Branding a Heritage City

A contemporary approach used
to brand the historical identity of
Ahmedabad, India

by Medha Mistry
Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication and Strategic Branding,
Srishti Institute of Art, Design & Technology

Supervisors: Katherine Gillieson and Hélène Day Fraser

Acknowledgements

↑ My family at *Adalaj ni Vav*, a 15ᵗʰ century stepwell in the village of *Adalaj*, close to Ahmedabad, India (1996)

← Dad and I at *Adalaj ni Vav* (1996)

Preface

My first exposure to design was at my Dad's architectural studio in Ahmedabad, India. From the age of 8, my sister and I would often accompany him on his weekend site visits in the city. He would take us to art galleries, furniture stores, design schools, places of worship and show us around. I would point to forms that caught my eye and he would explain to me its significance — not just in terms of its built form but also why *this* design was relevant to *this* place.

When I was 13 years old, he took me to **Sidi Saiyyed Mosque** in the old city centre of Ahmedabad. The 15ᵗʰ century mosque is most famous for its *jali* (Fig. 80), a lattice stone window that has also become the unofficial symbol of Ahmedabad. I remember how the morning light glistened through the intricate hand carved details while its shadow danced on the bare floor. Dad told me that *jalis*[1] helped combat heat in hot climates by allowing air to flow through. In India, in several regions where modesty and social interactions of women were largely protected, *jalis* provided the ability to view street life from the privacy of indoor spaces. I was intrigued by this duality of local architecture.

Growing up in Ahmedabad — amidst a strong presence of heritage buildings, narrow bylanes and also the opposite, less ornate modern buildings by architects like Le Corbusier, Louis Khan and B.V. Doshi that are rich in cultural interpretations — I developed a strong affinity to design and architecture.

My Dad is also actively involved in various Design Committees including the *India Design Council* (IDC)[2], so his dinner table conversations habitually revolve around the gaps in Indian design education, and the need to encourage businesses in India to view design as a value creator. Being part of these conversations at an early age has played a fundamental role in how I view Indian design as diverse, plural and empathetic.

[1] *Jali* is a stone screen, perforated or latticed, usually with a geometrical ornamental pattern, used in Indian and Islamic architecture

[1] *Indian Design Council* is a government-appointed national strategic body for multi-disciplinary design and is involved in promotion of design to make India a design enabled country

To Dad
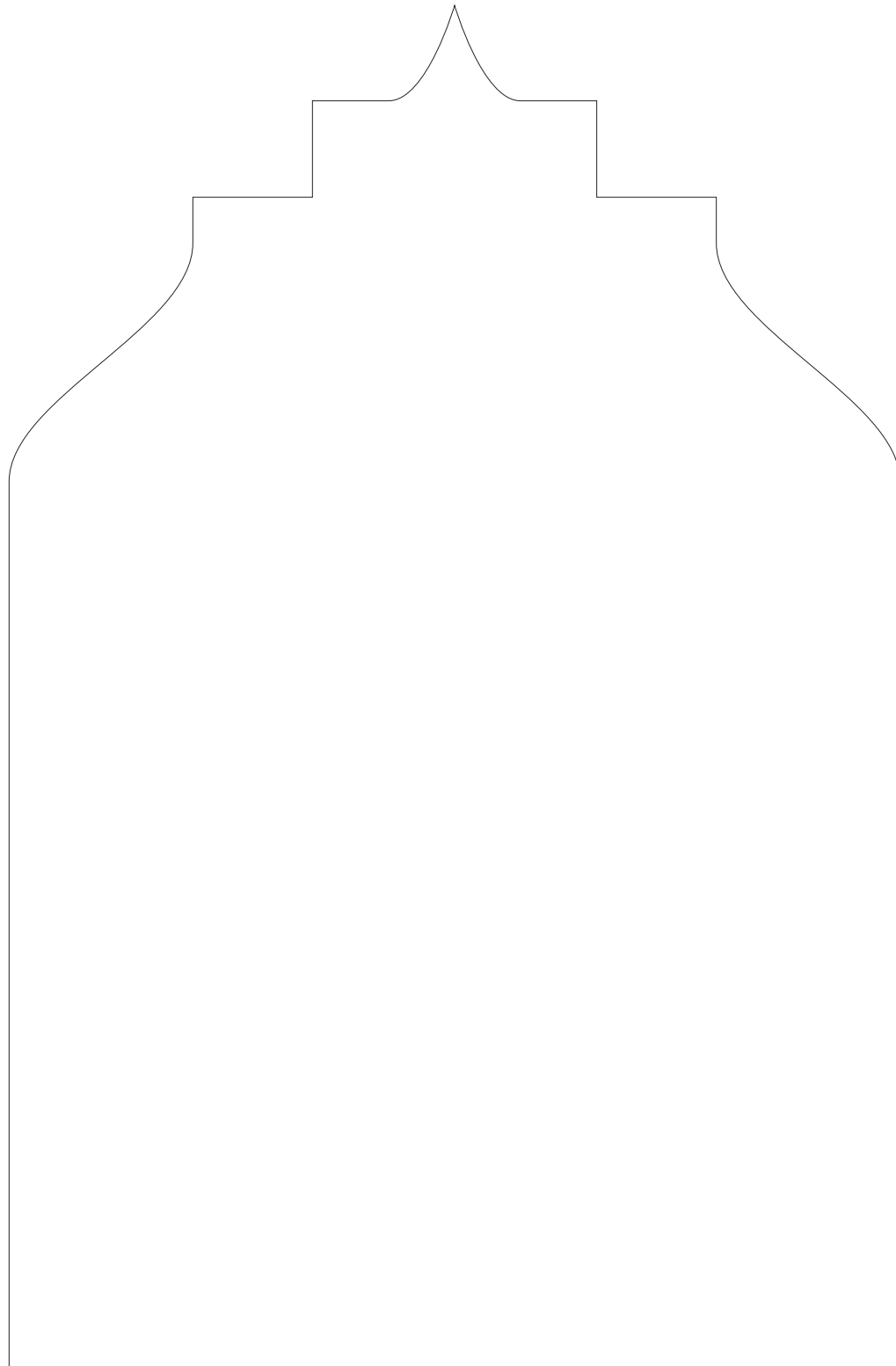
Abstract

This thesis investigates how branding can be used to celebrate the historical identity of Ahmedabad, India. Branding a city can be a difficult task because cities are complex and constantly evolving. For a richly diverse and geographically vast country like India, it can be particularly challenging. The existing brand identity for Ahmedabad lacks an extensive, consistent visual identity system and uses stereotypical Indian motifs to represent the city. The thesis explores Ahmedabad's colonial, pre-colonial and post-colonial heritage to find visual vernacular that is *true* to the region. These concentrated communication design-based studio explorations inform a larger exercise to represent the city of Ahmedabad visually. Other design research methods include photo analysis, case studies, observations and personal reflection.

The thesis proposes a flexible brand identity system to capture the multiple realities of the city, its people, its tradition and cultural heritage. The final studio project is inspired by the windows of Ahmedabad. From 600-year-old monuments to residential *pol* houses to modernist buildings — windows have displayed a wide range of architectural heritage and played a huge role in defining what is important to *Amdavadis*.[1] The research also creates a generic module that can be used to brand other Indian cities by looking at its tangible, intangible cultural heritage and its visual vernacular or graphic past.

[1] *Amdavadis* refer to the residents of Ahmedabad

Keywords:
Ahmedabad, Heritage, Visual Vernacular, Contemporary, Visual Communication Design, City Branding, Flexible Brand Identity Design

Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Branding a city is a challenging task since cities are complex and constantly evolving. For an Indian city, that task might be particularly demanding because the visual culture greatly differs from region to region and also because, India is a vast and diverse conglomeration of people, regions, cultures, languages and traditions. The complexity also arises from the different influences of its colonial past — from the Mughal empire to the British rule — and now its present globalised state.

Growing up in Ahmedabad, the design hub of India, I marvelled at the plurality of its rich and varied cultural heritage. Ahmedabad is known for its 15th century Indo-Islamic mosques and residential *pols* but also, its modern, brutalist architectural expressions of local and international architects. I used this plurality to navigate what makes the city unique, with a particular focus on its visual vernacular.

The intension of the research is to safeguard and celebrate the historical identity of the city of Ahmedabad through branding. While the local government has been successful in hosting community-building experiences such as *Heritage Week* festivals and *Ahmedabad Heritage Walk*, they have been unable to translate that in their visual identity. The current visual identity of Ahmedabad only reflects the city's 600-year-old heritage and promotes its newly acquired *World Heritage City* tag. It lacks considerations of other lived realities of the city, such as its modern heritage.

The essence of a city branding exercise is to represent the city's unique identity by capturing its culture, character, reputation and communal spirit. During this study, I attempt to find Ahmedabad's **authentic** visual vernacular by responding to its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial heritage. The thesis explores a brand identity system that is flexible, plural and comprehensive — allowing people to associate with a spectrum instead of a single icon or a more standardised solution. The emphasis of the research is on translating the heritage of the city in a contemporary context through visual communication visual communication strategies such as branding, publication design and typography.

Purpose of Inquiry

The term 'Indian design' has been associated with kitsch, ornamentation, cheap plastic, with motifs of elephants and numerous Gods **(Geel and Lévy 11)**. Moreover, India's rich heritage of intricate craftsmanship has influenced its perception in relation to design **(Ray)**. This perception has also impacted the way India is represented through communication design. Interested in longer term design initiatives, I argue that depicting India via the aesthetics of kitsch serves only as a vehicle to short-term, mass appeal.

During this study, I raise concerns over the current use of stereotypical visual elements such as *mandalas, mehndi* patterns to brand the city and suggest alternatives that are inspired by the city's visual and architectural heritage. The lack of documentation of visual vernacular might be the reason why the representation of Indian design is stuck in a certain era. It is crucial to study the visual vernacular of the city with the help of documentation. Consequently, design schools in India should encourage in-depth study of visual vernacular that surrounds them. I also reflect on my communication design education in India that focused on Western references such as Bauhaus and Swiss posters, Paul Rand's logos, etc. that were foreign to us.

This investigation into my hometown, Ahmedabad is also a personal effort to contribute to the emerging needs of my city, and a nostalgic attempt to reconnect with the memories of my formative years in Ahmedabad.

Design Methodology

Branding is a discipline that isn't easily understood. For some, it is a buzz word for marketing and advertising or an extension of one's lifestyle or a practice of making logos. Contrary to popular belief, branding is not about a logo. While the logo is something that is imbued with the attributes of a brand, branding is far greater than that. Debbie Millman defines branding simply, "it is deliberate differentiation" (*Branding and the impact it has on business* 04:11-04:17). Branding can be viewed as a continuous process of establishing a distinct identity of a brand in peoples' minds. The aim of branding is not only to differentiate but also to represent values and beliefs (Tasci and Kozak 310).

While branding is heavily associated with mass-marketed products, it should not be viewed as just limited to commercial use or a "manipulative brainwashing tool forced on us by corporations" (Klein). People fear branding because they think it can comprise their independence of thought and critical thinking. Now more than ever, we are creating marks and symbols to unify us — our values, beliefs and vision. For example, symbols have been born in response to social and political movements such as Black Lives Matter (Fig. 1), Anti-CAA and NRC protests (Fig. 2). In movements like the Women's March (Fig. 3), it was not only represented through visuals but also with an artefact: the pink pussyhat. These are proof that branding is not just a tool of capitalism.

These non-commercial symbols were created in a bottom-up manner: they were made by people for people, and then shared for free among people to honour their shared sentiments. I believe that this perspective can also be used while approaching a city branding exercise. Drawing from a broader relationship between stakeholders and city branding, Sarah Essbai, an urban planner in Amsterdam says, "A city's brand is not its identity, it is rather a collection of stories and visions told by the different members of its community. As such, it is able to accommodate various identities and deliver value while providing consistency and enough room for growth." The objective of city branding is not to promote local culture to visitors. Instead, it is to identify the values associated and already embedded within the local culture and then using it to promote the city itself (Kavaratzis and Hatch 78).

Fig. 1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
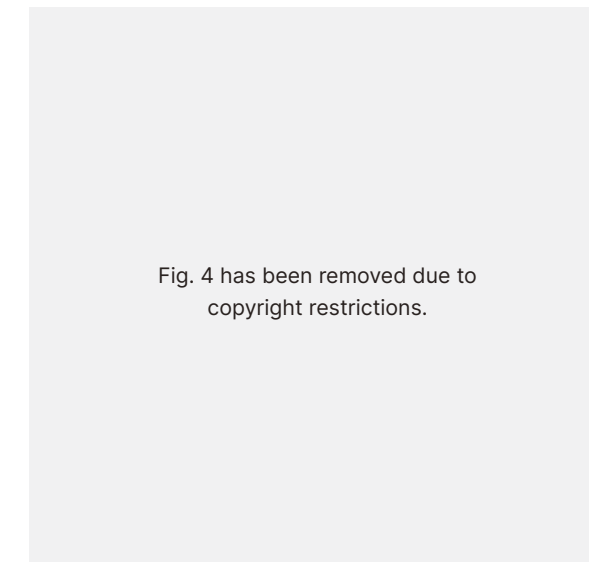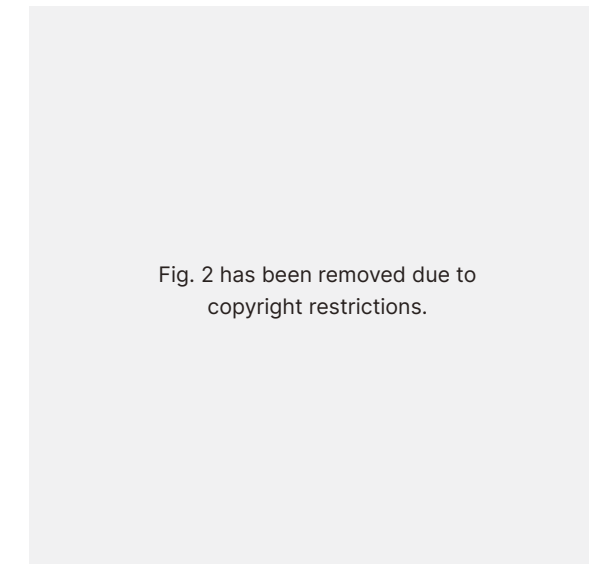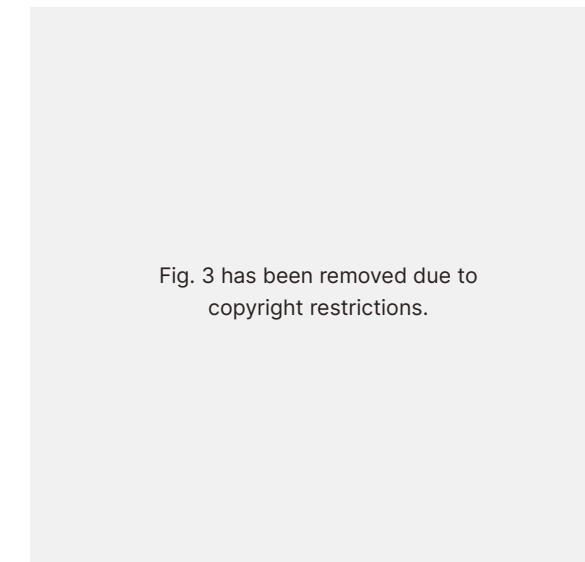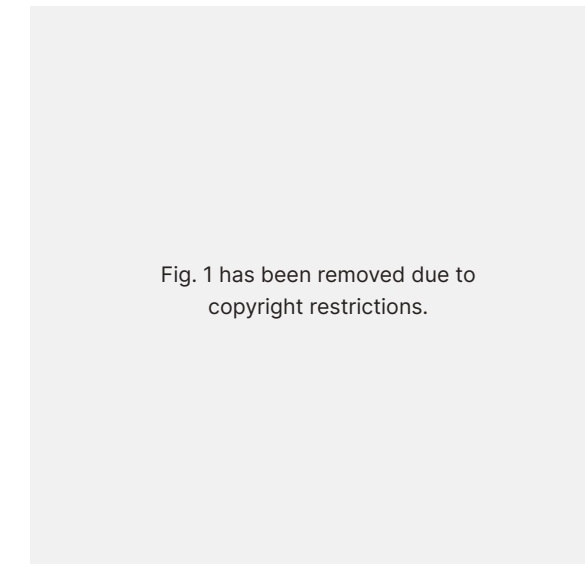
↑ Fig. 1
Logo for Black Lives Matter, designed by Design Action Collective (2016)

↑ Fig. 2
Posters at Anti-CAA and Anti-NRC protest in Chennai, India (2019)

↑ Fig. 3
Pink pussyhats at the Women's March in Washington, D.C. (2017)

↑ Fig. 4
#PeaceforParis illustration by Jean Julien in response to the terror attacks in Paris (2015)

In my opinion, the power of branding lies in its ability to unite people in the communication of shared sentiments — beyond market share conditions and corporate constructs. The idea is to imbue values of authenticity, culture, tradition, heritage — values that are deeply vernacular at heart — into the city branding process.

Indian Visual Culture

In high school, I took a Fine Arts class, where I was first introduced to the history of Indian art. For two years, we studied *Rajasthani* and *Mughal* miniature paintings (16th-19th century) (Fig. 5) as well as the evolution of the Indian national flag (mid-20th century) (Fig. 6) and modern Indian art expressions of *Raja Ravi Varma, K. Laxma Goud, M.F. Husain* (Fig. 7), *Mrinalini Mukherjee* (Fig. 8) and their contemporaries **(Kumari)**.

Fig. 5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 6 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 5
Mughal Miniature: Emperor *Akbar* receiving *Sultan Adam Gakkar*, *Akbar-nama* manuscript (1604-5)

↑ Fig. 6
The first unofficial Indian national flag was hoisted on August 7, 1906 in Kolkata

Fig. 7 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 8 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 7
Kerela-II by M.F. Husain (2001)

↑ Fig. 8
Adi Pushp II by Mrinalini Mukherjee (1998)

Kosh kosh par pani badle, char kosh par vani
In India, the water changes at every kilometre and the dialect every fourth kilometre

The history of Indian art is a long one. We were taught how India was not just a geographically vast country but a conglomeration of cultural identities. The cultural identity of a region is defined partly by its climate, cultural history and to a great extent, by its social or religious practices. Hence, the Indian visual culture varies from region to region. For example, in a sandy place like Rajasthan, you will come across brighter shades of earthen tones such as blue, that offset the daily monochromatic shades of brown (Fig. 9). In South India, *kolams* are made with rice flour since rice is a food staple there (Fig. 10).

Fig. 9 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 10 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 9
Houses in the old area of Jodhpur, Rajasthan are painted blue

↑ Fig. 10
Kolam is traditionally made in South India with rice flour in front of a house for good luck and blessings

At the age of 18, I moved across the country, from Ahmedabad to Bangalore, to pursue my undergraduate degree in visual communication design. A large part of the design curriculum focused on designing for a corporate market. The experience felt limiting. Unlike my high school Fine Arts class, we studied logos designed by Paul Rand, Massimo Vignelli's subway maps, Bauhaus posters, Volkswagen advertisements, etc. These were seen as ideal design solutions and conclusions for 'a better life', but felt foreign. I now realise that this could be because we were studying things that were fundamentally alien to us. It was very perplexing. Design is meant to create something that impacts people and life but these examples of graphic design were far out of our reach and lived experiences. We were surrounded by *Amul* political posters, *Doordarshan*, *India Post* letter boxes (Fig. 11), *Gujarati*[1] newspapers and magazines (Fig. 12), etc. Why weren't we studying them? Who designed the *Mother India* film poster? (Fig. 13) What was the process behind designing the *Handloom* mark? (Fig. 14) What about the history of Indian visual culture? ***How could that enter our design consciousness and discourse?***

[1] *Gujarati* is a language spoken predominantly by people of Gujarat, India. This is the most common language in Ahmedabad

Fig. 11 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 12 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 13 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 14 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 11
Logo for *India Post*, a government-operated postal system, designed by R.K. Joshi (1993)

↑ Fig. 13
Movie poster of Bollywood *Hindi* film, *Mother India* (1957)

↑ Fig. 12
Indian film actress, *Priya Rajvansh* on the cover of Filmfare magazine (1970)

↑ Fig. 14
Handloom mark designed by Anil Sinha (2007)

Moving from the western part of India to the south, I was aware of the change in visual culture that surrounded me. For example, unlike Ahmedabad, each road in Bangalore had a yellow sign with the name of the street written in English and *Kannada*[1] (Fig. 15).

In design school, my exposure to this rich body of Indian visual vernacular (as part of my *Heritage Exposure* course) was only limited to a trip to Bidar, a crafts village that was a 14-hour train journey away from Bangalore. The town is known for its metal handicraft — *Bidri* — which originated in the 14th century. The emperor *Sultan Ahmed Shah Bahmani* craftsmen from Iran to decorate the royal palaces and courts, which is why the style and techniques in Bidar are influenced by Persian art **(Desai)**.

[1] *Kannada* is a language spoken predominantly by people of Karnataka, India

↓ Fig. 15
A yellow street sign in Bangalore, Karnataka

[1] I called the machine a 'de-generator' as the Western objects are a degenerate form of the 'higher' Indian objects

For centuries, India has nurtured a culture of assimilation and integration — absorbing and creating hybrid expressions from the heritage of its conquerors, travellers and other settlers **(Ray)**. This makes it difficult to separate what is truly Indian and what is adopted. However, vernacular visual culture is not considered design in India **(Balaram, 12)**. The rich heritage of craft heavily influences how it is perceived in relation to design. This might be another reason as to why we don't learn about the history of Indian graphic design in design schools.

Over the past year and a half, I have been pursuing my Master's degree in Canada. Here, we are encouraged to read, discuss and respond to topics like decoloniality and the need to challenge the Western ideologies. This perspective has changed the way I approach design. I have entered into the dialogue through a lens that looks at the means of addressing this in non-Western contexts. In India, I was encouraged by teaching faculty to look at Swiss and Bauhaus design styles as inspiration or a point of reference. In Canada, I have drawn and reflected on my experience of India's visual vernacular and respond to the notions of decoloniality.

Very early on in my Masters I began wondering, ***how would the visual vernacular of Western culture look like if it had Indian influences?***, instead of the other way around. This question led me to design a speculative 'de-generator'[1] machine that converted a Western object into its Indian-ised version. The intention was not to emulate the West or adopt its modernist design styles but rather to offer another perspective. In choosing four objects (i.e. transportation, food, apparel and political campaign poster) that I would morph, I knew that I wanted them to be rich visually and also hold strong cultural references.

My speculative prototype was fairly easy to construct. A cardboard box acted as a 'machine', a flat sheet of cardboard served as a conveyer belt that could take my input — Western objects — into the machine that then 'generated' its Indian-ised object version (Fig. 16).

While making, I found myself wondering:

What truly is authentically Indian?

What is the 'Indian' way of design?

How 'Indian' are these generated objects anyways?

I asked my peer, Shrushti Kulkarni to help photograph my prototype in actions — as I slid the paper pop-up objects in and out of the machine. Working with her felt natural and also resourceful — she helped validate my Indian references. I was reasonably aware that not all my peers in the studio (we are a very diverse group with many diverse cultural experiences from around the world) would understand the cultural references, so I ran my concept by the other Indians in my cohort. This was the first time I was expressing my concurrent thoughts about the influences on Indian culture. Doing so, I realised that I needed that validation from others more than I anticipated.
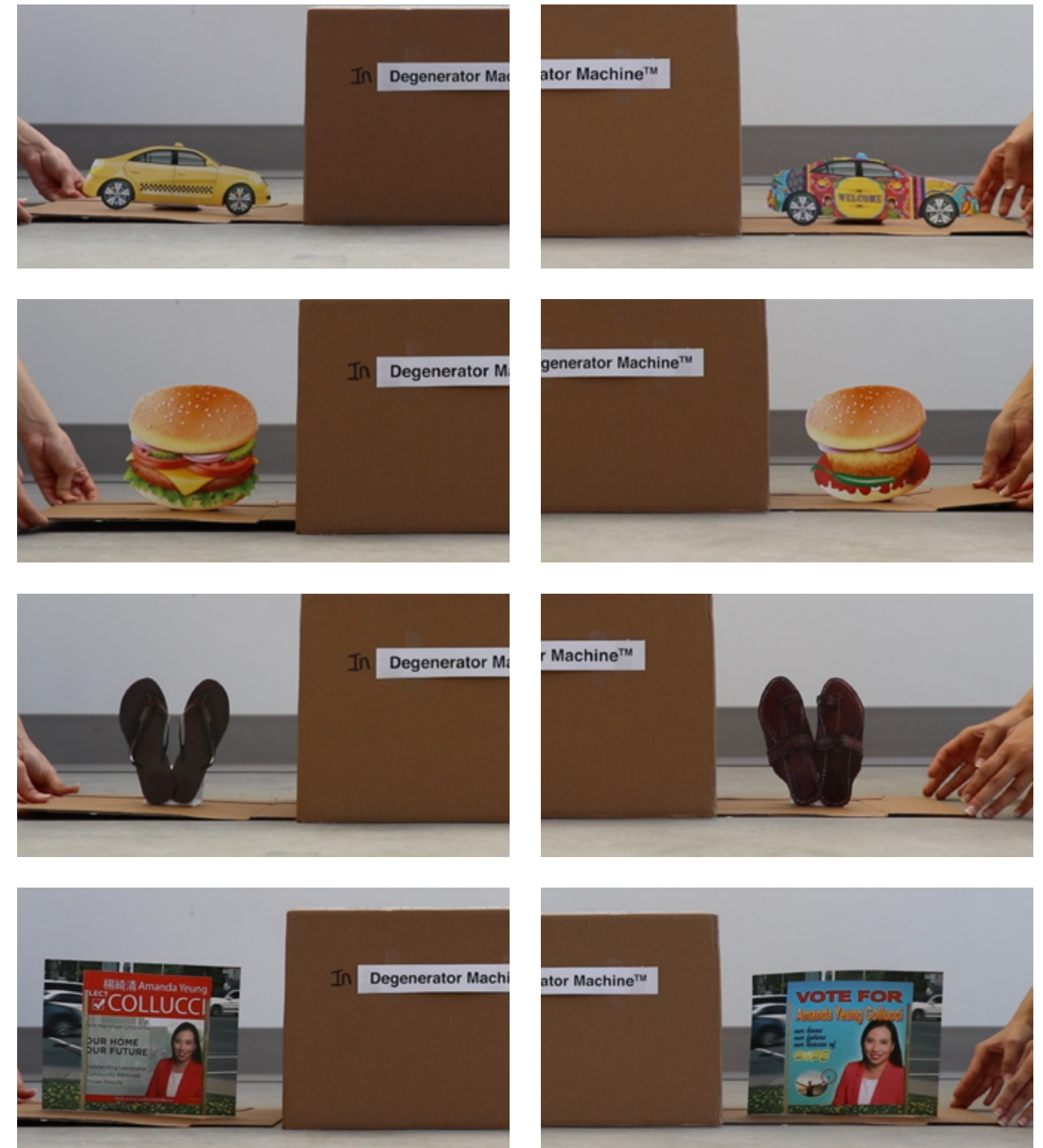
↑ Fig. 16
A New York City yellow cab gets Indian truck art visuals
A hamburger gets swapped for a *vada pav*
A pair of flip flops come out as *Kolhapuri* chappals
A political campaign poster adopts the Indian political poster aesthetic

Ahmedabad and its (colonial) *Old City*

Ahmedabad and its (colonial) *Old City*

Later, I followed my speculative exploration in the studio with a more pragmatic real-world scenario — a concentrated three-week studio project that focused on one brand (place, organisation, etc.) that is based in my hometown, Ahmedabad. I began by listing local brands that I had direct personal experience with. This included restaurants, crafts museum, textile brands, dairy packaging etc. I did not want my selection to be exclusively anecdotal, so I also employed methods such as analysis of images and secondary research to aid my design survey. At the same time, I was also thinking about the heritage of Ahmedabad and the rich 600-year-old architectural history of its old city centre that is vital to its local identity and continuity of place.

Pols in Ahmedabad's *Old City* are regarded as the city's 'living heritage' and one of the key reasons the city earned its UNESCO *World Heritage City* honour (**UNESCO World Heritage Centre**). As a visitor walking through Ahmedabad, it might be easy to miss the *pols* as they are well-integrated in the cityscape. *Pols* are enclosed residential clusters that can be entered by gates. They are made up of a network of small streets, side lanes, shrines and open community spaces with a *Chabutro* (Fig. 17), a birdhouse raised on a pole to feed birds in the neighbourhood. There are as many as 356 *pols* in the *Old City*, each with five to sixty houses and a population of thousands (**Patel**). "Ahmedabad city's planning in a hierarchy of living environment with street also as a community space is representative of the local wisdom and sense of strong community..." noted UNESCO. (Fig. 18, 19)
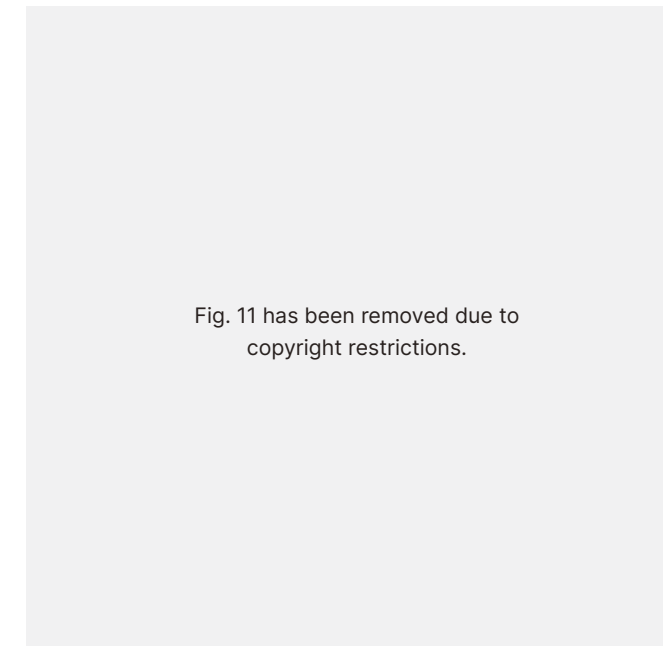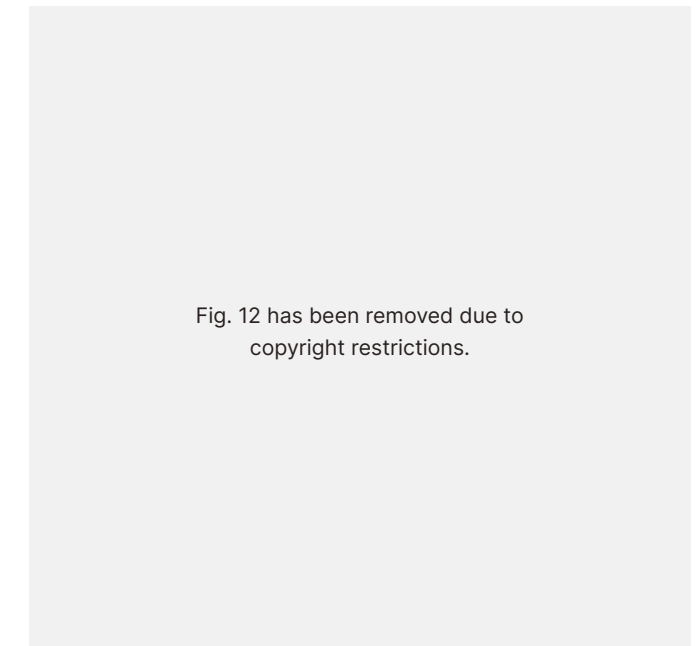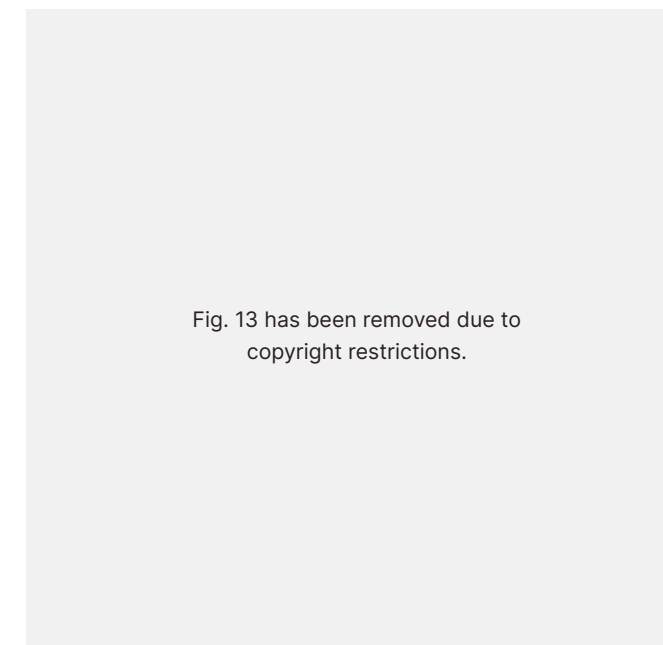
Fig. 17 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 18 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
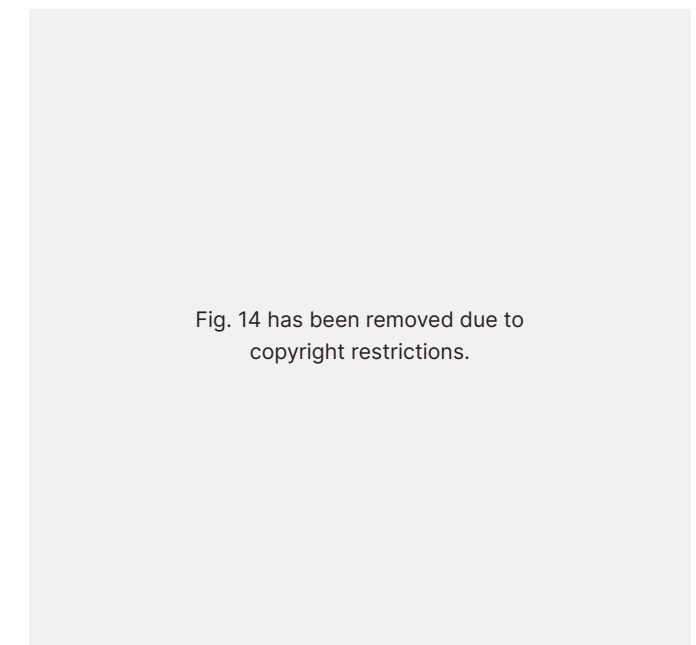
Fig. 19 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 17
A *Chabutro* is a bird feeder that locals constructed to replace the trees that were once cut down while building the city. Photograph by Amit Panchal

↑ Fig. 18
A woman looking out of her *pol* house window. Photograph by Sudhir Herle

← Fig. 19
A hand-painted advertisement for clothes repair in the *Old City*. Photograph by Jyotik Bhachech

Re-branding *The House of MG*

In the end, I chose *The House of MG*, a heritage hotel in the *Old City*. Growing up, I visited this hotel and its restaurants, The *Green House* and *Agashiye* numerous times. I have seen the city expand and change around The *House of MG* and recognized that despite this, the feel of the *Old City* and its buildings remain constant. The *Old City* is known for its centuries-old intricately carved wooden architecture and the neighbourhood settlements of *pols*.

The *House of MG* was built in 1924 as a home for *Sheth Mangaldas Girdharda*s, one of the city's foremost businessmen and philanthropists. It overlooks the *Sidi Sayed Mosque* (Fig. 80) that was built in 1572-73 AD. The *House of MG* was restored in the late 90s as a hotel. The aim was to reuse the spaces to cater to a modern lifestyle without losing either the historical perspective or the traditional customs of a *Gujarati* home. Just like the city of Ahmedabad, the hotel's architecture is a confluence of different styles — representing the colonial architecture of the early 20th century.

It was important for me to consider the cultural, traditional and historical significance of the hotel that had been beautifully represented through their actions. These experiences include receiving a rose when entering the property, eating a traditional *Gujarati* thali on the terrace, ending a meal with *paan*, walking through photographs of old *Mangaldas* family portraits, and so on. Simultaneously, you are also surrounded by other visual communication pieces such as the hotel's logo, takeaway menu, flyers with offers and deals on food packages, etc. It is evident that their visual communication on social media and across the hotel does not coincide with their philosophy (Fig. 20). For example, the logotype uses *Bombshell Pro*, a Western hand-calligraphy font — mostly seen in contemporary Western wedding invites. The overall visual language imitates a generic Western style and appears inconsistent with their experience touchpoints — which are typically local.

Fig. 20 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 21 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 22 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 23 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 24 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

← Fig. 20
Collection of T*he House of MG*'s existing brand identity

In addition to looking at photographs of *The House of MG*, I also referred to a few space design projects undertaken by *National Institute of Design* students **(Singh)**, *Old City* case study by UNESCO **(UNESCO World Heritage Centre)**, videos **(The House of MG, "History of The House of MG")**, TEDx talk about 'Redefining Heritage' by the hotel's owner **(Mangaldas)** and *Design in India: The Importance of the Ahmedabad Declaration* by S. Balaram **(54–79)**.

To move forward, I focused my visual references to the works of *Haku Shah* (Fig. 21)*, November* (Fig. 22)*, B.V. Doshi* (Fig. 23)*, Raw Mango* (Fig. 24)*,* etc. — Indian artists and designers who situate their practice as being traditionally Indian without using stereotypically ornate, saturated with vernacular visual elements.

↑ Fig. 21
Sakhi by Ahmedabad-based artist, Haku Shah (early 2000s)

↑ Fig. 23
Brand Identity for *Artists Unite*, an anti-fascist movement in New Delhi designed by *November* (2018)

↑ Fig. 22
LIC Housing in Ahmedabad, designed by city-based architect B.V. Doshi (1972)

↑ Fig. 24
Raw Mango, a contemporary Indian handwoven textiles brand based in New Delhi

When I was recollecting my experience at *The House of MG*, I couldn't help but remember the scent it held. The hotel is filled with an aroma of roses, a subtle yet intoxicating fragrance. In the photographs I found online I could spot roses everywhere — in a shallow bowl at the entrance, on top of a cloth napkin (Fig. 25), on a serving of thali, and on the wooden dining tables. One of the most wonderful experiences I have had at this hotel, and something it is renowned for, has been sitting outside on its terrace and eating their traditional *Gujarati thali*[1] (Fig. 26).

In hot, tropical cities like Ahmedabad, terraces are very common most homes. The temperature can almost reach 50°C during summers, so the warm, gentle breeze helps cool down the open space. Since terraces in the *Old City* are connected to one another, they turn into 'elevated' streets, with people jumping from one terrace to another.

[1] *Thali* is *Gujarati* for plate. It refers to an assortment of dishes arranged as a platter for lunch or dinner

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed is houseofmg.com/

Fig. 26 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 27 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 26
Thali served on the terrace of *Agashiye*

↑ Fig. 27
A flower vendor across the street, making garlands with roses and jasmine

↑ Fig. 25
A traditional *Gujarati* thali at *The House of MG*. Various *chutneys* are served on top of the *paan* leaf; while a rose is placed next to the plate

Exploration #1

With all of these things in mind, I began to create a graphic language. I wanted to evoke the layering (of chutneys) you find on the *paan* leaf (Fig. 25) and the tangibility of the flowers that are an inevitable part of the experience at The House of MG. I started by illustrating and composing these elements digitally and pulled on the earthy terracotta colour that is seen throughout the hotel.

↑ Fig. 28
Initial digital explorations to compose and layer these elements

After creating the first set of digital compositions, I felt as though they were *too refined* and *too clinical*. I wanted to translate the slight roughness of terracotta that seemed more organic than perfect. To do that, I hand traced these compositions and captured the *roughness* that was missing in earlier iterations (Fig. 29). I later observed that these flowers had an airy lightness to them; *you can almost blow on it*. It gave this visual language a spirited, dynamic quality — which I liked.

↑ Fig. 29
Second attempt to hand trace these compositions

↑ Fig. 30
Second attempt to hand trace these compositions

Then came the development of a logotype for *The House of MG*. A crucial detail that I was attentive to was the **use and representation of the regional script** (in this case, *Devanagari*[1]). In India, it is mandatory to translate any brand name (often in English) in the local, regional language. More often than not, this regional script of the brand is produced at a fraction the size of its Latin counterpart and placed in a corner. It is usually written in a default font[2] — treated as unimportant (Fig. 31).

Happily, Indian and international type foundries such as *Indian Type Foundry*, *White Crow* and *Typotheque* are creating typefaces and type families with the intention of "giving the same attention to Indian typography as Latin typography has received in the last few decades" **(Indian Type Foundry)** (Fig. 32). For my particular explorations for *The House of MG*, I chose *Fedra* by *Typotheque* as the English and Hindi logotype. The typeface attempts to reconcile two opposing design approaches: rigidity of a typeface designed for the computer screen and flexibility of handwriting. In turn, it humanises the communicated message and adds simple, informal elegance **(Typotheque)**.

[1] *Devanagari* is an abugida script used to write several Indian languages, mainly Sanskrit and Hindi

[2] A default font is the text styling that is usually used by a computer when a document is opened, such as *Arial* (Latin) and *Mangal* (*Devanagari*)

Fig. 31 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 32 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

← Fig. 31
Regional script on *Idea* storefront signs are a fraction of the size of its Latin counterpart and placed on the top right corner

← Fig. 32
Storefront signs for *Axis Bank* give equal importance to the regional and Latin script, with the former preceding the latter

Exploration #2
As another visual language exploration, I bought two stems of roses and scanned it on a flatbed scanner against a black background. The black background helped isolate and highlight the roses — creating a more dramatic effect. For the logotype, I reached out to *Indian Type Foundry* based in Ahmedabad and expressed my interest in using some of these regional typefaces for my studio projects. They replied immediately, saying that they were really excited to hear about the projects and offered me a free educational license **(Appendix 3)**. For this exploration, I chose another multi-lingual type family, *Quantum* as the logotype. In this scenario, the *Devanagari* script is more prominent than its Latin equivalent. The typeface is very wide, but the letterforms do not look too technical. Stroke endings are vertical, like in a humanist sans **(Indian Type Foundry)** (Fig. 33).

↓ Fig. 33
Overlaying the logotype on the scanned image

मंगळदास नी हवेली

The House of MG

As an extension of this visual language, I arranged other flowers in addition to roses that are found on the property of the hotel and throughout the city Ahmedabad: *Champa* (Fig. 34) and *Bougainville* (Fig. 35). As with my previous rose explorations, I placed these flowers in a similar radial symmetry that you find on the *thali* (Fig. 25).
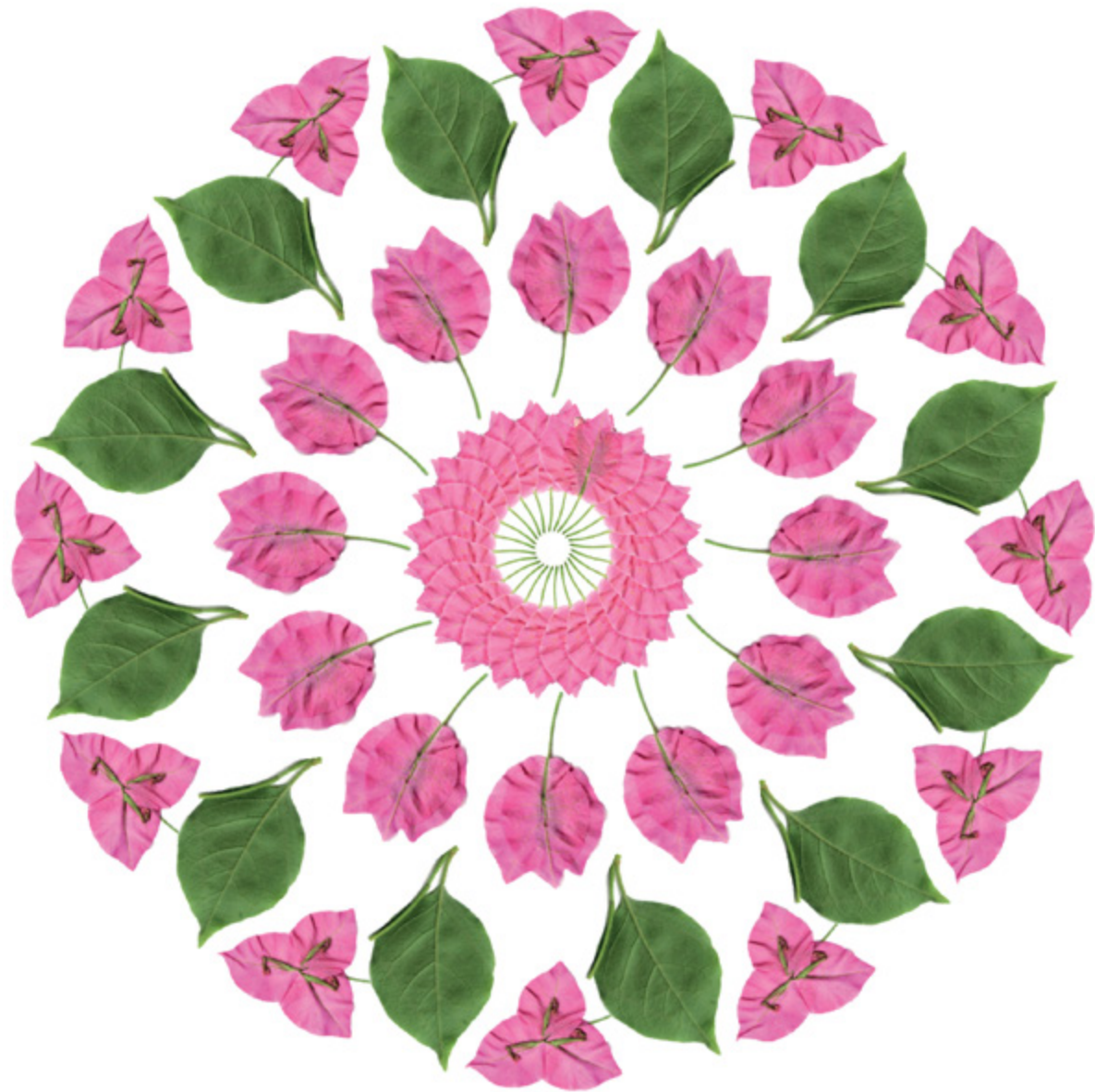
→ Fig. 34
Champa

← Fig. 35
Bougainville

Exploration #3

I thought about the speculative machine I had made earlier as a response to the baggage of colonial influences. As previously mentioned, the *House of MG*'s architecture is an amalgamation of many influences, including colonial ones. For instance, the hotel's ornamental facade is influenced by the Baroque style. As the owners' intention while renovating the property was to modernise the space, I wondered if I could also modernise a digital Baroque typeface. I chose *Regula* by *Storm Type* (Fig. 36), which was inspired by the historical model, including its inaccuracies and uneven letter edges. In its modernised version, I removed *Regula*'s uneven and soft edges and instead, opted for an uninterrupted and a more 'digitalised' constructed type structure while retaining its lively expression (Fig. 37).

My intention while working on the three separate visual explorations for *The House of MG* was not to resolve their existing branding but rather, to start looking at the *Old City*'s colonial heritage, hoping to find visual vernacular that is authentic to the place.

Through the process, I was interested to see how the *Old City*'s culture and heritage has influenced its visual landscape. While searching for this authenticity, my supervisor Dr Katherine Gillieson suggested looking at **pre-colonial material** such as older forms of print and book formats while paying close attention to ornamentation, painting style, colour palette and type hierarchy through script and colour.

The House of MG

↑ Fig. 36
Regula Medium by *Storm Type*

House of MG

↑ Fig. 37
Modernised *Regula*

Ahmedabad and its (pre-colonial) Communication Formats

Ahmedabad and its (pre-colonial) Communication Formats

In his book '*Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-Two Languages*,' A. K. Ramanujan shares that **"No selection can truly 'represent' the multiple and changing lives of Indian tales"** (3). Since the earliest Indian history is based on oral tradition and not the written word so, one has to depend on myths, legends and folktales to trace the oldest communication formats.

[1] *Old Gujarati* (1000 CE–1500 CE) is the ancestor of modern Gujarati and Rajasthani

With this in mind, I began to collect a series of resources which acted as **visual research**. The oldest printed publication formats in Gujarat date back to 12th century CE, when *Old Gujarati*[1] was used. I began to gather images of artefacts, translation of *Gujarati* folktales, documentaries of ancient Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscripts (**"India Unboxed: The Perfection of Wisdom,"** 00:10–03:50) (Fig. 38), book covers of prominent *Gujarati* literature (such as the first book printed in *Gujarati* (Fig. 39), the oldest newspaper in Asia (Fig. 40), the first *Gujarati* dictionary (Fig. 41), etc.) and some *Gujarati* children's books that my grandparents use to read to me (Fig. 42). While some were familiar, most of these references were new to me. **I was deeply aware that many of these only existed inside glass boxes in museums.**

Fig. 38 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 38
Instruction by Monks: Manuscript of *Siddhahaimashabdanushasana* by *Hemachandra* (1089-1172)

By placing these images together, I noticed a distinct visual style that existed at that time. *How could I attempt to revive these? How can these exist outside glass boxes? How can I make this accessible?*

I designed a website prototype that could adapt these print formats for reading in a digital age. I wanted to revive the visual vernacular by extracting visual components from these traditional formats and use them share the folktales (**Ramanujan, "The Boy Who Sold His Wisdom"** 240).

My process of searching for references for this project was quite challenging. There was not a single easy resource or piece of literature that I could refer to. Much like the gap in learning about vernacular design in Indian design schools, the history of Indian graphic design is not well documented. On the other hand, I noticed that architecture and craft-based forms are richly and thoroughly documented by archaeologists, historians and even Western designers. For instance, Ray and Charles Eames recorded everyday Indian objects like *lota* and *matka* during their travels to India in 1957 (**Eames and Eames 8**). S. Balaram, an industrial design faculty at *National Institute of Design* in Ahmedabad noted that there are "a vast number of such design-rich objects and communications for the (Indian) designer to research and learn from" (**20**).

Fig. 39 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 40 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 41 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 42 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 39
The first printed book, *Gujarati* translation of *Dabestan-e Mazaheb*. Prepared and printed by Fardunjee Marzban (1815)

↑ Fig. 40
The first page of *Bombay Samachar*'s first issue, the first *Gujarati* newspaper and the oldest in Asia. Founded by Fardunjee Marzban (1822)

↑ Fig. 41
The cover of the first volume of the first monolingual *Gujarati* dictionary, *Narmakosh* by Narmadashankar Dave (1861)

↑ Fig. 42
Bakor Patel, a *Gujarati* children's biweekly literature. **I grew up hearing these stories from my grandparents. They read these to my parents as well!** Written by Hariprasad Vyas (1936-1955)

Website Prototype

I started by analysing the oldest print format I could find — the manuscript of *Siddhahaimashabdanushasana* (Fig. 38).

I identified three key visual elements that made up these compositions: **typography, grids and borders, colour palette** (Fig. 43).

Grids

Since these manuscripts were hand-painted, the scribe often drew grids to set the type in place. As a result, most of the manuscripts have exposed grids and prominent borders as part of the page layout. I drew on this and used it to inform the wireframe I created for the website (Fig. 44).

Typography

For the text, I looked at Latin typefaces that had similar characteristics to the *Devanagari* script — as approached previously in *The House of MG* explorations **(Appendix 1)**.

I chose a *Devanagari* typeface that had high contrast in angular endings (to mimic the carefully calligraphic strokes) and was also easy to read digitally.

I chose *GT Super* type family by *Grilli Type*. For my titles, I used *GT Super Display* which has all the characteristics of a titling serif: tall x-height, short descenders, narrow shapes, short serifs, and very high contrast between thin and thick sections. *GT Super Text* is more restrained and focused on an even texture for long reading. I used this for the body text.

↑ Fig. 45
Landing Page

↑ Fig. 43
Extracing visual elements from the *Siddhahaimashabdanushasana* manuscript

↑ Fig. 44
The website's wireframe was constructed from the exposed grids and borders found in *Siddhahaimashabdanushasana*
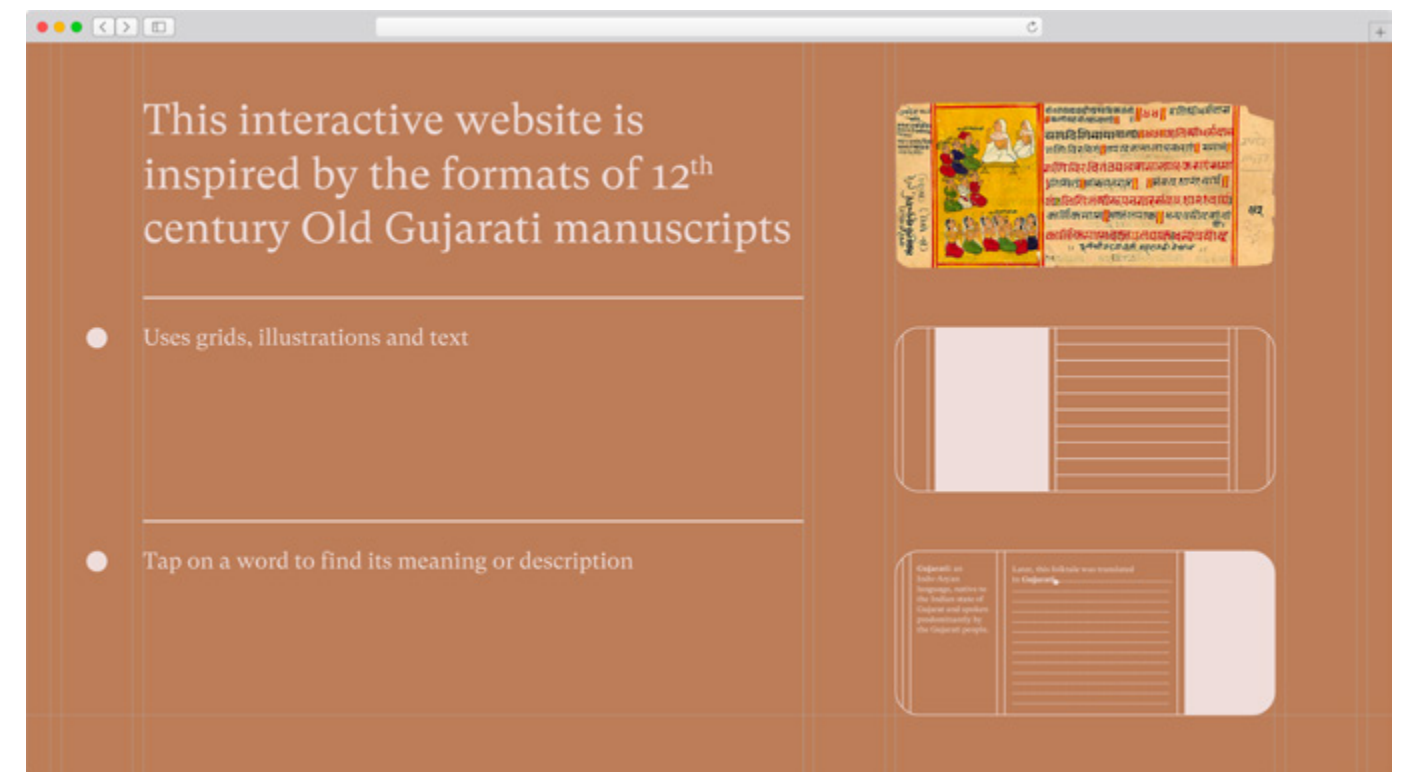
↑ Fig. 46
A section on how to navigate the website

↑ Fig. 47
Tap on a word to find its meaning or description
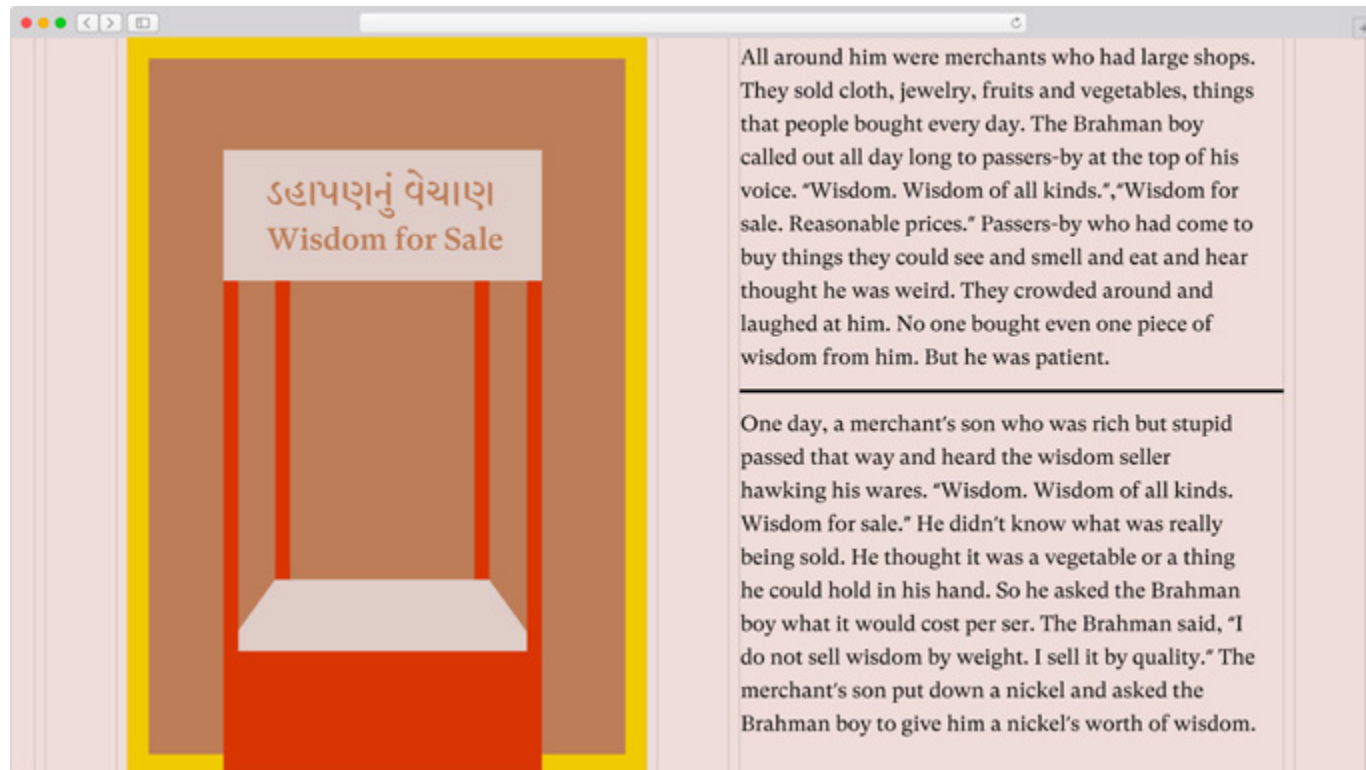
↑ Fig. 48
Using a modular grid system to lay text and illustration

This website prototype led me to start looking for **inspiration in the graphic past**. Working this way has convinced me that it is imperative to discuss examples of Indian graphic design not purely in regard to visual strategies but also in terms the historical context it sits within.

I have come to understand that **recording such knowledge in a tangible form is essential** — a preliminary step for approaching design projects. Since most Indian traditions are living, what needs to follow the documentation is the application of traditional knowledge into contemporary design situations.

Looking back, my lack of knowledge and training about India's graphic past in my undergraduate years has strongly affected the way I approach Indian graphic design. It can feel alienating if we were only encouraged to transplant from one culture to another where the original contexts might not apply. Hence, it is important to study one's own culture, understand its context (historical, geographic, socio-politico-economic) if one were to design in response or in relation to a place.

Amsterdam and its Heritage Markers

Amsterdam and its Heritage Markers

Still unable to find answers to Ahmedabad's *authentic* visual graphic, I took a break in the summer of 2019 and went to The Netherlands. I had been given the opportunity to work as a Teaching Assistant on a Communication Design undergraduate course in Amsterdam. The focus of the course was to expose students to new design cultures and provide them with insights into the workings of commercial design agencies. Aware that Dutch design is known for its distinctive contemporary forms and functionality, I looked forward to seeing how these design agencies approached contemporary place-specific branding that was situated in Amsterdam, which — like Ahmedabad — is also a UNESCO World Heritage City.

We visited two branding agencies, *Studio Dumbar* and *KesselsKramer*, who shared their branding case studies for *Dutch National Polic*e and *I Amsterdam* respectively. **How could I take what I learnt from these projects and hopefully see if can apply to Ahmedabad as well**?

Shortly after arriving, I started to notice recurring symbols on the streets of Amsterdam. 'XXX' symbols were everywhere — on buildings, street poles, graffiti, on the pavement (Fig. 49). Initially, I associated this symbol to a common stereotype connected to the city — its connection with sex tourism. I later discovered that the triple X symbol has nothing to do with its adult entertainment industry but rather, everything to do with its cultural heritage.
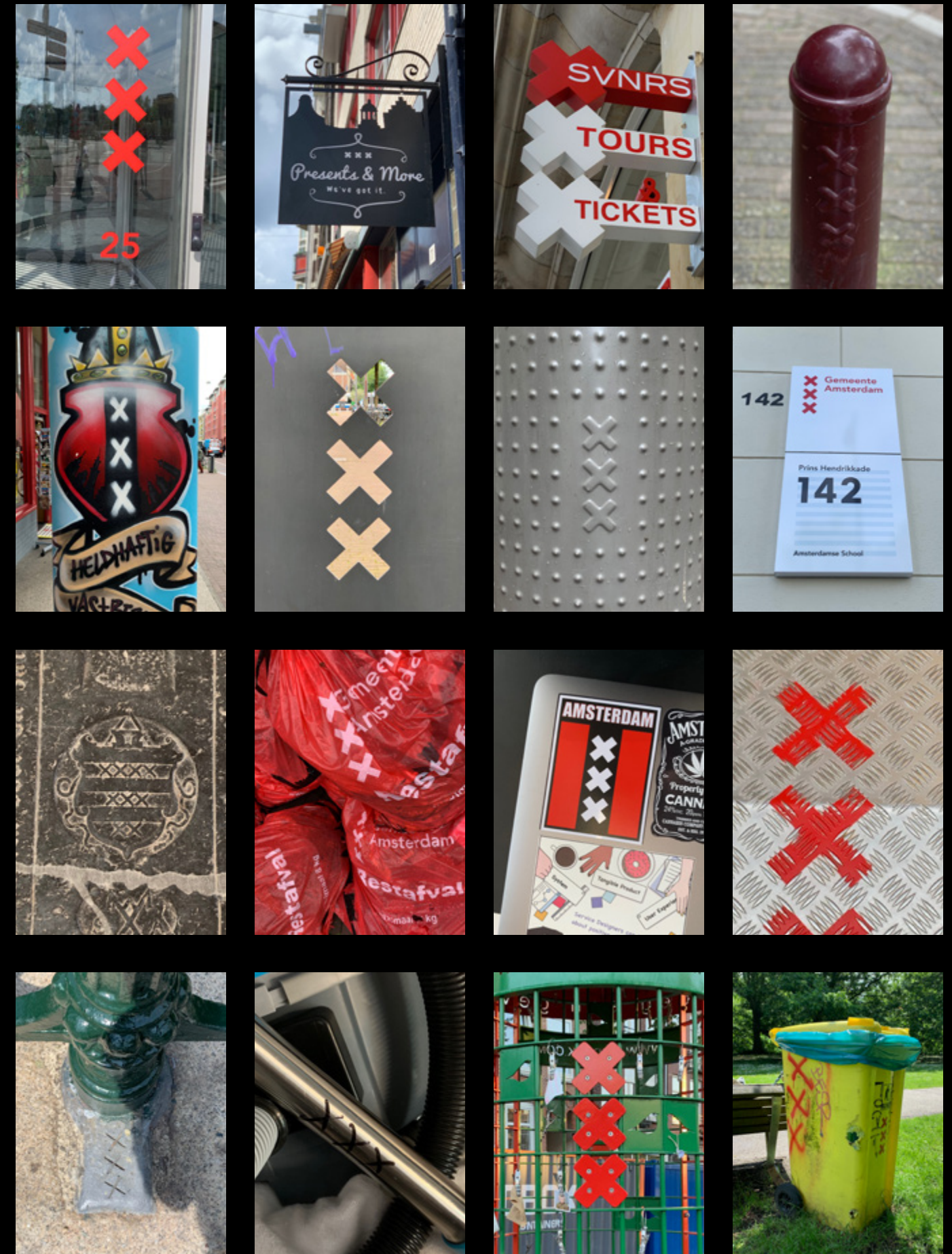
→ Fig. 49
Photo documentation of triple X symbols I spotted in Amsterdam

The triple X symbol is derived from Saint Andrew's Crosses. It is the official symbol of the city ("Decoding Amsterdam and City Symbols"). **What stood out to me was how a heritage marker had been widely adopted by locals and also chosen as the brand identity for the City of Amsterdam, yet it often goes unnoticed by visitors.**

When *Edenspiekermann*, a global creative agency rebranded the City of Amsterdam, they were severely criticised for charging the municipality €100,000 for "very little change" **(NOS)** (Fig. 50). They later explained that it wasn't just a logo they developed but also an extensive visual identity system with new applications, grids and guidelines **(Dijk)**. This reminded me of the questions I was asked while I worked at Landor, a global branding agency...*What do you do? Do people really pay that much money for design?* Just as the response Edenspiekermann received, when I replied using the term branding, I generally and inevitably got the response, **"Oh, so you make logos"**. There is a common perception that brand = logo and those words tend to be used interchangeably.[1]

Another symbol more commonly associated with Amsterdam than the XXX is the **I Amsterdam** letters, part of the city's marketing campaign, which aimed to "celebrate Amsterdam's citizens in all their diversity" **(KesselsKramer)**. The phrase "I am Amsterdam", designed by *KesselsKramer* was initially intended as a symbol of inclusion. These large scale climbable red and white letters were placed outside *Rijksmuseum* and gathered a lot of attention from tourists — eventually becoming an overcrowded selfie-spot (Fig. 51). While this was appealing to outsiders, for the locals, it became a symbol of mass tourism that "made them feel as if they were living and working in an attraction park". To reverse this, officials decided to remove the sign in 2018 **(Dickinson)**.

Fig. 50 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 50
Left to Right: Before and After of City of Amsterdam's rebranding exercise. The new identity has been designed by *Edenspiekermann* (2014)

In my opinion, the branding for *City of Amsterdam* is an incredible example of a well-embedded city branding. The logo effectively communicates the heritage of the city (i.e. Amsterdam's coat of arms that is connected to the heraldic system in Europe) and is a part of larger, consistent visual identity system. The residents have adopted this symbol in their own way (from tattoos to graffiti to local business logos) and truly made it their own.

As a response to this frequent XXX sighting, I designed a mini publication containing photographs of garbage bags, Oude Kerk[1], tourist shops, etc. along with a comparative analysis of the two separate brand identities of the city (i.e. XXX and I Amsterdam) (Fig. 52, 53) and a reflection on the general perception of branding as a case of just "making logos" (criticism received for City of Amsterdam re-branding).

Tourist postcards inspired the format of my publication. Since the XXX symbols are hidden and spread across the city, I placed them inside an envelope and then covered them in black paint (Fig. 54) — enabling the user to only be able to find the symbols if they made a move to scratch the black paint off (Fig. 55). The colours that I used were inspired by The Netherland's national colour, orange. *Avenir*, the official typeface that I employed is used for both of the brand identities of Amsterdam that I described earlier.

For me, taking on this mini publication was a great case study — a means to consider how elements of a city's graphic past — such as a heritage marker — can be used as inspiration for contemporary brand identity application. ***Could there be such markers that exist in Ahmedabad? Symbols that were inspired by its heritage? Markers that were hiding in plain sight?***

Fig. 51 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

← Fig. 51
I Amsterdam sign outside Rijksmuseum (2018)

↑ Fig. 52
City of Amsterdam identity, inspired by Saint
Andrew's Crosses by *Edenspiekermann*

↑ Fig. 54
'XXX' in the photographs can be revealed once
they are scratched off

↑ Fig. 53
I Amsterdam identity by *KesselsKramer*

↑ Fig. 55
'XXX' in the photographs can be revealed once
they are scratched off

Ahmedabad and its Heritage Markers

Ahmedabad and its Heritage Markers

With these thoughts, I turned to my recollections of the city I grew up in. I quickly realised I would need some assistance. As I was not in Ahmedabad, and there was limited documentation of the city's visual culture available online, I had to rely on my memories of the place.

I had to remember road signs, storefronts, where the *autorickshaws* are parked and what neighbourhoods look like with people going about their daily routines. Luckily, my Dad and Sister offered to help out. Now and then, in their every day going about the city, they began to click photographs for me. When we spoke via FaceTime, they helped clarify the scenarios I recollected.

I was trying to identify visual vernacular that is not stereotypical to India, such as hand-lettered type or truck art. As wonderfully executed as they are, there is a dearth of other documented examples.

Mosaic Benches

One of the scenarios I remember from growing up was sitting on mosaic benches in the park that my Mom took me and my Sister (Fig. 56). These benches are made by repurposing large discarded tiles. Hence, they are a mish-mash of different colours, patterns and sizes. Smaller tiles are used to set the bright, striking type — indicating the name of the persons who donated these park benches — making each bench visually distinct (Fig. 57).

Inspired by these mosaic benches, I created a bilingual (English and *Gujarati*) character typeset (Fig. 58). Since I did not have any experience in designing typefaces, I reached back to the *Indian Type Foundry* to make a second request — this time to use their multi-script type family, *Akhand* as a structure.

← Fig. 56
A mosaic park bench in Law Garden that my Mom used to take me and my Sister while growing up

↑ Fig. 57
Mosaic benches are everywhere in the Ahmedabad and often are donated by religious institutes and persons

The process of replicating the uneven edges of the broken mosaic tiles into a new character set, while ensuring that the alphabet was recognisable, was laborious. I went through several rounds of iterations, gradually fine-tuning the details such as the gap between each tile, the proportion of tiles, etc. Looking back, eight months later, I notice tiny features that seem off, such as the heaviness of my *M*'s middle stroke. Yet, the process of using the benches as an inspiration and a way to explore the city's visual vernacular was quite rewarding.

Feedback

Later, in Fall 2019, I presented this work as a part of my *Summer In Review* Presentation. I received varied and divergent feedback. Jon Hannan, Assistant Professor of Communication Design at ECUAD, suggested that I check out generative typography[1] as a way to overhaul the complexity of tiles. Some of my Design peers thought that the character set I had developed was *too clean* and did not embody the roughness of the broken tiles I was emulating. My supervisor Dr Gillieson, Associate Professor of Communication Design at ECUAD, felt that I needed to "claim it, modernise it and make it accessible". This feedback resonated in different ways:

Jon Hannan's comment made me think about designing a **flexible identity system** to capture multiple aspects of Ahmedabad through branding; my peers observations made me realise that I didn't want my work to sit inside a glass box; Katherine's remark made me wonder about the role of a designer in service of society rather than to just solve problems. As I made my way through these views, I came to feel that **accessibility**[2] (also seen in the adoption of triple X symbols by locals in Amsterdam) was important to me because it provides an emotional connection between the city and its residents. It welcomes stakeholders[3] into the dialogue to communicate the shared lived experiences of the city.

[1] **Generative type** allows one to create multiple, varying versions based on a single font. For instance, by using a set of algorithms or rules, these mosaic tiles can grow thicker or thinner, transform from readable to abstract and present other variable manipulations

[2] By *accessibility*, I mean the quality of being easy to obtain or use. Explored further in *'Ahmedabad and its Windows'*

[3] Stakeholders include residents, visitors, municipal bodies, local businesses, etc.

↑ Fig. 58
Bilingual character type set inspired by the city's mosaic benches

Designing for a complex world

Contemporary society is varied and fluid — a complex world with many realities and cultures **(Escobar)**. The role of a designer designing in this context can be limited if understood as a "business-as-usual" practice in support of object-centric markets driven by experienced experts in a first-world, globalised and capitalist agendas. In *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*, Arturo Escobar expresses the potential power of design as a "medium in the service of society rather than solution-making expertise in the service of industry". According to Escobar, designers can create and inculcate a participatory, open-ended practice that is rooted in specific places and communities.

> The notion of oww [One-World World] signals the predominant idea in the West that we all live within a single world, made up of one underlying reality (one nature) and many cultures. This imperialistic notion supposes the West's ability to arrogate for itself the right to be 'the world,' and to subject all other worlds to its rules, to diminish them to secondary status or to nonexistence, often figuratively and materially. It is a very seductive notion...**(Escobar, 86)**

Through my specific studio projects, I was hoping to find means to create a **visual toolkit** that would help me brand the city of Ahmedabad and move beyond the *OWW* perspective Escobar and others **(Frisk and Middelkoop)(Balaram)** identify as problematic. I wanted to allow myself to be inspired by the visual culture that surrounded me in Ahmedabad — to reference and celebrate that.

As a starting point, and means to inform my work, I began to seek out examples of the vernacular. It dawned on me that the lack of documentation of these examples found in the everyday context of India might be why it is not understood as *design*. For instance, anything seen on the street is usually termed as "vernacular design" and is generally considered "low" (street posters, mosaic benches, murals, regional magazines). The vernacular just exists — with no paper trail in existence. On the other hand, graphic work that is created in a corporate office using software and documented considerably is considered as *design*. Being surrounded by India's rich vernacular while growing up has played a considerable role in the way I approached the visual design. I am fairly sure I am not alone **(Vansadia)**. ***So, instead of thinking of the city as the starting point for branding a city, what if I thought about this task of designing for a city in terms of the personal lived experience of a designer?***

Ahmedabad and its Existing City Branding

Ahmedabad and its Existing City Branding

In 2017, UNESCO declared Ahmedabad as a *World Heritage City*, making it India's first heritage city. As a way to promote Ahmedabad's historical identity, the local municipality initiated *Ahmedabad Heritage Walk*, a small-group guided tour through the *Old City*. The 3-hour tour takes you through the narrow bylanes, winding *pols* and historical landmarks such as *Jama Masjid* and *Rani no Hajiro*. The guide points to the *pols*, windows with intricate stone and wood carvings, *cabutaro*, havelis while explaining its socio-cultural and architectural significance. I have found this to be an incredible way to explore the 15th-19th century heritage of the *Old City*.

Heritage Week festivals such as *Dhal ni Pol*, part of *a* project undertaken by Ahmedabad-based *Brihati Foundation*, aim at encouraging the city's youth to explore the *pols* while collaborating with the locals (Fig. 59). They have created greater interaction in the community by hosting wall painting workshops, dance performances, film screenings in the neighbourhood. These local community initiatives have helped create awareness about the need to conserve *pols* while having a positive social influence.

Fig. 59 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 59 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

← Fig. 59
Pols decorated as part of the *Heritage Week*

↑ Fig. 60
Heritage plaque outside a *pol* house in the *Old City*, Ahmedabad

Other municipality-initiated measures like the installation of heritage plaques (Fig. 60) outside havelis have not been as successful. These plaques were unable to identify heritage properties in the *Old City* or convey any information about buildings, without the help of a tourist guide (**Raval**). In addition to using these plaques as a solution to identify heritage sites, the city also used them to address another issue – to help mark "compromised" properties that had been identified in a recent survey (**John, "Ahmedabad Loses Heritage Treasures"**). The primary goal of these plaques was to make the heritage buildings easily identifiable. There was also an expectation that it would act as a symbol of pride for the homeowners (**John, "Blue Plaques No Angel Guard for Ahmedabad's Heritage"**).

Traditionally, site-specific plaques around the world are used to celebrate the heritage of a specific site by listing the year a building was built, who contributed to its construction, if the property is commercial or residential and, finally, identifying prominent structural and architectural elements. In the case of Ahmedabad, however, the plaques only list a grade level[1] and a survey number (Fig. 61). At first glance, this information appears as a line of random numbers on a blue coloured stainless-steel disc. As such, these plaques that were designed to communicate the relevance of the property's heritage to its people and visitors can only be understood by town planners and surveyors.

[1] Grade level refers to the grading of heritage buildings. There are three grade levels (Grade 1, 2A, 2B and 3) depending on the buildings' architectural significance

More alarmingly, for a community that was once colonised by the British, these plaques bare an uncanny resemblance to blue bauble plaques used to de-mark significant sites of *English Heritage* in the United Kingdom (Fig. 62). Features of Ahmedabad's heritage plaques including colour, shape, type hierarchy, type and logo placement, all seem to be imitating the British precedent — a poorly made counterfeit at best. Considering Britain's historical relationship with the area and role in exploiting India's resources (Tharoor), Ahmedabad's civic body's decision to base the design of its heritage plaques on ones used by their past colonial rulers' seems highly irresponsible.

↓ Fig. 61
Ahmedabad's heritage plaque

↓ Fig. 62
English Heritage's blue bauble heritage plaque

Fig. 62 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

In another attempt to brand the city's heritage, the authorities renovated the local airport. The intention was to introduce travellers to local heritage sites. While good in intention, in reality, the images failed to adequately depict the rich heritage of the city (Fig. 64-66). A local newspaper made a note of local resources and capacity such as *National Institute of Design* and wrote, "our airport fails miserably in terms of aesthetics, which is ironic, considering that it has at its disposal a pool of talent in the form of students and experts from some of the finest institutes of the country." **(Ajay)**

↑ Fig. 63
Google image research result for *Indian Design*

More often than not, work produced in India fails to have an identity of its own beyond those demarcated by popular stereotypes. The term *Indian Design* is frequently linked to notions of functionless aesthetic supplements and cheap quality. A quick Google image search for *Indian Design* brings up an endless catalogue of *mehndi* and *mandala* patterns where ornamentation and intricacy seem to be key elements (Fig. 63).

↑ Fig. 64
Photographs of *Adalaj Ni Vav*
at the airport's Baggage Claim
area

↑ Fig. 65
A mish-mash of (stereotypical)
icons and visual styles at the
Ahmedabad airport

↓ Fig. 66
Ahmedabad's landscape
represented through vector
clip art near the Departure
Gate area

Existing Brand Identities in Ahmedabad

In its official logo, Ahmedabad positions itself as a *World Heritage City* (Fig. 67). This logo features a *Chabutro*, a prominent structure that is placed in the centre of small community spaces in Ahmedabad. The open window structure of *chabutro* provide a space for birds to make their nests, eat and rest during hot sunny days. Meanwhile, the base of the structure acts as a gathering place for locals and a playing area for children. This key feature of the city's built environment is also used as a symbol for *Ahmedabad Heritage Walks*. The city's current brand identity, which is limited to one logo based on the *chabutros* and does not include an extensive or cohesive visual identity system misses an important opportunity. Elements such as tone of voice, photography, grids, print design, cultural artefacts, etc. which help brands communicate their story and engage people in a familiar and meaningful way are missed.

Added to this logo specific aspect of the built environment, Ahmedabad's diverse architectural heritage has informed other city-based brand identities, including *Indian Institute of Management* (IIM-A) which draws on *Sidi Saiyyed ni Jali* (Fig. 80) while *Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation* (AMC) and *Ahmedabad Design Festival* (2020) uses *Teen Darwaza* as an inspiration.
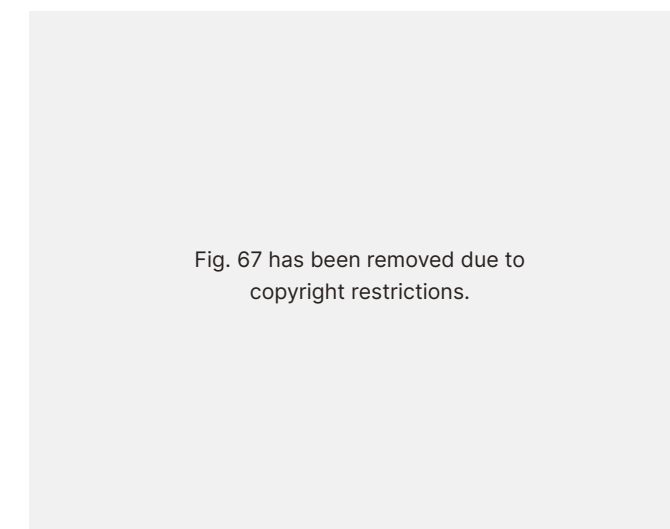
Fig. 67 has been removed due to
copyright restrictions.

← Fig. 67
Official logo for the city of
Ahmedabad

अतुल्य !भारत
Incredible !India

RAJASTHAN
JAANE KYA DIKH JAAYE!

Vibrant
GUJARAT
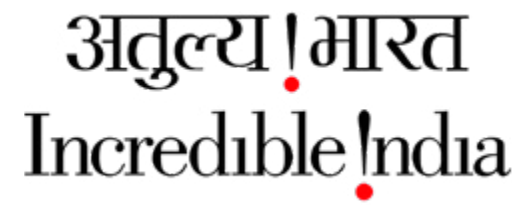
kerala
God's Own Country

RAJASTHAN

GUJARAT

KERALA

In the broader context, Ahmedabad is considered as a sub-brand of the overarching *Vibrant Gujarat* identity. In contrast to the city-specific campaign used in Gujarat, the state of Rajasthan, uses a different state-wide branding campaign that is arguably more successful (Fig. 69). *Ogilvy*, an advertising agency responsible for the Rajasthan branding, is able to successfully present the abundant and diverse of scenic landscapes in that state by drawing from its geographic and cultural distinction. Photographs depict stories shared by visitors mentioning, "Rajasthan looks different through the eyes of different travellers. Through the eyes of *Arya*, it becomes *Aryasthan*. Through the eyes of *Meera*, it becomes *Meerasthan*...It is not about what Rajasthan has to offer but how you perceive it." (**"Ogilvy Presents Rajasthan through the Eyes of Travellers"**)

World
Heritage
city

AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

IIM
AHMEDABAD

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

AHMEDABAD
HERITAGE WALK

HERITAGE

ADF
AHMEDABAD
DESIGN FEST

INSTITUTES AND
FESTIVALS

Fig. 69 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 69 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
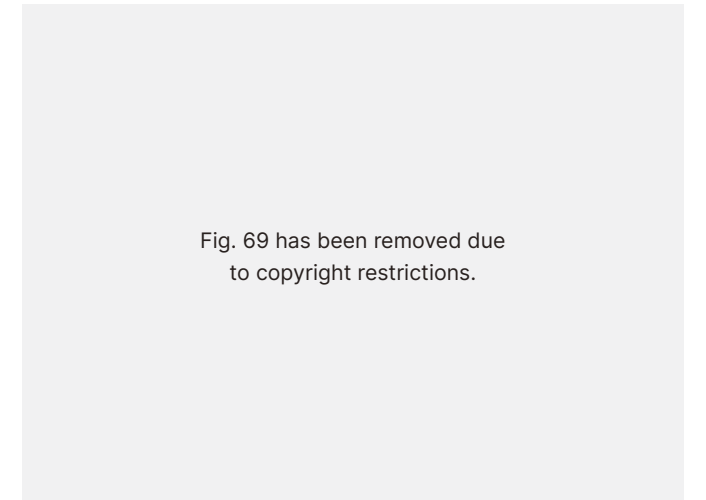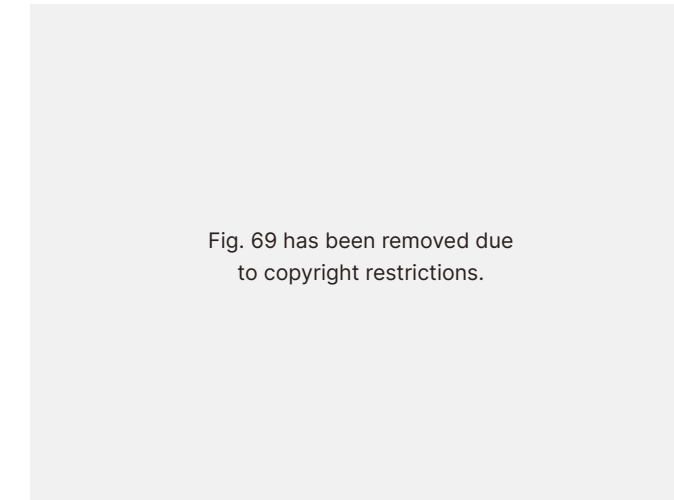
↑ Fig. 69
Rajasthan tourism campaign
by *Ogilvy* (2016), showcasing
the city of Jodhpur

↑ Fig. 68
Mapping out India's brand architecture

Why does a city need to be branded?

A city, just as a brand, is not a building, neighbourhood, river, or another physical site. It is the set of associations that people hold about the place. Some cities have had their identities develop organically, for example, Paris is considered the 'city of love', while New York City is known as the 'Big Apple' or 'city that never sleeps'. The city's culture, character, reputation and communal essence is what represents its unique value and identity. It can also be seen as an instrument to communicate the city's uniqueness to its residents and visitors. For example, Rajasthan's brand identity plays on its geographic and cultural distinction — with two camels and birds (facing different directions) that make up a *v* man's face, complete with the signature handlebar moustache that one might find men sporting in the state (Fig. 70).

A city's brand identity needs to be looked like one part of a broader strategy to represent the city's image. A new logo probably won't alter a city, unless it's a part of a bigger initiative to address the city's challenges and opportunities. **(Dvornechuck)**

For Ahmedabad, its intangible cultural heritage (folklore, customs, beliefs, traditions, language) has helped inform its tangible cultural heritage (architecture, regional magazines, mosaic benches, murals). In recent years, locals and non-government organisations have collaborated with city authorities to take positive steps towards the conservation of cultural heritage. There have also been numerous efforts by the municipality to represent the heritage of Ahmedabad through branding.

However, it lacks an extensive or cohesive visual identity system — visuals at the airport look different from the heritage plaques. As illustrated through the case of Rajasthan's branding, having a consistent visual identity system would help establish a distinct identity of the place in the stakeholders' minds.
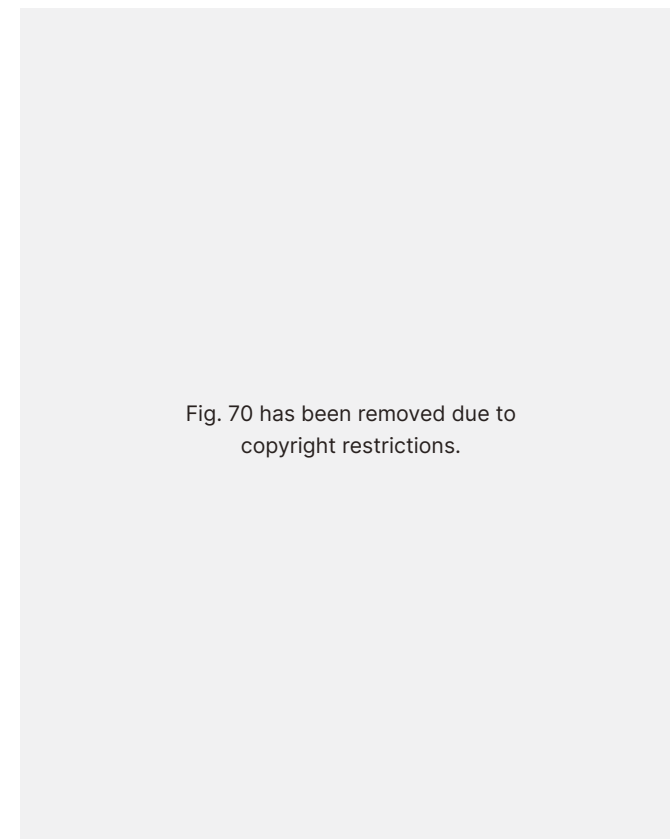
Fig. 70 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 70
Left to Right: Rajasthani man; Logo for Rajasthan, designed by Ogilvy (2016) that plays on its geographic and cultural distinction

Ahmedabad and its (post-colonial) Modern Architecture

Ahmedabad and its (post-colonial) Modern Architecture

Designing for a Post-Independent India

...at the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes, but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance...

Tryst with Destiny was a speech delivered by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, on the eve of India's Independence (1947)

In 1947, when India gained independence, the first thought was to get out of the colonial mindset. The nation had a "tryst with destiny", reimagining itself without the burden of colonialism. The arrival of modernity brought with it new ideas of regeneration and self-identity. In search of answers, the nation turned towards design — as a catalyst for change, newness, and creativity for its citizens. This was particularly notable in the domain of architecture.

Post-independence, India's nation-building exercise involved new institutes such as *National Institute of Design*, *Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology* (CEPT) (Fig. 73) and *Indian Institute of Management* (IIM-A) (Fig. 71). As a thriving mercantile centre and an important place in the freedom struggle[1], Ahmedabad had an obvious advantage in building such institutions.

Fig. 71 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 71
Indian Institute of Management (IIM-A) designed by Louis Kahn (1974)

Farsighted stalwarts of the Ahmedabad mercantile families recognized the need to repurpose the architectural identity of the city for more modern and futuristic institutions and availed the services of international architects like Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn along with Doshi, Charles Correa and others. They were able to capture the essence of longstanding regional architectural styles while providing a more modern outlook. The goal was not simply to emulate the West or adopt its modernist styles and designs.

For instance, exposed brick structures conveyed the warmth of the earth and subdued the glare of the harsh tropical sun. Examples of this work can be seen in the following buildings: *Ahmedabad Textile Mill Owner's Association* (ATMA) designed by Corbusier along with Doshi; *Indian Institute of Management* (IIM-A) building by Kahn; *Amdavad ni Gufa* (Fig. 81), *Premabhai Hall*, *LIC Housing* and *CEPT University* by Doshi.

I took my first steps into studies in the arts at the *Kanoria Centre for Arts* (Fig. 72) when I was 9 years old. The beauty of the wonderful structures that make this centre — that look outwards rather than inwards — are etched in my memory. **To me, Ahmedabad's heritage also includes these great modern buildings that, arguably helped entire generations connect to the essence of the city.**

Reflecting on my personal experiences, I realise how significant they are. These institution-building ideas and experiments need, to be captured as much as the *chabutros* in the branding of Ahmedabad as a city.

↓ Fig. 72
Kanoria Centre for Arts designed by Doshi (1984), where I took a 2-year Children's Arts class when I was 9

Fig. 72 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
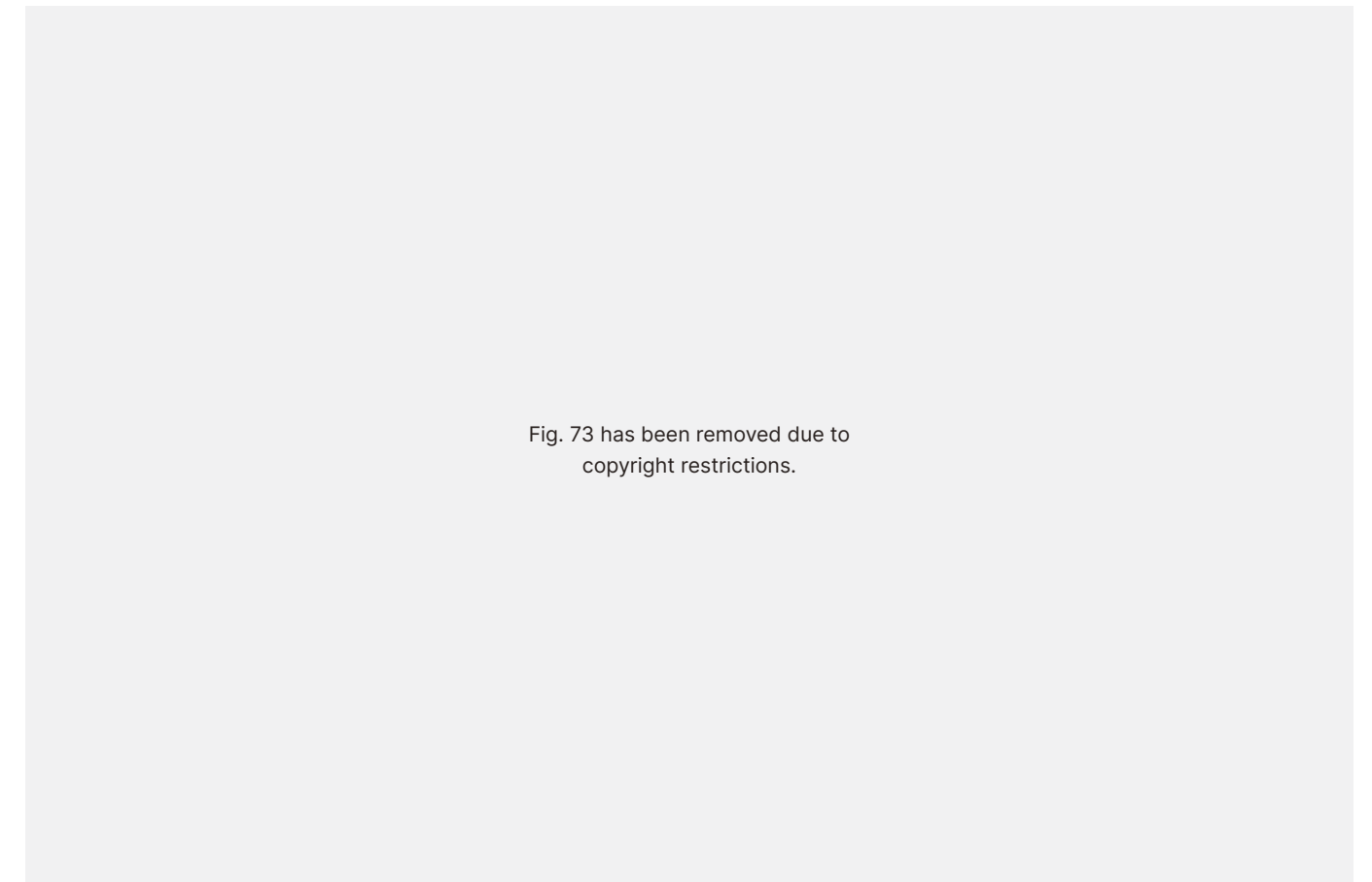
Fig. 73 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 73
Wide and open windows at *CEPT University*, designed by B.V. Doshi (1962)

Ahmedabad has seen a myriad of architectural developments, but the ones that have always stood out for me are the works of Doshi. Doshi is an Ahmedabad-based architect and a mentee of the modernist architect Corbusier, whose work represents the Indian realities, traditions and contexts — in consideration of ethics, religion, society, environment and climate. He draws from the rich traditions of Indian architecture such as the open courtyards, terraces and intricate jalis, and reinterpreted these elements for modern Indian realities. For instance, windows in *CEPT University* are wider, open and less ornate compared to *jalis*, as a way to welcome natural light and airflow into the building and eventually, cut the electricity cost by half (Fig. 73).

Studio Explorations for ATMA House

I grew up close to the ATMA House, designed by Corbusier and Doshi. Walking under the scorching tropical sun, one just needs to enter the cooler interiors of the building (or any other traditionally designed house) to fully understand the effect of airflow that passes from strategically placed fenestrations (Fig. 74).

These open fenestrations blur the notion of inside v/s outside and reflect a common Indian ideology of **inviting openness** — "open to receive anyone who comes in, whether it is people or birds" **(Doshi, 16:43–16:47)**.

Drawing on the aspects of history and personal experience with the city's build environment that I describe above, I decided to draw on ATMA House for a preliminary exploratory exercise as a speculative brand identity pertinent to Ahmedabad. My intent, in this specific brand identity design exercise, was to reflect the Indian values of openness that Doshi and Corbusier drew on, and play with the visual language that makes up ATMA House's distinct structural form. My design outcomes included publications (Fig. 75) and visual language and typography explorations (Fig. 76).

↓ Fig. 75
Accordion-fold mini publication with hand-cut openings to mimic the light and shadow play seen in the open fenestrations

↓ Fig. 74
Play of light and shadow
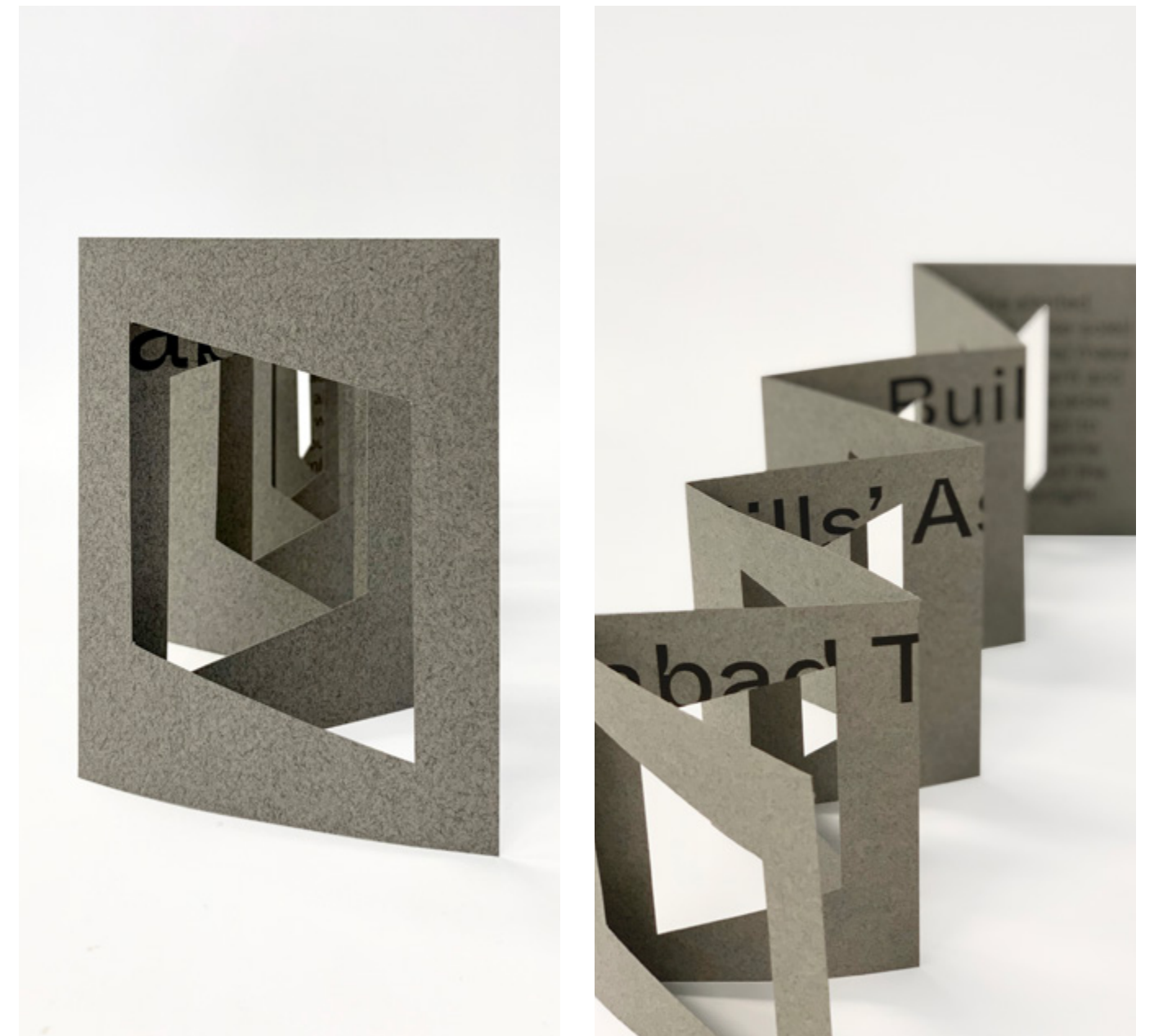
Inspired by the inviting open fenestrations and its shadow play, I directed the identity system around these perspective frames. I perceived each opening as a separate frame or viewfinder. When the sunlight hits the building, it casts shadows on these sun breakers at different angles, making them appear as if in perspective. I wanted to draw deliberate attention to these features.

To do so, I chose a long accordion-fold format for the mini publication, with hand-cut openings. I used a typeface: *Whyte Inktrap*, whose deep cuts at the joints resemble the sharp, angular windows of the building structure I was drawing inspiration from.

In a similar fashion, the logotype I developed uses an orthogonal grid; a means to speak to its Brutalist structure. This approach helps the viewer identify with one distinct visual element of the building. There are, of course, many such elements to the building (stairs, windows, lush greenery, intricate patterns) that can be used to visually capture the essence of its architecture (Fig. 77). In the limited context of drawing on one building for a visual branding strategy, my approach was to dissect the building to each of its different components and showcase them in their relationship to the whole.

As I worked through the exercise, I was conscious of how this might be scaled up to address the larger broader scope of city branding. I surmised that a similar approach of highlighting one component of the city and visually representing its relation to the whole might be applicable. I began to consider what it would mean to visually brand the city of Ahmedabad drawing on several of its essential components, as a means to acknowledge the plural nature of a place and appeal differently to different stakeholders.

↓ Fig. 76
Left to Right: My design outcomes for the ATMA logotype and publication design
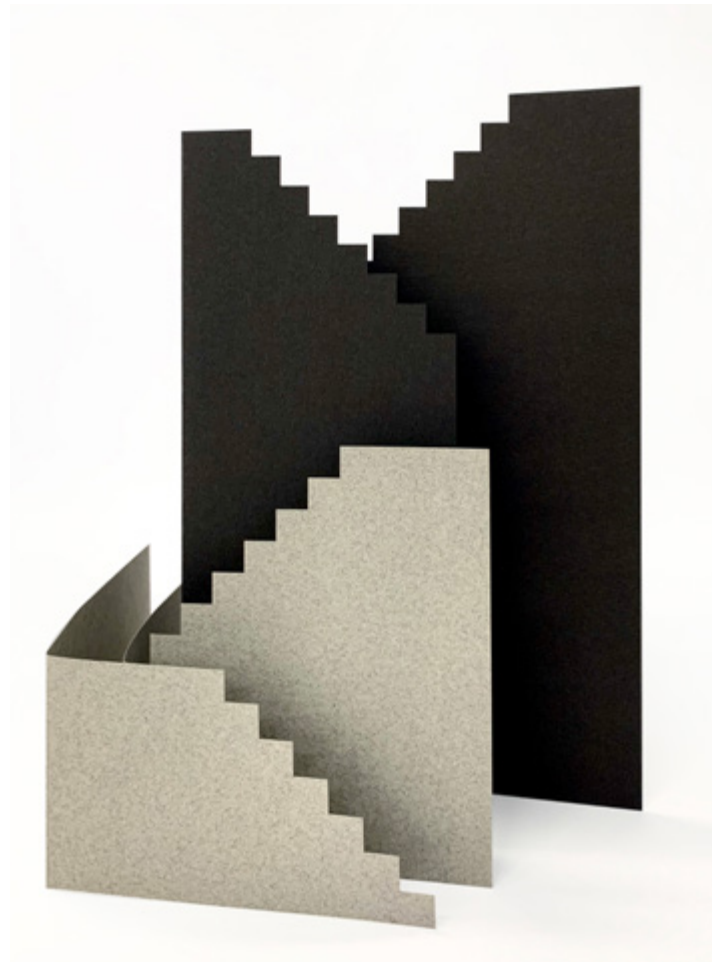
← Fig. 77
A three-dimensional paper
structure inspired by the stairs
in ATMA House

Flexible City
Brand Identity

Flexible City Brand Identity

When branding a city, it's almost impossible to encapsulate a city's image within the bounds of a single word or visual. When I worked at Landor, the rebranding of Melbourne done by the agency was used as a successful example of a flexible identity system. "When you brand a destination, the design must be an open system that is constantly changing and is composed of players that don't necessarily recognise their place in the mix, much less want to give input or take direction."**(Landor)** Given how complex and constantly changing cities are, their identity system should also be able to reflect that plurality. Currently, Ahmedabad's existing logo relies on a singular visual of a *chabutro* to reflect the city's rich and varied heritage. *Could we look at a flexible identity system to capture the multiple realities of the city, its people, its tradition and cultural heritage?*

I studied other successful examples of how places have used these flexible identity systems into their place-branding strategies **(Appendix 2)**. More specifically, I looked at what visuals they chose to capture the entirety of the place. Flexible systems like these can allow people to associate with the pluralities of the city instead of using a single icon or a more standardised solution.

Fig. 78 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

↑ Fig. 78
Flexible identity system for the city of Melbourne by *Landor* (2010). The iconic 'M' has been reinterpreted in multiple visual styles and reflects the energetic vibrancy of the city.

Ahmedabad
and its Windows

Ahmedabad and its Windows

There is no doubt the role architecture plays in defining Ahmedabad's visual culture **(Murali)**. Architecture is one of the truest evidence of history and identity of the city — from 15th century Indo-Islamic mosques and residential *pols* to the modernist buildings — it has left its imprints on Ahmedabad. I draw my inspiration from architecture party because of the lack of documentation of Indian graphic design, partly because of my upbringing (raised by my Dad who is an architect) and mostly because of the imprint it has left on its residents and visitors.

Recently, when I laid out the photographs of Ahmedabad that I had collected over the past year and a half, I noticed windows everywhere — *Sidi Saiyyed ni Jali* (Fig. 80) in a 15th century mosque, intricate wooden carvings on the windows of havelis in *pols* (Fig. 18), *chabutros* for birds (Fig. 17), Corbusier and Doshi's open fenestrations (Fig. 71-74) designed for a gregarious Indian community. Windows are key to have a relationship with the environment. For a hot and dry climate like Ahmedabad's, open windows are not just integral to let the air flow but also provide a social connection to the active street life outside. I decided to explore this porosity provided by windows to let air pass through, to let sun-light filter to the interiors, to let people connect with each other over barriers of a wall.

I designed a flexible brand identity system for the city of Ahmedabad inspired by the various windows found in the city. This branding project marks the end of my studio-based design research. As demonstrated in the examples shown in section *'Flexible City Brand Identity'*, these systems can be used to reflect multiple scenarios of city life and collective sentiments. This is particularly useful in the Indian context to reflect its vast and diverse plurality of geography, culture, language, history and tradition.

→ Fig. 79
Multiple stone *jalis* inside *Sarkhej Roza* (15th century)

→ Fig. 80
Sidi Saiyyed ni Jali, a lattice stone window (15th century)also regarded as the unofficial symbol of Ahmedabad and an inspiration for the IIM-A logo (1961)

Fig. 79 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 80 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 81 has been removed due to
copyright restrictions.

Fig. 82 has been removed due to
copyright restrictions.

← Fig. 81
Amdavad ni Gufa, an underground art gallery
designed by Doshi and painted by M.F. Husain
(1992)

↑ Fig. 82
Windows at *Kanoria Centre for Arts*, designed
by Doshi (1984)

Window Frames

I created a visual bank of window frames based on photographs I had collected earlier (Fig. 83). This collection is meant to be plural, modular and comprehensive. It conveys a visual spectrum of architectural heritage, from the more ornate to the more abstract (Fig. 84).

The visual treatment of these frames can also be flexible — from a window-like transparency to hold photographs to a solid shape to an outline. Depending on the application, an appropriate window can be used. For example, a more abstract window frame can be chosen for the cover of a 'Modern Architecture Heritage Walk' poster (Fig. 90). Similarly, if the application was based in the *Old City*, an intricate window frame can be used to compliment the design (Fig. 91).

Colour Palette

The colour palette of the branding exercise is inspired by the visual landscape of Ahmedabad (Fig. 85). Colours such as *Terracotta, Earth, Brick* and *Concrete* are inspired by the city's tangible heritage; while *Breeze, Sun, Lush, Light* and *Shadow* speak to an intangible association. These colours are meant to compliment one another — as demonstrated in the design applications (Fig. 90, 91).

Logo

The logo, too, is flexible. The logo unit consists of one window frame and bilingual logotype (in Latin and *Gujarati*) (Fig. 86). Unlike my previous typography explorations[1] that required a font license, I wanted people to have free access to the typeface. I chose Indian Type Foundry's *Hind Vadodara*, a modern bilingual typeface that is free and easily downloadable from Google Fonts. Since the structure of all the window frames are consistent, the logo appears the same — creating a strong, consistent brand identity.

The recommended visual treatment for the logo is shown in Fig. 88. This displays a light source coming out of the window frame. The light can be displayed in various ways to support the layout (Fig. 89).

[1] *The House of MG* (in 'Ahmedabad and its *Old City*' section), **Folktale website prototype** (in 'Ahmedabad and its Communication Formats) and **bilingual Mosaic character set** (in 'Ahmedabad and its Heritage Markers)

↓ Fig. 85
Colour palette inspired by the visual landscape of Ahmedabad
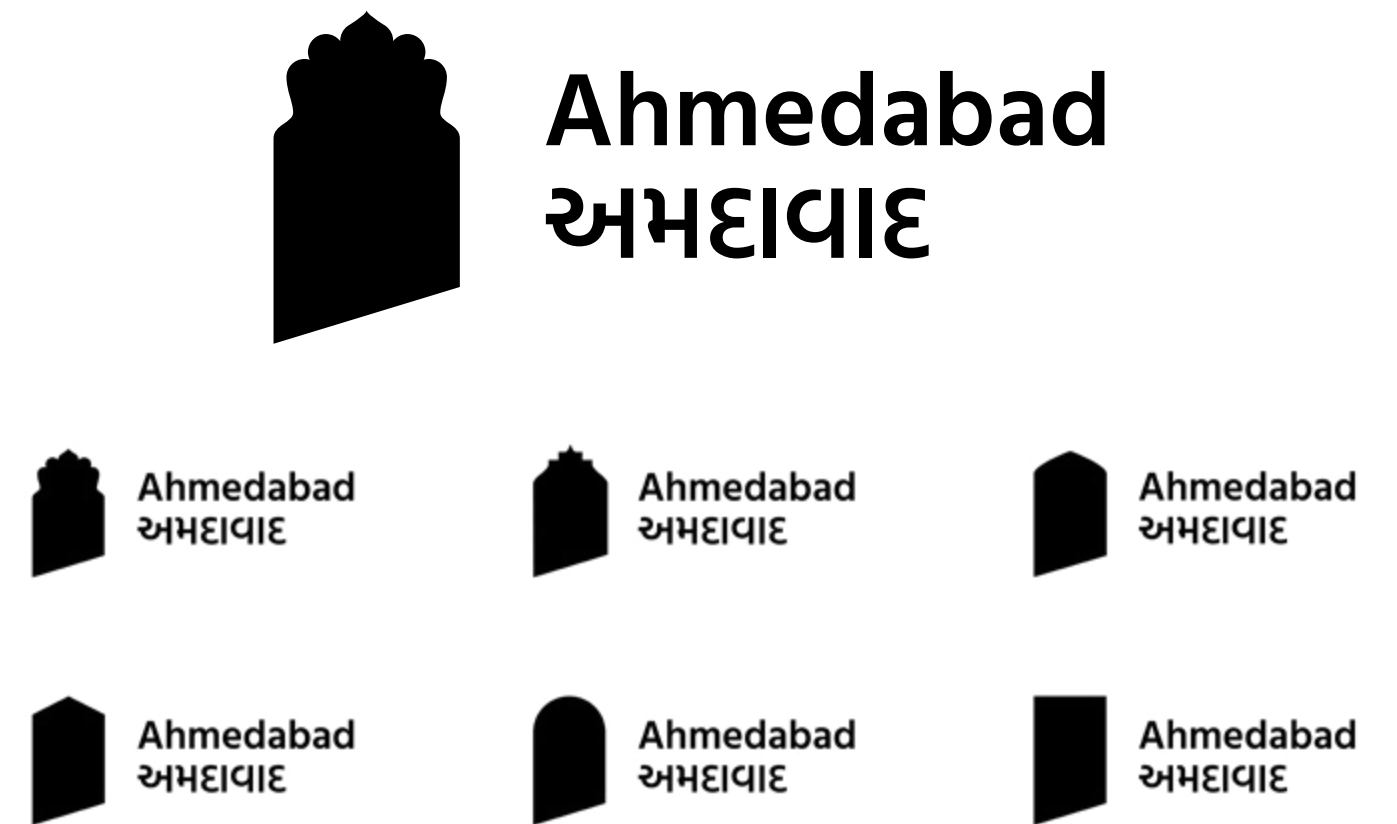
↑ Fig. 86
Flexible logo with varying window frames. This representation shows the logo on a white background. Colour can be introduced by replacing the black with a colour from the brand colour palette
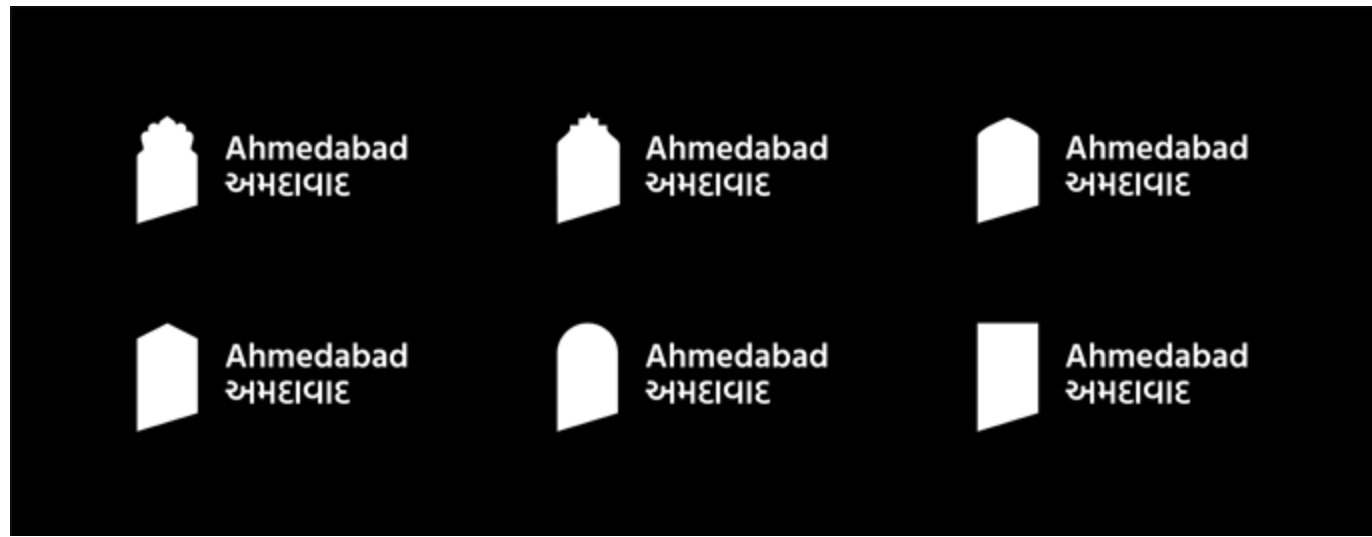
↑ Fig. 87
Logo on a colour background

↑ Fig. 88
A light source emerging from
the window frame
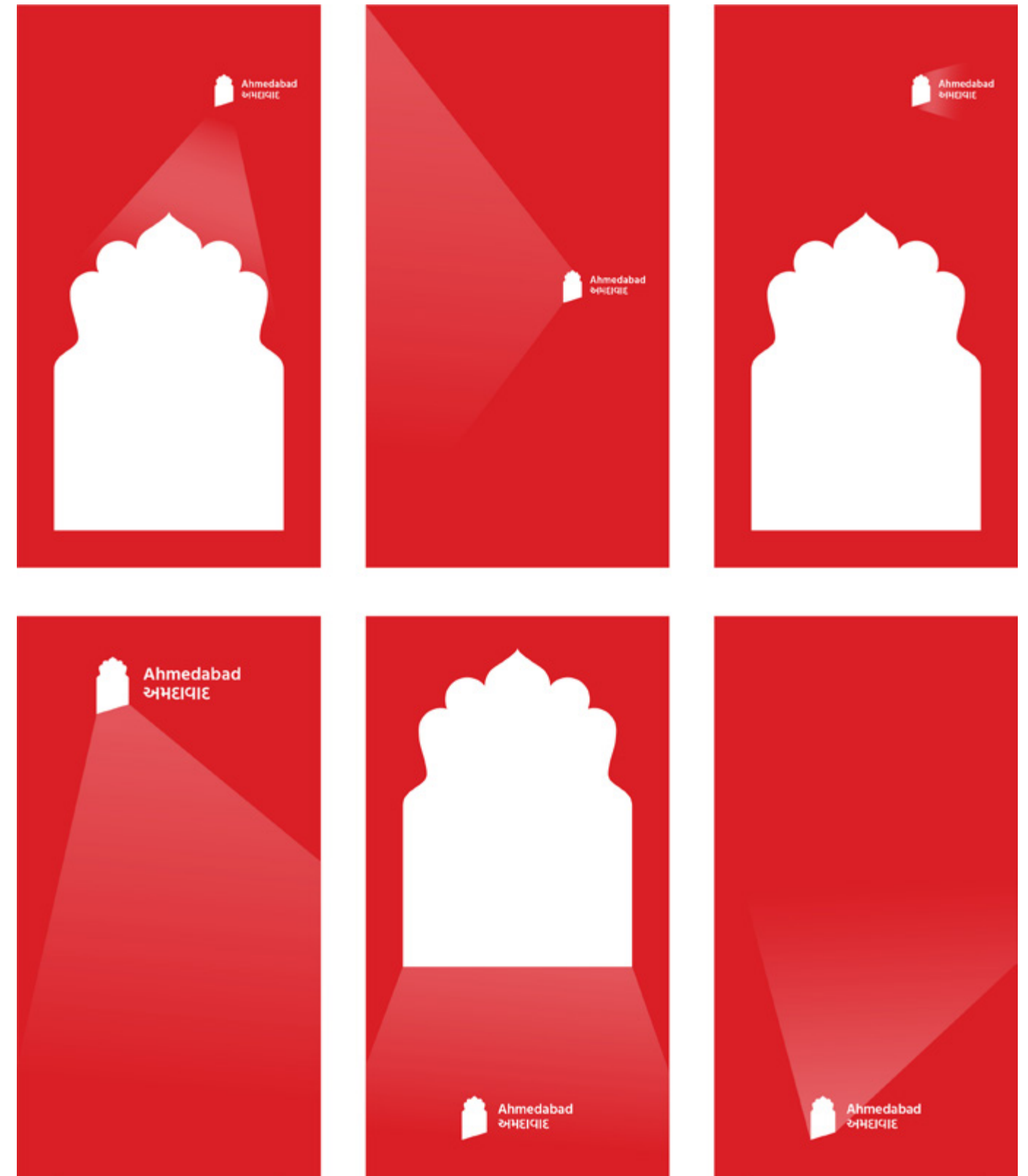
↑ Fig. 89
Possible layout examples
showing how light can be
modified or manipulated

↑ Fig. 90
Design applications to show how the flexible
identity system can display a multitude of
scenerios

↑ Fig. 91
Design applications to show how the flexible
identity system can display a multitude of
scenerios that are specific to the *Old City*

↑ Fig. 92
Identification cards for Tour Guides

Moving forward, I would like to expand on my brand identity for Ahmedabad to include a broad range applications and tools. The visual identity I have proposed above is intended to be generative and constantly evolving. For example, window frames can be adopted based on the location and/or architectural features. If a community-building event or festival was taking place in the *Old City*, the window frame across its brand identity would be more intricate and could use supporting visual elements such as birds (in spirit of the neighbourhood's *chabutros*).

Similarly, a logo generator could be imagined — to enable adaptable visuals, capable of serving multiple communication contexts. For example, if a two-day kite flying festival was taking place in a specific *pol* in the *Old City*, keywords such as "Old City", "Kites" and "Pol" would generate a logo that would be associated with these three themes.

↓ Fig. 93
Postcards with 'Aapnu Amdavad!' ('Our Ahmedabad!') written in *Gujarati*

Conclusions and Future Directions

Conclusions and Future Directions

→ I have attempted to raise questions that may form the essential design process for city branding, hoping to create a generic module that may be replicated for other Indian cities. Designers may need to look at:

> (a) **The tangible city:** Built environment including historical monuments or modern architecture, natural landmarks like mountains and rivers, mining, flora & fauna, handicrafts, etc.
> (b) **The intangible city:** Social cultures, religion, language, dialects, cuisine, arts, etc.
> (c) **The visual vernacular or graphic past:** to explore the colour palette, the regional scripts and the visual backdrop that the local populace is surrounded what.

However, cities — even neighbouring ones — will differ in their basic essence and hence may differ in approach to brand design. I'm aware that my graphic language explorations and the concept of windows is specific to Ahmedabad and as such would not translate directly to other for another cities and contexts. I focused on Ahmedabad as it is my birthplace and has paved the way for thought-provoking ideas at various stages in its existence. In another situation, were a designer is tasked with designing an identity for a city they are unfamiliar or have little experience with, it would be highly beneficial to facilitate means to co-create with stakeholders, local design professionals and students. Doing so would assure that the lived experiences and shared sentiments of individuals and groups within local context could be effectively imbued into the city branding.

→ Upon completion of my Masters Degree, my intent is to take the brand identity system — which I have only just begun to develop — back to Ahmedabad to see how locals might perceive and respond to the work.

→ In a lot of design scenarios, including Landor's rebranding for Melbourne, designers are hired at the beginning of a city branding project and then walk away once the task at hand is complete. In my opinion, designers need to be closely involved in the implementation of the brand design, including future applications. A dedicated, experienced in-house design team can be put in place to overlook all city branding initiatives. As branding is a continuous process and not a one-step solution, authorities must recognise the benefit of getting continued assistance from designers. This can also provide a consistent design narrative that is critical to establish a brand. Currently, the Government of India gives out design contracts an L1 basis (**"All about Tenders"**). This means that an agency or person with the lowest price quotation would be given the design project.

→ While searching for authenticity in visual vernacular, I finally realised that for something to be authentically Indian, it need not rely on visual aesthetics but rather, be deeply rooted in local tradition and culture. For example, by looking at Ahmedabad's post-colonial heritage, I learned that although the buildings are modernist, brutalist expressions of architecture, they are deeply rooted in Indian sensibilities. For instance, open glass-less windows are meant to embody the typical Indian ideology of inviting openness. Therefore, the definition of what is Indian is embedded in pluralism, hence it cannot be contained within a single set of visuals.

→ Documentation of Indian design — beyond architecture and craft-based practices — is important for designers to understand the historical, geographic or socio-politico-economic context and be able to draw inspiration from that. Small-scale design studios in India like *November*, *South Asia Art* and *Border & Fall* are creating online repositories of Indian design by visual documentation, interviews of practising designers in India, opinion pieces, etc. Part of the contribution I wish to make in the future is to create a repository of images tracing Ahmedabad's graphic past.

→ Design in India, just like India, needs to be **diverse, plural and empathetic**. Further, the understanding of one's own culture is essential to not slip into mimicking generic Western design trends. Design education in public and private design schools needs to have syllabi dedicated to the history and evolution of Indian design, designing for real-world pragmatic scenarios of social and cultural relevancy, and non-commercial design expressions. When design students begin to be encouraged to reflect and respond to their immediate surroundings and situations, Design as a practice and as an industry in the Indian context will have the opportunity to flourish and evolve.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Website Prototype
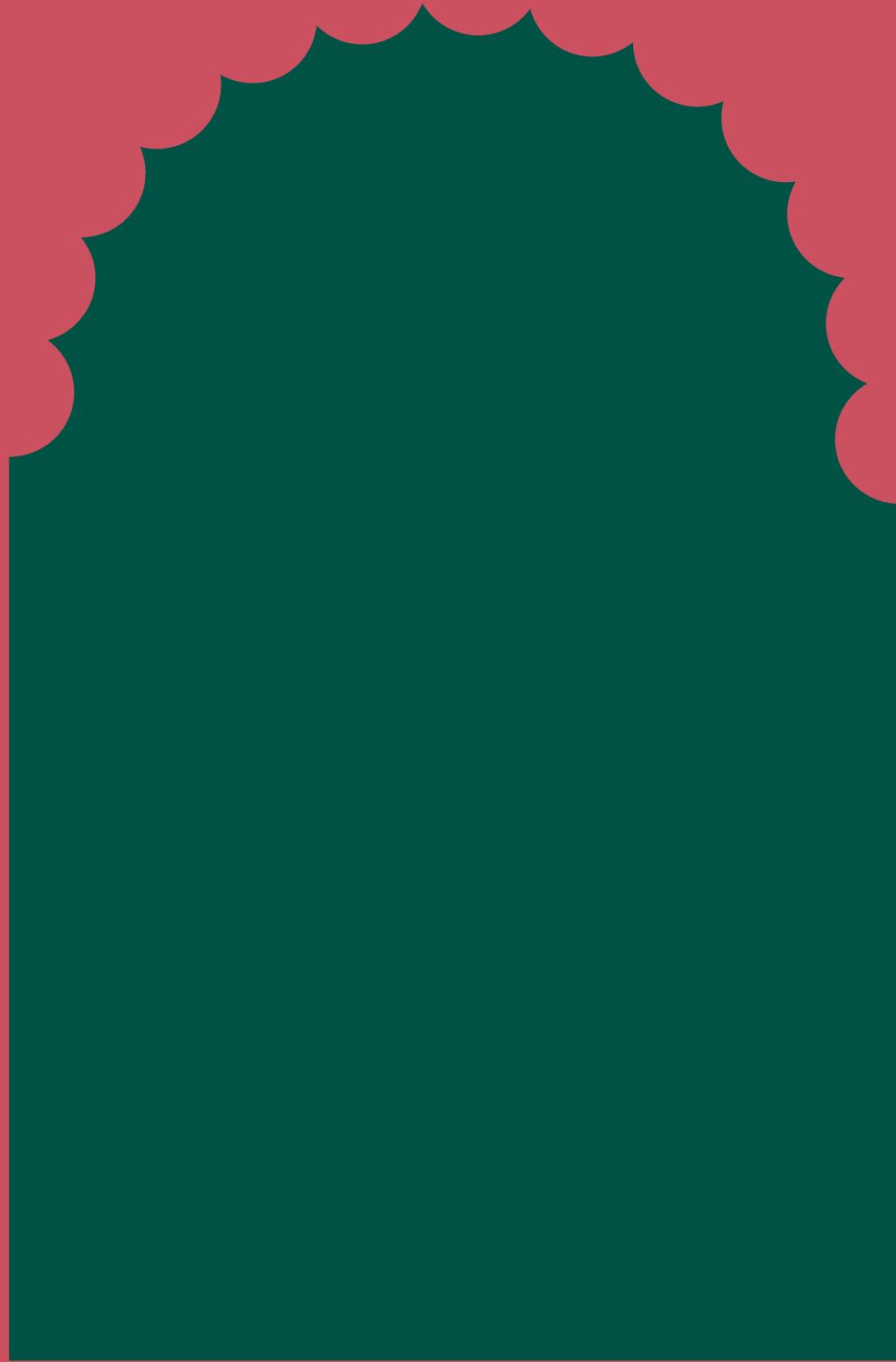
The Boy Who Sold Wisdom

Amster Negra by Pampa Type

The Boy Who Sold Wisdom

Amster Gris by Pampa Type

The Boy Who Sold Wisdom

Breve Title by DSType

The Boy Who Sold Wisdom

Karloff Negative Standard Bold by Typotheque

The Boy Who Sold Wisdom

GT Super Display by Grilli Type
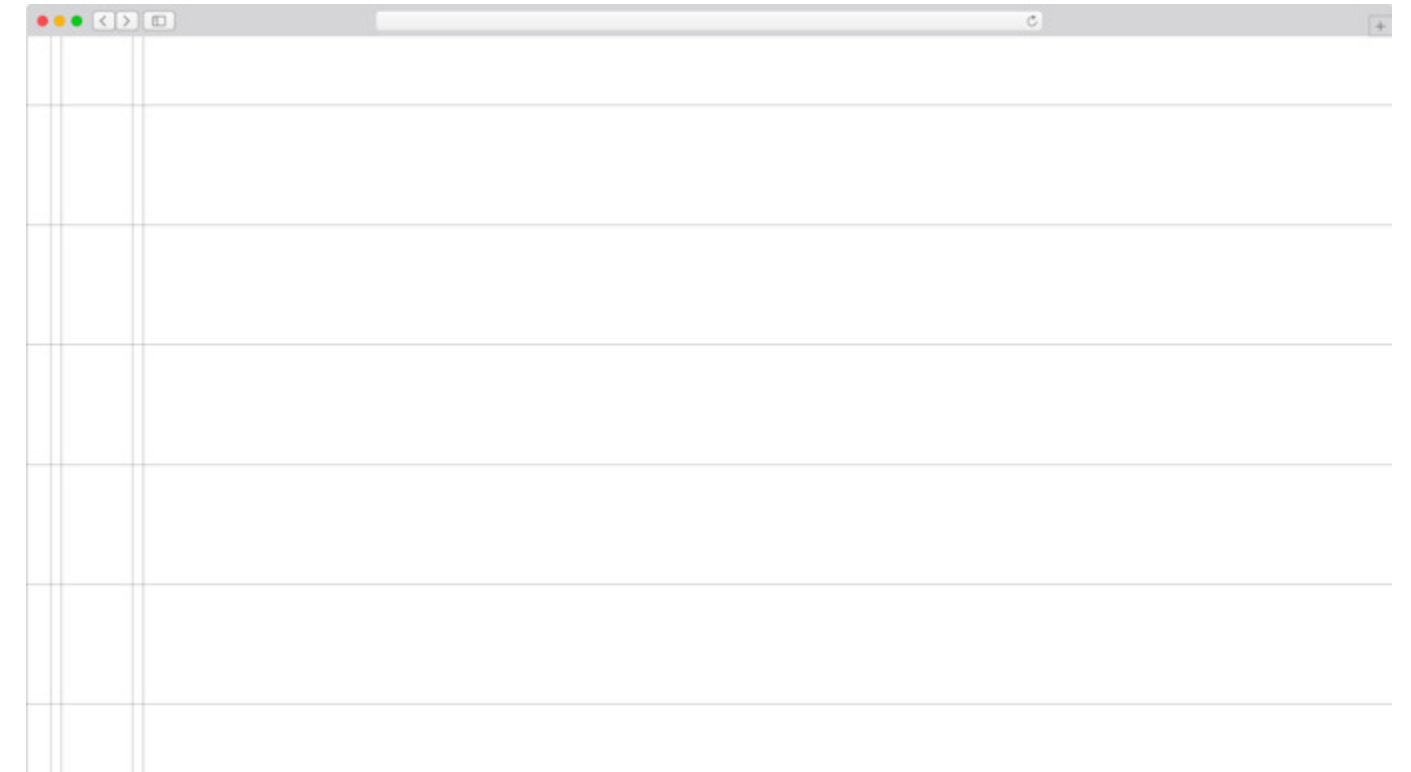
↑ Exploring typeface options that mimic the
Devanagari script found in the manuscript of
Siddhahaimashabdanushasana

Story 1 Title Goes Here
Story 2 Title Goes Here
Selected / Highlighted Story
Story 3 Title Goes Here
Story 4 Title Goes Here

Folktales from India
by A.K. Ramanujan is a collection of 110 tales, translated from 22 different Indian regional languages.

↓

Story 1 Headline

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie.

Consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui . blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisie.

અ આ ઇ ઈ ઉ ઊ
Supporting Text for Illustration

Illustration Goes Here

Prince Sabar
One More Use for Artists
The Boy Who Sold Wisdom
A Story for Sundays
The Serpent Mother

The Boy Who Sold Wisdom

A poor Brahman boy was orphaned and found himself without a job. He was clever and he had learned many things by watching his father. One day, he had a brilliant idea.

He went into town and hired the smallest, cheapest place he could find and set up shop. He spent the few nickel coins he had on paper, ink, and a pen. Over his shop, he put up a placard that said "Wisdom for Sale".

ડહાપણનું વેચાણ
Wisdom for Sale

The boy took out a piece of paper and wrote on it, "It is not wise to stand and watch two people fighting," and he asked the merchant's son to keep it tied in his turban cloth.

The merchant's son went home and showed his father what he had bought. He said, "I bought some wisdom for a nickel and I have it here, tied up inside this turban cloth." The father untied the knot, looked at the scrap of paper, and read what was written on it. "It was not wise to stand and watch two people fighting."

He was furious. He screamed at his son, "You fool, fancy paying a nickel for this nonsense. Everyone knows you should not stand and watch two people fighting." The he went to the marketplace and stormed not the Brahman boy's shop and scolded him roundly. "You scoundrel. You've cheated my son. He is a fool and you are a cheat. Return the nickel or else I'll call the police."

It was not wise to stand and watch two people fighting.

Appendix 2: Flexible City Branding Case Studies

Porto
Year: 2014
Design Agency: Eduardo Aires based in Porto
Inspired by the blue tiles spread all across the city, this flexible identity system captures 70+ visual references that represent the city and its people. The minimalistic icons represent Porto's architectural landmarks, ports, climate, food, sports, etc. and can be combined in endless ways to communicate the never-ending complexity of the city.

> *"...The most difficult thing is not representing the city by an icon or something physical. It's more translating an abstract idea into something visual; that's the most difficult thing..."*
> Aires, designer of Porto's brand identity **(Balch)**

Singapore
Year: 2010
Design Agency: BBH-Asia Pacific based in Singapore
Based on the geographical contours of the country, this flexible identity system replaced the previous *Uniquely Singapore* branding. While the typography seems generic and static, the visuals behind are interesting and dynamic. They reflect the multiple landscapes found in this small country. A similar geography-inspired identity system was also created for *Russia Tourism* in 2019

Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau
Year: 2016
Design Agency: Graphéine based in Lyon
Illustrator: Séverin Millet based in Lyon

Technically this isn't a city branding example, but the brand identity design for Paris' official tourism organisation was particularly fascinating and struck a chord with me. They were faced with the same dilemma that comes with having the city's visual identity rest heavily on one landmark: the Eiffel Tower, in this case. ***To use that symbol or not? Will it communicate effectively to an international audience?*** While designing, they were aware of "entering a visual territory particularly used and where the kitsch border is very close". (**"Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau Rebranding"**) They settled on a minimal, subtle representation of the skyline with the 'A' evoking the Eiffel Tower. The flexibility in the visual identity comes from the window-like transparency of the word-mark that allows the varying illustrations to peep through.

Appendix 3: Educational Font License

Dear **Medha Mistry**,

Greetings from the Indian Type Foundry.

This is to inform you that your request for the Educational license for Akhand Font Family has been approved. You can download the fonts here:

Download Fonts

Important:

Trial licenses are valid for the period of your educational career with the mentioned institution. You will be notified (via email) prior to the License's expiration. These fonts can be used for Educational/non-commercial work only. Please read our Educational License Agreement carefully.

If you have any questions about the usage or the installation, please email us at support@indiantypefoundry.com

Best regards,
Indian Type Foundry

Indian Type Foundry
304, 637 Business Complex, Panchwati 2nd Lane,
Gulbai Tekra Road, Ahmedabad 380006
INDIA

Phone: +91 79 4019 1967
Email: info@indiantypefoundry.com

----

www.indiantypefoundry.com

Dear **Medha Mistry**,

Greetings from the Indian Type Foundry.

This is to inform you that your request for the Educational license for Saguna Gujarati Font Family has been approved. You can download the fonts here:

Download Fonts

Important:

Trial licenses are valid for the period of your educational career with the mentioned institution. You will be notified (via email) prior to the License's expiration. These fonts can be used for Educational/non-commercial work only. Please read our Educational License Agreement carefully.

If you have any questions about the usage or the installation, please email us at support@indiantypefoundry.com

Best regards,
Indian Type Foundry

Indian Type Foundry
304, 637 Business Complex, Panchwati 2nd Lane,
Gulbai Tekra Road, Ahmedabad 380006
INDIA

Phone: +91 79 4019 1967
Email: info@indiantypefoundry.com

----

www.indiantypefoundry.com

Bibliography

Ajay, Lakshmi. "Ahmedabad Airport Fails in Terms of Aesthetics." Ahmedabad Mirror, 23 Oct. 2018, ahmedabadmirror.indiatimes.com/ahmedabad/cover-story/heritage-fails-to-take-off-at-city-airport/articleshow/66323064.cms.

"All about Tenders." All about Tenders, 25 Feb. 2009, tender-tiger.blogspot.com/2009/02/all-about-tenders.html.

Balaram, Singanapalli. "Design in India: The Importance of the Ahmedabad Declaration." Design Issues, vol. 25, no. 4, 2009, pp. 54–79. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20627830.

Balaram, Singanapalli. "Design Pedagogy in India: A Perspective." Design Issues, vol. 21, no. 4, 2005, pp. 11–22. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25224015.

Balch, Oliver. "Porto: A Masterclass in City Branding." Raconteur, 19 June 2019, www.raconteur.net/technology/eduardo-aires-city-branding.

Curtis, William Jr. "Pritzker Prize 2018: For Balkrishna Doshi, Architecture, Urbanism and Landscape Are Inseparable." Architectural Review, 9 May 2016, www.architectural-review.com/today/pritzker-prize-2018-for-balkrishna-doshi-architecture-urbanism-and-landscape-are-inseparable/10005827.article.

"Decoding Amsterdam and City Symbols." I Amsterdam, 26 Sept. 2017, www.iamsterdam.com/en/about-amsterdam/overview/history-and-society/city-symbols.

Desai, Rishikesh Bahadur. "Karnataka Tableau to Feature Bidriware." The Hindu, 11 Jan. 2011, www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-karnataka/Karnataka-tableau-to-feature-Bidriware/article15514822.ece.

Dickinson, Greg. "The 'I Amsterdam' Sign – a 'Symbol of Mindless Mass Tourism' – Has Been Removed." The Telegraph, 4 Dec. 2018, www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/news/i-amsterdam-sign-removed.

Dijk, Edo van. "It's Not the Logo." Edenspiekermann, 6 Feb. 2014, www.edenspiekermann.com/insights/it-s-not-the-logo.

Doshi, B. V. "Balkrishna Doshi Accepts the 2018 Pritzker Architecture Prize." YouTube, uploaded by Articulate with Jim Cotter, 2 Jan. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtZY1za9R0c&t=1040s.

Dvornechuck, Arek. "Best City Logos Explained." Ebaqdesign, www.ebaqdesign.com/blog/city-logos. Accessed 24 Mar. 2020.

Eames, Charles, and Ray Eames. "Part 1." The India Report, National Institute of Design, 1958, pp. 8–9.

Escobar, Arturo. Designs for the Pluriverse. Duke University Press, 2018.

Essbai, Sarah. "City Branding: What Role in Placemaking? #TheGlobalGrid February Chat Recap." The Global Grid, 28 Feb. 2018, theglobalgrid.org/city-branding-role-placemaking-theglobalgrid-february-chat-recap.

Frisk, Ryan Pescatore, and Catelijne van Middelkoop. "Strange Attractors: Reinventing the Graphic Vernacular." AIGA, 10 Oct. 2006, www.aiga.org/strange-attractors-reinventing-the-graphic-vernacular.

Geel, Catherine, and Catherine Lévy. 100% India, 1st ed., Seuil, 2005, p. 11.

"India Unboxed: The Perfection of Wisdom." YouTube, uploaded by Cambridge University, 12 June 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Fw_p31bH7Y&feature=emb_title.

Indian Type Foundry. "About." Indian Type Foundry, www.indiantypefoundry.com/about.

John, Paul. "Ahmedabad Loses Heritage Treasures." The Times of India, 19 July 2019, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/ahmedabad-loses-heritage-treasures/articleshow/70285319.cms.

John, Paul. "Blue Plaques No Angel Guard for Ahmedabad's Heritage." The Times of India, 21 Nov. 2019, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/blue-plaques-no-angel-guard-for-citys-heritage/articleshow/72150297.cms.

Kavaratzis, Mihalis, and Mary Jo Hatch. "The Dynamics of Place Brands." Marketing Theory, vol. 13, no. 1, 2013, pp. 69–86. Crossref, doi:10.1177/1470593112467268.

KesselsKramer. "I Amsterdam." KesselsKramer, 13 Dec. 2018, www.kesselskramer.com/project/i-amsterdam.

Klein, Naomi. No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies. 1st ed., Vintage Canada, 2000.

Kumari, Devender. History of Indian Art. Full Marks, 2015.

Landor. "Rebranding the City of Melbourne | Thinking." Landor, 21 Aug. 2017, landor.com/thinking/rebranding-the-city-of-melbourne.

Mangaldas, Abhay. "Redefining Heritage." YouTube, uploaded by TED, 31 May 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzLb6HMpx9A.

Millman, Debbie. "Branding and the Impact It Has on Business." YouTube, uploaded by Speakers' Spotlight, 1 Apr. 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0gV1_x4DIY.

Millman, Debbie. "How Symbols and Brands Shape Our Humanity." YouTube, uploaded by TED, 6 Mar. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-W_KgZhG_A&t=6s.

Murali, Akshaya. "Places Architects Must Visit in Ahmedabad." *Rethinking The Future*, 12 Aug. 2019, www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/architects-lounge/places-to-visit-for-architects-in-ahmedabad.

NOS. "Ton Voor Bijna Hetzelfde Logo." *NOS*, 5 Feb. 2014, nos.nl/artikel/606724-ton-voor-bijna-hetzelfde-logo.html.

"Ogilvy Presents Rajasthan through the Eyes of Travellers." *Ad Gully*, 21 Jan. 2016, www.adgully.com/ogilvy-presents-rajasthan-through-the-eyes-of-travellers-64943.html.

"Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau Rebranding." *Grapheine*, 17 May 2016, www.grapheine.com/en/branding-en/paris-convention-and-visitors-bureau-rebranding.

Patel, Riddhi. *Legendary Pols: The Heart Of Heritage City Ahmedabad*. 1st ed., Printbox, 2017.

Rajan, Manju Sara. "Ahmedabad, the Design Hub." *Condé Nast Traveller India*, 25 Jan. 2017, www.cntraveller.in/story/ahmedabad-the-design-hub.

Ramanujan, A. "Introduction." Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales From Twenty-Two, *Pantheon Books*, 1991, p. 3.

Ramanujan, A. "The Boy Who Sold His Wisdom." Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-Two Languages, *Pantheon Books*, 1991, pp. 240–43.

Raval, Gargi. "Ahmedabad's Heritage Properties Will Get a Blue Bauble." *DNA India*, 10 Apr. 2019, www.dnaindia.com/ahmedabad/report-ahmedabad-s-heritage-properties-will-get-a-blue-bauble-2738086.

Ray, Mohor, editor. Dekho: Conversations on Design in India. 1st ed., *Codesign Brand Consultants*, 2012.

Singh, Ekta. "Space Design for House of MG. Agashiye." *Behance*, 16 Nov. 2017, www.behance.net/gallery/58910933/Space-Design-for-House-of-MG-Agashiye.

Tasci, Asli D. A., and Metin Kozak. "Destination Brands vs Destination Images: Do We Know What We Mean?" *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2006, pp. 299–317. Crossref, doi:10.1177/1356766706067603.

Tharoor, Shashi. *An Era of Darkness*. Aleph, 2016.

"The House of MG." *The House of MG*, www.houseofmg.com.

The House of MG. "History of The House of MG." *YouTube*, uploaded by The House of MG, 4 Jan. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pfzn3ZTljI&t=4s.

Typotheque. "Fedra Sans." *Typotheque*, www.typotheque.com/fonts/fedra_sans/about.

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. "Historic City of Ahmadabad." *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, whc.unesco.org/en/list/1551. Accessed 13 July 2018.

Vansadia, Namrata. "India Is Home; I Look at the World through That Lens." WePresent, 20 Nov. 2019, wepresent.wetransfer.com/story/namrata-vansadia.