

Interim & final
reports
(from the evaluator)

**Mid – Term Report of Ms Anurupa Roy's Project : "....about Ram"
By Ranjana Pandey**

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The Puppets

There are only two central puppet characters. Ram and Sita.

The style of puppetry chosen for these puppets is Bunraku (a generic term for puppet manipulation based on a Japanese Puppet Tradition by the same name).

Changes have been made in the structure of the puppet and the limbs. This affects the overall proportion. The changes have been made also to bring greater movement and sophistication. Instead of two puppeteers, now three puppeteers will manipulate Ram. This calls for greater coordination and sensitive choreography.

The bulk of the reconstruction and stringing together of the puppets has been completed. (Pictures of the unfinished puppets enclosed).

A mask has also been designed and is ready (photo enclosed)

The Ravana shadow puppet is also ready.

The blocking of all the scenes has been completed. A video recording was made. This has been useful not only for the performers but especially for the music composer.

Rehearsals are carrying on .Now the mask and the Ravana shadow puppet have also been incorporated . Chau and Kathakali choreography is also fine tuned simultaneously.

Music

Kolkata based musician, Abhijit Bannerjee is composing the original music score. Both Vishal and Anurupa traveled to Kolkata and had detailed discussions with Abhijit. The video recording of the rehearsal was an important tool in bridging the physical distance from the project.

The first 'scratch' sound track was received a few days back. Both Anurupa and Vishal feel the need to make some changes and bring the score closer to their vision. This back and forth is expected and inevitable.

The Animation

The process is very complex . The physical puppets are first taken apart and then the various pieces are individually scanned and then cleaned up. Once scanned they are reassembled as digital files and the pivots are added for manipulation. Currently the walk cycles and motion paths are being worked on.

The style chosen for the war scenes is the Andhra Pradesh Shadow Puppet Theatre.

Workshop with Chidambra Rao (Andhra Pradesh Shadow Puppet Theatre)

In this week long workshop in Vishal Dar's design studio ,(photographs provided) both of them worked on designing and styling the puppets for the animation sequence (especially the war scene).

Besides the traditional repertoire, some new innovative ' war machines' were designed. More joints were added to the existing form to provide greater animation.

In a major departure from traditional representation, Ravana's 10 heads have been assimilated in a vertical crown of heads(rather than a horizontal, linear line of heads on either side. Refer to photograph)

Comments

The challenges in this project are many.

The participants and key players are spread over Andhra, West Bengal and Delhi!

Coordination is a challenge in itself.

One of the practical problems facing the group is rehearsal space for full rehearsals and the high cost of the final rehearsals with the multi media, animation projections and lighting.

The biggest challenge is to make all the different elements flow together...

- Challenge is to have a seamless integration between 2D animation and traditional shadow puppetry
- Challenge is also to bring a traditional puppet maker to imagine, innovate and create within his style.
- Challenge is to humanize Ram and present a one puppet performance with skill and excellence

This month is crucial and the work is going on at an energizing pace.

Because it is a production which has been performed before the challenges and pitfalls are not unknown and the team is very bravely looking at it as a test by 'audience'.

This is a self driven group, impressive in its dedication to quality and honesty of purpose.

Ranjana Pandey