Zai Thakoor

I'm a brand / visual designer with 4 years of experience in crafting multilingual narratives for diverse markets. My work stems from cross-cultural dialogue that shapes strategic branding, systems, and connections out of the visual fodder around me. Currently based in Brooklyn, NY, I'm pursuing an MFA in Products of Design at the School of Visual Arts, NYC, and committed to shaping inclusive ideologies through purposeful design.

Website   zai.thakoor@gmail.com / zthakoor@sva.edu   +1 (917)9140823

EXPERIENCE

Brand Designer / Consultant ——— Anomaly Brands (July 2020 - July 2023)

Creating an Identity system for Asia's largest Microbrewery

- Developed thorough **competitor audits** to assess the Indian craft beer market.
- **Re-positioned** the ethos of Ironhill for target users/clients.
- Worked on product development and renamed **8 in-house brews** as brand labels.
- **Coordinated** with retail space designers to extend the language across the **3-acre space.**
- **Impacted stakeholder footfall** and new partnerships with change in brand strategy.

Category Branding for Indian legacy-led brands in the F&B space

- Created innovative packaging experiences to enhance the brand status of sweets/snacks for **4-decade old businesses** like **Anand Sweets and Savouries, Smoor Couverture Chocolates, and Almond House**
- Worked at design solutions for these brands that helped a **manifold increase in turnover** at the various store outlets **across India**
- Created **product categories** as part of periodic development services in response to **consumer consumption trends**
- Dabbled with print & production techniques to add to the **brand's tactile experience**.
- Styled and **art-directed** shoots for exclusive product collections.
- Worked extensively with web design teams to extend **Almond House's retail experience onto a digital platform**, as a **strategic brand repositioning** from its earlier offline presence. This brought in an increase in impressions and higher online purchase.

Design Lead ——— Womxn's Mobility Project (May 2022 - Present)

Womxn's Mobility Project **amplifies stories, issues, anecdotes, histories and realities of and womxn's mobility in and claim to Indian public spaces. Urban and Online.**

- **Led design initiatives** thus crafting a unique brand identity for public presentation.
- Facilitated diverse groups to share stories of collective resistance, Focused on reflections, narratives, and conversations to amplify voices - **to enhance community engagement for collective resistance.**
- Creatively documented stories in a compelling zine format and presented the project at **Indie Comix Fest, New Delhi, 2022.**

Web Designer ——— LeTS Foundation (Feb 2021 - July 2021)

This not-for-profit initiative is disseminating a learning model, developed at IIT Bombay. The venture collaborates with schools and communities in remote, rural regions, in an attempt to share an alternative approach to learning through content that children create collaboratively.

- Spearheaded **web design**, showcasing bound books, animated videos, and interactive app stories.
- **Derived narratives** from children in remote contexts, **ensuring diversity**.
- Aimed at attracting potential donors and engaging **stakeholders like educators, workshop facilitators and design professionals** effectively

Visual Design Intern —— Bombay Design Centre (January 2020 - May 2020)

The Modern History Project is a journey to create objects and experiences that connect people to artefacts, traditions and tales from the past.
My thesis project involved the design and development of a game, and packaging it for the second edition of the project. It encapsulates the major timestamps of the Indus Valley Civilization with respect to linguistics prevalent then.

Design Intern ——— G.A.S Mumbai (May 2019 - July 2019)

In-store Interactive Display - I helped develop a tangible experience that could describe the ethical initiatives undertaken by the **DeBeers Group**, the mining company. The work showcases the journey of a diamond from ore to its final form.

Illustrator ——— Tata Centre, IIT Bombay (June 2017 - March 2018)

Associated as an illustrator on an education project **'Hindi Shabdamitra- A Digital Aid for Language Learning and Teaching'.** Over the course of 9 months, we conceptualized, illustrated and tested visuals that could teach children (4-8 years) grammar concepts in the Hindi language.

EDUCATION

School of Visual Art, New York, USA
MFA Products of Design (2023 - 2025)

Awarded the Department's Graphic Branding Assistantship

MIT Institute of Design, Pune, India
B.Des in Graphic Design (2016 - 2020)

SKILLS

Brand Strategy	Qualitative Research
Identity Design	Experience Design
User Research	UI Design
Service Design	Presentation Design
Publication Design	
Art Direction	
Conceptualization	
Photography	

TOOLS

Figma	Google Workspace
Adobe Illustrator	Slack
Adobe Photoshop	Keynote
Adobe Indesign	
Adobe XD	
Adobe Dimension	
Adobe After Effects	

COMMISSIONS

2023

Publication Designer

Understanding and Enhancing Transdisciplinary Climate and Health Collaboration in the Asia-Pacific - Quicksand & Wellcome

Lead Facilitator

Models of Impact Workshop - The Circle India Commissioned by verynice.co

Creative Consulting

Threshold
Brand identity for an Endurance-Sports Nutrition brand based in Belgium

Miror
Brand Building & Identity Design for a community driven platform focusing on Women's midlife care

2022

Ri8 Brain
Re-defining the design strategy for a platform for children and young adults to learn about animation and motion design