

## Into the future: Design of an extra-human body ornament to change traditional rigid thinking perspectives.



### Overview

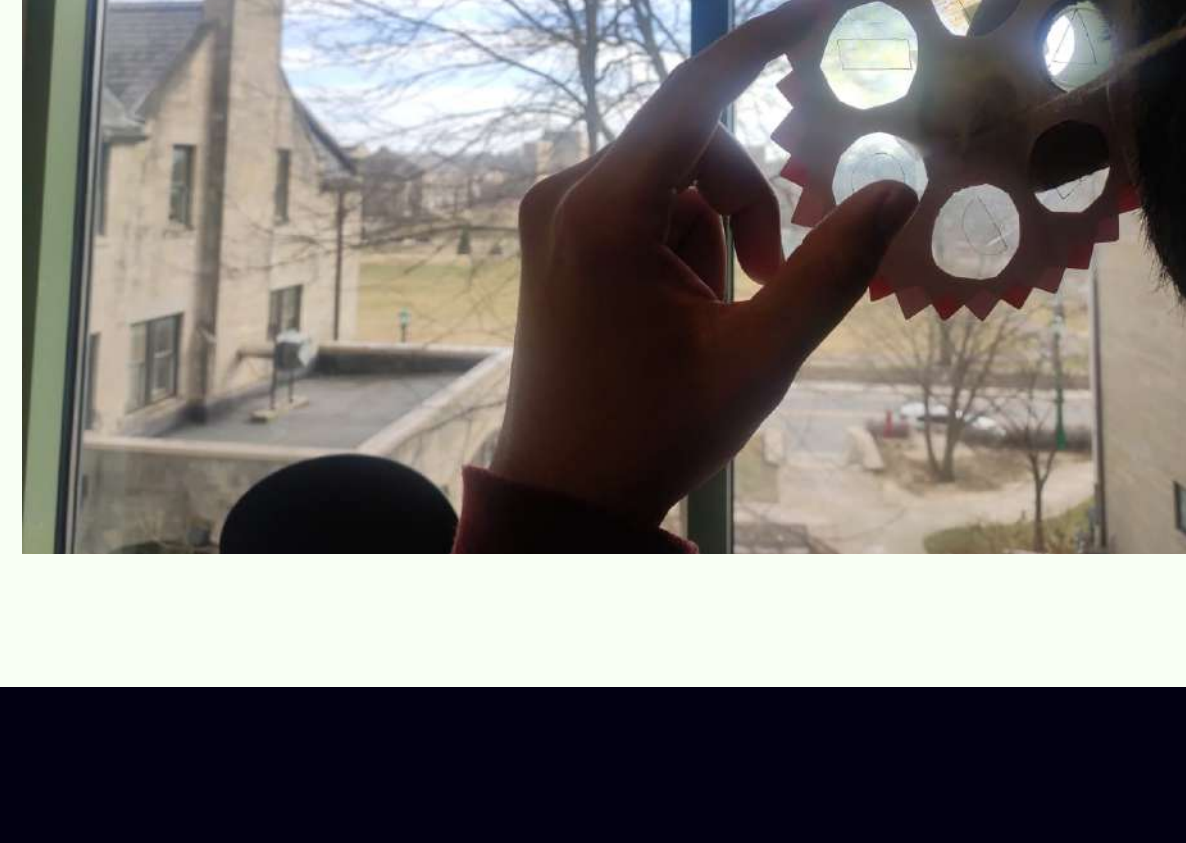
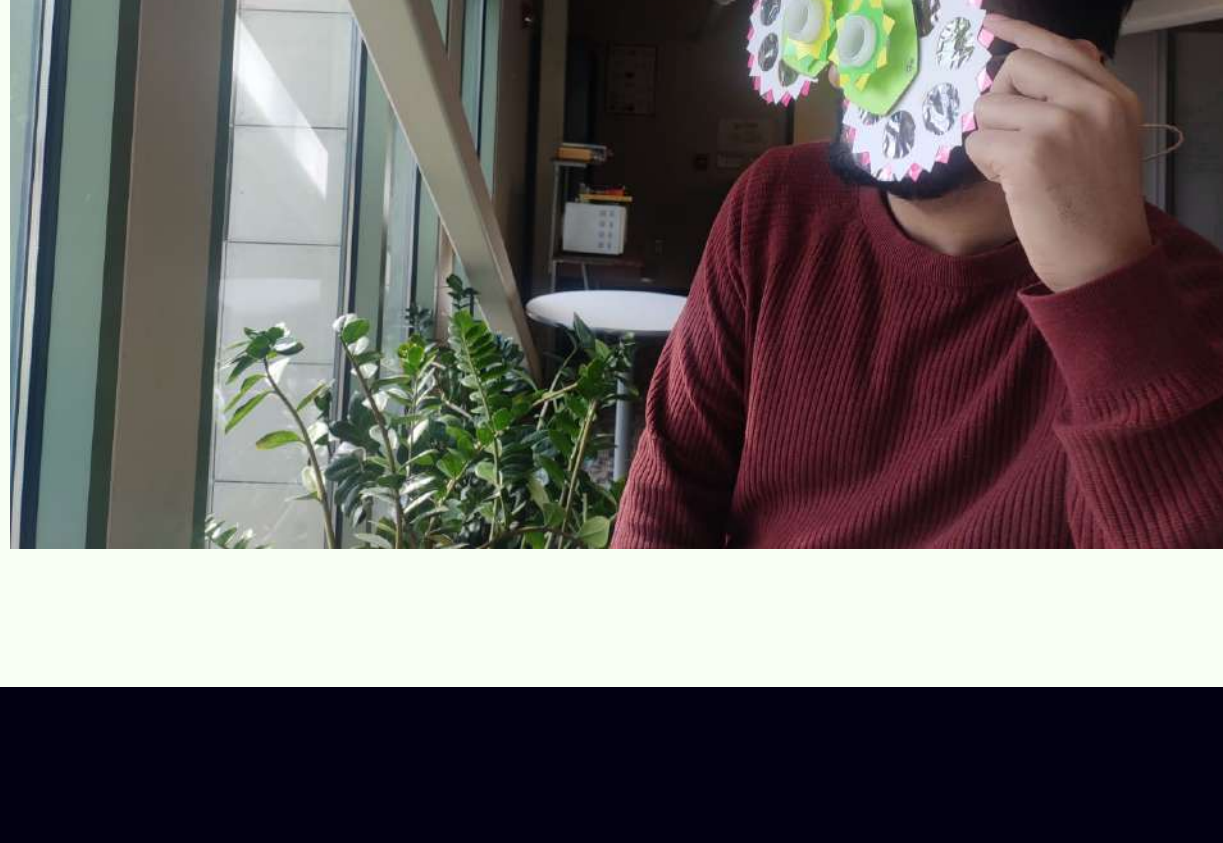
This class project has motivated me to think beyond human-centered design and to explore design opportunities in a broader socio-technical context. I am particularly interested in speculative design as a way to spark critiques and inspiration, and have been influenced by post-human, postmodern feminist theorists such as Donna Haraway's cyborg manifesto. As a result, I have designed a body ornament that challenges dominant, oppressive, and rigid historical and traditional ideologies by allowing people to see the world in multiple perspectives and change their perceptions.

### Duration

2 days

### Team

Individual project

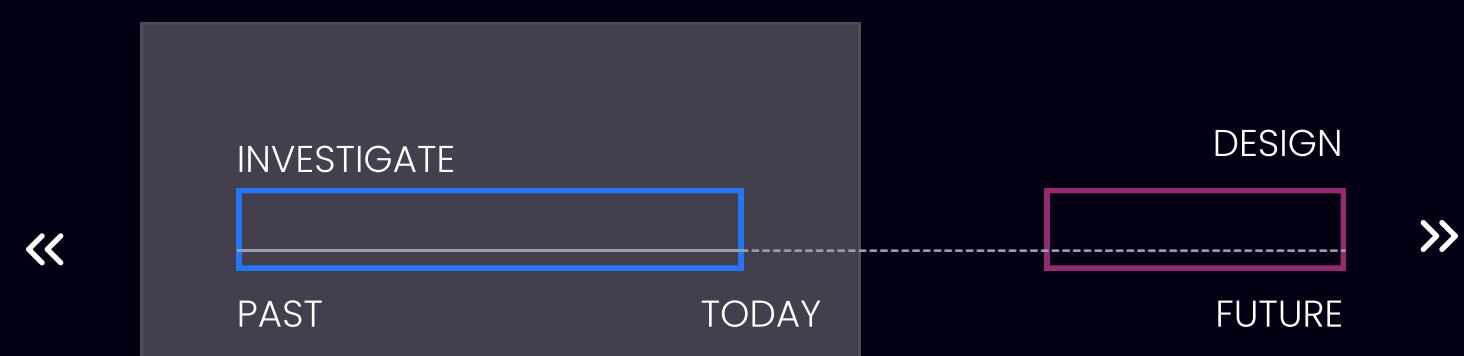


### Project Requirements

Design an extra-human body ornament using basic materials to give super human ability for a specific purpose. Define clear visual/contextual design guiding principles and incorporate in the artifact.

### Background and context

My research began with my personal experiences with social inequality. I conducted a comprehensive literature review to explore the history of social inequality and systemic injustice, and how these issues have shaped current ideologies and perceptions of society from prehistoric times to the present day. I also considered alternative futures that could further marginalize and devalue the role of women and nature due to technological advancements and human dominance. This research informed the design of an artifact for an alternative future reality that is free from injustice and the oppression of human and non-human entities.



### Let's understand the current perceptions shaped by the past

Men as hunters, women as gatherers

Since prehistoric times, men have been viewed as powerful hunters who fought beasts and brought home meat to feed their families, while women have been seen as weaker beings responsible for household chores. This idea has led to many interpretations of men as being central to human development, which has resulted in the alienation of women whose unpaid labor is often undervalued.

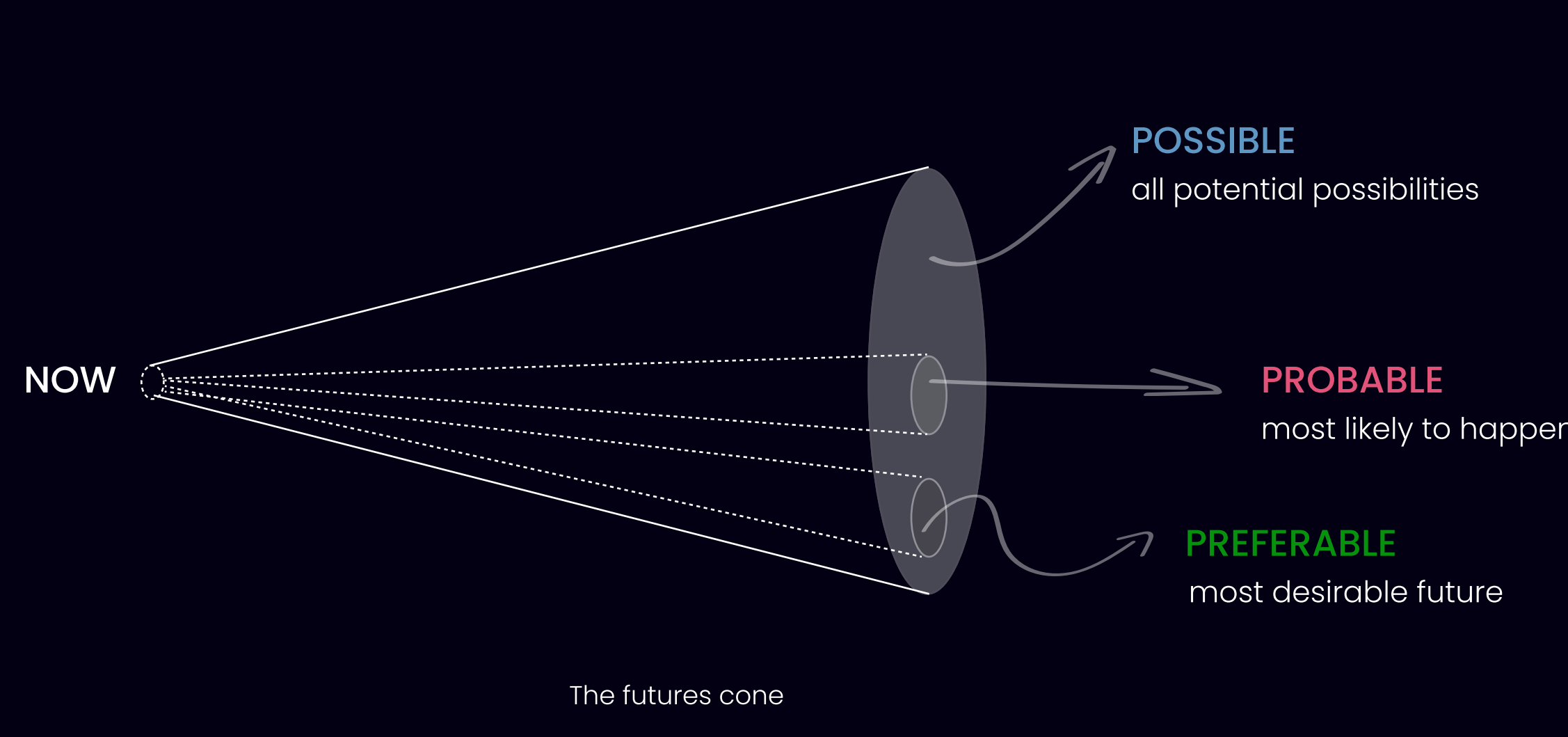
Sexual division of labor

The gendered division of labor is a social construct that has been used to justify the unequal distribution of labor and resources based on gender. By assigning certain tasks and occupations to women and others to men, this division reinforces traditional gender roles and expectations and reinforces the unequal power dynamics between men and women.

Nature-culture dualism

It ignores the interconnectedness of all living beings and the fact that human culture is a part of nature. This dualism has been used to justify the exploitation and domination of nature, as well as the marginalization and oppression of those who are seen as being closer to nature, such as indigenous peoples.

### What could the future look like ?



### Technologically possible futures

artificial brain artificial ozone layer  
cyberpornography artificial womb  
genetic experimentation with nature  
authoritarian system capitalist  
racist dualist view oppressive

### Technologically desirable futures

non-hierarchical socially just  
embrace pluralism non violent  
non-binary world view Fluid  
communal balance No identity  
equitable fragmented power

### Speculative and Critical Design

*"By presenting people with hypothetical products, services and systems from alternative futures people engage with them as citizens/consumers."*

–Dunne & Raby

Critical designs probe our beliefs and values, challenge our assumptions and encourage us to imagine how what we call reality could be different.

### Postmodern Feminism and cyborgs

According to Donna Haraway,

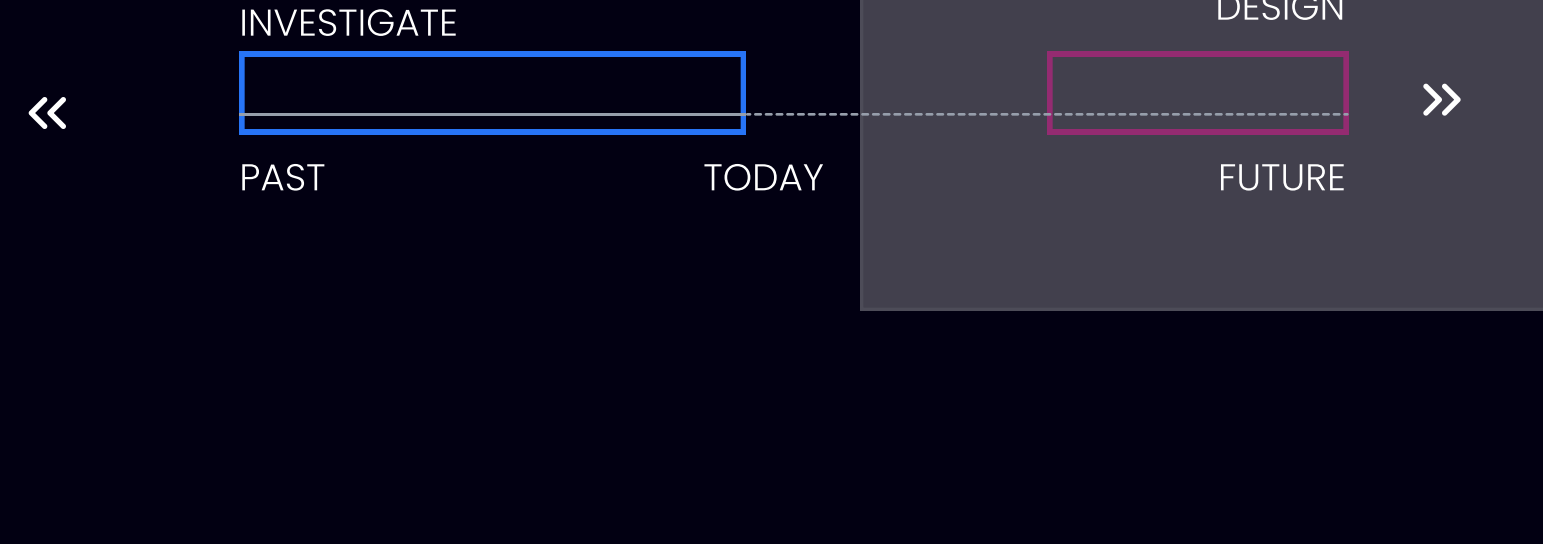
*"Gender, race, or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, racism, and capitalism."*

*"Cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction."*

A cyborg could be viewed as a radical organism that destabilizes socially imposed identities and roles. The inherently plastic nature of cyborgs is against the rigid essentialist binaries that favor oppressive patriarchal capitalism. The concept of cyborg transcends beyond gender, color and physical features that breaks socially constructed walls of dualistic identities.

How might we reflect on rigid and singular thinking to create an alternative desirable future that is egalitarian, socially just and free from gender inequality, oppression and hierarchy.

What if we have a futuristic superhuman ability to see the world in multiple perspectives and change the way we think so we become more fluid than rigid?



Both critical design and postmodern feminism deconstruct and resist rigid norms. It led me to design an embodiment for a techno-social alternative future that is beyond gender, race and class differences where all humans would be cyborgs with artificial implants making them more than human.

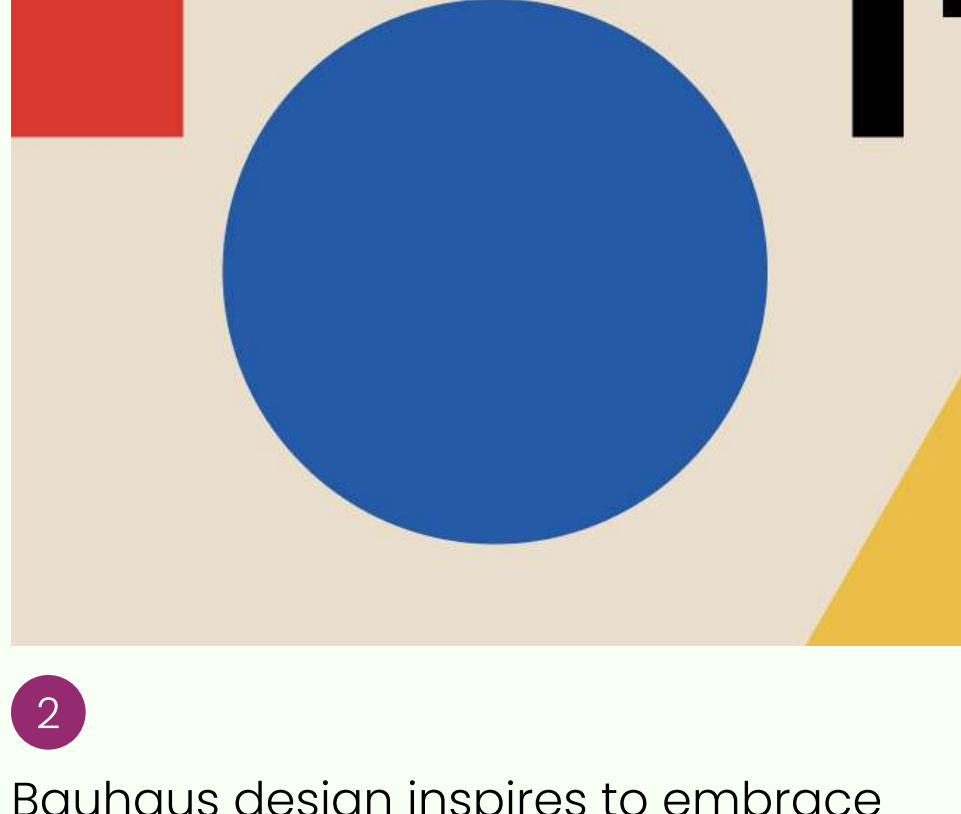
I've used a research through design methodology to design an embodied artifact that sparks critical reflection from users instead of creating a commercial product. It is used as a probe to critique current social norms by embodying alternative values. I asked myself, what can I design that people can interact with and think? To think in multiple, what can I design that people can interact with and think? To think in multiple, what can I design that people can interact with and think? To think in multiple, what can I design that people can interact with and think?

What if in an alternative cybernetic future, we are all cyborgs with implants. Imagine we have a lens that we can use to change the way we think about something we see. Would there be less wars, violence and injustice? What if there is no gender bias and we see a world where all genders are equal, decisions are made based on seeing multiple perspectives, based on empathy?

### Visual and contextual guiding principles



1 Taking inspiration from nature, I wanted to use rotation and movement to signify change

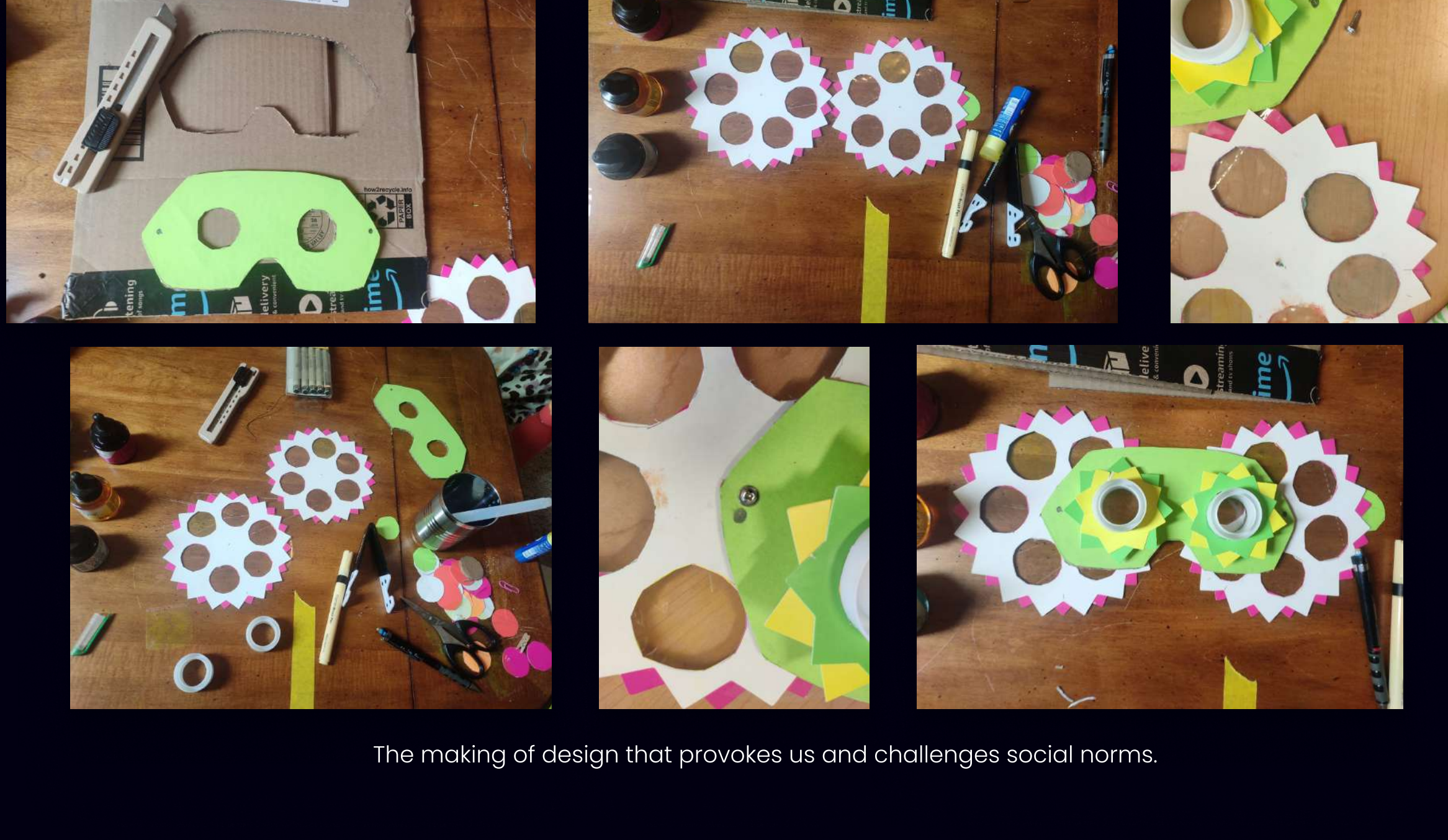


2 Bauhaus design inspires to embrace change in modern technologies.



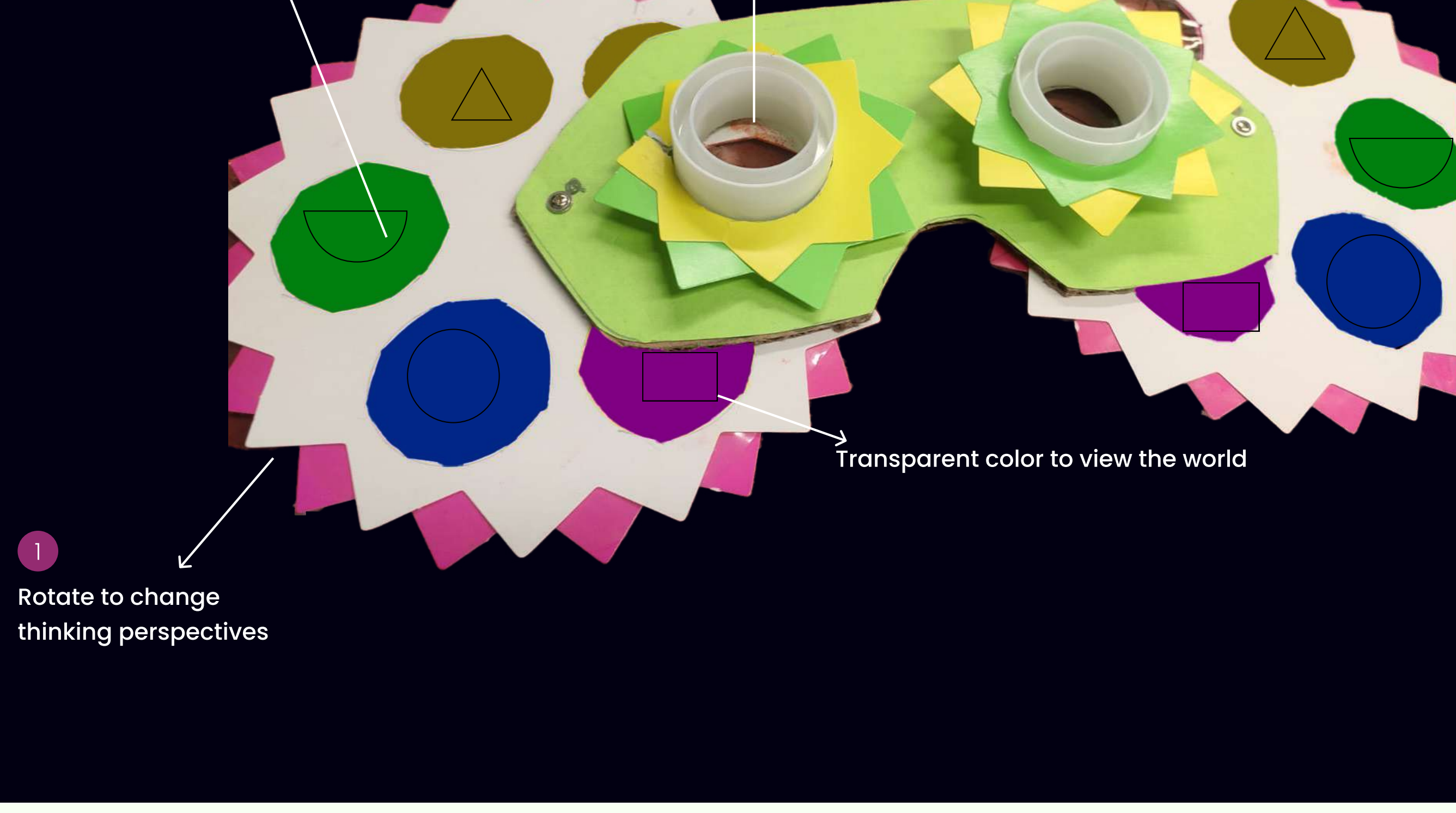
3 Inspired by the series cyberpunk, I observed use of neon colors to represent futurism

### Prototype: Building the design probe



The making of design that provokes us and challenges social norms.

### Perspective Lens: Final Prototype



By envisioning a future beyond traditional categories of gender, race, and class, I wanted to offer a glimpse of a more inclusive and equitable society. Both postmodern feminism and critical design seek to subvert dominant narratives and oppressive systems. By combining these, I created work that challenges traditional notions of gender, race, and class, that facilitate an embodied exploration of alternative future by sparking self-reflection and conversations about future.