AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

// The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun. //

MANAV DWIVEDI

Creativity has always been at the core of who I am. Growing up, I was the child who colored outside the lines—not out of defiance, but because I saw possibilities where others didn't. This instinct carried through to my career, where I have had the privilege of working as a designer and art director for some of the world's most recognized brands, including Mercedes and Pepsi. These experiences allowed me to hone my craft, pushing the boundaries of branding, storytelling, and fashion design. Yet, amidst these professional achievements, one comment has stuck with me: **"You have a childlike energy."**

At first, I dismissed it as a surface-level observation—an appreciation for my enthusiasm, perhaps. But the more I heard it, the more it intrigued me. Was there something deeper beneath this remark? Did it reflect not just how I worked, but how I saw the world? In a creative industry that often values polish and structure, could this "childlike" approach be my greatest strength?

This question became the seed for my Final Major Project, "Am I Still That Young?"—an exploration of how the spontaneity and unrestrained curiosity of childhood can inform professional design processes. My interest in this theme was bolstered by the theories of Jean Piaget (1952), who describes children as natural innovators. He emphasizes that cognitive freedom—marked by the willingness to experiment without fear of judgment—defines childhood creativity. This freedom, however, begins to fade as we grow older, constrained by societal norms and professional expectations. Reflecting on my own creative journey, I wondered if it was possible to reclaim this sense of playfulness and unfiltered imagination, not just for myself but for the broader fashion industry.

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This project is deeply personal. It's as much about my professional growth as it is about rediscovery. Having worked in diverse creative roles—from crafting streetwear collections to designing runway pieces for Lakme Fashion Week—I have seen firsthand how the industry often prioritizes trends and marketability over genuine creative exploration. It's easy to lose sight of the joy and curiosity that drew us to design in the first place. With "Am I Still That Young?", I want to challenge these norms. By collaborating with a child—a natural innovator in their own right—I aim to explore how their cognitive freedom can inspire fresh approaches to design.

"IT MAKES ME HAPPY. IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I'M A TEN-YEAR-OLD KID"

Dennis Rodman, The Last Dance, 2020

Art by KILLER HONDA 2022

The project also reflects a broader question about how age and experience shape creativity. In an industry obsessed with youth, where the "next big thing" is often synonymous with the youngest creator on the block, what happens to the voices that don't fit that mold? How do we preserve the imaginative instincts that drive innovation while balancing the demands of professionalism?

Through this journey, I hope to create a lifestyle brand that bridges the gap between childlike spontaneity and professional design. It's not just about the clothes or the accessories—it's about rediscovering the essence of unfiltered imagination and sharing that with the world.

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The relationship between creativity and age has been a recurring theme throughout history, both in art and design. The notion that children possess a unique and untamed creativity has intrigued thinkers and practitioners for centuries. This project, "Am I Still That Young?", emerges from a legacy of artistic movements and cultural moments that have sought to channel the spontaneity and cognitive freedom of youth into structured creative practices.

In the early 20th century, modernist movements such as surrealism and dada embraced childlike forms of expression to challenge societal norms and aesthetic conventions. Artists like Joan Miró and Paul Klee sought to replicate the spontaneity and simplicity often found in children's art. Klee, for instance, famously remarked that his work was an attempt to ***"take a line for a walk,"*** echoing the unfiltered and exploratory spirit of a child's drawing. Similarly, surrealists like Salvador Dalí employed dreamlike, irrational imagery inspired by the subconscious—another nod to the uninhibited creativity of youth. These movements laid the groundwork for the idea that breaking free from adult constraints could lead to innovative forms of expression.

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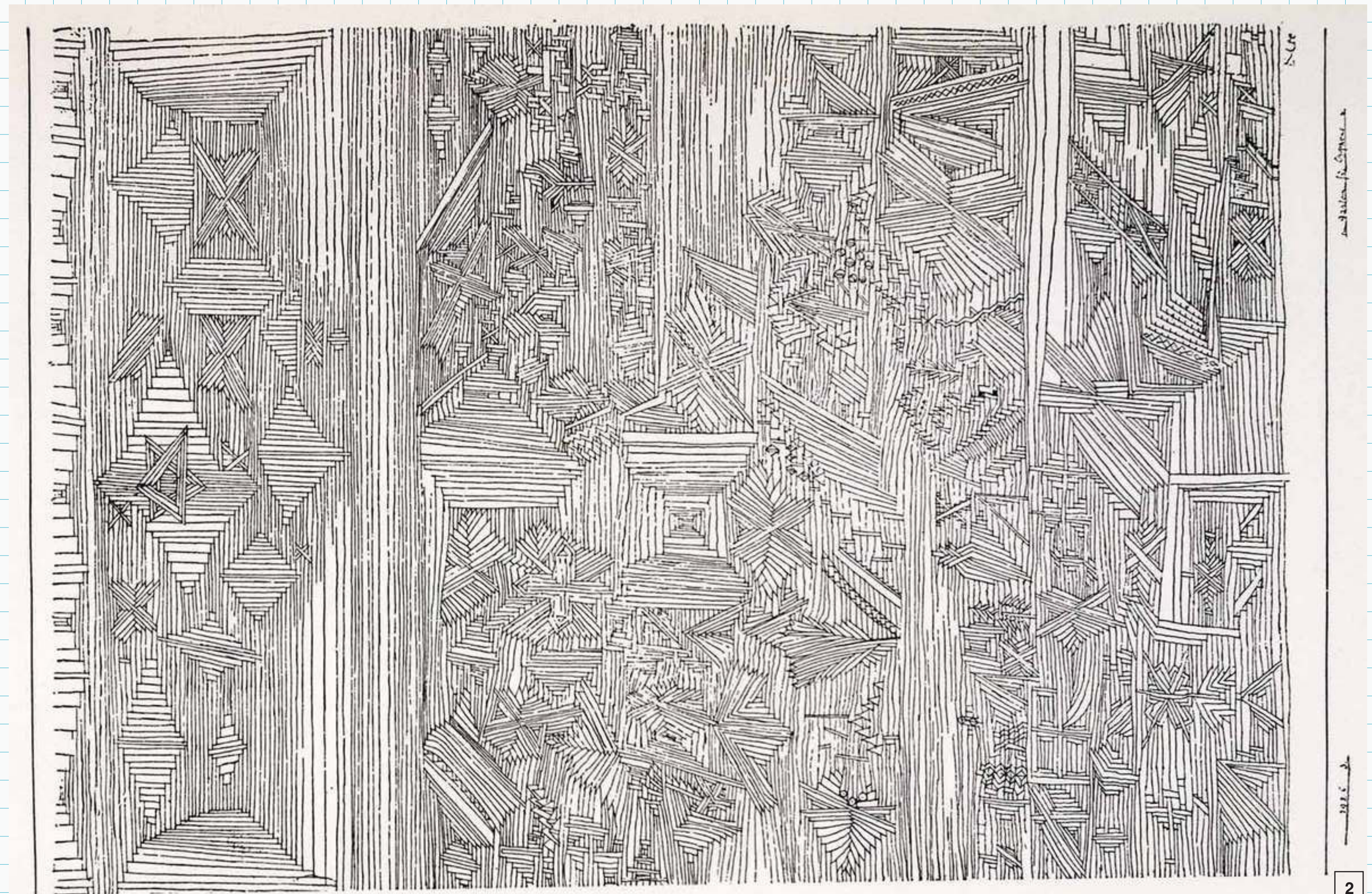
In the world of design, this fascination with childlike spontaneity continued to surface. The anti-design movement of the 1960s and 1970s, led by Italian designers like Ettore Sottsass and the Memphis Group, rejected rigid functionalism in favor of playful, colorful, and experimental aesthetics. Their work, characterized by bold shapes and unconventional forms, mirrored the uninhibited spirit of children's creativity. Sottsass himself described his designs as "serious fun," a concept that resonates deeply with the ethos of this project.

More recently, streetwear culture has drawn parallels to this rebellion against structure. Brands like Off-White and Supreme have embraced bold, playful designs that subvert traditional fashion norms. This shift reflects a growing desire within the industry to challenge the status quo, much like children naturally do when they approach problems with fresh eyes.

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The idea of celebrating youth and spontaneity is not limited to art and design but is also deeply rooted in broader cultural and social movements. The counterculture of the 1960s, for example, was driven by a rejection of societal constraints and a desire to embrace freedom, both creatively and socially. This era saw the rise of experimental art, music, and fashion, all of which drew heavily on themes of rebellion and unrestrained self-expression.

Similarly, the DIY ethos of the punk movement in the late 1970s championed the raw, unpolished creativity often associated with children. Punk designers like Vivienne Westwood used unconventional materials and methods to create clothing that defied traditional standards of beauty and perfection. This spirit of "making do" aligns closely with the idea of using blank canvases and encouraging spontaneous customization, as explored in my project.

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In more recent years, the rise of digital platforms has transformed the way creativity is perceived and valued. Social media has amplified trends like "drop culture," emphasizing exclusivity and immediacy in fashion. At the same time, these platforms have highlighted the work of younger creators, reinforcing the idea that youth equates to innovation. However, this focus often comes at the expense of recognizing more seasoned designers or unconventional approaches to creativity.

In parallel, global conversations around mental health and well-being have brought attention to the importance of play and spontaneity in fostering creativity. The pandemic, for instance, forced many of us to reevaluate how we approach work and leisure, leading to a renewed appreciation for activities that spark joy—much like the creative freedom exhibited by children.

Relevance to My Project
These historical and cultural developments provide a rich context for "Am I Still That Young?". By collaborating with a child to create customizable fashion pieces, I aim to draw on this legacy of rebellion against structure and embrace the spontaneity of youth. The project is not just about clothing but about challenging the industry's emphasis on trends and perfection. Like the surrealists, the Memphis Group, and the countercultural movements before me, I hope to question established norms and explore new possibilities for creative expression.

Exploring the historical context reinforced the timeless relevance of childlike creativity. It helped me see my project as part of a broader continuum, connecting past movements with contemporary concerns. This understanding has given me a deeper appreciation for the ways art and design can challenge conventions and inspire change.

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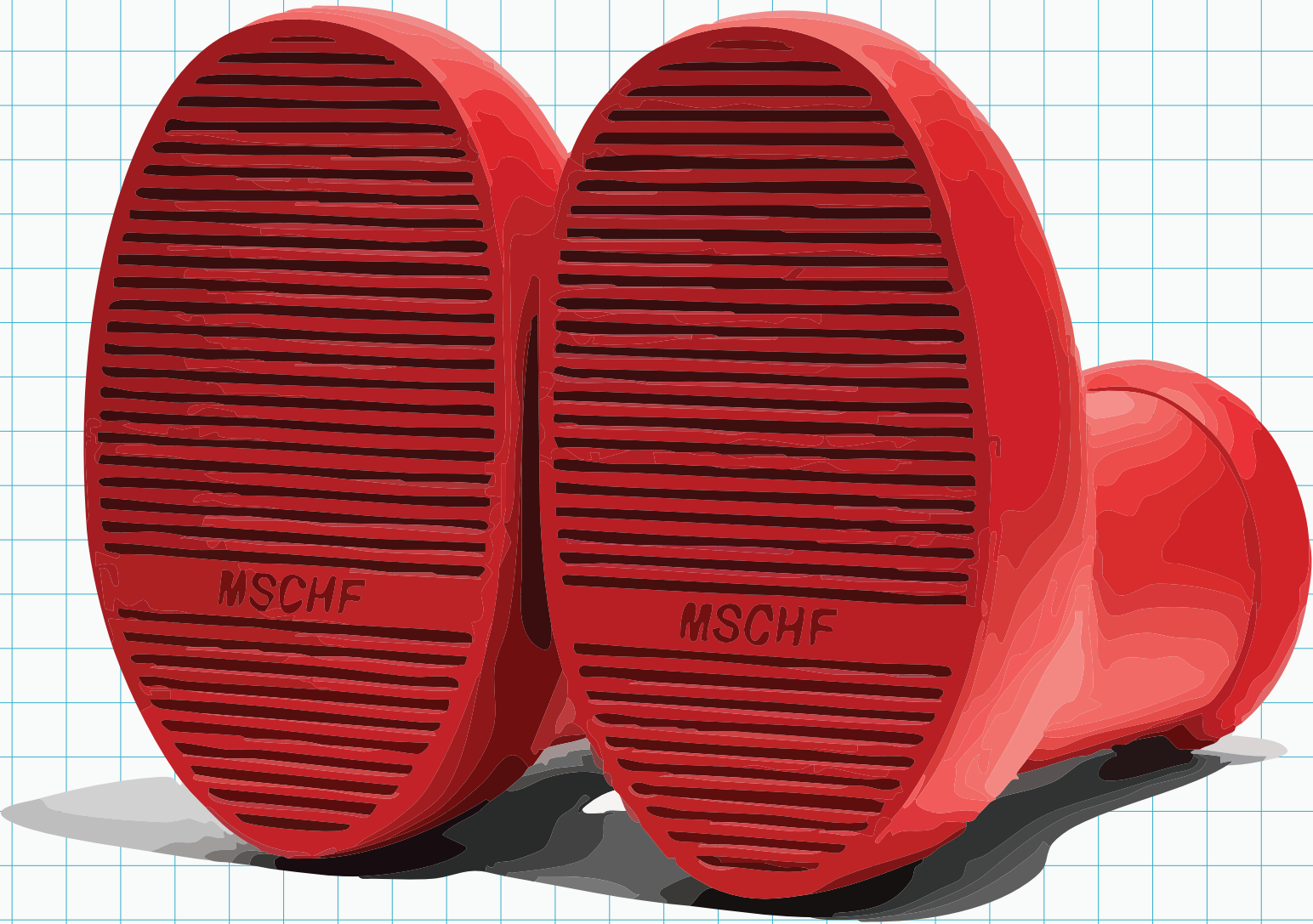
The world of design today is exciting but also full of challenges. There's constant pressure to stand out, to stay trendy, and to capture people's attention quickly. As a designer, I've often found myself questioning how these pressures shape creativity—especially in an industry that places so much importance on being young.

The fashion world often links creativity to youth. Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram have given younger designers a huge stage to showcase their talent, making them the face of what's "new" and "fresh." Designers under 30 are celebrated as trendsetters, while older creatives often struggle to get the same level of recognition. Research by Wang et al. (2018) shows how this focus on "freshness" creates a narrow idea of what creativity looks like.

But is creativity really about age? Designers like Rei Kawakubo and Dries Van Noten prove otherwise. Their work is bold, thoughtful, and still breaks boundaries. Yet, their contributions often don't get the spotlight they deserve in mainstream fashion. This project is my way of questioning that imbalance. By working with a child—a creative mind that's entirely unfiltered—I wanted to show that creativity isn't about age; it's about perspective and how you approach your work.

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Social media has changed the way we share and value creativity. Platforms like Instagram have given smaller designers the chance to reach global audiences, which is great. But they've also made creativity feel like a race. To succeed, you have to create something that's instantly shareable, something that stands out in a scroll of endless posts. This was something I had to think about for my project. The idea of working with a child to create custom designs is eye-catching, and I knew it could get attention. But I didn't want this to be a project that just looked good on social media. It needed to tell a deeper story—one about collaboration, playfulness, and finding joy in the process of creating.

Challenges in Collaboration

Working with a child wasn't always easy. They don't follow strict schedules, and their way of thinking can be all over the place—which, honestly, was part of the beauty. It forced me to slow down and let go of the structured way I'm used to working. At the same time, I had to make sure their contributions were valued and authentic. Druin (2002) talks about how, in projects like this, kids should be treated as true collaborators, not just "helpers." That was a guiding principle for me throughout this process.

On top of that, there were logistical challenges. Coordinating materials, managing feedback, and dealing with manufacturing delays was tough. With my pieces being produced in India, delays in the supply chain added extra stress. These setbacks reminded me how important it is to plan for the unexpected in creative work.

Working on this project has taught me so much about creativity. I've learned that some of the best ideas come from letting go of control and embracing the unexpected. It's also reminded me that creativity isn't about fitting into a specific box—whether that's age, skill level, or expectations. It's about finding new ways to connect and create, no matter where you are in life.

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Social media's impact on young children is a multifaceted topic, encompassing both positive and negative effects.
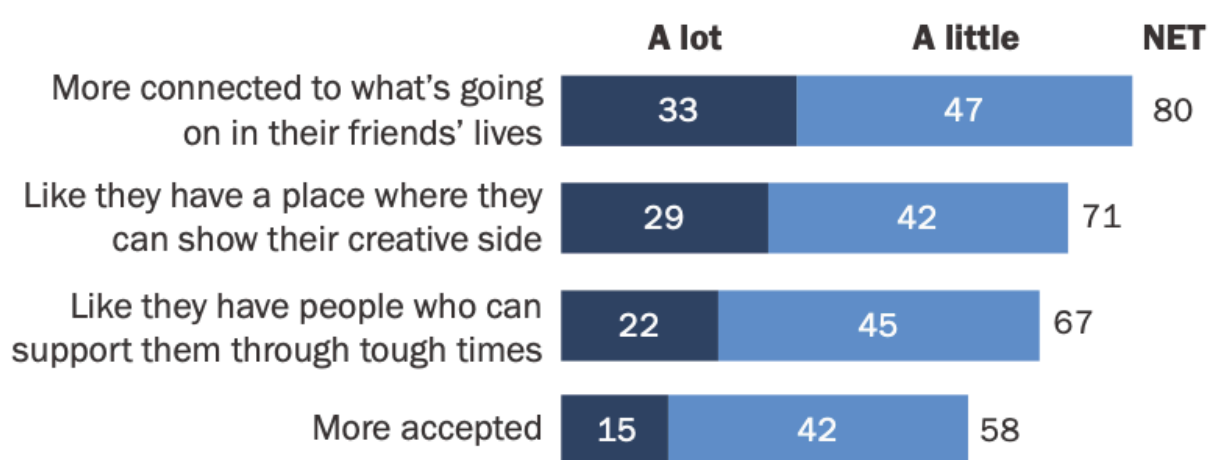
Positive Effects:

Enhanced Creativity:
Social media platforms offer children avenues to express themselves through art, writing, and other creative outlets. A 2022 Pew Research Center study found that 71% of teens feel social media provides a space to showcase their creative side.

Social Connection:
These platforms enable children to maintain relationships and build new ones, fostering a sense of belonging and community. The same Pew study reported that 80% of teens feel more connected to their friends' lives through social media.

Majorities of teens say social media provides them with a space for connection, creativity and support ...

% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel ...

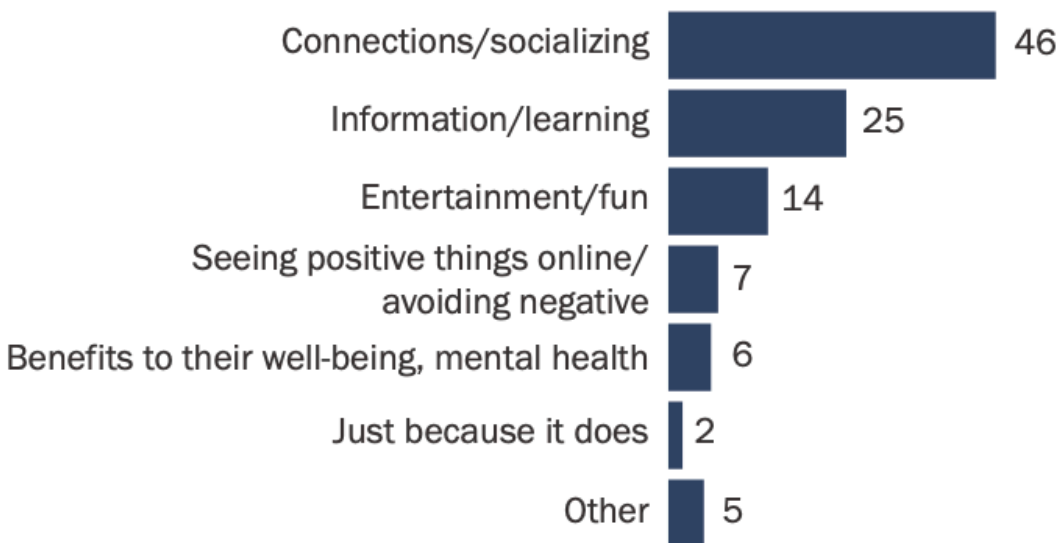|	A lot	A little	NET
More connected to what's going on in their friends' lives	33	47	80
Like they have a place where they can show their creative side	29	42	71
Like they have people who can support them through tough times	22	45	67
More accepted	15	42	58

... and are more likely to say these sites have had a positive rather than negative impact on them, with many citing friendships, connections as reasons why

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on them, personally

Mostly positive	Neither positive nor negative	Mostly negative
32	59	9

Among those who say mostly positive, % who give each of the following as the main reasons why

Connections/socializing	46
Information/learning	25
Entertainment/fun	14
Seeing positive things online/avoiding negative	7
Benefits to their well-being, mental health	6
Just because it does	2
Other	5

Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Verbatim responses have been coded into categories. The 13% who received this question but did not give an answer are not shown. Including this group, figures may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

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Negative Effects:

Mental Health Concerns:
Excessive use of social media has been linked to increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among children and adolescents. The American Psychological Association highlights that young brains are particularly vulnerable to social media's effects, with heightened sensitivity to social feedback during adolescence.

Exposure to Inappropriate Content:
Children may encounter harmful or unsuitable material, including cyberbullying and explicit content, which can adversely affect their development. The American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes the importance of monitoring children's social media use to mitigate these risks.

Age-Related Vulnerabilities:
Developmental Sensitivity: Research indicates that girls may experience negative effects of social media at ages 11-13, while boys may be more vulnerable at ages 14-15. This suggests that developmental stages play a role in how social media impacts young users.

Only a minority of teens say their parents are extremely or very worried about their social media use

% of U.S. teens who say they think their parents are ___ worried about them using social media

Not sure

<1 No answer

NET Extremely/ Very

9

22

27

NET A little/ Not at all

41

Somewhat
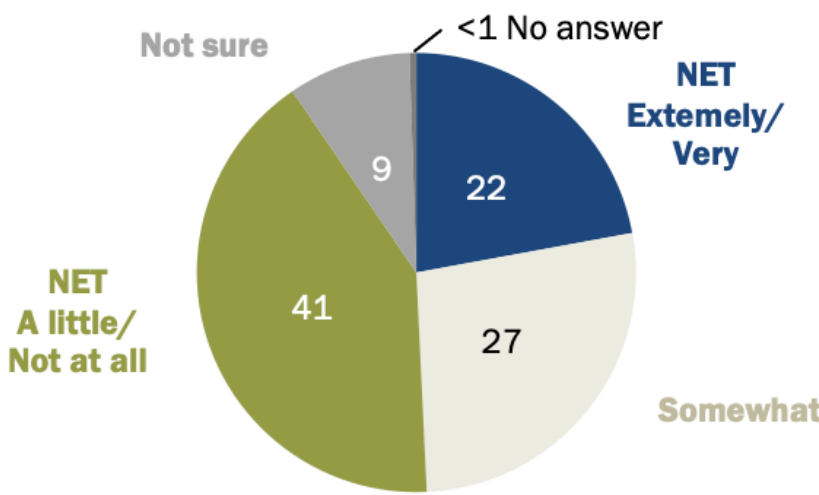
About four-in-ten teens say teens' experiences on social media are better than what parents think

% of U.S. teens who say they think teens' experiences on social media are ...

Better than parents think	Parents' views are about right	Worse than parents think
39	33	27
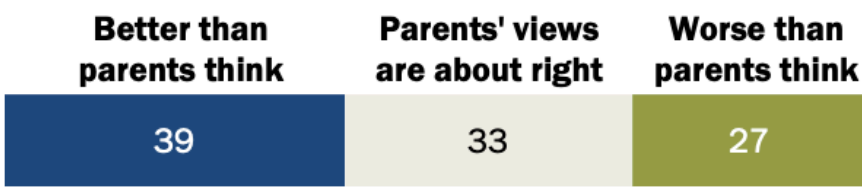
Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

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Teens who see social media as a positive for all teens more likely to report positive personal experiences

% of U.S. teens who say what they see on social media makes them feel a lot (of) ...

Among those who say social media has had a ___ effect on people their age

	Mostly negative	Mostly positive	Positive - negative DIFF
Positive experiences			
More connected to what's going on in their friends' lives	27	54	+27
Like they have a place where they can show their creative side	23	43	+20
Like they have people who can support them through tough times	16	35	+19
More accepted	9	28	+19
Negative experiences			
Pressure to post content that will get lots of comments or likes	7	9	+2
Like their friends are leaving them out of things	5	7	-2
Worse about their own life	4	7	-3
Overwhelmed because of all the drama	6	12	-6

% of U.S. teens who say teens' experiences on social media are ...

	Mostly negative	Mostly positive	DIFF
Better than parents think	23	58	+35
Worse than parents think	15	43	-28

0 20 40 60 80 100

Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Statistically significant differences in DIFF column are in **bold**. The DIFF values shown are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

Understanding these dynamics is crucial for my project, which explores the intersection of child-like creativity and professional design. Recognizing both the benefits and potential pitfalls of social media can inform strategies to harness its positive aspects—such as fostering creativity and connection—while mitigating negative outcomes like exposure to inappropriate content or mental health challenges.

One of the hardest but most rewarding parts of this project was finding a balance between freedom and structure. Children, as Torrance (1974) explains, are amazing at coming up with wild, unexpected ideas because they don't worry about whether something "makes sense." Adults, on the other hand, are trained to focus on what's practical and achievable.

Working on this project has taught me so much about creativity. I've learned that some of the best ideas come from letting go of control and embracing the unexpected. It's also reminded me that creativity isn't about fitting into a specific box—whether that's age, skill level, or expectations. It's about finding new ways to connect and create, no matter where you are in life.

For this project, I let the child's creativity lead in the early stages, allowing them to bring fresh ideas to the table. Then, I stepped in to refine those ideas and shape them into something that could work for an adult market. It wasn't always smooth, but it taught me that the best ideas often come when you allow freedom and structure to meet in the middle.

Gaps in Research and Practice

When I started this project, I realized there's very little research about how the creativity of children can directly influence professional design. There's a lot written about kids in learning environments (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1952) and about innovation in the adult world, but not much that connects the two.

Fashion, in particular, hasn't fully embraced the idea of co-creation across generations. While fields like product design often involve collaboration between different age groups (Sanders & Stappers, 2008), this isn't as common in fashion. My project hopes to show what's possible when we bring these two worlds together.

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

THE CREATIVITY OF CHILDHOOD

Every creative project needs a solid foundation, and for "Am I Still That Young?", that foundation lies in understanding how creativity works—particularly the kind of creativity that thrives in childhood. To guide my approach, I turned to theories that explore the differences between childlike and adult thinking, the dynamics of collaboration, and the role of spontaneity in innovation.

Children see the world differently. Where adults might see a single solution to a problem, children see endless possibilities. This difference is explained by Torrance (1974), who described divergent thinking as a child's ability to explore multiple answers without fear of getting it "wrong." Divergent thinking thrives on curiosity and play, two qualities that often fade as we grow older and face the pressures of structure, deadlines, and judgment.

Jean Piaget (1952) adds to this with his theory of cognitive development. He explains that children are natural experimenters, using play to test ideas and make sense of their surroundings. This "learning by doing" is something I wanted to bring into my project by allowing a child collaborator to explore and customize designs freely, without constraints.

Lev Vygotsky (1978) takes this further with his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. He argues that children achieve their highest potential when supported by others—whether that's a parent, teacher, or in this case, a designer. For this project, my role was to create a space where the child could express their ideas while I guided the process, ensuring their contributions were not just appreciated but also elevated into something meaningful for the final product.

These theories shaped the way I approached collaboration. Rather than dictating what the designs should look like, I let the child take the lead. My job was to refine their ideas, balancing their spontaneity with the structure needed to turn those ideas into professional pieces.

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BALANCING CREATIVITY WITH PROFESSIONALISM

One of the challenges I faced was navigating the tension between unfiltered creativity and professional expectations. This tension is deeply rooted in how adults and children think. Torrance (1974) highlights how adults tend to favor convergent thinking—focusing on narrowing down ideas into something practical and executable. While this is valuable, it often limits the kind of creative risks that lead to truly original outcomes.

This project required me to blend both approaches. The child collaborator introduced unexpected, playful elements that pushed me out of my comfort zone. At the same time, my role as a professional was to guide those ideas toward something cohesive and marketable. This back-and-forth process echoed what Sanders and Stappers (2008) describe as co-creation: a collaborative practice where different perspectives come together to create something that neither party could achieve alone.

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HOMO LUDENS

A Study of the Play-Element in Culture

JOHAN HUIZINGA

Play isn't just something children do—it's a critical part of how they think and create. Play theory, explored by scholars like Huizinga (1955), emphasizes that play creates a space where rules can be bent, boundaries can be tested, and new ideas can emerge. In design, this mindset is invaluable. For my project, incorporating play wasn't just about letting the child explore freely; it was about reminding myself to let go of rigid expectations and embrace the messiness of the process.

This idea aligns with the anti-design movement of the 1960s and 1970s, where figures like Ettore Sottsass rejected functionalism in favor of experimentation and fun. Their work showed that breaking the rules can lead to groundbreaking results—a principle that guided me throughout this project.

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Working with a child introduced not just creative challenges but also ethical responsibilities. Alison Druin (2002) stresses that children in collaborative projects must be treated as equal contributors, not just passive participants. This meant creating a process where the child felt heard and valued at every stage. It also meant being mindful of their boundaries—ensuring that the collaboration was enjoyable and never overwhelming.

This perspective informed how I structured the project. For example, I allowed the child to work at their own pace, using tools and materials they felt comfortable with. While this sometimes slowed things down, it ultimately made the process more authentic and rewarding.
Connecting Theory to Practice

All of these theories came together in how I approached the project. Piaget's idea of experimentation shaped how I encouraged the child to customize designs, while Vygotsky's emphasis on collaboration reminded me to guide rather than dictate. Torrance's insights into divergent thinking inspired me to embrace the unexpected, and Druin's ethical framework ensured the child's voice remained central to the process.

These theories didn't just influence how I worked with the child—they also made me reflect on my own creativity. As adults, we often lose the ability to take risks and play with ideas, worrying too much about whether something is "right." This project reminded me that creativity isn't about having all the answers—it's about being open to discovering them along the way.

Building this theoretical framework gave me a deeper appreciation for the dynamics of creativity and collaboration. It made me realize that while children bring spontaneity, adults bring structure, and the magic happens when these two elements meet. More importantly, it reminded me that even in a professional setting, there's room for play, experimentation, and the kind of joy that fuels true innovation.

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The core of my project revolves
around one central question:

How does applying the cognitive freedom approach observed in children to design processes in the digital age impact creative solutions?

This question emerged from my curiosity about the ways creativity changes as we grow older. Children are often seen as naturally creative because they think freely, without the constraints of practicality or judgment. Adults, by contrast, are trained to refine and narrow their ideas—a process that's valuable but often limits innovation. By bringing these two approaches together, I wanted to explore whether the spontaneity of a child's imagination could push professional design processes in new and unexpected directions.

From this, I developed my hypothesis: Collaborating with a child to customize fashion pieces will lead to designs that feel fresh and playful, while still resonating with adult audiences. I believe that the cognitive freedom children bring to the table, when paired with the structure and expertise of professional design, has the potential to produce truly innovative outcomes.

This project doesn't just aim to create unique designs—it also hopes to contribute to a larger conversation about creativity in the fashion industry. By showing that age and experience are not the only markers of innovation, it challenges the narrow ways in which creativity is often defined. My hope is that this project inspires others in the field to rethink their processes, embrace collaboration across generations, and make space for more playful, open-ended approaches to design.

Methodology
The process of bringing "Am I Still That Young?" to life required a mix of research, experimentation, and collaboration. My methodology was shaped by a desire to combine theoretical insights with hands-on creative practices while ensuring the project remained grounded in ethical and professional standards.

Research Methods
To guide the project, I relied on both qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative side involved studying foundational theories on creativity, such as Piaget's work on cognitive development (1952) and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978). These texts gave me a framework for understanding how children approach problem-solving and how their creativity thrives in collaborative settings.

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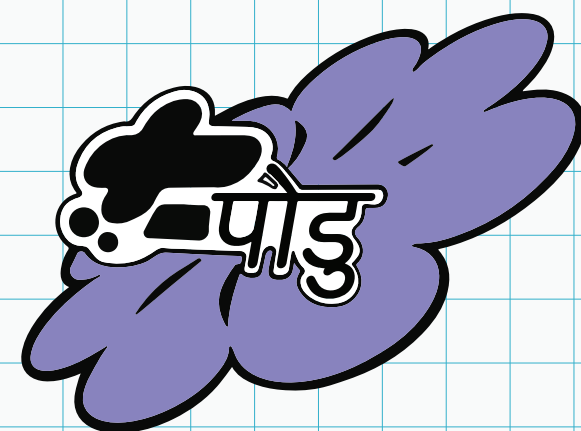
ar ti st 1 | he/him
i am a dragon

ABOUT ME
04 | JANUARY | 2011
Born in | Chennai | India

MY VALUES
SLIDE
DANCE
GAMING
PASSION FOR EATING ICE CREAM
INNOVATE NEW CARTOONS

WHAT IS YOUR FAVROUITE WORD ?
Podu

IF YOU HAD TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN ONE IF I ASKED YOUR NAME BUT YOU CANT SAY YOUR NAME
Bob the bulilder

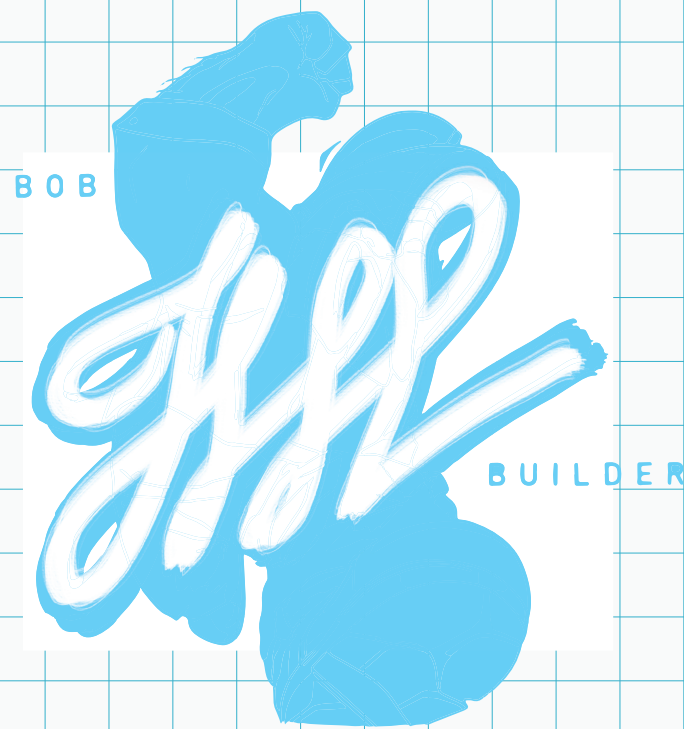**WHATS YOUR 3 FAVOURITE COLORS ?**
Blue, Red, Purple

DID YOU LIKE DRESSING UP WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER
I wore my brothers clothes.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURTIE CATCH PHRASE ?
Drink water

WHATS YOUR FAVOURITE NUMBER?
21

LANGUAGES
English   **
Hindi   *
Malyali   ***

WHAT DO YOU WANNA BE WHEN YOU ARE OLDER?
Power ranger

Additionally, I observed my child collaborator during customization sessions, documenting how they interacted with materials and made decisions. This observational research provided insights into their unfiltered thought process, which often contrasted with the structured approaches adults typically take. On the quantitative side, I conducted surveys to gauge the reactions of my target demographic (aged 20-30) to the designs. This feedback helped refine the final pieces, ensuring they appealed to both the playful spirit of the project and the expectations of an adult audience.

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The project focused on creating minimalist clothing and accessory piec-
es in neutral tones, such as whites and pastels. These designs served
as blank canvases for customization. The child collaborator used tools
like acrylic tassels, markers, and stencils,laces etc allowing them to
explore freely without feeling restricted by complex techniques.

From my side, I used professional-grade design software to refine the
child's contributions and turn them into cohesive products. The final
pieces were manufactured in India, which added an additional layer of
complexity due to global supply chain challenges. These delays required
me to adapt timelines and adjust my approach to maintain momentum.

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Working with a child collaborator came with ethical responsibilities. Alison Druin's (2002) guidelines for participatory design provided a valuable framework, emphasizing the importance of treating children as equal contributors. Throughout the process, I ensured the child's autonomy was respected by giving them the freedom to make creative decisions at their own pace.

At the same time, I remained mindful of their well-being. Sessions were designed to be enjoyable and low-pressure, with clear boundaries to prevent overexertion or stress. Parental involvement was also key, ensuring the collaboration was transparent and fully supported.

Limitations

One of the main limitations was balancing the child's unstructured approach with the need for polished, market-ready designs. This required multiple iterations and refinements, which extended the timeline. Additionally, manufacturing delays tested my ability to adapt and highlighted the unpredictability of working with global supply chains.

Despite these challenges, the methodology allowed me to explore the project's central question while staying true to its playful, collaborative spirit.

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"Am I Still That Young?" is more than just a design project—it's a journey into rediscovering creativity. The idea was born from a simple observation: adults tend to lose the freedom to create without overthinking, while children do this effortlessly. I wanted to explore whether combining these two approaches—spontaneous imagination and professional structure—could produce something unique, something that feels as fresh and exciting as it is polished.

The concept was simple: create a collection of minimalist, blank garments and accessories that a child would customize freely. The goal was to let their unfiltered creativity take center stage, while my role would be to refine and balance their ideas to appeal to an adult market. Through this, the project aimed to challenge traditional notions of age and creativity, asking whether professional design could benefit from the cognitive freedom of childhood.

At its core, this project wasn't just about designing clothes. It was about stepping out of the usual rules and routines of fashion and finding a way to inject joy, spontaneity, and collaboration into the process. The collection reflects this balance—a blend of playful creativity and professional craftsmanship, created for young adults but inspired by the boundless energy of youth.

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

Laying the Foundation
The first step was designing the blank canvases. I started with sketches of jackets, trousers, and accessories, keeping the shapes simple and clean. The color palette—mostly whites and pastels—was chosen to give the pieces an unfinished feel, almost like a fresh sheet of paper waiting to be filled. Each piece was made with the intention that it would eventually transform into something vibrant and unexpected.
This part of the process was exciting, but also a little daunting. Designing something "unfinished" felt risky, especially in an industry that's all about perfection. But I knew the blanks had to stay true to the concept: they weren't just clothes; they were starting points for something bigger.When i first sketched the design i had colors in mind but then i decided to do the above and olny have colors on the prints.

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

NAME	Bucket Jacket & Tote Backpack	**MATERIAL**	Poly Blend, Suede
MODEL	Jacket with a backpack head	**COLOUR**	Blue & Green

highsnobiety   New Posts

BUCKET JACKET

NECK INSPIRATION TAKE FROM A FOOTBALL DRAWSTRING BAG

TOTE BAG

TOTE BAG TO HAVE DRAWSTRINGS AT THE BACK TO USE IT LIKE A BACKPACK

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

NAME	flap fold pants	MATERIAL	Cotton blend
MODEL	2 layer oversized straight fit pants	COLOUR	Dark green

Flaps that fold on the back

This is the stance to show how the fit could be

Back

Front

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

NAME Asymmetric Shirt

MATERIAL Cotton blend

MODEL Deconstructed Shirt

COLOUR Blue

EXAMPLE
FOR ANOTHER
POSSIBLE POCKET
DESIGN

METAL BADGING
FOR BRANDING

THE POCKETS ARE EXTENDED
MORE THAN THE SHIRT
TO GIVE IT MORE DEPTH

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

NAME	Mock Fold Pants	**MATERIAL**	Cotton blend
MODEL	2 layer oversized straight fit pants	**COLOUR**	Beige

This is filler text just to show the placement

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

NAME	Irregular Puffer	**MATERIAL**	Poly Blend
MODEL	Overlapping layered puffer	**COLOUR**	Red

FRONT

BACK

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.
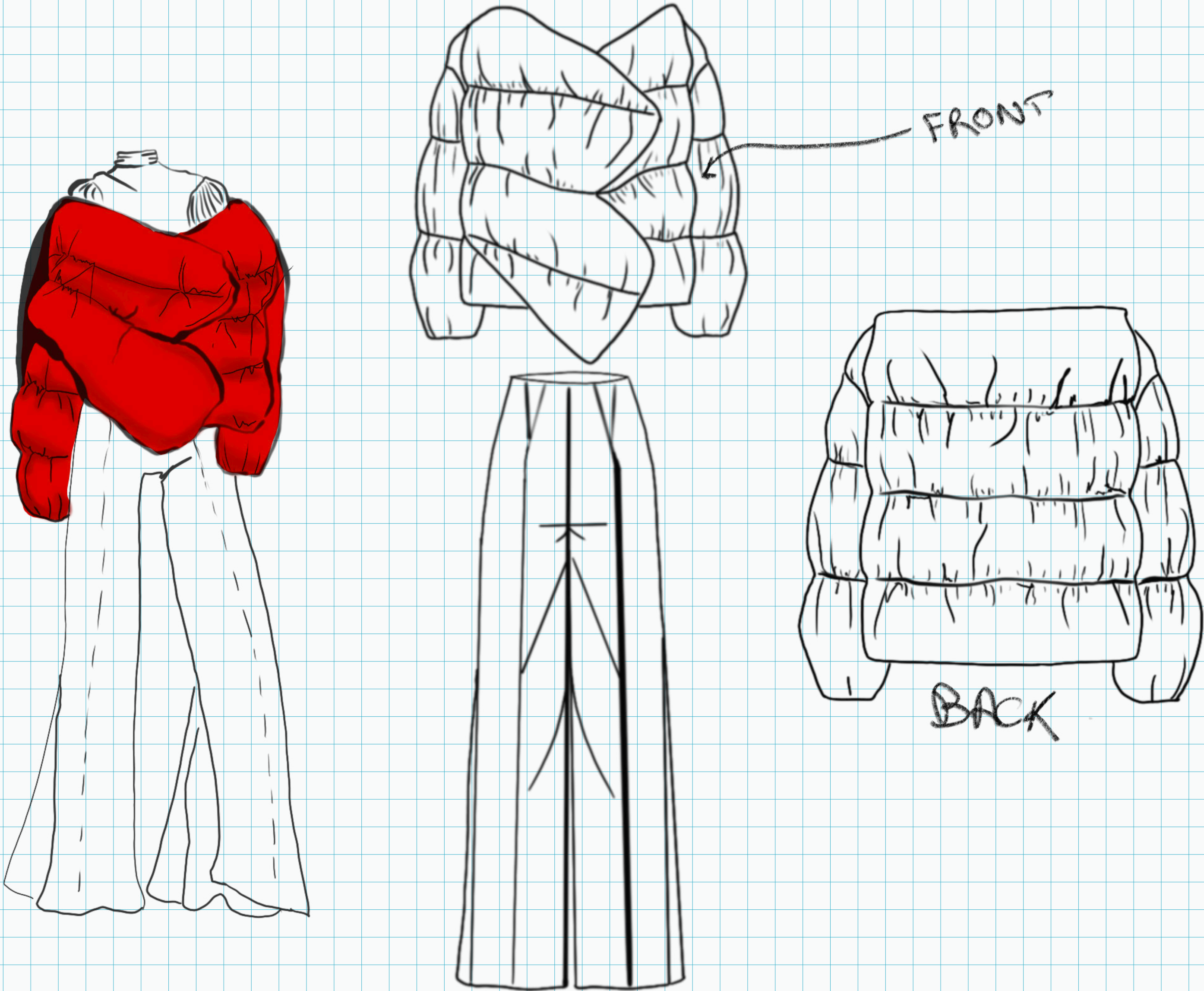
INITIAL CONCEPTUALIZATION

NAME Duel Tone Jacket

MODEL A Gradient over a leather jacket

MATERIAL Napa Leather

COLOUR Black treated leather

EXAMPLE FOR THE SHADE OF THE GARMENT

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AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

NAME	Layered Skirt	**MATERIAL**	Cotton blend
MODEL	Double layer skirt with a matched neck	**COLOUR**	Olive green

EXTENDED POCKERS LIKE THE SHIRT

COLAR SKIRT

FLAP SKIRT

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AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

NAME	Cropped Jacket	**MATERIAL**	Denim
MODEL	Single layer short Jacket	**COLOUR**	Mocha Brown

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Apart from the core items that were manufactured in India, the rest of the pieces were blanks I sourced from various vendors here in London. Each item was carefully selected to align with the personality and vision of the project, ensuring they complemented the overall collection seamlessly.

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Once the blanks were ready, the real magic began. I worked closely with my child collaborator, who brought a completely fresh perspective to the project. I gave them a range of tools—fabric paints, markers, stencils—and let them go wild. Watching them create was incredible. They didn't hesitate or overthink; they just jumped in, combining colors and patterns in ways I never would have imagined.

One moment that stood out was during an interview with the child collaborator. We were talking about games, and they mentioned a time they played chess with their grandfather. They couldn't remember the names of some pieces, so, in their words, "The horse became a crocodile." We both laughed at the idea—it was so vivid and unexpected. That simple misunderstanding turned into one of the most memorable parts of the project.

Later, we decided to bring this idea to life. The child sketched a whimsical creature that blended the features of a horse and a crocodile. It was playful, surreal, and full of personality. Seeing their excitement as they worked on it reminded me of how naturally kids turn confusion into creativity. The final illustration ended up becoming a recurring motif in the collection, appearing on a jacket and even as a patch on one of the bags.

Moments like this are why I started this project. They capture the unfiltered imagination of childhood—the ability to take something small and turn it into a story that feels fresh, funny, and completely original.

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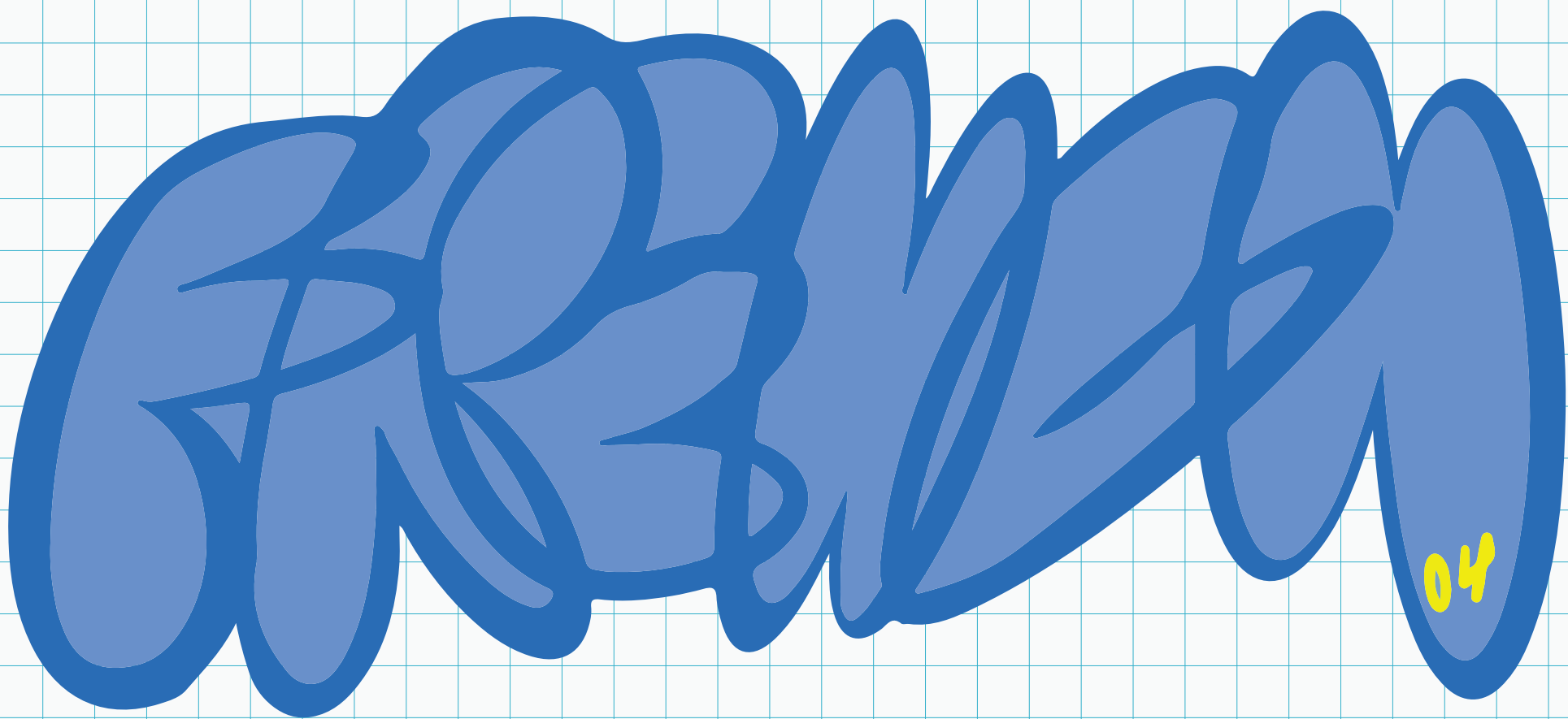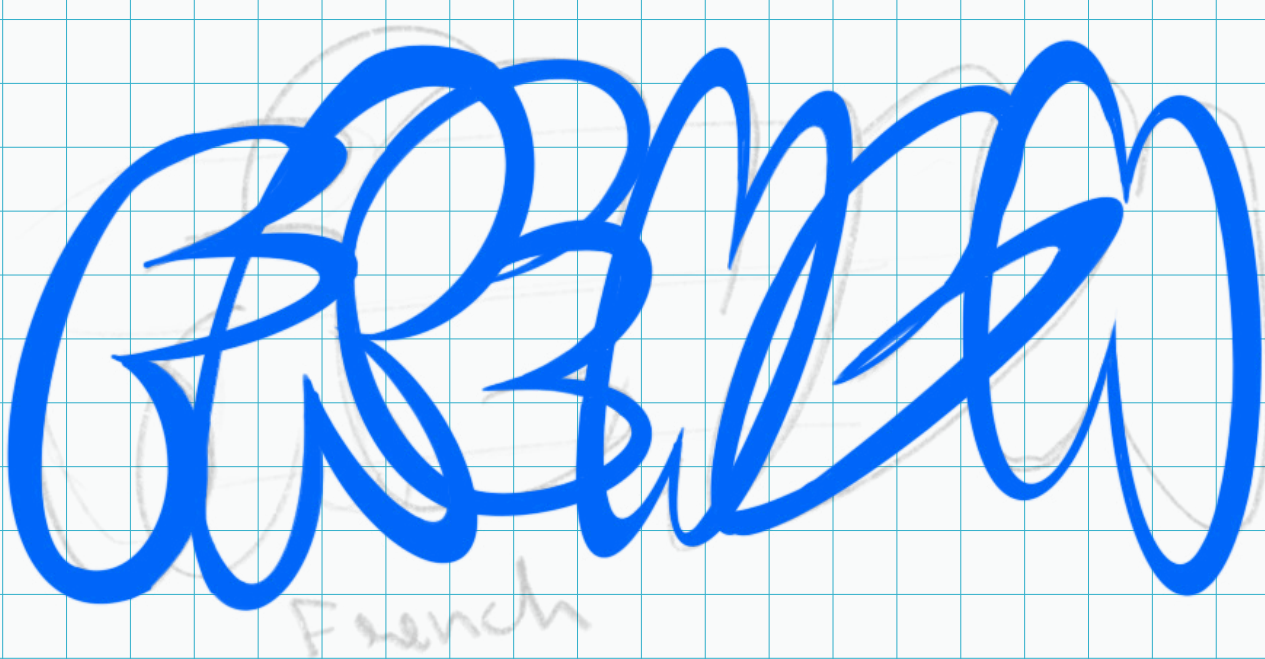
Over two months, I had the privilege of interviewing six children to collaboratively develop a series of patches for the final designs. Each patch became a reflection of their individuality—infused with their favorite colors, meaningful phrases, and moments from their lives that held significance. These sessions were more than just creative exercises; they were opportunities to understand how children see the world and express themselves when given the freedom to do so.

One child, for instance, chose to incorporate a bright green star because it reminded them of a drawing they made in school that their teacher had praised. Another picked the phrase "Juice Box" because it reflected their love of favourite drink with their friends in the park. These seemingly simple elements carried layers of meaning, transforming the patches into deeply personal artifacts.(The red highlighted patches are the once i just talked about)

This process aligned closely with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978), which emphasizes that creativity flourishes in collaborative settings where guidance and freedom intersect. By giving the children a platform to share their stories and ideas, I acted as both a facilitator and a collaborator. Their contributions were not just decorations but integral elements that shaped the final collection.

The use of patches also allowed for flexibility in how these narratives were presented. Each piece became a canvas for storytelling, bridging the playful spontaneity of the child's input with the structure and cohesion needed for professional design. This balance mirrored Torrance's (1974) theory of divergent and convergent thinking, where divergent exploration led to unfiltered ideas, and my role was to refine those into cohesive designs.
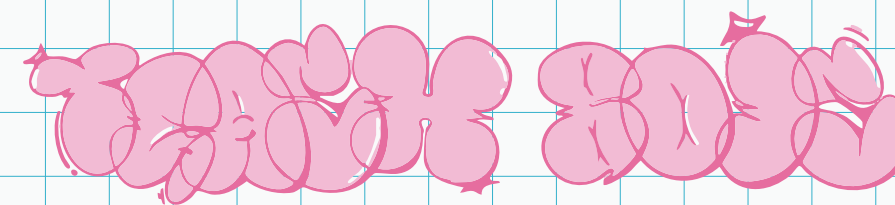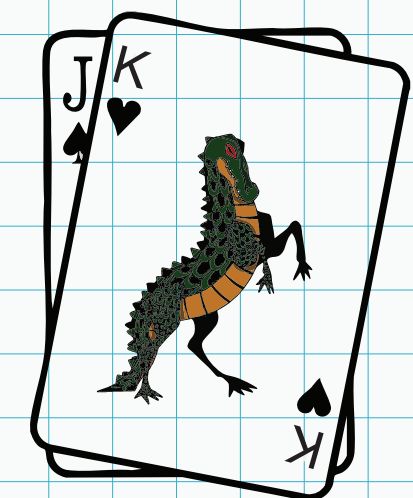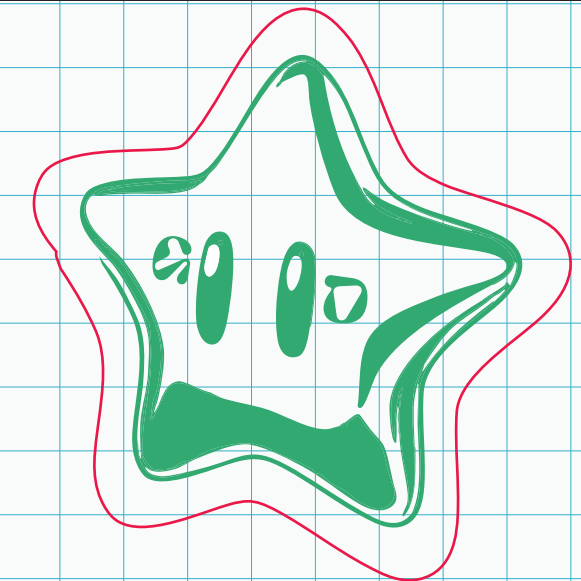
These patches ultimately became the heart of the project. They weren't just creative additions—they were a celebration of the children's perspectives, offering a window into their imaginations and a reminder of why this collaboration mattered.

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

EVERY PATCH DEVELOPED FROM THE SESSIONS

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The next step was refining these ideas. Some designs worked perfectly as they were, while others needed adjustments to make them more cohesive. For example, one bag design had so many competing elements that it felt overwhelming. I pared it back, keeping the child's most striking additions while removing some of the noise.

This back-and-forth process wasn't always easy. There were moments when it felt like I was walking a fine line between preserving the child's voice and ensuring the pieces fit the vision of the brand. But in the end, this tension is what made the designs special—they were playful but polished, unexpected but intentional.

All the accessories for the project were brought to life in the 3D lab at LCC, thanks to the incredible expertise and support of the skilled professionals there. I'm deeply grateful to the entire 3D lab team for their guidance and collaboration throughout the process. Each accessory has its own story, and in the following section, I'll share behind-the-scenes moments and print files to show how these designs came to fruition.

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PATCHES LASER CUTTING
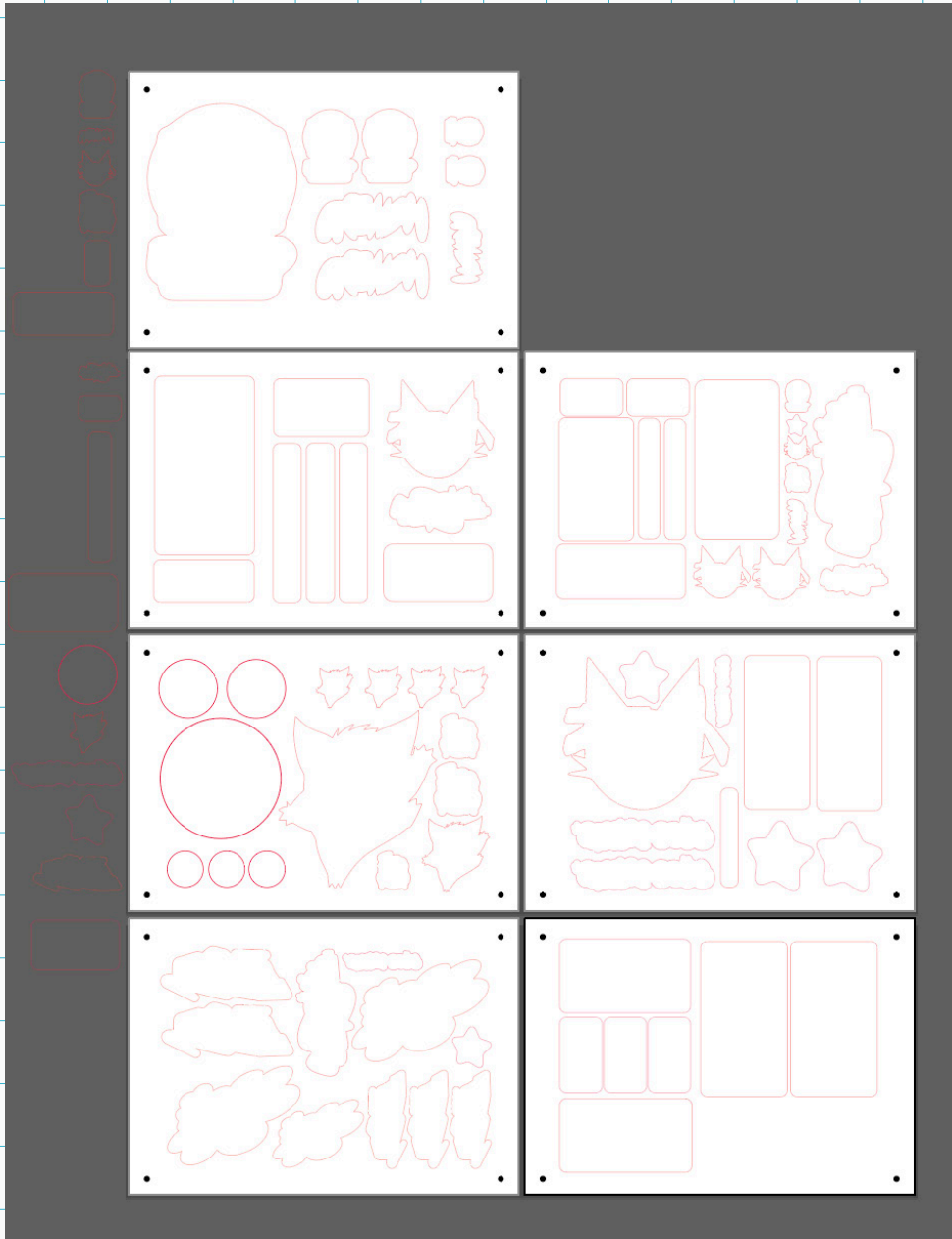
Creating the laser cutting print file was one of the most challenging tasks of this project. Even a millimeter of error could throw off the alignment, potentially ruining the precision of the entire patch. The image on the left shows the design file, while the one on the right is formatted specifically for the machine's requirements. The machine only recognizes this precise format, with the four dots on the edges—known as registration dots—helping it determine the starting and ending points of the paper. The red lines indicate where the machine will make its cuts.

A special thanks to Jules and Jess from the 3D lab at LCC, whose expertise and guidance ensured this process was carried out with absolute precision. Their support was instrumental in bringing this aspect of the project to life, and I couldn't have achieved it without their meticulous attention to detail.

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ACRYLIC BACKS AND TAGS CUTTING

Some of the patches needed an acrylic backing to give them more character and support. To make the most of the material, I decided to cut them alongside some tags I had designed for the clothing, which featured the project name. This approach not only reduced material waste but also added a cohesive touch to the overall collection. The process went surprisingly smoothly, and the finished pieces added a polished and distinctive element to the final designs.

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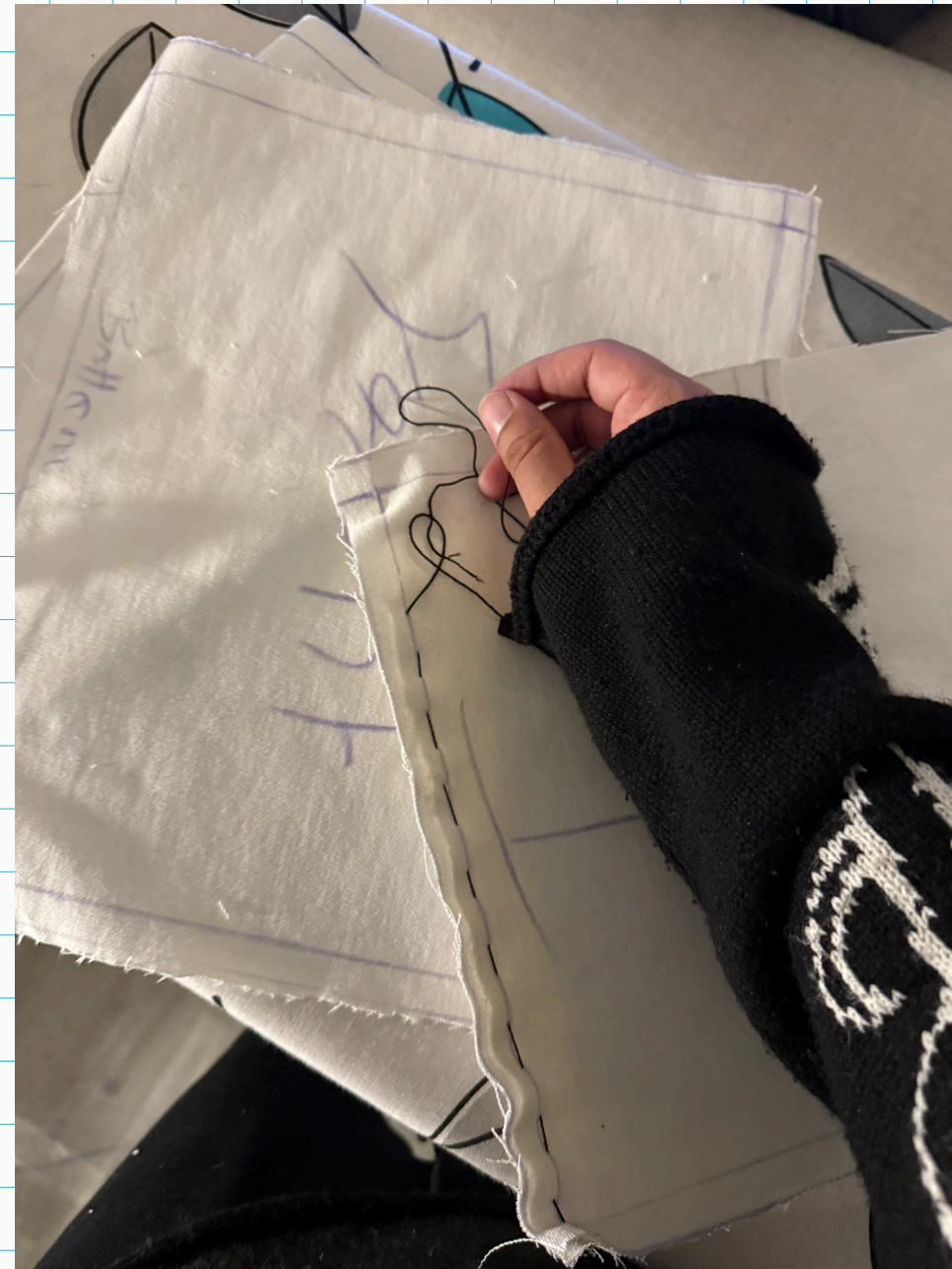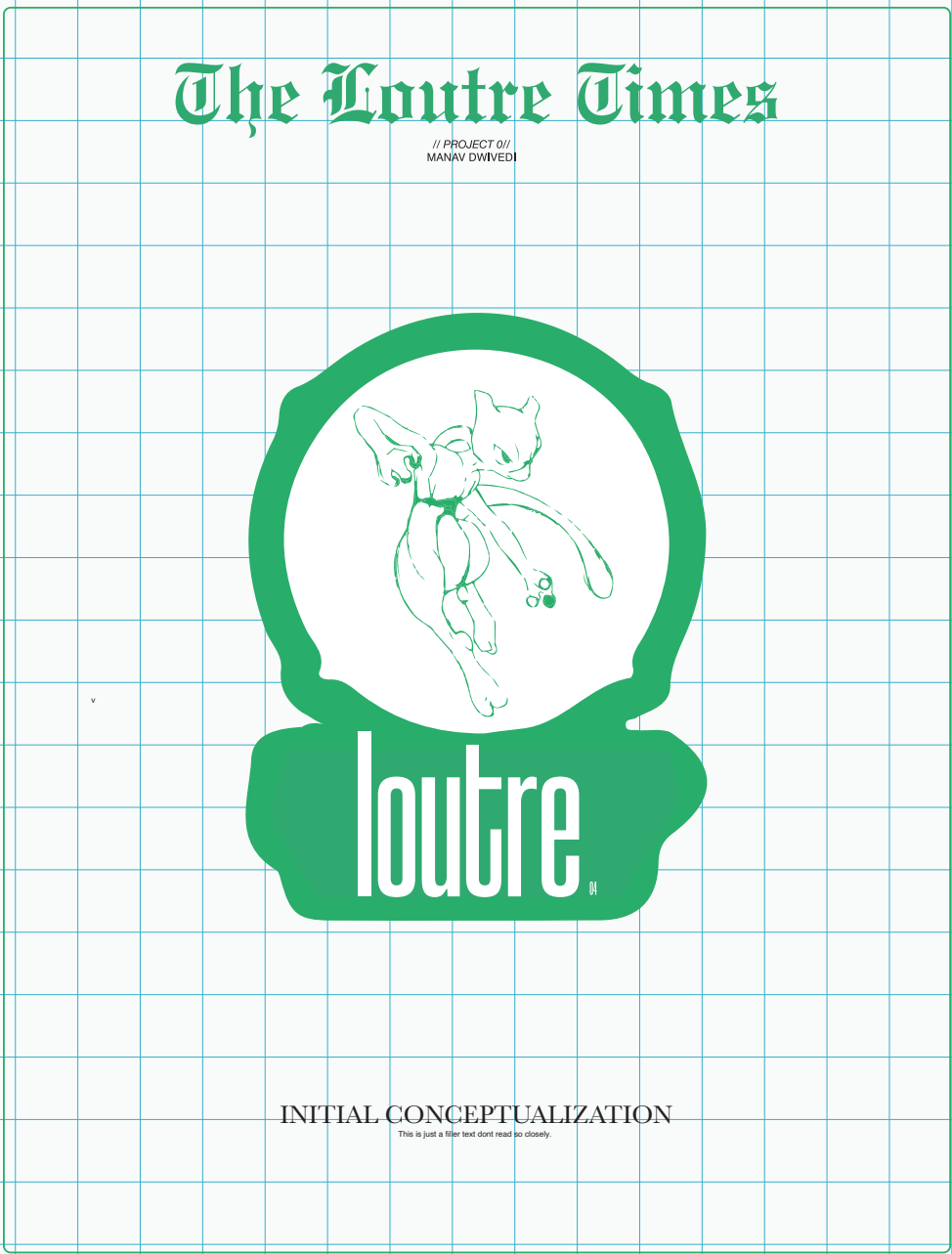
ACRYLIC BAGS

The acrylic bags ended up being one of my favorite pieces in the entire project. They turned out so beautifully that as I was leaving uni, people were stopping me to ask where I had bought them—something that couldn't have made me happier. It was such a simple idea, but seeing it come together so well was incredibly rewarding.
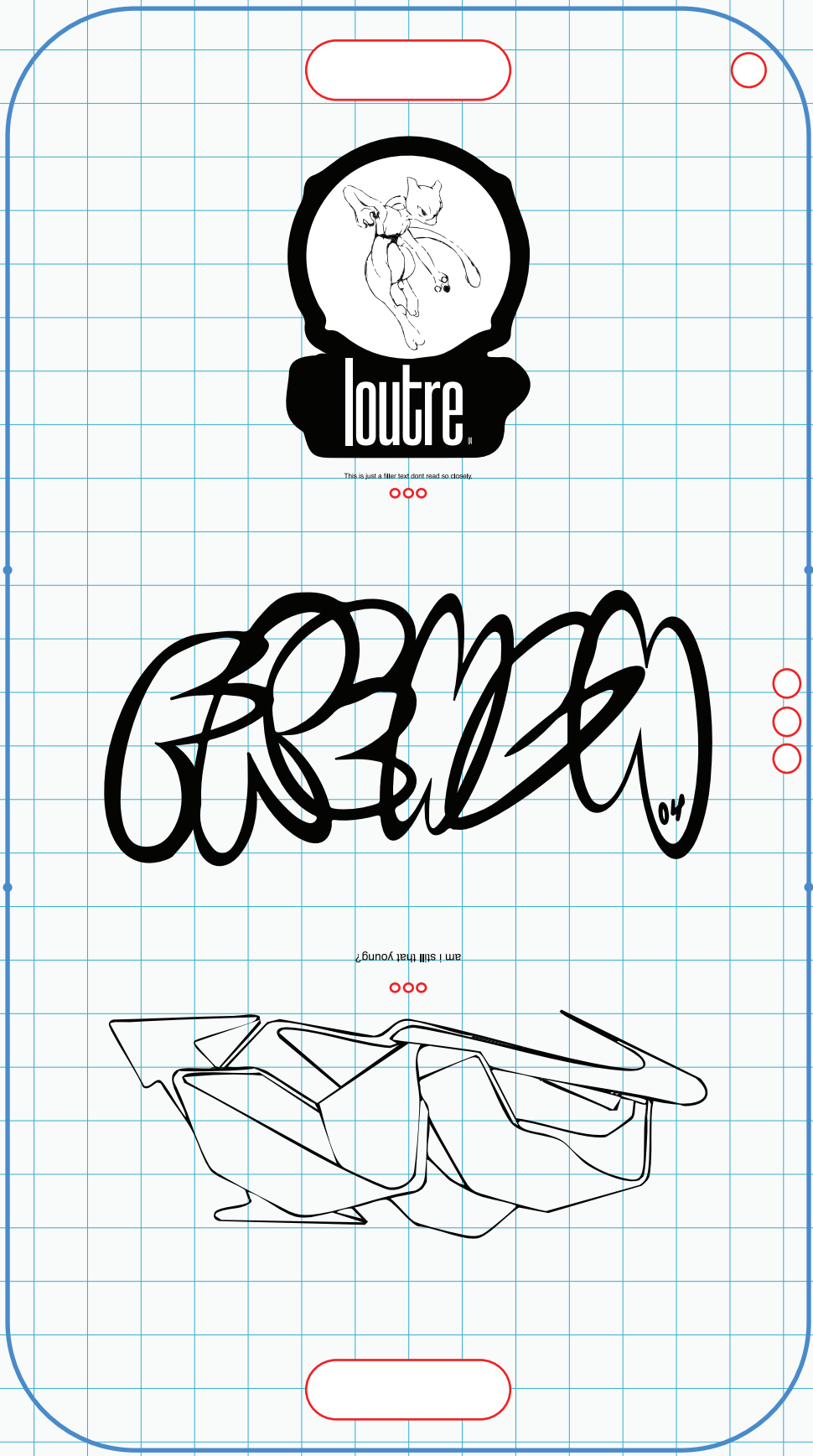
The design featured acrylic as the outer shell, paired with denim bags that I hand-stitched myself. The contrast of materials gave the bags a polished yet handcrafted feel, making them stand out as one of the highlights of the collection.I made the bag in two sizes.Next are attached print files cutting exploration and the final bags

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ACRYLIC BAGS

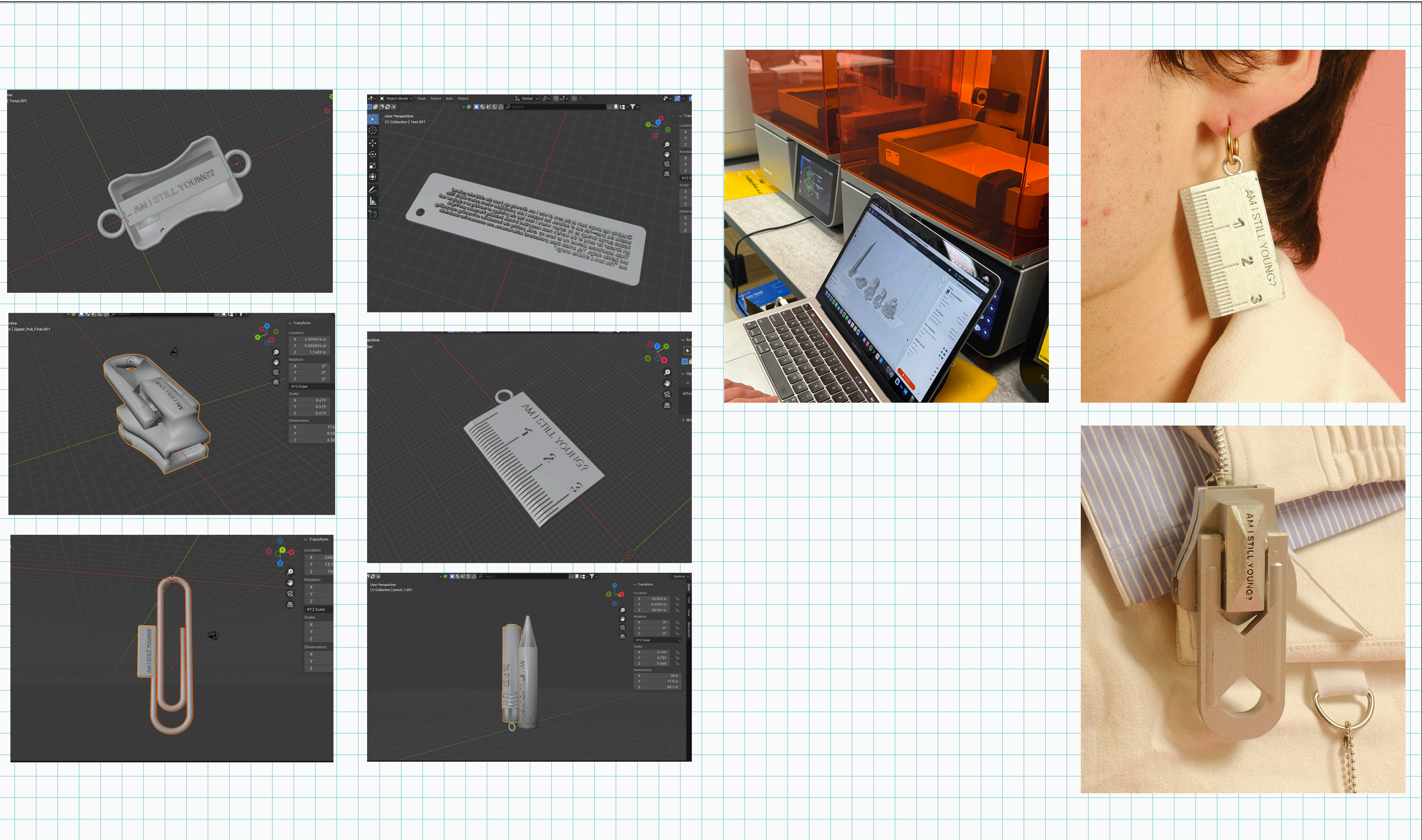The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

The newspaper accessory became a standout element in both the shoot and the event. Designed on a large scale, it wasn't just a prop—it was a statement piece. Accessories like this have a way of leaving a lasting impression, especially on children, who are drawn to bold, tactile objects that feel larger than life. Inspired by the idea of creating something both memorable and playful, I chose to include this as a nod to the project's theme of blending imagination with design.

This approach aligns with Huizinga's (1955) theory on play, which highlights how interactive, playful elements can resonate more deeply with audiences by engaging their senses and emotions. The newspaper was intentionally oversized, almost cartoon-like, to amplify its visual impact and ensure it captured attention. Seeing people interact with it during the shoot and event confirmed its success as a piece that could make a mark while staying true to the spirit of the project.

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

3D OBJECTS

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS

Every step of the journey was documented. I photographed the child as they worked, capturing the moments where their ideas began to take shape. I filmed behind-the-scenes clips of us collaborating, and I created a time-lapse video of the customization process. These visuals weren't just for the final presentation—they became a way for me to reflect on the journey and appreciate the messy, beautiful process of making something from scratch.

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS - CALL SHEET

AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

Call sheet: *Am I still that young?*
Documentary Shoot

Date and time: Saturday 20th of November 2024,
CALL CREW: 11.45am
CALL TALENTS: 12:00am

Location:
Studio 4
217 Mare Street Floor 3, London, ENG E8 3QE

Invitation link: HERE

—CREW
Art Director: Manav Dwivedi
Photographer: Jules Lansac [@julesfoad]
Videographer: Neil Pepin [@origineildon]

Assistants:
BTS: Emre Cetinkanat [@emrecetinkanat]
Carla Vegas [@caarlavg]
Karam Altaweel

—TALENTS
Salma Altaweel
Jim Murphy [@jimkentmurphy]

Shoot Schedule:

| Time	Type	Cast	Equipment	Location
11:40 / 12:00	Call crew + Setting up the space	CREW	N/A	Studio
12:00 / 12:30	Fittings + Set Installation + Test Shots + BTS	CREW + TALENTS	Clothes + go pro rig + Insta 360 + Lighting and set equipment	Studio
12:30 / 14:00	Customisation	CREW + TALENTS	Clothes + main camera for documentary + Fuji XH2 + wide shots on Insta 360 + Camcorder	Studio

Time	Type	Cast	Equipment	Location
14:00 / 14:20	Lunch, by Brunch Break catering	N/A	N/A	Studio
14:20 / 15:00	Shoot customised clothes with talent	CREW + TALENTS	Main video cam+ Fuji XH2 + go pro + Camcorder	Studio
15:00 / 15:45	Shoot with the models (Model 1)	CREW + TALENTS	Main video cam+ Fuji XH2 + go pro + Camcorder	Studio
15:45/ 16:30	Shoot with the models (Model 2)	CREW + TALENTS	Main video cam+ Fuji XH2 + go pro + Camcorderv	Studio

General Notes:

PLEASE ARRIVE ON TIME, so we can all have breaks and a chill day.

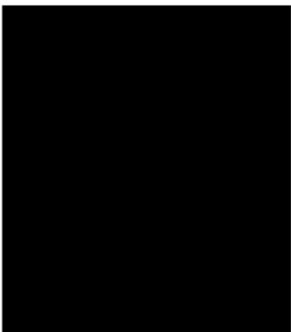Let us know for any allergy or medical condition we should be aware of for the day.

Talents:
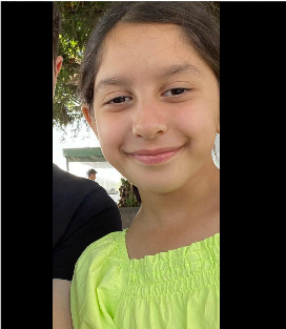
Main talent - Salma Altaweel

Jim Murphy [@jimkentmurphy]
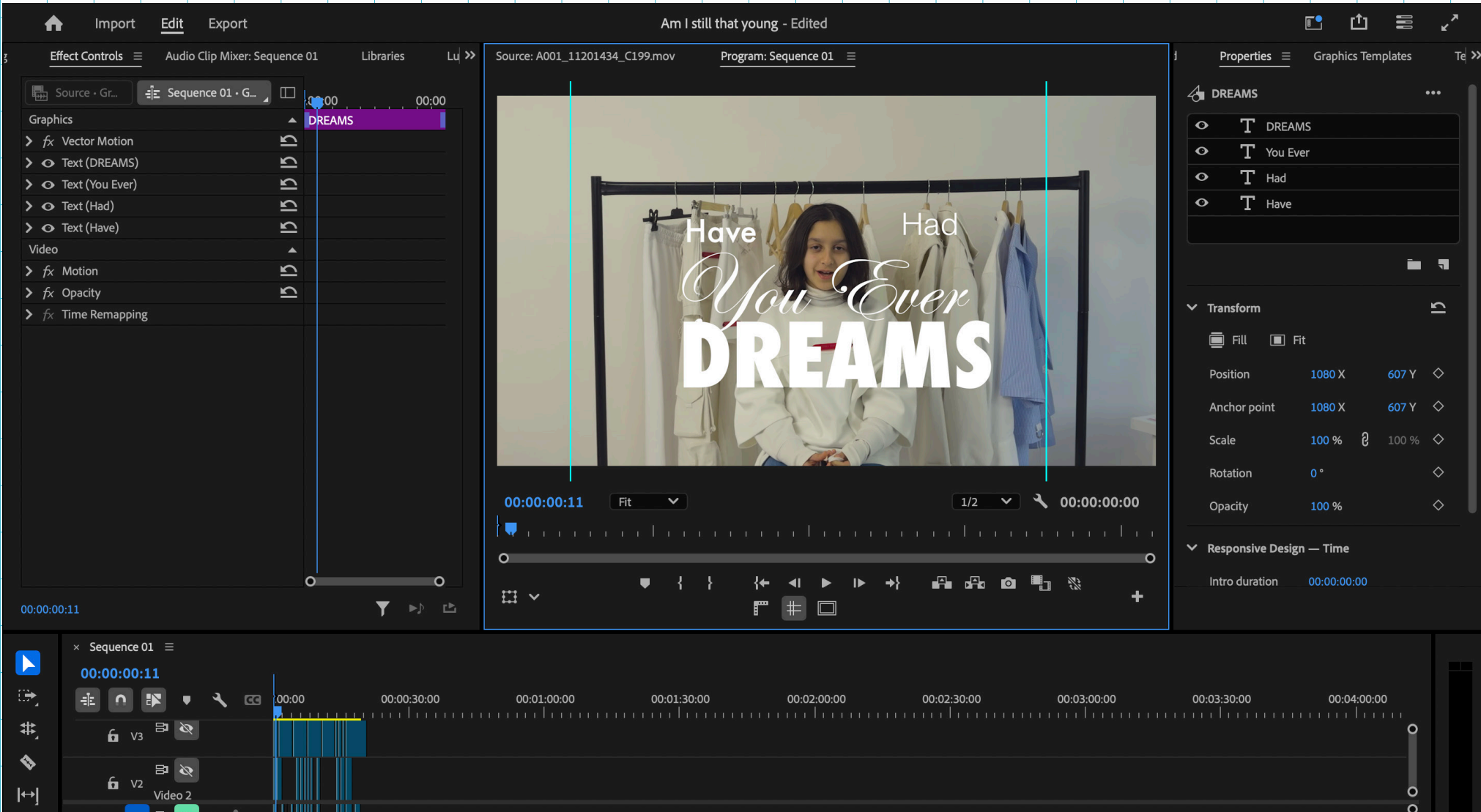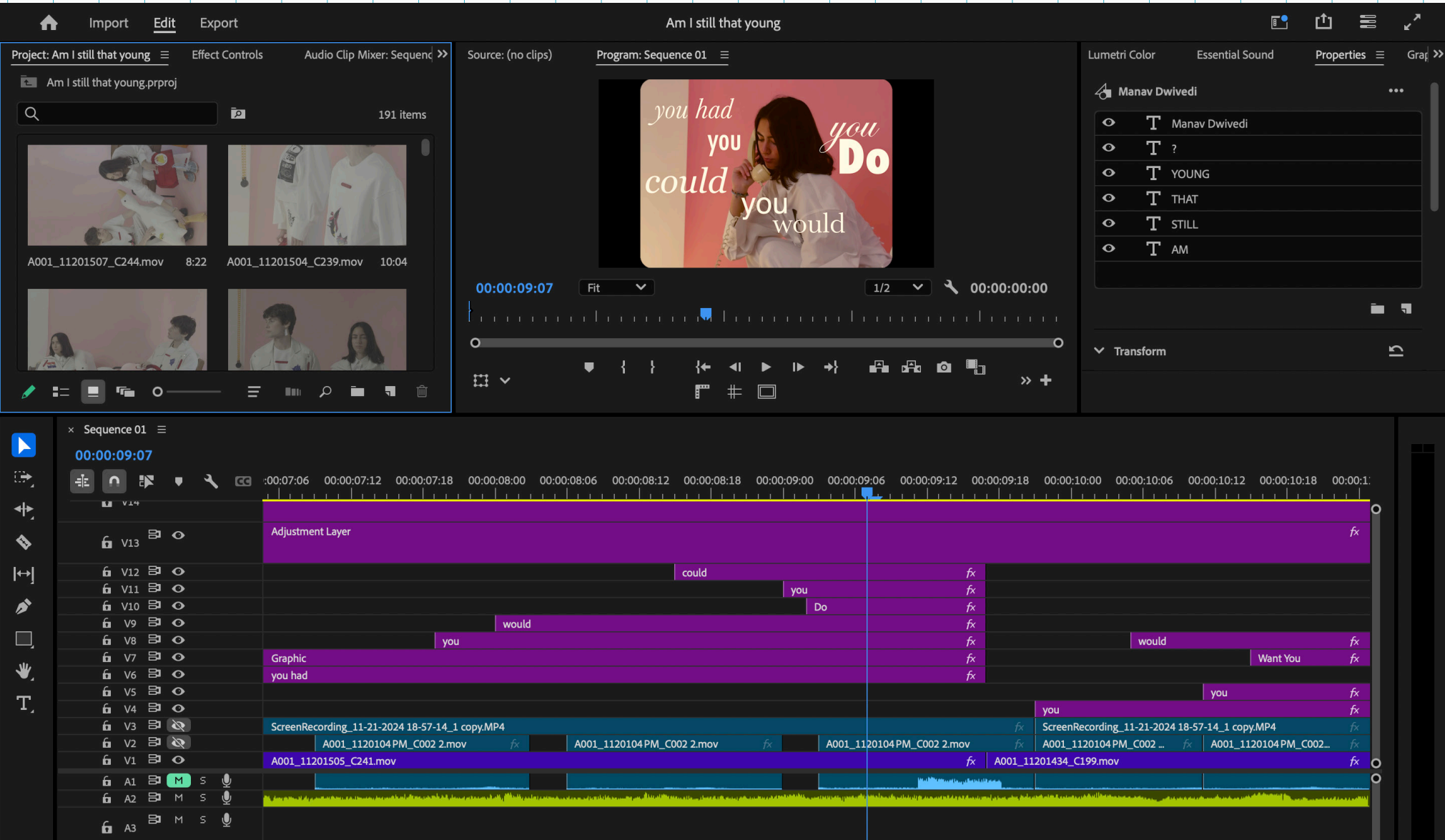Height - 6'1
Size - uk 9/10

Emma @emmasobh

AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun.

DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS - EDITING THE TEASER

CLICK TO VEIW THE VIDEO-   https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h_v2lVnTJLaGbU6ZMieO2_geIHAoN6jx/view?usp=sharing

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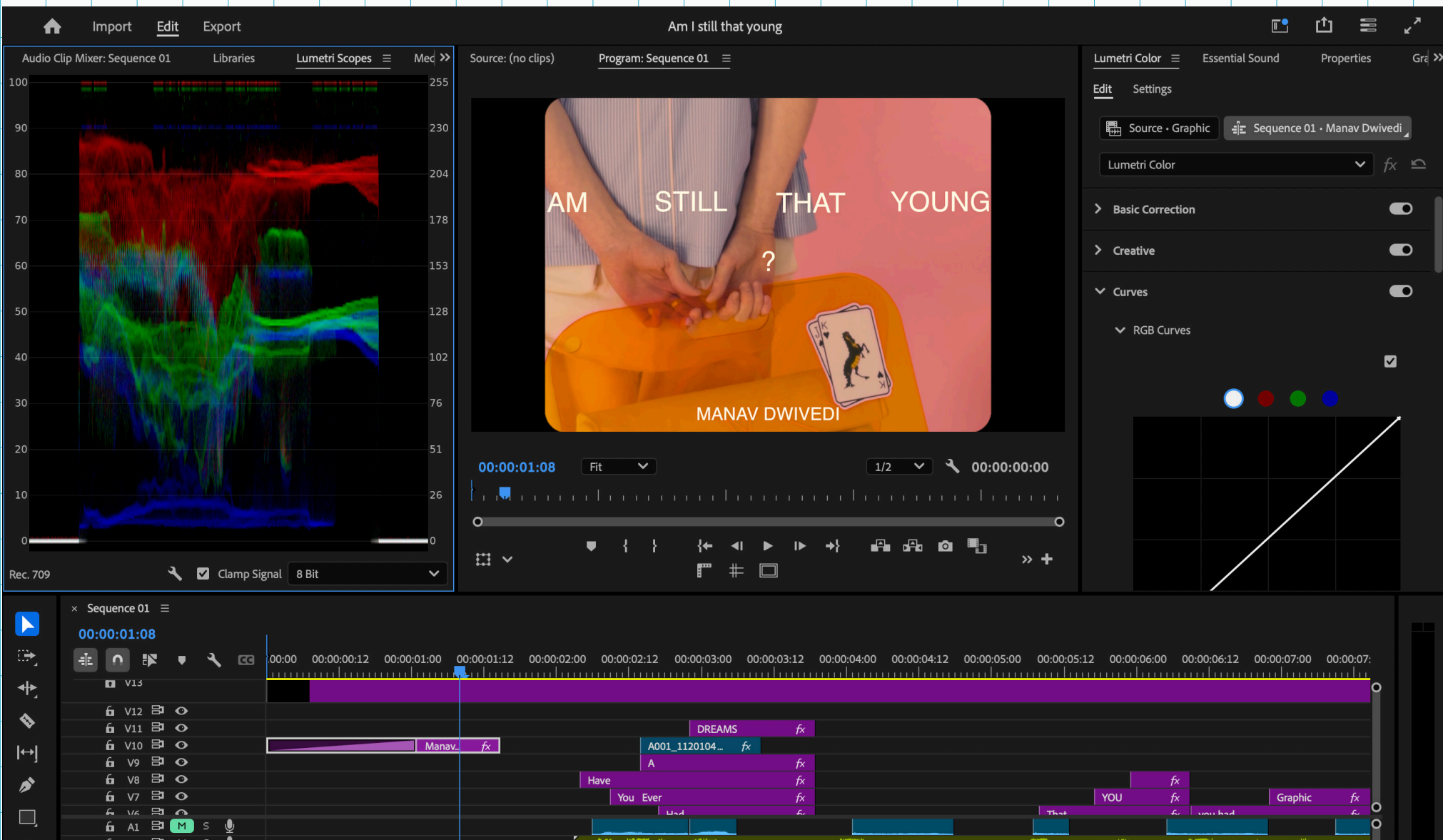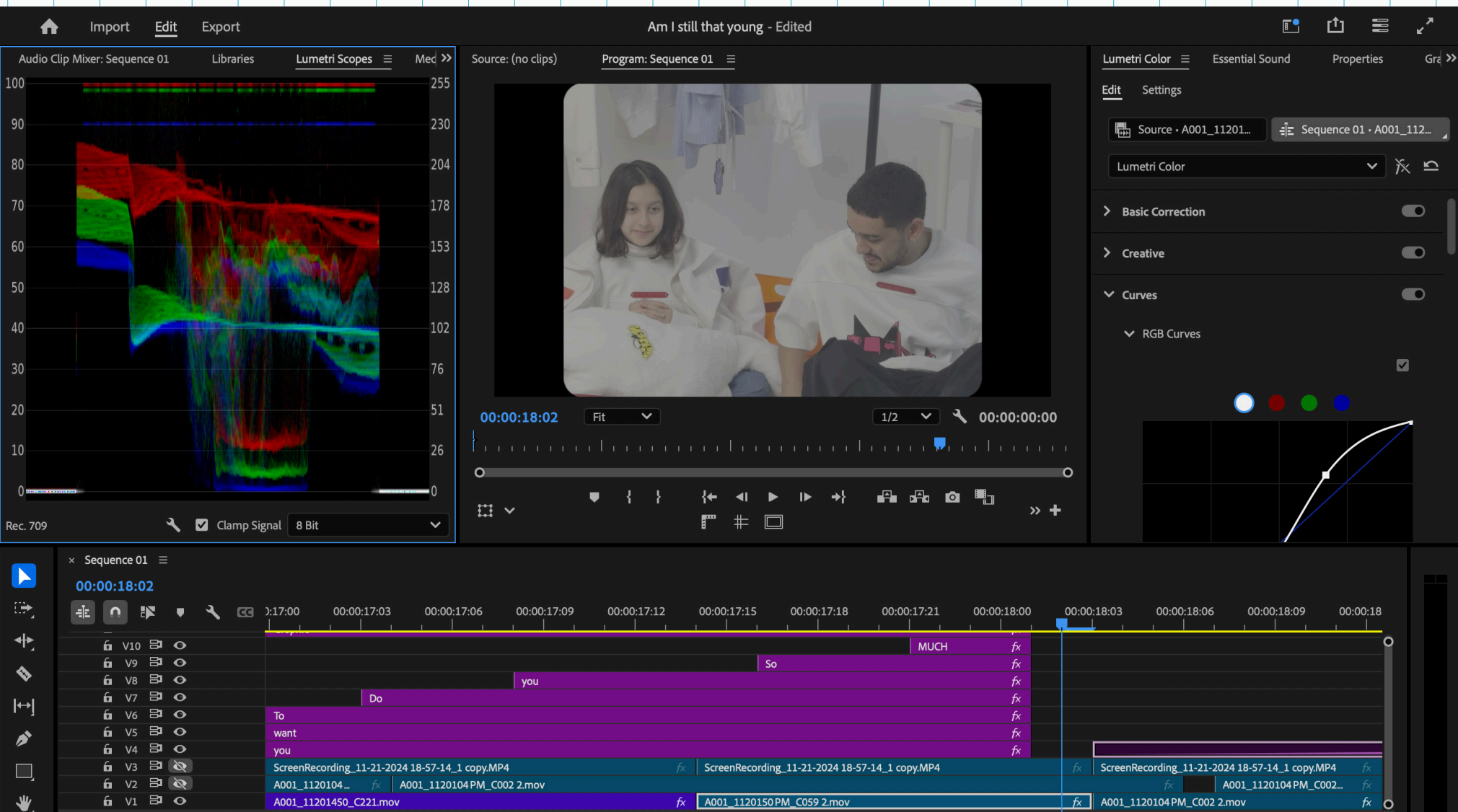
DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS - BEHIND THE SCENES

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DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS - CUSTOMIZATION OF THE CLOTHES
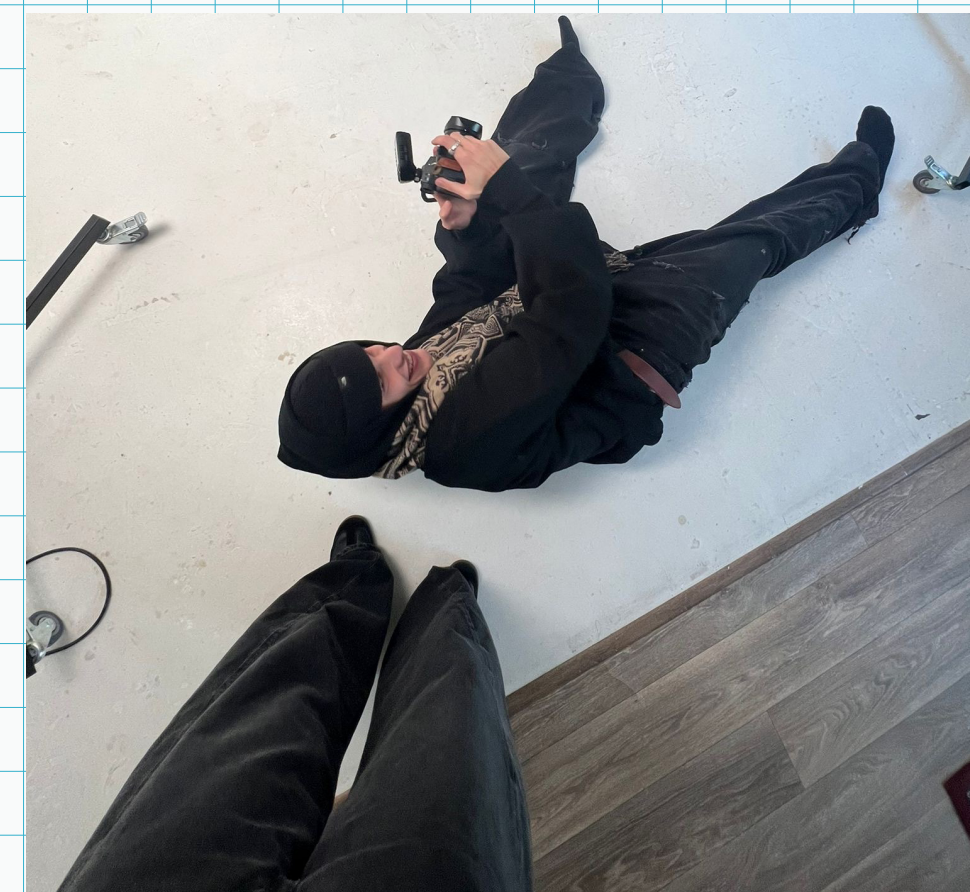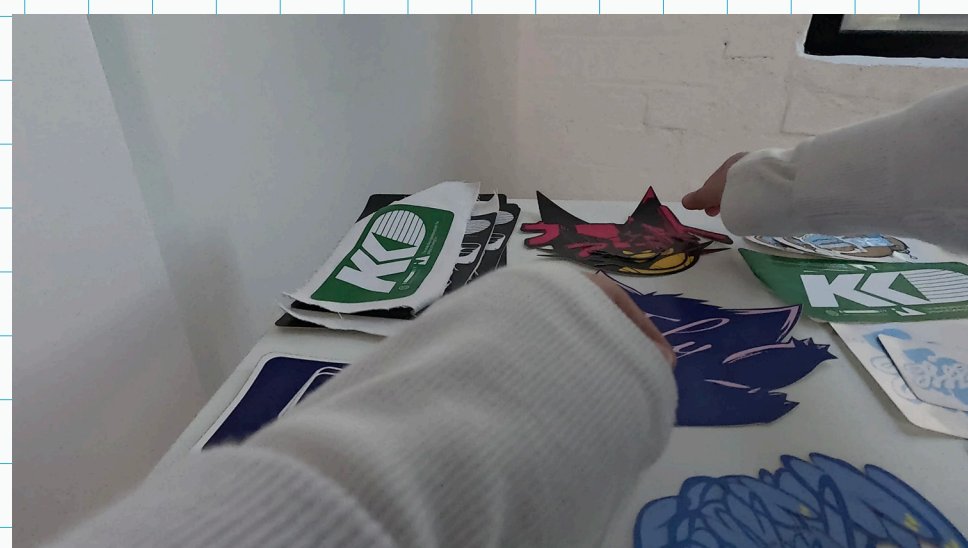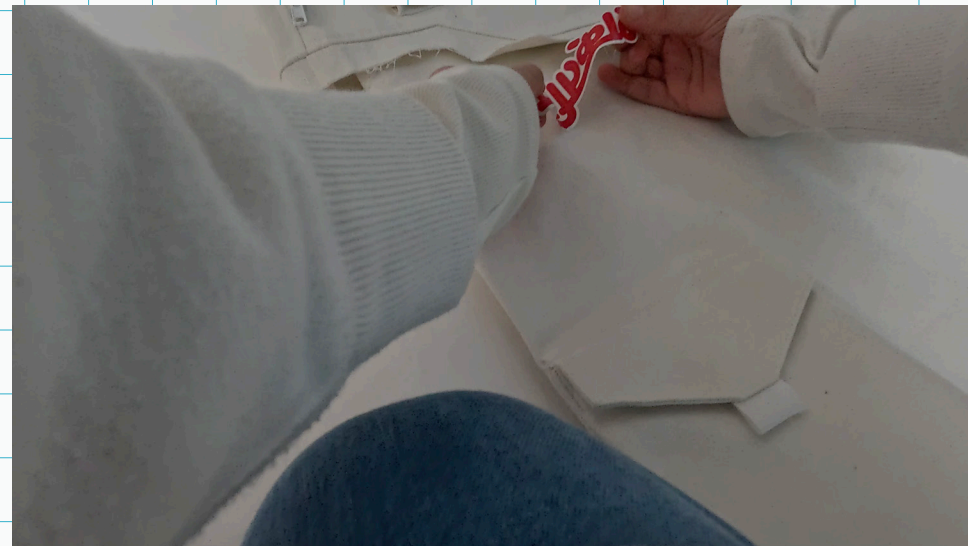
Artist pov shots from the Go Pro

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DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS - LIFESTYLE SHOOT PICTURES

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AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

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DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS - LIFESTYLE SHOOT PICTURES

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Looking at the finished collection, I see a story in every piece. Each design feels like a conversation between two perspectives: the child's raw, unfiltered imagination and my structured, professional experience. Together, they created something I couldn't have done on my own.

The audience feedback validated this approach. When I shared the pieces with my target demographic—young adults aged 20-30—the response was overwhelmingly positive. They loved the concept of collaboration and the sense of playfulness that ran through the collection. It was clear that the designs resonated, not just as fashion but as something meaningful and personal.

That said, there's room to grow. Relying on a single child collaborator limited the diversity of ideas in the collection. Expanding the process to include multiple children in the future could lead to even more dynamic results. I also realized the importance of better contingency planning to avoid delays in production and delivery.

More than anything, this project reinforced the idea that creativity isn't about age or skill level. It's about perspective, collaboration, and finding joy in the unexpected.

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This project has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my creative career. It reminded me why I started designing in the first place—not for the end product, but for the thrill of experimenting, collaborating, and discovering along the way.

Working with a child changed the way I think about creativity. They showed me that sometimes the best ideas come when you stop worrying about whether something will "work" and just dive in. It's a lesson I plan to carry into all my future projects.

At the same time, this journey taught me the importance of balance. The child brought spontaneity, and I brought structure. Neither would have worked on its own, but together, they created something truly special. As I move forward, I'm excited to keep exploring collaborations like this—working with people who see the world differently and finding ways to combine our perspectives. This project may be finished, but the lessons I've learned will stay with me for a long time.

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"Am I Still That Young?" has been a journey of rediscovery—a chance to explore the intersections of childlike creativity and professional design. At the heart of this project lies a simple yet profound insight: creativity isn't about perfection or age, but about perspective. By collaborating with a child, I was reminded of the unfiltered joy that comes from experimenting, taking risks, and embracing the unexpected. Through both theoretical research and hands-on practice, the project uncovered key findings. Theoretical frameworks, such as Piaget's and Vygotsky's studies on childhood development, illuminated how cognitive freedom fosters divergent thinking. This idea was brought to life in the customization process, where the child's imagination introduced design elements that I couldn't have predicted. The final collection succeeded in balancing their spontaneity with the structure needed to create cohesive, market-ready pieces.

One of the broader implications of this project is its challenge to the traditional norms of the fashion industry. It questions the emphasis on trends, perfection, and the narrow definition of creativity often tied to youth or experience. By showcasing how collaborative creativity can blur these lines, the project opens up possibilities for more inclusive, playful approaches in art direction and design.

While the project achieved its objectives, it also highlighted areas for growth. Expanding the collaboration to include multiple children could lead to a richer diversity of ideas. Addressing logistical challenges, such as manufacturing delays, is another area where future projects can build on these learnings.

Looking ahead, this project has inspired me to explore further connections between unconventional collaborators and professional design practices. Whether it's working with children, older adults, or other overlooked groups, I see immense potential in creating spaces where different perspectives come together to reimagine creativity.

More than anything, this process has reaffirmed why I love design. It's not just about creating products—it's about telling stories, fostering connections, and finding joy in the messy, unpredictable process of making something new. "Am I Still That Young?" has been a reminder to hold onto that joy and to keep searching for inspiration in the most unexpected places.

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