

PROJECT

THREE

DESIGNING

EXPERIENCE

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THIS STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OBJECT (SKO) PRESENTS A REFLECTION ON MY LEARNING JOURNEY THROUGHOUT THE DESIGNING EXPERIENCE STUDIO, LED BY CHRISTOPHER DALAMAGAS.

IT RESPONDS TO THE STUDIO INQUIRY THROUGH A COMBINATION OF CONTEXTUAL FRAMING, CRITICAL REFLECTION, AND FORWARD-THINKING APPLICATION. BEGINNING WITH A RETURN BRIEF THAT REVISITS THE AIMS AND INTENTIONS OUTLINED IN THE DESIGNING EXPERIENCE OVERVIEW AND PROJECT BRIEFS, THIS SKO TRACES THE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, CHALLENGES, AND BREAKTHROUGHS THAT HAVE SHAPED MY DEVELOPMENT AS A DESIGNER.

THROUGH ANNOTATED WORK-IN-PROGRESS VISUALS AND REFLECTIVE COMMENTARY, I EXAMINE HOW KEY MOMENTS OF LEARNING UNFOLDED, WHAT VALUE THEY HELD, AND HOW THEY HAVE INFORMED MY CREATIVE PROCESS. THIS REFLECTION CULMINATES IN A PROPOSAL FOR HOW THESE INSIGHTS WILL CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE AND GUIDE MY FUTURE DESIGN PRACTICE.



Designing Experience is a studio that explores how user experience can be crafted through empathy, experimentation, and a balance between desirability, feasibility, and viability. It invites students to consider not only how systems function, but how they feel, how they communicate, and how they fit into the behaviours and values of real people. The studio focuses on breaking down barriers to communication by developing comfort with confusion, testing and refining ideas through research, and responding with thoughtful, user-led outcomes.

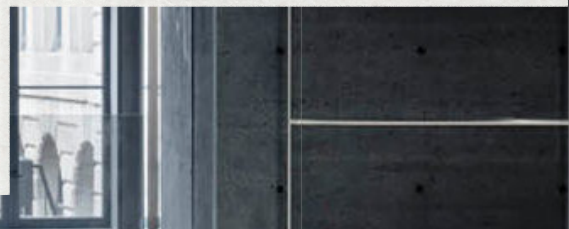
This course positioned user experience as a multidisciplinary and iterative process. We were encouraged to investigate our user group in depth, build empathy, and draw from both service and interaction design to craft more meaningful outcomes. By grounding our ideas in testing and insight, we developed concepts that reflected the realities of the people we were designing for, not just assumptions.

My project emerged in response to these studio goals. It centred around designing a digital platform for second-hand homewares, informed by a deep curiosity about how people discover, trust, and connect with design. The studio's emphasis on critical enquiry helped me question initial assumptions, shift directions when needed, and consider not just what the platform offered, but how it would make users feel—how it would inspire, guide, and invite them to explore. Through multiple rounds of testing and reflection, the project became more than a shopping platform; it became a system of curated discovery, cultural storytelling, and emotional connection.

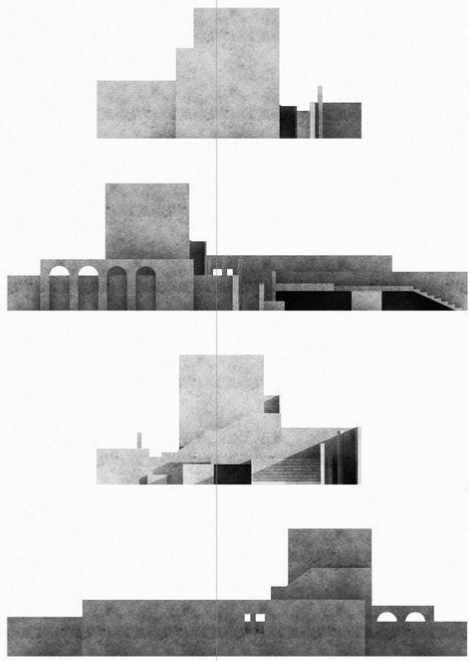
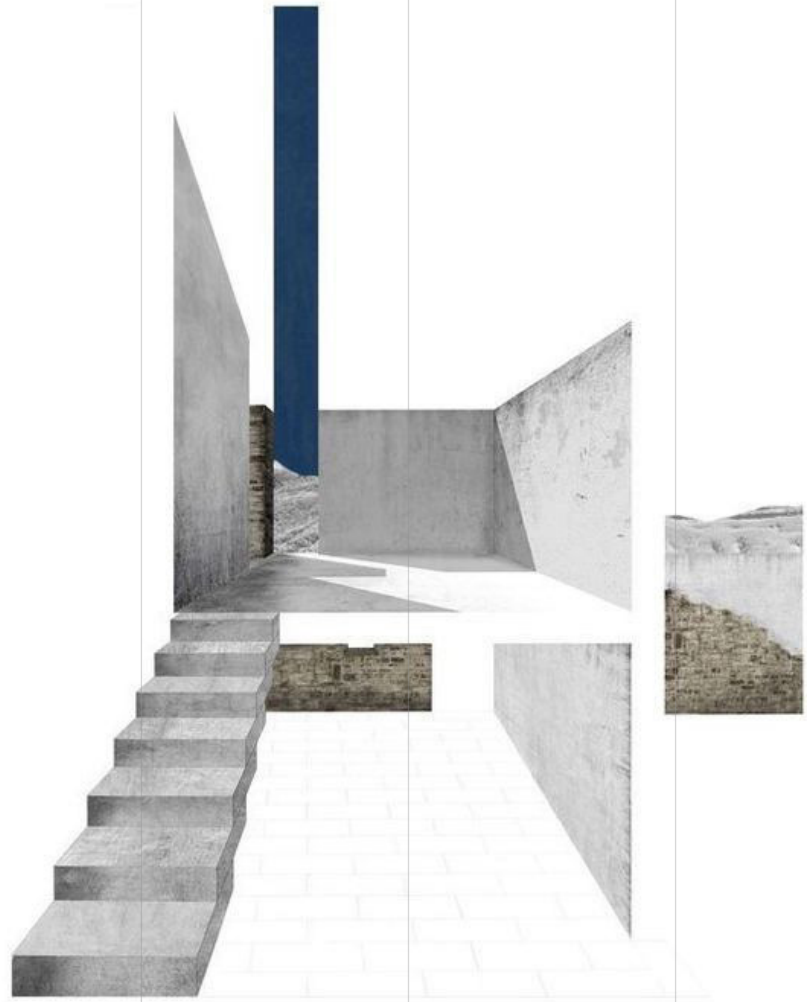
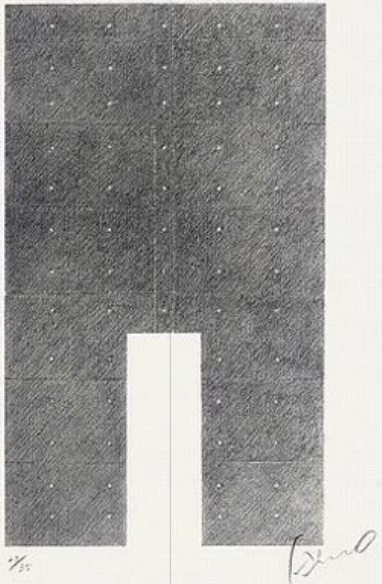
The aims of the studio—to investigate deeply, design responsively, and think critically—were core to the evolution of my work. I moved from a broad idea of a community marketplace to a more focused, elevated platform model. This aligned more closely with user needs uncovered through persona testing and supported the studio's goal of creating experience design outcomes that are both intentional and viable.

Throughout, I engaged with studio methods such as prototyping in Framer, iterative design critique, and contextual research to develop a system grounded in both functionality and feeling. Inspiration would become a form of labour—not something left to chance, but something to be pursued with intention. It could emerge from unexpected places, often outside the boundaries of the field or industry itself.

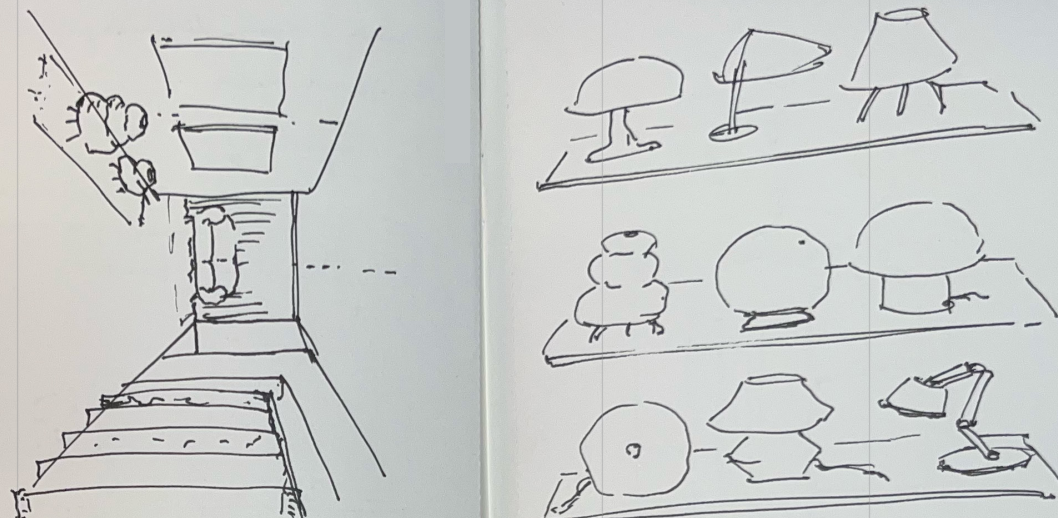
Ultimately, Designing Experience provided a framework for creative risk-taking, research-driven refinement, and user-centred storytelling. These principles shaped every step of my project and will continue to guide how I approach design in future contexts.











Coming into this studio, I had very little experience with UI/UX design. Most of my design background had been rooted in physical, tactile forms—painting, sculpting, installation. In those spaces, I've always worked quite intuitively. The process was about following an internal vision and bringing an idea into the world through materials and form. The audience was never a central focus—if anything, the work just needed to feel resolved for myself. It was more about expression than utility.

So stepping into this studio felt like entering a different mindset entirely. Designing experience meant designing not just for myself, but for others. This shift challenged me to think of design as something that offers a service—not just a mood or a concept, but a system that supports someone, helps them do something, feel something, find something. It was uncomfortable at first. I wasn't used to testing ideas with people, receiving feedback mid-process, or even considering if the thing I designed was “understood.”

But this friction was where the learning began. One of the key takeaways I held onto throughout the studio was the idea to be ok with ambiguity. Not everything needed to be resolved from the start. Letting go of the pressure to have a “finished” idea early on opened up space for real exploration and response to user needs. It taught me to sit in the unknown and let clarity form through process—not just intuition.

Early in the studio, I mapped out a platform concept that leaned heavily on aesthetics and mood. It was more of a community marketplace at first—open, ambitious, and somewhat idealistic. It drew from my interest in materiality, in storytelling, in beautiful things. But through testing and feedback, I realised that the scale of the idea was too big, and I hadn't really thought through the backend systems it would require. What's more, I hadn't grounded it in the actual needs or behaviours of users. That was a major turning point.

Instead of scrapping everything, I returned to the essence of what the concept was trying to do—create a space for discovery, meaning, and connection between people and the objects in their lives. That focus helped me refine the platform into something more curated, more intentional. I began designing with personas in mind, using empathy rather than assumption. Through user journeys and critiques, I reshaped the platform into something more viable: a place where people could find small-batch, story-rich homewares with ease and inspiration. It wasn't just about looking nice anymore—it had to work.

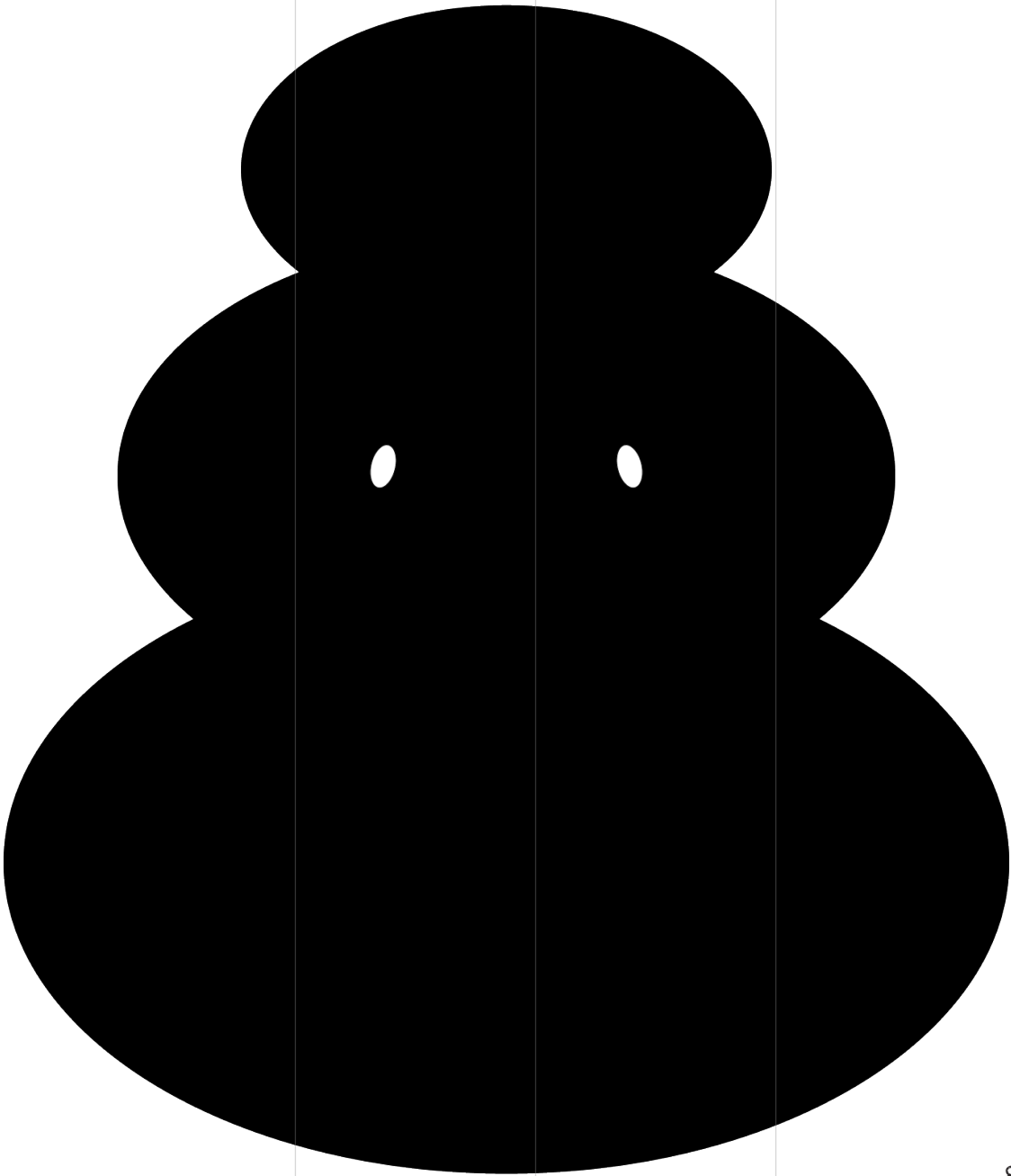
I also began to understand how closely the success of a user experience is tied to the integrity of a brand. If the essence of the brand and their audience were lost or misdirected, the result would have been a brand that was rejected by its audience. That became a critical insight for me—good design isn't just about beauty or concept, it's about resonance. If the experience doesn't speak the same language as its user, it won't be understood or trusted.

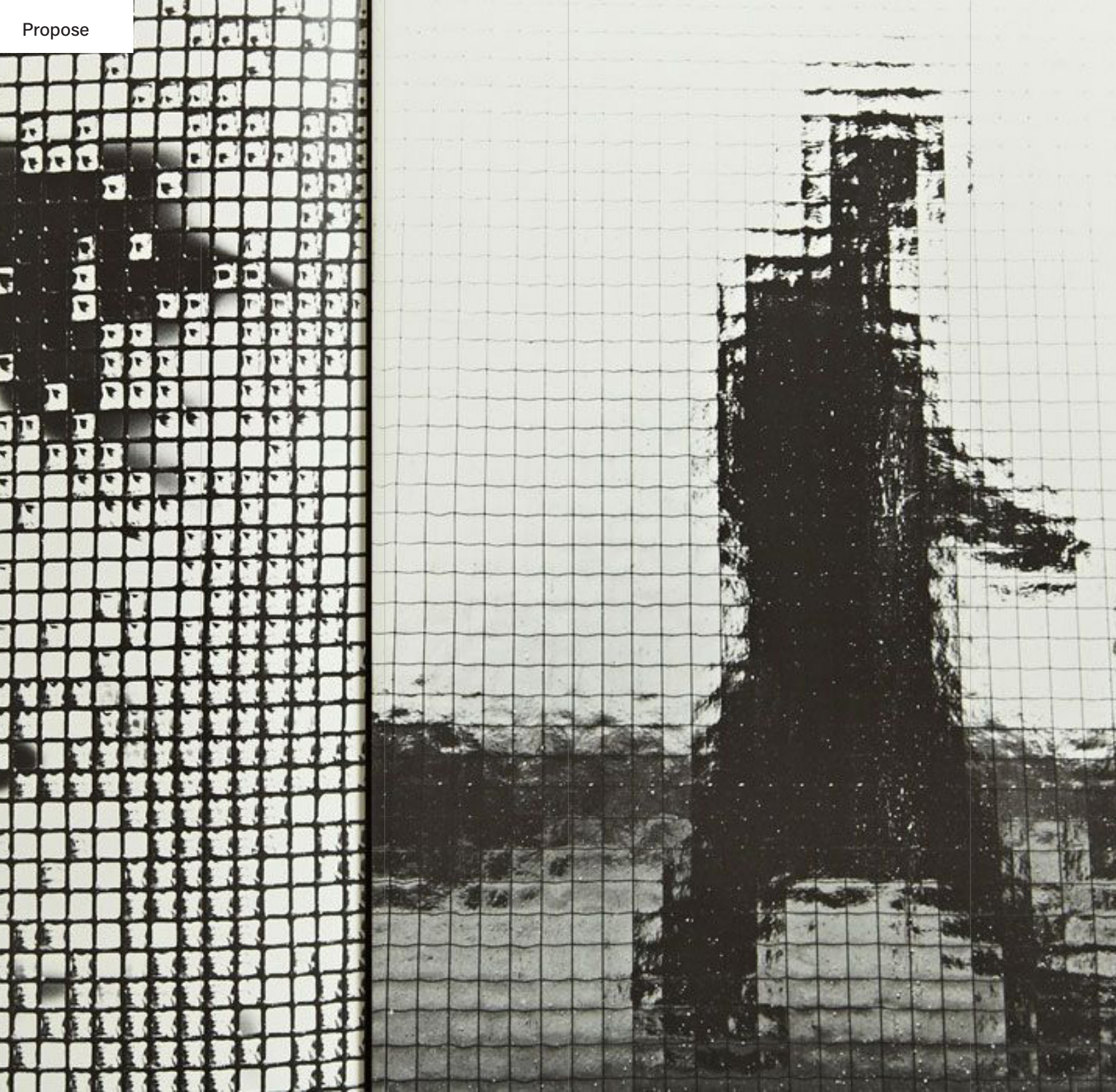
Working in Framer for the first time was another steep learning curve. I had never designed for screen or considered interaction patterns before this studio. The logic of digital design forced me to think structurally—where does the user go next? What are they looking for? What should this button do? These were new questions for me, and at times overwhelming. But slowly, they began to make sense. I started seeing UX as a kind of choreography—designing movement, pacing, intention. The visual design still mattered, but it now needed to support a clear journey.

There were definitely moments of frustration, especially in translating high-concept visual ideas into practical, interactive systems. I often had to pull back and simplify. But that taught me the value of clarity, and how good UX isn't necessarily flashy—it's intuitive, thoughtful, and sometimes invisible. In that way, this studio expanded my definition of what design can be.



OVERALL, THE BIGGEST SHIFT WAS INTERNAL: MOVING FROM DESIGN AS SELF-EXPRESSION TO DESIGN AS COMMUNICATION. THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'VE LOST THE CONCEPTUAL OR EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF MY PRACTICE—IN FACT, I THINK THEY'VE DEEPEMED. BUT I NOW UNDERSTAND THAT IDEAS DON'T LIVE IN ISOLATION. THEY LIVE IN SYSTEMS, IN INTERACTIONS, IN THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS. AND THAT'S WHAT THIS STUDIO HELPED ME LEARN: HOW TO DESIGN NOT JUST FROM THE INSIDE OUT, BUT FROM THE OUTSIDE IN.





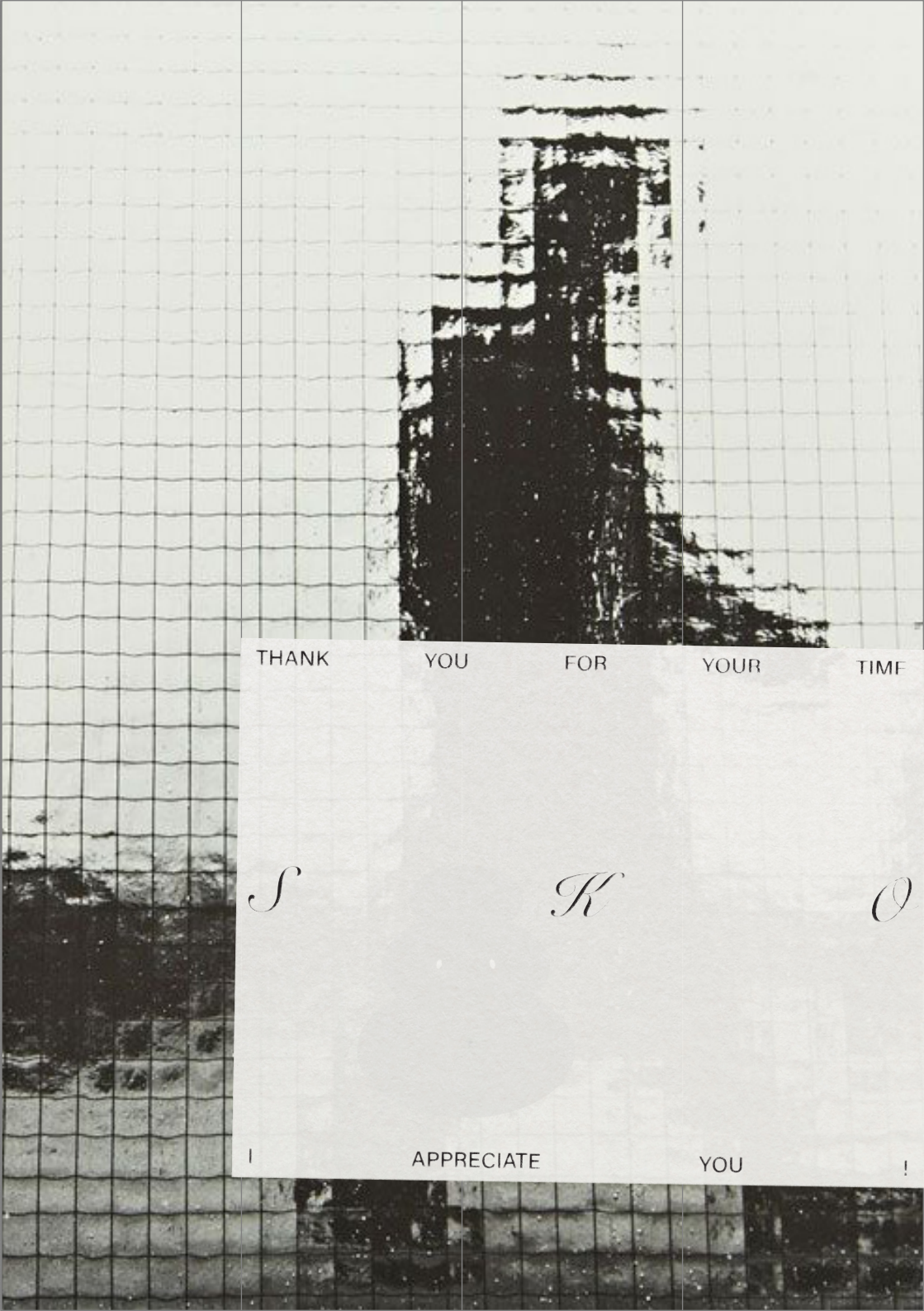
Moving forward, I intend to carry the key insights from this studio into every part of my design practice. The biggest shift for me has been in understanding that design is not just about the thing itself — it's about the experience it enables. Whether I'm designing a brand, a spatial environment, or a digital interface, I now see each outcome as a system of relationships: between user and object, user and platform, emotion and function.

I've learned the importance of research and testing not as box-ticking exercises, but as necessary conversations with the people I'm designing for. I want to keep asking better questions, listening more closely, and letting those insights shape the work from the inside out. I want my practice to be grounded in clarity and empathy, even when the outcomes remain experimental or conceptual.

The lesson of being "okay with ambiguity" is something I'll hold onto — embracing the messiness of early-stage design, letting ideas breathe, and not rushing to polish before I've truly understood the problem. It's helped me recognise the value in pacing myself, refining with purpose, and working iteratively to build richer, more layered solutions.

I also want to continue exploring how to translate tactile, emotional experiences into digital spaces. As someone who's always worked with physical materials, this studio taught me that the screen doesn't need to flatten meaning. It can be used to evoke texture, memory, slowness — all the things I care about in design. I want to keep experimenting with how digital platforms can feel more human, more intentional, more alive.

Lastly, this studio reminded me that concept and craft must move together. If the soul of the work isn't clear — if the intention is misdirected — then the audience feels it. My future practice will centre around aligning the two: making things that look good, yes, but also things that work, speak, and connect. Design that doesn't just fill a space, but earns its place in someone's life.



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