OUT OF YOUR HEAD | Dariga Alpyssova d.alpyssova0420211@arts.ac.uk

Out of head project allowed us to create short 20 seconds animation film in groups of 2-3 people. We were inspired mostly by words: demand, linger, ask, pity, shadow from word cloud. Zoe (Yunxin Zou) was storyboarder, line artist and animatic creator of our film. She proposed idea to us, that we immediately connected with. Main character of the story is a girl that firstly is presented to viewers in the form of her true self. Due to not being able to follow society, struggling with her identity, she keeps constantly fighting in her mind, trying to cope with norms that she feels a need to follow. Film shows character's shadows, that symbolize her opinions and different parts of herself, telling to obey, or rebel, push true emotions to surface or burry them under a forced smile. At the end we see her shutting her face, literal embodiment of distancing from reality, and presenting in different form, saying "Hello" to the viewer. Throughout the entire video, the audio is reversed, with mummering coming from her "shadows". The common greeting at the end is actually "Elloh" but played backwards, thus allowing us to see her mask, which she created for society. She is forcing herself to be normal for everyone. All members of our group contributed to the idea and supported it variously, since all of us felt close with the problem. The image depicts self-judgment, feeling insecure and nervous about not keeping up with other people or not following traditional rules. Wendy (Yidong Bao) created character design as well as background, and edited video. Background appears to be abstracted, non-realistic and overwhelming, showing struggles within. At first, it is colourful, but in the end, it becomes black and white, symbolizing loss of true colours and what made it unique, beautiful. Character's internal conflict is again portrayed in an allegory. As character shuts as flower, everything around becomes white and black, creating contrast between her inner self and how she presents herself to outside world. We used primarily Toon Boom for animation, Procreate for background, After Effects for editing and Premiere Pro for sound design. I was responsible for colouring and sound design. I recorded my speech and reversed it, not forgetting to record word "hello" but saying it reversed, so it will sound as if it is correct. Then, I experimented with different sound to make audio heavier, more emotional. Zoe, Wendy and me recorder mummering to be put on the background, as well as I created various water splash sounds using bowl of water to give each action volume. Rustling plastic packaging with reverb effect was added too. I Using GarageBand, I created a short piano improvisation to be played in the background of all sounds. It provided video musicality and most members of the group agreed to add some self-made music. Audio reflected fight in character's mind, while becoming completely non-existent by the end of animation, as character closes all their thoughts from others. For colouring I used mostly warm, sometimes dull colours that complemented cold background, but stood up against it. A gradient effect was employed to make it more colourful. To make everything very chaotic, we wanted our project to continually contrast between vibrant, cold colours and black and white. The main goal was to convey the main character's struggle while keeping the animation vague enough for viewers to return to the video for further hints and interpretations. During production, we encountered a variety of issues, such as background movement and minor issues that each group member encountered while working on their part of the project. When lines weren't closed, the colouring process was problematic in some areas. Toon Boom saw them as open even though they were visually closed, thus I spent the majority of my time with the closing lines tool. Because background and colour stages were done at the same time, we changed colour pallet multiple times. But, despite minor issues, we held regular meetings with group members to solve them, and worked together, while constantly communicating with each other whenever someone had a question or to just keep track of the project's progress. Overall, Out of Head project became helpful experience that gave us opportunity to work in groups with more experience and knowledge behind us, that we received through rotations. This experience offered us a decent idea of what it's like to work in a team environment and helped us strengthen our communication skills in preparation for future projects.

https://darigaalpyssova.myblog.arts.ac.uk/2022/01/23/out-of-head/ https://youtu.be/FEt2uZuYTQQ