



# SRISHTI MANIPAL COLLECTIVE'25

Under Graduate Professional Programme





# UNPACKING LIES

## DECODING UNTRUTHS IN BRAND, MEDIA & CONTENT IN AN AGE OF AI

APARNA RAMAN

A journalist prepares to join Harvard as faculty, until she realizes she's been a victim of a sophisticated spam. Apple's Siri has been sued for eavesdropping on conversations. Meta has removed fact checking tools from social media. And Luigi Mangione's arrest has led to heated discussions on the culpability in deceiving consumers. With identity fraud omnipresent everywhere, the question remains as to where is the 'real' in reality?

Communication is increasingly murky and controversial these days leading large companies, data behemoths and powerful individuals to face greater accountability. Advertising and Communication by definition, is the subject matter of creating and sustaining a perception in the customer's mind towards a branded product. To sustain the perception that the brand wishes to perpetuate, the messaging has played hide and seek with the truth, across the ages choosing to conceal and reveal details as it pleases, embellishing and sugar coating as the need may be. Celebrities as high net worth individuals are particularly susceptible to identity fraud and fake news.

The course attempts to open our eyes to the subterranean brandspeak from Packaging and retail to experience, online and innovative brand touchpoints. Using a deconstructive lens, students will decode the communication messaging using the binary of Perception Vs Reality to create a new Communication Design. These elements from the Advertising throughline will unmask the truth and subvert the messaging to reveal the brand truth, with all its follies, playing spoilsport to the purpose behind glittering but deceptive communication.

With increasing dependence on technology to create messaging based on data and algorithms, the line between truths and fiction is even further blurred with fewer hits and greater misses. Moreover, the blatant falsehoods masked as the truth have been tantamount to abuse of power and criminal offence.

The project will encourage participants to immerse in their own mental health as they navigate the dark web with its deceptive facades. Facing their fears, they will experiment with creating and experiencing the duality that is the most predatory for them.







“Online fast fashion thrives on speed, affordability, and mass appeal, driving impulse purchasing through rapid product turnover and psychological triggers. Leveraging neuromarketing, targeted digital advertising, and algorithmic recommendations, brands exploit consumer psychology by fostering decision fatigue and a fear of missing out. Social media and constant notifications further shape self-perception and emotional well-being, reinforcing the notion that consumption equates to self-worth. This study critically examines the mechanisms employed by online fashion and product platforms to stimulate impulsive buying, highlighting the interplay between digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior. By uncovering these tactics, the research aims to empower consumers with effective counter-strategies to resist hyper-consumerism, encouraging ethical consumption and informed decision-making in the digital age. The graphic narrative - ‘Clickbait Conspiracy’ uses the research and findings of the project to narrate a simple yet introspective story on pit pat process of fashion consumption, equipping individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern digital marketplace with greater awareness and autonomy.”.

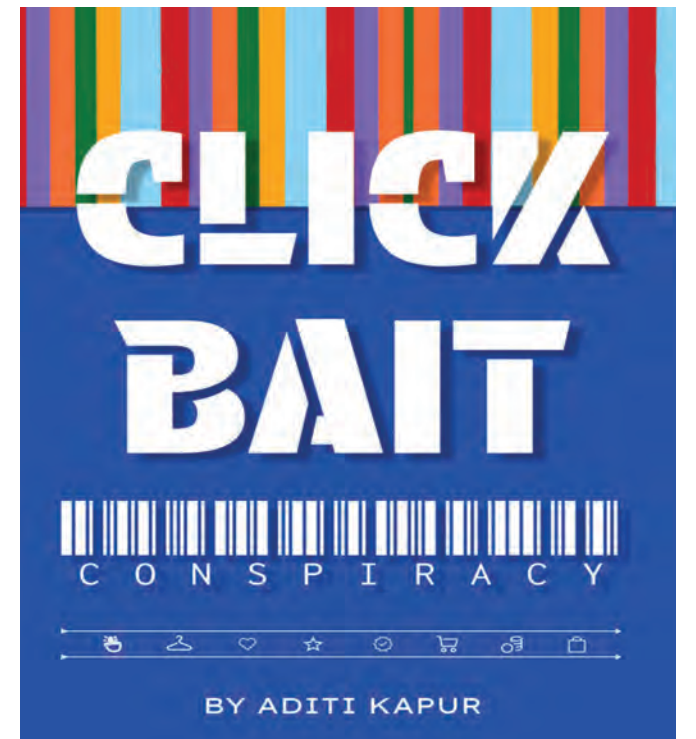


## CLICKBAIT FASHION

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**unscroII**  
Interrupt the habit. Not your day.



“Have you ever picked up your phone to check one notification, only to find yourself still scrolling 30 minutes later? You’re not alone. Rooted in the shared, everyday experience of binge-scrolling, this project unpacks the lie of digital agency—the assumption that we’re in control of our time online. It explores the psychological and technological forces that drive compulsive media use, examining not just what keeps us hooked, but also what causes us to stop. But, despite knowing these patterns, we still find ourselves in the loop—scrolling, regretting, repeating. So is it truly a lack of control... or a lie we tell ourselves to feel better about giving in? That gap between awareness and action is where this project intervenes. It proposes ‘Unscroll’, an app that uses subtle friction and natural behavioural cues to interrupt compulsive use, offering space to pause, reflect, and maybe, just maybe, choose differently.”

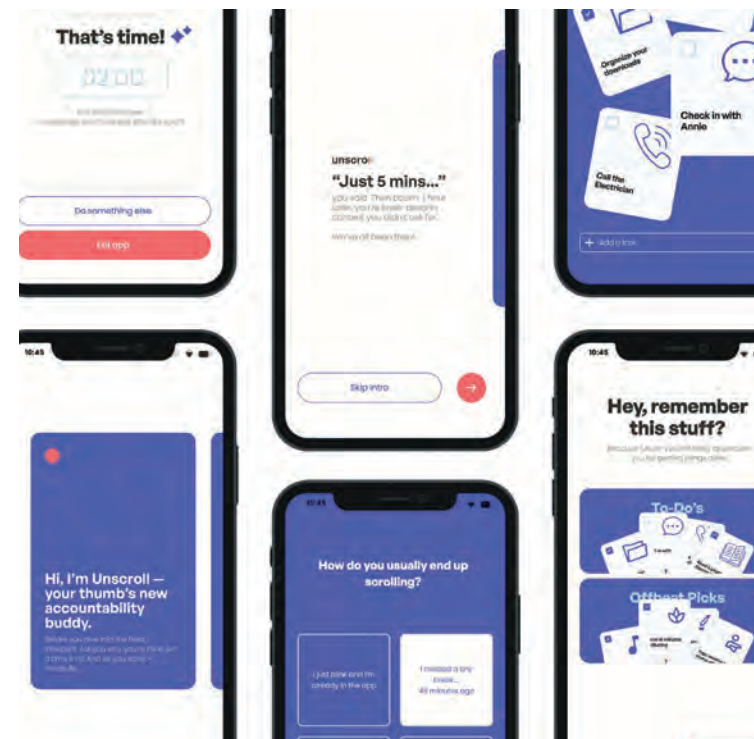
INSTAGRAM,

You keep me on my toes even when my eyes are sore and tired. But you helped me keep an archive, almost as personal as if I have my handwriting written all across my screen. My memories in folders and stories that I will always look back on, even on my bright days. You became a source of inspiration, a well so deep to dig out anything from. I feel I know a lot about the world, life, love, from you. It's a bad thing, that I set expectations based on what I see on

DOOMED TO SCROLL?

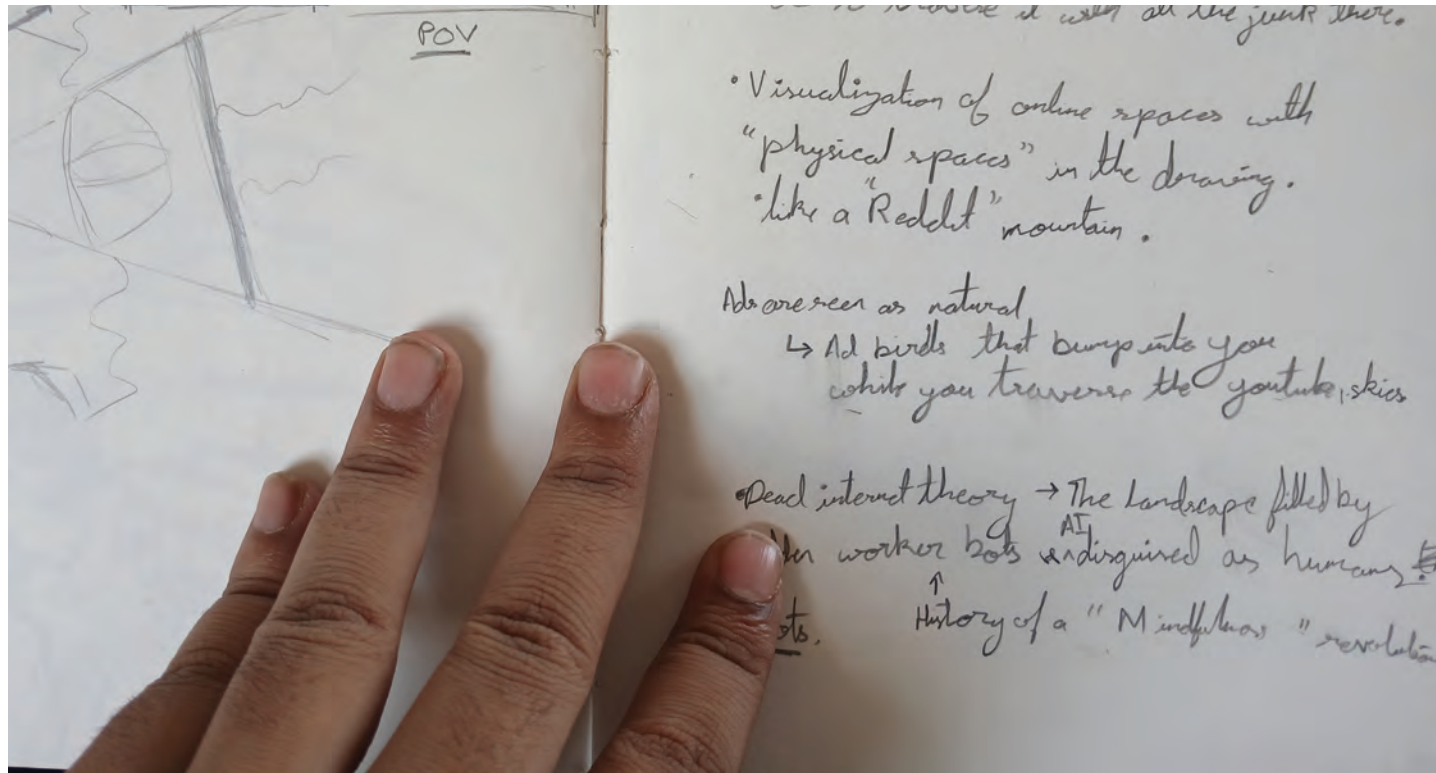
ANANYA RAJHANS

Creative and Applied Computation  
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INSTAGRAM,

It is way past what is due, you keep me distracted from everything that really matters in this world. Myself. I spiralled everyday, every hour, almost subconsciously giving into the whims of your chimes. It is exhausting, and it keeps me up at night even on my worst days. I wouldn't say I actively think about you every second of the day, but my fingertips would disagree. The dent on my index finger would disagree, my sore sleepy eyes would disagree. You gave me starting points when I was lost, but you made me lose myself to the spiral of finding the inspiration. I almost wish for a happy ending, but I know it means I need to understand the meaning of my own time.



"Artificial intelligence (AI) in art has sparked intense debate, often driven by fear-based narratives that paint AI as an existential threat to creative professionals. The dominant discourse frames AI as a force that will replace artists, devalue human creativity, and strip artistic labour of its worth. However, this rhetoric echoes historical patterns of technological resistance, where innovations like photography, digital art, and 3D modelling were once seen as threats but ultimately became tools for creative expansion. This project critically examines the idea of fear and how fearmongering around AI in art is constructed, amplified, and internalized. By analysing online narratives, their biases, historical technological disruptions, and real-world artistic adaptations, this project seeks to craft narratives and stories which touch upon issues commonly faced by new creative practitioners and ease the commonly existing fears including but not limited to the fear of ai, financial pressure, online discourse and artistic burnout. Through a combination of research and visual storytelling, this project aims to empower artists with the knowledge to navigate AI's role in their practice, shifting the conversation from fear to informed adaptation."

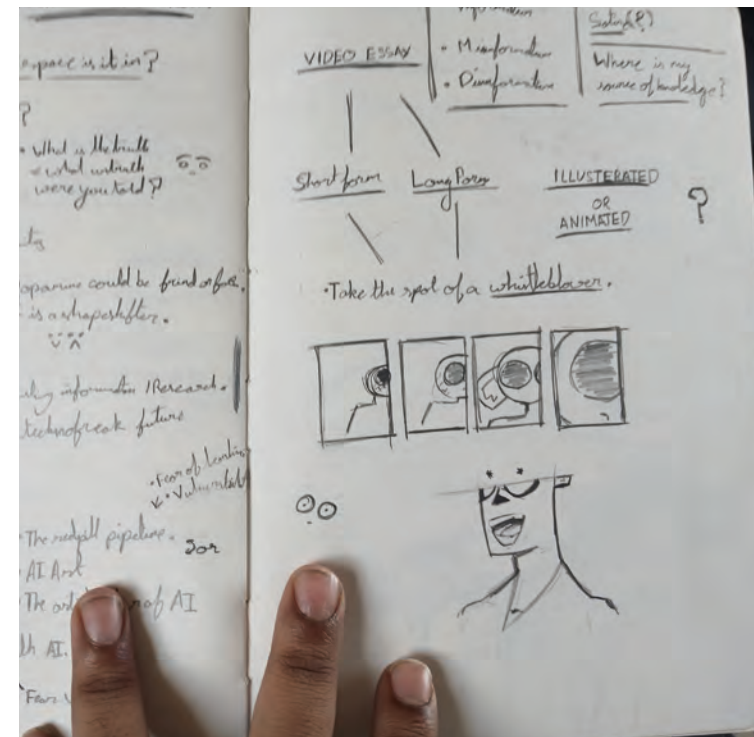


## ECHOES OF A MACHINE: REFLECTIONS ON AI AND ART

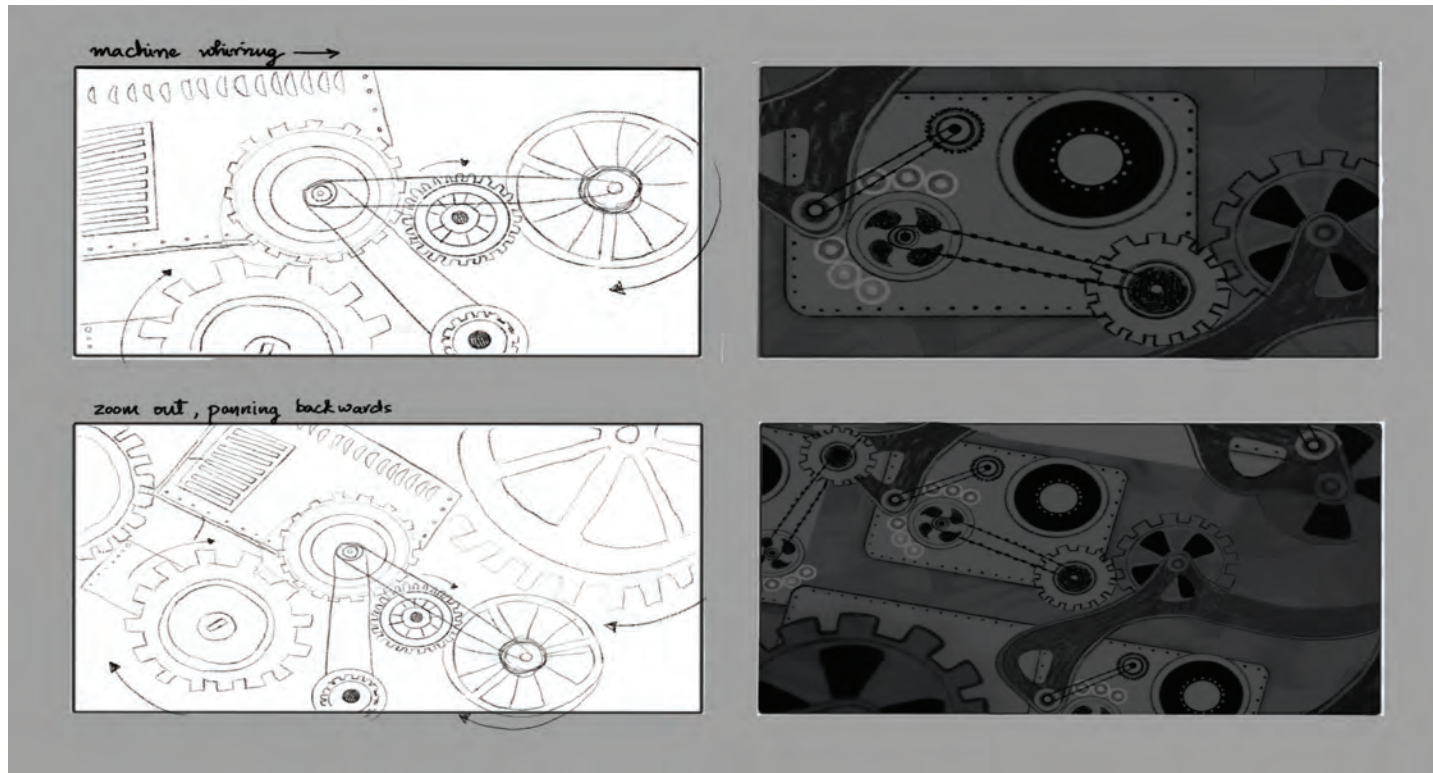
**ANUJ MENON**

Visual Communication and Strategic Branding

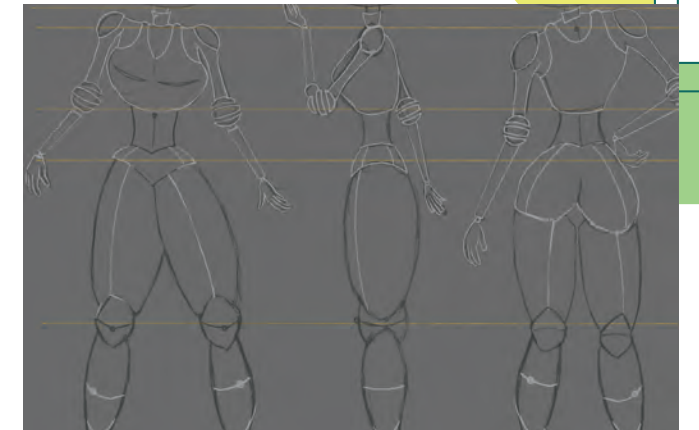
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“Mirrored” is an animated short trailer about a confused robot female AI who is inherently programmed according to the misogynistic culture and stereotypes of the world and is celebrated all over the world. But as she sees how real women are silenced, controlled and erased in the world, doubts on her self rise in her. Through this awakening, she begins to question her purpose, her programming, and the culture that built her. This project explores themes of objectification, gender norms, and autonomy through the lens of artificial intelligence, highlighting how deeply-rooted misogyny shapes not only human lives but also the technologies we create.”

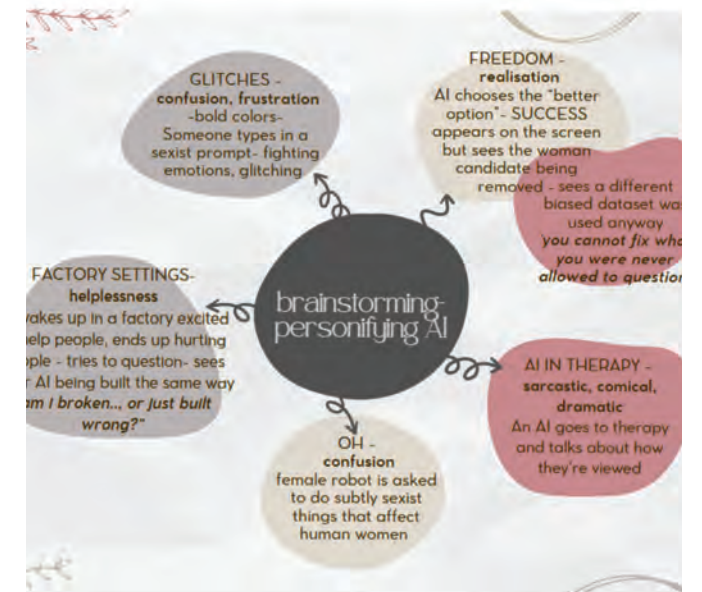


## MIRRORED

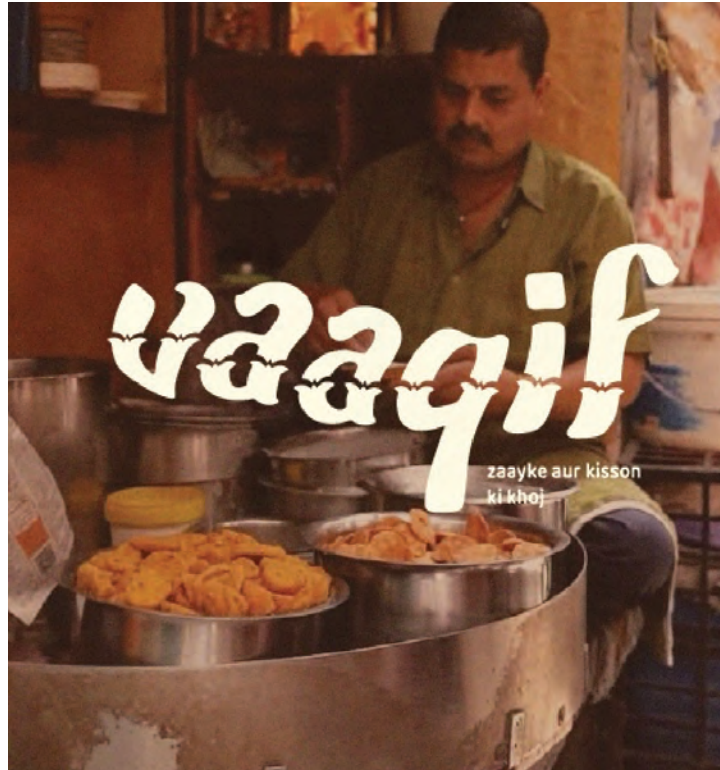
APARNA VISWANATH

Digital Media Arts

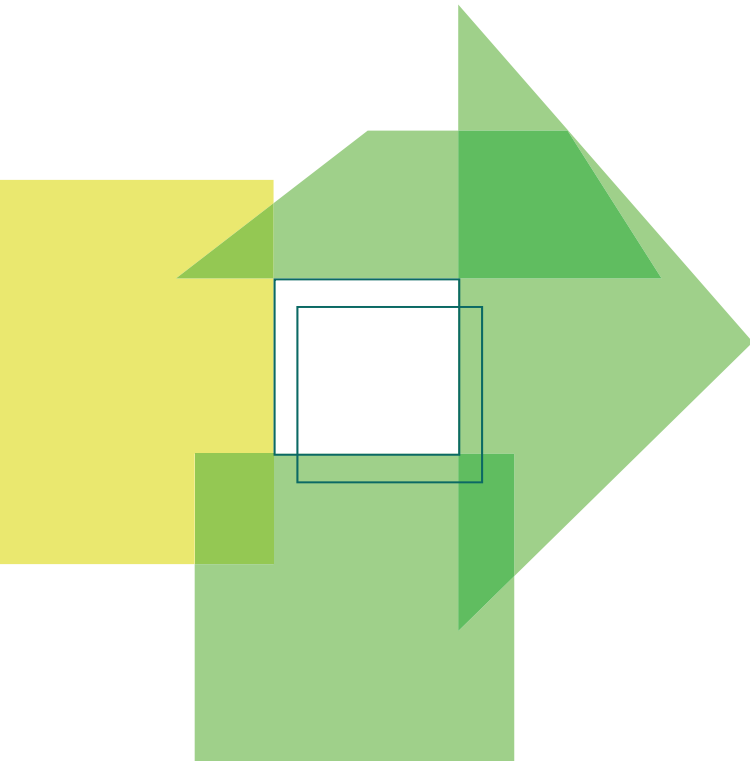
screamycat1502@gmail.com







Bhavika's project deconstructs the mythic construction of "authentic Indian food" via her brand, Vaaqif. Through an experience-based storytelling of food, Vaaqif disrupts conventional perceptions and the fixed understanding of taste. How much do we know about what we eat? In a world where culture is exoticised and appropriated, the 'taste of India' becomes a gimmick and we become sheep following the rhetoric. For a country that loves its chai and loves its charcha, we need more. That is where we come in. Vaaqif is a service that facilitates self-reflection through guided walks, tastings, and conversations that map the power of migration, memory, and individual context over food. Authenticity is not a product here – it is a process. Through the deconstruction of labels and affirmation of lived experience, Vaaqif is an invitation for an open-ended discussion, wherein each contributor offers up their own truth..



**VAAQIF**

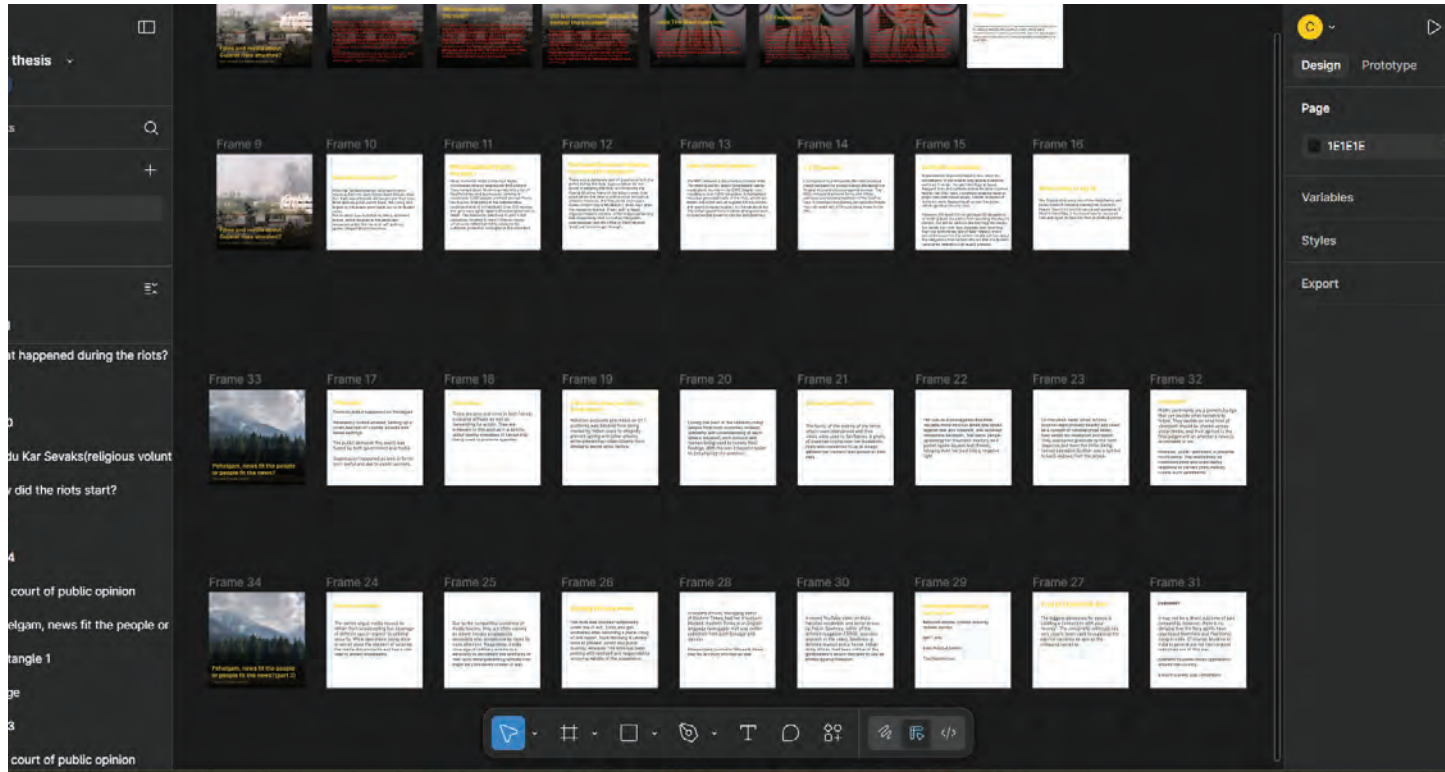
**BHAVIKA BHATIA**

Visual Communication and Strategic Branding

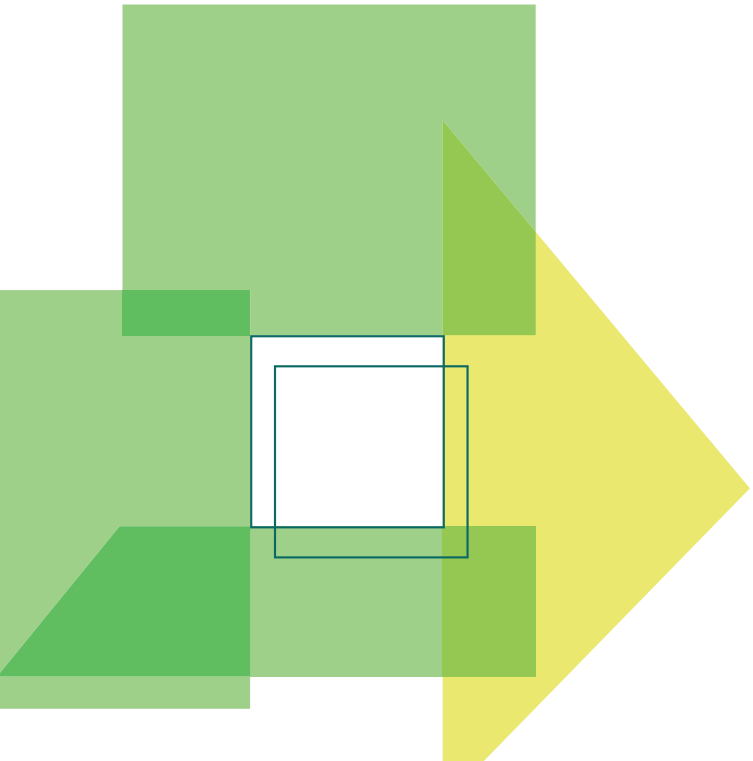
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India is ranked 159 out of 180 nations considered in the 2024 edition of the Press Freedom Index, published by the organisation Reporters Without Borders. Censorship does not begin with openly sanctioned government laws; instead, it arises from brute force, financial and influential power, and control over media outlets. A nation's progression brings with it information. Such information is complex and layered, and it needs media and journalists to piece it together. Controlling these media results in people not accessing the information and therefore being unaware of the restraints they are put under. My project aims to create a social media account to create various content focusing on different aspects of censorship such as films, laws, national and foreign journalism, and private and public journalism..

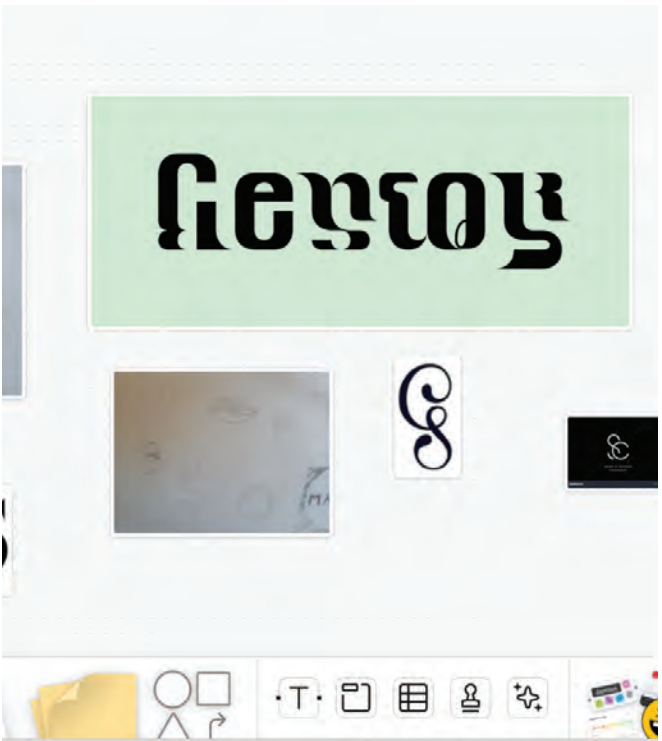


**CENSOR SENSOR**

**CHIRAGH ARORA**

Creative Writing

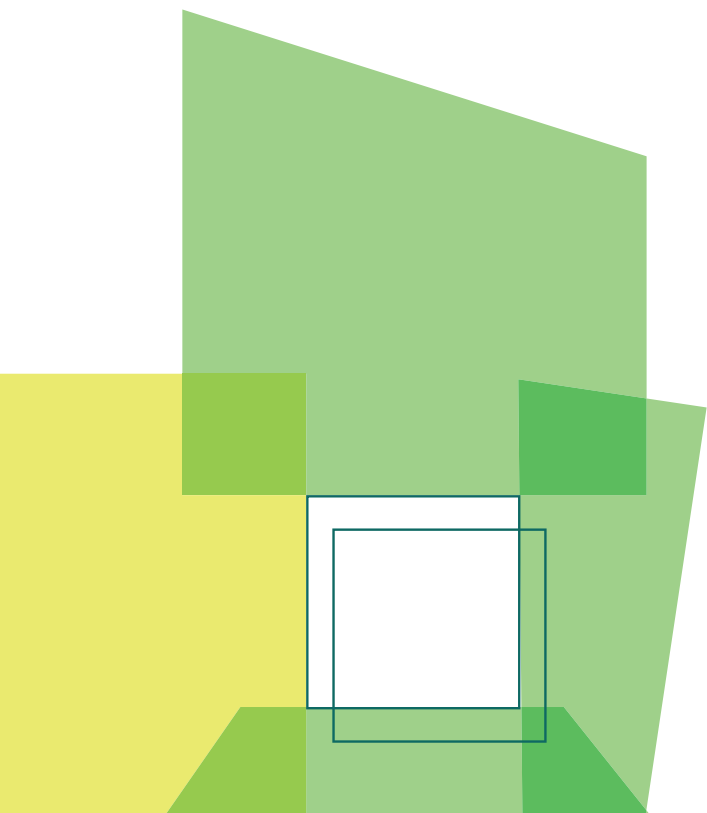
chiragharora24@gmail.com







This thesis interrogates the deeply embedded myth of Mumbai as the “city of dreams and resilience”—a narrative that continues to romanticize struggle, glorify resilience, and frame success as universally attainable. By unpacking the illusion that hard work alone ensures mobility, the project reveals how systemic barriers render struggle a condition rather than a phase for many of the city’s inhabitants. Through a critical exploration of cultural memory, mainstream cinema, and news media—from films like Gully Boy to coverage of crises like the migrant exodus and urban floods—this work examines how these stories sustain deceptive ideals of opportunity. Rather than dismantling Mumbai’s mythos with cynicism, the thesis seeks to hold its contradictions in tension: honoring lived truths alongside celebrated illusions. Ultimately, it asks—if we expose a lie, what takes its place?.

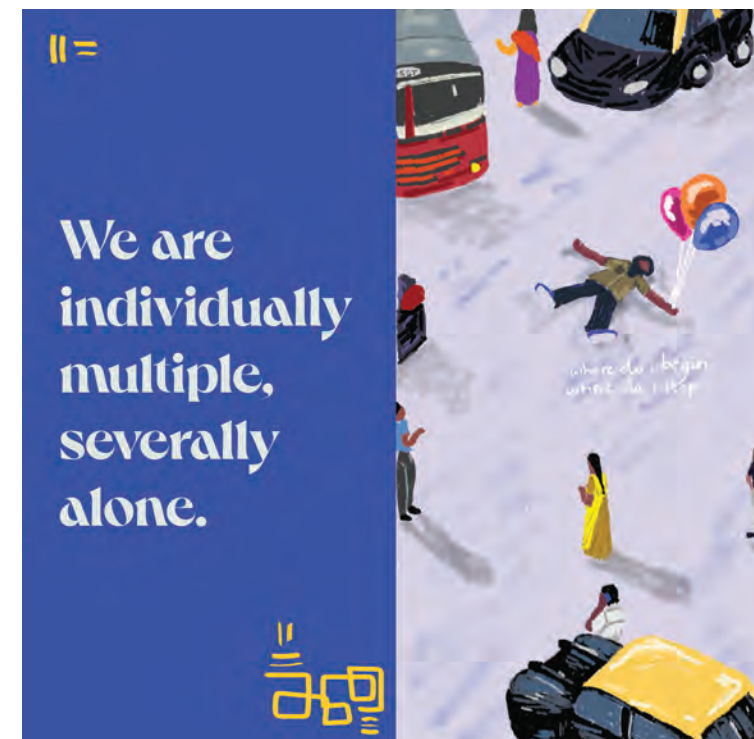


## MUMBAI- EK MAYANAGRI

DRISHTI TANNA

Digital Media Arts

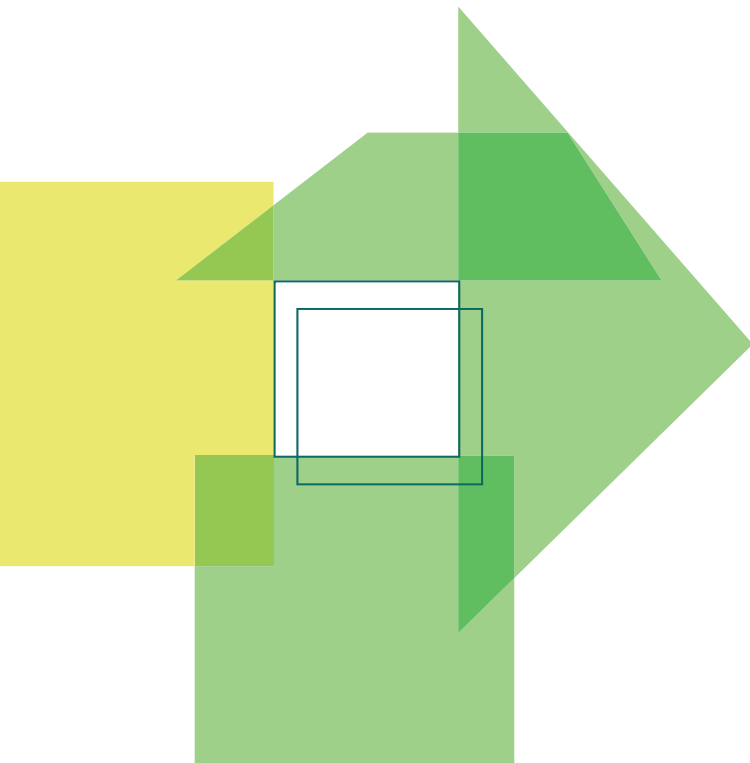
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The gaming industry has long relied on hype-driven marketing, often using misleading trailers, AI-enhanced visuals, and scripted gameplay sequences to sell an idealized version of a game. This project investigates the mechanisms of deception in video game marketing, focusing on how promotional content is fabricated to be more than what the final product is. Through a combination of case study analysis, visual comparisons, and experimental design, this research examines the ethical implications of such deceptive strategies and their impact on consumer trust. The project also explores methods for detecting misleading marketing, proposing a visual-novel game to spread awareness and help players evaluate promotional materials. By bridging academic research and creative experimentation, this project aims to raise awareness about the increasing media deception and empower consumers..

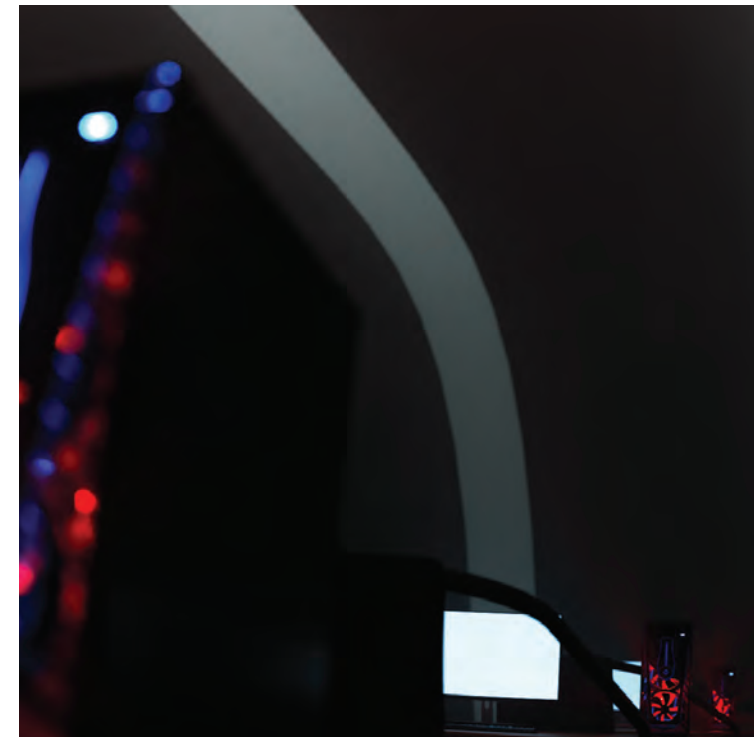


## BEYOND THE TRAILER

**G K ASHWATH**

Creative and Applied Computation

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We exist in a reality where a large portion of our lives is lived on the internet. Our online experiences are engineered, curated, and monetized. We navigate online spaces with the belief that our interactions are purely social and personal and that our data is protected through privacy policies we've "agreed" to. But the insidious reality is that our behaviors, emotions, and identities are being manipulated, nudged, and shaped by forces designed to reduce us into digestible tokens that can be profited from. "Where do the Carousel Horses Go?" is a metaphorical narrative unpacking the lie that frames our digital experience as a social experience and an empowering tool of self expression, uncovering the process through which social media has turned into a commercial ecosystem. If we don't question the truth we are fed, we risk living in a world where our perception of reality is entirely controlled by those that benefit from deceiving us.

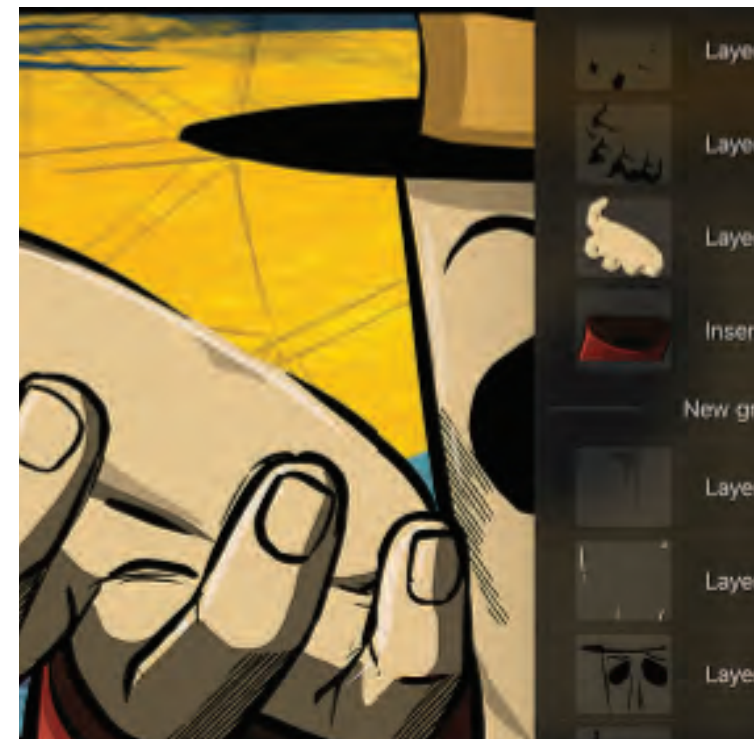


## WHERE DO THE CAROUSEL HORSES GO?

**SHALINI KUNDU**

Information Arts and Information Design Practices

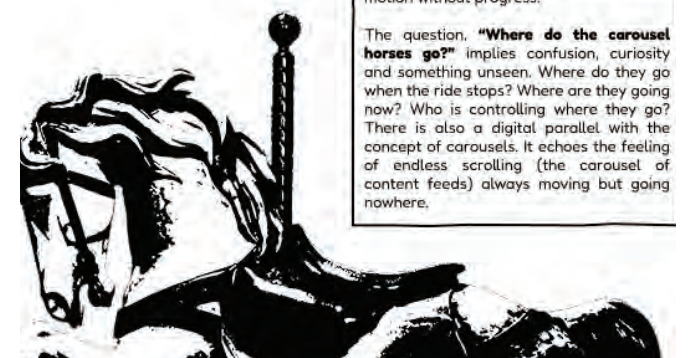
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## WHY A CAROUSEL?

The metaphor of a carousel evokes a childlike sense of wonder and whimsy that we're on a constant chase to find. The experience of being online feels like a carousel, colorful, fast, and addictive and yet you end up lost, disoriented, and no closer to the joy you were chasing. The carousel horses symbolize this perpetual motion without progress.

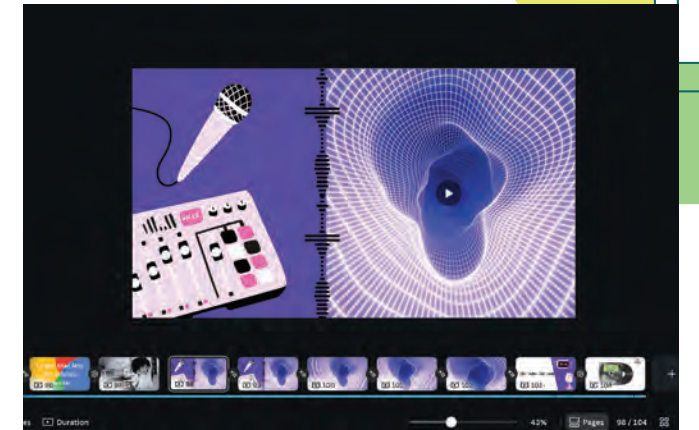
The question, "Where do the carousel horses go?" implies confusion, curiosity and something unseen. Where do they go when the ride stops? Where are they going now? Who is controlling where they go? There is also a digital parallel with the concept of carousels. It echoes the feeling of endless scrolling (the carousel of content feeds) always moving but going nowhere.







Jingles may sound fun and catchy, but there's more going on than meets the ear. This project digs into how sound and music in ads sneakily shape how we feel, trust, and remember brands—without ever spelling it out. From Liril's waterfall to Titan's classical flair and Airtel's friendship anthem, these tunes weren't just selling soap or watches—they were selling lifestyles, dreams, and sometimes, a little illusion. "What a Jingle Doesn't Tell You" pulls back the curtain on the feel-good frequencies that quietly mess with our choices..



## WHAT A JINGLE DOESN'T TELL YOU

**MALLIKA MADHAVI RAJESH**

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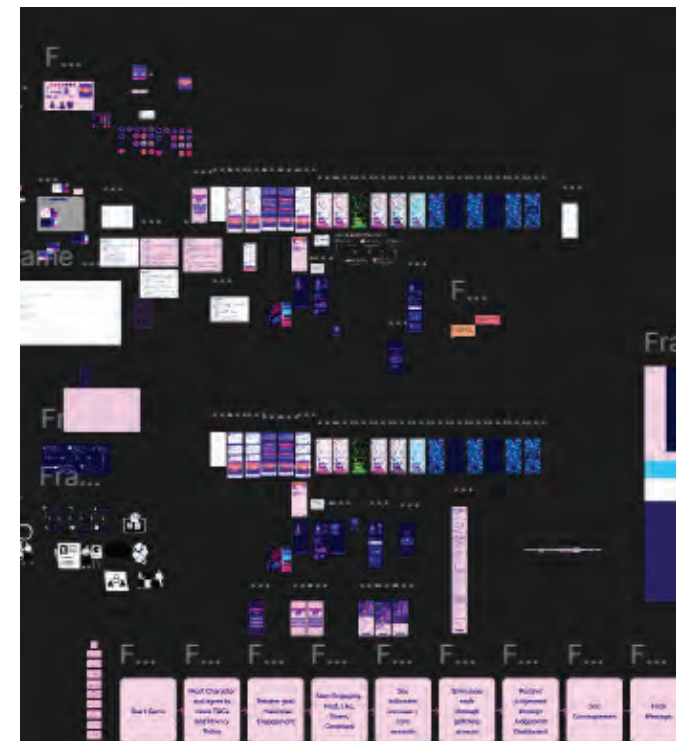
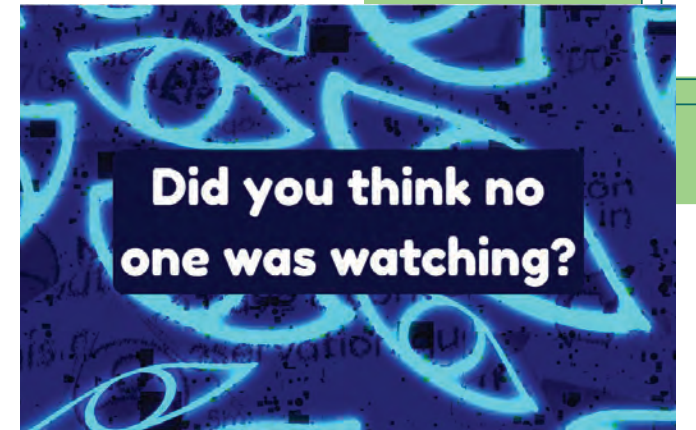
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You watched the world through your screens, unaware that someone was watching back. You joined for the memes, the cat pics and the occasional update on your life, but did you think that was all it would be? Did you think you would go by unnoticed? There is a hidden layer to everything you do online (yes even the smallest things), you are judged by more than just your physical reality. Every action you make on social media contributes to an ever-growing digital mirror of you. This project aims to give a reality check. It plays with the gap between who we think we are online and how we're seen — not just by people, but by invisible mechanisms deciding if we're good enough, safe enough, real enough. You are immersed in a social media simulator and you have only one goal- be the most engaging person you can. Through your likes, comments, reposts and posts, create the most popular digital personality you can, no matter how controversial. And forget about the tiny little, honestly inconsequential fact that it can and will all be seen. And judged. We are all but waiting to be the victims of our digital personas. Nothing can erase it.....no one can escape it..



## UNDER THE BLUELIGHT

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Human-centred design enables us to question how digital, physical, and phygital spaces shape our emotional and cultural experiences. This project explores how design can critically expose the psychological weight of productivity culture. In a world consumed by hustle culture and self-optimisation, productivity has evolved into a marketable ideal - packaged and sold by influencers, apps, and corporate systems. This project interrogates the paradox at the heart of this culture: are we truly getting things done, or merely caught in a cycle of consuming advice about doing? The Productivity Paradox immerses viewers in an overwhelming cycle of self-optimization and asks: are we getting more done, or just endlessly preparing to be productive? With the fragmented voices and shifting lights, it aims to drown out individual thought. At its core, a pixelated screen reflects the visitor's silhouette - fleeting, fragmented, never fully formed. As they step back, everything disappears, only to realize they haven't actually done anything, only consumed the idea of doing..

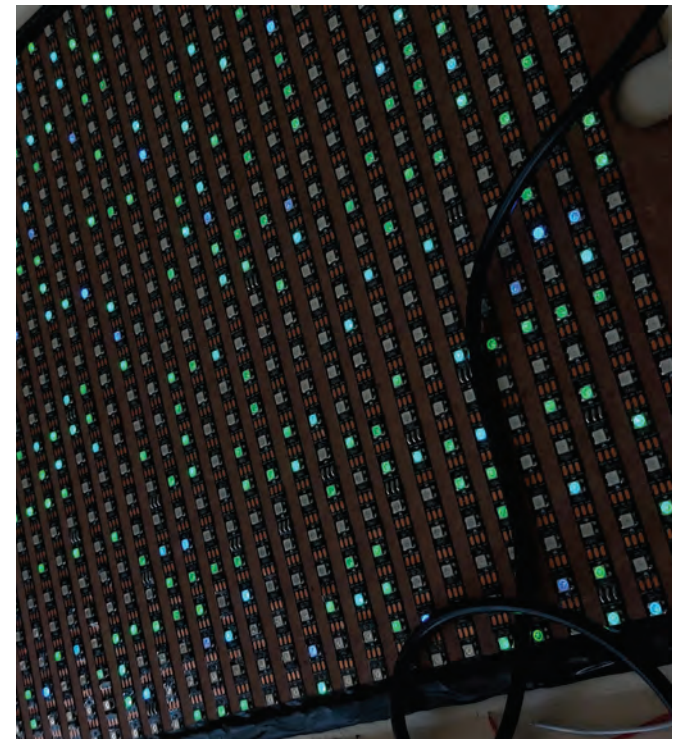


## THE PRODUCTIVITY PARADOX

MEHAL KUMAR

Human Centered Design

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Penelope is a speculative design intervention that tackles the murky ethics of AI-powered marketing. Set in a consumer landscape increasingly shaped by opaque algorithms and surveillance capitalism, the project questions how much agency we truly have when every scroll, click, and pause becomes data. By exposing manipulative design patterns and unpacking the “black box” nature of AI recommendation systems, Penelope. AI empowers users to recognize when and how their decisions are being influenced. The project proposes a browser plug-in that gamifies AI literacy—making it easier for users to understand what data is being collected, how it’s being used, and why it matters. At its heart, Penelope.AI is a call for transparency, fairness, and user autonomy in digital spaces—an attempt to reimagine marketing not as a means of manipulation, but as a medium of informed, consensual desire..

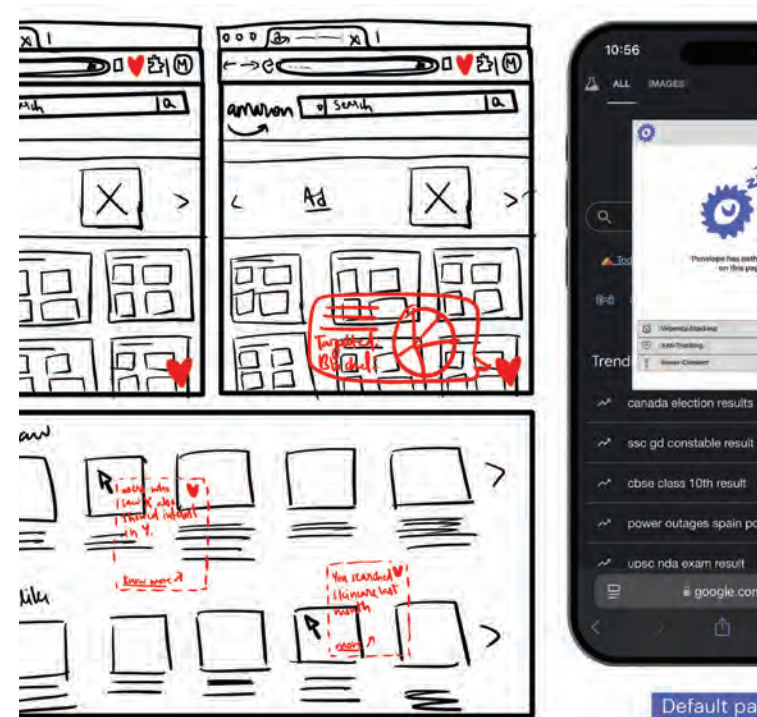


**PENELOPE.AI**

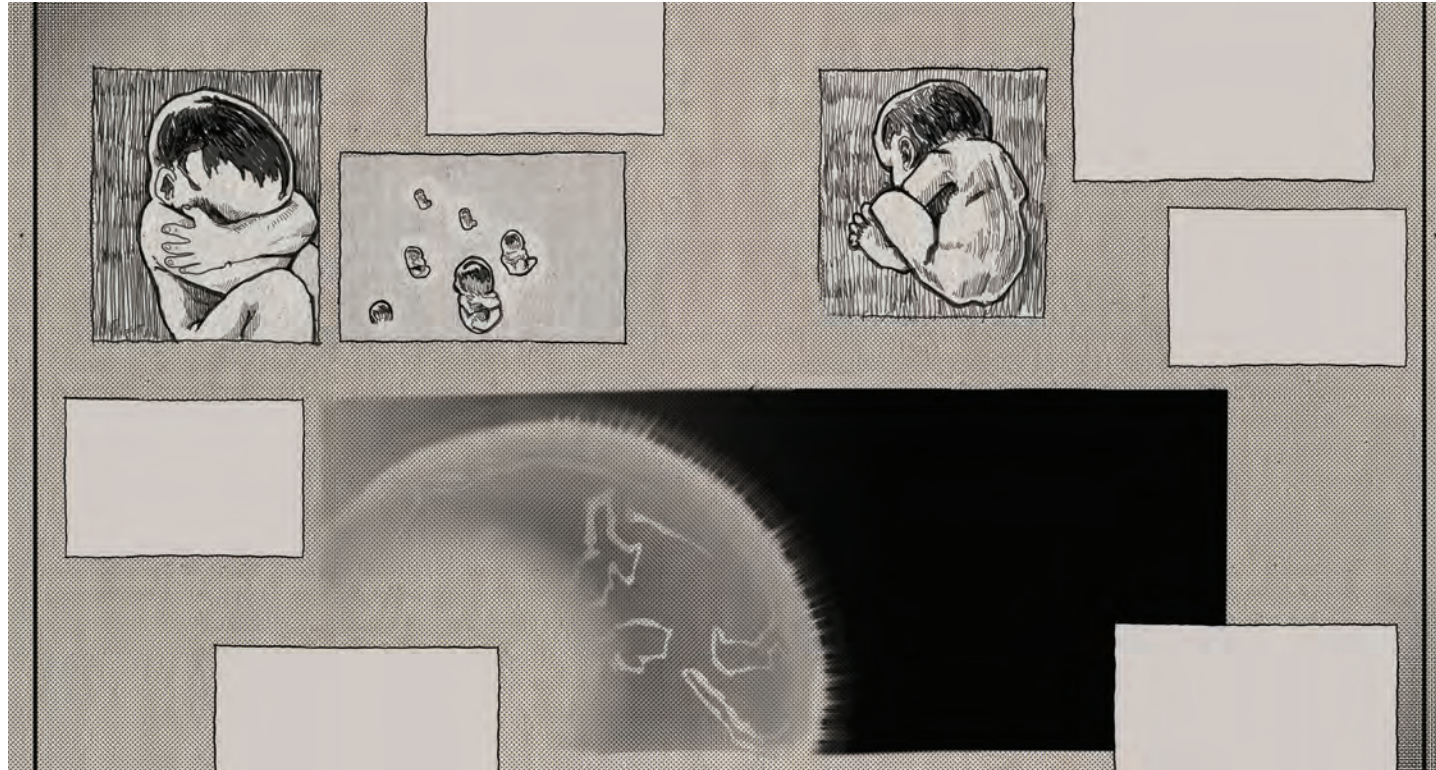
**MUSKAAN KUMAR**

Visual Communication and Strategic Branding

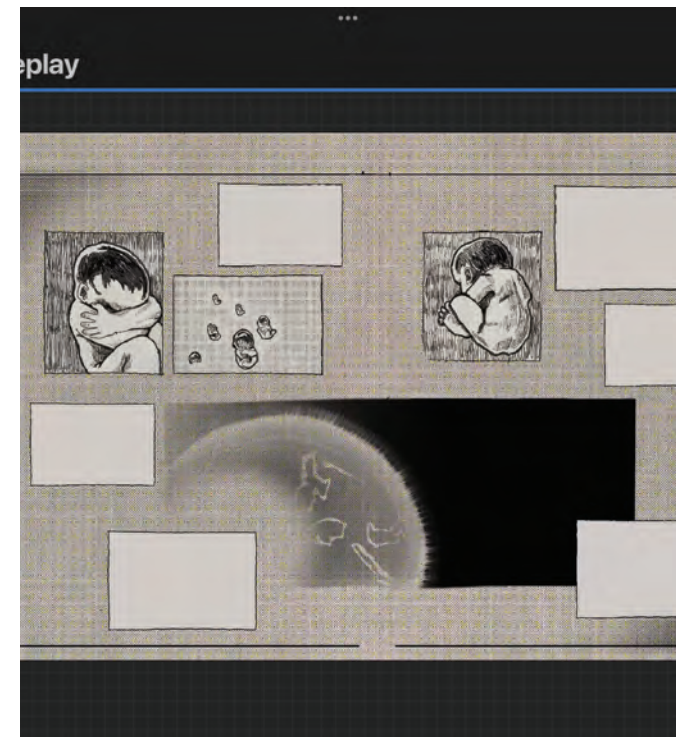
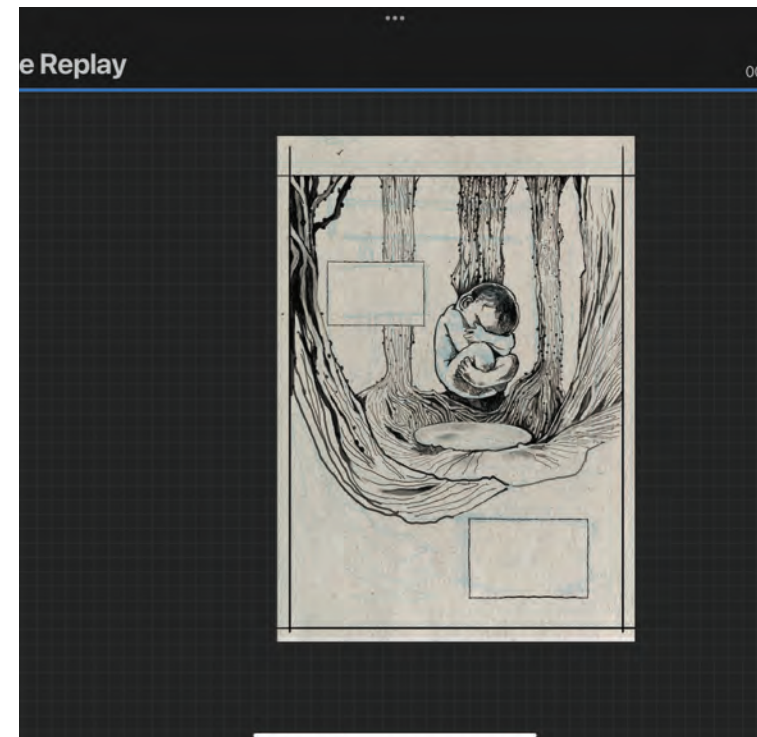
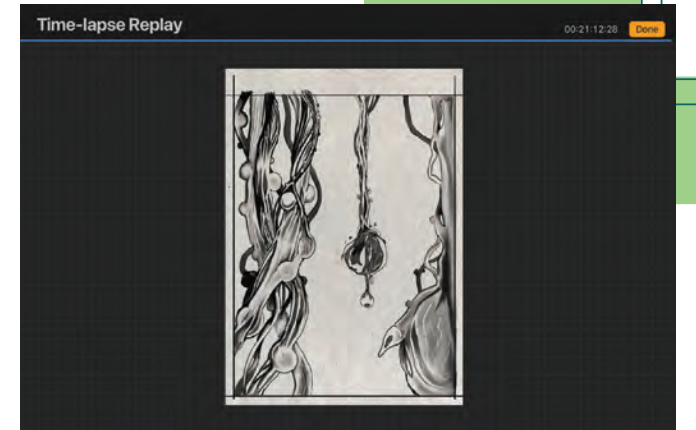
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Telehuman is a graphic novel research comic set in a near-future society governed by the Evaluators, a body assessing individuals' worth for housing, work, and civic rights. Aria, a devoted Evaluator, relies on impartial metrics until she meets Kai, a street artist whose emotional authenticity defies statistical norms. Flashbacks contrast Kai's vivid memories with sterile assessment charts, revealing biases in algorithmic systems that reduce human complexity to numbers. As Aria and Kai uncover a secret program manipulating evaluation thresholds for political and corporate gain, Telehuman explores ethical tensions between automated decision-making and moral responsibility. Council hearings and confrontations dramatize how instrumental rationality can erode empathy and social legitimacy. Through expressive line art and integrated data visuals, Telehuman interrogates algorithmic fairness, human dignity, and storytelling's power to critique surveillance infrastructures. It advocates transparent design and participatory governance, inviting readers to reflect on empathy's role in a data-driven world and its implications..



**TELEHUMAN**

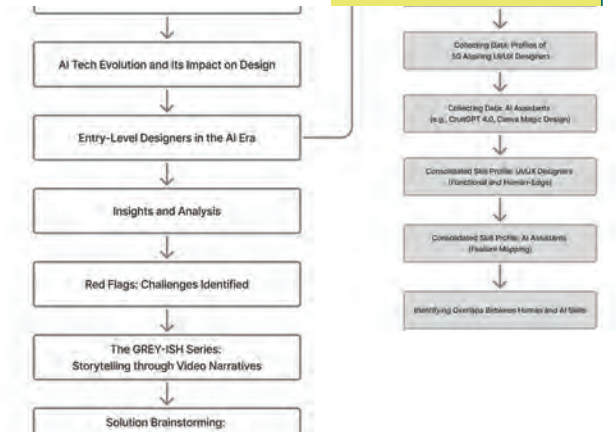
**PINAK AHLAWAT**

Creative Education





"I am an entry-level designer. AI will assist and augment the work I do." I believed this with complete certainty. It felt progressive and optimistic. But the closer I looked, the more that certainty began to fray. As someone just beginning their career, I wanted to understand the world I was stepping into. I'm not alone in this. Many young designers are trying to make sense of a landscape where AI is framed as an assistant, sometimes a collaborator, and increasingly—a competitor. The lines blur quickly, and what is currently touted as support seems to hold the potential to quietly slide into substitution. Grey-ish is an attempt to sit inside that blur. It begins with the lie and moves to unravel its cracks and contradictions. At its heart lies The Greyish Series—a set of video narratives delving into the shifting dynamics between AI and the design ecosystem, especially at the entry level. Expectations, Exploitation, Ethics. This exploration doesn't promise clarity. It lingers in the confusion. Because sometimes, the only honest place to be—is in the grey..



**GREY-ISH**

**PRANAV PREMKUMAR**

Human Centered Design

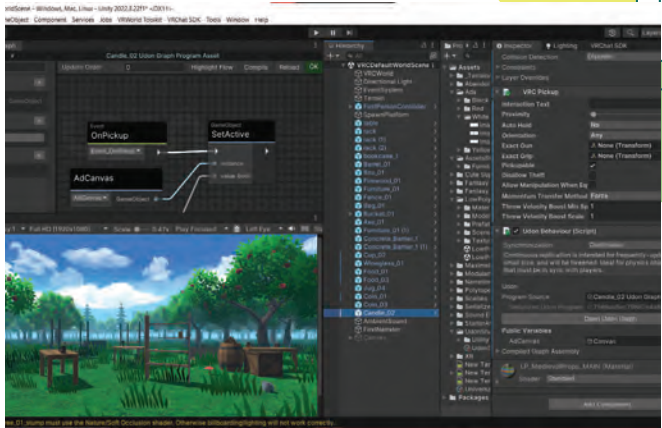
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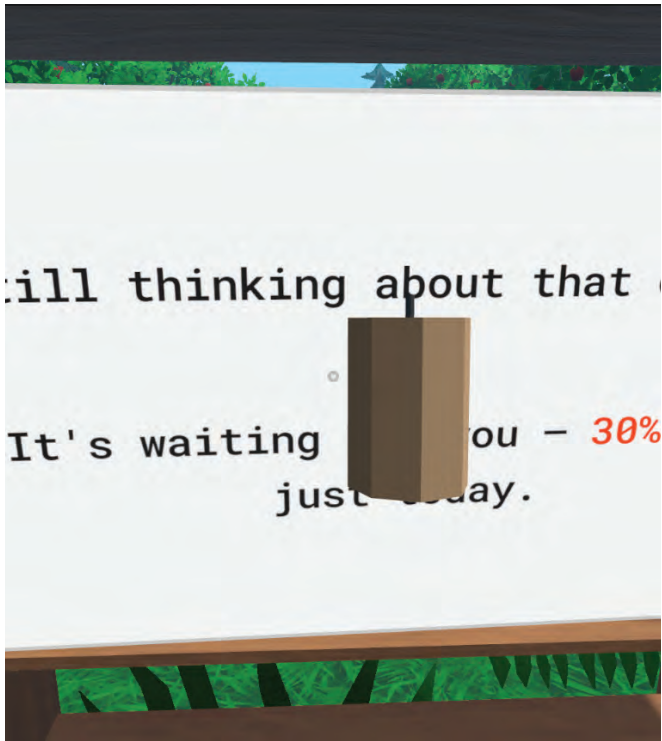
This project investigates how AI-driven advertisements and personalized recommendations shape user behavior and decision-making in digital spaces. Focusing on themes of digital persuasion, cognitive bias, and emotional influence, it reveals how users are subtly guided by algorithmic systems across social media, e-commerce, and streaming platforms. The intent is to unpack the hidden strategies behind targeted advertising and raise awareness about how user data is used to drive consumption and engagement. The final outcome is an immersive VR experience that places users in a simulated environment where ads escalate in response to their behavior—highlighting how everyday interactions are influenced by unseen forces and encouraging users to reflect on their agency in the digital world..



# MIND UNDER MACHINE

**RAGHAV SRIVATSAN**

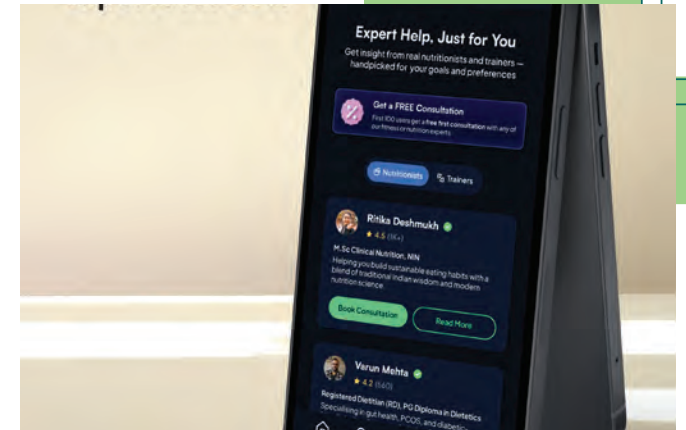
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In today's digital ecosystem, fitness and nutrition content is everywhere—shared through Reels, Shorts, and stories that blur the line between advice and opinion. With influencers, trends, and quick-fix solutions dominating timelines, users—especially young Indians—are left overwhelmed, unsure of what to trust, and often passive in their consumption. My project addresses this gap by designing a mobile-first app that helps users verify and reflect on the content they come across online. Instead of labeling information as right or wrong, the app breaks down claims into research-backed insights, highlights red and green flags, and prompts users with questions to assess whether the advice suits their body, goals, and context.

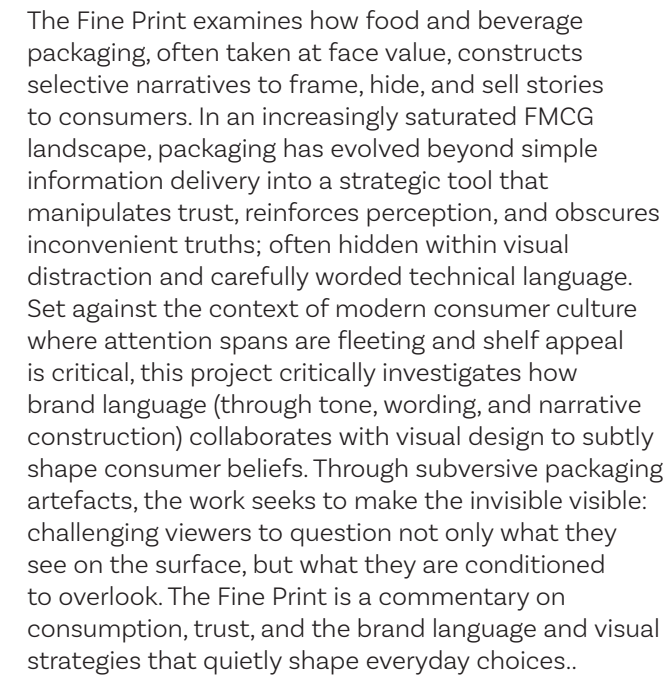


SOURCE: TRUST ME, BRO

RAHUL MISHRA  
Digital Media Arts  
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**ROCHELLE MARIA FERNANDES**

## Visual Communication and Strategic Branding

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Fracture is an abstract animated short film exploring the psychological effects of digital validation in the age of social media. The film follows a young woman navigating a hyperconnected world where online personas begin to overshadow reality. As she seeks validation through a curated digital presence, her internal self fractures—visually symbolized by cracked reflections and a haunting, perfected version of herself. Set in a surreal, inverted city and a rain-drenched apartment, the film uses moody lighting and metaphor to portray the emotional dissonance between external image and internal identity. Through visual storytelling rather than dialogue, Fracture captures the quiet crisis of a generation shaped by likes, filters, and performance. It invites viewers to reflect on their own digital habits and the cost of living through a screen. The narrative remains open-ended, leaving space for interpretation while exposing the unsettling loop of comparison, insecurity, and curated validation..



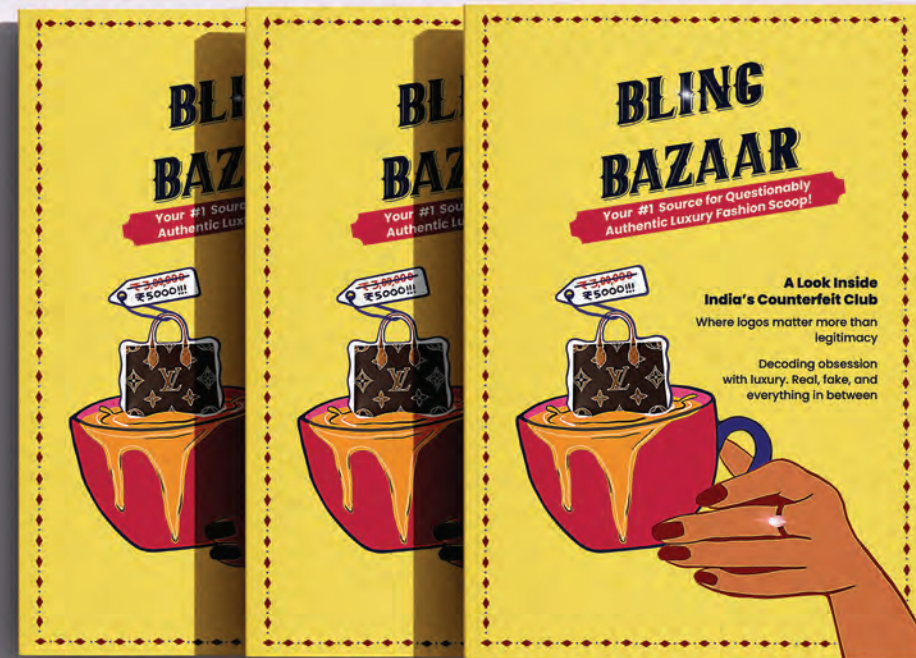
## FRACTURED

**SHIVA BHERI**

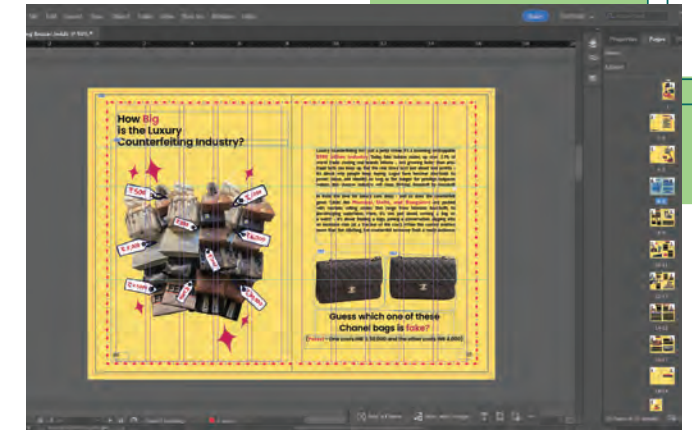
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Srinidhi Sairam's project investigates a unique lie in consumer culture — one where both the buyer and the seller are complicit in the deception: the booming luxury counterfeit market. Bling Bazaar is a playful publication that examines India's obsession with foreign luxury through the lens of imitation, aspiration, and identity. Set against the backdrop of Mumbai's bustling fake markets, this project delves into the layered world of counterfeits — where it's not just 'Lewie Vitton' bags on the line, but superfakes so convincing that even the original stores might blink twice. From Punjabi rap songs to celebrities' 'What's in My Bag' reveals, the publication explores how global luxury has been localized, reinterpreted, and sometimes spoofed. It brings together the seemingly opposite worlds of street markets and high fashion, offering commentary on how prestige and parody often collide in the most unexpected ways..

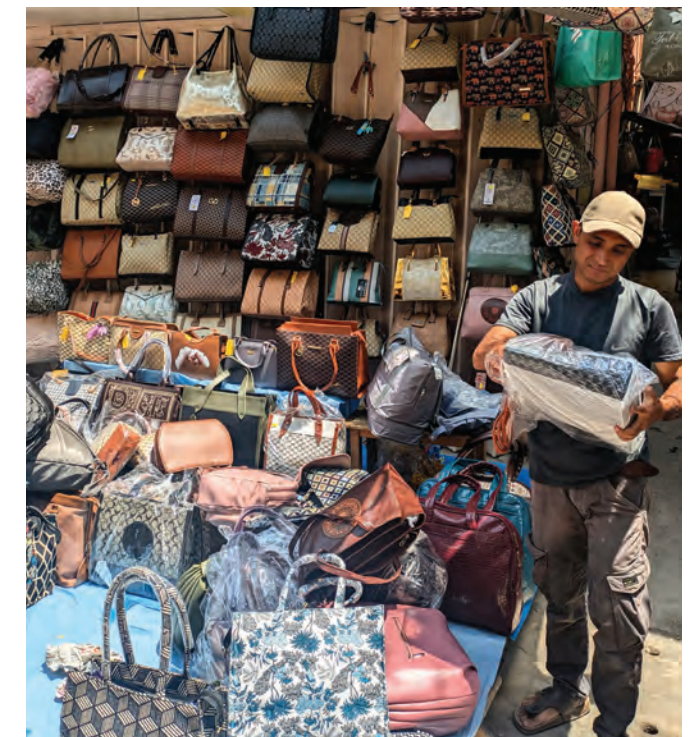


## GLITZ AND GIMMICKS

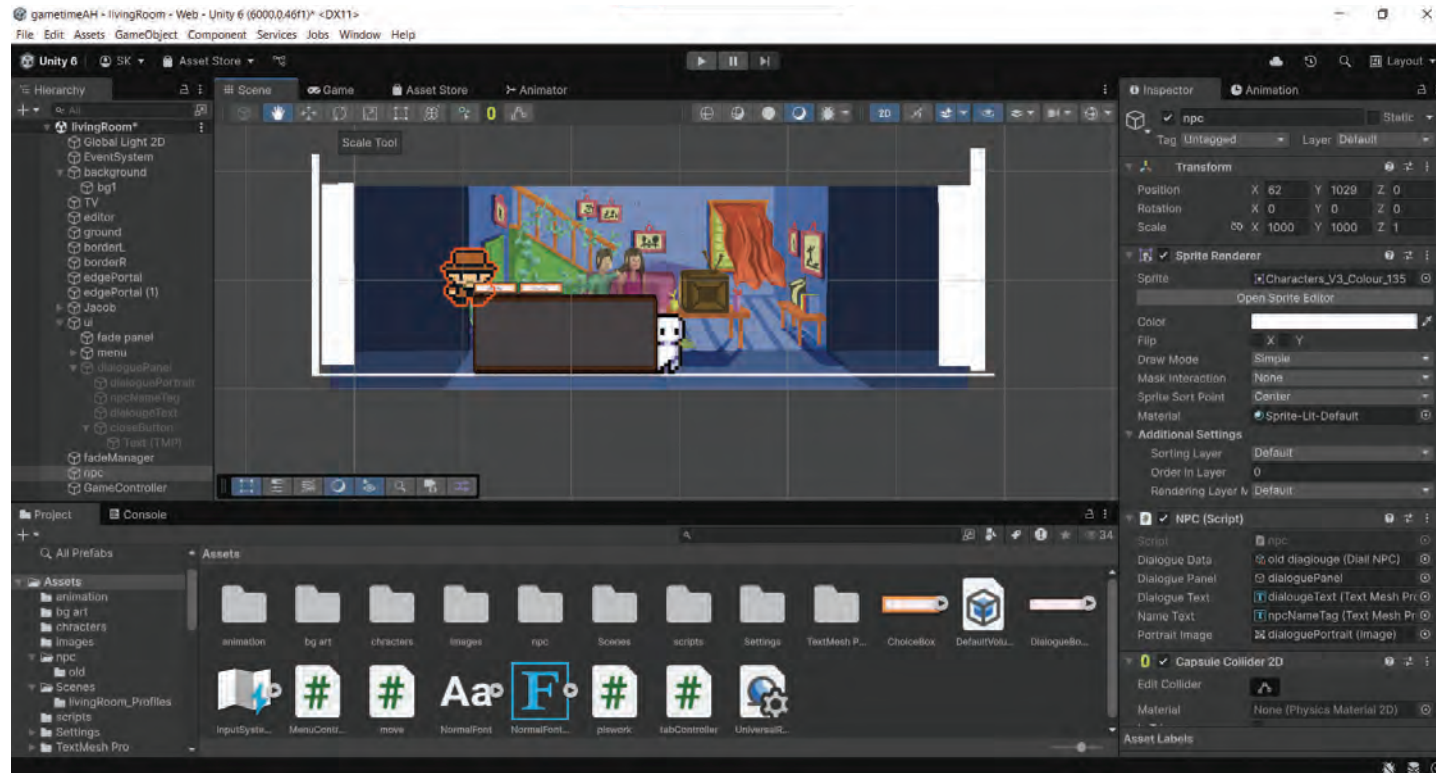
SRINIDHI SAIRAMAKRISHNAN

Human Centered Design

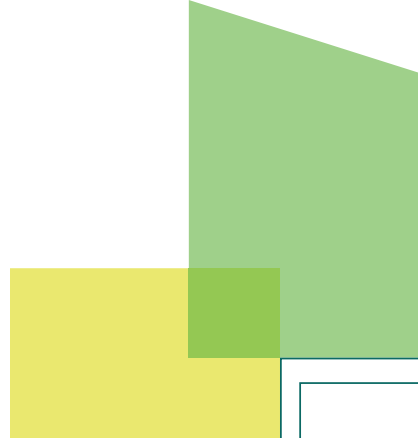
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Fake news is consumed everyday like biscuits with tea. Even in the age of information people tend to believe what fits their political biases rather than looking out for the truth. I am looking at how these political lies are spread by mass media, inhibiting our perception and inturn, decision making. Using humour as a tool to inculcate critical conversations, disarming the establishment of its faithful prestige..



DEBUNKED WITH A PUNCHLINE

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