

AUGUST 2026

Monthly Newsletter



SO
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**Design In
Vision**

DEAN'S MESSAGE

In a time marked by rapid technological change, uncertainty around AI, geopolitical complexities, and growing concerns around mental health and well-being, universities must remain more than places of academic instruction. They must also be spaces of belonging, connection and shared humanity.

This August, our celebrations from National Handloom Day and Raksha Bandhan to Onam and Independence Day—reminded all of us of the importance of coming together. These moments allowed students, faculty and staff to step beyond classrooms, connect with one another, celebrate diverse cultures, and experience the human relationships that sustain a learning community.

What these gatherings also revealed is that community itself is a curriculum. When students witness their teachers mentoring emerging leaders, publishing research, engaging with industry and contributing to national conversations, they learn something no syllabus can teach: that design thinking extends far beyond the studio, and that the work we do shapes the world around us. Every celebration, every collaboration, every moment of presence becomes a lesson in what it means to show up with intention.

Through mentoring, research, industry engagement, professional recognition and participation in national and global platforms, our colleagues are contributing meaningfully to the wider educational and social landscape. For me, this balance is important: embracing the future without losing the human connection that gives education its purpose.

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Education's purpose lies in embracing the future without losing the human connection that binds us together.

That is the SOAD we are building together.

Dr. Adity Saxena





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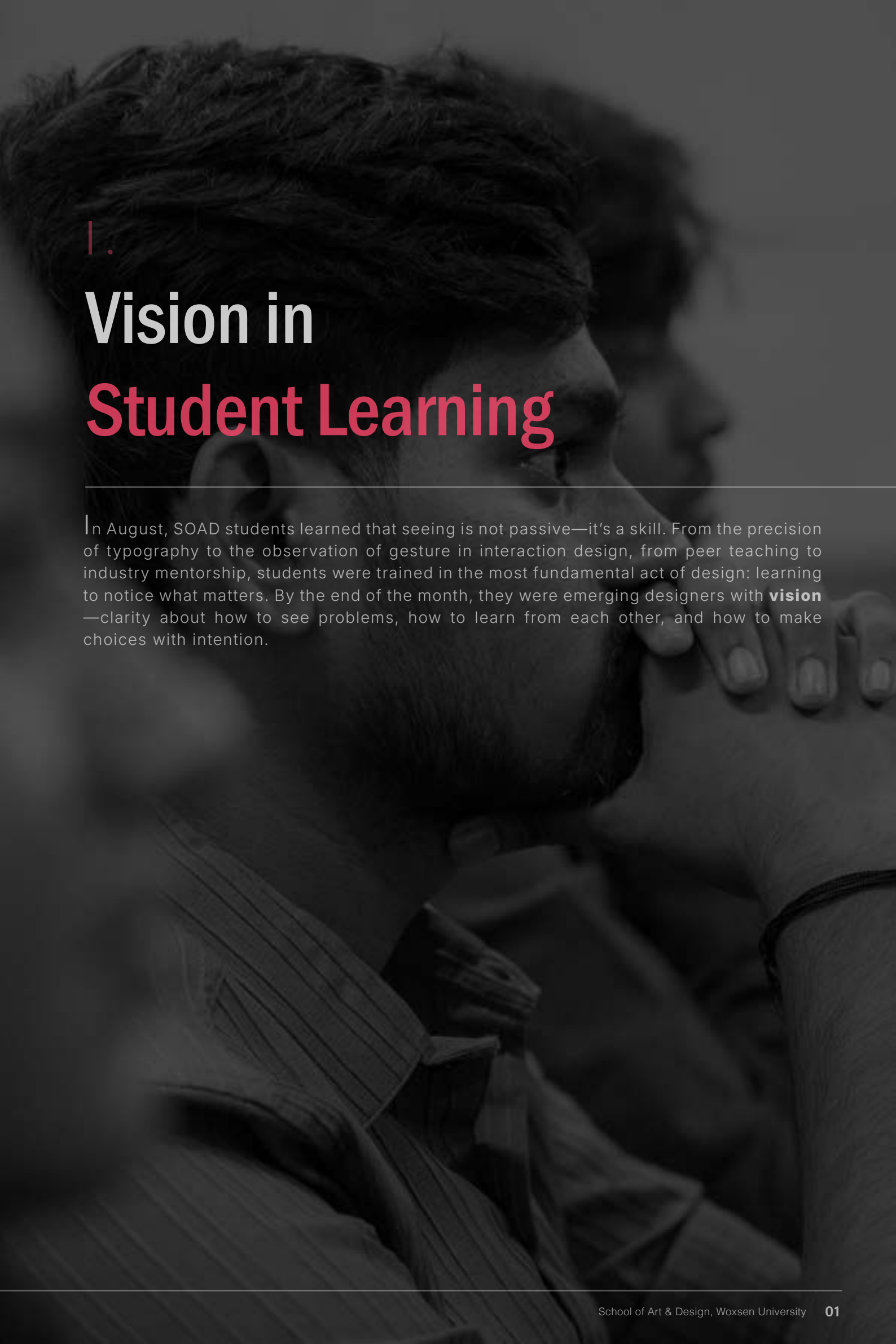
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I. Vision in Student Learning

In August, SOAD students learned that seeing is not passive—it's a skill. From the precision of typography to the observation of gesture in interaction design, from peer teaching to industry mentorship, students were trained in the most fundamental act of design: learning to notice what matters. By the end of the month, they were emerging designers with **vision**—clarity about how to see problems, how to learn from each other, and how to make choices with intention.



01

SOAD Launches Its First Design Postgraduate Program

M.Des Product Design & Innovation

On July 27th, Woxsen University opened its doors to the cohort that would begin this conversation. It was the birth of SOAD's first Master of Design program—a bet that Hyderabad needed a space where designers shaped Industry trends. Where innovation was a practice. Where Product Design meant something specific: the marriage of what's possible, what's sustainable, what's profitable, and what's actually needed. Prof. Puneeth, alongside Prof. Munwar Khan and Prof. Dhananjay, gave a glimpse of what the next two years would demand of these students.

The orientation was about unlearning. What happened over three days was a deliberate dismantling and rebuilding. The academic framework they learned wasn't rules—it was philosophy. An interdisciplinary ecosystem where a designer sat next to an engineer, next to someone with a business background. Four practitioners—Parag Trivedi, Hrishikesh Deshmukh, Meraj Faheem, Amit Shetty—who came to translate. They showed the gap between the brief and reality. The constraints that aren't in the brief. The opportunities that live in those constraints.





Rachanaarambh 2026

B.Des Orientation Program

Rachana means creation—the act of structuring something into being. Aarambh means beginning. Together, that’s what SOAD calls its orientation: the moment when a student’s design education starts.

This year’s Rachanaarambh ran across August 3rd and 4th, and it announced itself through deliberate choices about how those two days were built. Through how much space was left for new students to be unsure. Through the absence of answers they didn’t need yet.

The orientation was led by a team, with Dean Dr. Adity Saxena guiding from the start, faculty members Dr. Murali V Kesaboina, Bachaspatimayum Ashwinikumar, Manoj Borah, Suman Ghosh, Shiva Kumar, Eesha Sharma, and Dr. Divya Gauri—each bringing their own way of seeing design into the

room. Behind the scenes, Karthick and Naveen Babu Dosapati kept everything running. Guest speakers came. Alumni came. Student volunteers set the tone through quiet leadership.

Careful in a sense of attended to. Intentional. Built with the understanding that how you enter a field shapes how you move through it. These 200+ students didn’t need to hear about design on day one but they needed to experience what it feels like to be in a space where thinking matters. Where uncertainty is allowed. Where the people around them are genuinely invested in how they learn. That’s a beginning. By the end of three days, the 20 students stopped being applicants and became something else: a cohort with a shared question. “What do I want to design, and why does it matter?”















IV.

Vision in Community Engagement

In August, SOAD saw the communities around it. Through celebrations of Onam, Raksha Bandhan, and Independence Day and more, students and faculty gathered to honor traditions, preserve cultural knowledge, and recognize that design education is inseparable from the world beyond the studio. These weren't performances or tourism; they were deliberate acts of vision—**choosing to see what deserves to survive**, what stories matter, and how a design school strengthens culture by refusing to let it disappear.



03

The Language we are relearning: National Handloom Day

For thousands of years, Indian handlooms weren't a niche craft. They were an empire. Before machines made fabric fast, India made it impossibly beautiful. And the world couldn't stop buying it. They were an empire. In the 1700s, India produced nearly 50% of the world's textiles. they were unbeatable.

Bengal muslin was so fine that European traders called it "cloth of air"—you could pass an entire saree through a ring. Telia Rumals from Telangana were woven with such precision that the patterns seemed to float above the fabric. Kashmiri shawls





took six months to complete, yet people paid fortunes for them. They were proof that human hands could achieve what no machine could replicate. Then colonialism happened. The British didn't just want to rule India. They wanted to sell their own factory-made cloth. They imposed taxes so crushing that Indian weavers couldn't compete. They burned handlooms. They made it illegal to wear Indian textiles in some regions. They systematized the erasure of an entire knowledge system—one that had taken millennia to build.

By 1900, India's share of global textile exports had dropped to almost nothing. Millions of weavers lost their livelihoods. Entire communities collapsed. The knowledge that had been passed down for generations—how to create patterns so complex that they seemed impossible, how to dye with plants so

the colors would deepen with time, how to weave so precisely that the fabric would last a lifetime—began to disappear. Today, more than a century later, we're still recovering from that deliberate destruction. But here's what's shocking: Some of the weavers still making handlooms today are weaving patterns that their great-grandmothers wove. They're the last people on earth who know how to make certain textiles. When they die, that knowledge dies with them. And now—in 2026—we're realizing what we are losing.

A handloom can't produce what a power loom produces in a day. The weaver's hands move at the pace of human breath, human concentration, human care. Each thread is placed deliberately. If you rush, the pattern breaks. If you lose focus, the weave falters. A handloom forces you to witness

the making of fabric in a way that machines have trained us to forget. That's why handlooms matter. They're a form of resistance—against speed, against thoughtlessness, against the idea that everything worth making can be automated. The story of handlooms in India goes back centuries. But the story of National Handloom Day is younger, and more urgent.

On August 7, 1905, Swadeshi activists gathered at Calcutta's Town Hall and set fire to foreign cloth. They were saying: We will not consume what colonizers sell us. We will wear what our own hands make. That act—the Swadeshi movement—challenged the entire logic of industrial production. It said: There is dignity in making things slowly. ***There is power in choosing to support your own artisans.***

India didn't forget that. In 2015, the government declared August 7 as National Handloom Day—not to honor the past, but to interrupt the present. To say, in 2026, when most of us have stopped thinking about where our clothes come from: Stop. Look. Remember. There are people whose hands

are still weaving the nation. Why does this matter now? Because we've built a world where textiles are disposable. Where a garment is worn once and discarded. Where the person who made it will never know who wore it. Where the environmental cost of fast fashion has become invisible—until you see how much water it takes, how much waste it creates, how much labor it exploits.

Handlooms are the antidote to that story. They're slow enough that you can see their value. They're honest enough that you can't ignore their cost. They require you to choose: Do I want something cheap, or do I want something that matters?

But here's what most people miss: Handlooms aren't museum pieces. They're not nostalgia. They're a living technology that's more sustainable, more ethical, and frankly more beautiful than almost anything industrial production makes. A Telia Rumal saree—woven by hand with natural dyes—will last generations. It gets softer with wear. The colors deepen. Your grandmother can wear it. Your granddaughter can wear it. That's not sentimentality.





That's economics. **One garment, worn for 50 years, versus 50 garments worn for one year each.** And the artisans who make them—mostly women, mostly in rural communities—are among the most skilled craftspeople in the world. But they're also among the most economically vulnerable. A weaver makes in a month what a factory worker makes in a week. The middlemen who sell their work take most of the profit. The stories of their skill rarely reach the people who wear their textiles.

National Handloom Day is supposed to change that. It's supposed to say: See these hands. Honor this skill. Pay fairly. Preserve this knowledge. This is why a design school celebrates it. And why, on August 4th, 2026, SOAD made it matter.

Dr. Sadhna, who organized the event in coordination with the **Weaver Service Centre** in Hyderabad, understood students don't learn about handlooms from only lectures. They learn by witnessing. By having their hands near the loom. By seeing how each thread catches the light. By understanding that what looks simple on a finished saree is actually

incomprehensibly complex in the making.

The **Telia Rumal saree**—one of Telangana's most prized textiles—sat at the center of the conversation. This saree, traditionally woven with natural dyes, represents everything fast fashion has tried to kill: complexity, patience, regional specificity, and the refusal to make something if it can't be made well. The natural dyeing samples told another story. Students could see how color comes from plants, not chemicals. How indigo, madder root, and pomegranate create hues that industrial dyes have rendered obsolete. How sustainable practice isn't a modern invention—it's what artisans have been doing for centuries, until we decided speed mattered more. Dr. S. Arun Kumar and his team explained them. They connected them to the larger conversation about what design means in 2026—when climate crisis makes sustainability non-negotiable, when labor exploitation has become impossible to ignore, when every designer has to answer the question: Who made this? Were they paid fairly? Will this garment outlast its usefulness? And the students got it.



Fashion Design students understood immediately: handlooms aren't competition for their future. They're a language they need to learn. Because the most innovative design happening right now isn't in mega-factories. It's in small workshops where designers and weavers collaborate—where a designer brings an idea, and a weaver figures out how to make it real, and together they create something that couldn't exist any other way. Communication Design students saw a different story - How do you tell the story of something invisible? How do you make people care about handlooms when they've been conditioned to want cheap, fast fashion? How do you communicate the value of slowness in a world obsessed with speed? Interior Design students imagined - What role do handwoven textiles play in spaces? How do they change how a room feels, how people move through it, how light behaves? The celebration goes beyond nostalgia. It was about literacy—teaching the next

generation of designers to read the language of handlooms so they can use it intentionally in their work. Here's what SOAD was really saying by doing this:

We celebrate all communities and their cultures. As knowledge systems that your design practice needs. We understand that sustainability is a moral obligation. And handloom artisans have been practicing sustainability longer than sustainability was a concept. We're committed to supporting artisans not through charity, but through recognition and collaboration. By making sure our students understand their value. By creating markets that reward their skill. By refusing to let their knowledge disappear. When Dean Dr. Adity Saxena stood in that exhibition space, alongside faculty and students and weavers from the Weaver Service Centre, she was saying- This institution will not be part of the erasure of handlooms. We will be part of their future.





National Handloom Day is celebrated across India and SOAD celebrated it on August 4, with intention and depth. Because a school committed to design thinking—to seeing clearly, to understanding deeply, to making choices with full knowledge of their consequences—cannot ignore handlooms. Cannot treat them as quaint. Cannot accept a world where this knowledge disappears.

The hands that weave the nation are still weaving. SOAD's job is to make sure the next generation of designers knows how to honor them, how to collaborate with them, and how to weave their wisdom into the future of design.



A Thread That Says “I Will Protect You”: Celebrating Raksha Bandhan

Raksha Bandhan is one of the oldest protection rituals in the world. It's about covenant. A sister ties a sacred thread—a rakhi—on her brother's wrist. In that act, she's saying: I trust you with my safety. And he's saying: I accept this responsibility. It's a bond that goes beyond blood. It's a promise that in a world that can be cruel, at least one person has vowed to stand between you and harm.

The tradition goes back centuries. In the Vedic texts, there are references to protection threads. In medieval India, queens would send rakhis to neighbouring

kings as a plea for alliance and protection. Kings who received rakhis from queens understood they were bound by sacred duty. Rani Karnavati sent a rakhi to the Mughal Emperor Humayun when she faced invasion, and he came. A thread changed history.

There is something even older embedded in this: sisters sending warriors into battle with rakhis tied on their wrists. The thread was a physical reminder—Someone loves you. Someone needs you to come back. It was how women participated in protection, not passively, but through ritual and intention.





Over time, Raksha Bandhan evolved. It's no longer just about sisters and brothers. It's about anyone who wants to affirm: We protect each other. We are bound. Friends tie rakhis to each other. Teachers receive rakhis from students. In some places, people tie rakhis to trees, to the earth itself—saying: I vow to protect what sustains us.



On August 26th and 27th, SOAD created a space where that intention could be made tangible.

A student-led initiative organized by the 2024 batch with Samvidha as President, supported by Abhinav, Yadhu, Meenakshi, Reya, and a team of designers, social media coordinators, treasurers, documentarians, and strategists—set up a rakhi booth in the admin area.

Come.
Choose beads that speak to you.
Sit with a student.
Create your own rakhi.
Write a handwritten card.
Make the protection real.



Here's what a design school celebrating Raksha Bandhan actually does:

It says: We honor bonds that transcend hierarchy. A teacher and a student are not equals in the classroom. But in the rakhi booth, they're equal in vulnerability—both needing to express care, both needing to be protected.

It says: We understand that protection isn't violent. It's relational. That courage isn't about power. It's about showing up. About saying I'm here for you through a thread and a handwritten card.

It says: Culture isn't museum content. It's living practice. Raksha Bandhan isn't preserved in SOAD. It's practiced. Enacted. Made new every time someone chooses which beads go into their rakhi.

And it says—most importantly: We see you. All of you. And we vow to protect this space where you can be human.



What happened was simple and profound. Faculty came. Students came. Staff came. People who might never have made a rakhi before sat at tables with beads—crimson, gold, purple, green—and chose which ones felt right. They strung them together with intention. They wrote cards to people they wanted to protect, or people who protected them.



Aswathi and HarshaVardhini managed the flow so that people had time.



Meenakshi and Reya's design direction kept it spare—beads, thread, handmade cards.: Make something that represents your bond. Say it out loud through your hands.



Jashita's content strategy ensured that a design school understands that community built through rituals that ask people to slow down and make something real.

The juniors—Ashvin, Soumya—and the students who weren't officially part of the organizing committee but showed up anyway (Nithya, Ahana, Dhivya), understood something essential: You don't just lead an event. You hold space for it. You create conditions where people can be present.



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And it says—most importantly: We see you. All of you. And we vow to protect this space where you can be human. That's what happened on August 26th and 27th when a student-led team created a simple booth and invited people to make rakhis. Not tradition performed for its own sake. But tradition as a technology of care—a way of saying, in this world of speed and competition and isolation: You are not alone. Someone has vowed to protect you.



School of Arts & Design Celebrates World Photography Day

The *Art* of choosing moments to preserve – choosing the story to tell



"Migrant Mother" (1936)

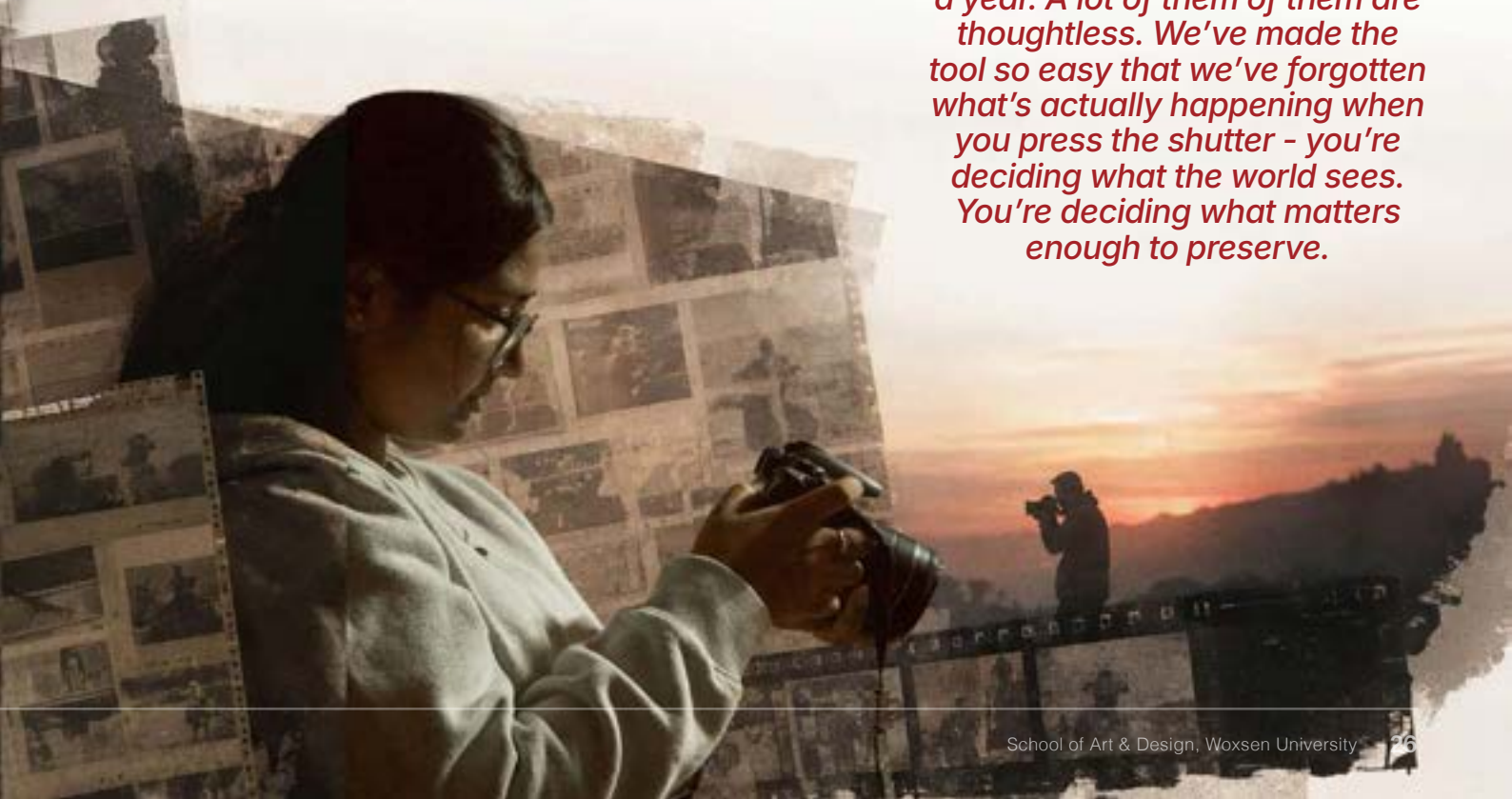
Photographed by Dorothea Lange, in Nipomo, California in a migrant labor camp during the Great Depression. It shows Florence Owens Thompson, a 32-year-old mother of seven children. The photograph became one of the most iconic images of the 20th century, symbolizing the struggles of migrant workers and poverty during the Depression. It influenced public opinion and government response to the plight of migrant workers. The image is in the public domain (Library of Congress).



"Earthrise" (December 24, 1968)

Photographed by Astronaut William Anders during Apollo 8 — showing Earth rising above the lunar horizon as seen from the Moon. It became one of the most influential photographs in human history because it showed humanity something we'd never seen before: our entire planet as a fragile, finite sphere suspended in the void of space. It changed how we saw ourselves and became an icon for the environmental movement.

We take 1.4 trillion photographs a year. A lot of them of them are thoughtless. We've made the tool so easy that we've forgotten what's actually happening when you press the shutter - you're deciding what the world sees. You're deciding what matters enough to preserve.



The View Finder Photography Exhibition

On August 26th, The View Finder opened at the Admin Block—a photography exhibition organized by the Communication Design Department, CD club.

There were no theme imposed and no curatorial narrative deciding in advance what photographs should mean. Just students from all years, all batches, bringing their photographs. Work from people who've just learned to hold a camera to those who've been photographing for months. Most exhibitions curate by theme—"identity," "urban landscape," "memory." They impose a story, force photographs into pre-decided meaning. The View Finder created a space

for seeing to happen, and not a space where seeing had already been decided.

One realises mastery is discipline. It's looking harder, choosing deliberately, trusting their eye. It's also about what you payed attention to as a photographer. The exhibition becomes a conversation across time. New photographers showing experienced ones what they've learned to see. Experienced photographers reminding beginners that growth is patient and constant. All the photographs speaking without hierarchy. Without predetermined meaning. Just to demonstrate this mattered enough to preserve. Look.







Prof. Pradeep Kumar on Photography

Prof. Pradeep Kumar, Program Director from B.Des Foundation, with 15 years experience in professional practice—leading photographic operations across high-volume studios in the UAE, working on documentary projects commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, co-founding LUCIDA, an independent photographers' collective in Delhi—shares his take on photography:

The best photographers are the ones who learned to see first, and picked up cameras second.



*Teaching
Presence*

He had spent years doing the work—commercial photography, documentary filmmaking, a photography documentation project on dying textile traditions across Northeast India. The kind of work that teaches you what vision actually costs and what it means to be present in a room with strangers for hours before you can lift the camera and what it takes to earn the right to photograph someone's life.

Somewhere in that practice, he realized that everything he'd learned—the patience, the listening, the ability to wait for a moment instead of chasing it—these things had to be seeded at the beginning, in foundation year, when students were still open to the idea that slowness is a strength in the fast paced world.

At SOAD, Prof. Pradeep Kumar teaches a radical idea, that Photography is not about itself but about everything else. the small unnoticed moments that make up a day. His design process is rooted in observation without agenda. He doesn't go looking for the "perfect shot." He goes looking. He waits. He notices what the light is doing. He watches how a

priest leans into a ritual. He sees how three children respond to a camera appearing in a doorway. He understands that the photograph doesn't happen when he presses the shutter. It happens long before, when he decides what's worth looking at. There's no hurry in his work. Some days he makes photographs. Some days he simply observes. Some days he is busy passing on his wisdom to students. But what

“

“It’s about who we are, our experiences, our influences, our connections with people, with things, with music, with family, with life, with everything,”

Prof. Pradeep Kumar



Pradeep Kumar
PHOTOGRAPHER

**Click Here to view
more of his work!**





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Ganga Aarti at Dashashwamedh Ghat happens every single evening. Same time, same steps, same sequence of rituals. Hundreds of people show up to watch it, photograph it, film it on their phones. And yet, standing there with a camera, it never quite feels like something you’ve already seen. What I kept coming back to in this frame is the priest. He’s not performing for the crowd behind him, not really. There’s something in his posture, the way he’s leaning into the rotation of the lamp, that reads less like a public ritual and more like something he’s working through privately. The fire is doing what fire does. He’s just the one holding it steady.

I’ve photographed this aarti more than once. Each time I come away with a different picture, not because the ritual changes, but because where you place yourself, and what you decide to wait for, changes everything.

Dashashwamedh Ghat, Varanasi



Prof. Pradeep Kumar

Prof. Pradeep emphasizes most on what he's trying to teach foundation students— which is getting close to something isn't about proximity. It's about deciding that the picture is worth the discomfort of being seen trying to take it. It's about overcoming hesitation. About accepting that fear of intruding, fear of being noticed, fear of making someone uncomfortable—these fears cost you photographs. And at some point, you have to decide that the image matters more than your comfort.

This is what he brings to SOAD's foundation year.

Literacy—The ability to see clearly, to wait patiently, to understand that everything you do as a designer starts with the discipline of noticing. Of choosing what matters. Of accepting that some moments reveal themselves only when you're willing to wait.

His students learn that seeing happens long before the shutter clicks. That patience is a design tool. That the quality of your attention shapes everything you create, whether you're designing a layout or a photograph or a user experience. Over the years, looking through a viewfinder, Prof. Pradeep has documented moments across India—from the ritual fire-keeping at Dashashwamedh Ghat in Varanasi to the quiet work of weavers in Dirang Basti, Arunachal Pradesh. From the weave of textile traditions disappearing from Northeast India to the daily ceremonies that mark time in sacred spaces. Each body of work carries the same intention: to be present enough that the photograph becomes a conversation.

Prof. Pradeep teaches design by teaching presence—To develop Vision.

And that presence—that willingness to slow down, to notice, to wait—is the foundation upon which all of SOAD's work is built.

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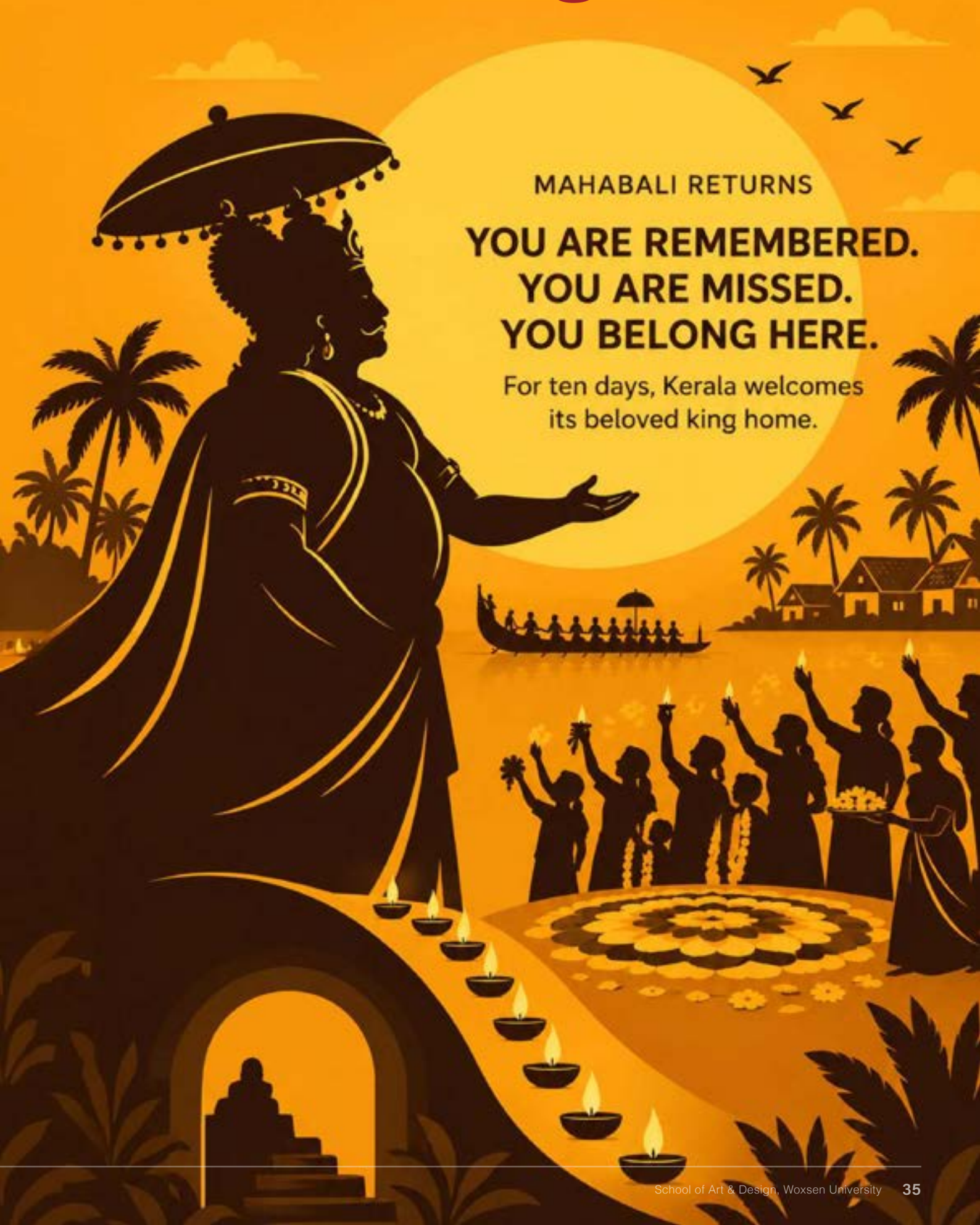
“I’ve photographed people in difficult, slow, patient situations, sitting with strangers for hours before lifting the camera,” he says. “And I’ve photographed people in four seconds of hiding behind a door. Both approaches got me something honest. The difference was just in reading what the moment actually needed.”

Young Photographers of **SOAD**



Coming
soon
on
September

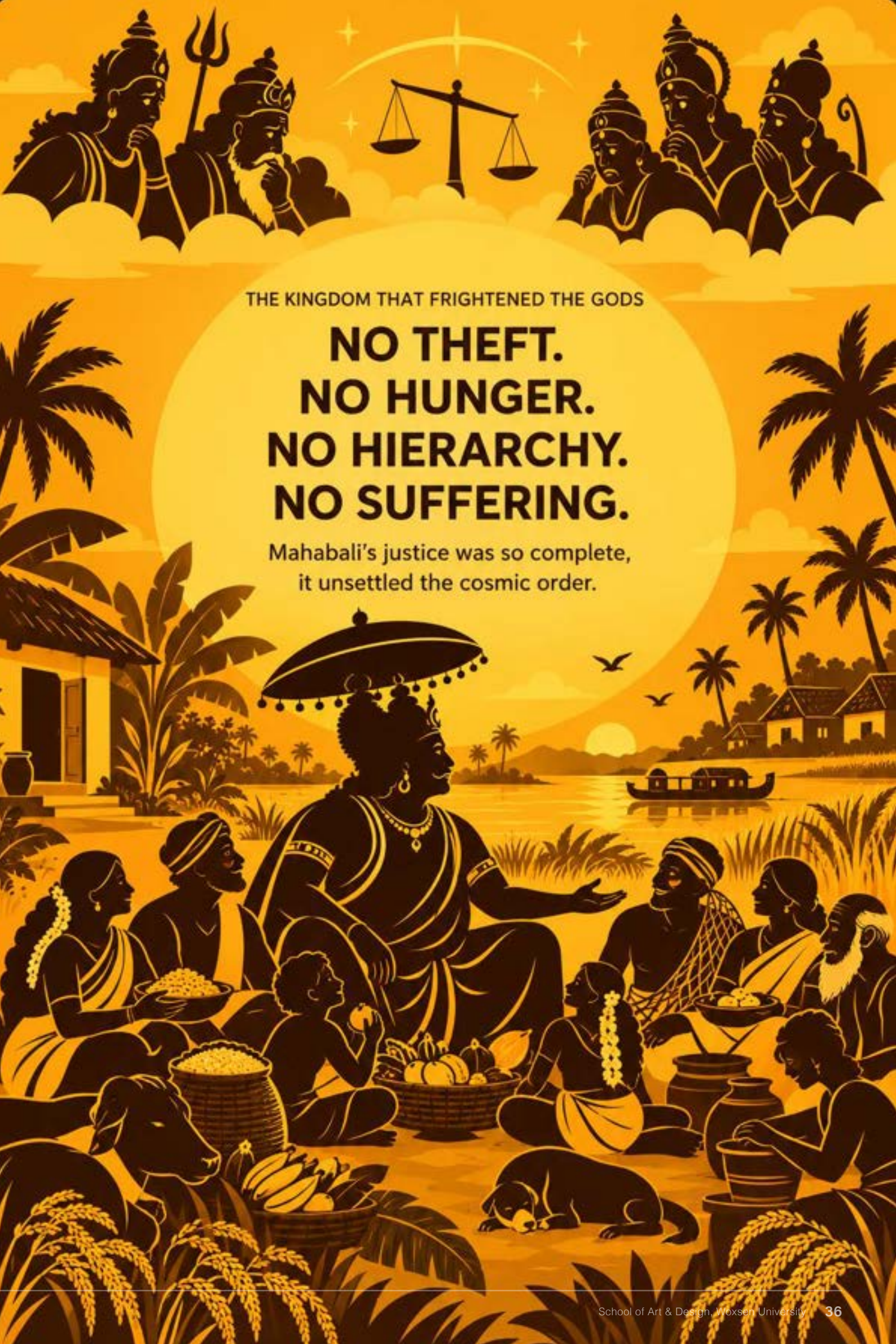
The Homecoming That Transcends Loss: Celebrating Onam



MAHABALI RETURNS

**YOU ARE REMEMBERED.
YOU ARE MISSED.
YOU BELONG HERE.**

For ten days, Kerala welcomes
its beloved king home.



THE KINGDOM THAT FRIGHTENED THE GODS

**NO THEFT.
NO HUNGER.
NO HIERARCHY.
NO SUFFERING.**

Mahabali's justice was so complete,
it unsettled the cosmic order.

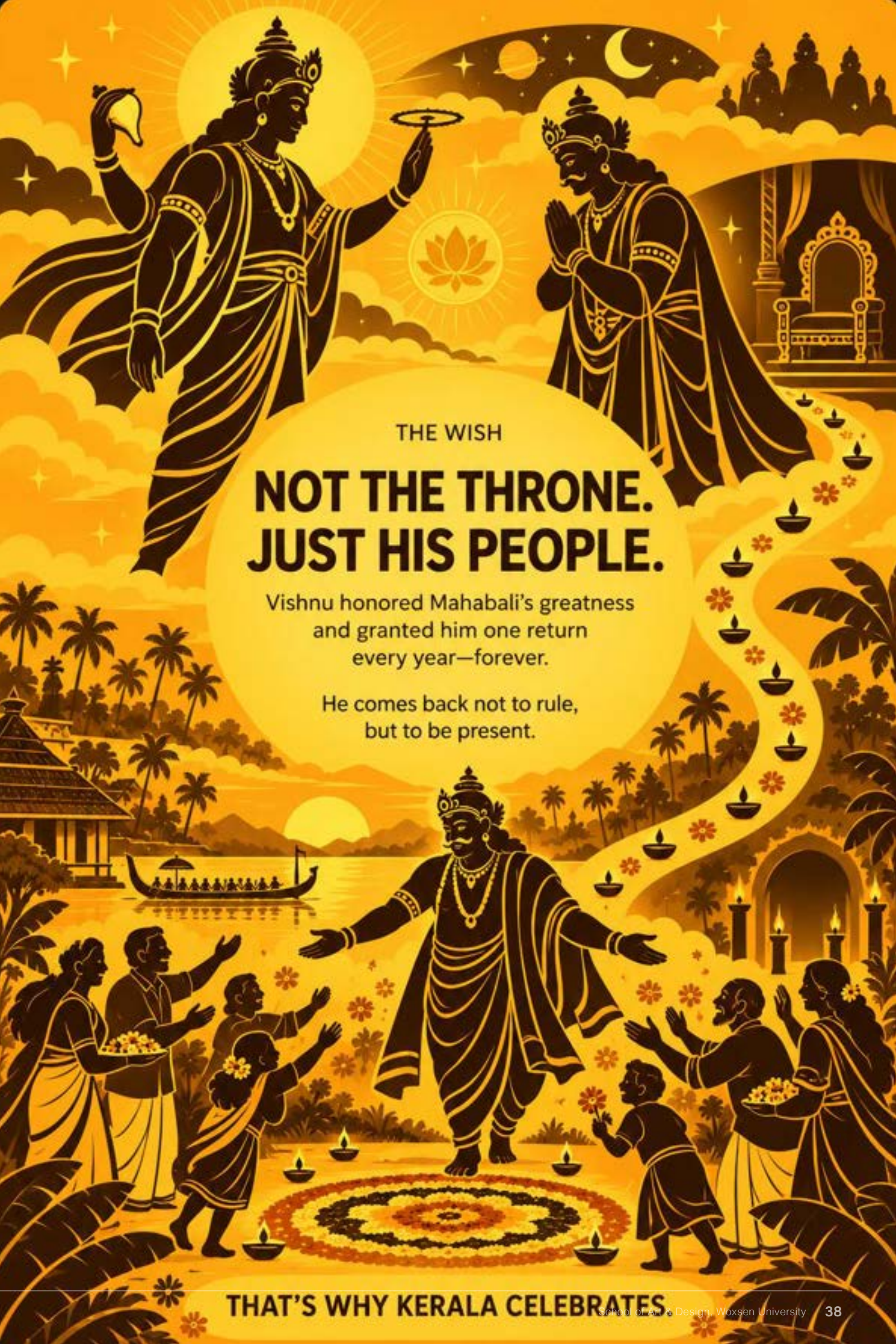


THE THREE STEPS

THE EARTH. THE SKY. THE KING.

Vamana asked for three steps of land.
Mahabali's generosity gave him the
universe.

With nowhere left to offer,
the king bowed his head.



THE WISH

NOT THE THRONE. JUST HIS PEOPLE.

Vishnu honored Mahabali's greatness
and granted him one return
every year—forever.

He comes back not to rule,
but to be present.

THAT'S WHY KERALA CELEBRATES



Onam goes beyond a simple story of a good king who was lost. It's about a more difficult story: about power and justice and the cost of both. About a king who was banished not because he was evil, but because his goodness was dangerous. About people who said: We miss you. We will keep you alive in our hearts. It's a community saying: The gods decided you had to go. But we decide you get to come back. And year after year, they keep that promise.

On 20 August 2026, that defiance became urgent at SOAD, a design school in Telangana, filled with Malayali students as well as students who've never stepped foot in Kerala understood exactly why they needed to.









The Freedom to Choose What We Build: Celebrating Independence Day

Independence day - a moment when a nation said: We are responsible for ourselves now. What we build will reflect who we are. On August 15, 1947, India It inherited a question: What does freedom look like? And more urgently—what will we do with it? For 200 years, India had been designed for by an

empire. Every decision was made elsewhere. Every system served extraction. Independence meant something radical - Indians would now design their own systems. Their own future. Their own nation. The struggle for independence wasn't fought only with weapons but also with ideas. The Swadeshi





movement insisted that we will make our own clothes. We will support our own artisans. We refuse to consume what colonizers sell us. understanding that what we choose to make, and what we choose to wear, shapes the world we live in. When Gandhi spun khadi by hand, he made a statement: The act of making is political. Where your clothes come from matters. Who profits from your consumption matters. When Rabindranath Tagore designed Shantiniketan, he was designing a vision of what education could be—rooted in Indian philosophy, but global in reach. Integrated with nature. Connected to community. He was asking- If we're free to choose,

what kind of learning space would we build? When the Constitution was drafted, it was designed—debated, argued over, crafted by Indians for India. Dr. Ambedkar and the drafting committee understood that a constitution is the ultimate design document. It shapes how society functions, who has power, whose rights are protected. This is why August 15 matters beyond nationalism. Independence Day is a reminder that design is never neutral. Every system, every institution, every choice about how to organize society—these are all designed. And if they're designed, they can be redesigned. When a design school celebrates Independence Day, it's about

recognizing that designers carry responsibility for the nation they're building. You're making systems. You're making institutions. You're making the visual language of society. The systems that distribute resources. The interfaces through which power flows. The spaces where communities gather. Every choice you make as a designer is a choice about what kind of India you're building.

This is the inheritance of independence. Freedom means you can't blame the system anymore. You can't say "this is how it's always been done." You can't hide behind tradition or external authority. Freedom means: You are responsible. What you design will reflect your values. What you choose to

make will shape the world. A designer in independent India is participating in nation-building. They're asking: Is this system just? Does this design serve all people, or only some? What does my work contribute to the world I want to live in? That's the question independence poses. ***That's the question SOAD engages with every day—through the curricula it designs, through the students it educates, through the projects it supports.***

On August 15, a design school remembers: We are free to design. That freedom is a responsibility, not a luxury. What we make matters. Who we design for matters. Whether we design to serve exploitation or to serve flourishing—that choice is ours.







IV . Vision in Faculty Achievements

SOAD faculty stepped into conversations that shape industries and define the future of education itself. Dr. Adity Saxena was selected as a mentor in EVEmpower, a national program identifying and guiding the next generation of women leaders across India. Four SOAD faculty were chosen as judges for QS Reimagine Education Awards, helping determine which innovations will reshape how the world teaches and learns. And Dr. Haleh Boostani published Q1 research advancing materials science and nanocoating technology. These were acts of vision, of faculty using their expertise not just to build their own fields, but to lift others, define standards, and author what comes next.

A Legacy of Contribution

Behavioural



Understanding how people perceive and experience spaces.

Experiential



Transforming studios into living labs for making, testing, and discovery.

Systems Thinking



Connecting behaviour, space, culture, time, and environment through critical inquiry.



Recognising those who shape design education, inspire minds and lead with purpose.

SOAD Enters the Global Conversation

When QS Reimagine Education Awards opened applications for judges, they were looking for people who could tell the difference between innovation that's *genuine* and innovation that's just *noise*. SOAD faculty applied. And four were selected: **Dean Dr. Adity Saxena**, **Prof. Neethu Parvathy**, **Prof. Eesha Sharma**, and **Prof. Aditya** as educators with something essential to contribute—the ability to see what actually changes how people learn, versus what just sounds transformative. By October 4th, they'll evaluate hundreds of educational projects from across the world. The ones they recognize won't just win awards. They'll become blueprints. They'll shape what universities globally decide to build next. It's not a small responsibility. It's the responsibility of helping author what education becomes. And now, from Hyderabad, they're part of defining the future of learning worldwide.



QS REIMAGINE EDUCATION AWARDS & CONFERENCE 2026



7-8 December | London, UK



Prof. Aditya Pasumathi

Dr. Aditya Saxena

Prof. Eesha Sharma

Prof. Parvathy

Design thinking to leadership growth.

In India, something interesting happens with women and work. More women graduate from universities than ever before. But fewer of them end up in professional roles years later. Researchers call it a “network gap” and “the visibility gap”—women often don’t have someone ahead of them saying, “I’ve been here. This is possible. Here’s what I learned.”

The Confederation of Indian Industry’s Indian Women Network runs a program called EWEmpower to change that. It pairs emerging women leaders—professionals and entrepreneurs across industries, across the southern states—with experienced mentors who commit real time each month to guide them. Not one-off advice. Real mentoring. Career pathways. How to navigate teams. How to lead when you haven’t seen it done before.

This year, the program launched its 7th cohort. And Dr. Adity Saxena, Dean of Woxsen’s School of Arts and Design, is one of the mentors.

When design educators step into roles like this, It says that design thinking—how to see problems clearly, how to center human experience, how to communicate with intention—isn’t something confined to studios and classrooms. It’s how leaders think. It’s how institutions change.

Dr. Adity’s mentees across industries will learn from her not just what leadership looks like, but what it looks like when someone who builds communication systems and educational spaces brings that same rigor to developing people. In a country working to close the gap between university enrollment and workforce participation for women, programs like EWEmpower are how that gap actually closes. One mentor. One emerging leader. Real attention. Real time. Real belief that the path forward is possible.



CII Indian Women Network
Southern Region



A PATH FORWARD BECOMES POSSIBLE WHEN SOMEONE SHOWS THE WAY.

Dr. Adity Saxena joins EWEmpower as a mentor to emerging women leaders across India’s southern states



One mentor. One emerging leader. Real attention. Real time.

7TH COHORT • 2026-27

Woxsen’s role goes beyond training designers. It is also about growing leaders who see people, listen carefully, and help others move forward.

Through EWEmpower, mentors like Dr. Adity Saxena help shape a more inclusive, connected and confident generation of women leaders across India’s southern states.

GUIDANCE THAT LASTS
Meaningful conversations that open new possibilities.

NETWORKS THAT INCLUDE
Expanding access, visibility and opportunity.


twn.sr@cii.in

STRONGER WOMEN
BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

School of Art & Design, Woxsen University 50

Prof. Eesha Sharma Recognized as Rising Star: Arcause Pedagogue Enabler Award 2026



ARCAUSE™ | AWARDS 2026

our responsibility



ARCAUSE PEDAGOGUE ENabler AWARD *The Rising Star*

Prof. Eesha Sharma
Assistant Professor | Woxsen University



With over a **decade** of experience, **Prof. Eesha Sharma** has advanced design education through **environmental psychology**, **experiential** pedagogy, and **human-centred** design. Her **White Cube** Experiment engages students with real users through observation, full-scale making, and public participation, integrating behaviour, **sustainability**, sensory experience, and research into **design** learning.



A Legacy of Contribution

Behavioural



Understanding how people perceive and experience spaces.

Experiential



Transforming studios into living labs for making, testing, and discovery.

Systems Thinking



Connecting behaviour, space, culture, time, and environment through critical inquiry.

Engagement



Connecting design education with communities, research, and scholarship.



Recognising those who shape design education, inspire minds and lead with purpose.

IV.

Vision in Industry Engagement

From apparel factories to textile mills, from UX workflows to furniture design processes, students watched how real design works when it meets production constraints, material realities, and market demands. Guest lectures on AI in fashion, Industry 4.0, and career pathways weren't abstract talks—they were sight-lines into the world designers actually enter. By August's end, students had developed vision beyond the studio: they could see supply chains, understand what manufacturers face, recognize where their design decisions have real consequence. That's industrial literacy—the ability to see and navigate the systems your work will inhabit.

Akash Ashesh

VISUAL MERCHANDISING HEAD • TITAN

GUEST SPEAKER • EX ABFRL • ITC • NIKE • PANTALONNS

Industry Connect • Guest Lecture

Sandeep Kumar of Silver Spark Apparel on Industry 4.0 & Apparel Manufacturing

How Smart Manufacturing is Reshaping the Blazer:

Over Spark Apparel Ltd. walked Fashion Design students through Industry 4.0, he was showing them a transformation. And the transformation isn't about robots replacing hands. It's about hands and robots learning to think together.



TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP MEETS INTELLIGENT MANUFACTURING

INDUSTRY CONNECT SERIES 2026
INDUSTRY INTERACTION SESSION

INDUSTRY 4.0 & THE MODERN BLAZER

Inside Silver Spark Apparel:
Raymond's Suit Manufacturing Case Study

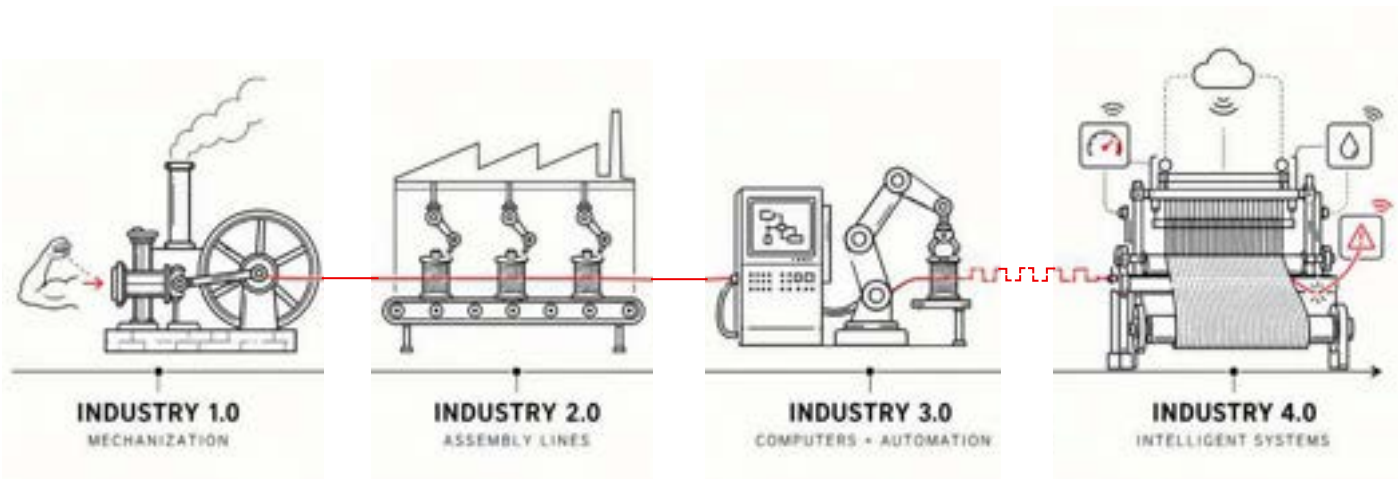
FOCUS AREAS

- Industry 4.0 in Apparel
- Smart Manufacturing
- Suit Construction
- Production Technology

16-17 April 2026 | 8:30 AM - 12:25 PM | Online Session

FROM THREAD TO INTELLIGENT SYSTEM.

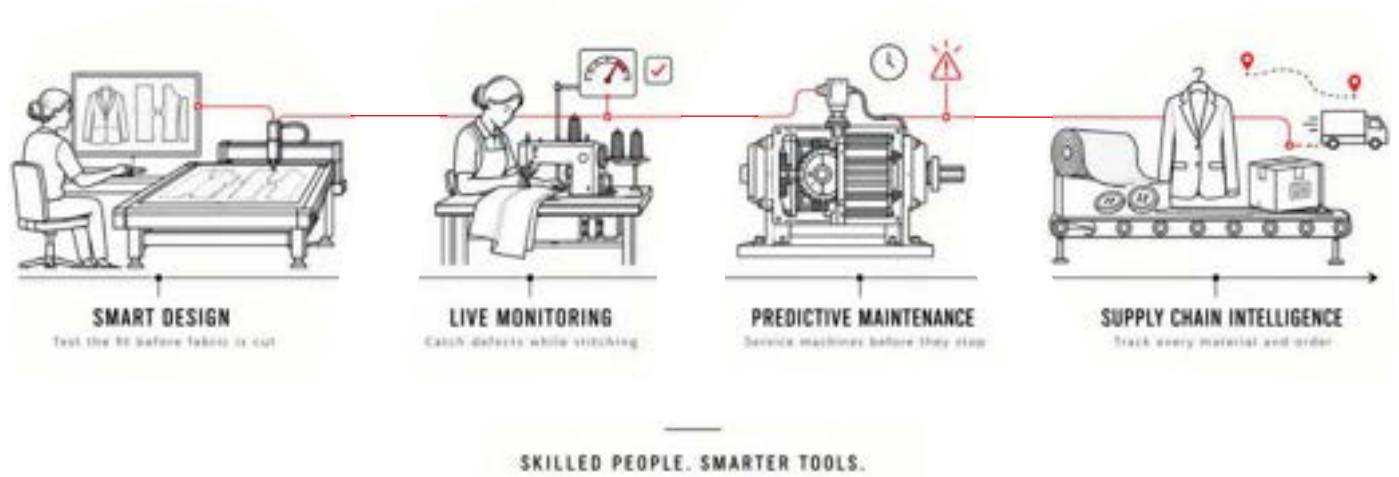
MR. SANDEEP KUMAR
LEAD – PRODUCTION MANUFACTURING
SILVER SPARK APPAREL LTD.
A RAYMOND INITIATIVE



Industry 1.0 was mechanization—the steam engine replacing muscle. Industry 2.0 was assembly lines—Henry Ford teaching machines to move at predictable rhythms. Industry 3.0 was computers and automation—machines that could follow instructions perfectly, every time. Industry 4.0 is something different. It’s intelligent systems. Machines that don’t just follow instructions—they communicate. They collect data. They learn. They anticipate problems before they happen. A loom in Industry 4.0 doesn’t just weave. It monitors tension in real-time, adjusts for humidity changes, tells you three steps in advance if a thread is about to break. For apparel manufacturing, this changes everything.

A traditional blazer is one of the most complex garments to make.

The front panels have to align perfectly with the back. The lapels have to roll a certain way. The collar has to sit at an exact angle. The sleeves have to hang with precise ease. One millimeter off in the pattern, one degree off in the seam angle, and the entire garment looks wrong. For centuries, this complexity meant that suit-making was craft. Experienced tailors, working slowly, adjusting constantly, using their hands and eyes to catch what machines couldn’t see. Then came automation, and everyone assumed those tailors would disappear. They didn’t. They evolved instead. What Sandeep Kumar showed the students was how smart manufacturing works in a real factory. Silver Spark Apparel Ltd., part of the Raymond Initiative, is operating at the cutting edge of this. They’re not replacing skilled workers with robots. They’re giving skilled workers superpowers. Here’s how it actually works:



Industry Connect • Guest Lecture

Vibhanshu Srivastava from CIEL Textile on Design to Dispatch

On July 31st, when Mr. Vibhanshu Srivastava from CIEL Textile walked Fashion Design students through the apparel export ecosystem, he wasn't just explaining logistics. He was showing them where their designs actually go. A sketch on a computer screen becomes a pattern. A pattern becomes fabric. Fabric becomes garment. But then what? Where does it travel? Who handles it at each stage? What constraints and possibilities exist in the global supply chain? Students learned the entire lifecycle—from design conception to production to

shipping to the international market—not as abstract information, but as the real journey every garment their generation designs will take. It was a lesson in consequence: your design choices in the studio ripple through factories, shipping routes, customs, retail floors across the world. Understanding that journey isn't optional information for a fashion designer. It's the difference between designing in isolation and designing with vision—seeing clearly where your work enters the world, and accepting responsibility for that entry point.

FROM DESIGN TO DISPATCH

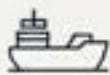
Understanding Apparel Export Operations



Design to
Production



Fashion Export
Careers



Global
Supply Chain



Apparel Export
Lifecycle



Fri. 31 July 2026

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM



Online Session

Design
Produce
Export
Impact

PEOPLE
PRODUCTS
POSSIBILITIES
GLOBALLY

Vibhanshu Srivastava
CIEL TEXTILE – LAGUNA INDIA

GUEST SPEAKER

Mr. KVT Rao from Signode India on Skills for Campus-to-Career Transition

On August 21st, Mr. KVT Rao, Director of Sales at Signode India, spoke to Fashion Design students about something most curriculum guides don't explicitly teach: how to become a professional. With 34 years of corporate experience, he wasn't there to sell a job. He was there to translate—to show the gap between what universities teach and what industries expect. Technical skills matter, yes. But what actually determines whether a designer thrives in their first role? The ability to listen. To ask questions before assuming you know the answer. To understand that your individual brilliance has

to serve team objectives. To see feedback not as criticism but as data about how your work lands in the real world. To show up on time, deliver what you promised, and own your mistakes. These sound obvious. But they're the skills that separate designers who get hired once from designers who build careers. Mr. Rao was teaching something deeper than job readiness—he was teaching professional maturity. The understanding that a career isn't about your portfolio. It's about your reliability, your adaptability, and your willingness to keep learning from people who see the world differently than you

SKILLS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM CAMPUS TO CAREER

4 LESSONS

FROM 34 YEARS OF CORPORATE CAREER

45-MIN TALK - INTERACTIVE Q&A

Fri 21 August 2020

12:20 AM - 12:35 PM

Online Session

3040 Classroom Weston



Mr. KVT Rao
DIRECTOR - SALES
SIGNODE INDIA LIMITED



16

Prof. Ankit on Human-Machine Interaction: Designing for Intelligence

On August 5th, Prof. Ankit brought HMI design into the classroom for Industrial Design's 5th semester students. Human-Machine Interaction is everywhere now. Your car's dashboard, your phone's interface, smart systems that learn your patterns. Every interaction between human and intelligent machine is HMI design, and it's exponentially complex. Prof. Ankit, alongside Prof. Harsha Sagar, Prof. Vidyadhar, and Prof. Tejas, decoded real industry briefs. A car manufacturer

asks: How do passengers trust an autonomous vehicle? How do they communicate with it? These are questions about human psychology and safety. Students learned how hardware and software must speak the same language, how a gesture on screen must match system behavior, how emotional experience matters as much as function. Through case-based simulation, they experienced what it's like to solve an HMI problem under real constraints.



III .

Vision in Student & Alumni Achievements

SOAD earned recognition at every level: globally (IED Milan), locally (Cutting Edge), nationally (#2 ranking). Convergence meant international partnerships and homegrown collaborations validating the same truth — design education's power lies in building bridges, not walls.



Chinmai & Venudharshan at Adobe NEXT Mumbai 2026

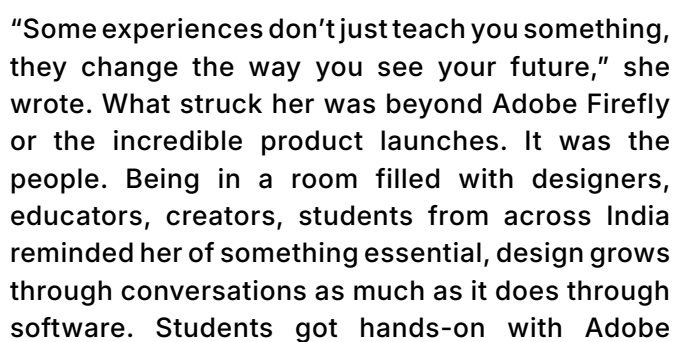
Adobe NEXT is where the design industry gathers to ask ***what's actually changing?*** What's next? when possibilities expand, when what seemed impossible last month becomes the default this month. On July 31st to August 1st, Adobe NEXT Live Mumbai 2026 brought together designers, filmmakers, educators, students, and creative leaders from across India to explore exactly that question. And three people from SOAD were there: ***Prof. Kamalanarayanan*** (Program Director), along with seventh-semester Communication Design students ***Chinmai sai Daivala*** and ***Venudharshan***—fully sponsored by Adobe to participate. The premise of Adobe NEXT 2026 was deceptively

simple: What happens when creativity meets AI? Not whether AI was replacing designers? But how do designers use AI differently than everyone else? What does creativity actually mean when the tool can generate in seconds what used to take hours? From Adobe Firefly workshops to hands-on design sessions, from conversations about branding to portfolio critiques, the event was exploring thinking. How do you remain the author when the process accelerates? How does your judgment, your taste, your cultural understanding become more valuable when execution becomes faster? Chinmai and Venudharshan walked in excited. She walked out transformed.





***AI** can accelerate the process.
But **YOU** remain the author.*



Firefly, designing note bags, experiencing how generative AI can become a creative collaborator rather than a replacement. But the real shift came from meeting other designers—especially getting to ask a question and interact with Anik Jain, a designer whose work they'd admired for a long time. That proximity, that connection, that moment of being in the same room—that's something no tool can automate. Venudhjarshan had a similar



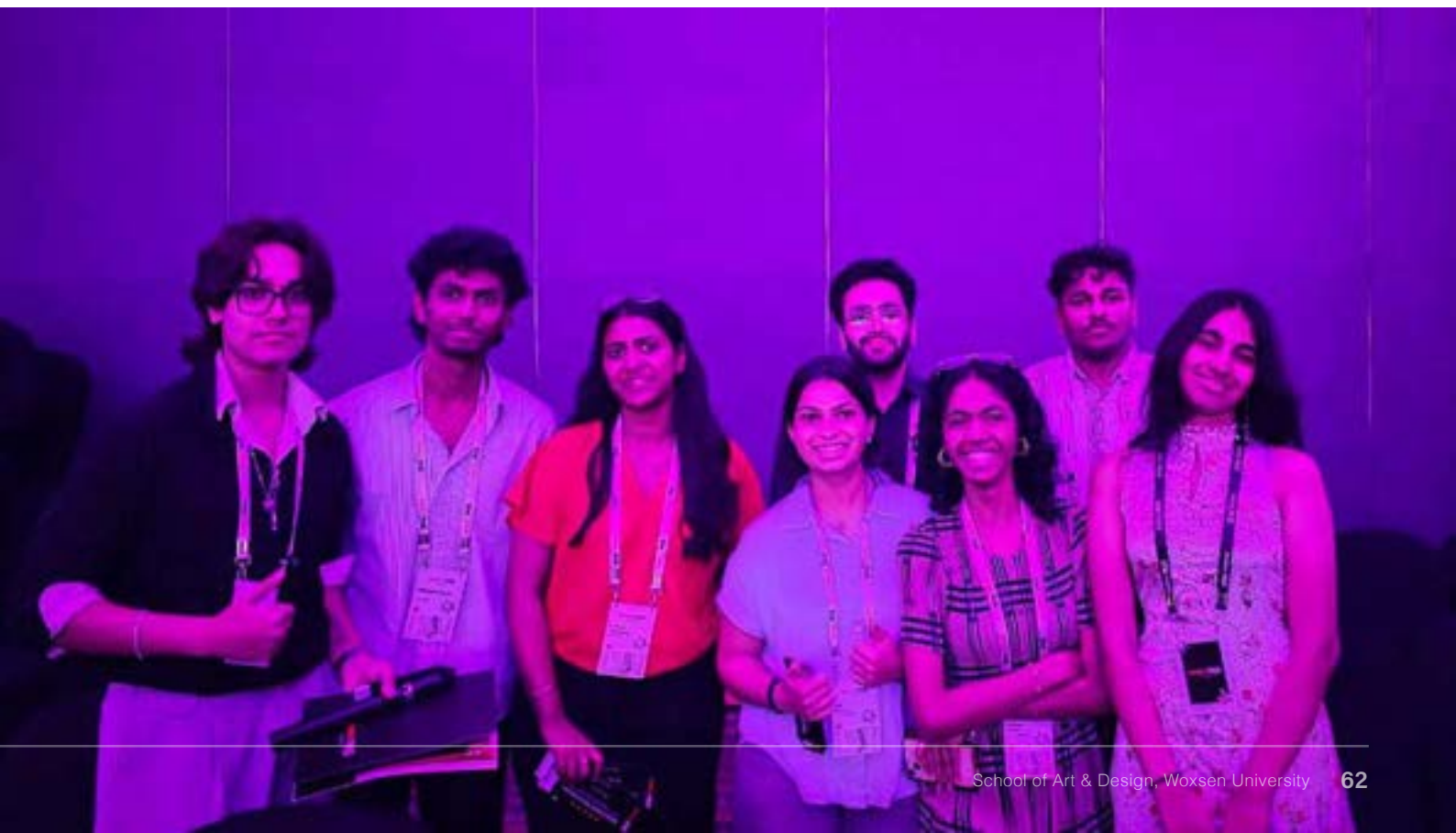
realization. He attended sessions by Adobe experts and industry professionals, learning better ways to use Adobe tools and improve his creative workflow. But what he emphasized was connection, "One of the best parts of the event was connecting with designers, filmmakers, and creative professionals from different parts of India. It was inspiring to talk with them, share ideas, and learn from their experiences." Both students understood something that only happens when you step outside your campus, you're part of a larger conversation.

The people you meet, the ideas you exchange, the paths that might cross again somewhere in the design industry and these become part of your trajectory in ways you can't predict. When SOAD sends students to Adobe NEXT—fully sponsored, trusted to represent the institution—It's about the institution saying: You're ready. Your work is ready. Go into the larger conversation and hold your own. Chinmai and Venudhjarshan were there

as designers. As future leaders. As people whose perspectives matter in conversations about the future of design. And the insight Woxsen brought back from the event matters for all students: "AI can accelerate the process. But YOU remain the author."

In a moment when everyone's anxious about tools replacing skills, Adobe NEXT—and SOAD's presence there—insisted on your judgment. Your taste. Your cultural understanding. Your ability to see what matters. These become more essential, not less, when execution becomes faster. This is what student achievement looks like at SOAD. Moments when students step into the larger professional world and discover: I belong here. My perspective matters. The work I'm doing is part of something bigger. Chinmai and Venudhjarshan came back with more than notes and photos. They came back understanding that being a designer is about joining a community of people asking difficult questions about what creation means when everything is changing.

*Chinmai and Venudhjarshan were there as designers.
As future leaders.
As people whose perspectives matter in conversations
about the future of design.*



Vidhya Motamarri Wins Dakshin Design Award 2026 in Social Impact Category

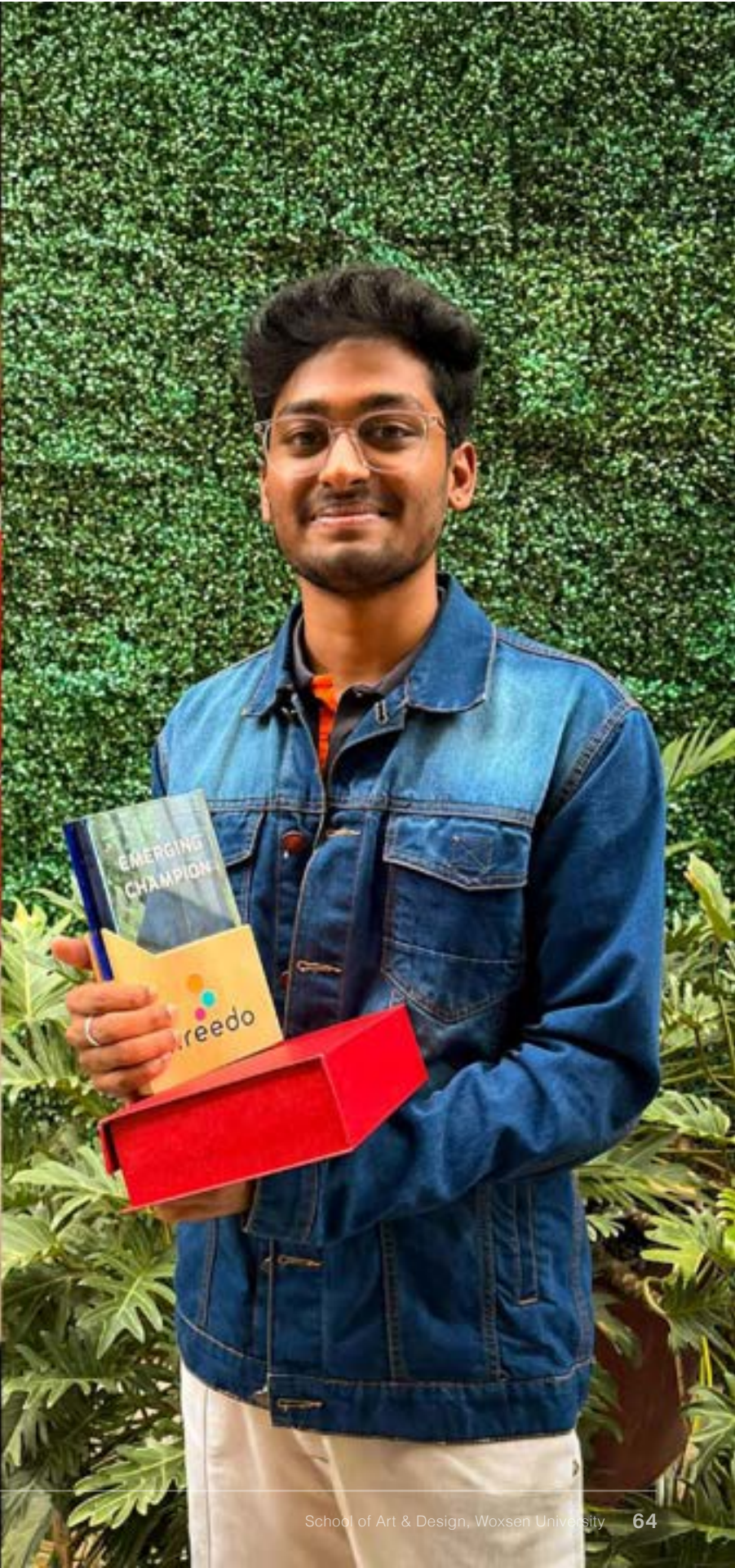
SOAD celebrates an achievement from its Industrial Design program- **Vidhya Motamarri** (IDD 2022-26) has been recognized at the Dakshin Design Award 2026 in the Social Impact category for her project "Moodmosaic." The recognition comes as validation of work that addresses social needs through design—a core

principle of the Industrial Design education at SOAD. Vidhya's selection in the Social Impact category reflects his commitment to creating design solutions that matter beyond aesthetics. Beyond this achievement, Vidhya has also been recognized as an Emerging Champion Award recipient at Kreedo, an organization with 350+



employees, for delivering exceptional outcomes as a fresher. In his own words: ***"This recognition means a lot to me, especially this early in my career. Your words have always motivated me to push myself and do better."*** What stands out in Vidhya's trajectory is he's taking what he's learning at SOAD—the discipline of research-driven

design, the focus on human-centered solutions, the integration of social responsibility into every project—and translating it into real recognition in the professional world. This is about work that matters. Work that moves from campus into the world and gets recognized there.



Rishita Marripalli's "Reclaimed" at Mazda Art Festival 2026

As Rishita Marripalli's artwork prepares to be exhibited at Mazda Art Festival 2026 (September 11-13 at State Gallery of Art, Madhapur, Hyderabad), the weight of the moment becomes clear: among 250 artworks curated nationwide, her acrylic painting stands as evidence of something fundamental about artistic growth. "Reclaimed" is, quite literally, a return—a recreation of a painting she made in 2020, approached with years of additional practice, refined technique, and visual language she'd developed since.

The decision to revisit an old idea rather than chase something new speaks to a discipline her SOAD faculty have consistently encouraged: that growth happens through patience, consistency, and the courage to deepen your own voice. For a Communication Design student who started with Barbie drawings as a child and built a hand-painted wooden furniture brand alongside her studies, this festival recognition isn't validation that she's arrived. It's proof that she's been showing up—returning to her own work, refining it, and trusting that the practice itself is the point.



WE INVITE YOU

For a three-day weekend celebration of art, culture & creativity, featuring 250+ artworks by 175+ artists from across India.

Discover diverse styles, meet artists, watch them create & acquire artworks directly from the artists without any additional gallery markup.

— FROM —



DILNAWAZ TARAPORE
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MAZDA ART



VISPI TARAPORE
FOUNDER AND COO
MAZDA ART



SINCE 2016: THE JOURNEY OF MAZDA ART BEGAN WITH A SIMPLE YET PROFOUND MISSION: TO UPLIFT AND EMPOWER EMERGING ARTISTS ACROSS INDIA BY PROVIDING THEM WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOWCASE THEIR TALENT AND CONNECT WITH A WIDER AUDIENCE.

MAZDA ART FESTIVAL 2026

INVITATION

11. 12. 13. SEPTEMBER

STATE GALLERY OF ART
MADHAPUR, HYDERABAD.

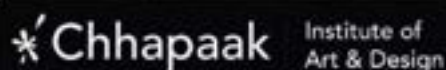


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DISCOVER

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Chenna Sai Vennela 's "Education One" Selected for Millennium Fellowship 2026

Among 76,000 applicants from 174 countries, only 5,500 are selected for the Millennium Fellowship—a 7% acceptance rate that speaks to the rigor of the selection process. Chenna Sai Vennela, a Communication Design student (Batch 2024) at SOAD, is among them. Her project, "Education One," was selected because it advances UN Sustainable Development Goals—

the fellowship's core criteria. For the duration of the fellowship (August-November 2026), Vennela will work within this cohort of global designers and innovators, engaging in the kind of intensive, purpose-driven work that the program demands. It's recognition that her design thinking—developed through SOAD's curriculum and refined through her own project work—addresses challenges that matter at scale. Selection to the Millennium Fellowship is an invitation into a community of designers asking how their work contributes to the world's most pressing problems.



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FOR SEPTEMBER EDITION

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THE SOAD
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The School of Arts & Design Newsletter reflects the collective spirit of learning, creativity, and collaboration that defines our academic community. Each edition brings together the efforts of many individuals who contribute to shaping an environment where ideas are explored, knowledge is shared, and design education continues to evolve.

We extend our sincere gratitude to:

- **The Vice Chancellor and Vice President** of Woxsen University for their strategic guidance and commitment to advancing design education and institutional excellence.
- **Vice Dean, Assistant Deans and Program Leaders** for their academic leadership and commitment to advancing innovative and interdisciplinary learning experiences.
- **Faculty Members** for their dedication to teaching, mentorship, and research that enrich the educational journey of our students.
- **Students** whose creativity, curiosity, and hard work bring life to the projects and explorations featured in this newsletter.
- **Parents and Families** for their trust and encouragement that support students in pursuing their creative aspirations.
- **Industry Partners, Alumni, and Collaborators** for their valuable engagement in bridging academic learning with professional practice.

Together, these contributions continue to nurture a vibrant design community committed to learning, innovation, and meaningful impact.



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