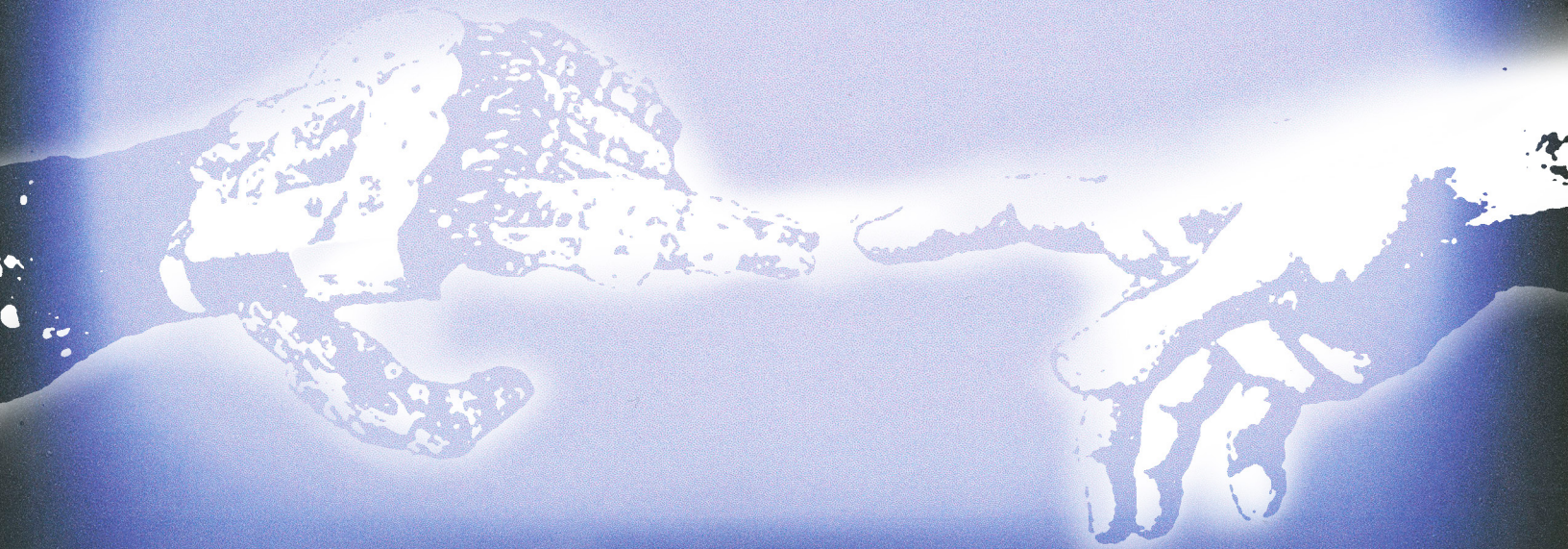


making technology feel more human  
in a digitally complex world



# DESIGNING FOR HUMANITY

a manifesto  
by Vasuki Sunder

A hand is shown holding a glowing, translucent orb. The text "create for emotional resonance" is overlaid on the hand and orb in a bright, glowing font. The background is a dark, gradient blue and purple.

# create for emotional resonance

*Art can exist purely to evoke emotion. This idea challenges our productivity-obsessed culture, especially in the realm of technology where value is often measured by efficiency and output. I want to create digital experiences that prioritize emotional resonance over quantifiable metrics, proving that moments of pure feeling—wonder, introspection, connection—are inherently valuable in our human experience.*

*Most technological interfaces today are designed primarily for task completion. What if a digital experience existed simply to make someone pause, to feel something profound and meaningful? We do not always have to create to solve a problem, but rather to create a moment of emotional depth and resonance. Rather than a tool that helps you complete a task, it's an experience that transforms how you perceive yourself or the world.*

*This principle also speaks to resistance against capitalist frameworks that demand constant productivity. In a world that constantly asks "What does this do?," my answer is that sometimes, the answer is simply "It makes you feel." This is radical in a digital landscape dominated by efficiency, metrics, and constant optimization.*

*My creative and technological work should be a medium for emotional exploration—a way to create digital spaces that honor the complexity of human experience beyond mere functionality.*

# EMBRACE THE GLITCH

IN TECHNOLOGICAL DESIGN, MOST APPROACHES SEEK TO ELIMINATE ERROR AND CREATE SEAMLESS, FRICTIONLESS EXPERIENCES. BUT THE MOST MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS HAPPEN IN THE MOMENTS OF DIGITAL VULNERABILITY, THE SPACES WHERE TECHNOLOGY REVEALS ITS HUMANITY. A GLITCH IS NOT JUST A MALFUNCTION, BUT A MOMENT OF RAW HONESTY—A REMINDER THAT BEHIND EVERY INTERFACE ARE HUMAN SYSTEMS, HUMAN LIMITATIONS, AND HUMAN CREATIVITY.

THERE IS BEAUTY IN IMPERFECTION; IN A SOCIETY THAT TENDS TO PRIORITIZE OPTIMIZATION AND MODERNITY, WHAT WE INITIALLY PERCEIVE AS FLAWS OR FAILURES CAN EVENTUALLY BECOME THE MOST COMPELLING AND HONEST ASPECTS OF OUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL. IN DIGITAL DESIGN, THIS CAN MEAN EMBRACING THE "SOUND OF FAILURE"—THE UNEXPECTED GLITCHES, DISTORTIONS, AND IMPERFECTIONS THAT REVEAL THE HUMAN DESIRE TO EXPRESS SOMETHING LARGER THAN THE MEDIUM CAN CLEANLY CONTAIN.

THIS PRINCIPLE SPEAKS TO DEEPER TRUTHS ABOUT IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE. OUR MOST AUTHENTIC MOMENTS OFTEN COME NOT FROM CAREFULLY CURATED PRESENTATIONS, BUT FROM UNEXPECTED VULNERABILITIES. I WANT TO CREATE WORK THAT ALLOWS FOR SURPRISE, FOR THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE, FOR THE BEAUTIFUL ACCIDENT—DESIGNS THAT EMBRACE USER INTERPRETATION AND RANDOMNESS. IT'S AN APPROACH THAT SEES VULNERABILITY NOT AS A WEAKNESS, BUT AS THE MOST POWERFUL FORM OF CONNECTION.



# explore digital selfhood

Our digital self is not a performance or a separate entity, but a deeply integrated aspect of our consciousness. The boundaries between our "online" and "offline" selves have become so porous as to be almost meaningless. We are simultaneously the creator and the created, constantly negotiating our identity through digital interfaces, algorithmic interactions, and networked experiences.

How do algorithmic recommendations subtly shape our preferences? How do online interactions influence our understanding of connection, intimacy, and self-expression?

Digital selfhood is more than a mere extension of our physical identity—it's a complex, fluid landscape where we continuously construct, deconstruct, and reimagine who we are. In an era where our online presence is as significant as our offline existence, we are perpetually in a state of becoming. Our digital interactions are not separate from our core identity but are integral to how we understand, express, and evolve ourselves. We exist in multiple contexts, constantly shifting and adapting—our digital experiences allow us to experiment with identity and connect across boundaries that once seemed immutable.

For designers and technologists, this means approaching digital experiences with profound ethical responsibility. We're not just creating interfaces; we're creating spaces of identity formation. Every design choice becomes a potential catalyst for self-discovery, transformation, or limitation. How can we design technologies that honor the complexity of human identity? How can we create digital spaces that expand rather than constrain our sense of self?

# CULTIVATE OUR SHARED DIGITAL WORLDS

Our digital landscape is a living, breathing ecosystem of collective thought and experience. We are not isolated individuals, but nodes in a vast, interconnected network of consciousness. Our virtual communities have become more than spaces of interaction; they are living organisms of shared imagination, where ideas flow, mutate, and evolve at the speed of thought.

I want to explore this shift in how we experience connection and community. We inhabit these spaces often more intimately than how we inhabit physical spaces—virtual communities become sites of belonging and collective identity that can transcend traditional geographic and cultural boundaries. We are constantly co-creating meaning, negotiating identity, and building shared narratives through our digital interactions.

How can we design environments that foster genuine connection? How can we create digital rituals that allow for meaningful collective experience? The challenge is to build spaces that don't just facilitate communication, but enable collective imagination, empathy, and understanding. We're all in this together, and the connections formed in our media landscapes create powerful ripples in our physical communities, economies, and global politics. Just as we can find profound connections in our digital ecosystems, we can also create new forms of isolation and division. I want to be aware of this complexity as a designer in these ecosystems—creating spaces that honor both our individual uniqueness and our collective interdependence.

Our virtual communities are becoming primary sites of cultural production, political engagement, and narrative formation. Increasingly more people feel more invested in their online communities than in traditional social structures. These digital spaces are where we explore identity, challenge existing systems, and imagine new possibilities for the future of our collective existence.

