

Design Course

Explorations in Image Making

Handmade Image Making

by

Ruchi Shah

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/course/explorations-image-making>



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<https://www.dsource.in/course/explorations-image-making/introduction>

Introduction

Within the context of this tutorial let us understand what image making really is. It is an illustration, or an image that has been made; handmade, handcrafted skilfully. So skilfully made that the boundaries between reality and illusion are blurred.

IMAGE: A PHYSICAL LIKENESS OR REPRESENTATION OF A PERSON, ANIMAL, OR THING, PHOTOGRAPHED, PAINTED, SCULPTURED, OR OTHERWISE MADE VISIBLE.

MAKING: THE ACT OF A PERSON OR THING THAT MAKES.

There are many different methods of image making and illustration. Images can be drawn by hand and rendered by paints, watercolours or inks. They can be made as a collage, sketched in different styles on a paper or on a tablet and so on. **But this module will cover how different materials, when used in a different context, create an alternative and interesting world of images.**

Why make images by hand?

The computer does allow for dimensional design, but still handmade and not virtually made images awaken a sense of wonder within us. If images are handmade, it gives way for the belief that it really exists, that it has weight, volume and dimension. The artist who creates them has touched them, and the viewer who perceives them knows that they have been touched by hand, thus almost bringing about a connection in between the viewer and the creator. A connection between the illusion that he has created - to the reality he is trying to represent.

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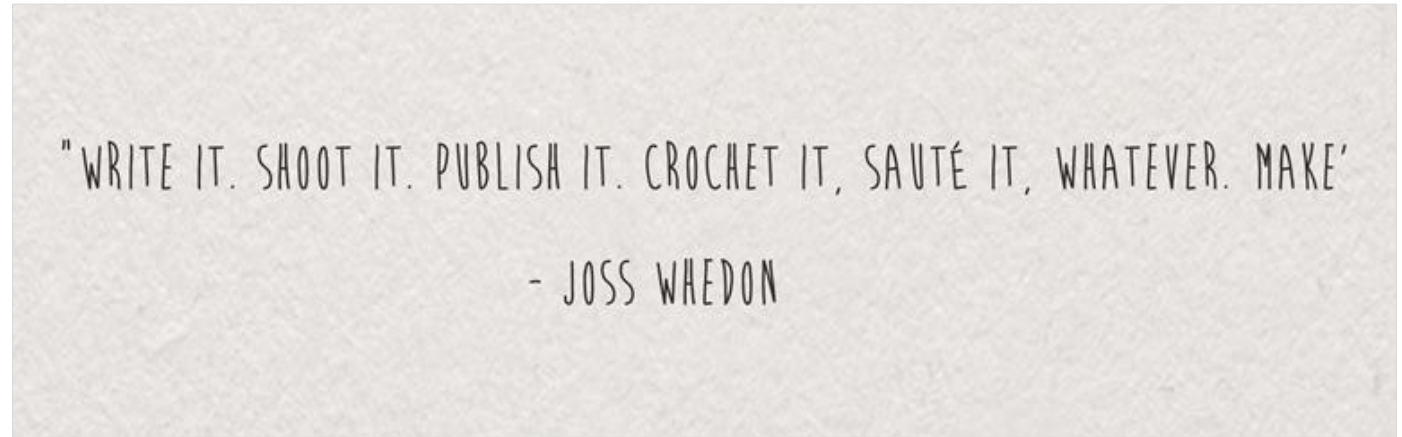
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<https://www.dsource.in/course/explorations-image-making/principles-illustration>

Principles of Illustration

Before we proceed into the tutorial it is important to understand what makes up the image or illustration and its defining style. Each image-maker has their own personal callings or skill sets that allows them to mark out the bounding lines between which they operate, to produce beautiful images for an audience.

For some it may be the subject that is of value to them. For others it maybe the medium that they manipulate well. Culture, cityscapes, stereotyped people or thick lines, disjointed lines, fine lines can be the bearers of distinctive illustration styles. Colours, textures and patterns also become the primary ingredients of a well prepared image. Which elements shall be used, how many times do they appear, in what proportions, how complicated or how minimalist, moving forward all these become rules to which an image-maker remains committed. When the content of the image is married to the method it is created in, the image becomes far more memorable, communicable thus achieving its purpose. The medium occasionally becomes the message.

Let us see some examples of varied styles in order to understand what really makes them different.



Images inspired from patterns follow the rules of repetition. They could also be following an equation while being repeated. Forms, colours, elements can be repeated creatively to make an entire image or pattern. These images in turn can have their own stylistic elements which could be hand drawn or vector based, for instance.

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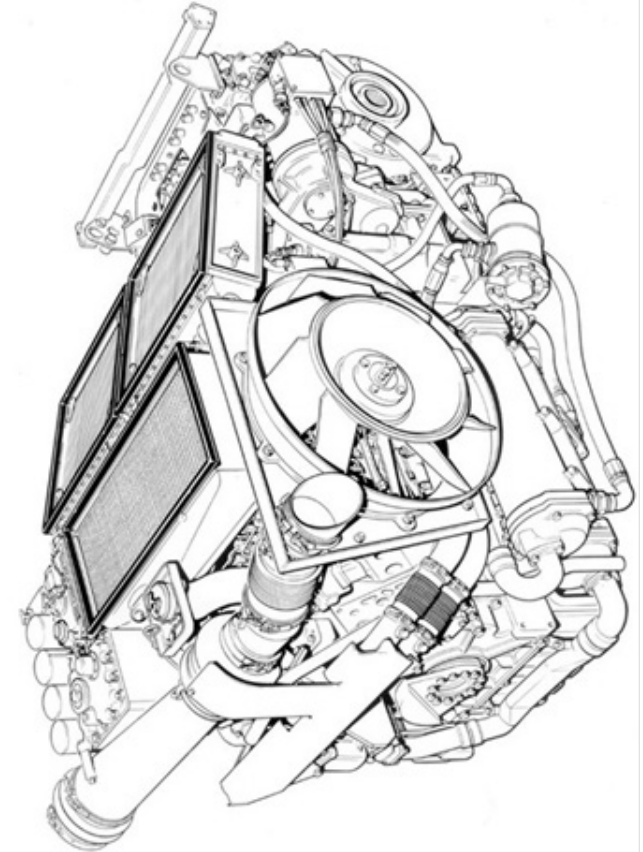
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Some images are dependent on how well the tools have been explored. Both these images are rendered in pen and ink, but both serve very different purposes. While the first image is a detailed sketch of a kitchen very artistically executed, the second image works as a technical illustration used in the industry.

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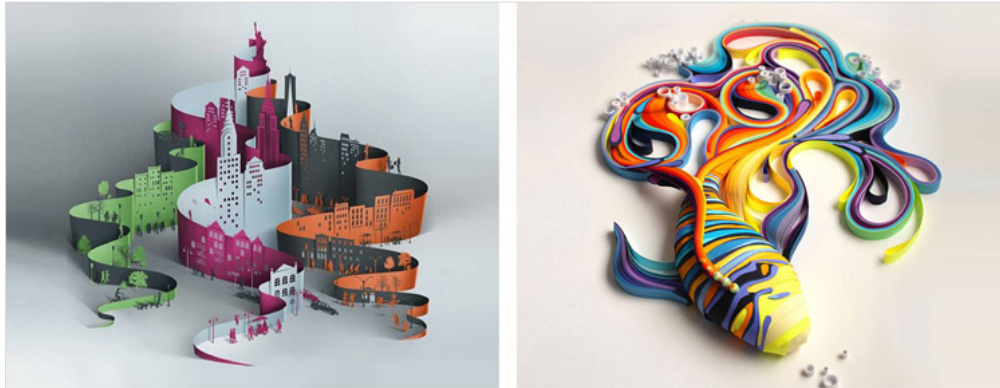
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An artist's staple material 'paper' has been explored in a totally different medium in these images. It has been exploited to express the content. Cutting, folding arranging, twisting and manipulating paper thoughtfully is the essence of these images. A new meaning is lent to the subject owing to the choice of the medium.



The subject of these three images remains the same: Nature, flowers and birds. While one uses the base of a symmetrical pattern, the second image uses repeated printmaking for its execution. The last image serves a more educational purpose, as it is a botanical illustration.

For this particular project the rule is to use something fake to create something real. Or use something real to make something fake.

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The Project

The inspiration for this project is supposed to be 'Consumeristic Cuisine'.

[**Note:** A variety of different topics can be used for creating the same type of image making. The process followed here, is applicable to those topics as well]

Before going any further, please understand what both the words mean.

CONSUMERISTIC: EXHIBITING OR SUPPORTING CONSUMERISM; MATERIALISTIC; EAGER TO AMASS MATERIAL GOODS.

CUISINE: A STYLE OR QUALITY OF COOKING; COOKERY.

Give a thought to what is food? What do we like / dislike eating? Is food becoming very manufactured in nature? Junk Food, Fast food etc. What are the ingredients of food? What are the ingredients of a fast consumerist life? What are the ingredients that we are consuming in our daily life? How some food is related to different aspects and different times of our life?

Using these questions as an inspiration, create a well prepared dish with unthought-of of 'man'ufactured ingredients.

Cook up the image well in your head, visualize every detail before creating and crafting it. Identify the 'foodness' of the food you are making, reduce it graphically into simplistic forms that can be replaced with everyday materials and objects. The aim of this project is to surprise the viewers eye, time after time.

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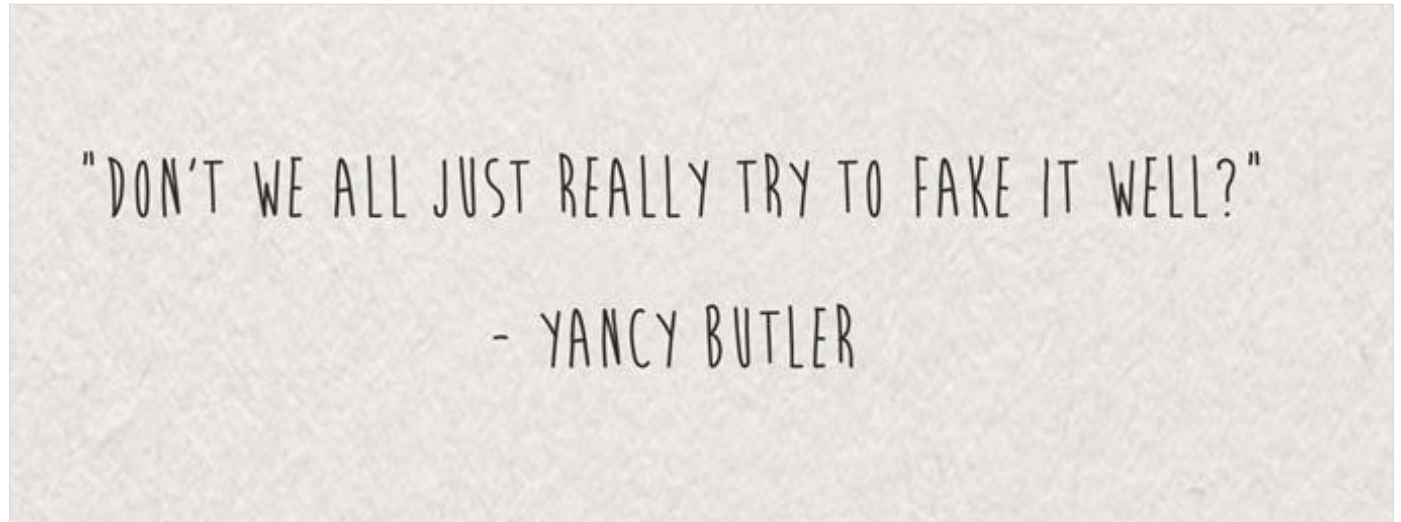
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You can download the Assignment Sheet here:

- [Consumeristic Cuisine - pdf](#)

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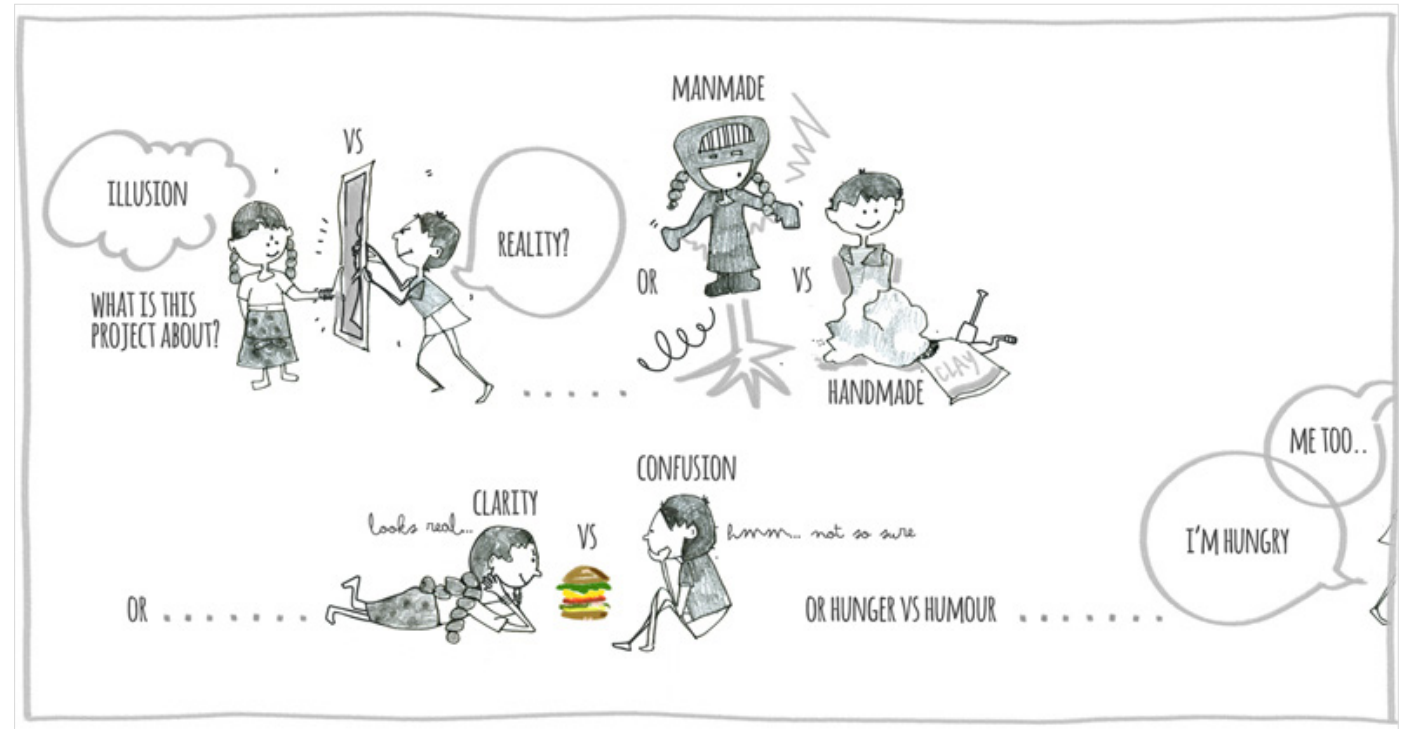
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Design Process

The design process is broken down into 3 steps depending on what you are addressing.



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Introspection and Visualization



Making and creating



Final Output

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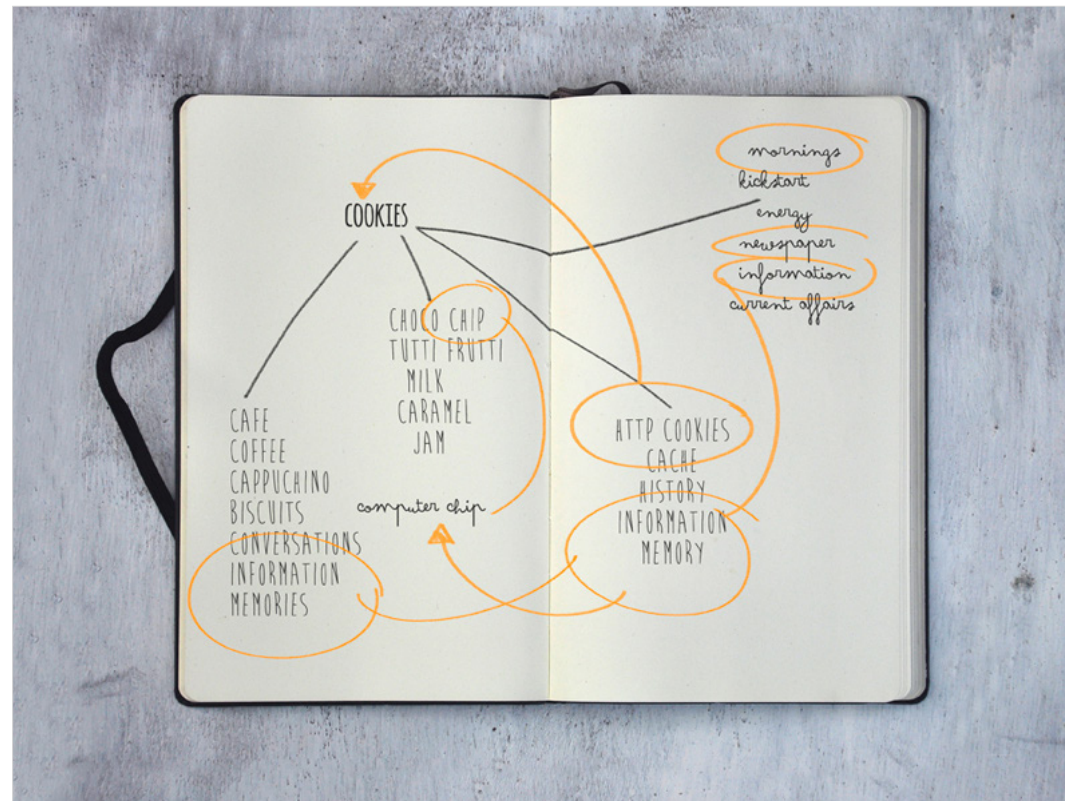
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Introspection and Visualization

- Choose what you want to create?
- Understand why are you choosing it? What is its form like?
- How will you recreate it with different materials?
- Are you being able to understand the limitations that lie within the subject? And are you learning how to choose those elements which are graphically interpretable ?

... These are some questions that will clear the air enough, to let you visualize what and how you want to make your artwork look like. Try answering them as articulately as possible, by writing things down.



For instance, you may be creating Cookies as a part of your project. Think of everything related to a cookie, when do you have it, with what do you have it. Does it have any other meanings. Once you start writing things down, you will spot connections and meanings, and this will shape the final idea for the artwork.

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You may want to create exotic looking food, owing to its form, or you may want to make something you love eating. You may have a story to tell through what you make, or express concern over a subject through it. After introspecting on these factors, select what you want to 'cook' as a part of this project and let's move onto visualizing the dish and its core ingredients.

Let us do a small activity that allows us to understand physical and associated qualities of different things around us. Download the PDF and attempt all the questions in it. Let this be a quick workout before beginning this particular project.

- [Exercise - pdf](#)

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/course/explorations-image-making/design-process/introspection-and-visualization>

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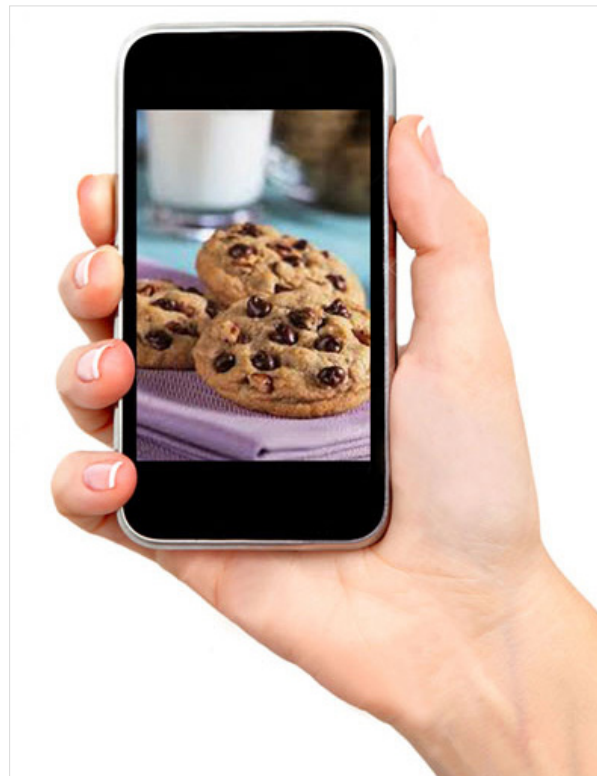
Making and creating

The students begin by finding reference images of the food they wanted to create. Using that as the point of departure, they went on to understand the recipe and ingredients of how it was made. What is the story that you are trying to say through a single image?

For each food-type different ingredients and methods were identified. The answers to all the questions above, were just as diverse as the makers and their stories.

- *Choose what you want to create?*

The students who attempted this particular workshop chose to create Sushi, Spaghetti, Cookies and a Pizza. Let's see how it was made.



You can source references from the net, keep them on phone, on the laptop, close to your workstation while making the final artwork.

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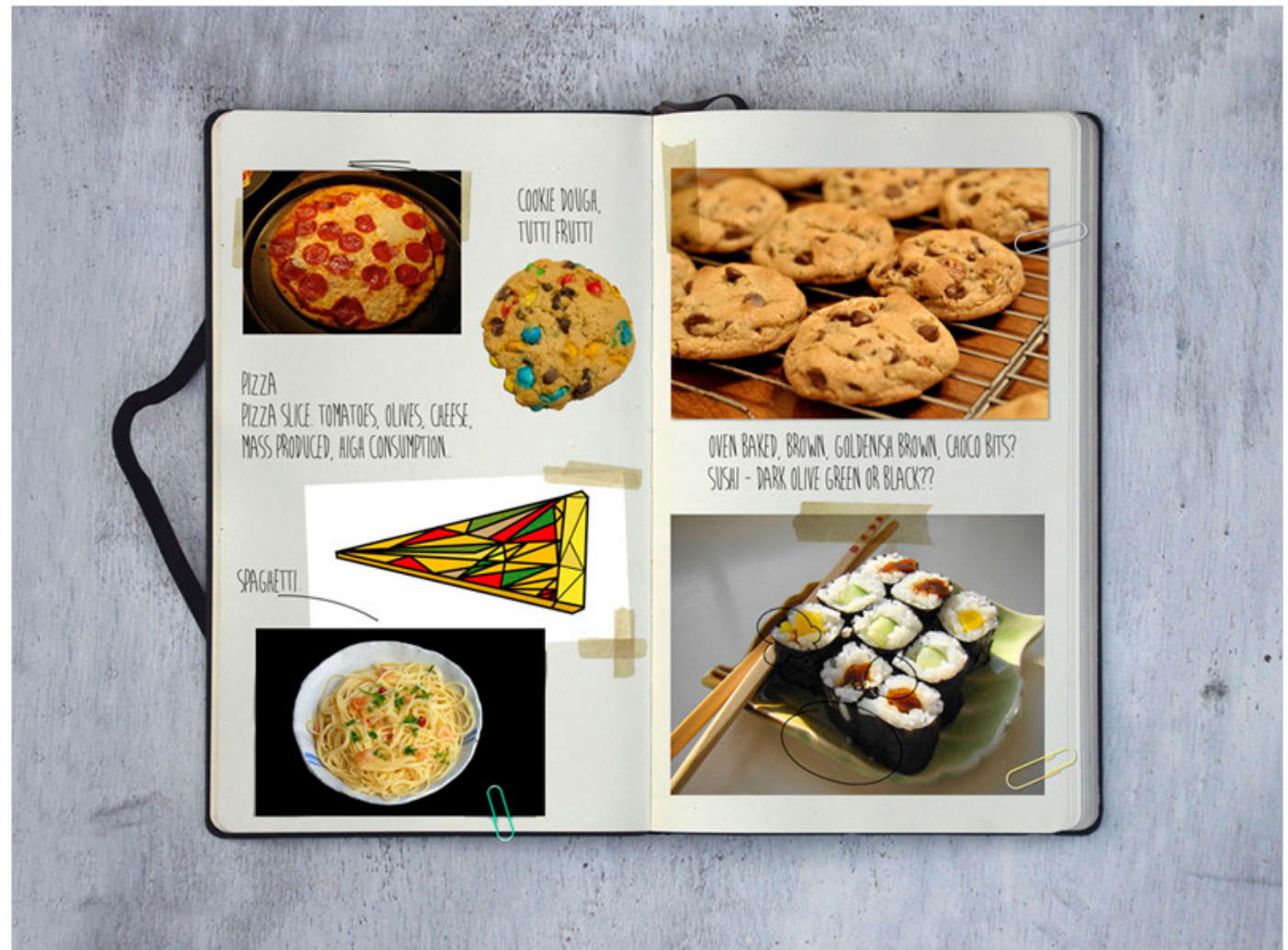
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It also helps to build a small reference or mood board in a diary where you have images, it helps to look at them now and again while making the 'food'.

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Why do you choose something? because you like it, or it bothers you. Or it fascinates you? Or you want to get a chance to know it better? Is it easy to make? Are objects available that can be reused to create your food artwork? From all the food that is being created in this tutorial by students, none of it is Indian food. Why is that so? The physical appearance of Indian food is a little tricky to replicate. And global cuisines usually cook their food in a way that the identity of the food and its form is mostly preserved. Which make it easier to identify and recreate, and also draw.



Can you spot what is real and what is fake from the ingredients from above? See how the qualities are mapped against qualities, it is real texture vs created texture, and natural colours vs created colours.

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While some artworks had a story embedded within themselves, others were more form oriented in nature. Let's see how something's were visualised by the students.



According to the artist - This slice of pizza represents everything that we are made up of. Metal nuts represent the mechanical nature of man and all things manmade. The cheese is made from pages of books, representing the endless source of information we are exposed to, over a lifetime. Red and yellow peppers are made with wires. And bindi's have been used as pepperoni to represent India. The artist has so much to say, and all of it become the content that she converted into an artwork.

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The story for this student has shaped her content which in turn became an artwork. Her mornings begin with newspapers, coffee and cookies. Newspapers are filled with a lot of data and information. Cookies, she connected it to HTTP cookies, it's a small piece carrying a lot of data, hence the cookies she made were of news'paper' mache. So this is how the cookie crumbles for her.

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Is it pipes, is it a straw ... nooooo ... its Macaroni! Wait! Hang on ... its pieces of straws. This image is a clear example of how the form has taken over the content. The material is so apt for creating something that looks specifically like macaroni that the form has given shape to the artwork, resulting in a story.

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Similarly, black paper and thermocal 'puffy' rice forms an authentic looking Sushi, making it a great example of a 'form over content' driven artwork.

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- *How will you recreate it with different materials?*

Instead of boiling, sautéing, baking and garnishing, the students took to tearing, folding, cutting, mixing, sticking, rolling, pasting, painting and arranging the ingredients to make their dish.



This student is shaping up the foam, to make it look deceptively like a piece of bun bread.

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Dipping woollen spaghetti into creamy green paint sauce.

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Painting a slice of foam.

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• *Are you being able to understand the limitations that lie within the subject? And are you learning how to choose those elements which are graphically interpretable ?*

We step into a phase where we understand the shortcomings and the strengths of each material. Paper can never remain permanently wet, and liquid cannot be cut. Paper can be turned into a dough, but can never be like clay. Clay cannot be semitransparent but liquid can be totally opaque. Wool resembles the noodles and crepe paper has a leafy texture, thermocal balls look like puffed up, shiny rice and beads look like tutti-frutti.

However their always remain challenges while taking on anything new, but the idea is to keep trying. So the thermocal balls 'rice' was extremely difficult to keep still as it would keep flying away. However, plenty of fevicol squeezed into the Sushi was good enough to create the stickiness of the rice filling. The 'Woollen' spaghetti kept absorbing too much of the 'thick paint' gravy and kept fading into a very light green until sufficient colour was added to it. The cookie mache took very long to be made from a paper pulp, but finally the cookies were so real that they could be lifted off the plate to be eaten.

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Final Output

Final Output of design process:



Kama no Sushi – Kama means paper in Japanese, hence the name.

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Crumpled cookies

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Spaghetti 'Wool'ognese in Green Sauce – Strands of wool being the essence of the dish.

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Nut Crust Pizza

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The execution is just as important as the idea. Pay attention to where you are staging your artwork. Does a white background make sense? Or a red tray? Would the cookies look good in a red tray? What does the red tray indicate?

What can you add as an extra element to finish it off as a perfect image? What goes with the artwork. A dash of white powder onto the foam - fries make them look well salted and ready-to-eat. Adding some paper crumbs around the paper mache cookies makes looks like they are fresh out of the oven. Adding a piece of sponge dressed up as a garlic bread is the finishing touch to the perfect bowl of spaghetti

These little details help develop your sense of Art direction, which is essential when you are making your work final and well finished. The tiniest of details matter in this case, and smallest of additions can accentuate a simple looking artwork.



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Shooting the artwork with a decent camera (preferably a DSLR) is essential. Give a thought to the angles that you can capture it from in order to bring out the essence of it. Try shooting the artwork in natural daylight or sufficient artificial lighting, ensure that the image is focussed upon clearly and the size of the image clicked is sufficiently large to edit and be used for different applications.

The cookies look better when shot diagonally, but the pizza looks delicious when seen from the top. The spaghetti looks even more delicious in a close-up.

Perfection in execution is crucial. Once the images are shot from various angles. Line them up into Photoshop. Remove the images that are not composed well or that are blurred and extremely under/over exposed.

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These are examples of image that cannot be used. A badly composed image, a blurred image and an over exposed image (L to R). Once you have done your shoot, you need to get rid of any such images, this will help you to select the final images.

Select only 4 images that represent the top, side diagonal and close-up view of the artwork. Tweak the image for any mistakes using the 'brush' tool or the 'clone stamp tool' in Photoshop. Anything that is disturbing like a strong shadow can be easily corrected using 'exposure' or the 'dodge tool' which allows you to lighten the image in certain places. If the image looks too faded out, try using tools like 'levels', 'exposure' and 'hue and saturation' to make the image come sufficiently alive.

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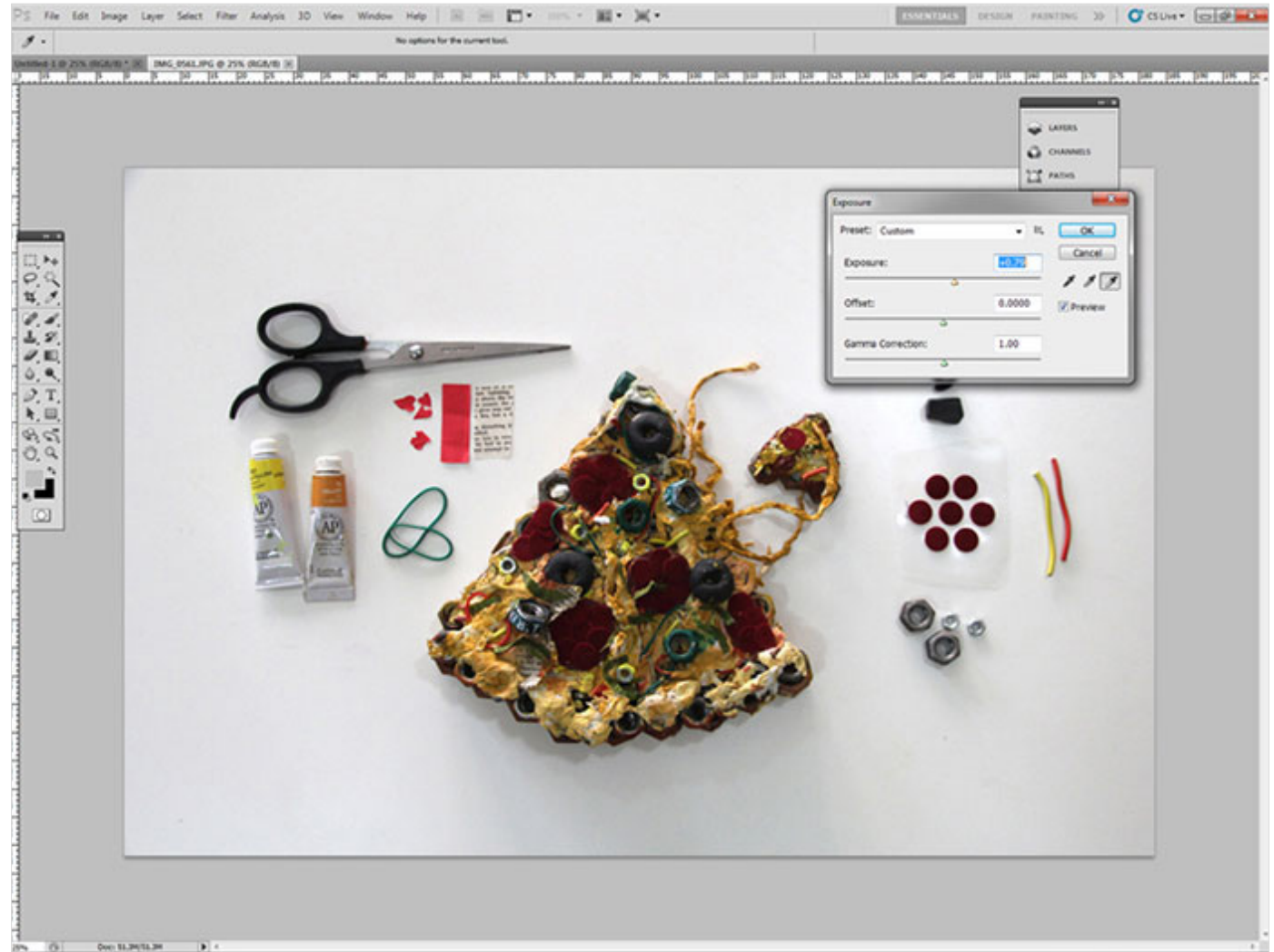
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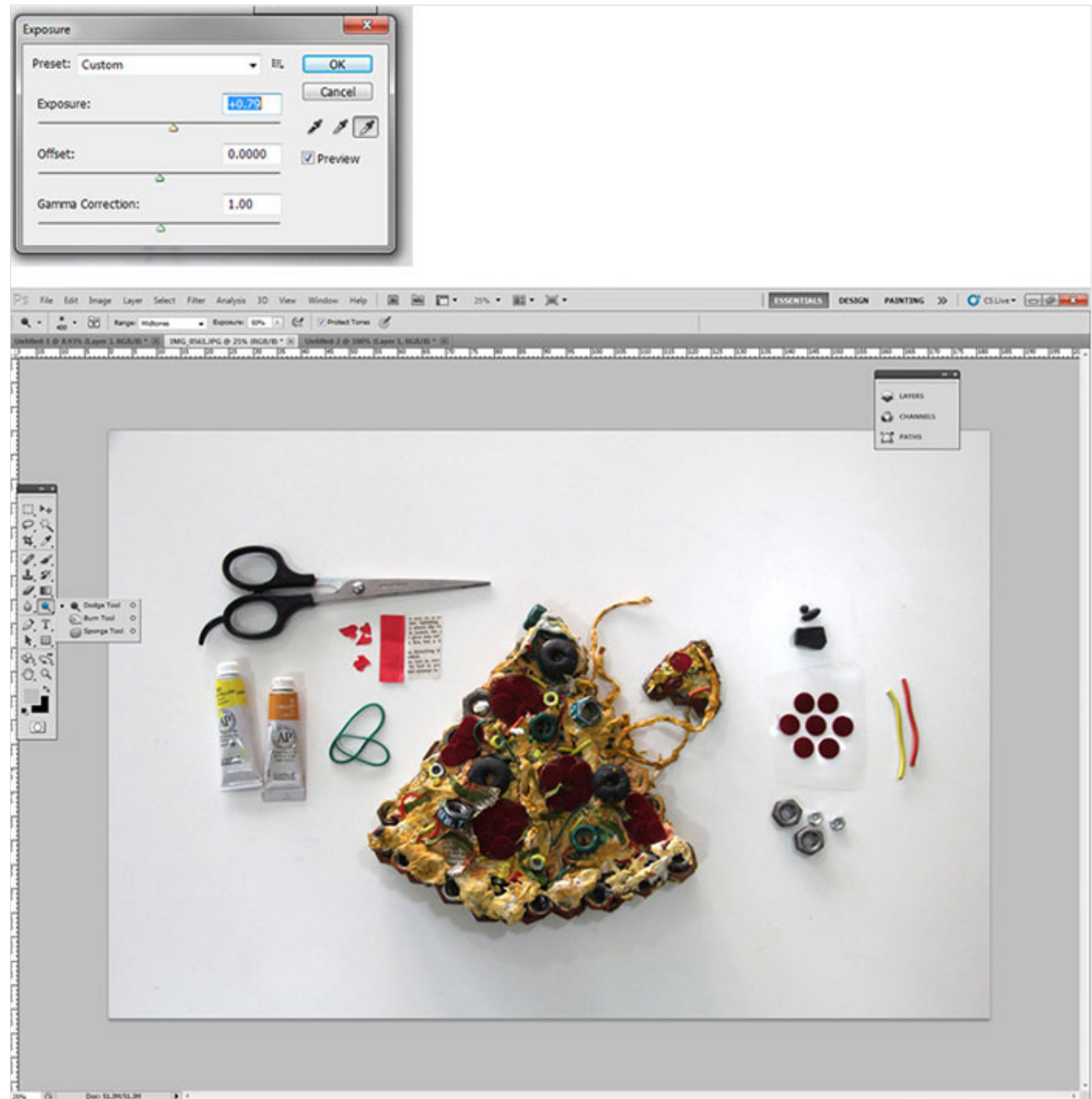
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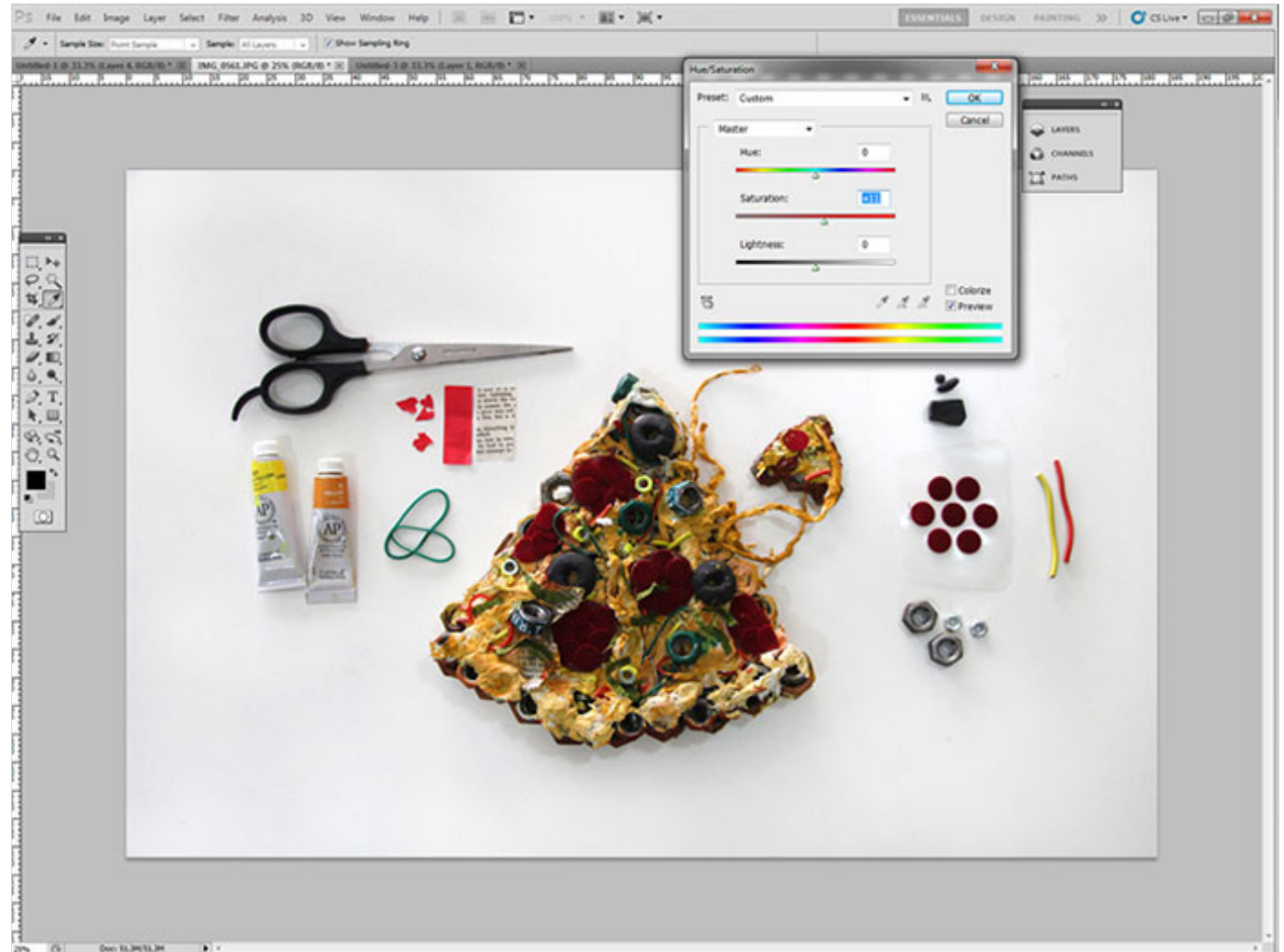
Ruchi Shah

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/course/explorations-image-making/design-process/final-output>

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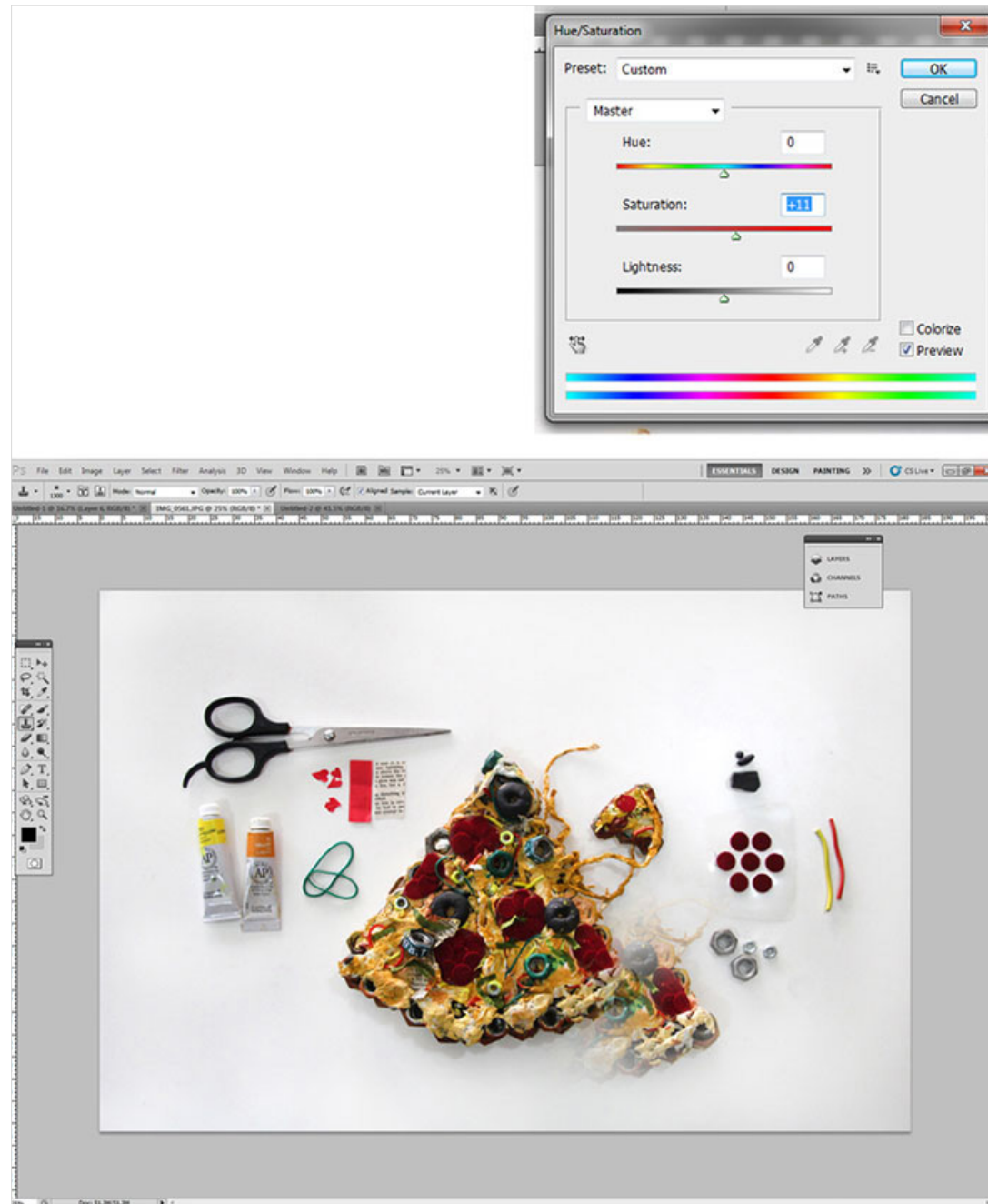
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You can see how the image looks before and after editing in a photo-editing software.

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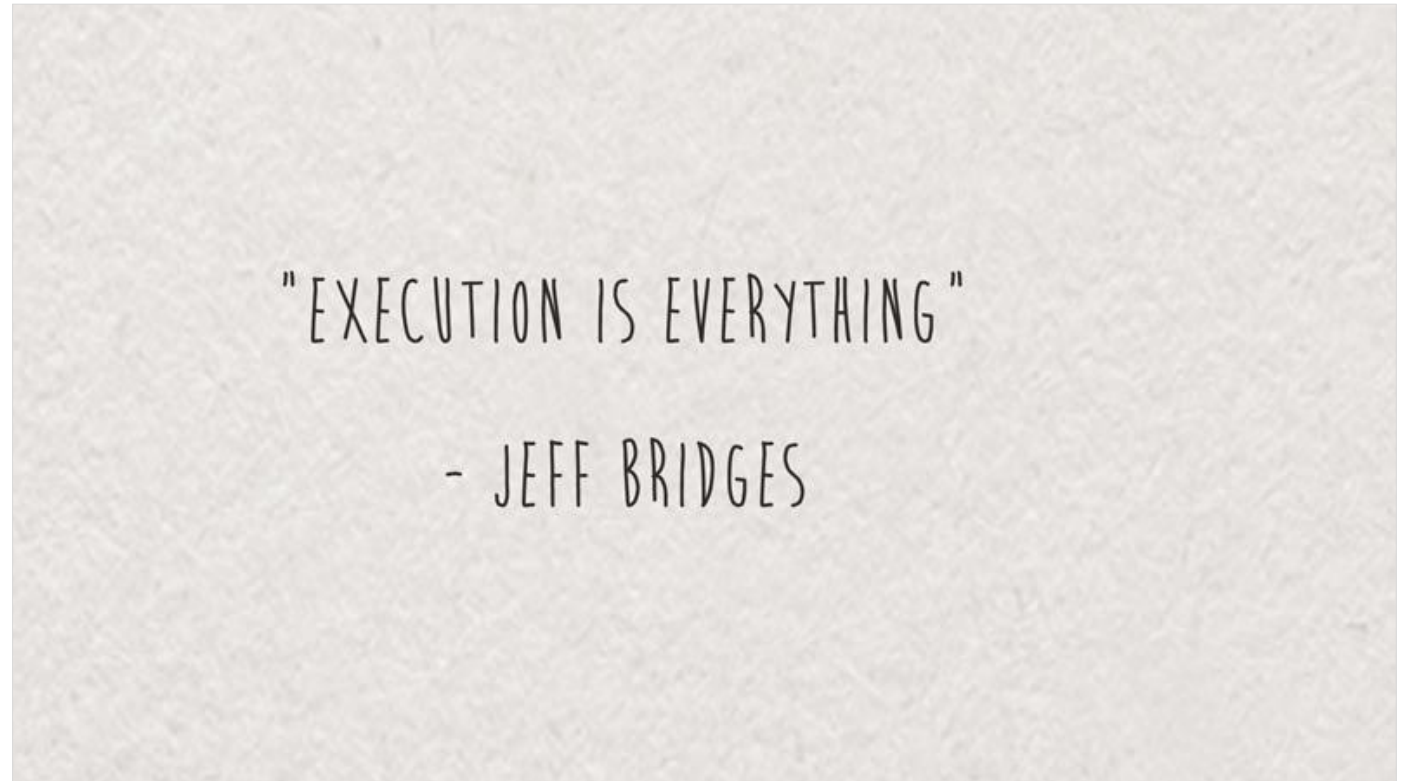
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Practical Applications

Once you change your perception about things around you, everything may appear as a playful tool that one can experiment with. There are no limits. Remove your coloured glasses of what you think you 'know', and question everything around you. Look at spaces, materials, people and objects through uncoloured eyes. It may not have a direct impact on your work, but do this will add a different twist within your designs.

This form of image making is widely practiced by different image makers in different ways. It overlooks the boundaries of graphic design, photography, art, illusionism and dimensionalism merging them into one solid mass. Some possible applications could be in the fields of Art Direction, Animation, Advertising and Visual Merchandising. These are some examples of artworks and artists who practice within the realms of tactile handmade illustrations.



Can you spot the illusion? Look how well the photographer has captured it.

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Illusionism has existed centuries ago. Arcimboldo a painter and artist from the 16th century spotted faces amidst baskets filled with vegetables and fruits. Most of his painted artworks, were works of illusionism.

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Spaces of all dimensions, posing all sorts of challenges are being designed constantly as a part of visual merchandising. Look how the artificial splashes have been designed in 3D, using paper and plastic, turning into 2D cut-outs and shapes as the design ascends.

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A simple and effective info graphic, where the medium becomes the message.

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An outfit inspired from waves and vegetable textures.

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A diet inspired fashion shoot the art director has innovatively replaced the models hair with lettuce and the necklace which is made from tomato and cucumbers.

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Links

Links for reference:

Hanoch Piven - Illustrator

- <http://www.pivenworld.com/>

Links from Creative Commons:

- http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5b/Morris_Bullerswood_carpet_drawing_detail_c_1889.jpg
- <http://www.boredpanda.com/quilled-paper-art-yulia-brods kaya/>
- <http://imperfect-vision.deviantart.com/art/Doodle-Collab-166159122>
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- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/thoth-god/4162693439/>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botanical_illustrator#mediaviewer/File:Banksia_coccinea_\(Illustrationes_Florae_Novae_Hollandiae_plate_3\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botanical_illustrator#mediaviewer/File:Banksia_coccinea_(Illustrationes_Florae_Novae_Hollandiae_plate_3).jpg)
- <http://crossroadscreative.com/illustration.html>
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- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tinou/133982614>
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- http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Visual_Merchandising_-_Milo_Display.jpg

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- [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KOCIS_Lie_SangBong_Catwalk_Fashion_Show_London_\(7689308828\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KOCIS_Lie_SangBong_Catwalk_Fashion_Show_London_(7689308828).jpg)
- <http://pixabay.com/en/adult-artistic-beauty-concept-diet-84478/>
- http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Visual_Merchandising_-_Window_Display_at_Hua_Ho_Department_Store_Brunei_1.JPG
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wheatfields/5835914334/sizes/l>

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This documentation was done by Ruchi Shah at IDC, IIT Bombay.

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