Visual Narrative Unit
Living Voices

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Moodboard, Research and Palette

Simple backgrounds paired with thicker line art on characters with fluid limbs and movements

Light texture shown on the figures

Heavy focus on shape when adding simple tone paired with flat colour

Colour palette focussing mostly on various tones of: pink, blue, yellow and brown

Flat colour vs texture

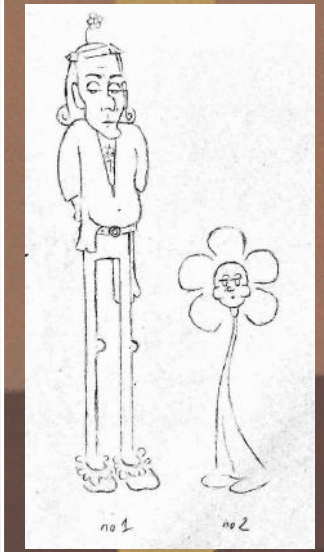
High contrast between highlights and shadows

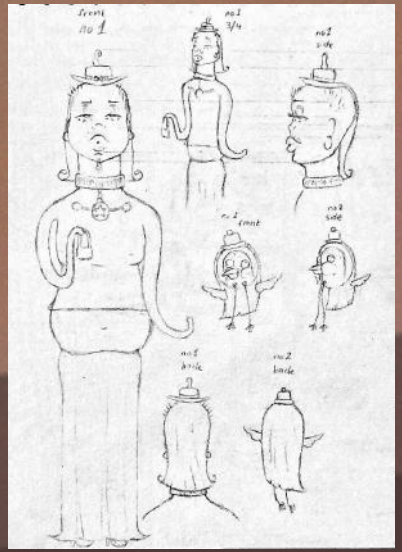
Clown-esque feel

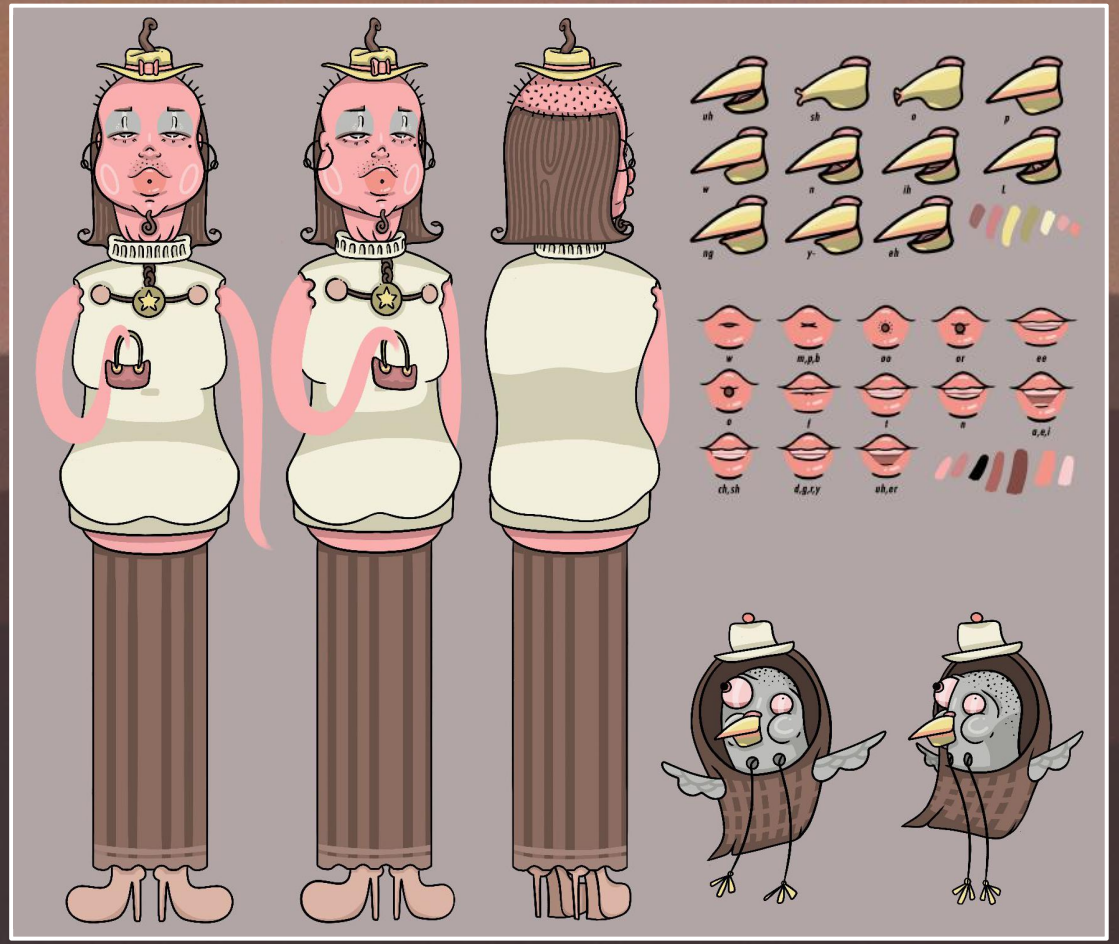
Original Palette

Updated Palette

Original Character Designs VS Finished Turnarounds and Mouth Sheets



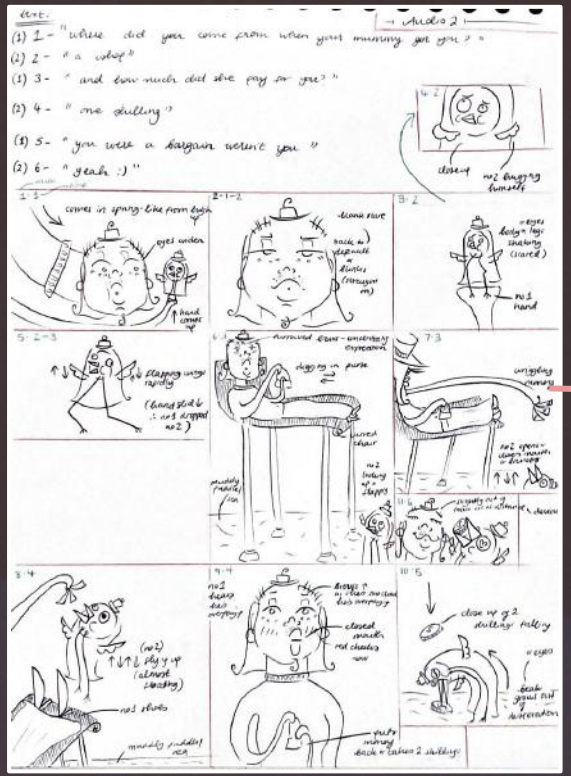




Transcript & Phonetic Version for Mouth Sheet:

Character 1: Where did you come from when your mummy got you?
Character 1: W-E D-I-D Y-OO C-UH-M F-R-O-M W-E-N Y-O-R M-UH-M-EE G-O-T Y-OO
Character 2: From a shop
Character 2: F-R-O-M A SH-O-P
Character 1: And how much did she pay for you?
Character 1: A-N-D H-AH-W M-U-CH D-I-D SH-EE P-E-Y F-O-R Y-OO
Character 2: One shilling
Character 2: W-U-N SH-I-L-I-NG
Character 1: You were a bargain weren't you
Character 1: Y-OO W-UR A B-A-R-G-I-N W-UR-N-T Y-A
Character 2: Yeah
Character 2: Y-E

Storyboarding Process



Backgrounds

Screenshots from Animatic

Backgrounds drawn for those scenes

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2&3

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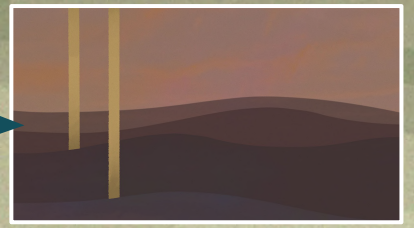
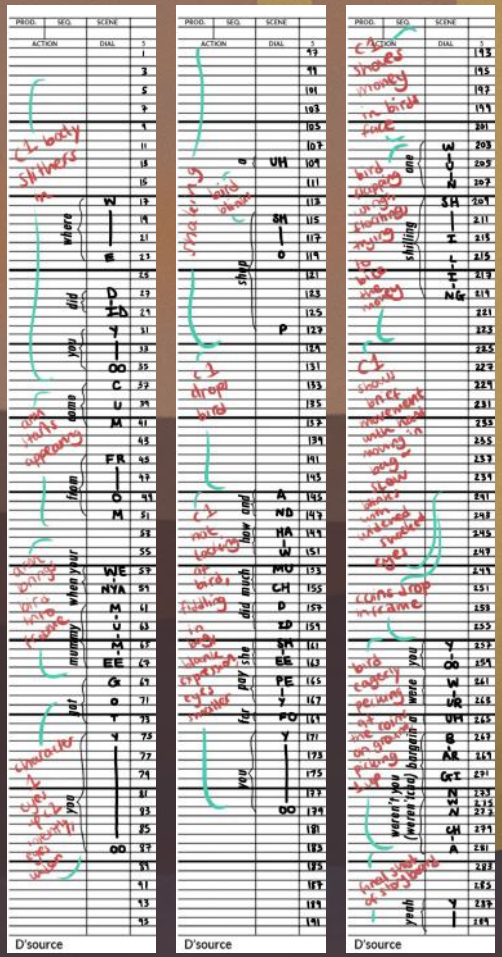
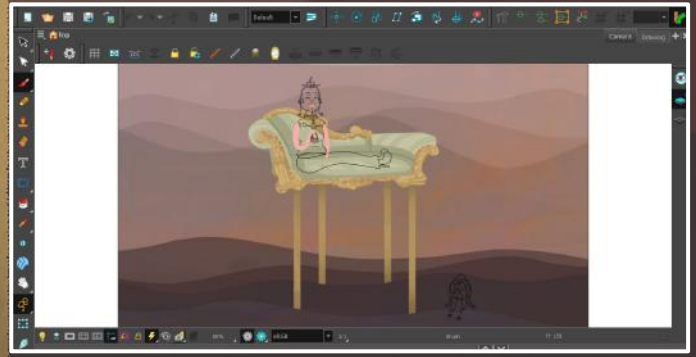


X-Sheets and Keyframes



Within the keyframes, I tried using arcs in order to achieve a more natural result when the character moved



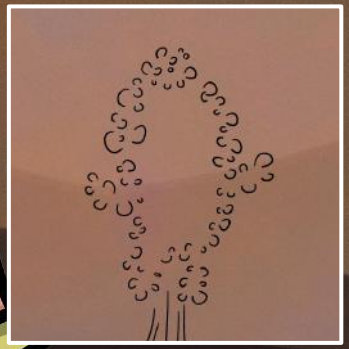
In certain scenes, when making the keyframes, I included the backgrounds so that the characters were positioned in the right places. This also helped me gain a better understanding of the scenes' composition.

Inbetweening

Timing Charts

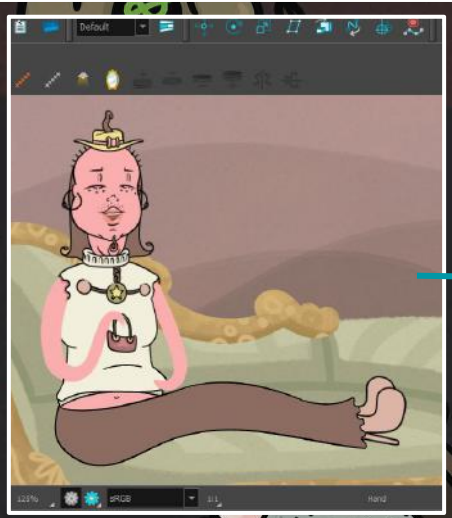
In order to try and plan out the various movements within the scenes, i tried using Timing Charts, even though I found them quite confusing.

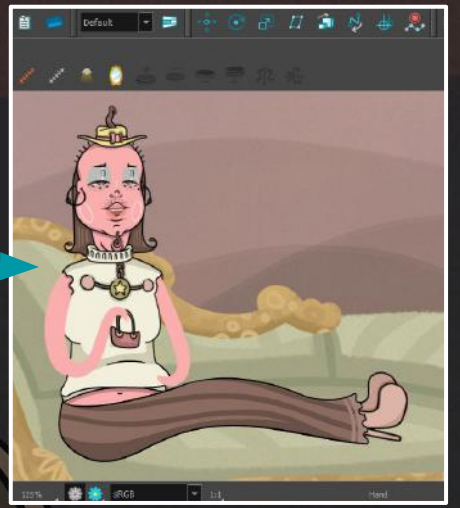
Limb Smear Frames & Motion Lines

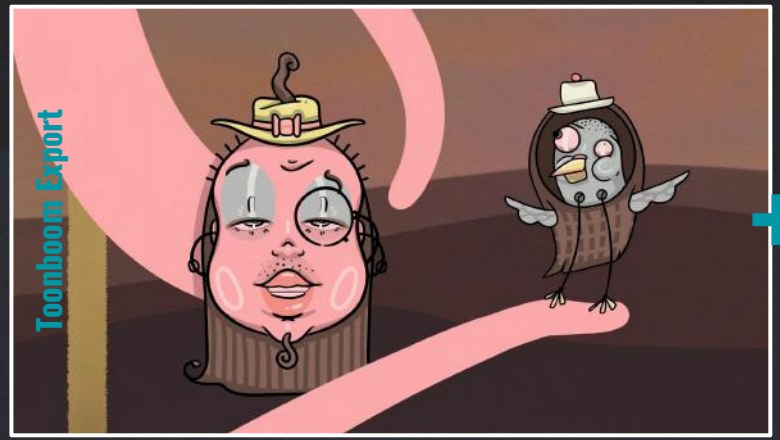


Squash and Stretch to Convey Speed

Colour and Toning







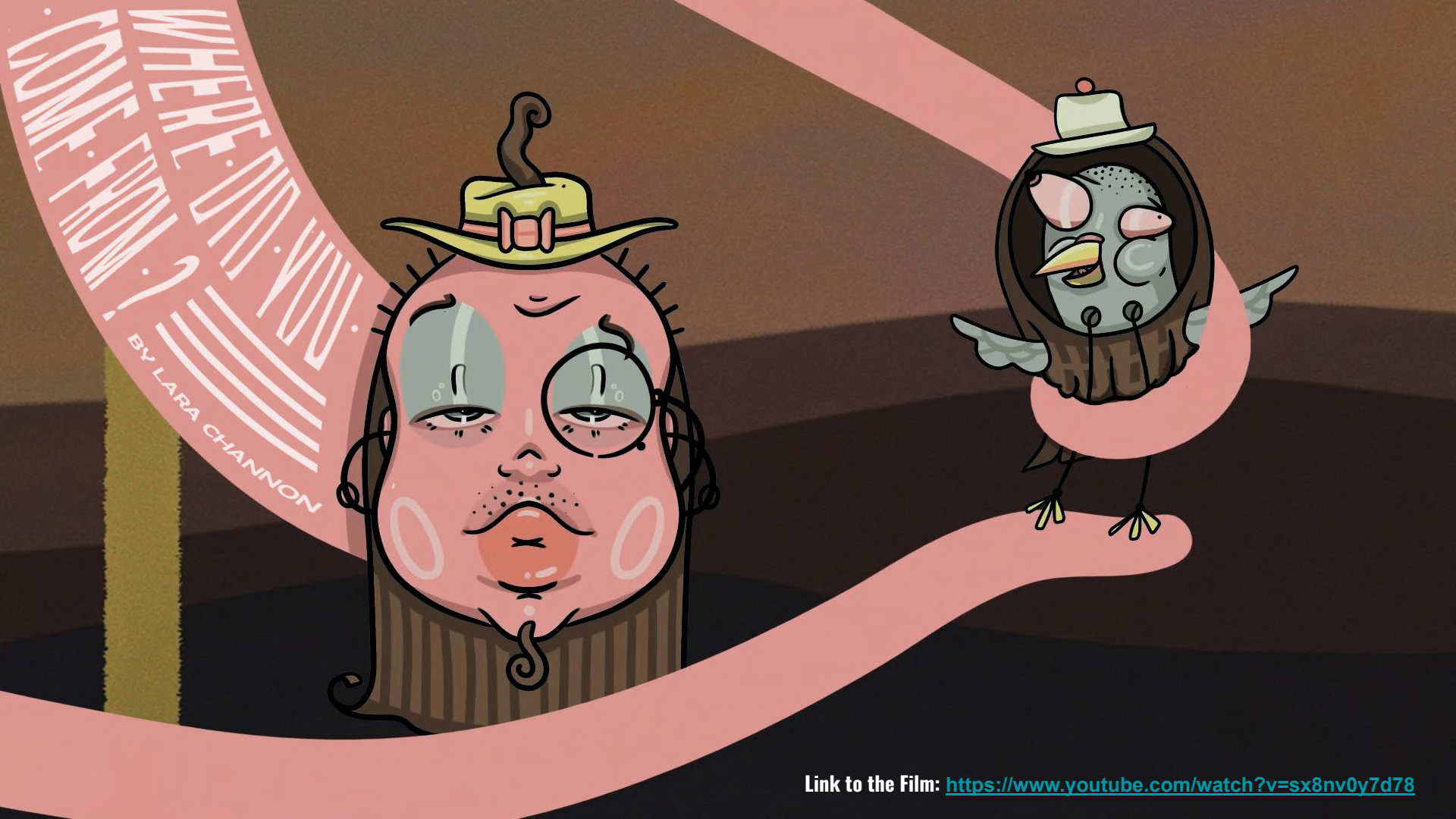
+

10% Subtract

+

10% Difference

=



Link to the Film: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx8nv0y7d78

Reflection

Initially, when listening to this audio, I noticed there was a dramatic power dynamic between the two characters, where one spoke in a slightly condescending tone. This inspired me to play on the idea of combining an egocentric and vain character with a naive and impressionable character. Within this film, I decided to present a narrative where an overly wealthy yet stingy character sitting up above in the clouds, decides to buy a little bird from the dirty sea below for the minimum amount he can get away with, as within the audio it's implied the second character was bought, like a product.

After experimenting with various character designs, I decided that in order to capture the power imbalance between the two, the dominant character could appear larger than the scared character. As the childlike voice within the audio seems to be looking up to the deeper voice I thought the little bird could be someone who tries to imitate the wealthier character. This was inspired by the reality that wealthy people create this illusion that if less well-off people buy certain products such as designer, they too can be a part of the rich lifestyle, causing the rich to become richer, whilst the poor simply *think* they are too. In order to show this, within the characters, I used the same colour palettes consisting of heavy emphasis on cool brown and pink shades, with slight accents of pale blue and yellow. As well as this, in order to show their false similarity, both characters wear wigs and hats, differing in quality and detail. Due to the two characters being from very different worlds, wealth wise, I chose to draw their features in quite different styles, where character 1, for example, has very thin and sleek eyes similar to the effect many get from plastic surgery whilst the bird had round 'derpy' eyes. This style choice is to show how those classes appear within the lens of the wealthy, where they think their plastic features are the epitome of beauty as they look down on other classes, seeing them as lower value and less desirable physically just because they are less privileged. Despite this decision, I chose to keep the thick black outline, to maintain cohesion

In order for there to be an obvious contrast between the characters and their surroundings, I didn't include harsh lines in the backgrounds and kept the colours within the light to medium tonal variety; light at the top where the wealthy character lives and darker towards the muddy sea. For texture, I chose to add a combination of noise and a photograph I took of a sunset at a low opacity.

When storyboarding, I found I had to change my ideas quite a few times as I was overestimating the amount of shots that I could use within a 15 second scene. In order to decrease the amount of unnecessary cuts, I created multiple animatics. As, generally, I was used to working in a straight ahead format rather than pose to pose, I found key-framing quite difficult. Through focussing on the key actions, it made me pay greater attention to how the timing would work against the audio. Even though I had removed many cuts from my initial storyboard draft, I still wanted the visuals to be quite fast-paced. This influenced my character design choice where I chose for the wealthy character to have very fluid, unrealistic arms that moved quickly and chaotically. When I reached the inbetweening and colour stages, I found it quite straight forward. However, lip syncing was relatively challenging, especially creating the mouth sheets for the bird as it was quite hard to find references for birds saying certain letters. Despite X Sheets helping plan the timing of the mouth movements, sometimes too many sounds were made in a short time, making it difficult to choose a mouth shape that would encapsulate that part of the speech accurately.

Overall, I'm quite happy with the result as I like the narrative as well as the characters and backgrounds. However, if I were to do this again, I would probably add a larger variety of mouth shapes and inbetweens on those layers, and maybe get rid of one or two of the cuts as it can appear a little confusing. In addition to this, as there are scenes where the bird is splashing in the water, possibly adding some extra background sounds could make viewers feel more present in the scene.

Visual Narrative Unit

Retro Device

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06.06.22

Research Mind Map

Summary: 1

For this project, I've decided to sculpt a washing machine inspired by the technology and style of Ancient Greece. Initially, I began researching what technology there was available at the time, leading me to the Perachora Wheel. After looking at how it works, I thought it could work as a base to put objects to be washed. Once I found out the Greeks only used water to wash their clothes, I thought this could work well as a clothing rack, for clothes to be washed. This then led me to start looking at the style of architecture the Greeks had. There was quite a range of styles around at the time, depending on the material and status of the object/building. However, there was also quite a consistency within what was made at the time, as patterns were frequently used. This inspired me to start looking into how I could incorporate them into my structure. Following on from this, I began looking at what materials were around at the time, so that I was aware what textures and colours would be most prominent. After this, I began brainstorming ideas of what the washing machine could look like. As the wheel was quite simple, I began developing the idea to be a public washing machine, within a larger structure within a greater developed landscape. In order to wash the clothes, the robes would be placed onto each rack in the wheel, while the water moves the wheel to keep spinning and washes the clothes, through a number of cycles.

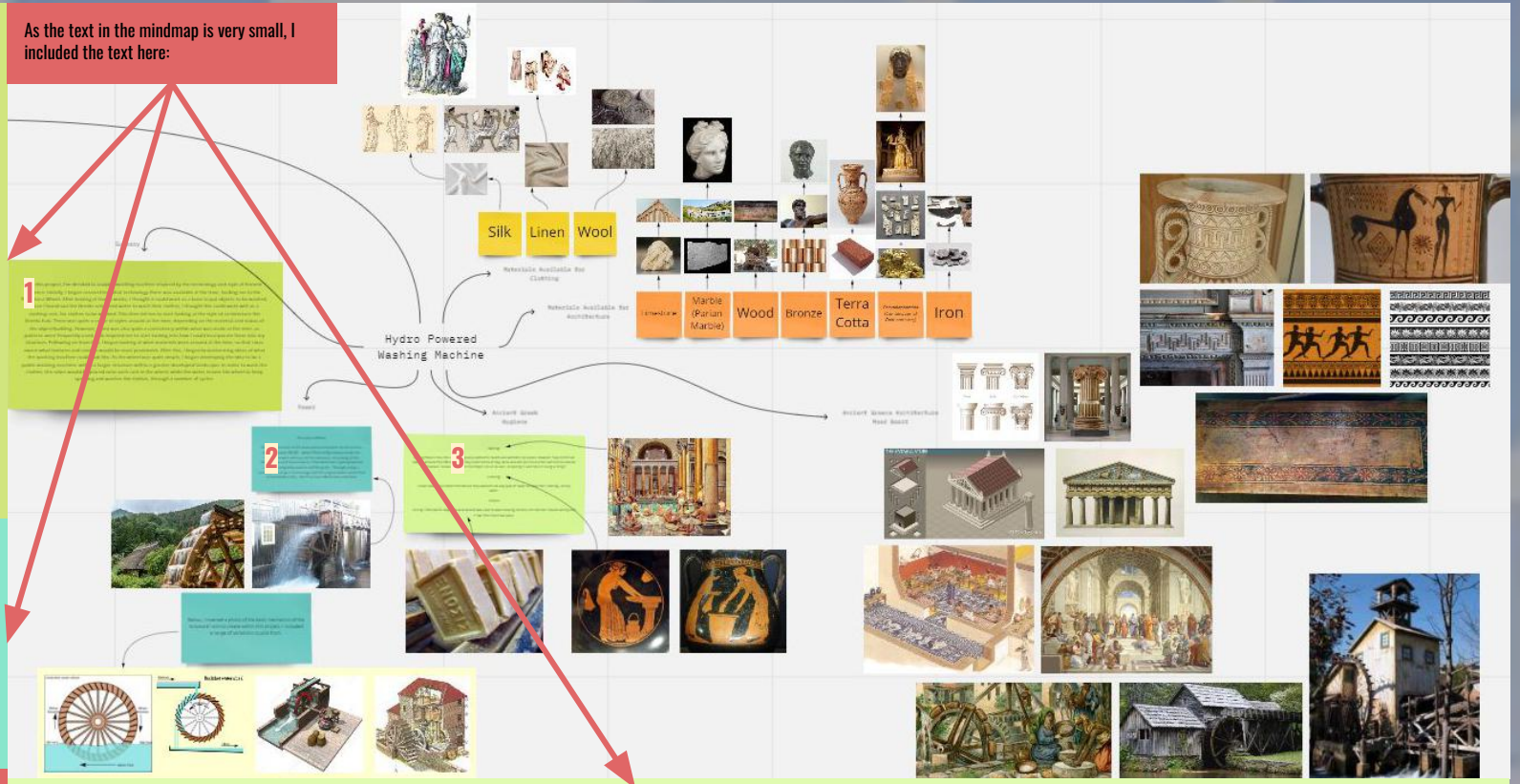
The Perachora Wheel: 2

The first invention of the watermill started with the Perachora wheel, around 300 BC - where Philo of Byzantium made the earliest known reference of its existence, consisting of the Pneumatica and Parasceustica. This wheel was hydropowered and was originally used to mill the grain. Through using a combination of gear technology and the original water wheel that existed before this, the Perachora Wheel was invented.

Link to Mindmap:

https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOML910w=/

As the text in the mindmap is very small, I included the text here:



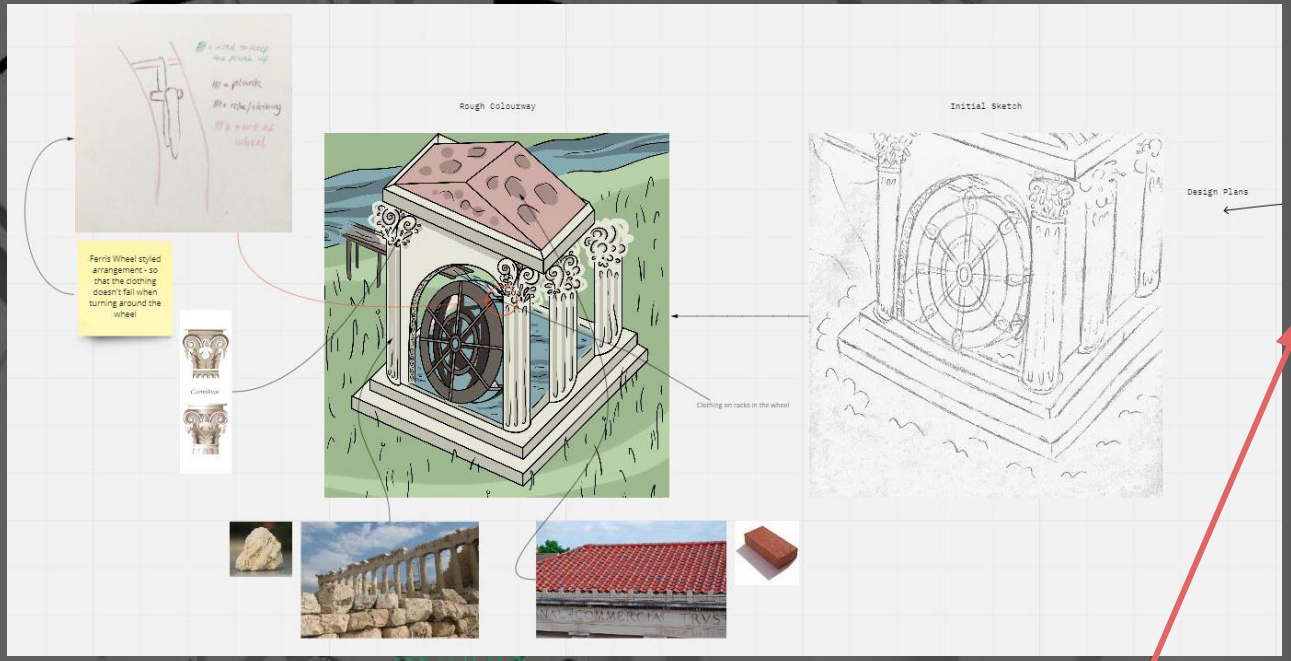
Hygiene: 3

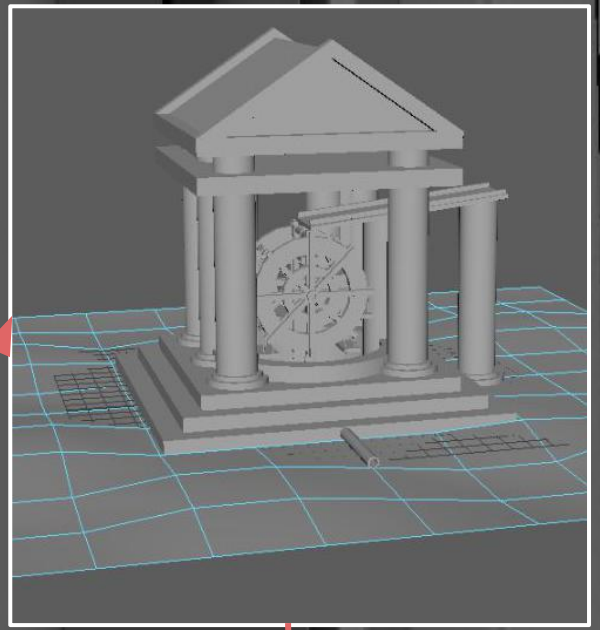
Bathing- During these times, the Greeks regularly bathed for health and aesthetic purposes. However, they didn't use soap to achieve this effect. Instead they used blocks of clay, sand, ash and purrice on their wet skin to cleanse themselves. Following on from this, they'd rub oil all over, scapping it and the dirt using a "strigil"

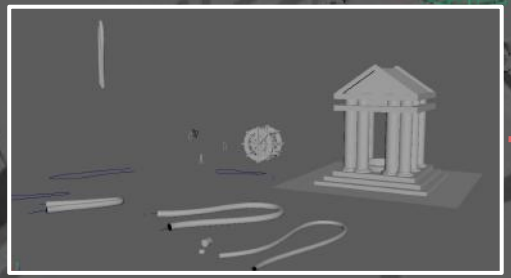
Clothing- Unlike how they'd bathe themselves, they wouldn't use any type of 'soap' to clean their clothing - purely water

Dishes- During 1200-200 BC, soap was around and was used to wash cooking utensils but not their bodies as they felt it had very little medicinal value.

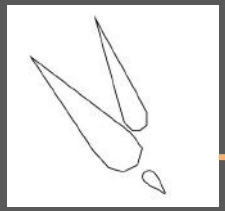
Design & Blocking

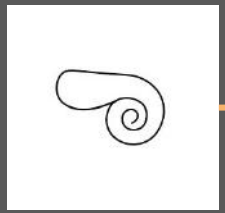


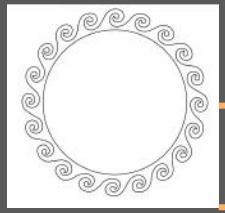


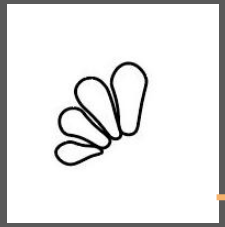


Details

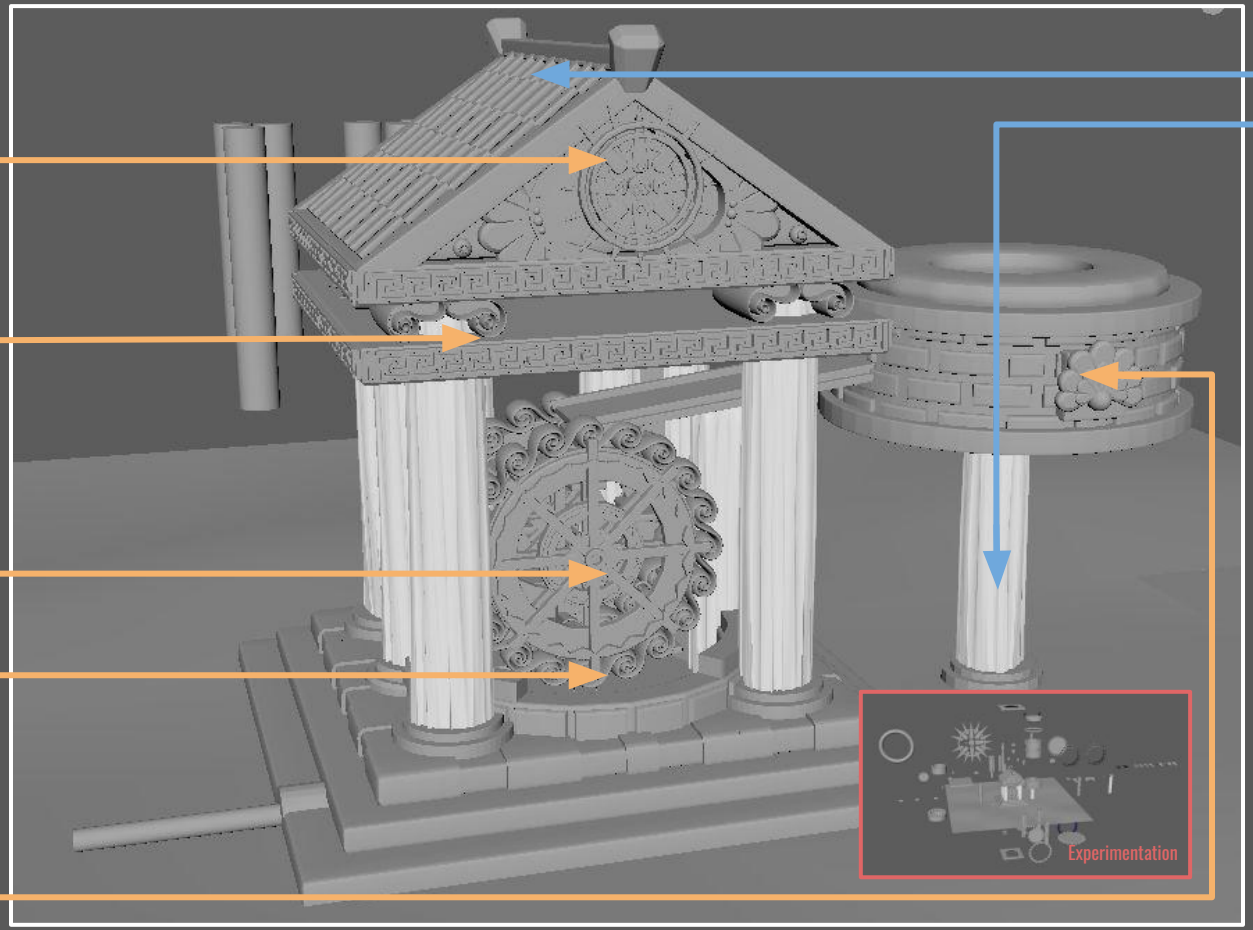




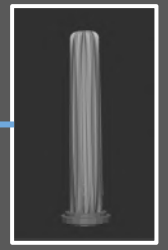


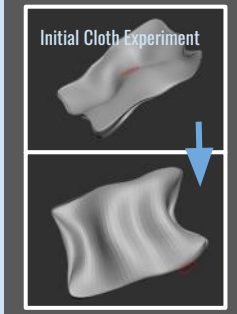


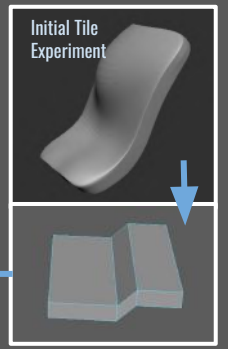
Adobe Illustrator Files



ZBrush Files

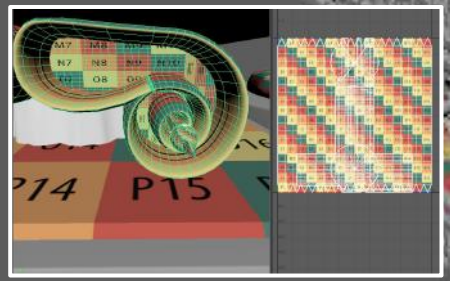


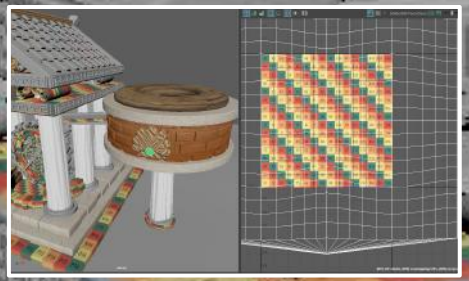


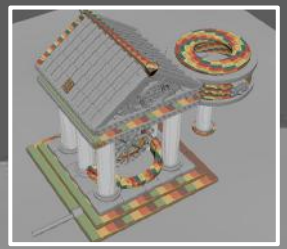


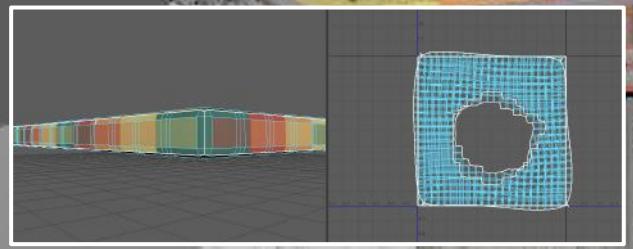
UV Unwrapping

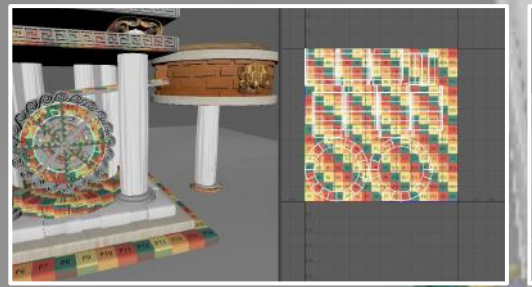
Progress Photos - Failed and Successful Screenshots

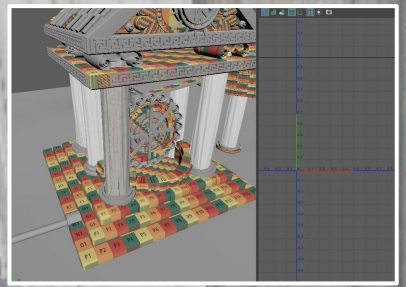






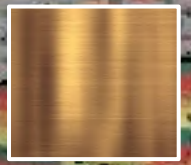


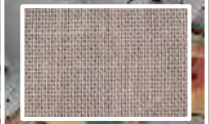




Progress Photos - Testing out Example Textures:

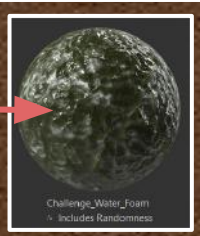
- In order to see how the UVs show the texture
- To Plan out what materials I may use in Substance Painter

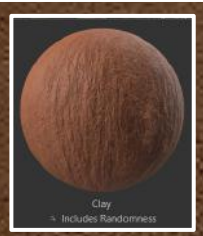




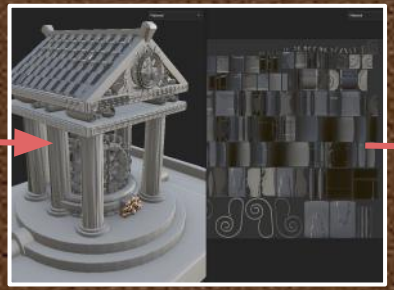
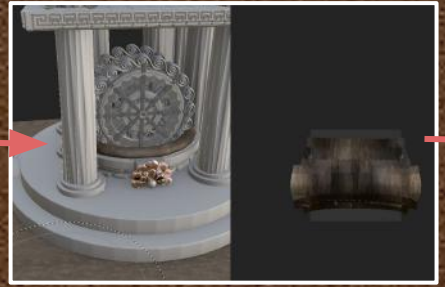
Texturing

Textures used in Substance Painter





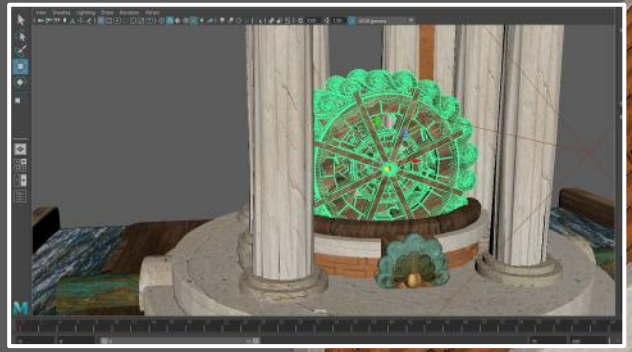
Progress Photos - Compilation of Fails and Successes

Maya Planned Textures VS Substance Painter Result

Rigging, Animating and Rendering Stage

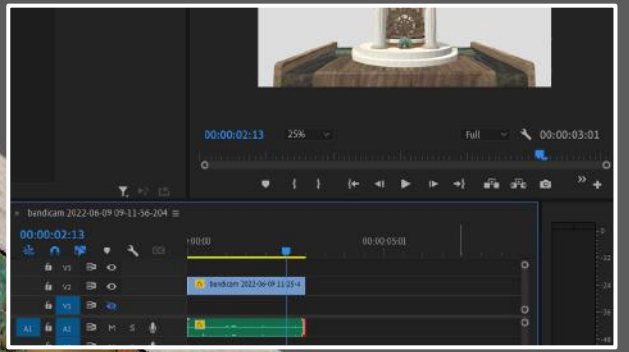
Progress Screenshot of Animation



Link to Tester Maya Animation

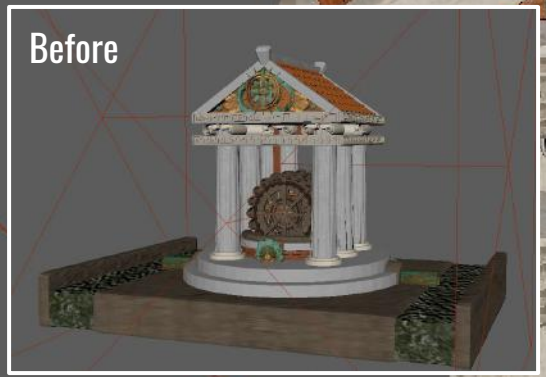
Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-Vx-zVC6bU

Progress Screenshot of adding Sound

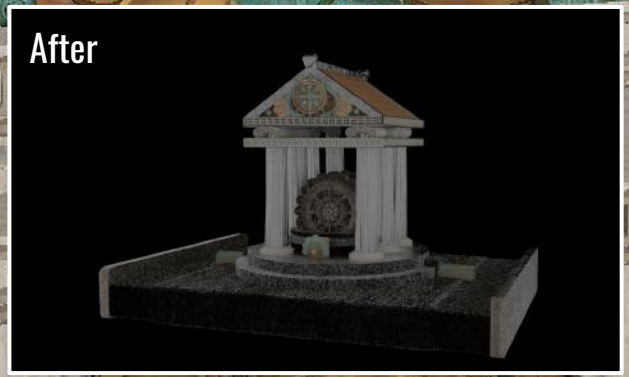


Maya initial Still Renders, using a combination of experimental textures and textures imported from Adobe 3D Substance Painter

Before



After



After - Zoomed

2 Paragraph Creative Writing Piece based on Device - Specified in Brief

It was a regular day in our hectic household. Whilst the husband was able to escape by milling the grain, I had some non co-operative children to handle. I stood by the amphora with the pile of family washing I, of course, had to do. It was a long and strenuous task which I dreaded - but it had to be done. I hitched up my skirt and began putting my hair in my cap. That's when it happened.
"What have you done?! I told you to stop messing around!" I screamed at the children.
It was in pieces. Our amphora lay on the floor across the room. Dragging the culprit by the ear I marched outside.
"Go then!" I instructed my child, "You're old enough to go the river! Go and clean this mess!", I yelled, throwing the pile of clothes at her. I thought it was about time she learns her lesson on messing around and starts taking some responsibility, so I ordered her to the river where I used to do our laundry. She'd find out soon enough why I stopped - it was a very long walk away. The amount of sandals I had worn through because of that journey was unbelievable; it's finally her turn.

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As the day came to a close, I finished the majority of my tasks. However, my daughter was nowhere to be seen.
"She must have got lost on her way to the river", I thought, concerned.
Scrambling my way through the village, I passed where my husband worked. I took a quick glance and noticed something was off. Squinting, I inched my way towards the wheel.
"My robes?"
I stood there in confusion, when my husband suddenly came out of the hut beside our now hanging laundry.
"Isn't our little girl resourceful," He smiled.
I gazed, again, bewildered, "This is for our grains-"
"Yes, but now it has an additional use. See, you load the robes onto the side of each panel and it goes in and out of the water," He explains, placing one of the robes onto the wheel.
My little girl poked her face out of the doorway, "A-And as the panels never go fully in the water" she points, edging closer, "you can move the robes slightly so they no longer soak and they can dry slowly in the sun as they spin! See!"
She skipped towards the wheel and brought me one of the robes.
"Clean and dry!" She beamed.
She was right. "Of course, this would need some adjustments-" I said while her smile began to fade.
"Oh", my daughter sighed.
"But it's definitely a start, I suppose," I ogled back at the wheel then to my daughter who's grin rapidly grew back.

Link to Retro Device on Sketchfab:
https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/picturetexture3wheelspins-729393fe5b374241b80f00a8dee97479
Link to Film with Sound (Youtube):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsNGy3OAnw0

Reflection

When initially reading the brief, I struggled to think of ideas that could physically work without the wonders of today's technology. This led me to begin investigating the most basic ways people, throughout history, generated power. Through doing this, I found out that Ancient Greeks made great strides in hydraulic power, through the Perachora Wheel. When I first saw it, its form reminded me of a drying rack, causing me to focus on Ancient Greek hygiene.
In order to create a device realistic for the time, I began researching what materials were used within Ancient Greek architecture as well as what the hygiene practices were. As people only used water to clean their clothes I thought this idea of a Perachora Wheel inspired washing machine could work as it would be able to wash and dry the clothes, in a way they saw hygienic, during its cycle by using the moving water below it.

After creating the initial sketch, I began blocking out simple shapes in order to get a better idea of the structure of my device. In addition to including some more basic shapes, I tried extruding a cylinder along a curved path to mimic the form of a rope that would hold up the clothing. Probably my favorite part of the process consisted of adding a variety of details to the low-poly model. During this process, I experimented for the first time with ZBrush for the objects that I wanted to look less uniform, such as cloth or the manmade wobbly pillars. As the structure of my model was made of quite simplistic shapes, I began researching different Ancient Greek patterns so that I could add more interest to each item. With the knowledge that creating these patterns would be quite complicated for my ability, I used Adobe Illustrator to create the paths necessary.

When it came to UV Unwrapping, however, I began to find the process quite difficult as it was something I'd never done before and especially due to the fact that some of my shapes weren't the most straightforward to deal with. This resulted in some of the UVs not being unwrapped in the best way, which caused some of the texturing to appear a little deformed or stretched. Before I began adding textures to my model using the materials in Substance Painter, I tested out some textures in Maya, while unwrapping the UVs, to get a better sense of what result I would be able to get.

Even though I enjoyed the process of adding colour to the model, making it come to life, I had quite a difficult time using Substance Painter as it was extremely slow on my computer. Despite this, I managed to texture the majority of the model in that program. When it came to adding these textures back into Maya, however, the rendered versions of the Substance Painter textures appeared quite grainy and presented quite different to how I thought they would. I also encountered a number of problems within this stage consisting of exporting an animated version of the file, causing my computer to crash a lot and a list of errors to appear. Looking back, I wish I had spent more time on this section as I feel if I had sorted out those problems, the model would look more realistic and detailed. Since my computer wasn't able to handle the quality of the imported textures, I added textures within Maya itself through using textures I found online. Reflecting back on this section of the process, I think some of the textures I used weren't the highest of quality, causing parts of the model to look quite blurry, so if I were to do this again I would revisit that definitely.

After texturing the model fully, I moved onto the animation portion of the project where I had planned to make the wheel move in place, rotating the cloth hanging from it nearer the water. Originally, I planned to animate using Maya fluids, where I aimed to have water coming down onto the wheel causing it to move. Instead, I expanded the surrounding with two rivers where the water moves from through a pipe to the well below the wheel so that the wheel moves.

Overall, I found the project interesting yet challenging, but am quite happy with the result. However, if I were to revisit this, I would spend greater time on the textures and the UV unwrapping, as I think that was my biggest issue.