

Comparative Study of Sing Ji & Kay Nielsen by, Isabeau Goyette



Merryn (2016), Sing Ji



Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes
(1914), Kay Nielsen

This Comparative Study will be comparing and contrasting the elements of art and design of three illustrations by Sing Ji and Kay Nielsen including Merryn's *Leviathan* and concept art of *Unannounced Mobile Project* by Insomniac Games by Sing Ji and *The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes* by Kay Nielsen. Sing Ji and Kay Nielsen are both illustrative artists whose purpose is to tell a story in their artwork from the use of design and style and the world they create. These illustrators came from different backgrounds and different time periods, but their work carries similar cultural significance and purpose for their communities.

The Cultural Significance of Kay Nielsen's Art

Kay Nielsen was a Danish illustrator who created art during the time period known as the “Golden Age of Illustration” (1880 - 1920). This was a time period where methods for printing became more efficient through the advancement of printing technology. This allowed illustrations to transfer faster and more abundantly to popular means of media such as books, magazines and literature. Fine artists and commercial artists were no different during this time and art primarily focused on marketing and catching the attention of consumers.



'Don't drink!' cried out the little Princess, springing to her feet (1913), Kay Nielsen



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen



Job (1896), Alphonse Mucha.

The “Golden Age of Illustration” also had revived the art of fairy tales. A large quantity of fairy tales and stories from across the world were being documented and compiled into collections. Illustrators including Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac and Kay Nielsen were commissioned to create illustration prints for these fairytale compilation books. What made Nielsen's art stand out was his use of intricate and **repetitive** designs in clothing that did not follow the physical **movement** of the object which made his objects flat. What also contributed to this style was his use of head-on angles. Nielsen's style most closely correlates to the “Art Nouveau” style which consisted of stylized hair and heavily **outlined** bodies with very detailed designs. During this period, design heavy art was **emphasized** and most work included embroidered borders, intricate designs on both clothing and natural objects in the artwork.

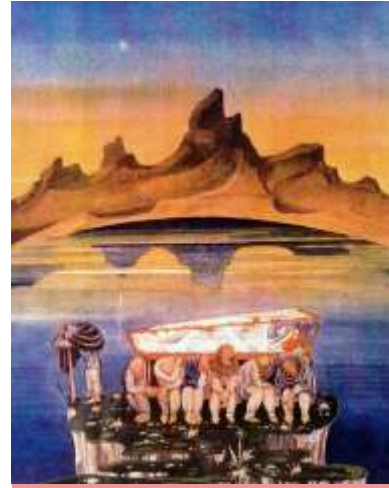
The Cultural Significance of Kay Nielsen's Art (2)



Night on Bald Mountain (1940), Kay Nielsen.



Night on Bald Mountain (1940 Disney Film)



Snow Drop, Kay Nielsen



Snow White (1937 Disney Film)

Centuries ago, fairytales served as a tool in many cultures to teach people and their children the right choices from the wrong choices. These life lessons told through stories and narratives were created to assure they live their life safely; fairy tales taught these lessons by using elements such as **repetition** of events in a single story (that would usually occur in 3 intervals), and using animal characters to symbolize and act as a force in life that should be avoided or consequences will follow. Most of these stories did not end happily, and Nielsen expresses this through his dark and eerie illustrations.

Towards the end of the Golden Age of Illustration, the company “The Walt Disney Studios” was formed in 1923 which grew exponentially in popularity in the following decades for animating versions of famous fairy tales like “Snow White”, “Cinderella”, “Sleeping Beauty” and many more. This was significant during this time period since Disney began creating animations which romanticized tales from the past to make them more friendly for younger audience viewers. Nielsen was hired by Walt Disney and collaborated on an animation project to create the scene “Night On Bald Mountain” and “Ave Maria” for the 1940’s film, “Fantasia”. However, he was later removed from his position due to his portrayal of fairy tales in his art depicting fairy tales to be too ‘dark’ and ‘strange’ for Disney.

The Purpose and Function of Kay Nielsen's Artwork:

The primary goal of Kay Nielsen's illustrations was to give visuals to the world and create a unique mood for the fairytale that would signify the feelings and underlying lessons of the story. Nielsen's illustrations convey a serious and whimsical tone through the pale or simple **color** palettes used in each artwork. Nielsen's artwork also holds the responsibility of giving visuals to fairy tales that would be read in books. During this time period, people from around the world were becoming more and more literate, and stories such as fairytales were being documented on paper rather than passed down by ear. Most of the commissions he received were used for books of folktales and legends from across Europe and also parts of Central Asia. He would illustrate for fairy tales with underlying themes of human survival and knowledge being passed down through imaginary creatures and stories. Most fairy tales personified elements of nature as strong characters who usually determined the fate of the victims caught in their storm. As someone would read along with the story, his illustrations were a way to imagine the world of the story through Nielsen's creativity.



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen



East of the Sun, West of the Moon, Kay Nielsen

Analysis of the Formal Qualities of Kay Nielsen's *The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes*, 1914.

Value: No set light source; **value** in the cloak has darks and an overlapping illusion. **Value** is mostly used to show depth, not necessarily the lighting or the time of day.

Color: Black to blue gradation of **color** in the background suggests the time of day this story takes place by resembling either a sunrise or sunset.



Repetition: The way the man's cloak folds gives off a flat and two-dimensional **shape** and the long semi-circle **shapes repeated** within it represents a stylized **pattern** similar to other artwork created during the Art Nouveau period.



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen

Line: is used to shape the **form** of the man's face and the details of his clothing. Within the lines, there is a great amount of **value** and blending used to create detail of the man's determined expression.



Form underneath and above the eye made through the use of **valued color**.

Space: is shown between the foreground and the background through the use of **value** in the snow. The snow caps which are **colored** darker give the illusion a **textured** landscape. This **pattern** also gives into the idea of endless snowy hills and the desperation of the man in the snowshoes.

The Cultural Significance of Sing Ji's artwork



stagHorn (2017), Sing Ji

Sing Ji is currently an active artist whose career is centered around creating artwork for entertainment purposes such as video game concept art and children's book illustrations. Sing Ji is originally from South Korea; she moved to the United States to attend school at the Art Center College of Design in California in the field of Illustration. Ji now resides in Los Angeles, California, where she works as a freelance artist.

Like most modern-day artists, Sing Ji draws inspiration from other artists, films and animations she enjoys. She also draws inspiration from plants and the environment which is apparent throughout her work. Her work heavily consists of portraits of girls with large eyes and flowing hair who are usually accompanied by animals and insects, fan art of fantasy films and concept and narrative art. Her style most correlates to the Japanese drawing style of "Manga" which stems from the mid-20th century and has been growing increasingly popular around the world since its creation.



Merryn (2016), Sing Ji



Chopper 4 (2014, *The Last of Us*), John Sweeney

One of Sing Ji's careers as an artist was creating concept art for developing video games. Video games in modern society are highly renowned and played by millions of people. Video games have increased in popularity in the past decades since their existence that there is contemplation whether video games should be considered its own art form. What concept artists provide for video game developers and companies is an idea and a glimpse of the world the video game will reside in. Concept art helps bring the artists and designers imagination into view for reference when designing the game.

The Purpose and Function of Sing Ji's Concept Art

Sing Ji has been a leading artist in two companies: “Big Fish Games” and “Insomniac Games” and has also been the concept artist for “Walt Disney Imagineering” where she has contributed her visual knowledge and creativity. Ji continues to work at the video gaming company, “Insomniac Games”. The purpose of her artwork is to get an idea of how the designers will create what they want their video game's world to look like. Concept art could be rough drafts which may not be used in the final product or finished and well-executed works of art to show the depth of elements and senses in that universe.



Outernauts, Sing Ji



Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji



Song of the Deep (2016), Sing Ji

Analysis of the Formal Qualities of Sing Ji's Concept Art of *Unannounced Mobile Project* by *Insomniac Games*.

Texture: Tall and narrow patches of darker brown to show **textured** bark within the tree by creating **value** and shadows.

Color: There are different layered **colors** of the snow to convey the **value** of shadows between the snow and the reflective light coming from the snow on the ground.



Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji

Space: Trees' hue becomes paler and **shape** becomes thinner as they fade into the background to convey **space** within the piece and possibly the snowy weather.

Space: What also creates the illusion of **space** is the **shape** formations and sizes of the snowflakes; flakes range from low to high opacity and small to large in size.

Emphasis: To **emphasize** focus on the characters, there are **outlines** of their clothing and faces. On the other hand, the scenery has soft, **textured** edges to distinguish form to offset the characters.

Color: Snowflakes are a soft grey in areas of **negative space** and a translucent white in areas of **color** or **positive space**.



Analysis of the Formal Qualities of Sing Ji's, *Merryn's Leviathan* 2016.

Form: Diving helmet made by a blue circle **line** design and small white **highlight** on upper right side of circle to show a spherical **form**.



Texture: Stippled darker **color** used against a solid gray to create **value** and **texture** of the rock.



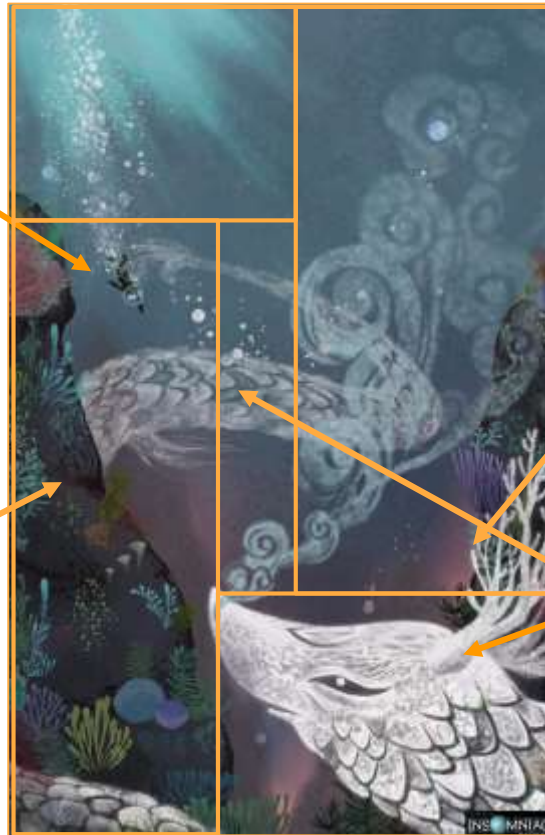
Balance: The rocks **balance** the weight of the bubbles the creature is blowing out as the creature **balances** the weight of the man and the light coming from the top corner.

Space: Faded pink hues convey possible light sources from the ocean expressing depth and intriguing the viewer.



Space: The way the "Leviathan's" **color** is more opaque in the lower right corner and more translucent in the middle of the artwork gives the illusions of **space**. Size also contributes to this.

Repetition: the repeated **pattern** of the crescent **shape** and leaving a border in between that has the same **color** as the background suggests the creature is wispy.



Merryn (2016), Sing Ji

Comparison of *Functions and Purpose* of Kay Nielsen Illustrations and Sing Ji's Concept Art

Kay Nielsen

- ❖ Most of Nielsen's artwork deals with scenes in the foreground; Background appears to be very close to the foreground.
- ❖ Not a significant amount of depth. Generally, due to the **line** design; the objects of Nielsen's illustrations are usually **outlines** in a soft, thin, black line which resembles the style of the time period; Art Nouveau.
- ❖ Most of his themes connect to the idea of struggle and isolation.
- ❖ Artwork is usually on a head-on angle and characters are seen in the bottom half of the piece with vast **space** on the top half of the piece.



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen



'Don't drink!' cried out the little Princess, springing to her feet (1913), Kay Nielsen

The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen

Similarities

- ❖ Both artists delve into mediums and styles that were popular in their time period.
- ❖ Both artists created work for means of entertainment and popular media.
- ❖ Both artists have been involved in the creation of children's books.
- ❖ Both artists uniquely uses popular art styles in their time period to create their own style.

Sing Ji

- ❖ Most of Ji's artwork contains scenery with leaves twining around characters or around the frame of character portraits in both the background and the foreground.
- ❖ Style is inspired by a popular form of Japanese drawing called "Manga".
- ❖ Artwork has a range of different perspective points (especially in concept art).
- ❖ Wide array of depth in artwork created **from** objects, opacity fading to create the sense of distance.



Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji



stagHorn (2017), Sing Ji

Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji

Comparison of *Formal Qualities* of Kay Nielsen's *A Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes* and Sing Ji's *Unannounced Mobile Project* by Insomnia Games Concept Art

Kay Nielsen



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen



- ❖ The snow is rippled by the faded grey **lines** and **organic shapes** within the snow. The black **outlines** show the **shape** of the ground the snow is covering.
- ❖ No set light source; **value** is used without correlation to other objects
- ❖ Snow design is different; The snowflakes are shown as a star design **patterned** evenly in above the man.
- ❖ Positioning: The man in this piece is directly centered and takes up half of the artwork, putting much **emphasis** on his character.

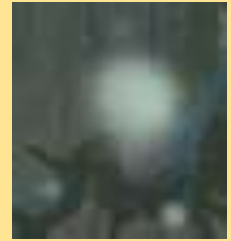
Similarities

- ❖ **Horizon line** is in the lower half of the artwork, displaying much of the scenery above the characters.
- ❖ Similar curved body positions of the people in the pieces **outlined** in a thin, dark line to show **body movement**.

Sing Ji



Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji



- ❖ Set light source at the left of the art piece; shown by the shadows of the characters and the **highlights** of their backs and the tree trunks
- ❖ The snow is smooth and has an opaque yellow-white **color** up to the horizon line.
- ❖ Positioning; The two people in this artwork are located in the lower right section and do not take up most of the **space**.
- ❖ Snow design is different; It's soft, translucent and comes in various sizes to portray **space**.

Comparison of Formal Qualities of Kay Nielsen's *A Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes* and Sing Ji's *Merynn's Leviathan*

Kay Nielsen



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen



- ❖ **Symmetry:** This piece leans towards the right side of the piece; the way the man leans forward creates **movement**, eye movement and distributes the weight to the right side of the piece.
- ❖ **Color:** The blue **hue** starts off as very dark on the top of the piece, then gradually becomes brighter as it moves down.
- ❖ **Color:** The piece is mostly made up of cool **colors**, but the **emphasis** is centered on the man as he wears **colors** that **contrast** against the blue background: reds and oranges.

Similarities

- ❖ Not all of the objects in both illustrations have extreme **values** and shading; The man in Nielsen's art does not have a set light source to dictate the value of the colors of his clothes and the
- ❖ Both pieces have a **color** gradation from the top of the artwork towards the bottom of the piece.

Sing Ji

- ❖ **Symmetry:** This piece is evenly weighted and **asymmetrical**; the "leviathan" in the bottom-right corresponds with the blue, point-shaped blue light coming from the top-left of the piece as the underwater rocks in the bottom-left correspond to the expanse of water and bubbles in the top-right corner.
- ❖ **Color:** gradation starts on the top left corner of the piece and fans out to resemble the waves in the ocean when light passes through.
- ❖ **Color:** The entire piece is made up of cool **colors**; **colors** don't **emphasize** a part of the piece aside from the white "leviathan".



Merynn, Sing Ji



Storytelling in Sing Ji's Concept Art of *Unannounced Mobile Project* by Insomniac Games and Kay Nielsen's *A Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes*



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes
(1914), Kay Nielsen

Similarities:

- ❖ Both the man in Nielsen's work and the two people in Ji's work are heading in the same direction as seen through the positioning of their legs and the direction their bodies are facing through the snow.
- ❖ The **coloring** in both artworks expresses the time of day; Nielsen's work seems to take place at either dusk or dawn while Ji's work takes place sometime where the sun is nearly high or is starting to set by the way the shadows are casted onto the snow



Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji

Differences:

- ❖ Nielsen's character seems to be fighting and struggling through the snow by the way his body is spread out and bent forward. The way the man's neck and head are tilted forwards shows signs of determination in the character and resistance.
- ❖ Ji's characters seem to be comfortably walking by the way their bodies are controlled, although the snow is reaching up to their ankles and by the way the man's scarf is sailing upwards expresses the movement of air and wind in the peace that cannot be visibly seen. Their heads are also looking down not seeming to have a great determination to continue.

Storytelling in Sing Ji's Song of the Deep Concept Art and Kay Nielsen's A Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes.

In the analysis of these two pieces, there's definitely two separate journey's happening in two separate places, but how exactly does the artist convey what is happening with their characters through elements of art and design?

Vulnerability: both of the environments in these two pieces express the feeling of being vulnerable to the elements. The way both landscapes fade off into the distance through the use of **value** and color, conveys an expanse of unfamiliar territory.

Traveling: the way both characters' left arms are positioned in front of them suggests **movement** forwards. The force of their **movement** is shown through the white, speckled bubbles creating behind the girl in Ji's work representing the water she's swimming through and the curve of the cloak, angle of the knee and the line movement of the man of Nielsen's work conveys a struggle through what might be wind.

Protection: Coincidentally, both artworks use the same **shape**, the circle, as means of protection from their environments. The man in Nielsen's art possesses an opaque, circular shield while the girl in Ji's art uses a blue **outlined** circle representing a diving helmet.



Storytelling in Sing Ji's Song of the Deep Concept Art and Kay Nielsen's A Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes.

In the analysis of these two pieces, there's definitely two separate journey's happening in two separate places, but how exactly does the artist convey what is happening with their characters through elements of art and design?

Expression and Isolation: In Nielsen's piece, the man seems to be alone by the dimension cuts of the image; you cannot see past what is on the image. By the character's expression, facing forward, determined, it can be inferred there's no-one behind him. On the other hand, in Ji's piece, it's shown how the girl swimming is not alone, something awaits her at the bottom of the image which she is heading towards.

Color: The **colors** exhibited by both artworks expresses a different mood between both stories. Kay Nielsen's illustration has **contrasting colors**, the orange-brown in the man's shield and cloak which **contrast** against the blue of the sky. There's struggle and restlessness in his piece while in Ji's illustration, there is a variety of cool **colors**, all **unifying** together. By the soft transition of blues and violets, there's a sense of conformality and **unity**.



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen



Merryn (2016), Sing Ji

Formal Qualities of Personal Art, *The Edge of the World* vs Kay Nielsen's, *The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes*



The Edge of the World (2018),
Isabeau Goyette



Difference in highlighting the distinction between the foreground and the background: The foreground is distinguished in Nielsen's through thin black **lines** outlining the snow and the man while the foreground is separated through lush, saturated **color** in my personal piece

Symmetry:

- ❖ My work, *The Edge of the World* in comparison to *The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes*, has a more **asymmetrical balance**; the two students on the building structure compared to the brown vines and the yellow, two-dimensional sky below balance the painting and carry equivalent weight. In Nielsen's work, the symmetry can most correlate to **symmetrical balance**, both sides are similar in weight. The bottom half of the art piece as a more **asymmetrical balance**; the man is spread out from the *bottom-left* of the piece towards the *mid-right* of the piece and the sky and snow surrounding the man accommodate for his weight.
- ❖ The **texture** or the technique to create the **form** in both the stones of the white structure of my personal art to the way the snow was created in Nielsen's work shows some similarities. Although both objects exhibit a different mood, the way the soft



There is a similar curvature in the girl in my personal piece to the man in Nielsen's piece. The girl's body creates this curved **shape** as the man's cape draping behind him does. This body language signifies the urgency or interest in what lies ahead of them.



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay
Nielsen



Comparison and Contrast of *Function and Cultural Significance of Personal Art, The Edge of the World* vs Kay Nielsen's, *The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes*

My painting exhibits a very two-dimensional, flat visual due to the **color** transition from the white brick structure to the yellow-orange background **color**. I did not use a black **outline** to distinguish the different objects of the piece. The purpose of this artwork was to make extreme **contrast** between two different environments through **color** to show viewers how two worlds colliding, “organic vs industrial” could symbolize different events occurring at the same time.

Kay Nielsen's illustration is also very **two-dimensional** but includes objects with a black **outline** to distinguish one another. The black outlines correlate to the Art Movement during Nielsen's time, “Art Nouveau” Kay Nielsen's illustration was created for story books in the early 20th century in the style of “Art Nouveau”. The purpose of his artwork was to be viewed by readers of fairy tales to see a visual of the story they were reading. His art was used for entertainment and commercial purposes.



The Edge of the World (2018),
Isabeau Goyette



The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes (1914), Kay Nielsen

Comparison and Contrast of Personal Art, *The Middle of Nowhere* vs. Sing Ji's, *Unannounced Mobile Project* by Insomnia Games

The Concept Art for *Unannounced Mobile Project* by Insomnia Games.

- ❖ Has a more leveled **perspective** / two-point perspective, more like Nielsen's piece of *The Man Gave Him a Pair of Snowshoes*.
- ❖ This piece includes color with a small **color** pallet including reds, browns, whites and dark greens.
- ❖ The trees have thicker and more **organic** strokes.
- ❖ Opacity gets lighter to show **space** between the trees and create the background.
- ❖ The girl and the man are leaning and hugging one another with one arm, both heading and looking the same way expressing trust and familiarity with one another.
- ❖ Trees are larger in size and have a more curved **shape** than the trees in my artwork.



- ❖ The perspective of Sing Ji's illustration can most relate with Nielsen's illustration; the horizon line is visible and the landscape starts to fade using a lighter opacity of **color** to create depth and **space**.



The Middle of Nowhere (2018), Isabeau Goyette

- ❖ The perspective is in a "Worm's eye view".
- ❖ There is no color but rather **values** of grayscale.
- ❖ Trees have thinner and straighter strokes.
- ❖ The background and **space** is created by making the trees thinner and adding more branches.
- ❖ Girl is nervous seen from body language. (Hugging herself; arms around stomach).

Storytelling in Personal Art, The Middle of Nowhere vs. Sing Ji's, Unannounced Mobile Project by Insomnia Games

- ❖ Both wandering through a wooded area, represent isolation and endless wilderness.
- ❖ Similar to Sing Ji's work, I plan on creating artwork that evokes a story and strikes creativity within the viewer.
- ❖ Both artworks contain symbolism or ways of making the characters look vulnerable and clinging on or security: The girl holding herself in the **perspective** of a worm's eye view in my illustration and the two people walking together as a tiny element to the bigger image of the forest in Ji's illustration.
- ❖ Due to the perspective in my artwork, the **tone** and mood seems more menacing and hysteric rather than calm and still like the tone and mood of Sing Ji's artwork. What also contributes to the tone is the grayscale **values** of the piece rather than the soft, pale **colors** found in Ji's piece.
- ❖ The snow in the concept art by Sing Ji has more **movement** within the piece through the **repetition** of snowflakes and the organic **form** of the scarf while my Illustration seems very still by the the dark **lines** creating the stiff branches of trees.



The Edge of the World (2018), Isabeau Goyette



Unannounced Mobile Project, Sing Ji

Comparison and Contrast of Kay Nielsen's art

As I reflect upon my Illustration and Painting, I noticed I have used both Sing Ji and Kay Nielsen's styles and techniques in my artwork:

- ❖ The elements I used in *The Edge of the World* painting included Kay Nielsen's style of perspective: flat, two-dimensional not a significant amount of **space** but with **forms** that included realistic **values**. What I drew from Sing Ji was her use of soft transitional colors and values in an object that I considered as I painted the trees and created various **textures** throughout my work. The figures I drew in this piece both resemble the man in Nielsen's art and the two people in Ji's art. This art piece most closely resembles work by Kay Nielsen.
- ❖ The elements I included in *The Middle of Nowhere* drawing that stemmed from inspiration from Sing Ji was the element of storytelling and journeying through the unknown. Sing Ji's art displays different erie situations and quests to conquer the unknown, which is the theme that lies beneath my illustration.
- ❖ What seems to be present throughout all artworks addressed in this Comparative Study is the sense of security. This idea or sense of being is the theme that surrounds my current artwork and this need for safety and security can be seen in various elements of art and design in each art piece.

