Sandeep Menon

Sandeep started his career as an intern at Pixar Animation Studios. Currently he is a designer at Blue Sky Studios. He has also worked as a product designer for Titan.

Brief
To create a new imagery out of a traditional visual.

Tools used
Adobe Photoshop

TRADITIONAL
TWIST

For an artist, the images you grow up with, linger on for long. As you grow, you think of recreating them, basis your understanding and expertise. That's exactly what designer Sandeep Menon does with a traditional image he has grown up with. He gives it a twist and renders it in a new form. He explains how.


01 Collected reference as the first step. Looked to some of these images while starting the project. It's a good practice to go back to reference images while recreating something.
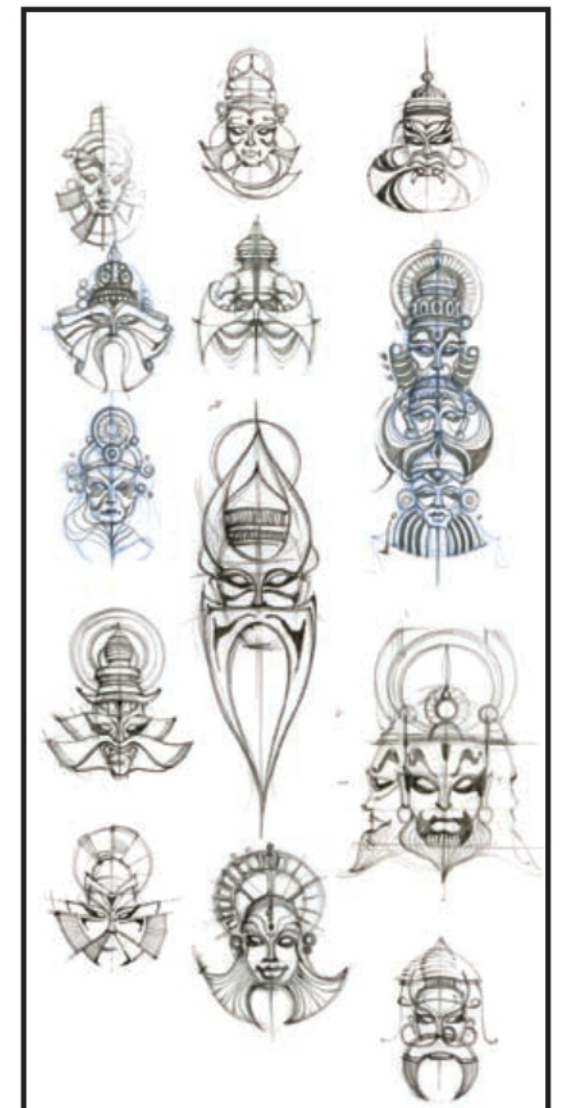
02 Started by doing some head studies. These were just explorations of the mask and an exercise to get into the world of Kathakali. The attempt was to achieve something that was semi-realistic in style.

03 Decided on the final sketch. Started by drawing the heads and the rest of the body evolved. Since the character had multiple heads, it seemed natural to give it several arms.
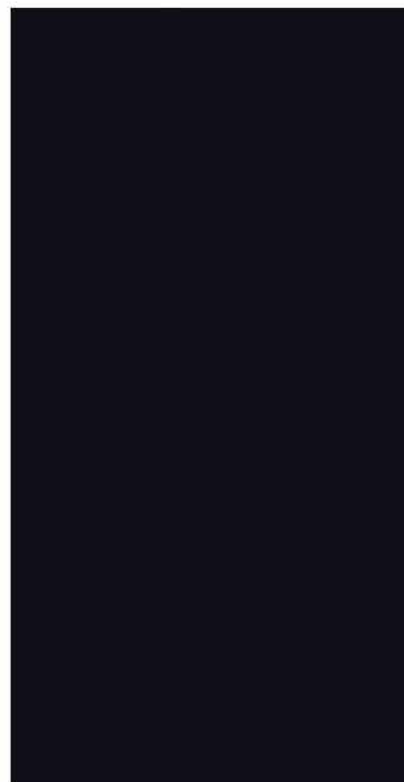
04 Started with a black background. Black would bring out the vibrant colours and the gold accents against a dark background.

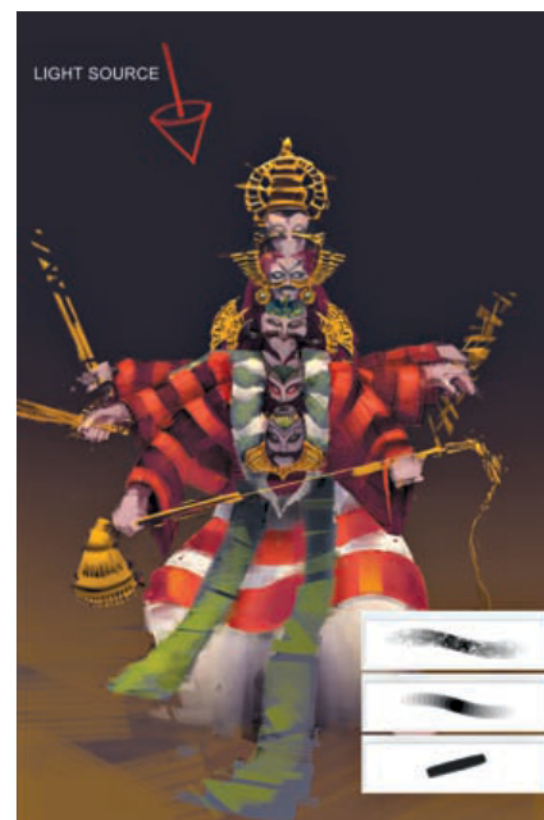**05** Next, the background was given a gradient wash, so that it feels like the light source was on the top. Gradient tool was used for the purpose.


**06** Scanned the sketch and dropped it on the background, on a Multiply layer.

07 Started blocking in solid colours. Not really focussed on the rendering but got the colours right at this stage. Used a simple solid round brush.

LIGHT SOURCE

08 Established a light source on the top, slightly towards the left. Started rendering the character by using a combination of brushes. To push the coolness in the shadows, added a little bit of blue to all the shadows.
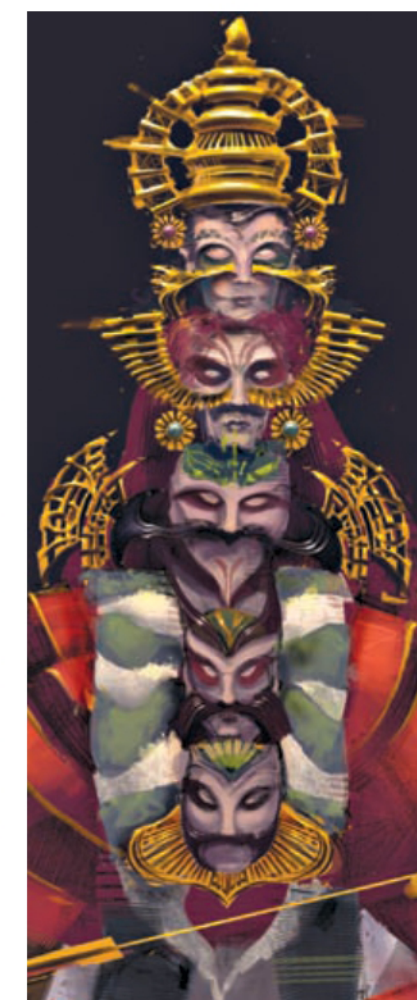
09 Since the main focus lay on the heads, zoomed in and started working on them. It's important not to add details all over the image but save it for where you want to lead the viewer's eyes.

Dodge Tool   O
Burn Tool   O
Sponge Tool   O
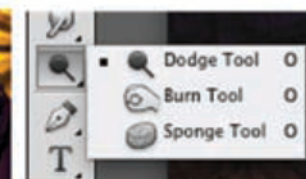
10 To give highlights to the gold material, used the colour dodge tool. Set the highlight mode to 15%.

★★ *Not to add details all over the image but save it for where you want to lead the viewer's eyes* ★★

11 Arrived at the final image. Note that a shadow was added to the base to ground the character. Also, the painting style changed from the centre, where it was detailed to the base, where it was loose and very rough ←