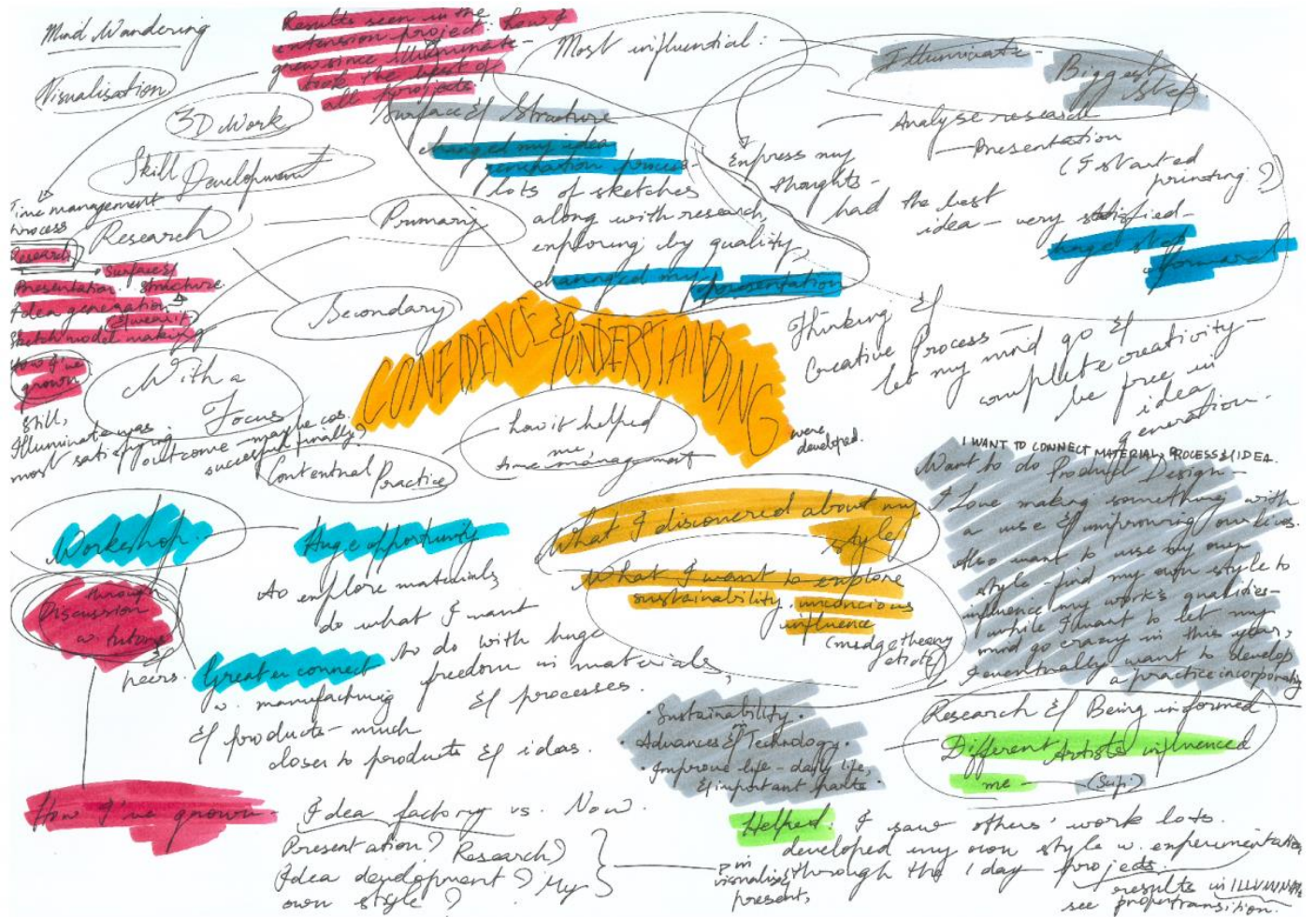*Foundation Diploma in Art and Design*
Unit 3: Developing Specialist Practice

"Design cuts across all disciplines, be it the arts or sciences, humanities or engineering, law or business."[1]


MEGHA VENKATESAM

My journey through part one of the foundation course has helped me grow incredibly as a designer. I have gotten to know my process better through each project. For example, I learnt that I develop my ideas best through initial sketching, and then proceed to experiment more with models. I draw initial ideas from primary and secondary research, and then develop them with continuous research. Creating mood boards out of visual research has helped me tremendously. Staring at them helps me absorb and understand the mood I want to create and themes I want to use.

Starting out, I aimed to develop my idea generation process. I also wanted to gain experience with 3D thinking and become comfortable with working with different materials in the workshops.

1.   Norman, D., 2007. *The Design Of Future Things: Author Of The Design Of Everyday Things*. Basic Books.

At first, I had only a vague idea of what was expected of me. My drawings were drab and lifeless, and my display page was cramped and cluttered. However, seeing everyone else's work during the idea factory crit made me I realise that I forgot about presentation and visual clarity.

Therefore, I sought to improve myself, by learning from others' work. I experimented with colour and presentation in Explore it, Build it and Wear it. While the outcomes weren't great, I learnt through trial and error. I introduced mood boards in illuminate, and integrated small sketch ideation with research in Surface and Structure. I realised that sketching with pen worked better for me, than with a pencil. Finally, I saw the results in my extension project- the clarity in my presentation, depth of research and layout had improved by leaps and bounds. In fact, I could even see my own unique style developing.
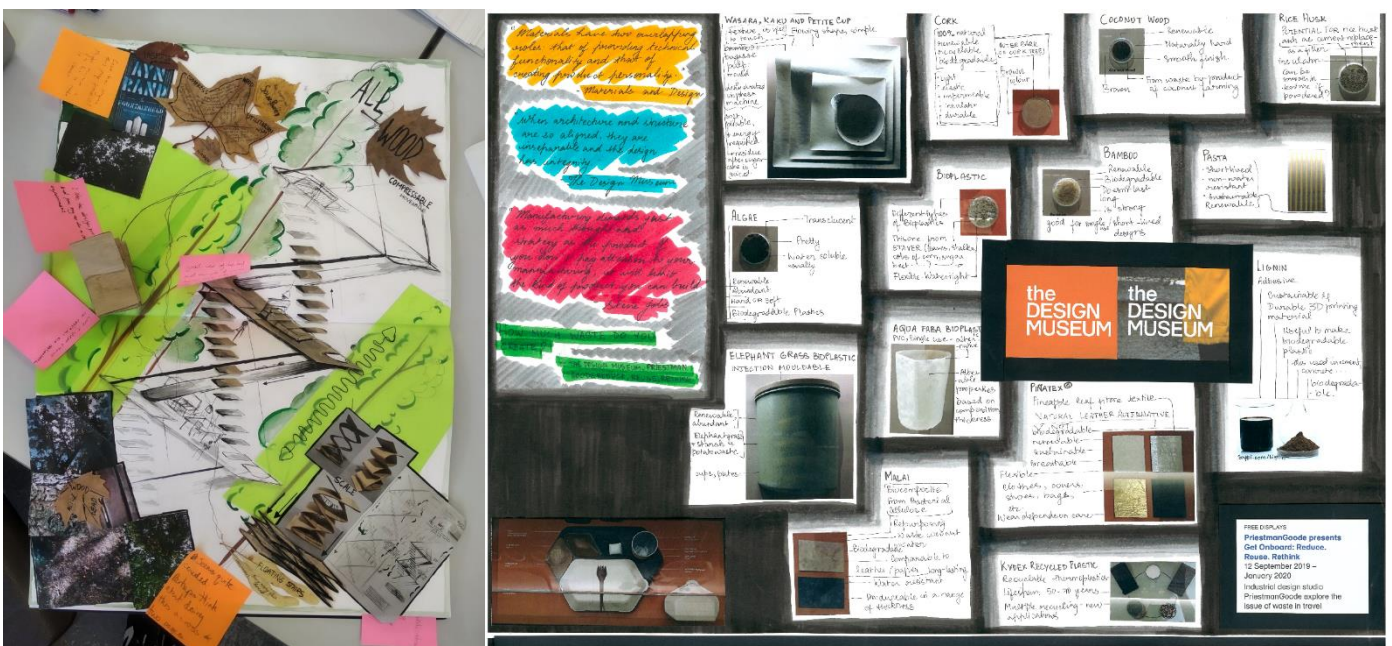

Idea Factory double page spread vs Research for Structure and Surface

Right now, I think that my style or aesthetic is based around a stark, futuristic look, inspired by science and science fiction, and suitable for urban contexts. The first clear sign of this was the outcome of Illuminate. I was pleased with the feel of the product, which had come about as a result of research on work by designers such as James Turrell, Ilanel and Issey Miyake. In fact, I found it natural to ideate on black pages, which may be because my designs tend to be informed by the concepts of spacetime, universes and scientific phenomena both big and small. Surface and Structure and my Extension Project both affirm this.

"We are now in a period of unprecedented technological development."[2]

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2. Hyman, A., 1973. *The Computer In Design.* Studio Vista
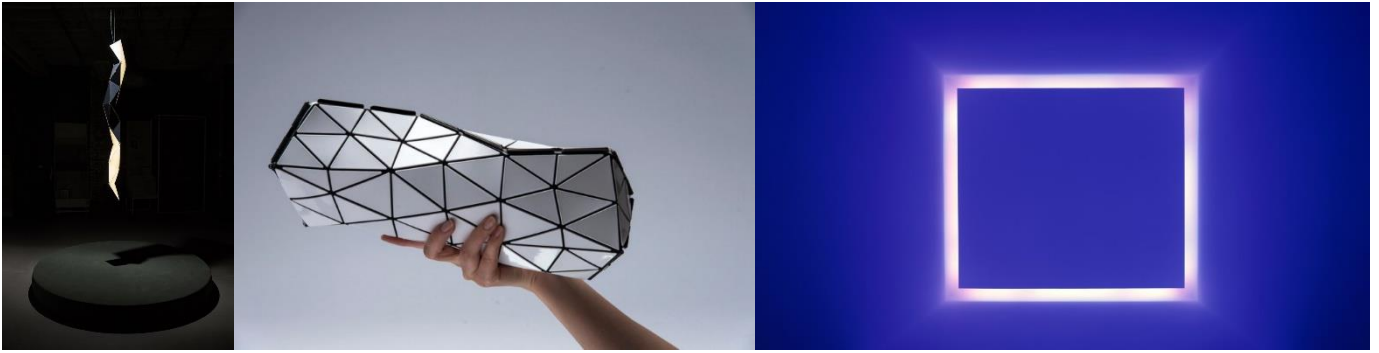
Ilanel, Issey Miyake, James Turrell

1Illuminate: light, Surface and Structure: Catwalk, Extension: Light

Science Fiction, as stated earlier, is very close to my heart. It mixes science with possibility and creates new worlds out of mankind's most powerful tool: imagination. This feeds back into reality and informs my designs and thinking. An example is Star Trek's PADD- Personal Access Display Device, a device my parents thought of as futuristic: a device that became reality in the form of the iPad. Thoughts on what the far future could be inspires me to think of issues such as sustainability in materials and energy. It makes me want to design for the future- drawing from new technologies and discoveries that could change the way we think, act, perform, and design. *I want my designs to be influenced by the future, and to influence the future.*

2Star Trek PADD, iPad

When integrating this philosophy into my work, I keep coming back to one thought: Product Design. I want to work towards a world that integrates sustainability with technology, through designing and redesigning objects that interact with society and people. I want to design products- something I reaffirmed during Surface and Structure, when I tried out Spatial Design for a change. While the outcome was successful, I felt a much greater connection to the lights I designed in Illuminate and the

Extension Project, than to the catwalk. I believe that I would have a much greater impact on the world as a product designer, than as anything else.

Ultimately, my growth in part 1 of the Foundation Course has brought me closer to my goals. I have had experience with different workshops, which has made me design with much more consideration to processes and materials. My 3D thinking and visual presentation skills have improved leaps and bounds through constant ideation, model making and Crits throughout the projects. In the next step, I want to explore more sustainable materials and techniques, and include more technology in my designs. I have become very interested in 3D printing, which I plan to explore further and integrate into my practice. I hope to keep learning, both through my own work and from others' work, so that I can improve my product design practice even further.

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