



# Behind the Animation

From Storyboards to Scenery



Hello, my name is Tessie and I am an animator who specialises in 2d animation, though, I often spend more time working on backgrounds and storyboards.

Over the last four years I have been exploring how animated storytelling can be used to communicate environmental messages through the creation of three animated films made in collaboration with different environmental scientists. The films are: *A tale of two pods*; *This season might not be as good as you think, Jim* and *River, Rain, Runoff*.

This exhibition, *Behind the Animation*, features some of the development and production artworks made during this exploration and includes storyboards, studies, concept images, character designs, reference footage and most of all, backgrounds.

I hope you find it interesting :-)

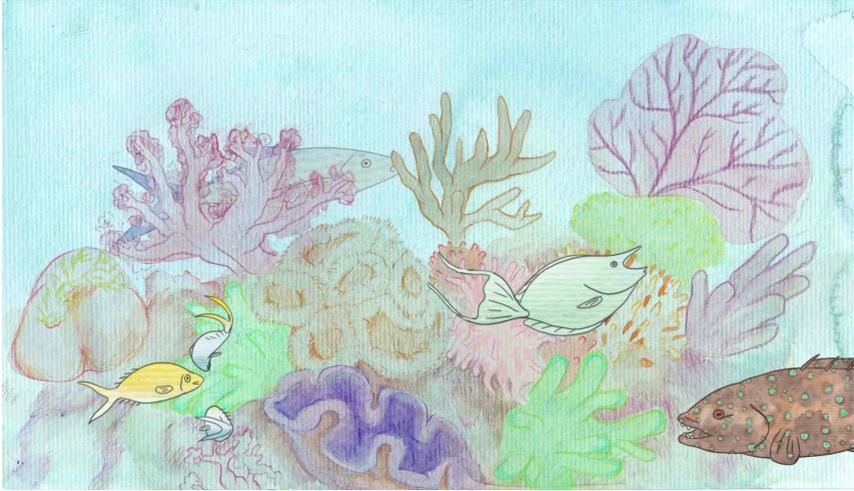


Big thanks to  
family & friends,  
supervisors &  
scientists

DEUXIÈME 157



A tale of  
two pods



*A tale of two pods*

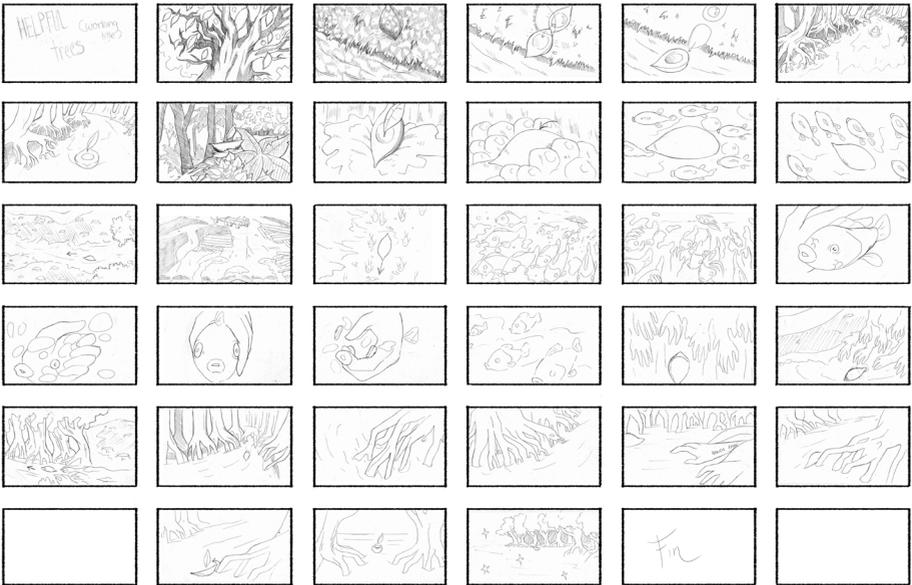
2016

Short animated film

Length: 3:22 minutes

*A tale of two pods* was completed in 2016 and was made in collaboration with environmental research group SNAPP: Ridges to Reef. The animation highlights the threat which land-based runoff poses to aquatic ecosystems and fisheries in the Pacific, specifically those in Vanua Levu, Fiji. *A tale of two pods* follows the journeys of two seed pods which travel down separate rivers on opposite sides of a mountain. One seed pod experiences the natural environment filled with lush rainforests and healthy fish whilst the other seed pod has a far less pleasant trip down the river as it faces eroded riverbanks, polluted water, dead fish and bleached coral.

*A tale of two pods* was screened for locals in Vanua Levu at a workshop run by the World Conservation Society in 2016. Viewers enjoyed the depictions of the natural environment in the film but were a bit confused by the cross-cutting between the journeys of the two pods and felt the animation could have been improved with the addition of a guiding narration.



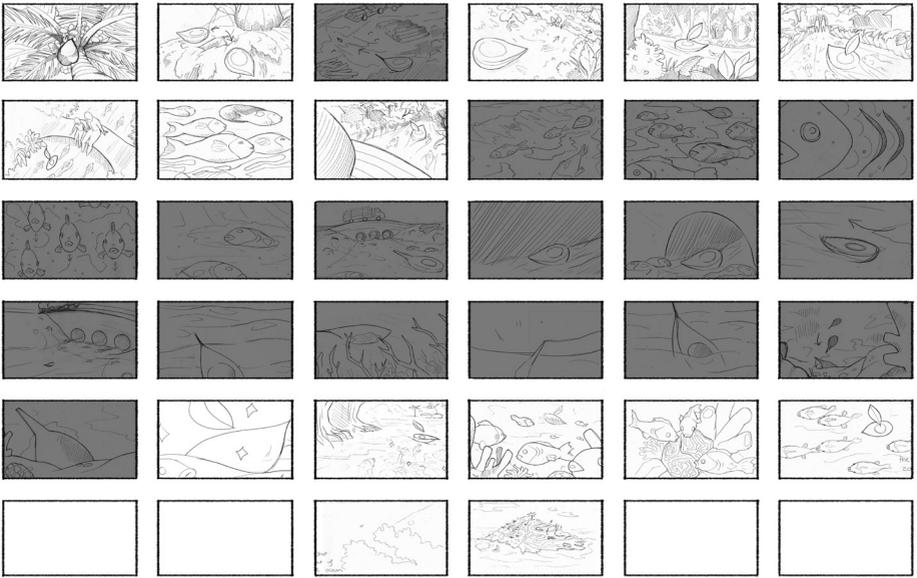
*A tale of two pods: storyboard 1*

2016

Digital print

50 X 70 cm

This initial storyboard follows a seed pod as it travels down a river, past a logging operation, out to sea. In this set of boards, the sediment (caused by the logging operation) is depicted as grasping hands which entrap the fish and suffocate them in their grip. This metaphorical element was later removed upon the recommendation of the communications experts to avoid audience confusion.



*A tale of two pods: storyboard 2*

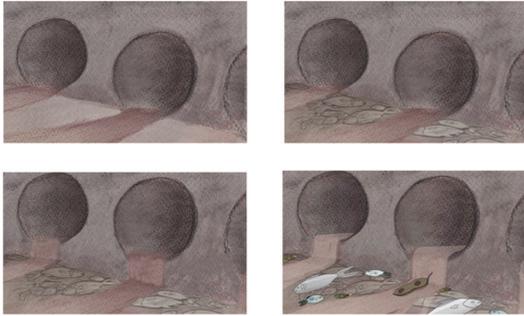
2016

Digital print

50 X 70 cm

The second storyboard features the journey of two seed pods (as opposed to a single pod) which travel down separate rivers out to sea. One pod has a happy voyage, passing forests, happy fish and small villages, meanwhile the other pod faces eroded riverbanks, a culvert, dead fish and bleached coral. The grey panels depict the second pods journey.

This adjustment was made to have the animation more accurately resemble the scenario on Vanua Levu in which one side of the island is more developed than the other.



*A tale of two pods: background development*

2016

Digital print

40 X 50 cm

This image shows changes made to one of the backgrounds that features a culvert. Culverts, which are designed to channel water, pose a threat to fish as they prevent them from travelling upstream. By elevating its opening and by lining the base with bodies, the threat of the culvert is made more evident.



Background artwork featured in the film.

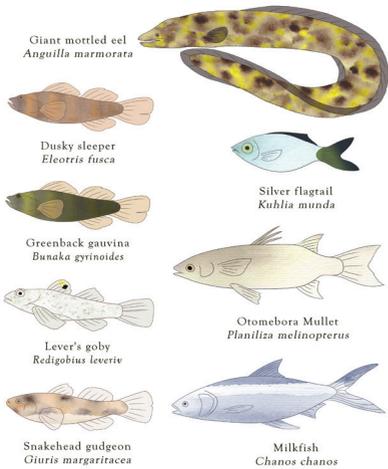


*A tale of two pods: background illustration*

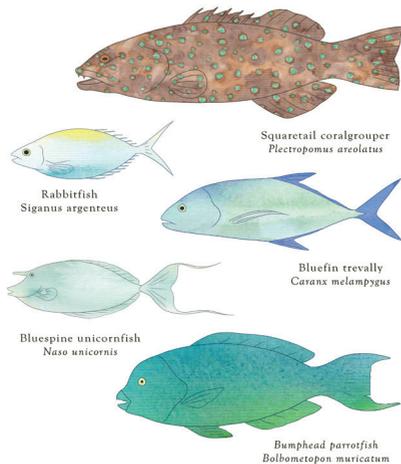
2016

Watercolour and pencil on watercolour paper

2 illustrations 16.5 X 29 cm each



## Freshwater Fish Species



## Saltwater Fish Species

This character design features some of the freshwater fish which appear in the animation. The initial list of recommended species was increased to include a greater variety of different sized and coloured fish.

*A tale of two pods: freshwater fish designs*

2016

Digital print

30 X 40 cm

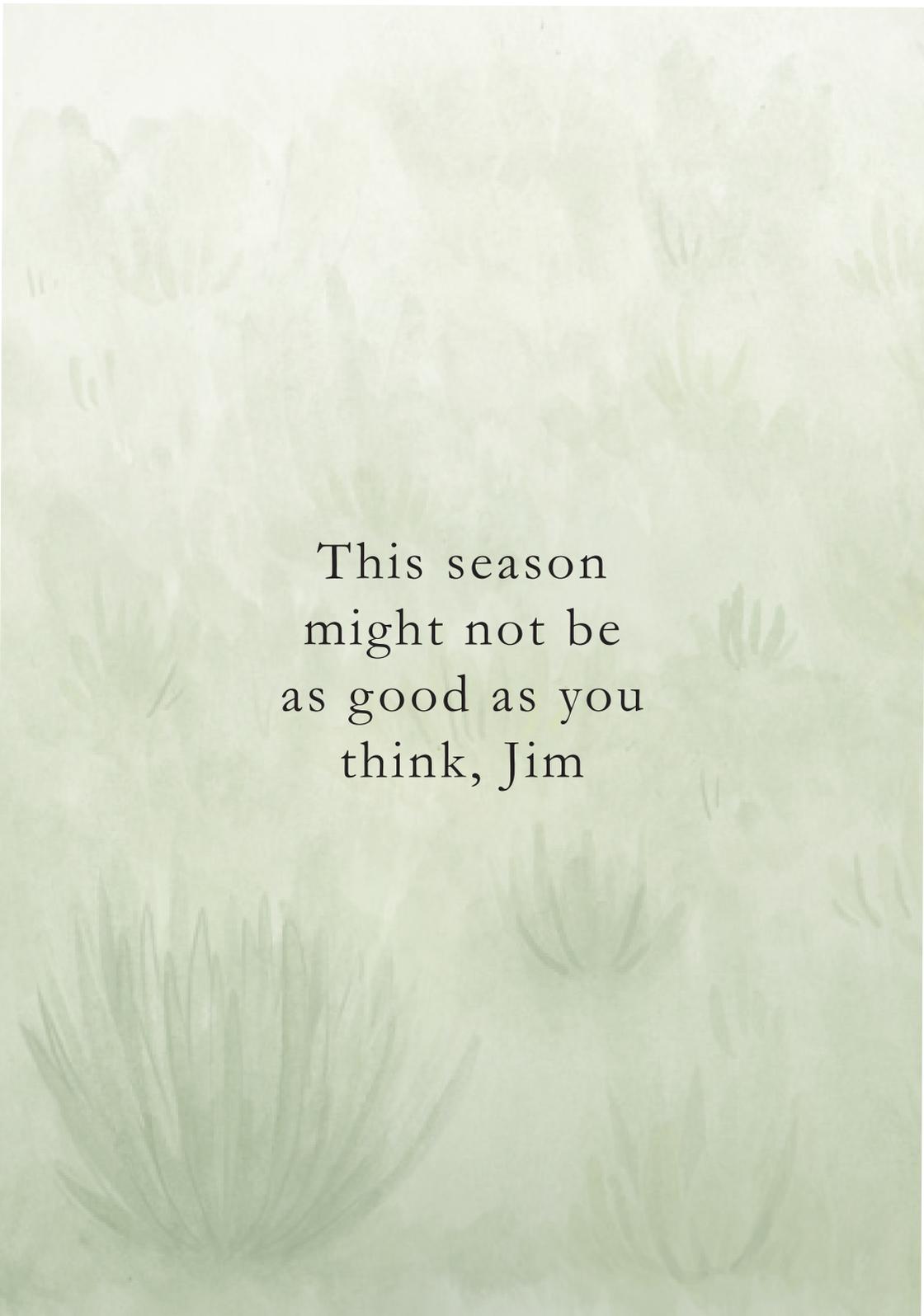
This character design features some of the freshwater fish which appear in the animation. The initial list of recommended species was further edited to include a greater variety of different sized and coloured fish.

*A tale of two pods: saltwater fish designs*

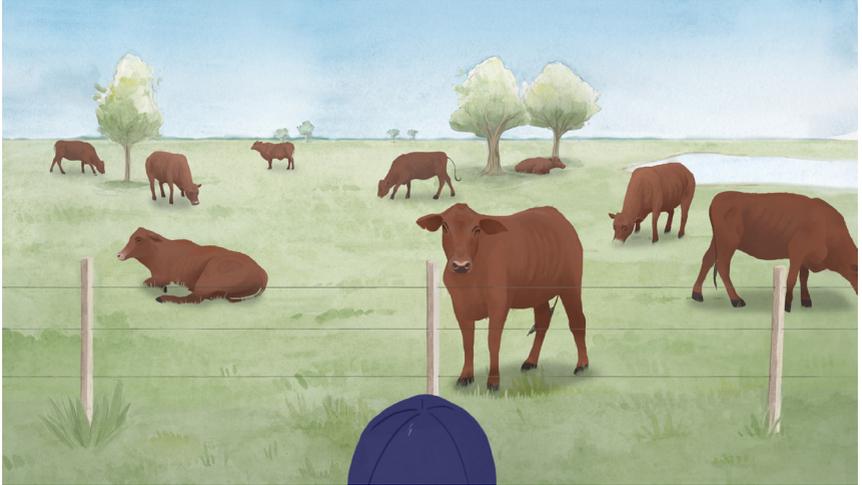
2016

Digital print

30 X 40 cm



This season  
might not be  
as good as you  
think, Jim



*This season might not be as good as you think, Jim*  
2019

Short animated film  
Length: 5:08 minutes

*This season might not be as good as you think Jim*, was made as part of the 2018-2019 AIRS (artist in residence science) program held at the Ecosciences Precinct in Dutton Park. This season might not be as good as you think, Jim was created in collaboration with social scientist Fiona McCartney and agricultural scientist Grant Stone and follows a conversation between two graziers, Mick and Jim, whom discuss rainfall percentiles and how they apply to land management.



*This season might not be as good as you think, Jim: storyboard 1*

2018

Digital print

50 X 70 cm

The initial storyboard introduces the characters Mick and Jim whom discuss rainfall percentiles.



*This season might not be as good as you think, Jim: storyboard 2*

2018

Digital print

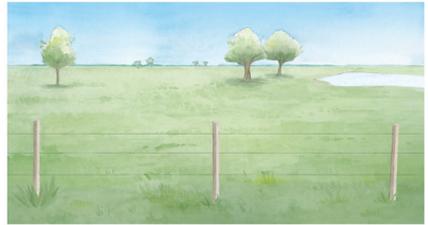
50 X 70 cm

The second pass of the storyboard introduces the character of Rusty the dog and the swapping of a laptop for a phone. The second storyboard also features a greater variety of visualizations to help add interest to Mick and Jim's conversation.



*This season might not be as good as you think, Jim: character concepts*  
2018  
Digital print and pencil  
50 X 70 cm

The characters of Mick and Jim underwent many changes throughout the development of the animation from their names to their outfits. This collection of images features different stages of design both in terms of animation style as well as character details. The image to the left of the piece includes edits made by collaborating scientist Grant Stone.



*This season might not be as good as you think Jim: background artwork*  
2018

Watercolour and pencil on watercolour paper and digital print  
4 frames 21 X 30 cm each

Initial watercolor backgrounds made for the film were digitally air-brushed and edited to better suit a typical Queensland grazing land context. Note the addition of a water trough and the removal of mountains on the horizon.



River, Rain,  
Runoff



*River, Rain, Runoff: research trip video*

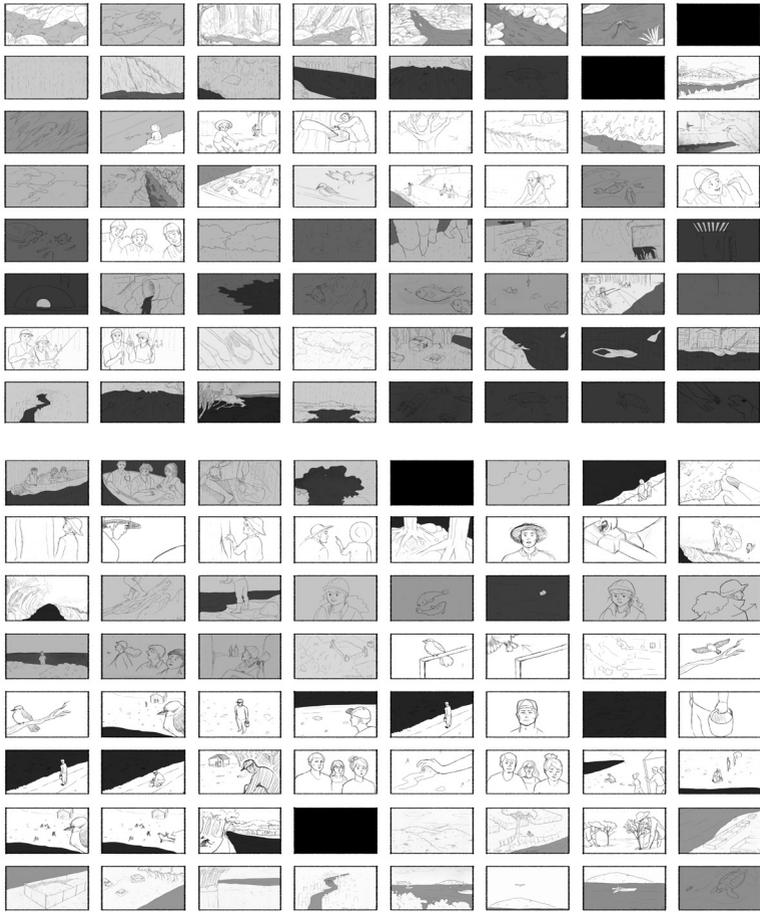
2017-2019

Live action video footage

Screen ratio: 1920 X 1080

*River Rain Runoff*, is an ongoing project which began in 2017 and is being developed in collaboration with scientist Dr. Paul Maxwell from water monitoring organization, Healthy Land and Water. The animation is set in Brisbane and aims to connect the environmental, social, political, economic and industrial aspects of the Brisbane river, in demonstrating how many actions contributes to its overall condition. The story follows the events which take place before and after a rain-storm where the small choices made by a farmer, a fisherman and a construction worker leads to a culmination of runoff which threatens Moreton Bay.

The video referenced above features a collection of footage captured over several research trips across South East Queensland to observe the region's various waterways.



*River, Rain, Runoff: storyboard 2018*

2018

Digital print

2 frames 50 X 70 cm each

This storyboard features the early style of boards used for the film. The story follows the events which take place before and after a rainstorm where the small actions, or lack of action from a farmer, a fisherman and a construction worker leads to a culmination of runoff which threatens Moreton Bay.



*River, Rain, Runoff: storyboard 2019*

2019

Digital print

2 frames 50 X 70 cm each

Little was changed story wise between the 2018 and 2019 storyboard. The 2019 set of boards has a greater focus on the layout of scenes especially those which take place on the construction site.



*River, Rain, Runoff: background development*  
2017  
Watercolour and pencil on watercolour  
paper  
4 frames 21 X 30 cm

A collection of early background artworks



*River, Rain, Runoff: environmental studies & story concepts*

2017-2018

Watercolour and pencil on watercolour paper

3 frames 30 X 40 cm

An assortment of studies based on photographs of Australian creeks and rivers. These studies were painted to help develop the style of the animation.

Image to the right is an early story concept





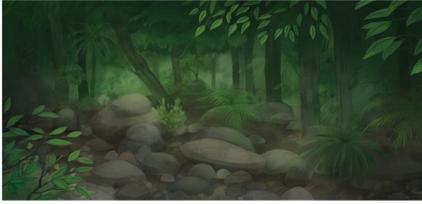
*River, Rain, Runoff: background development*

2018

Watercolour and pencil on watercolour paper

3 frames 30 X 40 cm

Original watercolour backgrounds which were to be used for the film before the project transitioned to digitally painted backgrounds.



*River, Rain, Runoff: digital backgrounds*

2019

Digital print

4 frames 40 X 50 cm

The transition from a traditional to digital painting style was made for practical reasons, mostly related to the efficient perspective drawing tools available on Photoshop. However, I tried to maintain the transparent feel of watercolour by lowering the opacity of brushes, layers and gradients whilst painting digitally.

This exhibition was held at the Pop Gallery on Brunswick street in  
Fortitude Valley from 15.10.19 - 24.10.19