VISION

VISION

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This project is part of the Live Client module

Which focuses on real-world, client-based design projects where students collaborate with external partners to deliver professional outcomes. The brief, titled "National Space Exploration Centre (NSEC)," involves developing a comprehensive brand identity, wayfinding systems, and one interactive exhibition for a new, innovative space center. The live client Project is the Branding Project about the National Space Exploration Centre, called NSEC. It is an upcoming Space education visitor attraction by Metaversal Ltd. Located in Monksland Athlone in Westpoint Retail Park.

Live Client

It aims to be an interactive Space Museum which combines entertainment and education through new VR technologies and other simulations.
The Centre is divided into 4 quarters with different space-related themes.

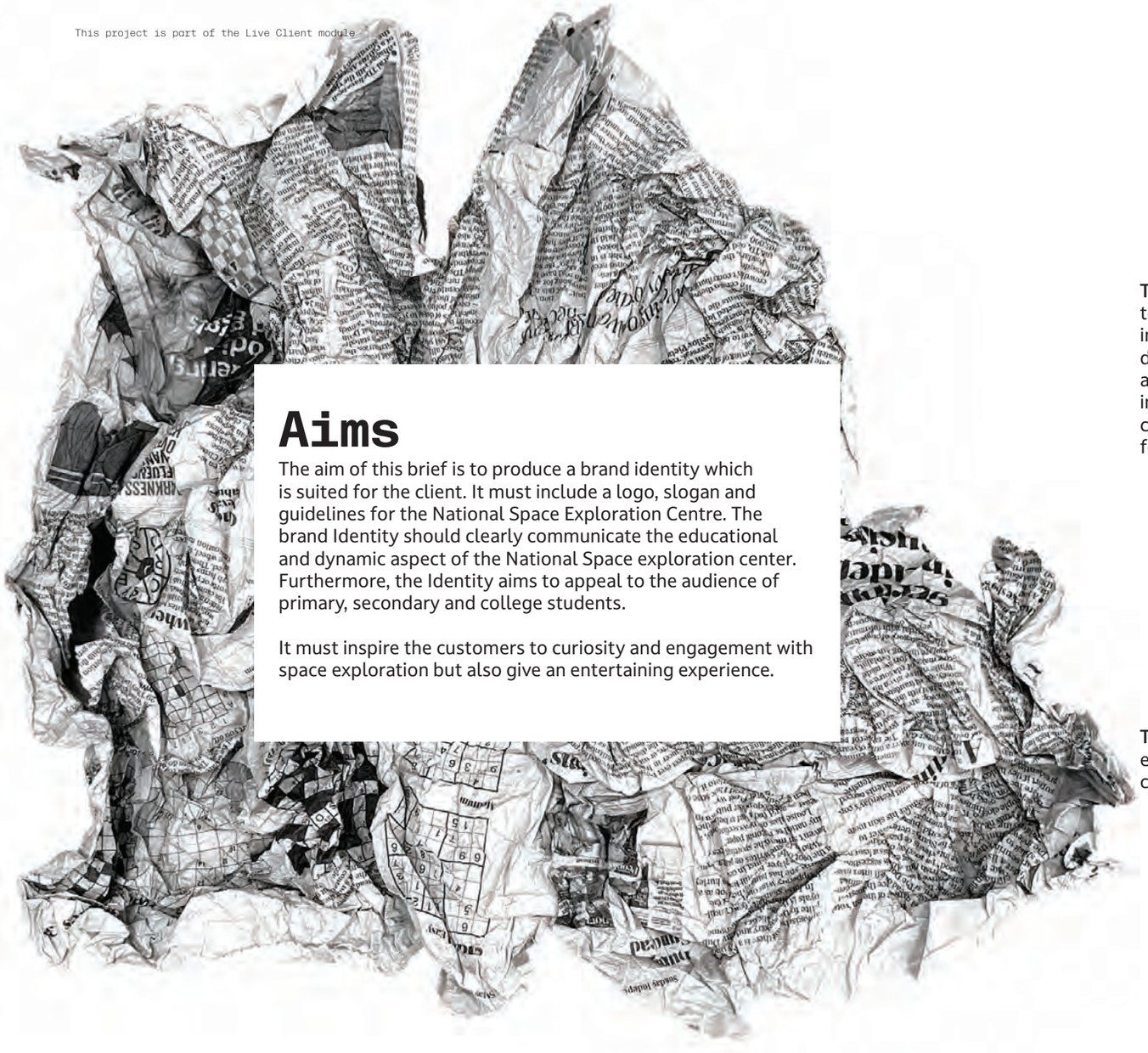
The National Space Exploration Centre is being developed to fill the gap in space-related educational facilities in Ireland. Currently, institutions such as Birr Castle and Armagh Observatory offer space-orientated experiences, but they primarily focus on the history of space exploration.

There is a lack of interactive, hands-on science experiences that inspire future generations, particularly in the Midlands region. The NSEC aims to address this by creating a technologically advanced facility dedicated to fostering interest in STEM.

The task is to create a brand identity, slogan, Logo, Wayfinders and designing an exhibition for the space center by considering the audience of primary and secondary school students.
It must be dynamic, engaging, but educational.

The final solution will see the NSEC emerge as a prominent national attraction with a cohesive brand identity, intuitive wayfinding systems, and engaging exhibitions.

This project is part of the Live Client module



Aims

The aim of this brief is to produce a brand identity which is suited for the client. It must include a logo, slogan and guidelines for the National Space Exploration Centre. The brand Identity should clearly communicate the educational and dynamic aspect of the National Space exploration center. Furthermore, the Identity aims to appeal to the audience of primary, secondary and college students.

It must inspire the customers to curiosity and engagement with space exploration but also give an entertaining experience.

Objectives

The first objective is researching to inspire the style and tone for the NSEC. This includes exploring space-related imagery to identify a suitable color palette, look at design styles that resonate with the target audience, and analyzing well-established competitors both nationally and internationally. The research findings will be made into a comprehensive mind map, outlining all relevant insights so far for the National Space Exploration Centre.

The second objective is to take the research done so far to design a brand Identity for the client, including Logo, Type and color scheme.

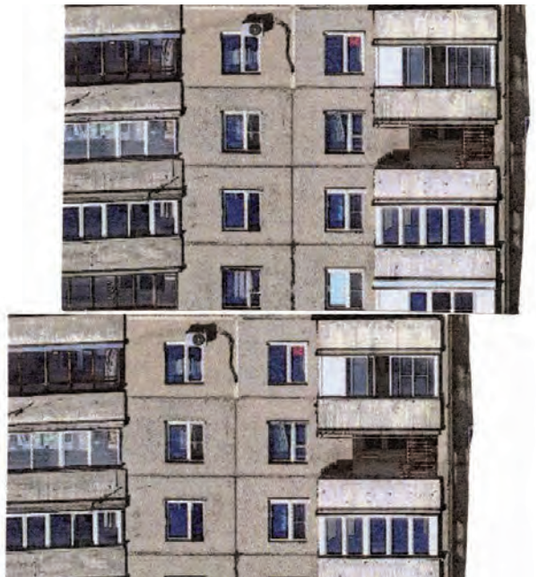
The third objective is creating intuitive wayfinding systems that enhance visitor navigation through the center, ensuring a clear direction across different sections and exhibitions.

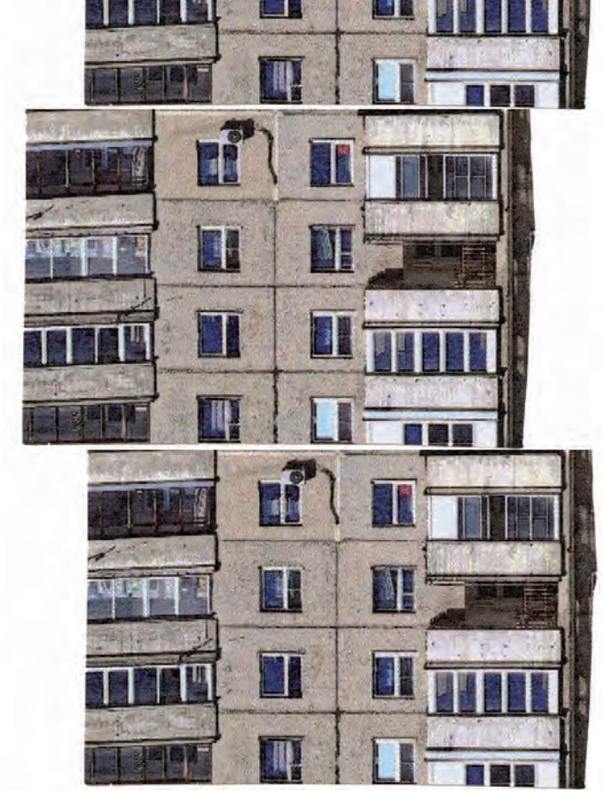
The fourth objective is to develop at least one interactive exhibition that engages visitors with space exploration concepts, incorporating both visual and digital elements to create a memorable learning experience.

Methodology

The methodology for this project will involve both primary and secondary research to inform the design of the brand identity, wayfinding systems, and exhibition for the National Space Exploration Centre (NSEC).

Primary research: involves Surveys or informal interviews with potential visitors, such as students and teachers, may also be conducted to gather insights into their preferences and expectations for a science-based center.

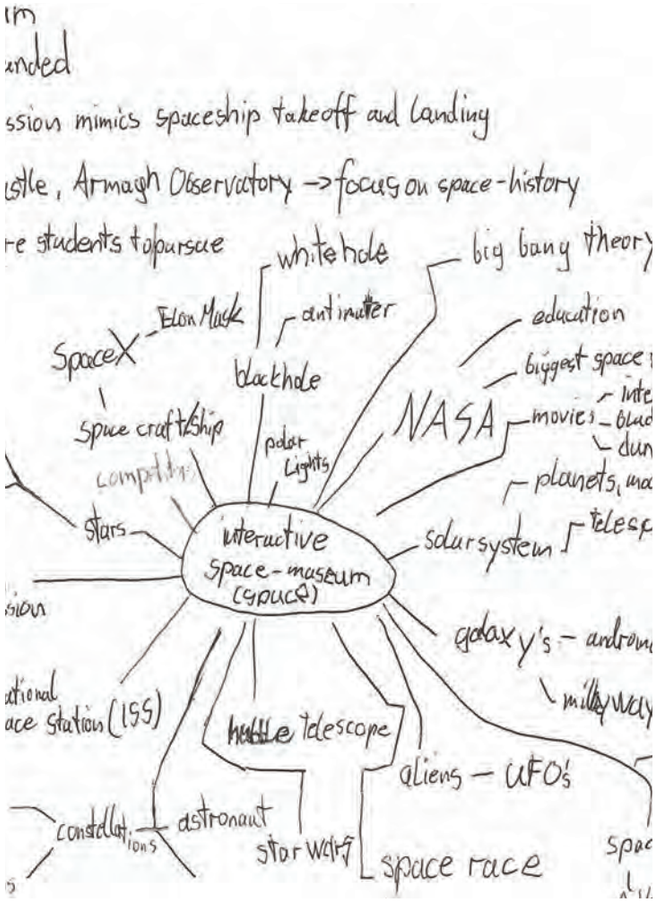




Secondary Research will involve analyzing existing literature, online resources, and case studies of well-established science museums and space centers worldwide. This research will focus on identifying trends in design, suitable color palettes, typography choices, and visual styles that align with the educational and interactive nature of the NSEC.

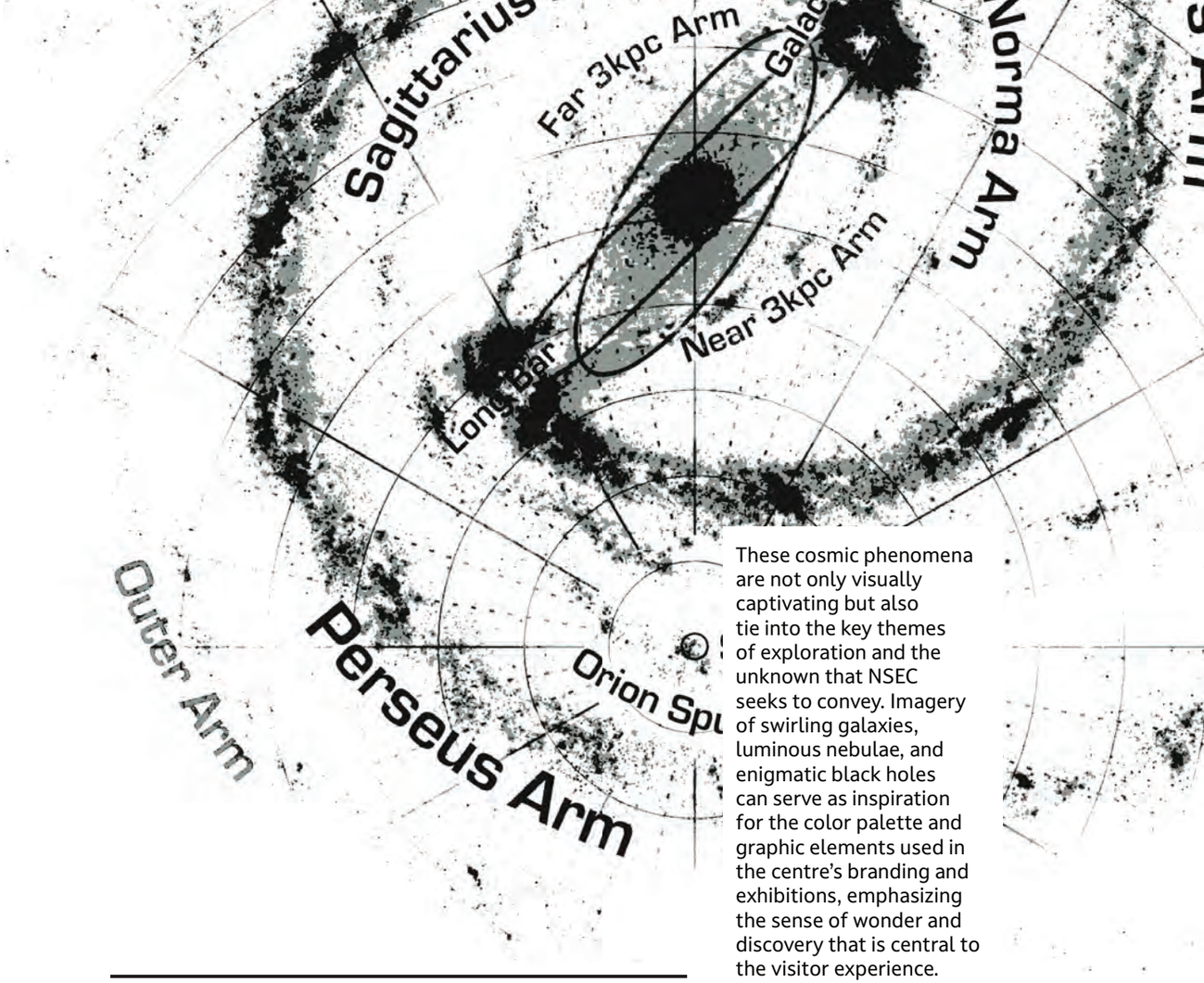
Design Research will be carried out through the creation of mood boards, mind maps, and experimentation with design software to develop a visual identity that reflects the NSEC’s mission.

Week 1



Initial research on the National Space Exploration Centre (NSEC) has focused on understanding the brief by sorting information into a mind map and gathering insights into space imagery that will inspire the branding and exhibition design.

The brief highlights the NSEC's role as an educational and interactive facility that aims to foster interest in space exploration and STEM subjects among students and visitors. To support this vision, research has been conducted on visual elements like galaxies and black holes, which represent the vastness and mysteries of space.



These cosmic phenomena are not only visually captivating but also tie into the key themes of exploration and the unknown that NSEC seeks to convey. Imagery of swirling galaxies, luminous nebulae, and enigmatic black holes can serve as inspiration for the color palette and graphic elements used in the centre's branding and exhibitions, emphasizing the sense of wonder and discovery that is central to the visitor experience.

Week 2

Subject 1 [LAIKA]

Subject 2 [USSRC]P2

Subject 3 [HAM] P3

Subject 4 [RESEARCH]

The research focused on several aspects essential to developing a space museum. First, space images were analyzed to explore color palettes that evoke the vastness and mystery of space.

The Logos of various space museums were also examined, to better emulate and to get accustomed to the branch and its imagery. The study extended to other space centers such as the Leicester Space Museum,[1] National Air and Space Museum,[2] and US Space & Rocket Center (USSRC),[3] providing insights into their layouts and visitor engagement strategies.

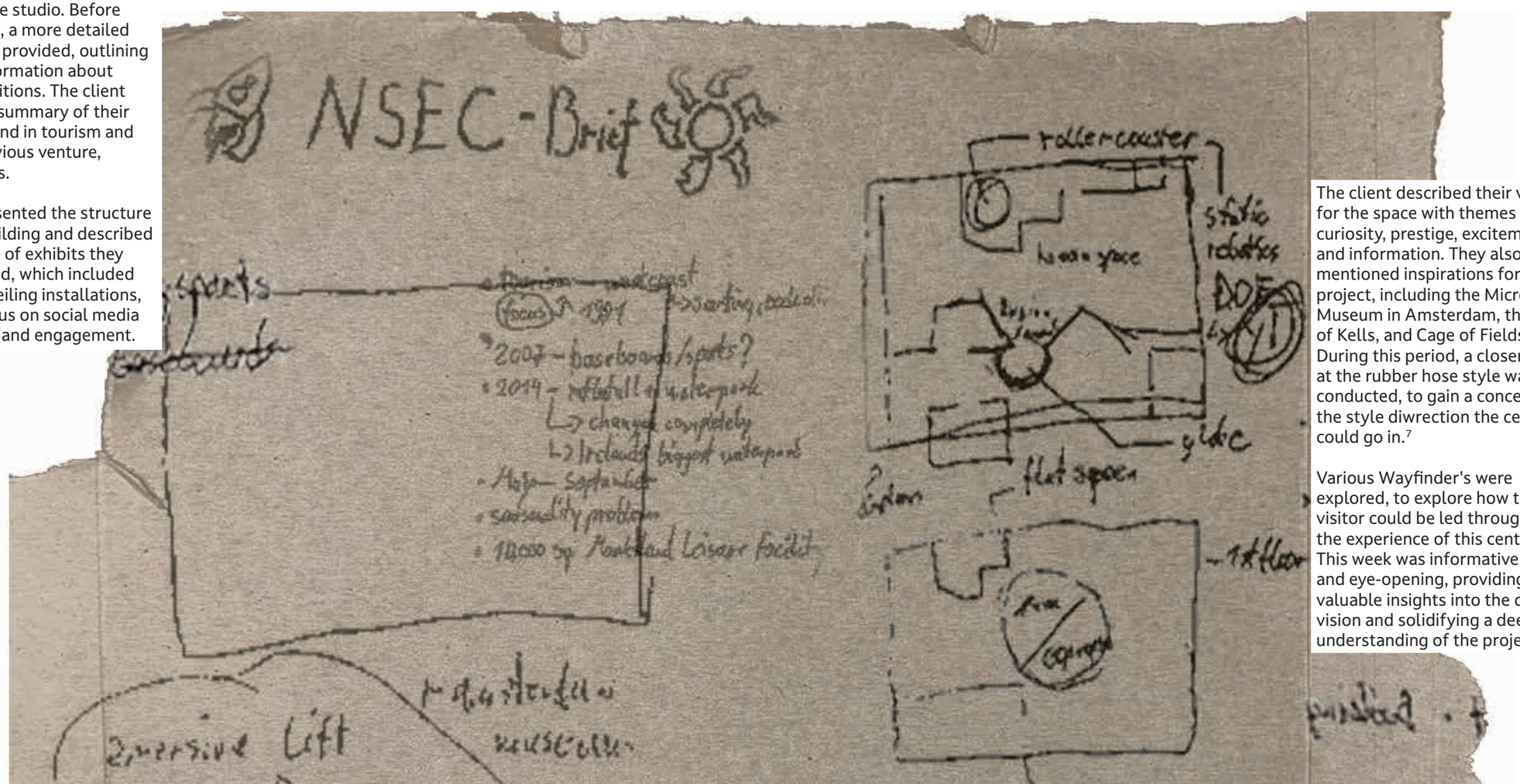
Another area of study involved animals that played a role in space exploration, including Laika,[4] Belka & Strelka,[5] and Ham the Chimp.[6] These animals' stories offer a compelling narrative for inclusion in exhibits.

Overall, this research provides a foundation for creating a captivating and educational space museum experience.

Week 3

In week three, the client visited the studio. Before their visit, a more detailed brief was provided, outlining more information about the exhibitions. The client shared a summary of their background in tourism and their previous venture, Baysports.

They presented the structure of the building and described the types of exhibits they envisioned, which included guides, ceiling installations, and a focus on social media presence and engagement.



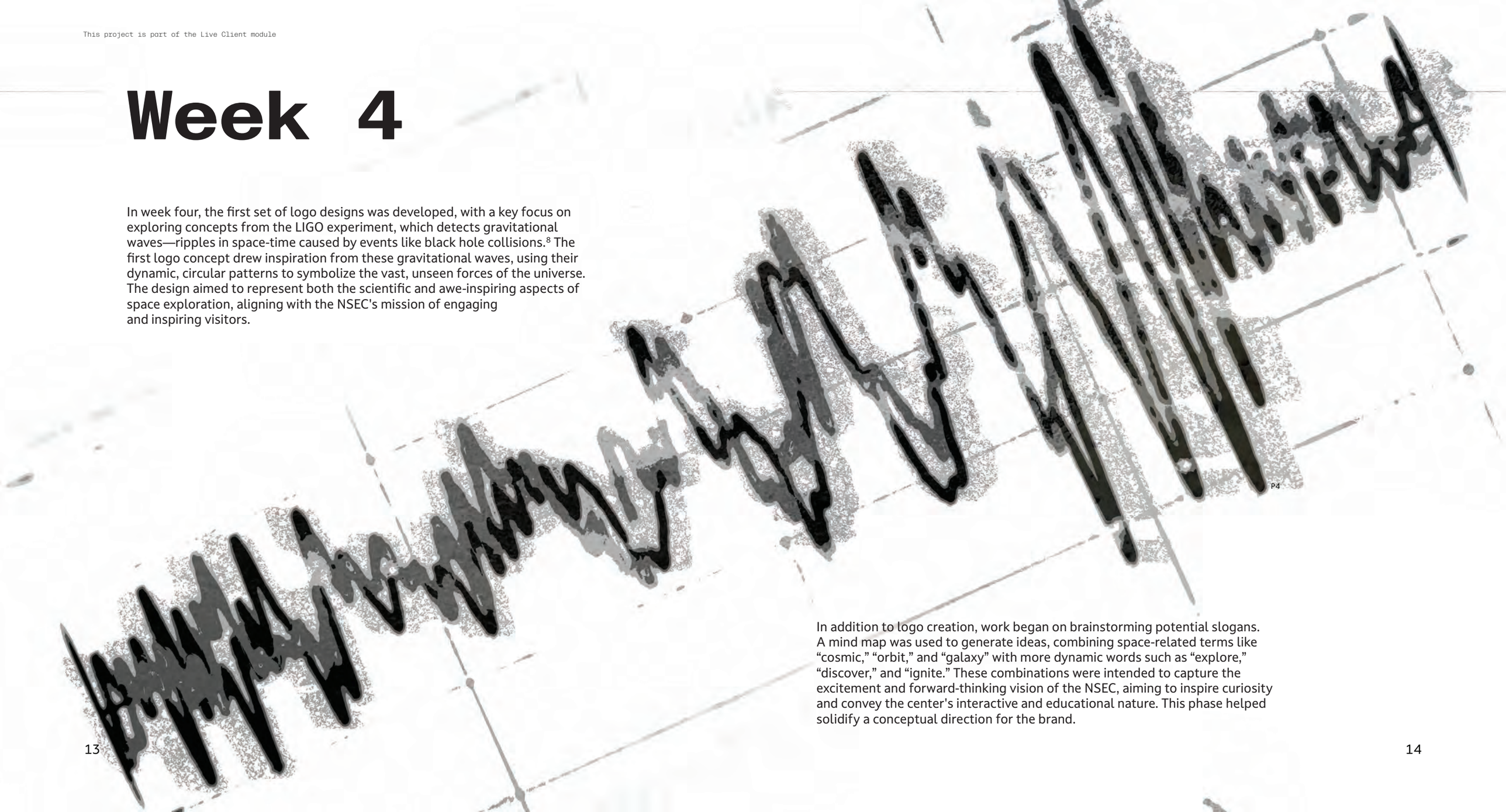
When the topic of education arose, the client clarified that the center is not intended to be curriculum-linked. Instead, they emphasized the importance of inspiring future generations through interactive and entertaining exhibits, rather than traditional educational methods.

The client described their vision for the space with themes of curiosity, prestige, excitement, and information. They also mentioned inspirations for the project, including the Microbian Museum in Amsterdam, the Book of Kells, and Cage of Fields. During this period, a closer look at the rubber hose style was conducted, to gain a concept for the style diwrection the centre could go in.[7]

Various Wayfinder's were explored, to explore how the visitor could be led through the experience of this centre. This week was informative and eye-opening, providing valuable insights into the client's vision and solidifying a deeper understanding of the project.

Week 4

In week four, the first set of logo designs was developed, with a key focus on exploring concepts from the LIGO experiment, which detects gravitational waves—ripples in space-time caused by events like black hole collisions.[8] The first logo concept drew inspiration from these gravitational waves, using their dynamic, circular patterns to symbolize the vast, unseen forces of the universe. The design aimed to represent both the scientific and awe-inspiring aspects of space exploration, aligning with the NSEC's mission of engaging and inspiring visitors.



P4

In addition to logo creation, work began on brainstorming potential slogans. A mind map was used to generate ideas, combining space-related terms like “cosmic,” “orbit,” and “galaxy” with more dynamic words such as “explore,” “discover,” and “ignite.” These combinations were intended to capture the excitement and forward-thinking vision of the NSEC, aiming to inspire curiosity and convey the center's interactive and educational nature. This phase helped solidify a conceptual direction for the brand.

Week 5

In week five, the focus shifted to researching wormholes, sparked by feedback on previous scribbles. Fascinated by the concept, more in-depth exploration of wormholes began, leading to new logo designs and the selection of fonts that could align with this theme.[9] After initial feedback, it was suggested to go back to the drawing board, encouraging a fresh approach.

Using feather and ink provided an opportunity to create unique and organic shapes, introducing a new level of creativity.

Additional experimentation was done using raster paper, allowing for more refined and detailed scribbles. Further feedback pointed toward refining one specific idea, which became the focus for deeper exploration. This process of iteration, coupled with ongoing research, was critical in shaping the evolving visual identity of the NSEC. The combination of creative techniques and targeted feedback continues to push the design in new, innovative directions.

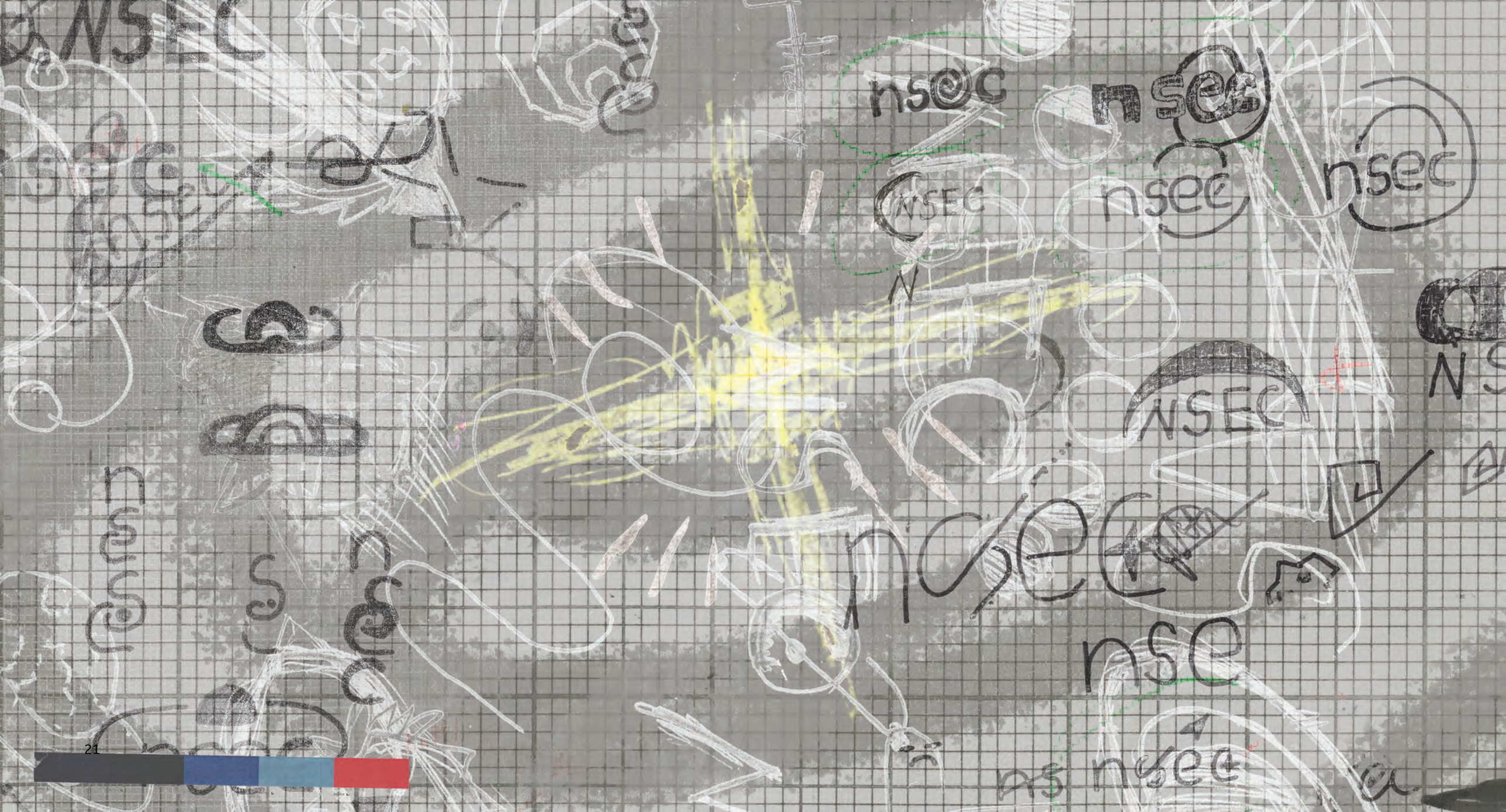
hsec

Week 6

Explored various fonts, ultimately choosing Manjari for its friendly appearance. Traced the font on grid paper to achieve precision before digitalizing the logo. The logo was then modified for better alignment with the brand's aesthetic, testing different sizes to ensure clarity and versatility. Drawing inspiration from a rocket launch picture, selected a color scheme, using red for the "S" to symbolize the rocket's liftoff.

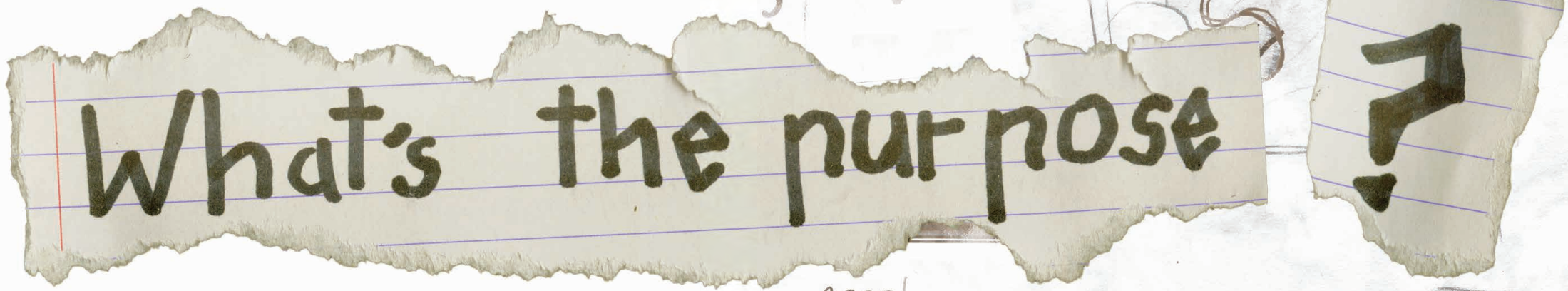
To ensure compatibility with print formats, different shades and color variations were tested. A rocket variation of the logo was created, which evolved further after receiving feedback from the client, leading to the inclusion of a capital "N" in one version.

nsec
nsec
nsec


nsec
NSEC

Week 7

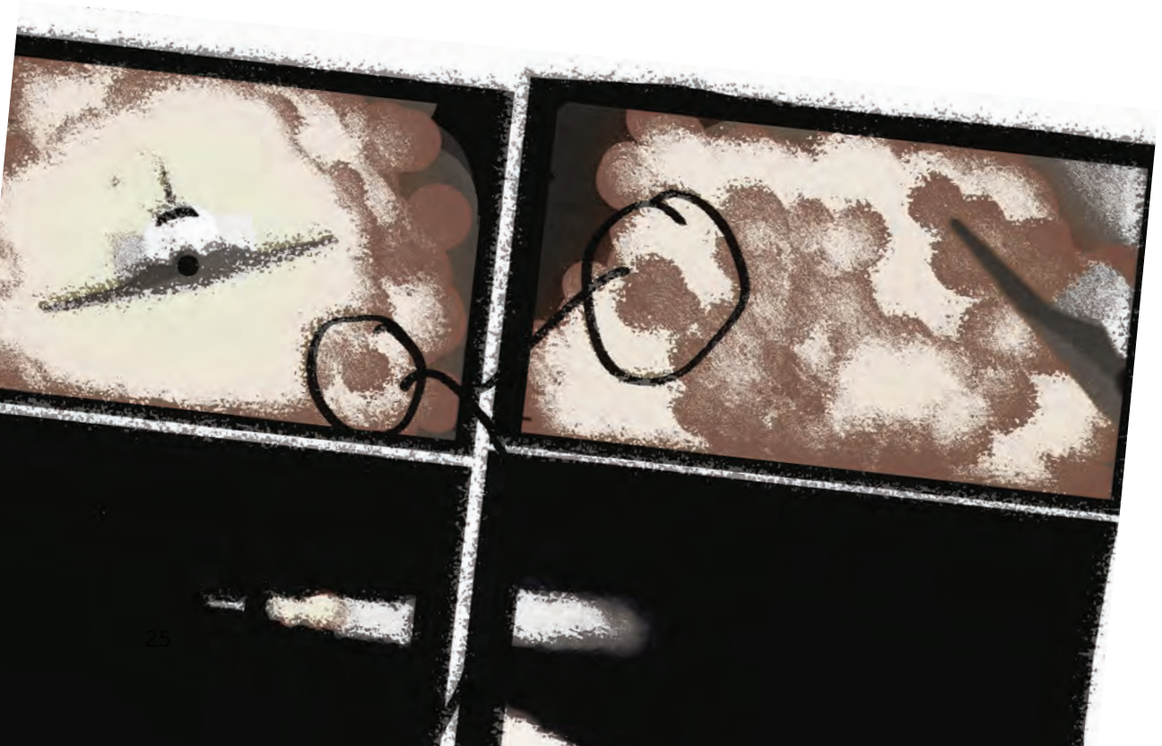
On the seventh week storyboards for the animation were created. The “S” was the focus for the animation because it´s the dynamic element of the Logo. After brainstorming a rocket start seemed most fitting for the animation, which underlines the dynamic aspect of the “S” and the company's brand identity. After that a question arose: “What is the purpose of the animation?”.

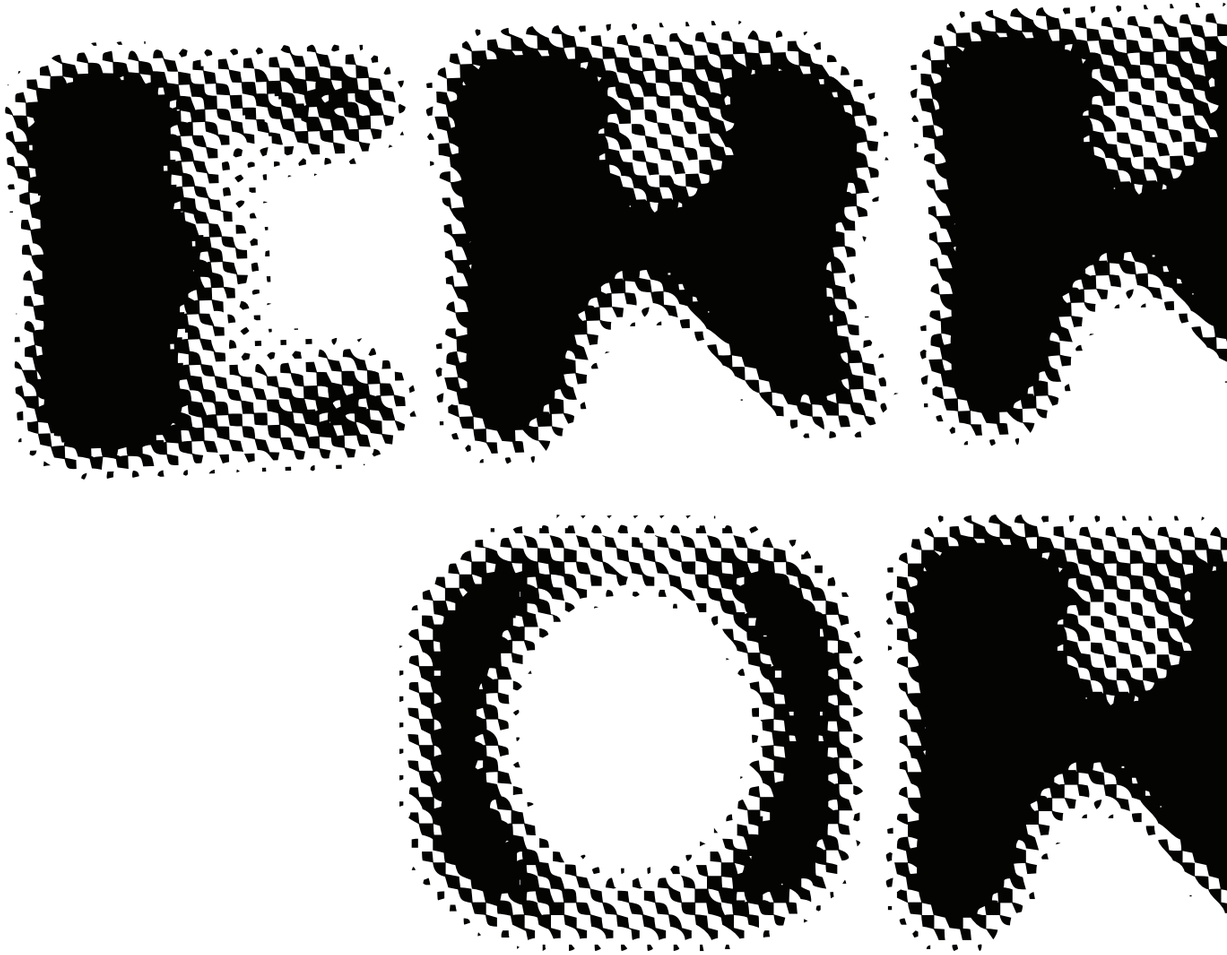


After brainstorming the conclusion was made that the rocket start animation would fit the most as a welcoming animation in the centre or for similar purposes like something booting up or for in between other animation to connect them. The final storyboard was refined to serve as the foundation for the animation, encapsulating the welcoming theme and dynamic energy of the rocket launch.

Week 8

In week eight, the animation was primarily created using Adobe After Effects, with a focus on the particle systems 2 feature to simulate the smoke trails left by the rocket. To achieve the desired effect, several trial-and-error phases were undertaken. Prior to the animation process, all assets were created in Adobe Illustrator, where the rocket was traced and its features modified to align with the overall style of the animation. The path animation feature was used to make the rocket follow a predetermined path. To reveal the “s” after the smoke cleared the stroke effect was utilized. A 3D camera was also employed to create a zoom effect, simultaneously making the logo appear.





Through this process, valuable lessons were learned about the importance of planning and testing in animation. The trial-and-error approach highlighted how essential it is to experiment with different techniques to achieve the desired visual outcome.

Week 9

In Week 9, additional refinements were made to the animation and logo design. The countdown element was revised, and the rocket logo was updated to resemble a NASA spacecraft more closely.

This process involved creating new sketches and tracing designs based on feedback. Adjustments included enlarging the engines and redesigning the cockpit to better reflect the appearance of an actual spacecraft.

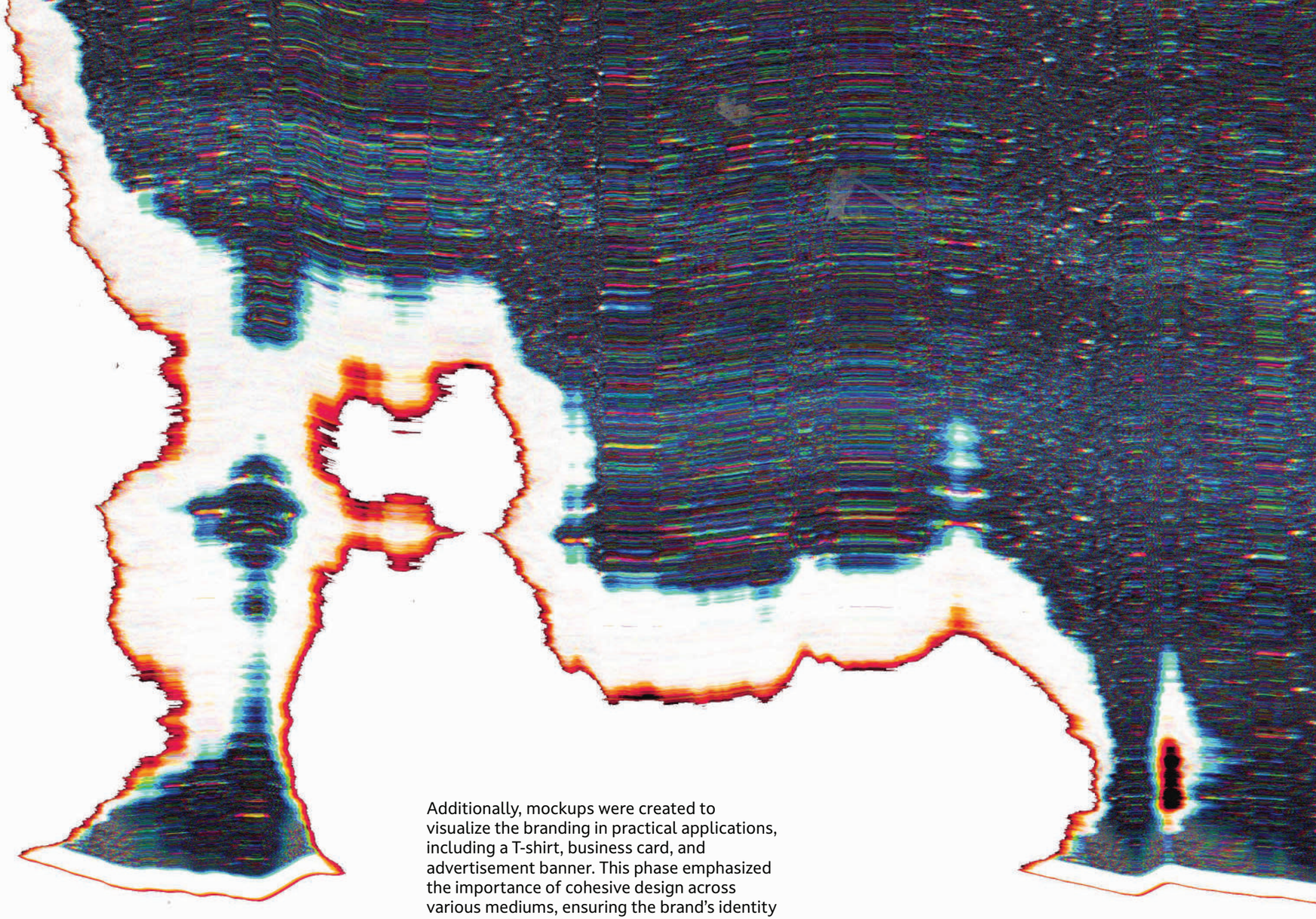
After receiving further feedback, the color palette was also revisited. A lighter color variant of the logo was developed to ensure better visibility and compatibility with darker backgrounds.

These changes highlighted the importance of iterative design, where adapting to feedback and testing can significantly enhance the visual appeal and realism of the final product.

This project is part of the Live Client module

Week 10

Further refinements were made to the animation by incorporating the slogan. Initially, the slogan was revised from “Go Beyond and Explore” to “Go Beyond... Explore,” and finally simplified to “go beyond” based on feedback. This iterative process demonstrated the value of concise and impactful messaging in aligning with the project’s theme.



Additionally, mockups were created to visualize the branding in practical applications, including a T-shirt, business card, and advertisement banner. This phase emphasized the importance of cohesive design across various mediums, ensuring the brand’s identity could be effectively communicated in both digital and physical formats

Week 11

Wayfinders were designed as part of the project, including a distinctive rocket-themed design. Concurrently, work began on the creation of the design manual, which serves as a comprehensive guide to ensure consistent branding.

The manual includes detailed specifications for the logo, demonstrating its application across various sizes, presenting an alternate color palette to suit different contexts, and defining the safe zone to maintain visual integrity. These developments contribute to a cohesive and professional brand identity for the campaign.

Week 12

The design manual was completed, providing a comprehensive guide for the campaign's visual identity. During the process, small refinements were made to the logo to ensure consistency and alignment with the theme and visual style of the project.

Additionally, minor adjustments were implemented in the animation to enhance its pacing and overall flow. These tweaks focused on refining transitions and improving the fluidity of specific frames, ensuring smoother movements and better visual storytelling. Together, these updates polished the animation and strengthened the campaign's cohesive branding, aligning both elements to deliver a more impactful message.

Conclusion

This project presented a unique opportunity to develop a comprehensive brand identity for the National Space Exploration Centre (NSEC). Through extensive research, iterative design, and client collaboration, the final solution successfully captures the dynamic and educational essence of the center. Key deliverables include a cohesive logo, slogan, and branding guidelines that resonate with the target audience of primary, secondary, and college students. The logo, inspired by space exploration and rocket imagery, combines modern aesthetics with accessibility, ensuring engagement across various age groups.

Additionally, intuitive wayfinding systems were designed to enhance navigation and create a seamless visitor experience. The interactive exhibition concept and animation reflect the innovative and aspirational nature of NSEC, emphasizing STEM education in an entertaining and inspiring manner. These outputs align with the client's vision of fostering curiosity and making space exploration relatable to the public, establishing NSEC as a national attraction.

Evaluation

The final solution effectively meets the project's aims and objectives, with a brand identity that is visually appealing, educational, and memorable. The logo's dynamic design, accompanied by the slogan "go beyond," encapsulates the center's mission to inspire and entertain. The animation, featuring a rocket launch, successfully conveys the center's energy and futuristic focus.

Challenges arose during the design process, particularly in balancing creativity with technical requirements, such as ensuring scalability and print compatibility. Feedback-driven adjustments, like refining the color palette and animation, were crucial in overcoming these hurdles. While the deliverables align with the brief, further enhancements could include developing additional digital and physical mockups to showcase the brand's full potential.

If there were additional time, designing an interactive exhibition would be the next logical step in the project. This would provide an opportunity to delve deeper into the possibilities that the National Space Exploration Centre (NSEC) offers, enriching its visitor experience while further expanding and reinforcing its brand identity.

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This project is part of the

Time Based

module

The Time-based Media module explores the use of time-sensitive design practices, such as animation and interactive media, to communicate messages. The brief set by the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty calls for the creation of a “banner of hope” for the planet. The aim is to develop a symbol or series of symbols that evoke hope, unity, and action, serving as the centerpiece for a campaign promoting a fossil-free future.

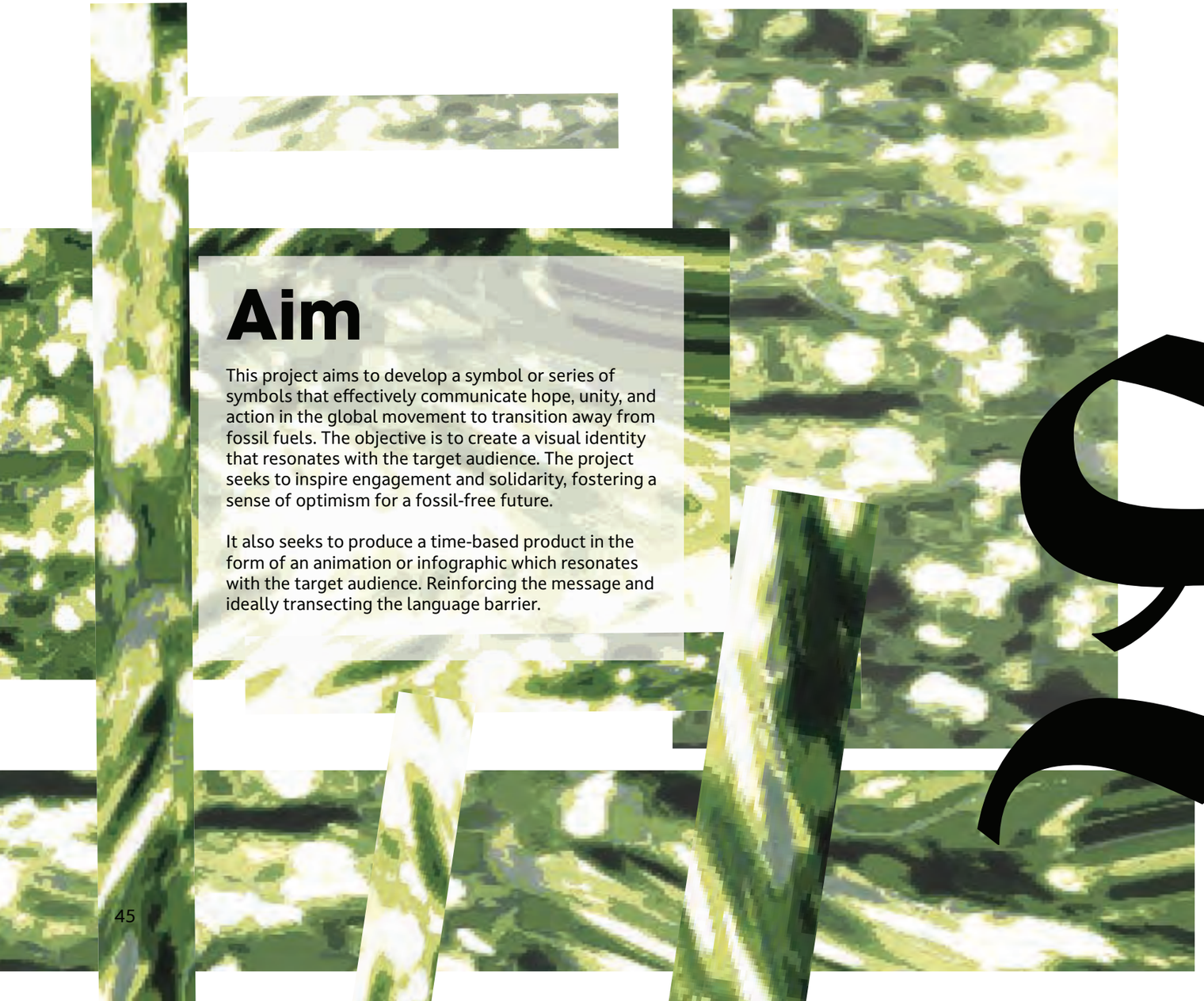
This project will involve showcasing how these symbols can be adapted for both physical and digital spaces, engaging global audiences through a design that everyone understands.

The central issue addressed by this project is the ongoing global reliance on fossil fuels, which are responsible for 86% of carbon emissions contributing to the climate crisis. Despite growing awareness, governments continue to subsidize the expansion of fossil fuel projects. Notably, the Paris Agreement makes no mention of coal, oil, or gas .

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty seeks to close this gap, proposing a global framework for phasing out fossil fuels rapidly and fairly. The task, therefore, is to create a powerful symbol that can unite global efforts to address this issue, much like the peace symbol has done for nuclear disarmament over the past 65 years.

The outcome will include a brand identity and a time-based media product, such as an animation or infographic, designed to communicate the urgency and hope of transitioning away from fossil fuels.

The final solution will provide a visual tool to empower climate activists, concerned citizens, and the creative industry, driving collective action towards a sustainable, renewable energy future.



Aim

This project aims to develop a symbol or series of symbols that effectively communicate hope, unity, and action in the global movement to transition away from fossil fuels. The objective is to create a visual identity that resonates with the target audience. The project seeks to inspire engagement and solidarity, fostering a sense of optimism for a fossil-free future.

It also seeks to produce a time-based product in the form of an animation or infographic which resonates with the target audience. Reinforcing the message and ideally transecting the language barrier.

Research existing symbols from past and present social movements, such as the peace symbol, for inspiration and insight into effective visual communication. Also research how other campaigns are structured and how they convey their message.

Look at movies and animations and how they convey a message.

Develop a campaign concept with a target audience, vision and

Create a script and storyboard

Design and develop a symbol or set of symbols that represent hope and the global effort to phase out fossil fuels.

Create a campaign showcasing how the symbol(s) can be used across physical and digital platforms

To present a cohesive brand identity, including the symbol, mockups and a video.

Methodology

The methodology for this project incorporates both primary and secondary research to inform the design process. Primary research includes conducting visual experiments and exploring different symbol designs through sketches and digital tools.

Secondary research will focus on analyzing successful symbols from past and present social and political movements, such as the peace symbol for nuclear disarmament and other cultural icons that have been widely adopted. Sources will include books, articles, and online resources discussing design theory, visual communication, and the role of symbols in activism.

Design research will involve experimenting with different digital media software, such as Adobe Illustrator and After Effects, to create both static and animated versions of the symbol(s) and characters. Various visual styles and color schemes will be tested to ensure that the final design conveys a message of hope and unity.

Additionally, examples of how the symbol(s) can be used across both digital and physical platforms will be developed to showcase their adaptability and potential for wide adoption.

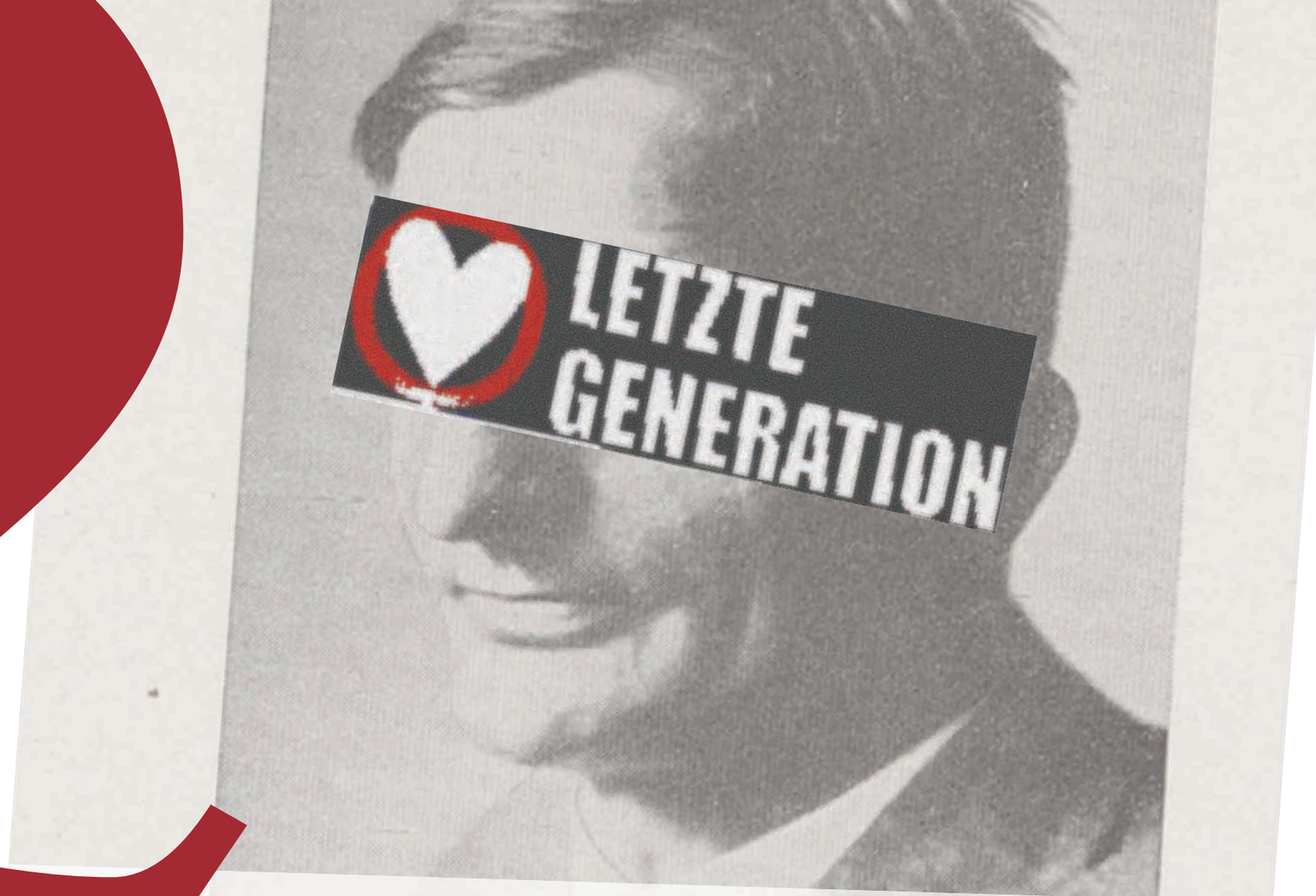
Week 1

During the first week of the fossil fuels project, relevant terms from the brief were highlighted, and previous winners of the D&AD were researched. The focus was on examining the symbols, understanding how they were created, what messages they conveyed, and how the designers visualized their concepts.[1,2,3,4,5]

Additionally, research was conducted on the origins of the peace sign, exploring its history and its use as a semaphore for Nuclear Disarmament (ND).[6] Other peace symbols from various cultures and historical periods were also analyzed, to understand which symbols could be interesting for reaching more people. Next, a mind map was created on the theme of fossil fuels to establish a direction for the campaign and to determine the next areas of research.

Week 2

During the second week, campaigns such as Fridays for Future[7,8,] C409, plant a Billion Trees[10], and The Last Generation[11] were investigated. The focus was primarily on their demands and the tone of their messaging. Most of the campaigns emphasized the Paris Agreement, except for Plant a Billion Trees, which centers on counteracting CO^2 emissions through reforestation efforts. This campaign highlights how trees absorb CO^2 and produce oxygen to clean the air.



While researching Plant a Billion Trees, the concept of the carbon footprint was explored, referring to the total amount of greenhouse gases generated by human activities. The tone across the campaigns was urgent, though The Last Generation movement adopted a more extreme and demanding approach, often resorting to actions like gluing their hands to concrete in protest. The C40 campaign is a more professional, corporate, and more organized campaign.

Week 3

During the third week, the research into renewable energies explored various sustainable alternatives such as solar, wind, hydropower, and geothermal energy. These technologies emphasize reducing carbon emissions and fostering a cleaner future.[12] Solar energy, in particular, aligns well with the Solarpunk movement, which envisions a future where society operates harmoniously with nature using sustainable, eco-friendly technologies.[13]

Solarpunk presents a utopian vision of urban and rural landscapes powered by renewable energy, with solar panels, wind turbines, and vertical gardens integrated into architecture. This movement not only focuses on the technology but also embraces a shift in societal values towards community, cooperation, and environmental stewardship. Through art, design, and speculative fiction, Solarpunk offers an optimistic blueprint for the future, inspiring hope, and action in climate activism.

Its aesthetics and ideologies provide a strong cultural foundation for creating symbols that transcend language, echoing the goals of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty campaign.

Week 4

Objectives

The campaign developed, grounded in the Solarpunk concept, envisions a hopeful, sustainable future that promotes renewable energy and environmental harmony.

The target audience includes climate activists, younger generations, and environmentally conscious individuals who are eager to embrace change and contribute to a better fossil-free world.

The beliefs driving the campaign revolve around community collaboration, technological innovation, and ecological balance. The motives are clear: to inspire action against fossil fuels and advocate for clean energy solutions, reflecting the values of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

To bring these ideas to life, outlined specific objectives, including creating visually compelling designs that transcend language barriers and resonate across cultures.

Initial logo sketches were crafted to symbolize these ideals, focusing on elements like solar energy, natural forms, and futuristic aesthetics. These early designs aim to capture the ethos of Solarpunk, blending creativity with a call to action for a sustainable future.

Week 5

Week 5 began by starting the scriptwriting and storyboarding process, drawn inspiration from the movie Oldboy . Oldboy is known for its intense and carefully constructed narrative, offering a masterclass in pacing, visual storytelling, and character-driven tension.[14] The dynamic framing and deliberate composition in the film can influence how to approach visual storytelling in the project.

Also a mind map was made to brainstorm ideas for the fossil fuel campaign script. This phase included sketching concepts for a logo, exploring potential slogans, and experimenting with possible names. After presenting these ideas, "Synchronicity" emerged as the most fitting name, capturing the essence of the campaign and aligning with the Solarpunk-inspired vision of harmony and interconnectedness.

With the name finalized, the focus shifted to scriptwriting and storyboarding, further developing the campaign's narrative and visual flow to effectively convey its message.

Week 6

~~Untitled~~ Synchronicity

written by

~~Author~~ Caleb Sokolov

In the sixth week, a finalized script was completed, and additional research involved watching the making-of video for the Regular Show episode "The Power."[15] This video provided valuable insights into the storyboarding process, showcasing techniques in pacing, character movement, and visual storytelling to create engaging scenes.

This research underscored the importance of timing and expression in storyboarding, helping to make each shot impactful while maintaining a coherent narrative flow.

Further brainstorming sessions focused on developing potential animation styles that would enhance the story's themes and appeal to the target audience. In the initial storyboard draft, a unique storyline took shape featuring a fox as the main character. The fox, symbolizing nature, experiences mistreatment and, in response, seeks revenge by targeting fossil fuel-producing infrastructure.

This revenge-driven narrative serves as a powerful metaphor for nature's retaliation against environmental exploitation, aligning with the campaign's underlying message on the dangers of fossil fuels.

From this research, valuable lessons in narrative clarity, character design, and the use of symbolism were drawn. The exploration of style and storyboarding techniques provided a foundation for creating a visually compelling and meaningful animation that communicates the campaign's goals effectively.

STORYBOARD

PROJECT Synchronicity Caleb PAGE 1 / 2

SCENE #	SHOT #	SHOT SIZE

SCENE #	SHOT #	SHOT SIZE

SHOT SIZE	SCENE #

SHOT #	SHOT SIZE

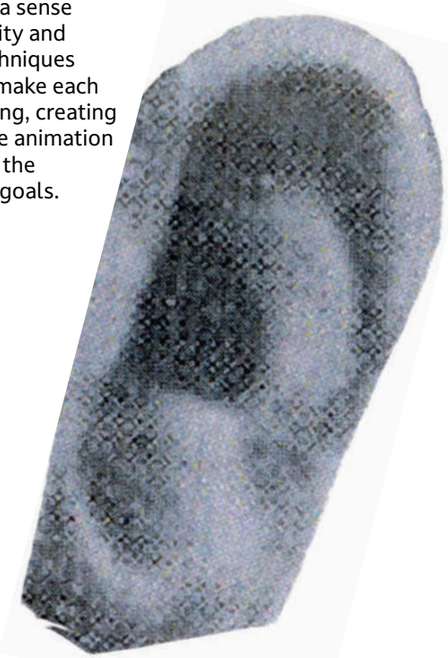
PROJECT

PAGE 1 / 3

A second storyboard was created with refined illustrations to better convey character movements, and a simplified storyboard version was made to depict the plotline on a single sheet. Research into Dadaism[16], including its historical context and chaotic, collage-like aesthetic, provided inspiration for incorporating unconventional and abstract elements into the visual style.

Additionally, the art of Monty Python, particularly Terry Gilliam's[17] unique cutout animation, offered valuable techniques for merging humor with surrealism, which could be applied to enhance the campaign's visual storytelling.

Watching the intro of Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events[18] further deepened understanding of how to use cutouts and layering to achieve visual depth with 2D objects. From these references, insights were gained into manipulating flat images to create a sense of three-dimensionality and dynamism. These techniques could be adapted to make each scene visually engaging, creating a striking yet cohesive animation style that aligns with the campaign's thematic goals.



WEEK 8

Cutouts from cardboard and colored paper were crafted and painted, alongside materials sourced from books that were scanned into digital formats. Experimentation with video techniques and stick puppets added depth to the animation process, offering practical insights into how physical materials could translate into a digital space.

This hands-on approach helped explore textures, layering, and movement, enabling a richer, more tactile aesthetic in the animation.

Through this process, it became clear that simplifying the script could enhance pacing and visual coherence, as a concise narrative would allow for more focused and impactful scenes. The exploration of mixed media, from cutouts to puppetry, underscored the importance of selecting the most effective storytelling methods.

By adapting the script to prioritize key scenes, the visuals could better align with the campaign's themes, allowing the animation to maintain clarity while retaining its engaging, handcrafted style.

WEEK 9

During the ninth week, the animation was significantly expanded to include dramatic and thematic elements. New scenes were added, such as the fox soaring into the sky, buildings engulfed in flames, and a lightning strike to intensify the narrative's impact. Environmental settings like a coal mine, a wind park, and a solar park were also introduced, enriching the story's depiction of conflict between destructive and renewable energy sources.

Despite this progress, challenges arose with pacing and character animation. Striking the right balance between dynamic movement and smooth transitions proved to be a key area requiring refinement. Additionally, ensuring that the fox's actions felt natural while maintaining emotional resonance highlighted the complexity of character animation. These hurdles underscored the importance of iterative development, with each revision bringing the animation closer to a cohesive and engaging final product that communicates the campaign's themes effectively.

WEEK 10

In the tenth week, the animation reached its final stages with the addition of key elements to complete the narrative. A scene was introduced, showing the fox emerging from a cloud. Stick puppets were incorporated to add visual diversity and charm, enhancing the storytelling.

The end of the animation picks up the beginning visually, but the background and the city are changed to incorporate renewable energies like wind turbines and solar panels, showing a changed city.

Audio was integrated to heighten the emotional and atmospheric impact. Sound effects (SFX) provided texture and realism, small voiceovers added narrative depth, and music tied the scenes together, creating a cohesive and immersive experience.

This final phase not only brought the animation to life but also underscored the importance of combining visual and auditory elements to effectively convey the campaign’s message. The completed animation now serves as a powerful tool for engaging the audience and driving the campaign's themes home.

WEEK 11

Final tweaks were applied to the animation to refine its visual appeal and balance the audio, ensuring a polished and cohesive presentation. These adjustments helped align the technical aspects with the narrative, enhancing the overall impact.

A logo and slogan for “Synchronicity” were developed, drawing inspiration from the animation’s colors and overarching theme of harmony between nature and urban life. The logo combines the imagery of a leaf and a city, symbolizing growth, renewal, and coexistence.

The accompanying slogan, **“We grow in sync”** encapsulates the campaign’s vision of unity and sustainable progress. These elements create a strong visual and verbal identity, reinforcing the campaign’s message and making it more memorable and relatable for its audience.

SYNCHRONICITY

SYNCHRONICITY

Week 12

During the final week, mockups were developed to highlight the campaign's visual identity. This included designs featuring activist themes, a cardboard mockup with the logo and campaign name, and photographs of a volunteer holding the mockup to simulate real-world application. Sticker mockups were also created to explore branding possibilities for smaller promotional items.

This process underscored the value of visual consistency and practical testing in branding. It highlighted how refining designs through real-world applications can enhance their effectiveness and relatability.

Conclusion

The "Synchronicity" campaign successfully captures the essence of hope, unity, and action in the fight against fossil fuels through a combination of thoughtful design, research-driven development, and creative storytelling. By drawing inspiration from Solarpunk aesthetics and leveraging symbols of harmony between nature and technology, the project establishes a visually compelling brand identity.

The logo, combining a leaf and a city, symbolizes the balance between growth and sustainability, while the slogan, “We grow in sync,” reinforces the campaign’s vision of a unified and sustainable future.

The animation, central to the campaign, delivers a powerful narrative that transcends language barriers. Featuring a fox as a symbolic protagonist, it conveys nature’s resilience and the urgency of transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Each design decision was informed by a mix of primary and secondary research, which included studying impactful symbols, exploring animation techniques, and engaging with past social movements.

The integration of handcrafted elements, like cutouts and stick puppets, paired with sound effects and music, ensures a rich and immersive storytelling experience. The final product stands as a versatile and engaging tool for inspiring audiences and promoting collective action toward a fossil-free future.

By combining visual and time-based media, this project demonstrates the power of design in addressing critical global challenges and fostering a shared vision for sustainable progress.

Evaluation

The final animation and campaign achieved the primary aim of creating a hopeful and engaging message to inspire action against fossil fuels. The combination of handcrafted cutouts, vibrant colors, and layered audio elements successfully communicated the themes of harmony, renewal, and sustainable progress.

The fox character resonated as a compelling metaphor for nature's resilience, and the Solarpunk-inspired visuals effectively conveyed the campaign's optimistic vision of a fossil-free future. The logo and slogan—"We grow in sync"—also encapsulated the campaign's message succinctly, adding a cohesive branding element.

Weida Thür.
Im Tälchen 1

However, some challenges arose during the project. Character animation posed difficulties, especially in achieving natural, fluid movements while maintaining an emotional connection. Additionally, pacing issues required multiple iterations to ensure that the narrative unfolded coherently without losing the viewer's attention. While these were addressed through refinement, more time could have been dedicated to perfecting transitions and exploring alternative storytelling methods.

The project objectives were largely met, but with more time, additional mockups and promotional materials could have been developed to further demonstrate the symbol's adaptability. Additionally, a more in-depth exploration of audience testing could have provided valuable feedback for refinement.

Overall, the campaign succeeded in creating a memorable and visually striking solution, effectively aligning with the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty's vision of a sustainable future.

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CHAPTER 3

Experience

This project is part of

Design

This project is part of

Experience

Design

Experience

Design

The Experience Design Module challenges designers to support local businesses through impactful branding and communication strategies. This project focuses on Aba's Barbershop in Athlone, a small, traditional barbershop offering personalized services.

Like many small businesses, Aba's Barbershop faces challenges in standing out against larger competitors. The goal is to analyze its operations and create a comprehensive branding solution that enhances its professionalism, credibility, and appeal to a broader audience.

The final deliverable will include an integrated campaign with digital, print, and social media elements, showcasing how design can help Aba's Barbershop thrive in a competitive market.

Objectives

To conduct primary research through interviews and observations to understand Aba's Barbershop's services, values, and target audience.

To analyze competitors and identify opportunities for differentiation in branding and communication.

To design a logo, color scheme, and visual identity that reflect the barbershop's traditional ethos while appealing to contemporary tastes.

To produce a range of deliverables, including digital assets, print materials, and mock-ups, for social media, in-store signage, and promotions.

To test and refine the branding solutions based on feedback to ensure they resonate with the target audience.

Aims

- To develop a cohesive branding strategy for Aba's Barbershop that enhances its professional image, credibility, and appeal to both current and potential customers.
- To create an integrated campaign that highlights the barbershop's traditional approach while utilizing modern design techniques to connect with a wider audience.

This project employs a combination of primary and secondary research methods to develop an effective branding strategy for **Aba's Barbershop in Athlone.**

Primary Research:

1. Conduct interviews with the barbershop owner to understand the business's values, services, and target audience.
2. Visit the barbershop to observe its operations, customer interactions, and physical environment for design inspiration.
3. Gather feedback on design concepts from the owner and potential customers to refine the solutions.

Secondary Research:

1. Analyze branding strategies of similar small businesses and barbershops to identify successful design elements.
2. Study traditional and modern branding approaches to create a balanced visual identity for the barbershop.
3. Research effective communication strategies for small businesses in competitive markets.

Week 1

During week 1, an initial search for small businesses and charity shops in Athlone was conducted using Google. Several establishments were identified and shortlisted for further investigation, including Aba's Barbershop, Link Brazil, Sewing and Alteration, and APA Charity Shop.

This preliminary exploration aimed to pinpoint potential case studies for the "I'm Here to Help" brief by understanding the local business landscape and identifying areas where enhanced branding and communication strategies could make a meaningful impact.

The selected venues are expected to offer diverse insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by small businesses in the region. These findings will guide the upcoming visits and in-depth analysis, laying the groundwork for a targeted and effective design intervention in subsequent weeks.

Week 2

During week 2, fieldwork was conducted by exploring the town to identify promising small businesses for the project. During this process, Aba's Barbershop was discovered, documented through photographs, and deemed a strong candidate for further investigation.

An interview was scheduled with the owner to gain deeper insights into the business's needs and challenges. Additionally, a set of relevant questions was drafted in preparation for the conversation, aiming to explore areas such as current branding practices, target audience engagement, and potential avenues for improvement.

This hands-on approach is laying the groundwork for a tailored design strategy that aligns with the "I'm Here to Help" brief, ensuring that future interventions are both informed and impactful.

Week 3

During week 3, an in-depth interview was conducted with Aba, the owner of Aba's Barbershop. The focus of the conversation was on Aba's personal approach to business and his relationship with his customers.

Aba emphasized the importance of building strong connections with regular customers, showcasing his commitment to delivering personalized service. Notably, the barbershop's relaxed atmosphere, with only one chair, provides a calm environment that makes customers of all ages, including children, feel comfortable.

Aba also shared some operational insights, including his irregular opening hours which he would like to change and future aspirations of transitioning to a pension while maintaining a small, loyal clientele.

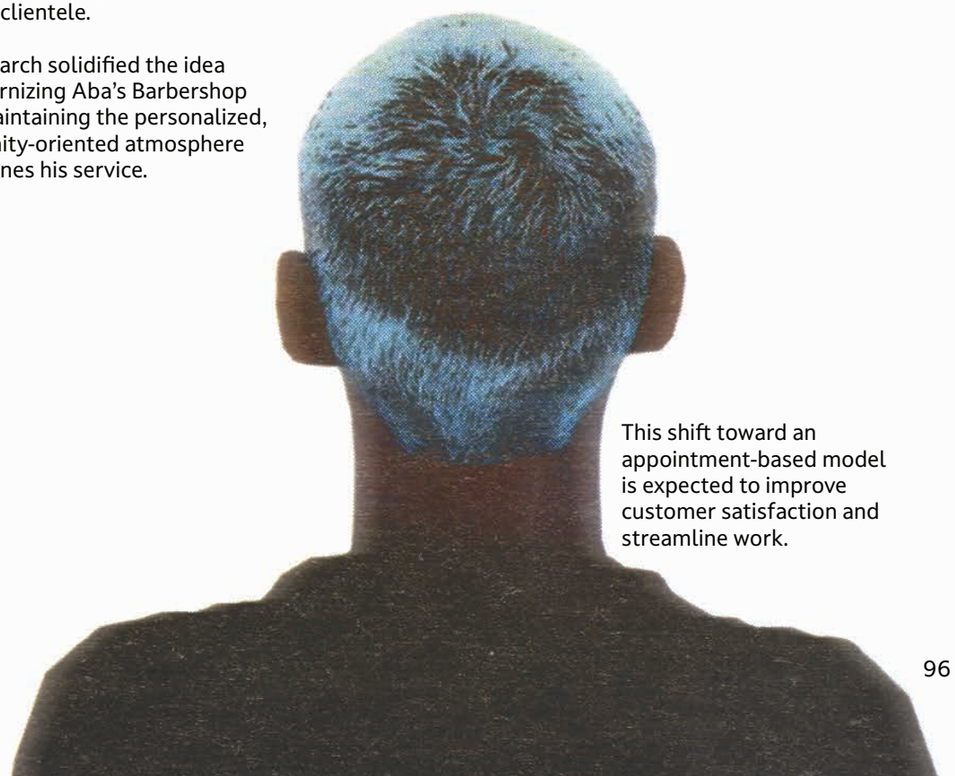
This interview analysis provided valuable insight into the unique identity of the barbershop, forming the foundation for a branding strategy that highlights its personal, community-centric service model.

Week 4

During week 4, research was conducted by examining other successful barbershops around town to gain insights into best practices and identify potential opportunities for Aba's Barbershop. One key takeaway was the importance of an online presence[1], with particular emphasis on the value of well-maintained websites and strong Google profiles.[2]

This was combined with findings from the interview with Aba, leading to the realization that an appointment-based system[3] could significantly improve the business by addressing his irregular opening hours and allowing him to better manage clientele.

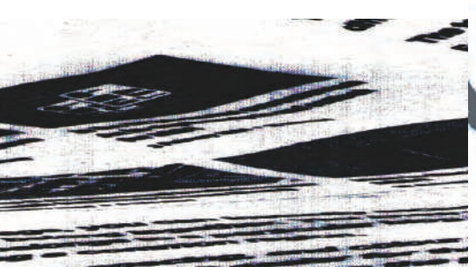
The research solidified the idea of modernizing Aba's Barbershop while maintaining the personalized, community-oriented atmosphere that defines his service.

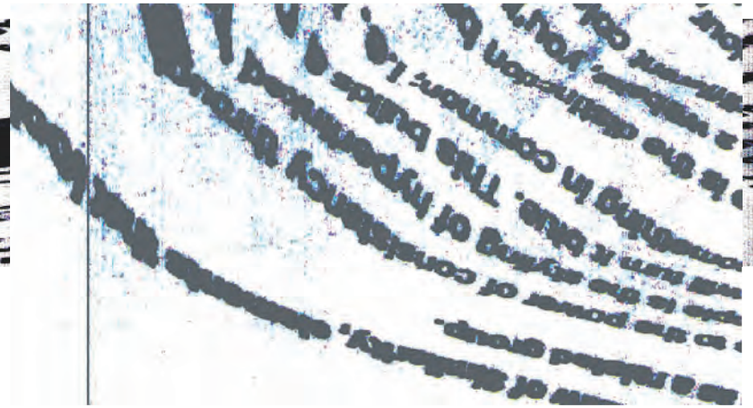


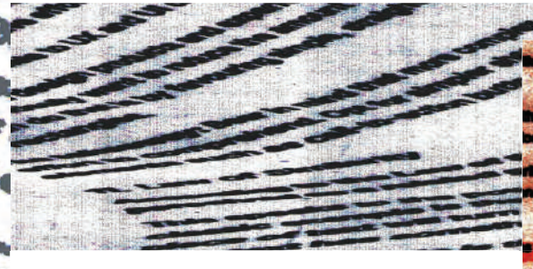
This shift toward an appointment-based model is expected to improve customer satisfaction and streamline work.

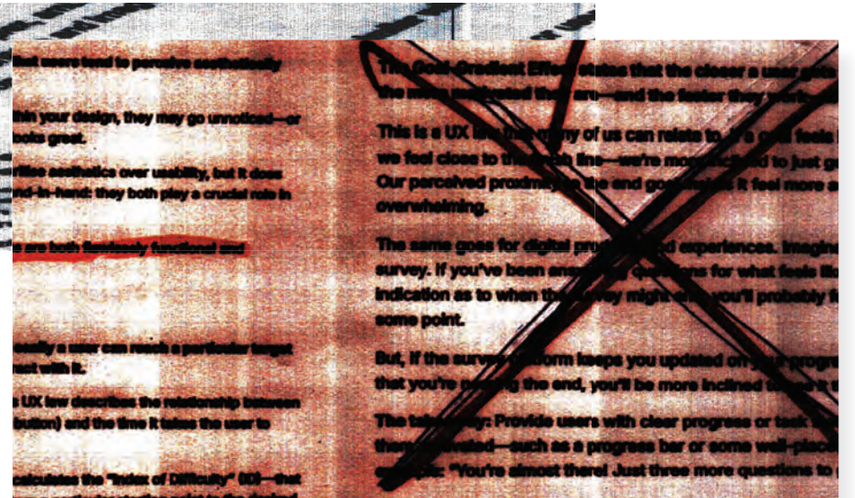
During week 5, the strengths and weaknesses of Aba's Barbershop were analyzed to form a strategic direction. Strengths identified include Aba's personable nature and genuine care for his customers, the quiet, distraction-free environment[4], ideal for children and sensitive individuals and the high quality of his haircuts, reflecting his expertise. Another strength of Aba's Barbershop is the personalized customer service he provides.[5] Operating alone allows Aba to offer undivided attention to each client, ensuring a tailored experience and fostering strong, loyal relationships with regular customers. This one-on-one service enhances the overall customer experience, making it a key differentiator for the business.

Conversely, several weaknesses were observed: operating alone limits the capacity for support, and irregular opening hours, especially during the low-traffic mornings, affect consistency. Furthermore, the current branding appears rushed with little thought behind it, and the shop's interior lacks cohesion and a unifying theme. This analysis lays the foundation for a strategy aimed at enhancing the business's operational efficiency, establishing a more consistent brand identity, and leveraging its strengths to overcome existing challenges.



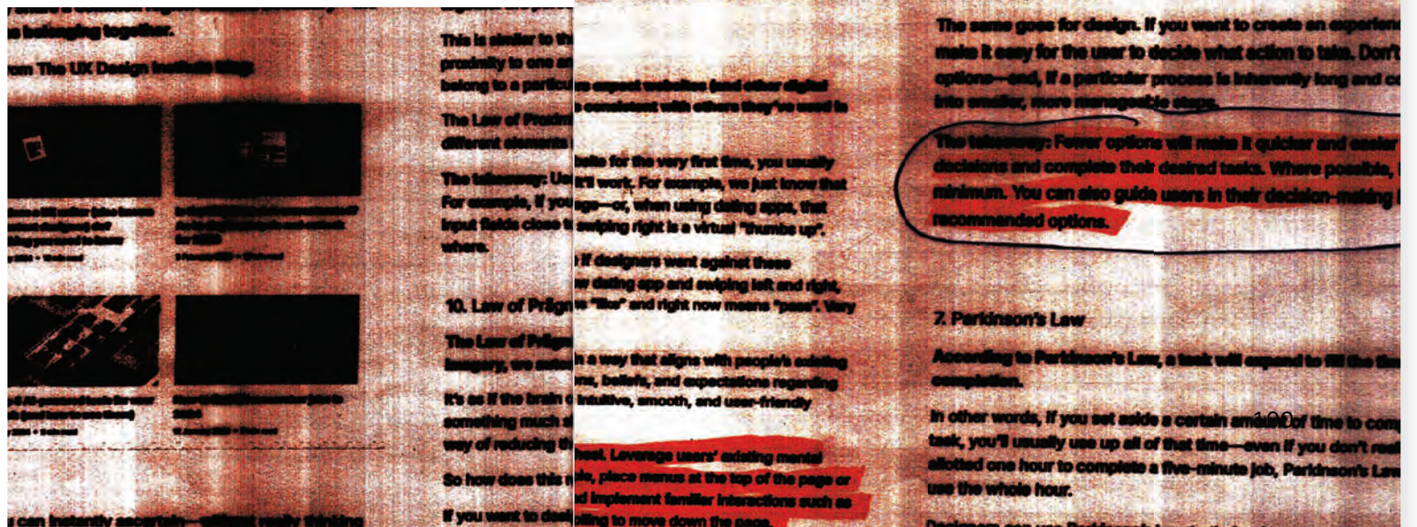






Week 6

During week 6, an analysis of UX laws was conducted to determine which principles could be effectively applied to Aba's Barbershop. Three key laws were identified as particularly relevant: Hick's Law[6], emphasizing the importance of a streamlined appointment booking process to reduce decision fatigue; Fitts's Law[7], which highlighted the need for large, easily accessible buttons for online booking and contact information; and the Aesthetic-Usability Effect[8], reinforcing the idea that a visually appealing website enhances user trust and engagement. This research demonstrated how digital accessibility and user experience design could significantly improve the barbershop's online presence and operational efficiency.



Week 7

During week 7, research into existing barbershop logos was conducted to identify common design elements and typographic styles.[9] It was observed that many traditional barbershops incorporate calligraphy-inspired fonts, contributing to a vintage, handcrafted aesthetic.[10]

Based on these insights, initial logo experimentation began using ink and a calligraphy pen to explore an authentic, old-school branding approach. This process reinforced the importance of maintaining a balance between tradition and modern design, ensuring that the final logo reflects both Aba's personal touch and the professional quality of his services.

Week 8

During week 8, further scribbles were created to refine visual ideas for the branding and animation. Initial storyboard drafts for the animation were developed, mapping out key scenes and transitions to ensure a cohesive visual narrative.

The focus was on effectively communicating the barbershop's atmosphere, services, and customer experience. Additionally, the hand-drawn logo sketches were imported into Adobe Illustrator for digital refinement.

This stage allowed for the polishing of typography, line work, and composition, ensuring that the final logo maintains its handcrafted essence while achieving a professional, high-quality finish suitable for branding across various platforms.

Week 9

During week 9, the style of Dadaism was chosen as a visual direction for the animation, aiming to give it an old-school, handcrafted aesthetic. To enhance this style, various assets such as textures, newspapers, and other printed materials were scanned for use in the animation, adding authenticity and depth to the visuals.

Additionally, the main character for the animation was designed in Adobe Illustrator, ensuring a distinct and recognizable figure that aligns with the overall aesthetic. These elements set the foundation for an animation that blends vintage influences with modern execution.

10

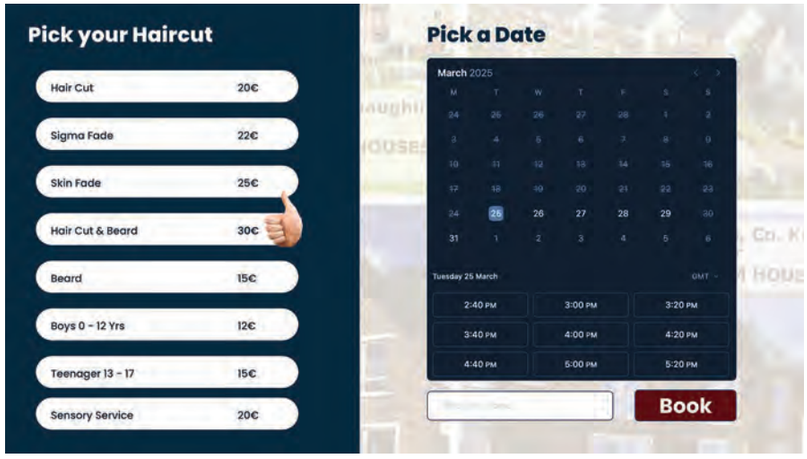
During week 10, production on the animation officially began and was brought through to completion. A slogan, “A New You, One Cut Away”, was created to emphasize transformation and the personal care offered at Aba’s Barbershop.

As animation progressed, challenges emerged, particularly with the walk cycle of the main character. The movement initially appeared stiff and unnatural, requiring several iterations and adjustments to achieve a smoother, more believable motion. Despite the setbacks, the process strengthened animation skills and ensured a final result that was both polished and engaging, capturing the barbershop’s welcoming, old-school charm.

Alongside the animation, a website was created that visually aligned with the animation’s style, incorporating similar textures, typography, and color schemes to maintain consistency.

A booking feature was also integrated to support the appointment-based model, improving accessibility and customer convenience. Despite the setbacks, the week marked a major leap in both visual output and user experience development.

Website


Pick your Haircut
Hair Cut 20€
Sigma Fade 22€
Skin Fade 25€
Hair Cut & Beard 30€
Beard 15€
Boys 0 - 12 Yrs 12€
Teenager 13 - 17 15€
Sensory Service 20€
Pick a Date
March 2025
Tuesday 25 March
2:40 PM
3:00 PM
3:20 PM
3:40 PM
4:00 PM
4:20 PM
4:40 PM
5:00 PM
5:20 PM
Book

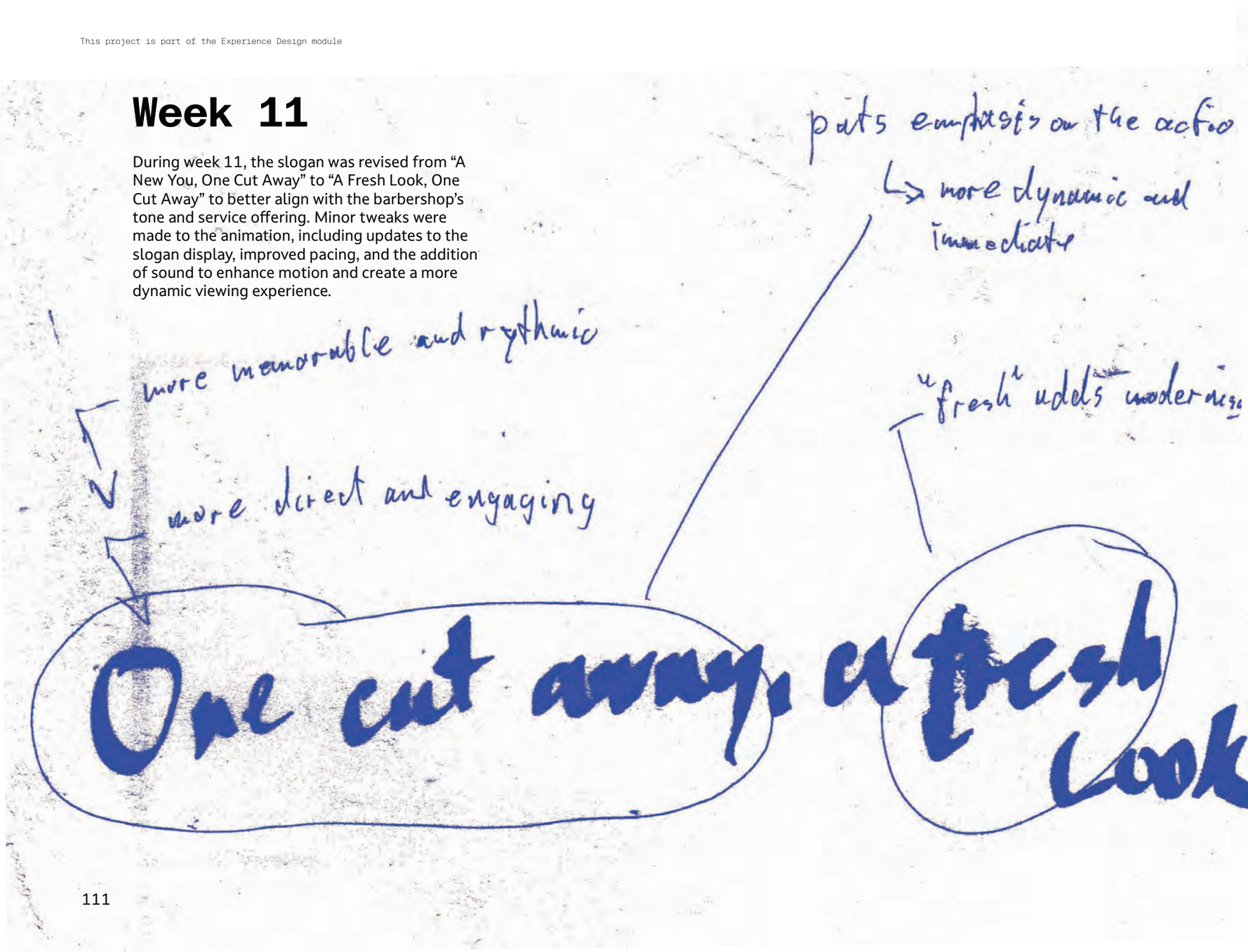
BOOK AN APPOINTMENT
New
Sensory Service
Aba's
One cut away, a fresh look
BBC2
Channel 4
Walk in as you are.
Walk out as your best.
At Abas Barbershop, it's more than just a haircut it's a reset. Whether you're after a fresh fade, a clean shave, or a whole new look, you'll leave the chair feeling sharp, confident, and like a new man.

Sensory Service
At Aba's Barbershop, we believe every child deserves a comfortable and enjoyable haircut experience. That's why we're introducing a specially designed sensory corner tailored for kids with ADHD and similar needs. This calming space features soft lighting, soothing textures, and gentle sounds to help reduce anxiety and overstimulation. With sensory-friendly tools and a patient, understanding approach, we aim to create a space where every child feels safe, seen, and supported, turning haircuts into a positive and empowering experience.
Quiet, low-stimulation corner with soft lighting and comfortable seating
Fidget toys and sensory tools to help ease anxiety
Interactive "Find the Dude" wall game to focus and engage
Extra time and flexibility during appointments
Patient, understanding staff trained in gentle communication
BOOK AN APPOINTMENT
BARBER SHOP

PRICING
Hair Cut 20€
Sigma Fade 22€
Skin Fade 25€
Hair Cut & Beard 30€
Beard 15€
Boys 0 - 12 Yrs 12€
Teenager 13 - 17 Yrs 15€
Sensory Service 20€
Find me here
6 Castlemaine St,
Athlone, Co.
Westmeath
Opening Hours
Monday to Friday
10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Saturday
11:00 am - 6:00 pm
Phone & Email
+353 (0) 12 34567 Email: barberaba@abas.com

Week 11

During week 11, the slogan was revised from “A New You, One Cut Away” to “A Fresh Look, One Cut Away” to better align with the barbershop’s tone and service offering. Minor tweaks were made to the animation, including updates to the slogan display, improved pacing, and the addition of sound to enhance motion and create a more dynamic viewing experience.

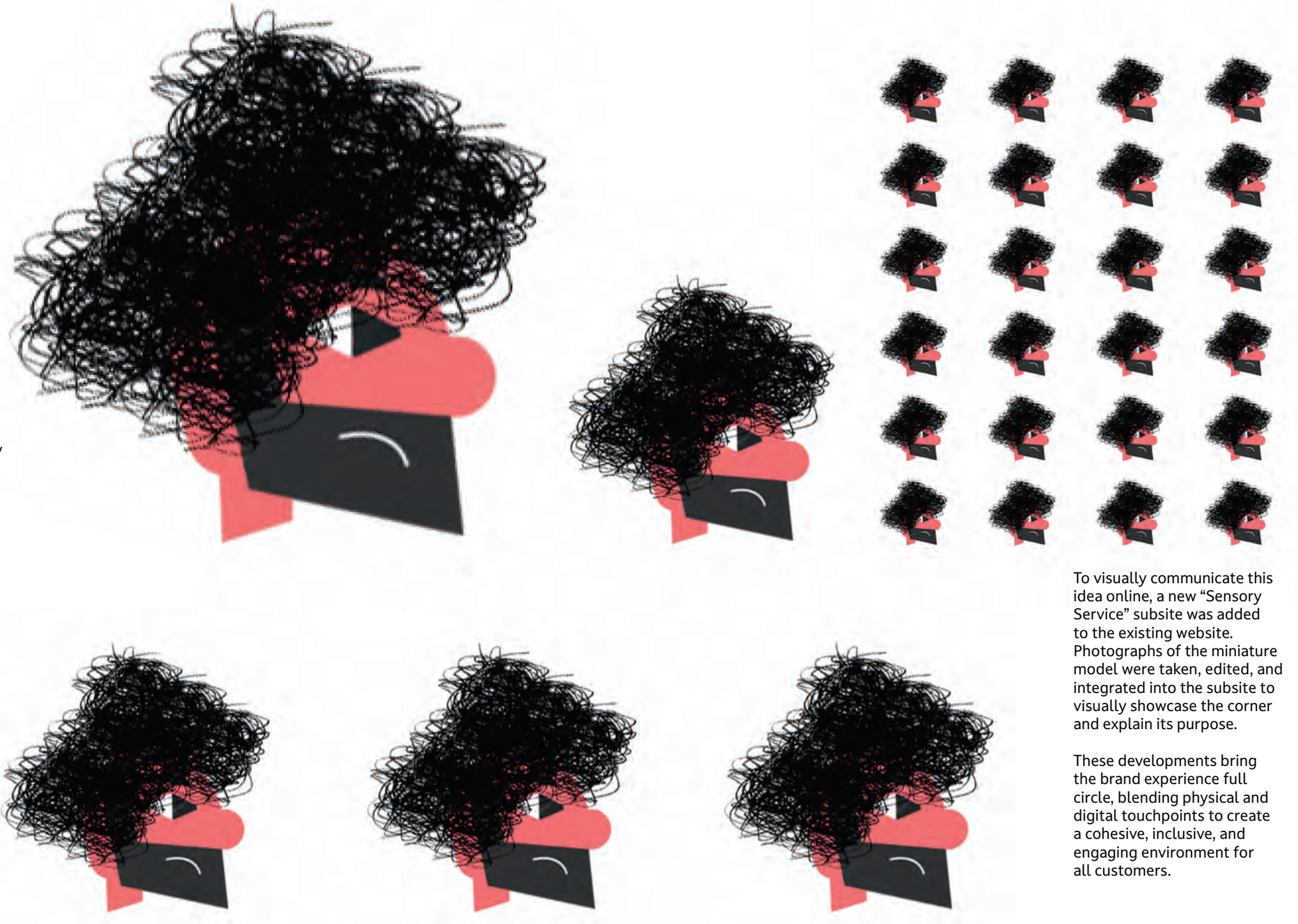


An end jingle was also integrated to give the piece a memorable and polished finish. Alongside these final adjustments, early planning began for a “Kids’ Corner” a dedicated, calming space for children, particularly those with autism.[11] This concept builds on the barbershop’s existing strengths: its quiet, one-on-one atmosphere, making it an ideal environment for sensitive or neurodivergent clients.[12]

Week 12

During week 12, the Kids' Corner concept was brought to life through the creation of a miniature, physical model representing the calm and quiet space planned for the barbershop. The design included interactive elements inspired by Where's Wally?, making the corner both dynamic and engaging for children, especially those who may benefit from visual stimulation in a calm setting. In parallel, branded stationery was designed and printed, including appointment cards and promotional material.

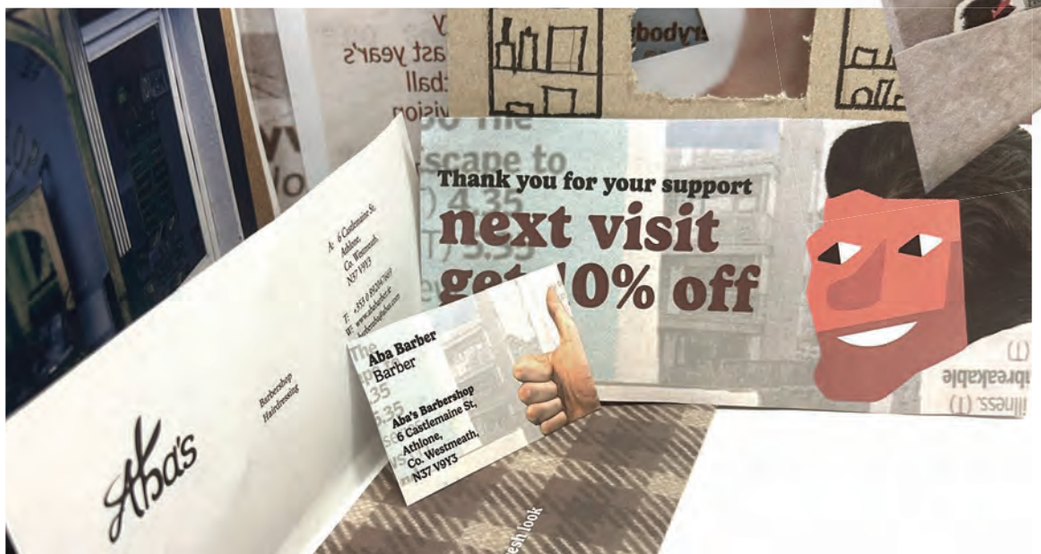
The printing process required several adjustments to ensure proper alignment and layout, highlighting the importance of precision in physical branding materials. These tactile elements added depth to the overall experience design and helped translate the project's values into real-world touchpoints.



To visually communicate this idea online, a new "Sensory Service" subsite was added to the existing website. Photographs of the miniature model were taken, edited, and integrated into the subsite to visually showcase the corner and explain its purpose.

These developments bring the brand experience full circle, blending physical and digital touchpoints to create a cohesive, inclusive, and engaging environment for all customers.

BBC2
BARBER SHOP
UNISEX
Aba's
One cut away, a fresh look
T: +353 0 892047669
E: barberaba@abas.com


Thank you for your support
next visit
Aba's
Aba Barber
Barber
Aba's Barbershop
6 Castlemaine St,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath,
N37 V8Y3

Evaluation

The project for Aba's Barbershop was shaped by a strong foundation of research, creative exploration, and continuous refinement. Primary research, including interviews and observational visits, provided meaningful insights into Aba's values, business goals, and the experience he offers his customers. Secondary research further supported the strategy by offering context on industry trends, UX principles, and branding practices in similar businesses.

Throughout the process, practical challenges were encountered and addressed. The animation required multiple revisions, especially in achieving a smooth walk cycle. Print materials such as appointment cards went through several test runs to correct layout and alignment. Despite these issues, the iterative process improved both technical and creative skills.

The integration of user experience design, animation, print, and digital solutions into one cohesive campaign demonstrated an effective application of multi-platform design thinking.

Conclusion

The project met the goals of the Experience Design Module by creating a comprehensive branding and communication strategy that reflects the spirit of Aba's Barbershop. The outcomes address the shop's operational challenges and amplify its strengths, including its welcoming atmosphere and personalised service.

By introducing an appointment-based system, refreshed branding, a functional and stylistically consistent website, and inclusive additions like the Kids' Corner and Sensory Service subsite, the project provides both practical improvements and emotional value. The work highlights how design can make small businesses more resilient, accessible, and engaging to a wider audience, without losing the authenticity that makes them really unique.

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WHAT LIES
BEYOND
THE
GRAVE

Final Project

The Final Project Module for the BA (Hons) in Graphic & Digital Design serves as the culmination of the skills, knowledge, and creative expertise developed throughout the program. The project allows for an in-depth exploration of a self-directed theme, integrating research, experimentation, and production to create a final exhibition piece.

The module emphasizes both conceptual and technical development, requiring a structured design process supported by theoretical frameworks and practical execution.

This project investigates the theme of fairytales, specifically exploring their grim nature, historical significance, cultural variations and social control. The research will analyze how traditional fairytales, often originating from oral storytelling traditions, were adapted over time, becoming sanitized for modern audiences.

The central problem explored is the contrast between the dark origins of fairytales and their contemporary perception as whimsical children's stories. Through a combination of historical research, design experimentation, and interactive storytelling, this project aims to reintroduce the eerie, thought-provoking aspects of traditional fairytales in a compelling visual format.

As the project progresses, the concept will evolve based on primary and secondary research, artistic exploration, and iterative design development. The final outcome will incorporate a blend of digital and physical media, potentially involving 3D printing, models, and interactive elements, to create an immersive experience that reflects the original haunting nature of these stories.

The final exhibition piece will present a visually rich, research-driven interpretation of fairytales, reimagining them in a way to show how they could have looked based on the original tales.

By merging historical research with modern design techniques, the project seeks to engage viewers in a critical reflection on the transformation of storytelling over time.

Aims

- To explore the dark origins and cultural evolution of fairytales, examining their transformation from folklore to modern adaptations.
- To develop a visually immersive and interactive design outcome using a blend of digital and physical media.
- To recontextualize fairytales through design and storytelling, engaging contemporary audiences with their eerie and thought-provoking themes.

Objectives

- Investigate historical fairytales, Slavic myths, and folklore evolution, analyzing their visual and thematic transformations.
- Experiment with 3D modeling, printmaking, digital illustration, and physical models to establish an engaging visual language.
- Develop a final exhibition piece integrating typography, imagery, and spatial elements to convey the project's theme.
- Assess the effectiveness of the design, gather feedback, and reflect on future refinements.

Methodology

Primary Research:

Visual Experimentation: Testing 3D modeling, physical model-making, digital illustration, and print techniques to determine the most effective medium.

Audience Insights: Conducting informal surveys and feedback sessions to understand perceptions of traditional fairytales and their darker elements.

Material Testing: Exploring textures, typography, and spatial arrangements to enhance the immersive experience.

Secondary Research:

Historical Analysis: Studying original fairytales, Slavic myths, and folklore archives to understand their themes, symbolism, and visual representation over time.

Comparative Studies: Analyzing adaptations in literature, film, and illustration, focusing on how these stories have been reimagined.

Design Theory: Reviewing principles of narrative design, interactivity, and immersive storytelling to inform the project's execution.

Week 1

During the first week, various themes were explored to establish a project direction. Initially, near-death experiences were considered, inspired by Raymond A. Moody's influential work.[1]

However, after a library search yielded limited academic sources and the subject did not resonate sufficiently, this theme was set aside. The focus then shifted to fairytales, particularly Slavic narratives, which have long been a source of inspiration due to their rich moral lessons and similarities to Western tales.

This exploration was anticipated to deepen the understanding of cultural storytelling, narrative evolution, and moral allegory. A mind map was created to visualize these themes, establish connections, and guide subsequent research directions.

2

Dark nature of fairytales

During week 2, after delving into fairytales, it became evident that many of these stories contain dark, adult themes that make them unsuitable for children. This realization sparked a deeper interest in the subject, leading to the headline "The Grim Realities of Fairytales. "

The investigation then focused on understanding what makes these tales grim, examining the themes of moral ambiguity, cultural symbolism, and narrative structures.

After submitting the initial findings and discussing it with the lecturer, the focus shifted towards exploring the concept of social control in fairytales, particularly how these stories subtly reflect and reinforce societal norms, behaviors, and power dynamics.

During week 3, analysis of classic fairytales, including Rumpelstiltskin[2], Snow White[3], and Slavic tales such as **Baba Yaga and Zamoryshek**[4], revealed key themes in societal control and moral lessons. **Rumpelstiltskin** was analyzed for its depiction of bargained power and the consequences of breaking promises, highlighting issues of trust and the tension between personal power and societal obligations. **Snow White** was explored through its focus on beauty, jealousy, and the moral consequences of vanity, examining how societal expectations of appearance and obedience shape behavior.

3

The Slavic figures Baba Yaga and Zamoryshek are prominent in many tales, representing the balance of good and evil and reflecting cultural understandings of morality and justice, with Baba Yaga embodying both wisdom and punishment. Overall, these tales illustrated how community values, social order, and obedience to authority were enforced through narrative structure, often imparting moral lessons that reinforced social cohesion and conformity.

Week 4

During week 4, an extensive investigation into the lives of the Grimm Brothers was conducted to understand their motivations for collecting folk tales and to determine if these narratives contained underlying social commentary.[5]

This research explored the historical context and personal influences that shaped their work, offering insights into how societal norms and values were subtly embedded in the stories.[6] Additionally, a blog article written by a contemporary storyteller provided an eye-opening perspective on modern approaches to fairytale creation.[7]

The combination of historical inquiry and contemporary analysis enriched the understanding of fairytales as dynamic tools for moral instruction and social control, bridging past influences with current creative expressions.

5

Further analysis of fairytales focused on **Cinderella**[8], comparing the versions by the Grimm Brothers and Charles Perrault.[9] The research highlighted significant differences between the French and German versions[10], particularly in tone, themes, and narrative structure.

Perrault's version, which places greater emphasis on elegance, grace, and moral lessons, was found to have a stronger influence on the widely recognized Disney adaptation. In contrast, the Grimm Brothers' version retains darker elements and more brutal consequences for antagonistic characters, reinforcing a more cautionary tone. This comparison provided deeper insight into how cultural perspectives shape storytelling and how fairytales evolve through adaptation.

6

The exploration of **Little Red Riding Hood**[11] and **Hansel and Gretel**[12], as recorded by the Grimm Brothers, further reinforced recurring themes in traditional fairytales, such as survival[13], deception, and the dangers of the unknown[14]. Both depict vulnerable protagonists encountering predatory figures, reflecting the cautionary nature of early folklore.

The research also examined the role of violence and consequence, which are often softened or removed in modern retellings. These findings emphasized how original fairytales conveyed moral and societal warnings through unsettling and sometimes gruesome narratives, which were later altered to fit contemporary sensibilities.

44

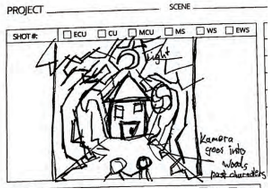
Visual research focused on how fairytale characters are depicted in contemporary media, including films, animated series, and children's books. The analysis revealed a trend towards stylized, approachable, and commercialized representations, often stripping away the grim or unsettling aspects present in older versions. This shift reflects changes in audience expectations and cultural attitudes towards storytelling.

Modern adaptations tend to humanize villains, emphasize character growth, and introduce humor, softening the darker moral lessons that were once central to these tales. This research provided valuable insight into the visual language used to reinterpret fairytales, informing how traditional elements might be reintroduced in a contemporary yet unsettling aesthetic for the final project.

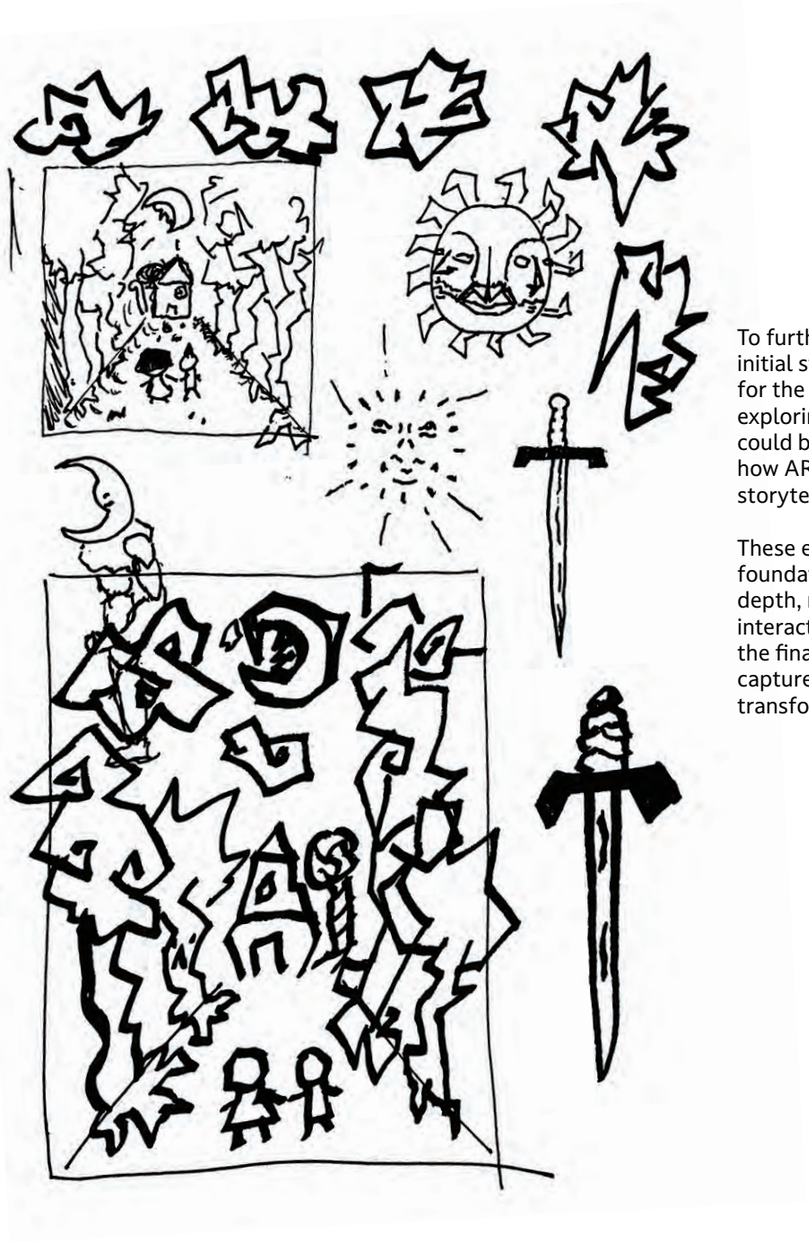
Week 8

Following the analysis of various fairytales and their adaptations, the decision was made to explore 3D and Augmented Reality (AR) as a means of visualizing the layers within fairytales. This approach aimed to emphasize the contrast between their original grim nature and their modern interpretations.

Research into AR applications focused on Instagram-based digital artwork, particularly the work of Jess Wiseman (@jesslwiseman)[15]. One of her notable pieces involved a digital pop-up poster created in Blender, which served as inspiration for developing a layered storytelling approach.



This concept was identified as a fitting solution for illustrating how fairytales have evolved over time, allowing for an interactive and immersive experience that visually reveals different versions of the same story.



To further develop this idea, initial storyboards and drafts for the poster were created, exploring how visual layers could be structured and how AR could enhance the storytelling process.

These early sketches laid the foundation for integrating depth, movement, and interactivity, ensuring that the final design effectively captures the complexity and transformation of fairytales.

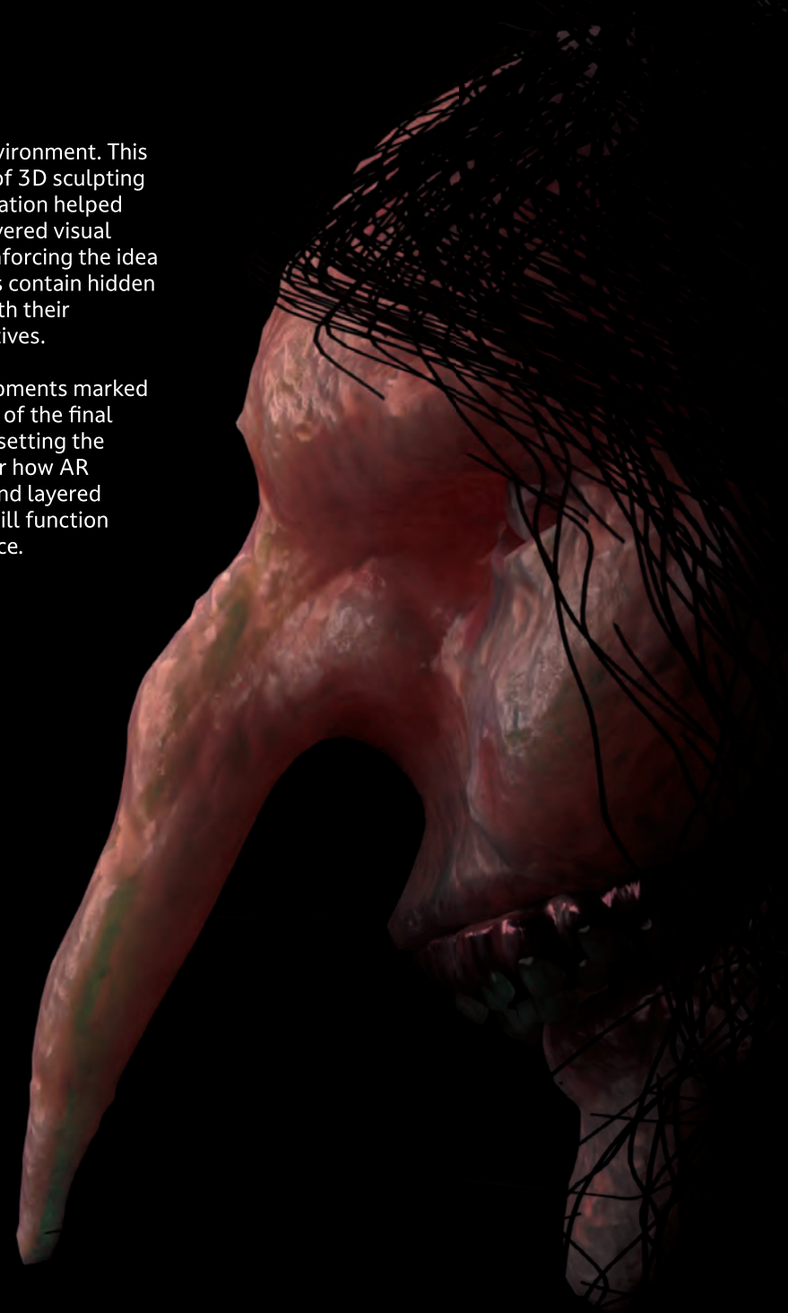
Week 9

The story of Hansel and Gretel was selected as the central narrative for the poster and AR experience. This fairytale was chosen due to its strong contrast between innocence and horror, making it an effective representation of the layers of fairytales from their whimsical surface to their darker origins.

To bring this vision to life, the witch was sculpted in Blender, with a focus on making her as terrifying as possible to maximize shock value. Emphasis was placed on exaggerated features, unsettling details, and eerie expressions, ensuring that she embodies the sinister nature of her character in early versions of the tale.

Additionally, the witch's hut was also sculpted in Blender, designed to reflect its menacing yet deceptively inviting presence. To complement the 3D elements, the forest surrounding the hut was illustrated in Procreate, creating a rich and immersive environment. This combination of 3D sculpting and 2D illustration helped establish a layered visual aesthetic, reinforcing the idea that fairytales contain hidden depths beneath their surface narratives.

These developments marked the beginning of the final composition, setting the foundation for how AR interactions and layered storytelling will function within the piece.



Week 10

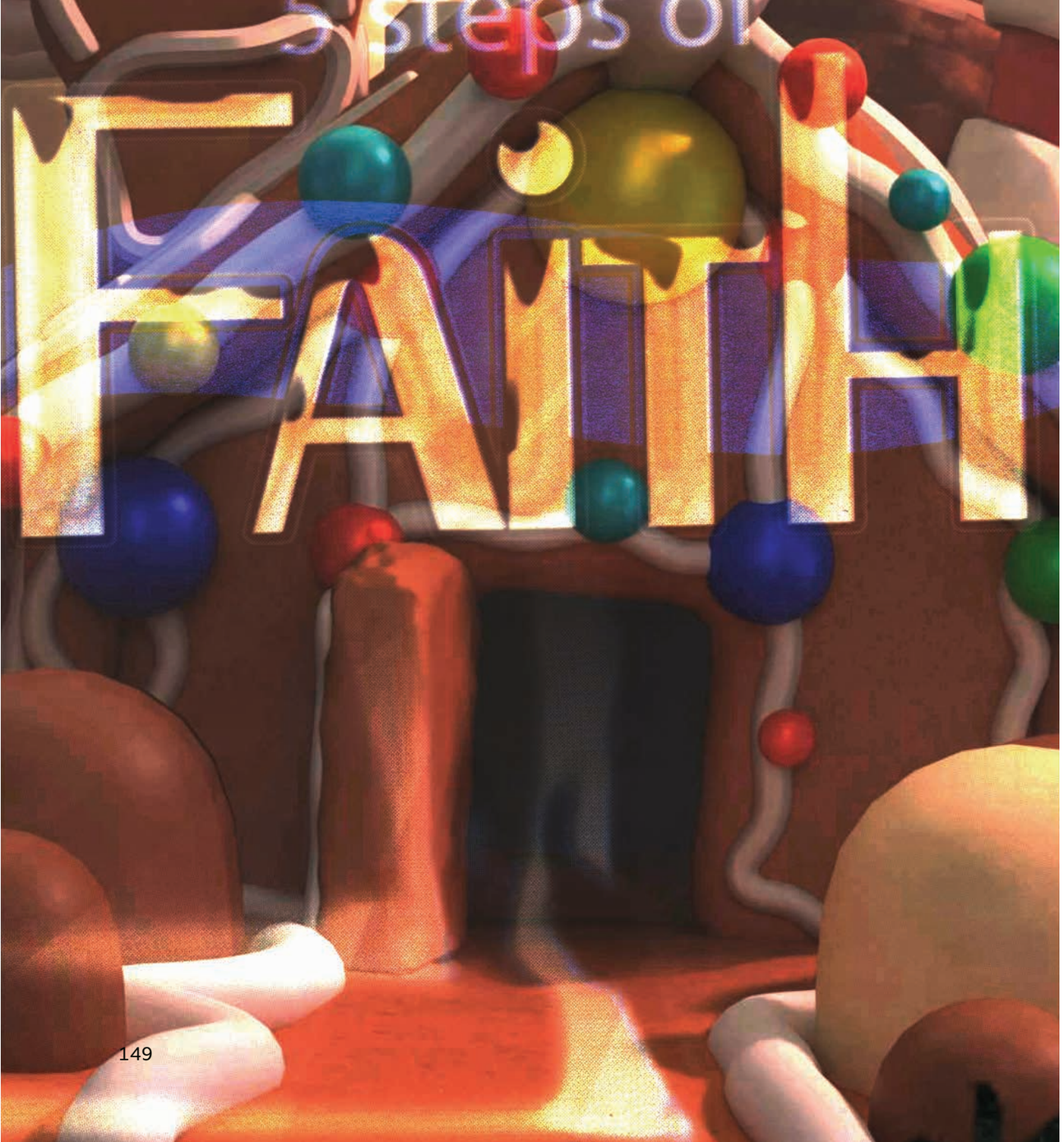
This week focused on the continued development and refinement of the 3D assets, particularly the witch's hand and arm, which were modeled and textured in Blender. The goal was to create a highly detailed and expressive animation that would contribute to the shock factor of the final piece.

The process involved animating the limb, applying keyframes, and optimizing both the mesh and texture files to reduce the overall file size. Attention was given to efficient UV mapping and texture baking, ensuring visual quality was preserved while attempting to make the scene suitable for AR deployment.

An attempt was made to implement the animation into ZapWorks to create an interactive AR scene, but the file size exceeded platform limitations.

After evaluating the visual degradation caused by compression, the decision was made not to compress the asset further, as it would have resulted in significant loss of detail and compromised the intended impact.

This experience underscored the challenges of balancing fidelity and technical constraints in AR, and informed decisions for future iterations or platform alternatives.



Week 11

This week marked a significant step toward finalizing the physical and audio components of the project. Sound elements were added to enhance the immersive quality of the animation and AR experience, helping to build atmosphere and tension around the visual narrative. The audio design focused on reinforcing the eerie, unsettling tone of the story, particularly in scenes featuring the witch and the forest.

Additionally, two posters were designed as the printed component of the project. The first poster presents the opening scene of the animation, showing Hansel and Gretel entering the forest, rendered in the same visual style developed throughout the project. This image evokes a sense of mystery and innocence, setting the stage for the narrative.

The second poster was conceived as the back or underside of the first, conceptually representing the "flipside" of fairytales. It visually reveals the darker reality hidden beneath the surface, including the witch, her hut, and the threatening environment, emphasizing how quickly a story's tone can shift. This design choice reinforces the central theme of the project that fairytales often carry disturbing truths just beneath their polished exteriors, accessible by flipping a page or in this case, a poster.

The dual-poster format offers both visual contrast and narrative depth, supporting the project's aim to reveal the layered complexity of traditional fairytales through interactive and illustrative means.

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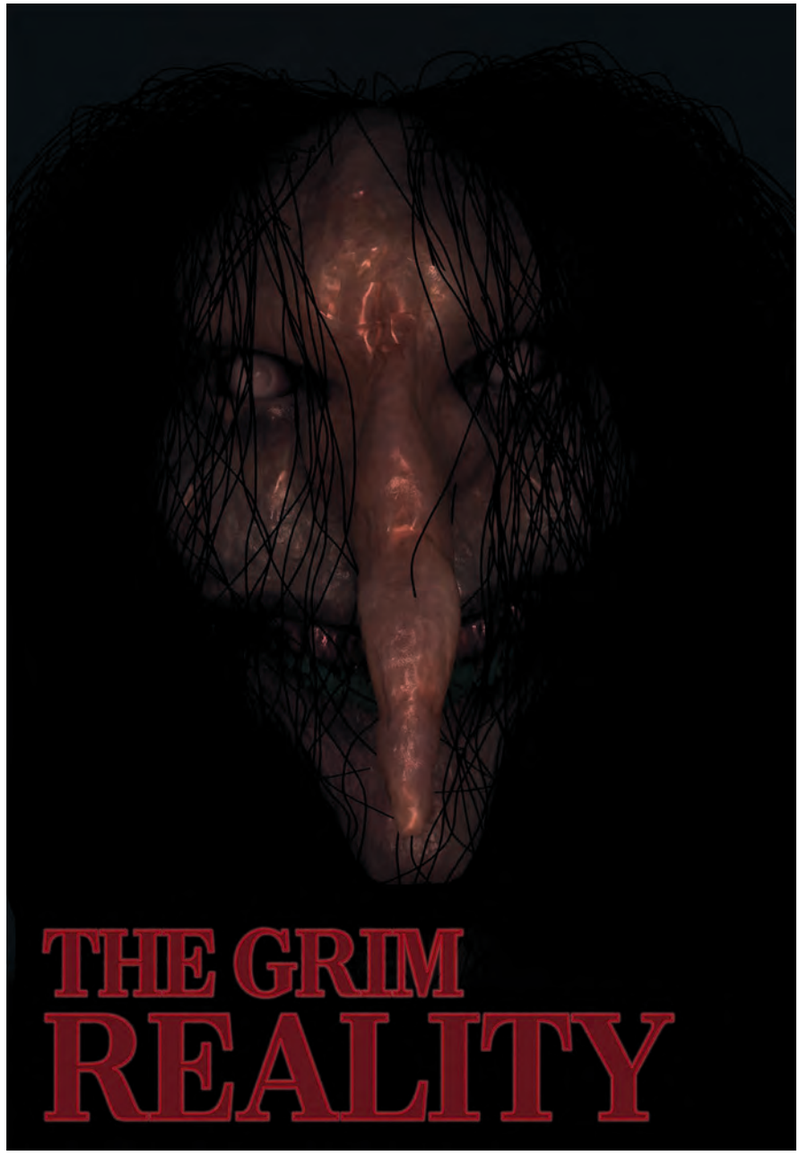

THE GRIM
REALITY

Week 12

In the final development stage, an AR mockup video was created using After Effects to visually communicate how all elements of the project could function together in a live setting. The mockup combined the printed poster, the animated sequences, and the 3D hand model, simulating an interactive experience where viewers could uncover different layers of the fairytale through AR.

This composite video served to demonstrate the intended concept in a polished and accessible way, particularly useful due to previous technical limitations in deploying the full AR scene through ZappWorks. The mockup allowed for a cohesive visual narrative, illustrating how the poster triggers animation and 3D elements to reveal the hidden, darker aspects of the Hansel and Gretel story.

By merging all components into a single visual prototype, the project was able to present a complete and immersive storytelling experience, effectively showcasing its central concept of fairytales as layered narratives with dual meanings.

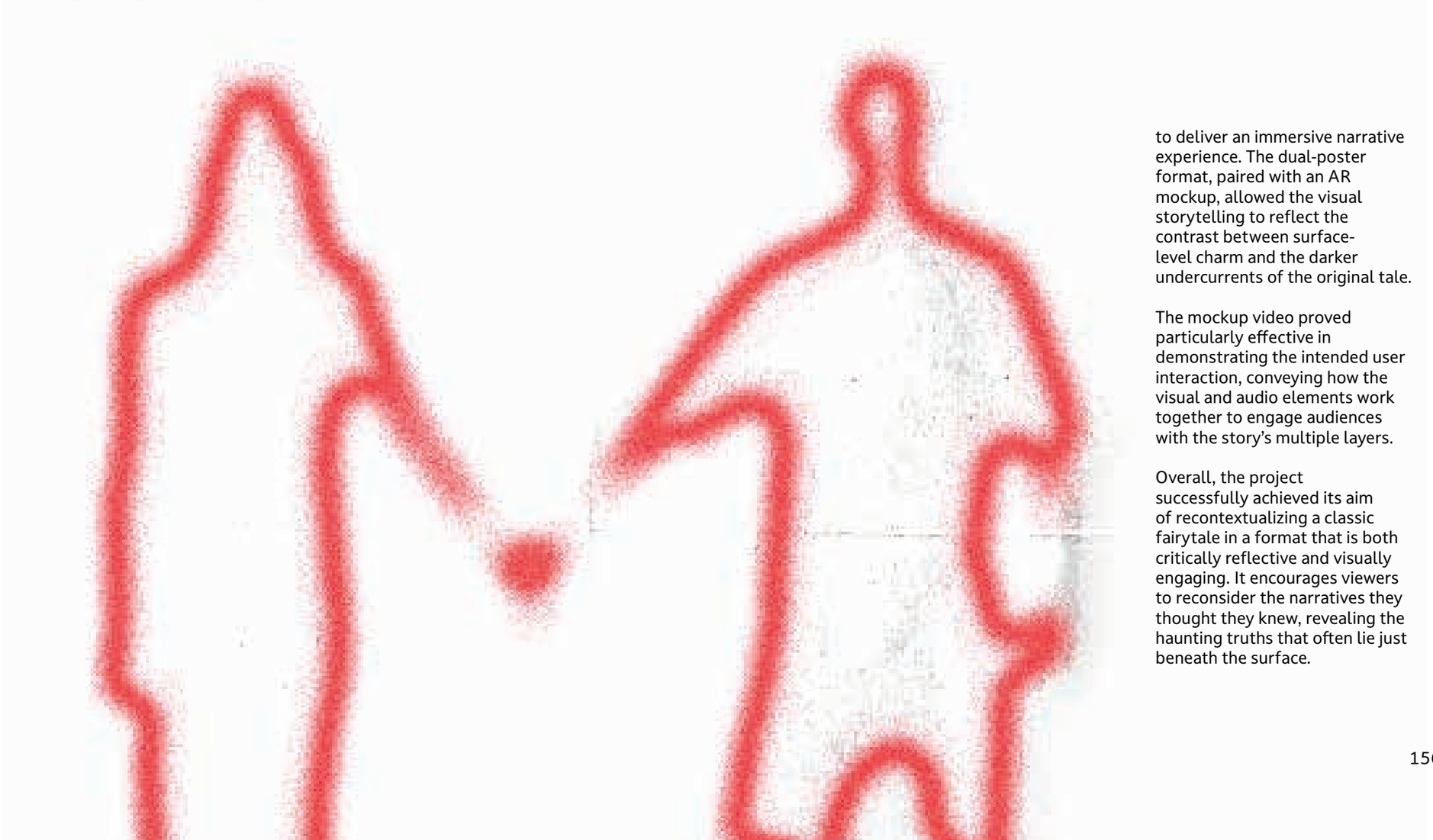
Conclusion

This project set out to explore the grim nature and layered complexity of traditional fairytales, using the story of Hansel and Gretel as a vehicle to investigate how these narratives have evolved through cultural adaptation and media representation.

Through extensive primary and secondary research, it became clear that fairytales serve not only as entertainment but as tools of moral instruction and social control.

By examining historical texts and comparing them to modern interpretations, the project uncovered the extent to which these stories have been sanitized over time, often losing their original cautionary tone and psychological depth.

The final design solution merges digital and physical media, utilizing 3D modeling, AR, illustration, and sound



to deliver an immersive narrative experience. The dual-poster format, paired with an AR mockup, allowed the visual storytelling to reflect the contrast between surface-level charm and the darker undercurrents of the original tale.

The mockup video proved particularly effective in demonstrating the intended user interaction, conveying how the visual and audio elements work together to engage audiences with the story's multiple layers.

Overall, the project successfully achieved its aim of recontextualizing a classic fairytale in a format that is both critically reflective and visually engaging. It encourages viewers to reconsider the narratives they thought they knew, revealing the haunting truths that often lie just beneath the surface.

The final outcome of the project demonstrates a strong integration of research, design experimentation, and multimedia storytelling. The witch's 3D model, posters, and AR concept were all crafted to support the central theme of fairytales as layered, often unsettling cultural artifacts. The project's strengths lie in its conceptual clarity and its innovative blending of analog and digital techniques.

One of the primary challenges was optimizing 3D assets for AR use, particularly the detailed witch model and animated hand. Attempts to implement the scene in ZappWorks were unsuccessful due to file size constraints, prompting the creation of a mockup video in After Effects. While this workaround provided a strong visual demonstration, the lack of full interactivity remains a limitation.

The final posters effectively conveyed the visual contrast between innocence and horror, aligning with the project's message. Feedback received during the development process confirmed that the narrative and aesthetic choices resonated with viewers.

If more time and technical resources had been available, further refinements could include developing a fully functional AR prototype and exploring additional fairytale narratives for comparison. Nonetheless, the project succeeded in engaging its audience, provoking critical thought, and pushing creative boundaries through an immersive and layered design experience.

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