loops. These images influenced my language of minimalist, black-and-white animation, in which transformation, motion, and space, rather than overt narrative or characters, are used to convey emotion.

My use of synchronised beats and floating forms was further influenced by the SHAED music video for "Trampoline". The MV showed how visual tempo may reflect emotional waves with its bizarre rhythm-driven transitions, luminous elements, and harmony of smooth and chaotic motion. It was particularly useful in helping me visualise a key concept in my project: the contrast between internal turmoil and external calm.

Ian Fontova's "Eyes of Closeness," a poem that uses solely abstract objects to depict love and distance, was another important work. I learnt how symbols can elicit strong feelings without the use of conversation or characters through the use of gentle dynamics, zooms, and ambient transitions, and I tried to emulate this in my work.

## 2.2. EMOTIONAL AND SYMBOLIC LAYERING

Inspired by the resurrection plant (*Selaginella lepidophylla*), the animation's central theme is non-linear growth. This desert plant's capacity to wither, dry up, and then blossom again under the correct circumstances served as a potent metaphor for the phases of collapse, uncertainty, and eventual rebirth that characterise my creative development.

The central crack motif represents that interior turning point or breakthrough; it is neither destructive nor healing, but illuminating. Throughout the animation, cracks develop to represent pressure points, potential, and change.

Studied the behavior and life cycle of the plant as a metaphor for non-linear growth. Its revival mechanism after complete dormancy resonated with the ups and downs of the creative process and personal growth.

## 2.3. SOUND-BASED RESEARCH

Spectre Folk's "Toot! Toot!"<sup>[5]</sup> was chosen because of its erratic speed and complex, meandering melody. It's unusual beat matched my topic of ambiguous emotional growth. To transform the soundscape into a narrative chronology, I used waveform analysis and segment breakdowns to plan and time my graphics to reflect the music's phases, particularly rhythm shifts, distortion, and ambient pauses.

Studies of music videos and animations, where the visuals are designed to enhance aural moments, are the result of research into audio-visual synchronisation. Two important sources that demonstrated how beats, silences, and distortions may be transformed into captivating visual beats were *Eyes of Closeness* and *Trampoline*. To improve viewer immersion, visual patterns like as flow, distortion, and pulsing were timed to significant musical transitions.

Although the track's looseness allowed for flexibility, the animation was rooted in its eerie constancy. Emotion was mapped to motion using insights from synesthetic animation theory and Foley sound design. The images mimic the emotional register of the music rather than depending on language or lyrics, resulting in a meditative experience in which sound takes on the role of the unseen narrator.

## 2.4. CONTEMPORARY DESIGN STORYTELLING

Modern design storytelling embraces abstraction, emotion, and metaphor as essential communication tools, moving beyond conventional narrative structures and character-driven arcs. Through symbolic visual languages, it enables artists to convey intensely personal or shared experiences. This is particularly true in animation, where shape, motion, and sound may inspire meaning and moods without the need for dialogue or realism. Subjective storytelling has become more popular as a result of this change, allowing the audience to experience and understand rather than just follow along.

The project's non-linear narrative, in which a crack takes on the role of protagonist and the journey is told through textures, transitions, and synchronised audio-visual rhythms, reflects modern storytelling. The animation transforms interior experiences—uncertainty, pressure, discovery, and revival—into dynamic abstract visuals rather than following a traditional plot. This storytelling technique prioritises atmosphere, development, and emotional resonance over intelligibility, taking cues from minimalist black-and-white imagery and experimental painters like Ian Fontova.

With students frequently going through disjointed journeys full of uncertainty and epiphanies, a storytelling method like this is especially pertinent in today's design education. Using a modern visual language to tell that story permits artistic experimentation and wider relatability in addition to personal expression.

## 2.5. HISTORY IN BLACK AND WHITE ART FORM

From the very beginnings of photography, film, and printmaking, black and white have been used in visual culture for a very long time. Black and white compositions, which lack colour, mainly rely on contrast, light, shadow, shape, and texture to draw the viewer's attention away from the distracting colours and towards form and emotion. To heighten psychological tension and bizarre atmospheres, early silent films and expressionist films, like German Expressionism in the 1920s, used harsh black and white images. Similar to this, black and white photography has long been used to emphasise clarity and timelessness while capturing unadulterated human emotion and structure.

### 3. CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Instead of adhering to a conventional narrative arc, I aimed to use abstract visual moments of fragmentation, stillness, rebirth, and flow to convey non-linear personal development.

This animation's central idea was non-linear personal progress, which was represented by the metaphor of a crack—a disruption that results in transformation rather than destruction. A rupture marks the start of the voyage, signifying the entry into a strange and demanding environment such as design school. The first uncomfortable but essential transition from comfort to creative confrontation is symbolised by this crack.

As the concept developed, the Resurrection Plant emerged as a crucial metaphor for non-linear evolution and regeneration. Its special capacity to wither in dryness and to bloom again in the right conditions matched the project's emotional rhythm, which alternated between periods of burnout and growth spurts. This functioned as a subliminal yet poignant symbol that only emerged as a subdued resolve in the latter moments of the animation.

The main metaphor appeared as a crack, signifying the initial change in direction and identity that progressively evolves into a course of creative and emotional growth. The Resurrection Plant (*Selaginella lepidophylla*), a desert plant that seems lifeless and dried but comes back to life when wet, served as a major inspiration for this. It represented the cycles of dormancy and rebirth in my own emotions.

I choose to narrate stories visually and nonliterally, illustrating stages of development through motion, form, and rhythm rather than characters and speech. Internal states, difficulties, and transitions are abstractly represented by circles, lines, spikes, sand, and flow.

During the early idea stage, a mood board was created by assembling components from abstract animation styles, black-and-white motion graphics, and music video aesthetics, particularly those from Ian Fontova's *Eyes of Closeness* and SHAED's *Trampoline*. These ideas influenced the film's symbolic, nonliteral storytelling style, which expresses feelings and interior states not through characters but through changing shapes, fluid geometry, and spatial movement.

The phases—disruption (the crack), descent (sandpit and collapse), internal disorder (spiked circle), conformity (windlines and triangles), reflection (eye and circle loop), and rebirth (flower and frame)—were organised with the use of emotional mapping and brainstorming. Every image had an emotional or psychological connection thanks to this multi-layered creative process, which made the abstract story incredibly intimate and coherent as a whole.

**A mood board that combined the following elements helped to reinforce this thematic and visual clarity:**

- Minimalist allusions to Simon\_'s animations in black & white.
- *Eyes of Closeness* and *Trampoline*'s rhythmic visual pace.
- Natural features such as sand formations, dry textures, and fractured surfaces.
- Shape-based metaphors for communication, upheaval, and rejuvenation.



- These elements worked together to create the animation's emotional and symbolic language.

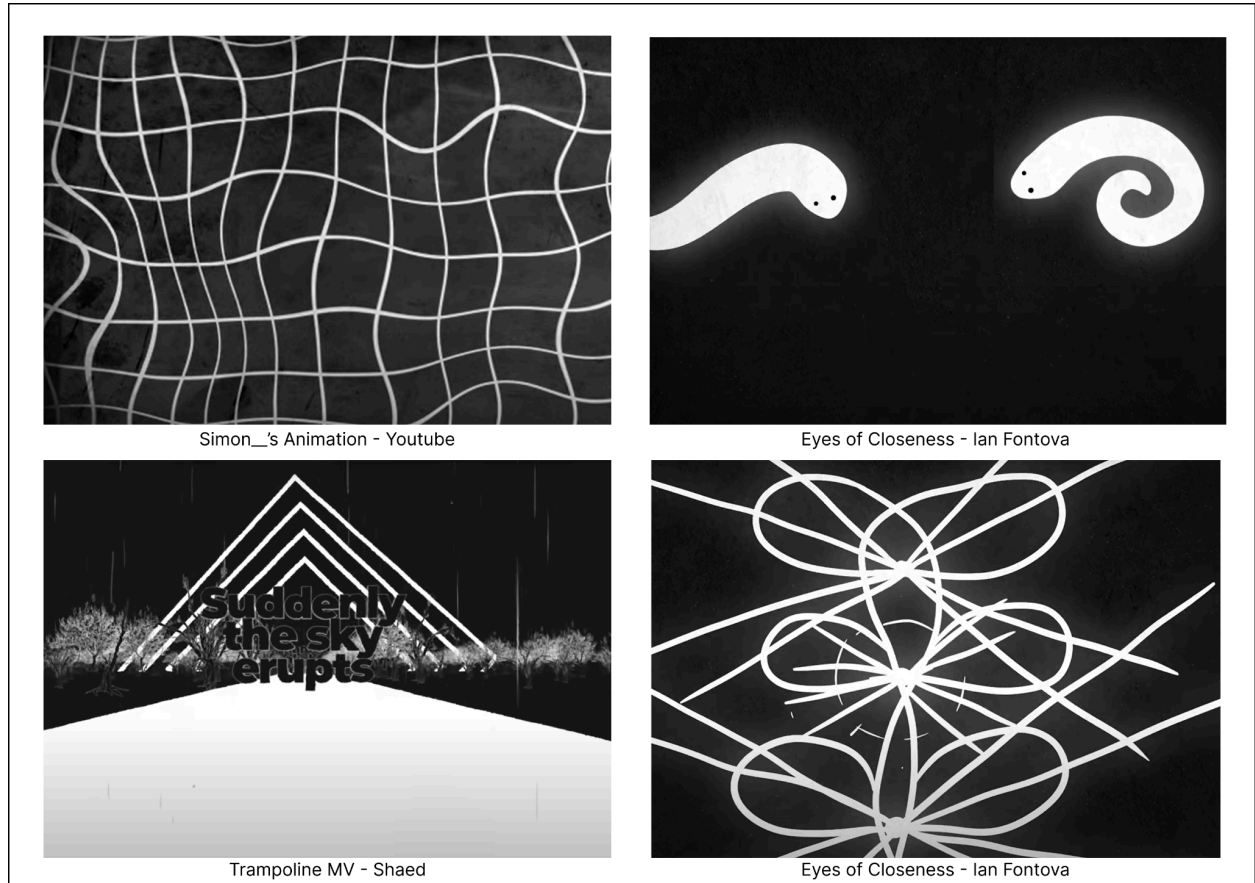


Fig 3: Mood Board, Psychedelic Patterns, 3 May 2014, <https://youtu.be/c5SF0Zi0NB8?si=8gNJRtC7pakHCl55> [1],  
 Eyes of Closeness By Ian Fontova, 20 May 2019  
[https://youtu.be/ZQK7WtyvISM?si=x4XS2jx\\_wzP3GrP4](https://youtu.be/ZQK7WtyvISM?si=x4XS2jx_wzP3GrP4) [2], Trampoline MV By Shaed, Zayn, 26 Sept 2019  
[https://youtu.be/Zzylc-7PwQ4?si=GKRJE\\_D7urKpsD7Z](https://youtu.be/Zzylc-7PwQ4?si=GKRJE_D7urKpsD7Z) [3]

## 4. METHODOLOGY

This project's process, which combines structured phase-wise development with intuitive design thinking, is based on exploratory visual storytelling. Every step of the production process was deliberate, striking a balance between emotional depth and abstract portrayal.

This animation project's methodology is centred on a thorough investigation of abstract symbols, motion design techniques, and experimental narrative. The first phase involved articulating the fundamental idea of non-linear growth, which was shown by the metaphor of a crack and its following development. Emotional mapping was the first step in the process, in which significant turning points in both professional and personal development were represented as abstract stages. Cracks, sand, spiked balls, triangles, and windlines were used to represent these phases and act as metaphors for the various stages of creative struggle and revelation.

Technically, the animation was made utilising Procreate for visual composition and sketching, and VN Editor for final video editing and music synchronisation. The animation's rhythm and tempo were greatly influenced by the use of music. Each visual transition's timing was meticulously synchronised with musical changes, paying special attention to beat shifts and nuanced aural cues to correspond with visual disruptions, development, and quiet moments.

Drawing inspiration from modern artists and motion designers who prioritise mood and feeling over precise representation, the methodology also welcomed experimentation with abstract shapes and forms. This made it possible to create a visual language that is more emotional and organic, reflecting the intricacies of personal development.

## 4.1. CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE

The symbolic metaphor of a fissure turning into a flower served as the foundation for the animation's central concept of non-linear growth. This graphic journey reflects stages of uncertainty, investigation, breakdown, and revival, representing my development as a designer.

This animation project's conceptual framework is based on the metaphor of non-linear growth, and the crack and its development serve as a major motif. Phases of the story's development correspond to different phases of internal conflict, personal development, and ultimate clarity. Because it reflects the real-world experience of navigating change, learning, and transformation, the framework is purposefully non-linear. This method allows for a more abstract depiction of the voyage by eschewing a conventional narrative arc and emphasising emotional and visual expression.

Though there are stops, changes, and disturbances to reflect the intricacies of personal growth, each phase is intended to flow into the next both thematically and visually. The sand pit, spikes, and windlines—all of which stand for significant emotional and psychological phases—come after the crack, which represents the initial indications of change. The ensuing triangles and circles represent the pursuit of progress, alignment, and direction, with the blossoming flower serving as a metaphor for rebirth and self-acceptance.

By using sound, each phase's emotional depth is further enhanced and the transitions are made to feel natural and representative of the underlying idea. The audience is invited to engage with the concepts of self-discovery and transformation through this conceptual framework, which is meant to encourage reflection.

## 4.2. EMOTION MAPPING

I started by charting my design school experience's highs and lows. After that, these states were abstracted into motion-based and visual representations (such as sand for fragility, spikes for chaos, and circles for flow).

The act of converting intricate emotional experiences into visual symbols and transitions to match the internal trip with the exterior depiction is known as emotion mapping in this animation production. Visualising the non-linear path of growth—from moments of clarity, acceptance, and rebirth to feelings of ambiguity, struggle, and chaos—was the main goal of emotion mapping. Finding important emotional states that connected with the learning process, both in terms of personal development and the experience of going to design school, was the first step in the approach.

For example, the fracture represents the tipping point or the beginning unease of change. It stands for the initial difficulty encountered and the associated vulnerability. The sand pit with the displaced particles after the crack represents a period of insecurity, self-doubt, and disorientation. The turbulence and disturbance in the learning and evolving process are symbolised by the spikes that emerge from the rotating ball. The windlines represent the brief epiphanies that accompany resolving internal strife. Last but not least, the triangles and circles show how to align and refine one's ideas before the flower blooms, which stands for self-actualization, tranquilly, and the pinnacle of personal development.

The story reflects real-life experiences, with each phase transitioning smoothly yet interspersed with disruptive periods to highlight the emotional highs and lows.

### 4.3. INSPIRATION STUDIES

- **Ian Fontova's Eyes of Closeness**

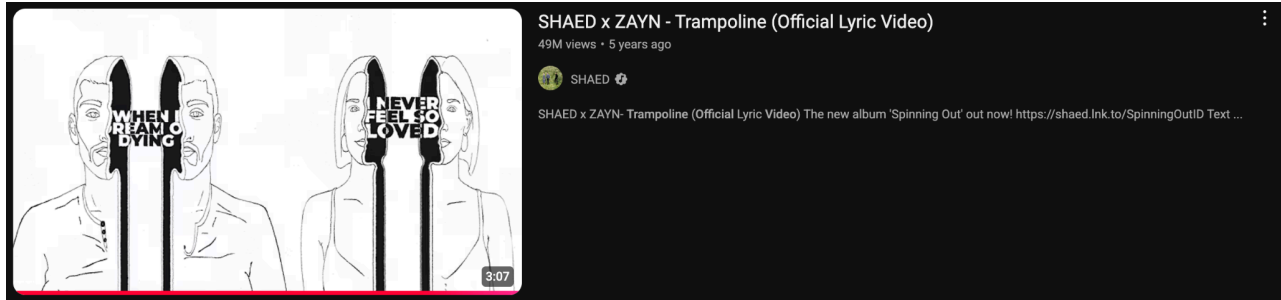
- Explores emotional intimacy through abstract symbolism and eye motifs.
- Strong influence on the idea of portraying emotion without a literal character narrative.
- Inspired the use of indirect storytelling and symbolic transformation.



*Fig. 4.3.1 Eyes of Closeness By Ian Fontova, 20 May 2019*  
[https://youtu.be/ZQK7WtyvISM?si=x4XS2jx\\_wzP3GrP4](https://youtu.be/ZQK7WtyvISM?si=x4XS2jx_wzP3GrP4) [2]

- **Music video of Trampoline**

- Powerful use of beat-synched transitions and fluid geometric shapes.
- Inspired by visual rhythm and minimal but expressive composition in animation.
- Helped conceptualize the balance of simplicity and emotional depth.



*Fig. 4.3.2 Trampoline MV By Shaed, Zayn, 26 Sept 2019*  
[https://youtu.be/Zzylc-7PwQ4?si=GKRJE\\_D7urKpsD7Z](https://youtu.be/Zzylc-7PwQ4?si=GKRJE_D7urKpsD7Z) [3]

- **Animation styles in black and white from Simon\_'s "Black and White Party Visuals"**

- Collection of high-contrast black-and-white animations with varied tempos and transitions.
- Showed possibilities of visual experimentation and distortion in abstract form.
- Directly influenced the visual style—sharp transitions, flowing lines, and layered circles.



*Fig. 4.3.3 Psychedelic Patterns, 3 May 2014*  
<https://youtu.be/c5SF0Zi0NB8?si=8gNJRtC7pakHC155> [1]

- **The Resurrection Plant's biological activity**

- Biological inspiration behind the concept of non-linear growth and revival.
- Provided metaphorical grounding to the animation's core symbol (flower blooming from the crack).

- Represents emotional fluctuations—drying, reviving, and persisting.



*Fig. 4.3.4 Resurrection Plant*

- **Black-and-White Motion Design Trends**

- Observed in digital artist showreels and generative art visuals.
- Emphasized motion texture, optical illusions, and minimalistic dynamics.
- Strengthened the idea of communicating mood shifts through non-literal visuals.

## 4.4. MUSIC SYNCHRONISATION

I chose Spectre Folk's song "Toot! Toot!." Its tempo changes, rhythm, and meditative distortions provide a logical structure for coordinating sound-based emotion with visual transitions.

One of the main tools used in this animation project to direct the emotional pace, thematic transitions, and visual narrative was music synchronization. With its raw, changing tempo and experimental sound layers, the selected tune, "Toot! Toot!" by Spectre Folk, complemented the non-linear idea of personal development and metamorphosis. Because of the track's erratic

percussion patterns, atmospheric layers, and subtle tempo changes, it was possible to interpret and create images that felt organic rather than forced.

Syncing required emotional mapping of sound textures to visual metaphors as well as in-depth beat analysis. Moments of change, such as the formation of cracks, the dispersal of materials, or the resuscitation of the bloom, were correlated with certain sound signals. By coordinating changes in motion with auditory stimulation, this technique provided the abstract sights rhythm and assisted in holding the viewer's attention.

The animation's energy and transitions were also impacted by the music. Ambient pauses permitted times of leisurely unfolding or emotional meditation, while high-pitched tremors or drum beats were accompanied by abrupt visual changes. The animation's whole structure was based on the song's changing structure, including its resolution, dissonance, and build-up. As a result, music synchronisation emerged as the unseen element that unites the many images into a seamless, emotionally stirring whole.

## 4.5. TOOL SELECTION

Procreate (frame-by-frame sketch animation) was used to create all of the visuals, and VN Editor was used for editing, sequencing, and beat alignment. The tools were selected based on how well they handled symbolic motion graphics.

The project's basic yet expressive aesthetic, time constraints, and the necessary flexibility for hand-drawn animation all influenced the tool selection. The main tools were VN Editor for video



editing and sound synchronisation, and Procreate for frame-by-frame animation. The film's abstract and symbol-heavy visual language was reinforced by Procreate's ability to facilitate intuitive, tactile drawing and direct alteration of each frame. Precise control over the visuals was made possible by its layers, onion skinning, and custom brush capabilities, especially when it came to displaying textures like sand and fractures, and organic shapes like the changing flower.

VN Editor was selected due to its user-friendliness, accuracy in audio synchronisation, and compatibility with a wide range of file types. It made it possible to regulate transitions, integrate music with animated scenes, and generate the finished product in a mobile-friendly workflow that matched the 10-day project's fast speed. When combined, these resources allowed for a creatively rich yet efficient pipeline that combined sound and pictures without the hassle of high-end software. They were perfect for a student-led animation project that focused on metaphor, rhythm, and emotional narrative because of their feature sets, which were both approachable and potent.

## 4.6. PHASES

The animation was broken into **seven symbolic phases**:

- **Surface**
  - Before entering the world of design, the story opens in silence—a pitch-black, empty space that symbolises the unexplored region of the self. It is the unbroken barrier of identity, feeling, and perception. This stage, which comes just before the first disruption, is one of potential and quiet. It depicts the period before

transition, both figuratively and literally, when everything appears to be the same on the inside while an invisible storm is building.

- **Crack**

- A fracture appears suddenly, fresh and startling. A metaphorical wall starts to fall apart, the screen shakes, and faint cracks start to appear. This stage represents the first struggle and awakening: the choice to experiment with art and design, the bravery to break through ingrained identity, and the opening to uncertainty. The crack represents a breakthrough rather than devastation. Here, repression is broken, and fresh feelings and ideas start to emerge.

- **Unraveling**

- Debris falls into a sandpit composed of older pieces—previous convictions, mistakes, and experiences—and turns into dust. This results in a whirling globe that revolves in a precarious equilibrium between cohesiveness and disintegration. Confusion, overwhelm, and reinvention are its defining characteristics. An essential component of every creative process, unravelling pushes the creator to confront discomfort and piece together meaning from emotional chaos.

- **Interaction**

- The sphere undergoes a metamorphosis, becoming a dynamic world with wind-like flowing, broken lines. Tiny, pointed triangles that represent structure, community, systems, and the overlapping energies of mentors and peers are

interwoven with these lines. The self starts to integrate rather than separate when adjusting to new routines, relationships, group projects, and shared creative zones. This is a reflection of external navigation.

- **Disruption**

- Uneven spikes form on the sphere—sharp, unpredictable manifestations of tension and reactivity. This visual chaos represents criticism, insecurity, rivalry, and the weight of expectations. It symbolises the emotional struggle all artists have when they must deal with criticism and attempt to balance their passion with approval from others. The subsequent return to smoothness is a sign of emotional equilibrium, resilience, and adaptation.

- **Evolution**

- At the end of each stage, a flower quietly blossoms, sometimes flourishing, sometimes stalling. Similar to the resurrection plant, *Selaginella lepidophylla*, which reacts to its surroundings, this is a live rhythm rather than a linear arc. The flower represents self-reflection, recovery, and individuality. As a visual metaphor for progress, it extends and contracts to highlight not only growth but also dips and regressions.

- **Reflection**

- The fully blooming flower is positioned in a frame that sits on top of the original crack in the final shot. Instead of concealing the past, this poetic resolution

presents it as lovely. As a reminder to viewers that change is not seamless nor unique, the framed fracture turns becomes a portal and a symbol of travel. The frame stands for acknowledgement and preservation—a tender affirmation that the individual on this trip is now complete, conscious, and continually evolving.

Each phase reflects a unique emotional or experiential state and transitions smoothly with the beat.

## 4.7. ITERATIVE CREATION

To measure rhythm, coherence, and consistency, animation frames were constructed sequentially and then reviewed backwards. Trial-and-error led to the evolution of visuals that were receptive to metaphor and music.

This animation's creation was a naturally iterative process. The development emerged through cycles of experimentation, feedback, reflection, and re-creation rather than along a straight or predetermined path. Every visual decision was honed at every level, from preliminary designs to frame sequencing, according to rhythm, emotional tone, and how effectively it captured the metaphorical complexity of the story. While the VN Editor made it possible to accurately match animation to musical beats, Procreate provided freedom in adding motion over still images. The project was able to develop organically rather than through coercion because to this continuous back and forth.

Every stage of the animation was revised several times: the flower's growth was examined in various iterations before settling on delicate, cyclical development; the crack was first straightforward but later overlaid with screen shakes and debris. To guarantee a smooth flow, the music's tempo, sync, and transitions were regularly adjusted. In keeping with the animation's central idea of non-linear evolution, iterative creation evolved into more than just a technique; it became the project's guiding philosophy. The project flourished through a responsive, changing process of making and remaking, much like a resurrection plant that folds and unfolds according to its surroundings.

## 5. ANIMATION BREAKDOWN

### 5.1 STORY

In the silence of the unknown, a fracture emerges — the first sign of something hidden deep within beginning to surface. The ground shudders as fragments of the old self crumble away, falling into a pit of memories and past experiences.

From the collected dust, a form struggles into being — a spinning mass shaped by past turmoil, sprouting unpredictable defenses, spikes that are both protection and pain. Yet, as the turbulence settles, the core smooths itself, preparing for transformation.

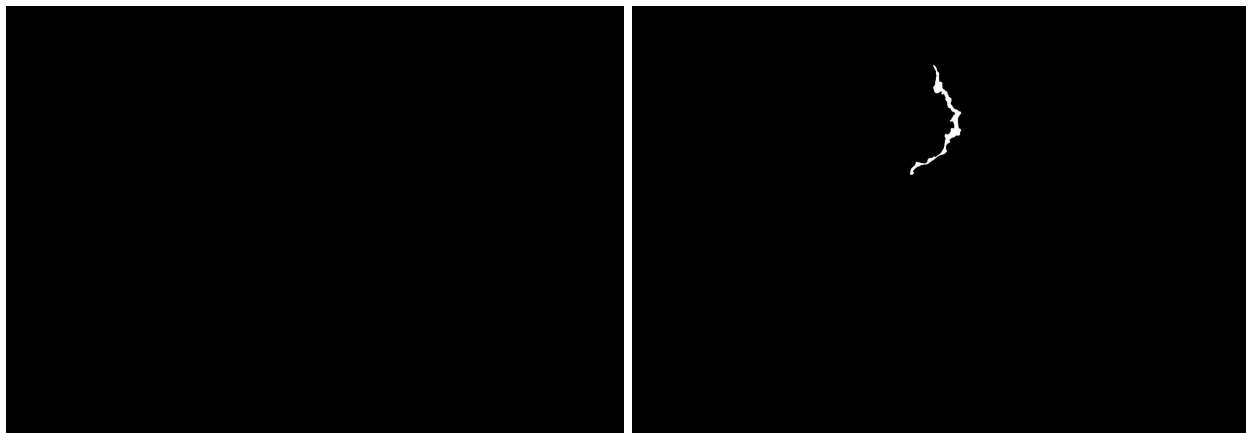
A stream of unseen forces carries this self forward — winds of change, invisible paths — dissolving the solid into flowing lines of growth. Zooming closer, complexity emerges: structured, delicate, interconnected — small pieces building a larger whole.

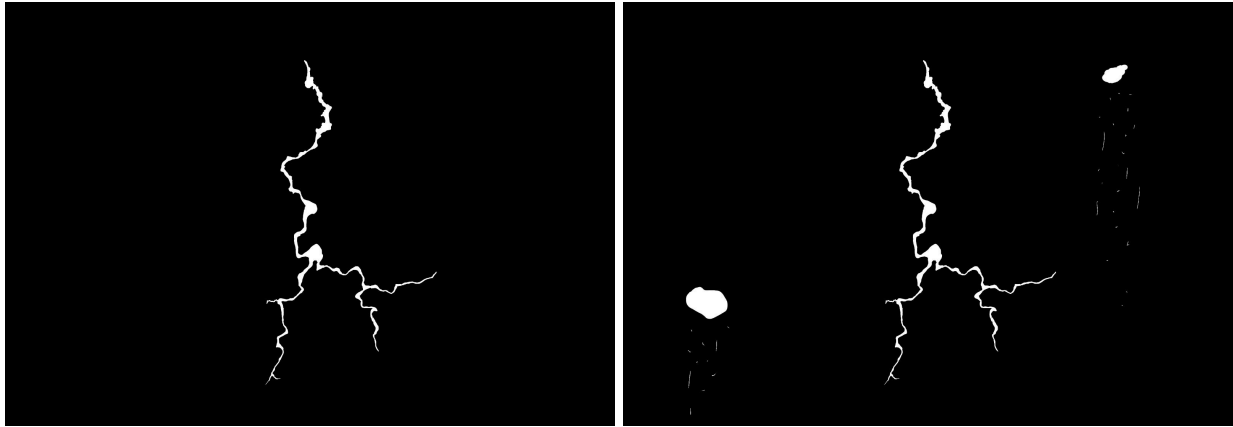
But progress isn't linear. Darkness returns, forming voids and new beginnings. Cycles of growth and pause pulse like a heartbeat, blinking into existence through the "eye" — a symbol of awareness, awakening, seeing oneself clearly for the first time.

The journey weaves through endless possibilities — until a path materializes, a road of self-discovery stretching into the distance.

It leads to the heart of transformation: the original crack, now framed with a blooming flower — a mark of resilience, of becoming, of cherishing every version that existed along the way.

## 5.2 STORY BOARD

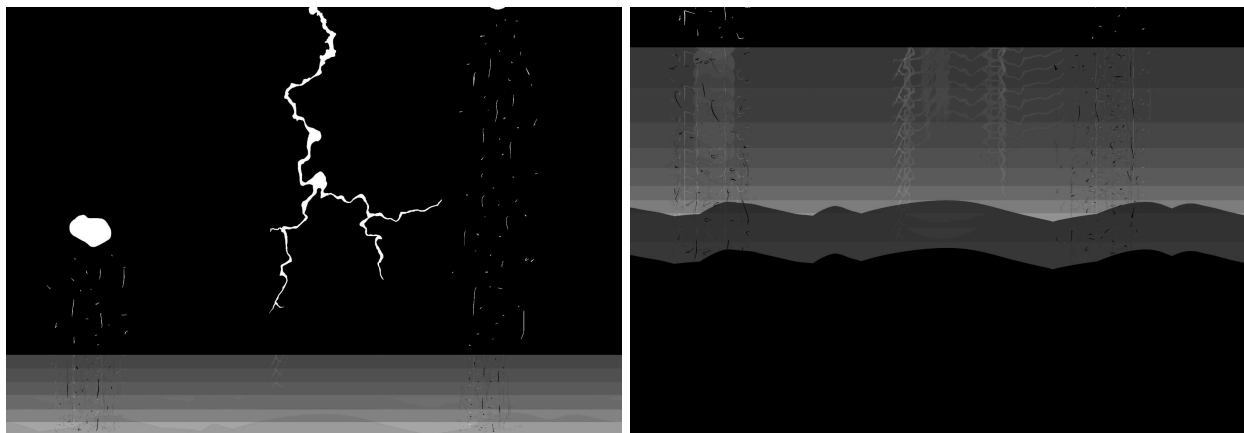




*Fig 9.2.1. - 9.2.4.: A static black screen. A faint crack appears and deepens.*

A stark black screen cracks open with tremors, symbolizing a sudden emotional or mental shift. This marks the entry into an unknown world—design school—where former patterns are disturbed.

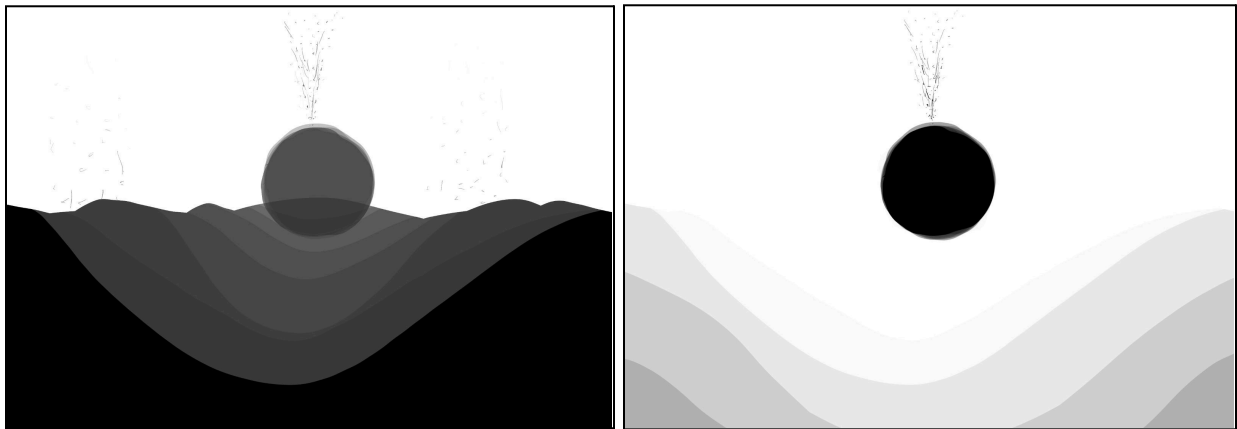
The crack acts as a metaphor for vulnerability and the first bold step toward transformation. It's raw, jarring, and marks a disruption in linear identity.



*Fig 9.2.5. - 9.2.6.: Crack triggers subtle tremors. Wall particles break off into dust, falling into the sand.*

The subconscious mind gathers broken memories and past experiences as little pieces fall away and land in a soft sand hole. The ground's instability and lack of definition reflect the initial bewilderment.

This instance represents self-scattering: attempting to establish oneself in a new setting while one's confidence begins to wane. It's a ground zero for emotions.

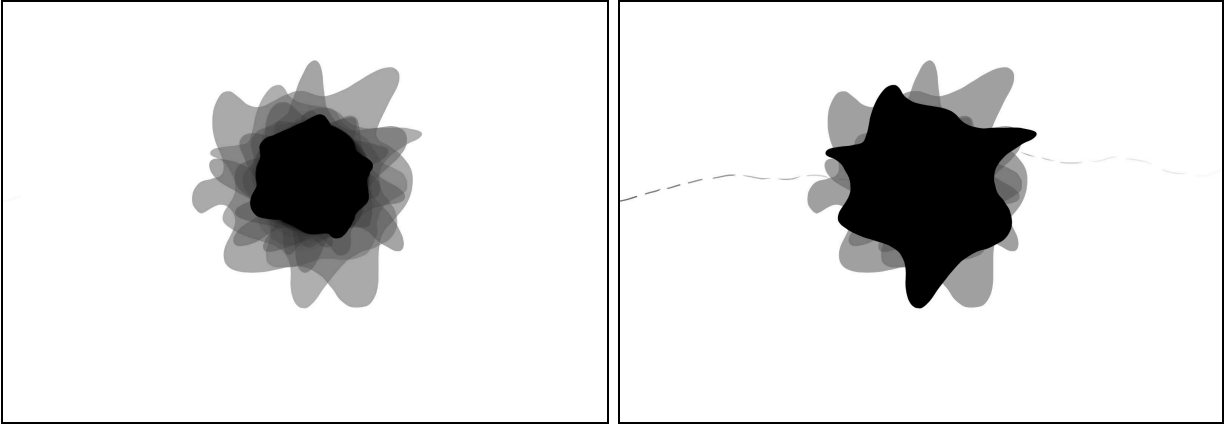


*Fig 9.2.7. - 9.2.8.: The falling dust collects and spirals into a ball of sand.*

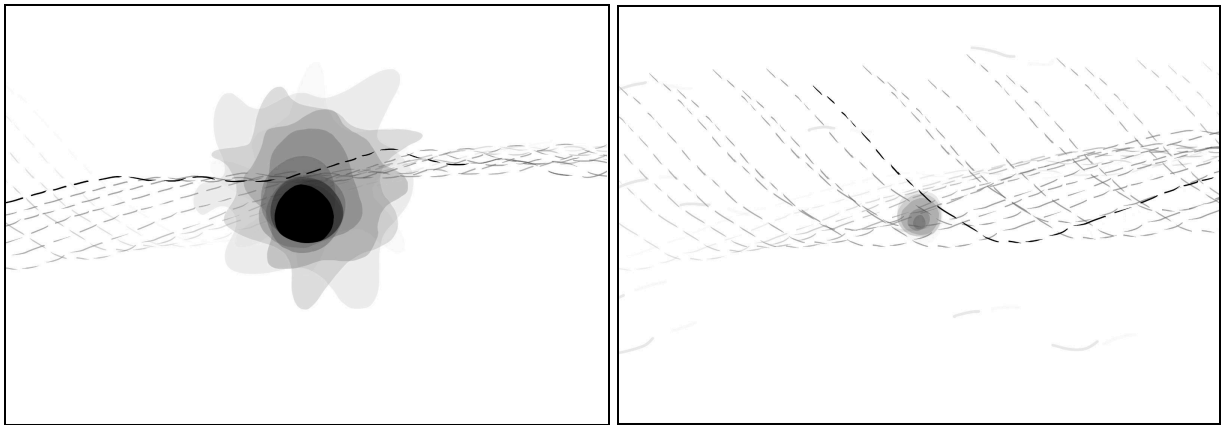
The sand compacts into a revolving ball before exploding into reactive, defensive, and unstable spikes. It represents feedback loops, internalised pressures, and insecurities.

The attempt to defend oneself when under pressure is visualised by this spiked structure. Overstimulation and the price of performance expectations are demonstrated by its fast spinning.





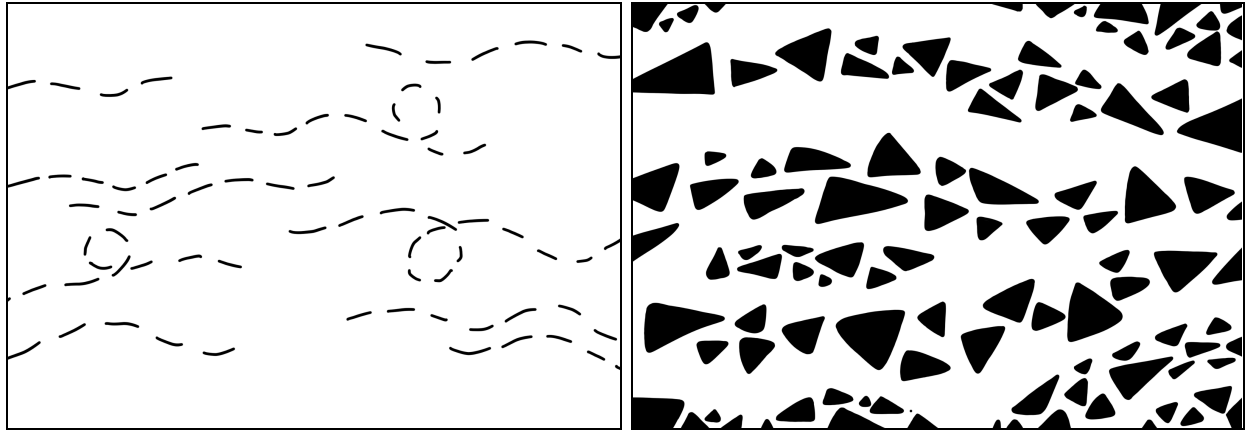
*Fig 9.2.9. - 9.2.10.: Sand-ball rotates, and jagged spikes protrude and retract.*



*Fig 9.2.11. - 9.2.12.: Thin flowing lines pass through. The sandball dissolves and blends into the wind.*

The sharp spherical object loses shape and transforms into light, ethereal lines that move like the wind. It demonstrates the loss of individual voice, the need to adapt, and the submission to the rhythm of the surroundings.

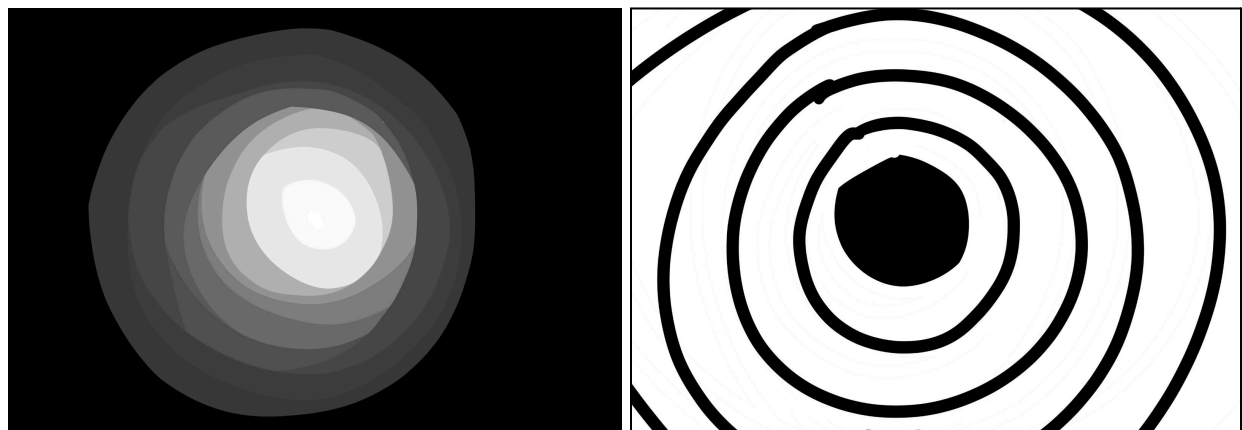
Not quite lost, not yet found, this is a transitional phase. To conform to external standards and currents, the identity momentarily disappears.



*Fig 9.2.13. - 9.2.14.: Zoom into wind lines — they're made of interconnected, moving triangles.*

Triangular geometries, whether small and huge, are layered and locked when you zoom into the flowing lines. It illustrates the intricacy of relationships, responsibilities, interdependence, and thinking.

It's the chaos that lies beneath the seeming simplicity. Here, a quiet but powerful world of networks, layers, unseen emotional labour, and changing skill sets emerges.



*Fig 9.2.15. - 9.2.16.: Black lines form concentric circles. A giant eye appears and blinks.*

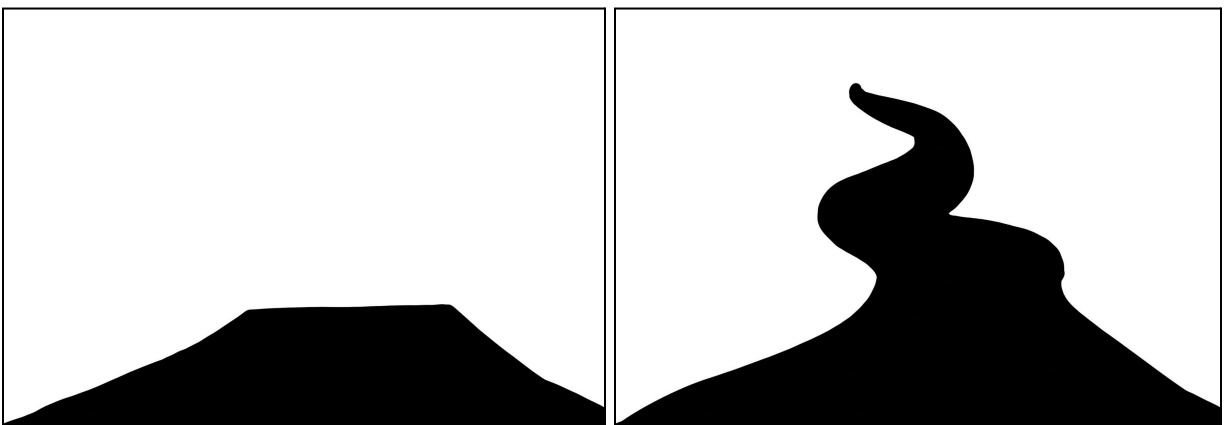


*Fig 9.2.17. - 9.2.18.: Darkness surrounds the eye, as it lingers like a silent observer.*

Through circles that grow and contract, a single big eye blinks into life. Now the viewer is being watched, or is being watched. The emptiness is not empty; it is reflecting.

This eye turns into a symbol for self-reflection, emotional intelligence, and self-assessment.

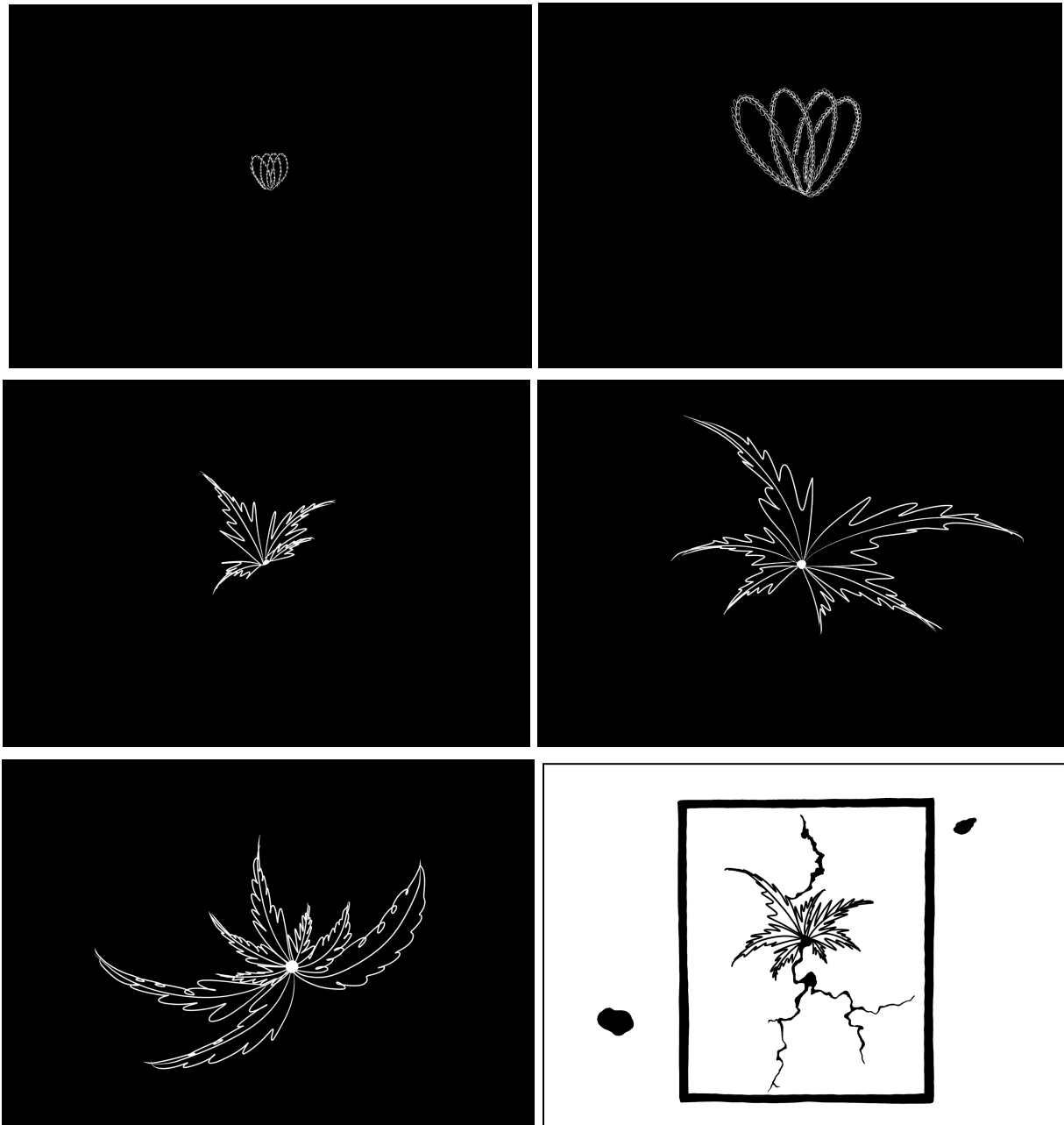
Perceiving beyond the material world is the journey's spiritual milestone.



*Fig 9.2.19. - 9.2.20.: A symbolic road appears, heading toward a destination but ends.*

A frame marks the conclusion of a simple road that continues for some distance. It demonstrates the process of accepting experimentation and rerouting in the face of uncertainty.

The road isn't straight; it's broken up into sections and stops in the middle. Despite its slowness and glitches, it is an honest representation of progress.



*Fig 9.2.21. - 9.2.26.: Return to the original crack, now framed — a flower blooms from within.*

Now framed, the same fracture opens up with a full-flowered flower of resurrection. This is a joyous occasion that signifies development, rebirth, and emotional maturity.

Over the flower, a gilded frame is positioned to honour the crack rather than conceal it. It is a picture of nonlinear beauty and radical self-acceptance.

## 5.3 ANIMATION PHASES

- **Surface**

A calm black screen — the silence before emergence. Represents the dormant stage, unaware of the transformation ahead.

Before the trip starts, this stage is a representation of the unaltered, uncontested self. It's the emotional pause that comes with starting a new chapter with unclear goals. It contains apprehension, expectation, and a blankness that symbolises both opportunity and a lack of focus. The self has not yet been tested and is inactive.

- **Crack**

A rupture breaks the stillness. The wall shakes, small fractures form — symbolizing the first realization, the entry into a new world (design school).

This is where the initial emotional breakdown takes place. It is the crucial point at when an internal identity transformation is compelled by the strain of novel experiences, self-doubt, or creative tension. Cracking represents a break from familiarity and the start of change, and it is both painful and important. The self starts to doubt its former form.

- **Unraveling**

Sand trickles into a pit. A ball forms and rotates — a metaphor for gathering past fragments, memories, and experiences that now reshape identity.

The internal structure starts to fall apart as soon as change is introduced. When prior identities, methods, or confidence feel shaky, this is the vulnerable stage. It is a time of turmoil, emotional outbursts, and self-doubt, and it is chaotic yet essential. Everything that used to feel solid now feels disorganised.

- **Interaction**

Wind-like lines guide the sand form. Shapes (triangles) emerge, interlocking and flowing — this reflects adapting, trying to blend, and learning from others.

External systems—peer relations, institutional expectations, and creative critique—meet the self at this stage. The person is shaped, influenced, and occasionally distorted by these encounters. The self finds it difficult to stay true to themselves while meeting social or academic expectations. Resistance and adaptation are at odds during this time.

- **Disruption**

Sudden spikes form; a disturbance shakes stability. The ball reforms, and visual dissonance shows confusion, failure, and emotional fatigue.

The inner world gets complex and dense at this point. Though they may be clumsy, patterns start to emerge in thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs. Though motion and plurality are present, clarity is still lacking. It is the period of personal development when you are neither who you were nor who you are becoming.

- **Evolution**

Amid the cycles, small hints of growth appear — a flower slowly emerges frame by frame at each phase end, symbolizing emotional resilience and development.

Here, progress isn't linear. Emotional setbacks alternate with epiphanies. We experience growth in spirals. It gains resilience by being vulnerable, much like the self dries and then re-energises emotionally. The highs and lows are equally honoured on this stage. It talks about being patient and letting go of one's own pace.

- **Reflection**

A blinking eye watches the transitions. Roads form and end — symbolizing self-observation and acknowledgment of growth.

Final shot: the crack is framed, flower in full bloom — a celebration of embracing complexity, mood shifts, and one's whole self.

The acknowledgement of what has surfaced from the fissures is the emotional climax of this last stage. The self becomes, not merely endures. The flower represents self-honoring as well as progress. It honours the flawed, changing process and the capacity to present it as something lovely and significant.

## 6. DESIGN & EXECUTION

The visual story was intended to be an abstract, symbolic trip that reflected the non-linear development of a creative person. The main objective was to portray change and emotion without depending on character-driven narrative. The design was centred on geometric patterns, sand, wind, cracks, and spikes, all of which were symbols for different stages of life and emotional states.

- **Visual Language:** The project eschewed literal depictions in favour of simple, highly contrasted forms, drawing inspiration from black-and-white animation styles, particularly Simon\_'s Black and White Party Visuals. The images convey change and disturbance through the use of motion, visual tension, and negative space rhythmically and symbolically.
- **Colour Scheme & Fashion:** Black and white, or monochrome, to conjure an unadulterated, unrefined emotional world.
- **Fluid Transitions:** The speed and emotional pacing are maintained through smooth cuts and flow-based transitions.
- **Textures:** The organic, sandy, and grainy textures add to the abstract images' tactile, realistic sense.



- **Procedure of Execution:**

Every visual component was created and animated frame-by-frame in Procreate, paying close attention to how each movement matched the rhythms of the music.

VN Editor was used for editing and sequencing, and effects like shake, zoom, and crossfades were employed to amplify tempo changes and emotional shifts.

To demonstrate growth without following a straight line, several animated elements (such as the flower) were replayed in various states throughout the phases.

- **Syncing to Music:** The animation's tempo was determined by the song "Toot! Toot!" by Spectre Folk. To create a sense of rhythm and emotional acceleration, key beat shifts matched visual transitions, such as the spike emergence, eye blink, or frame revelation.
- **Limitations & Creative Decisions:** Using Procreate and VN required a clear, targeted execution. The animation's philosophical depth, delicate growth, and poignant symbolism are its strongest points rather than its complexity.

## 7. ANIMATION TECHNIQUES

- **Frame-by-Frame Animation**

Frame-by-frame animation is a traditional technique where each frame is drawn individually, allowing for highly detailed and expressive movement. This method gives animators complete control over every nuance, resulting in natural, organic motion that captures subtle emotions and imperfections. The advantages of frame-by-frame animation include its ability to convey authenticity and personal style, create unique and fluid transitions, and evoke emotional sincerity. Because every frame is crafted by hand, the animation feels more alive and relatable, making it especially effective for projects that prioritize artistic expression and emotional resonance.[6]

- **Looping Motions**

Looping animation is a technique where a sequence is designed so that the first and last frames are identical, creating a seamless, continuous motion when played repeatedly. This approach is commonly used to represent ongoing cycles, such as spinning objects, flowing water, or rhythmic actions. The main advantages of looping animation include visual efficiency, as it allows for longer animations with less effort, and the ability to reinforce repetitive themes or moods. Seamless loops are visually satisfying and can effectively convey the idea of persistence, continuity, or infinite processes within a narrative or abstract context.

- **Match Cuts and Morph Transitions**

Match cuts and morph transitions are animation techniques that create smooth, visually coherent links between different scenes or elements. By aligning similar shapes, colors, or movements, match cuts allow for seamless shifts from one part to another, while morph transitions gradually transform one shape into another. For example, transitions between sand and spikes or from a circle to wind lines can be achieved using these methods. The main advantages include enabling smooth progression and maintaining symbolic continuity between phases. These techniques help guide the viewer's attention, reinforce thematic connections, and make the animation feel cohesive and fluid.[7]

- **Beat-Sync Editing**

Beat-sync animation involves timing visual cuts and effects precisely to the rhythm, beat changes, and tempo variations of a musical track. In this approach, tools like VN Editor were used to align animation elements with the beats of Spectre Folk's "Toot! Toot!" For example, zooms, shake effects, and speed-ups were triggered in sync with musical changes to maintain dynamic energy. The main advantages of beat-sync animation are its ability to enhance viewer engagement, create a strong audiovisual connection, and amplify the emotional impact of both the music and visuals, resulting in a more immersive and rhythmic experience.[8]

- **Visual Contrast and Negative Space**

Visual contrast and negative space are powerful techniques in animation that focus on the interplay of light and dark, and the use of empty areas to convey meaning. High contrast

black-and-white images were used to highlight time, texture, and shapes rather than intricate details, drawing the viewer's attention to essential forms and movements. Negative space was deliberately employed to express emotional voids, contemplation, and spaciousness, allowing moments of pause and reflection within the animation. These techniques enhance visual clarity, evoke mood, and provide a sense of depth, making the animation more impactful and emotionally resonant.[9]

- **Symbolic Progression**

Symbolic progression in animation uses evolving abstract symbols to represent ideas and emotions, rather than depicting a story literally. Using this approach, in my animation, elements like cracks, sand, wind, geometric patterns, and a flower serve as changing metaphors throughout the animation. This technique shifts the focus from straightforward explanation to open-ended interpretation, inviting viewers to find personal meaning in the visuals. The main reason for using symbolic progression is its ability to evoke deeper emotional resonance, encourage audience engagement, and add layers of meaning. By prioritizing metaphor over narrative, the animation becomes more thought-provoking and universally relatable.[10]

- **Layered Movement**

Layered movement in animation involves the subtle overlapping and independent motion of different elements within a scene. To replicate complexity and tension-much like negotiating chaos in real this technique employs overlapping parts, such as wind lines crossing circles or spikes sticking out mid-rotation. The effect creates a sense of depth,

dynamism, and realism, as multiple actions occur simultaneously. Layered movement enhances visual interest and can convey the intricacy of emotions or situations. Its main advantages are adding richness and texture to the animation, making scenes feel more alive, and effectively illustrating the multifaceted nature of real-world experiences.[11]

## 8. CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS

Creating a non-linear, characterless story that still holds personal significance was one of the most demanding aspects of this project. Without a central character or clear plot, I had to rely entirely on abstract visual elements- cracks, sand, wind- to represent shifting emotional phases. This required careful consideration of symbolism and layering, ensuring each motif carried enough emotional weight to guide the viewer through an unconventional narrative. Maintaining coherence in this format was challenging, as there were no traditional story anchors. Instead, I used recurring visual motifs and subtle transitions to provide a sense of unity and progression.

Another significant challenge was aligning the animation with the unpredictable structure of Spectre Folk's "Toot! Toot!" The song's erratic tempo and experimental sound made it difficult to time visual transitions in a way that felt both natural and emotionally resonant. I needed to break down the music into its beats and tempo changes, then meticulously synchronize visual effects-like zooms, shakes, and speed-ups-to these musical cues. This process deepened my understanding of how sound and motion can work together to heighten emotion and create a more immersive experience.

A further difficulty was representing internal change through visual metaphors without becoming too obvious or too obscure. Striking the right balance required ongoing refinement, as I wanted

viewers to interpret the visuals personally rather than being led to a single conclusion. Through this, I learned to embrace ambiguity and trust the audience's ability to find meaning in abstract expression.

Ultimately, this project taught me the power of abstract narrative and the importance of sound in animation. I learned to appreciate the subtle relationship between motion, form, and tempo, and discovered how each frame can hold unique significance within a broader emotional journey.

## 9. FINAL OUTPUT



**ANIMATION LINK:** [📺 Animation\\_Through the crack](#)

## 10. CONCLUSION

Through abstract animation, this project became a personal exploration of growth, ambiguity, and emotional transformation. By blending non-linear visual storytelling with the unpredictable rhythm of Spectre Folk's "Toot! Toot!", I was able to depict a complex emotional journey without the need for characters or dialogue. This approach challenged me to find new ways of expressing change and development using only shapes, textures, and movement, relying on the viewer's interpretation rather than explicit narrative cues.

The process deepened my appreciation for the storytelling power of metaphor and rhythm. I discovered how recurring abstract symbols-such as cracks, sand, and wind-could represent different phases of emotion and personal evolution. The deliberate use of minimalism and negative space allowed me to highlight moments of emptiness, contemplation, and transition, proving that sometimes what is left unsaid or unseen can be just as powerful as what is shown.

Working with the non-linear structure of the animation, especially in sync with the erratic tempo of the music, taught me how important timing and pacing are to emotional resonance. Matching visual transitions to musical shifts required careful attention and experimentation, ultimately revealing how sound and motion can work together to create a more immersive and affecting experience.

Most importantly, this project taught me to embrace ambiguity in visual storytelling. By letting go of the need for literal explanation, I learned to trust that each viewer would find their own meaning and emotional connection within the abstract forms. This experience reinforced my belief in the potency of design as a language-one that can communicate complex feelings and ideas even when words fall short. In the end, the project became not only a creative challenge but also a valuable lesson in the expressive possibilities of abstract animation.

## 11. BOARD DISPLAY

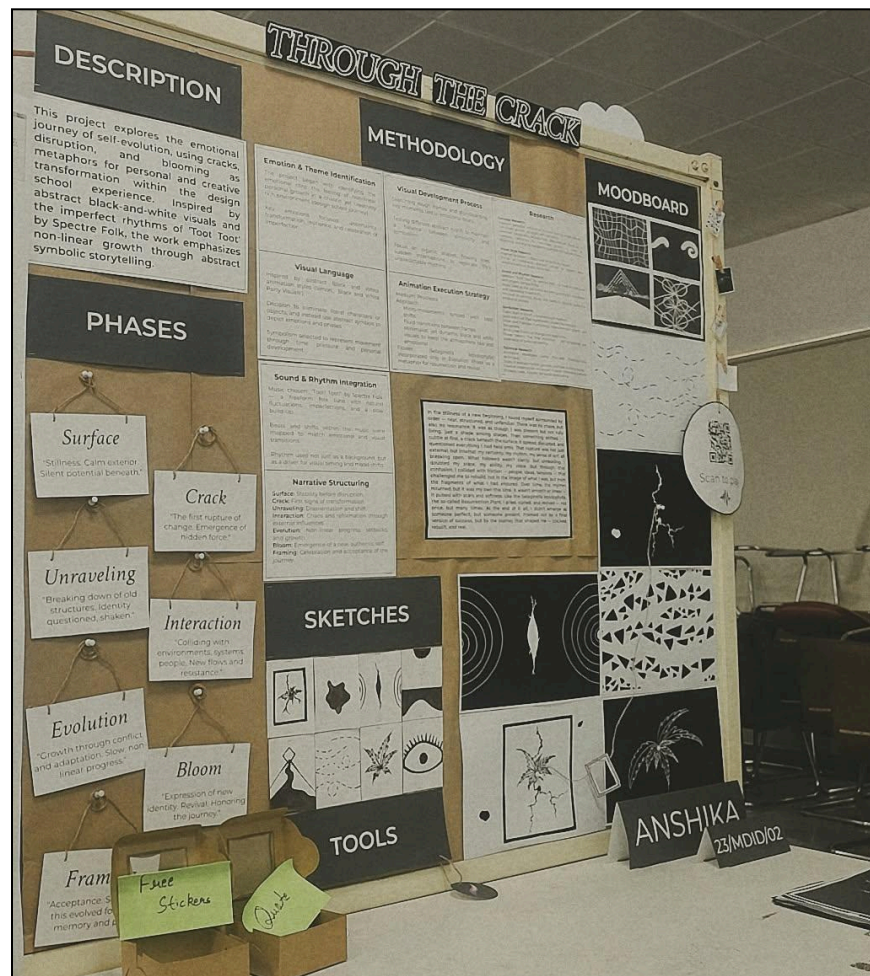


Fig. 11: Board Display

This 4 x 4 foot board depicts the path of my animation "Crack," using layered storytelling and symbolic graphics to capture the stages of creative and emotional growth. With essential stills, symbolic iconography, and brief subtitles, each section—Surface, Crack, Unravelling, Interaction, Transition, Evolution, Integration, and Bloom—represents a phase.

The story is anchored by the main image, a framed crack with a flower in blossom. Engagement is increased with interactive components such as pull-out quotes, flip cards, and thread



connections surrounding it. The technical and conceptual complexity is demonstrated by the tool screenshots, mood board, and music beat map.

The board, which keeps its black-and-white look, uses music and metaphor to take viewers on a nonlinear, personal journey of development.

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## 13. APPENDICES

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