

JANUARY 2026

Monthly Newsletter



SO
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Design
In Motion

DEAN'S MESSAGE



Across the world, governments and institutions are increasingly recognising design as a strategic driver of innovation, economic growth, and societal transformation. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Singapore have long integrated design into policy frameworks that shape industries, public services, and cultural development. In India, this conversation is now gaining significant momentum. In a notable step forward, Telangana has emerged as one of the first states actively working toward a comprehensive design policy, signalling a broader recognition that design is not only about aesthetics but also about systems thinking, innovation, and regional development. Such initiatives are particularly significant in a rapidly evolving knowledge economy, where design plays a critical role in shaping products, services, digital experiences, and urban environments.

At the School of Arts & Design, Woxsen University, we see these developments as a powerful affirmation of the direction in which design education must evolve. Our approach has consistently emphasised the importance of connecting academic learning with cultural contexts, technological shifts, and real-world practice. The experiences highlighted in

this edition of the newsletter reflect this philosophy in motion. Students engaged with global artistic discourse through the Kochi Biennale, one of the world's most influential contemporary art platforms, gaining exposure to interdisciplinary practices that challenge conventional boundaries between art, design, and society. They also explored emerging professional pathways through conversations with industry practitioners and alumni, examined the role of costume as narrative language in performance, and engaged with the growing global discourse around circular design and sustainability.

Equally important are the learning experiences that connect design with place and material intelligence. From observing colour, material, and finish in real-world retail environments to studying heritage architecture and traditional craft systems, our students are learning how design emerges from a dialogue between history, culture, and contemporary practice. These explorations help cultivate designers who can think critically about both local identities and global systems. At SOAD, we believe that the future of design leadership will depend on the ability to integrate creativity with technological insight, cultural understanding, and responsible innovation. As articulated in our Vision 2030:

“Design education must evolve from teaching isolated disciplines to cultivating systems thinkers who can connect creativity, technology, culture, and entrepreneurship to shape meaningful futures.”



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Kochi Biennale Immersion

Communication Design students step beyond the classroom and into one of the world's most dynamic contemporary art platforms.



Fourteen students from the Communication Design (CD 2024 batch) undertook a week-long immersion at the Kochi Biennale, India's largest international exhibition of contemporary art. The visit positioned students within a global artistic dialogue, exposing them to large-scale installations, experimental media practices, curatorial frameworks, and spatial storytelling that extend far beyond conventional classroom learning. Engaging directly with site-specific works, interdisciplinary practices, and diverse cultural narratives, students observed how contemporary art negotiates politics, identity, ecology, and technology through visual language. The immersion fostered critical reflection, expanded aesthetic vocabulary, and strengthened the ability to read visual culture in context, equipping students with a deeper understanding of how design operates within larger cultural ecosystems.

Date: 25th–30th January 2026

Venue: Kochi

Batch: Semester IV, (CD 2024 Batch)

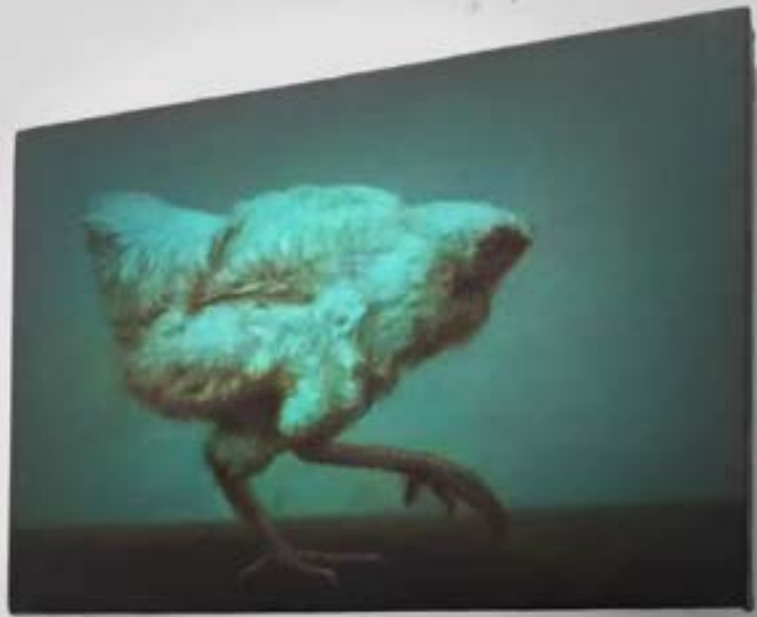
Organizer: Communication Design, SOAD

Faculty Involved: Prof. Kamal Narayana

“The artist is not a special kind of person; rather each person is a special kind of artist.”

— Ananda Coomaraswamy





Inside Bidar Fort and The Bidri Tradition

Students travelled to Bidar to study historic architecture and the living craft tradition of Bidri work through direct spatial observation.

Interior Design students undertook a field immersion to Bidar Fort and the Bidri craft cluster as part of their spatial and material studies. The visit enabled students to engage directly with heritage architecture, observing structural rhythm, surface articulation, ornamentation, and the dialogue between light and stone. Rather than studying space through drawings alone, students experienced scale, proportion, and material ageing within an active historical environment.

At the Bidri craft cluster, students examined the intricate process of silver inlay on blackened alloy — understanding how surface, detail, and craftsmanship contribute to spatial identity and cultural continuity. The immersion strengthened their ability to read built environments contextually, connecting interior design practice to history, material intelligence, and living artisan traditions.

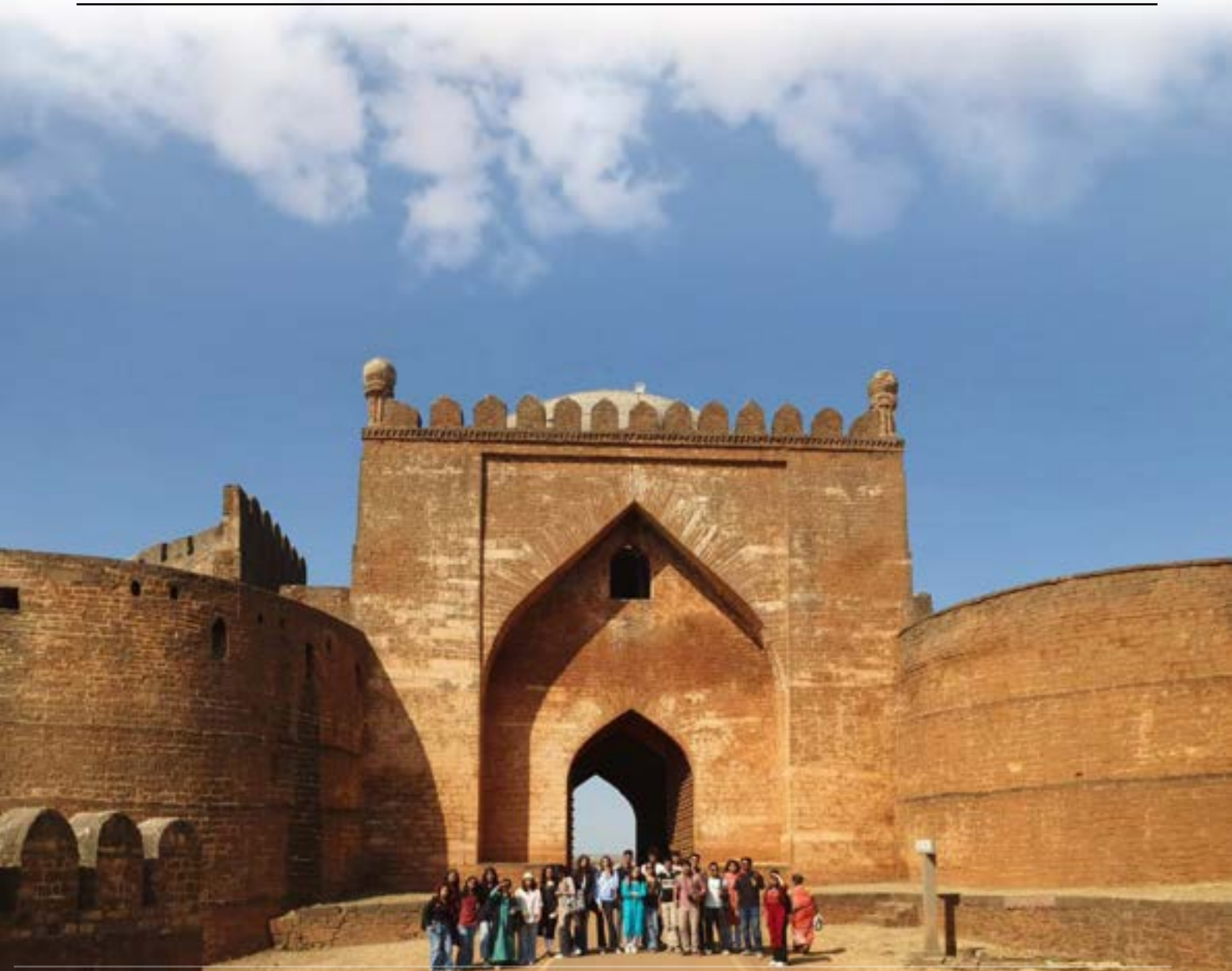
Date: 8 January 2026

Time: All day

Faculty in Charge: Prof. Tejas Eknath Pawar

Organizer: Interior Design

“A nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.”



Before the Actor Speaks: Guest session on costume design

Award-winning costume designer Dr. Susan Ashdown, from Cornell University, guides Fashion students through the narrative power of dress across stage and screen.

The Fashion Design Department hosted Dr. Susan Ashdown, Emerita Professor of Human Ecology at Cornell University, for a focused session on costume design as narrative construction. Drawing from theatre, film, and cosplay contexts, the session explored how garments shape character identity through proportion, fit, movement, and material choices. Students examined how costume operates beyond aesthetics—functioning as a structural tool that communicates psychology, period, and performance.

Date: 7 January 2026

Batch: B.Des Fashion Design (2024–2028)

Time: 5:00 PM IST | Duration: 1.5 Hours

Mode: Online

Organizer: Fashion Design Department, SOAD

External Resource Person: Dr. Susan Ashdown – Emerita Professor, Cornell University

Faculty Present: Ashutosh Kumar, Kamal Vas Narayana, Srijana Baruah

“Clothing is a form of language.”



Reading the City through Signage and Space

Students step into Hyderabad's urban environment including Knowledge City and IKEA, to study how signage, branding, and to observe how spatial systems shape public experience.

As part of the elective course Interior Landscape, Signage & Graphics, students undertook a field visit across key urban and retail environments in Hyderabad, including Knowledge City and IKEA. The objective was to observe how spatial planning, wayfinding systems, environmental graphics, and brand language operate within real-world contexts. Rather than studying signage as isolated elements, students examined how typography, scale, material, and placement influence movement, orientation, and perception. The visit encouraged analytical engagement with public space — from corporate landscapes to experiential retail environments.

Date: 7th January 2026

Time: 9 AM onwards

Faculty in Charge: Prof. Christian Aronsen

Course: Interior Landscape, Signage & Graphics

Category: Real-World Exposure

**“We shape our buildings
thereafter they shape us”**



From Student to UX Professional

Recent graduate returns to campus to share firsthand insights from the UX industry.

Communication Design students engaged in a candid industry dialogue with Ariz Mohammed, a 2022–2026 batch senior and full-time UX/UI Designer at Appiness Interactive. The session moved beyond theory to discuss hiring expectations, portfolio strategy, workplace dynamics, and the transition from academic projects to client-driven environments. By sharing real project experiences and professional challenges, the interaction offered students clarity on how classroom skills translate into industry practice.

Date: 22 January 2026

Venue: Online

Student Participation: Semester IV, Batch CD

Organizer: Communication Design, SOAD

Faculty Involved: Kamal Narayana

PORTFOLIO & CAREER MENTORSHIP SESSION

Focus:
Portfolio Development

Speaker: Aariz Mahmood



What You'll Gain:

- Internship & Placement Insights
- Branding Career Guidance

Online Session –
Link will be shared soon

JAN 22, 2026
10.30 AM TO 11.30 AM



SIEGE in Motion

Industrial Design Department launched SIEGE, a three-day immersive cultural and competitive platform bringing together creativity, endurance, and collaboration.

SIEGE marked the introduction of a new design-led cultural and competitive initiative at Woxsen University. Conceived as a high-intensity, three-day inter-team platform, the event brought together students from Semesters 2, 4, and 6 to engage in challenges that combined creativity, physical endurance, collaboration, and cultural expression.

Batch: 2nd, 4th, 6th Semester

Date and Time: 20/01/2026

Venue: Aula Block, Mode: Offline

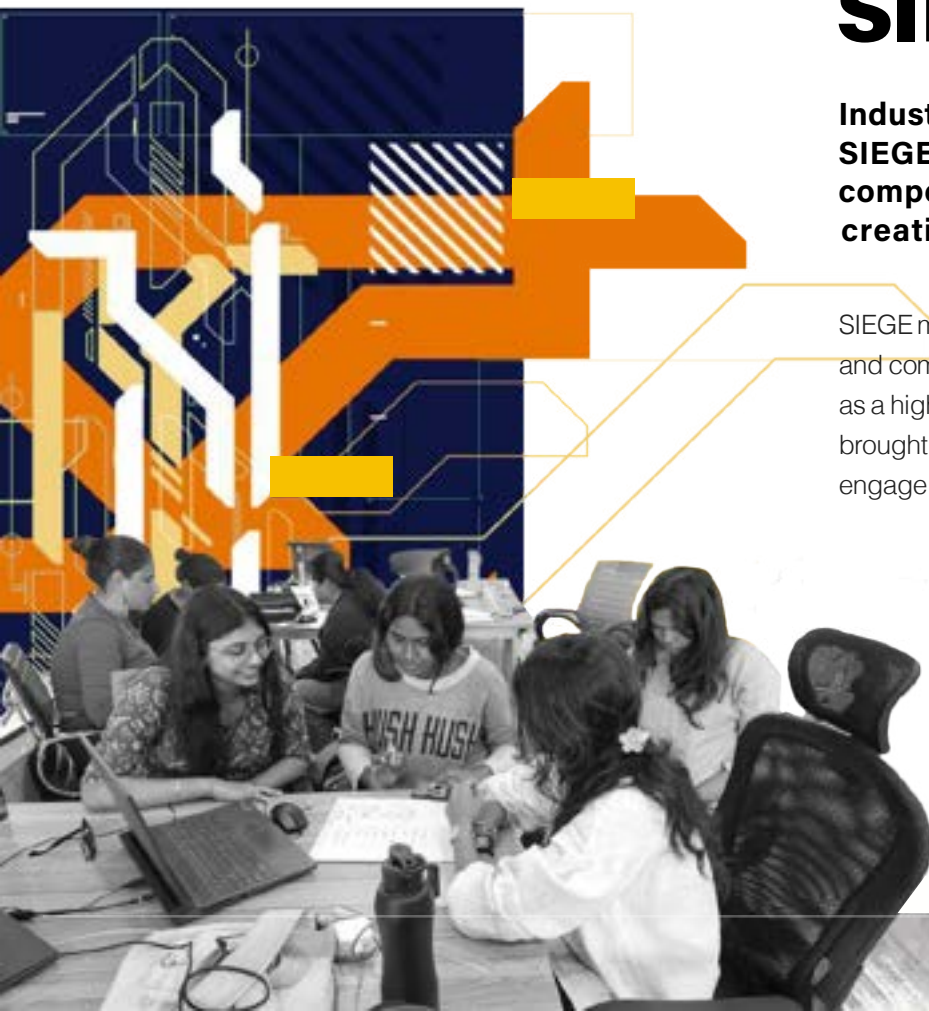
Number of Students Involved: 75–80

Organizer: Industrial Design Department

Faculty Involved: Prof. Vidyadhar, Prof.

Harsha, Prof. Bhushan, Prof. Yukta, Prof.

Gajanan, Prof. Mrudul



Project Engineering Drawing

Second-semester Industrial Design students developed technical drawing skills through the Project Engineering Drawing course.

The Project Engineering Drawing (PED) course introduced second-semester Industrial Design students to the fundamental principles of technical representation. Through structured exercises, students practiced orthographic projections, isometric drawings, sectional views, and standardized drawing conventions used in manufacturing contexts.

Date and Time: 19/01/2026

Venue: C-213

Mode: Offline

Number of Students Involved: 39

Organizer: Industrial Design Department

Faculty Involved: Prof. Harsha Sagar and Prof. Yukta Kanere

“Engineering is the art of directing the great sources of power in nature for the use and convenience of man.”



08 FASHION DESIGN

Costume-Oriented Short Film Exhibition

Fashion Design students explore costume as a narrative driver through a studio-based short film project.

As part of the Film and Costume course, Semester IV Fashion Design students undertook a curriculum-driven short film project that positioned costume as the central narrative element. Through script analysis, character breakdowns, mood boards, and costume timelines, students translated conceptual research into screen-based storytelling. The studio process required them to integrate design decisions with performance, location context, and visual continuity.

Date: 20 January 2026

Batch: B.Des Fashion Design (2024–2028), Semester IV

Duration: Studio-based activity conducted over class

Organizer: Fashion Design Department, SOAD



Reading the World Through Materials

Industrial Design students step into retail, material libraries, and spatial environments to study how colour, material, and finish shape perception.

As part of the Colour, Material, Finish (CMF) module, sixth-semester Industrial Design students undertook a field immersion across curated retail and material environments including IKEA, Magari Hyderabad, Tan Coffee, The Purple Turtles, and Balaji Marmo. The visit moved CMF beyond theory and into context, allowing students to observe how surface, texture, finish, and fabrication choices influence user perception, brand identity, and spatial narrative.

Batch: 6th Semester (2023–27)
Date & Time: 17/01/2026 | 10 AM – 6 PM
Venue: IKEA, Nayan Hardware, Tan Coffee, The Purple Turtles, Magari Hyderabad, Balaji Marmo
Number of Students: 25
Organizing Department: Industrial Design
Faculty Involved: Prof. Yukta Kanere and V.F. Samiksha Singh



Designing for a Circular Future

Industry expert introduces students to the global shift from linear production to circular design systems.

Semester IV Fashion Design students engaged in an expert session by Industry professional Ms. Sulakshana on the Circular Economy, exploring how sustainable systems thinking is reshaping global fashion practices.

Batch: B.Des Fashion Design (2024–28), Semester IV
Duration: As per scheduled class hours
Organizing Department: Fashion Design Department
Course: Circular Economy
External Resource Person: Ms. Sulakshana, Industry Professional (Circular Economy & Sustainability)



From Studio to Spotlight Project Featured in VIGOUR Magazine

Student-led fashion concept moves beyond the classroom to earn editorial recognition on a national creative platform.

The Fashion Design Department celebrated a significant milestone this January as **Po in Wonderland** was featured in the January 2026 issue of VIGOUR Magazine. The project reflects advanced conceptual development, strong visual storytelling, and professional execution aligned with contemporary fashion communication and editorial practices. Its selection marks not only creative excellence but also the department's commitment to preparing students for real-world design platforms.

Developed through rigorous research, experimentation, and iterative refinement, the project translated imaginative storytelling into publication-ready outcomes, integrating costume, surface development, color, and silhouette into a cohesive editorial narrative. The feature serves as professional validation of the student's creative and technical capabilities, reinforcing the importance of industry-aligned processes, collaboration, and presentation standards in design education.

Date: January 2026
(Magazine Publication)
Batch: B.Des Fashion Design
Mode: External Publication
Publisher: VIGOUR Magazine
Project Title: Po in Wonderland
Project Mentor: Ashutosh Kumar

**“To dress is to decide how
the world reads you.”**



Design for Mobility through Human powered Vehicles

Industrial Design students develop functional human-powered mobility prototypes rooted in sustainability and ergonomics.

Batch: 6th Semester (2023–27)
Date & Time: 17/11/2025 to 12/03/2026
Venue: A-011
Mode: Offline
Number of Students: 28
Organizing Department: Industrial Design
Faculty Involved: Prof. Vidyadhar Bhandare and Prof. Bhushan Sonawane

“The best way to predict the future is to design it.” – *Buckminster Fuller*



The Business of Brand Thinking

IDC alumnus and industry leader shared strategic insights on branding, identity, and industry expectations with Communication Design students.

Date and Time: 23 January 2026
Venue/Mode: Online
Student Participation: Semester VI, Batch CD
Organizing Department: Communication Design, SOAD
Faculty Involved: Arun Gupta
Category: Skill & Studio Development

“A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is, it is what consumers tell each other it is”

Communication Design Dept. Organises *MasterClass*

Topic
Branding and Identity

Date
23.01.2026 | Friday

Timings
10am to 1am

Meet at
Online

Sheetal Paknikar
Founder, Managing Director & CEO at Seven Twenty Ten Network Pvt. Ltd.

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Prof. Arun Gupta
Vice Dean



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Assistant Dean



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Assistant Professor



Prof. Yukta C
Assistant Professor



Prof. Harsha Sagar
Assistant Professor



Prof. Neethu Parvathy
Assistant Professor



Prof. Puneeth K
Assistant Professor





Corporate Office Gateway Jubilee, 2nd Floor, Road No. 36, Jubilee Hills,
Hyderabad - 500 033, Telangana, India. T: +91 40 4444 8888

Campus Kamkole, Sadasivpet, Sangareddy District, Hyderabad - 502
345, Telangana, India. T: 08455 255555, info@woxsen.edu.in

Official Website

www.woxsen.edu.in ↗

Editorial Design & Compilation

Neethu Parvathy
Assistant Professor, Communication Design
School of Art & Design, Woxsen University
Contact: +91 8089624894
neethu.parvathi@woxsen.edu.in

Content & Documentation Support

Ms. Ashwini Ashtagi Office of SOAD
Contact: +91 9867862909
office.soad@woxsen.edu.in

Proofreading

Ms. Vaishnavi Venkata, Industrial Design