

Smruti Mulchandani

Curriculum vitae

I like to make things.

I'm Smruti, an industrial designer and a paper artist. I make chairs and brownies, I make really good pizzas and knives when I'm bored, although I haven't gotten around to tempering steel just yet. I love live music, so much so that I am now learning how to play the guitar and sing, I someday hope to make my own. I enjoy playing Call of Duty with friends, I haven't really played any other video games in years. I write often, and I take a lot of pictures. These two habits are a way to satisfy my obsessive urge to document and are my emotional and creative outlets.



WORK EXPERIENCE

(Reverse chronological order)

I built it - Product designer

November 21 - Jan 22

This is a startup making laser cut, flat pack, 3D puzzles of castles and dungeons for tabletop gamers (who play dungeons and dragons and similar games). Our primary client base is in the US, but we sell kits at fairs in India too. I was brought in to design part of the new line of models and to make the manufacturing files parametric, move them from autocad and sketchup to Fusion 360 and set up a workflow for the same, for new models to come.

Foley Designs - Design Consultant

November 20 - May 21

Foley Designs is a well-reputed studio in Bangalore, with their designs and client products in most South Indian households. I was brought in to research the scope and possibilities of printed electronics. I arrived at a deconstructed speaker that is being used for visual merchandising at the moment in wirelessly powered canisters. There were several other projects that I researched, like oil-based analog timers to be used on perishable items in an individual's fridge, low-cost packaging brackets to avoid spilling of drinks when delivered with fast food, etc. This time was an interesting learning experience in a studio's process, but more so in workplace dynamics and expectations, as someone who was no longer an intern.

Malai Biomaterials

Undergrad thesis, Jan '20 - Aug '20

Product designer, Aug '20 - Oct '20

As a startup making vegan leather in a warehouse, a lot of the post-processing was being done by hand, some even outsourced. As part of my thesis, I proposed to mechanize some of these processes (like coating, "boarding" which is to fold the sheet over itself and press a spine through to make it more pliable and give it a texture). I proposed machine concepts and then final designs based on their needs and preferences. I was later approached by the co-founders to work with a design studio in their state (remotely, during the pandemic) to actually get one of the designs ready for manufacturing, and prototype it. This project was paused due to a lack of funds and the pandemic.

The Falls - Teaching assistant

Nov '19 - Dec '19

After my course in analog photography and printing, and my two experiences with exhibitions, I was approached by my faculty and mentor in print and photography to assist him in the next course he would be teaching. This included supervision of work and teaching cyanotype, analog photo development, screen printing, and setting up a class exhibition at one of the metro stations in the city. A lot of the prints are still at the station, the rest are on display at the campus.

Fracktal works (and Fractory) - Product and Web design Intern

May '19 - Mid July '19

I was hired as a web design and product design intern at a startup that manufactures 3D printers, assembles them in-house. During my initial project of redesigning their websites and after a few conversations, I was consulted on marketing strategies, I was in charge of planning giveaways, setting up a social media presence and managing the accounts for the duration of the internship. I was also part of a few innovation projects, using 3d printed parts to make electric skateboards among other things. Yes, I've made longboards, made the ply myself!

Srishti Live - Logistics crew

Nov '18 - Dec '18

Srishti Live is Srishti Institute's annual exhibition/fest where 14-16 groups of 20 students would prepare artwork/design work/performances in what is called the 'interim'. I was part of the logistics crew in 2018 to set it all up across the city, plan venues, make lists of furniture and equipment and take care of labeling, having it transported and brought back, making models of the venues and signs for guests, planning layouts, etc.

Zelaa Coin - ATM design, team project

June '18 - Aug '18

As part of a small agency (Avian) started by a senior in college, we designed a cryptocurrency ATM for Zelaa Coin, and I briefly worked on the housing for a mining device that was taken forward by another teammate.

Studio ABD - Product design Intern

May '17

The summer after my first year of college, I interned at a design studio. I wasn't an integral part of any project, my primary task was to create a shelving and access system for the studio's material library in a little room. I was allowed to work with the older interns on their projects, help them with mockups. This was my first experience in a design studio, watching reviews and conversations with clients, watching senior designers go through their research processes and ideation and iterations. The idea behind taking up the task related to the material library was that I would have the opportunity to familiarize myself with a lot of different kinds of materials, and research properties and ways of storing them.

ACADEMIC HISTORY

Grade 10 - ICSE (95%)

Ryan Intl. School - 2014

Grade 12 - CBSE (82%)

National Public school - 2016

B.Des in Industrial Design

Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology - 2020

This was a four-year course.

The first year was focused on unlearning, a lot of short courses with artists and designers in the field encouraging us to explore tools (research tools, software, online libraries and studies, design principles), work with the community (user research and studies with the community, projects that would benefit the locals), study our environment (through lenses of wabi-sabi, environmental health, systems and services, finding patterns in nature and biomimicry, finding scrap leaves and branches and making furniture from them) and some art/expression (mark-making, product sketching, large scale sketching, tearing artworks to construct new artworks, looking at some history of art and contemporary artists) - all this with the overarching theme of unlearning what we know and developing a wider perspective.

Our **second and third year** syllabus was designed by us individually with the help of advisers. My years consisted of a lot of studios in product design (design process and technical sketching, chair design, bicycle design and hacking, hand skills and working in the workshop, semantics and ergonomics in product design, machines mechanics and the human mind, detailing, accessory design, creative electronics among others), general study units (mine were about research and data and how to analyze it, some about communication and some about concepts and theories in art and synesthesia), workshops (more hand skills in the wood and metal workshop, prototyping).

My **fourth year** was two individual, trans-disciplinary design projects.

The first was an educational game - I did a few surveys and group discussions with students studying in grades 3-5 at schools of different economic brackets and arrived at the pain point that was mathematics. As it turns out, these students are very young and according to Jean Piaget, don't have the level of abstraction required to understand the concepts they are being taught in Math. Educational aids are doing a lot to bridge this gap and help students have tangible examples for concepts, but not enough to eliminate the fear of Math, and so I studied the syllabi across boards and devised a few games to gamify the experience of doing Math, shifting the aim from solving problems to winning the game by strategic movement. I went through a few different ideas, different age groups of students responding well to different ideas, and finally arrived at a game that seemed to work best. I then went through multiple iterations with one group of students at Ekya ITPL to fine-tune the game flow and cards, then tested the final iteration with students from different schools and grades.

The second project was for a startup manufacturing and selling vegan leather made from bacterial cellulose that has been grown in coconut water. This project was carried forward as a contract for me after college but was put on hold due to lack of company funds and the pandemic making it difficult for us to visit the site or get more prototypes made.

Across the four years I also took some elective courses in technical weaving, analog photography and printmaking (I was later offered a TA position by this faculty - Allan Forester Parker), electronics, visual tools, paper art, and co curriculars in guitar, drums, hip hop dance and football.

EXTRACURRICULARS

Product launch event - Aug '15

In grade 12, a few of my classmates and I participated in a product design and launch event called Brainstorm at an inter-school fest. We designed a dynamic braille device concept, called the magnetic pin reading system. We won our school first place at this event for our idea and research.

Exhibition at MG road - Dec '18

As a culmination of my course in analog photography and printmaking with Allan Forrester Parker, the class held an exhibition at Rangoli, MG Road. I had a cyanotype print on display, it was a picture of the foam and waves of Elliot beach in Chennai.

Artwork at the Biennale - Chennai Photo Biennale - Feb '19- March'19

The Biennale in India happens in two cities, Kochi and Chennai. One of my large cyanotype prints was on display at the Chintadripet Station in Chennai. It was eventually stolen from the exhibition and we never found out where it went, which is sad but also makes for a good story.

Garba night - Team lead- October '19

Dussehra is a festival season on the Hindu calendar celebrating the victory of good over evil, it marks the event of Lord *Ram* defeating *Ravan*, and the festival involves a lot of color, sweets, music, and dance. People meet at large grounds and do *garba* and *dandiya*, which are dance forms from Gujarat. Our college had few cultural events, and we had had one garba night before, but the cultural committees were busy in 2018 and it started to look like we wouldn't have another garba night. A few of my juniors approached me asking about it and I decided to set up the event myself.

I gathered a team of ten people, made a proposal to the college, and then we went about planning the event. We would meet and make lists and mind maps, arranged to rent equipment and get permission for the grounds and make posters. We also went through plans for authentication and made a list of situations that could go wrong, and how we would handle them. The event was a hit, and everything went as planned besides the music playlist, of all things. We brought in backup within a few minutes and everyone went back to dancing and singing.

Hoodies for the batch - Aug '20

When the pandemic hit, we were in the middle of our thesis and had to finish it up at home, by ourselves. We all sorely missed each other and craved a sense of closure, and I decided I could do something while I worked from home. I rounded up a small team from my batch for logistics and artwork, and we got custom hoodies and jackets printed for the batch with inside jokes and our logo. A few juniors asked me for details of how I went about the process. It looks like this may become a tradition.

Demagnetized - Jan '22

I have always externalized feelings in drawings and words, the earliest poem I remember writing was in third grade, and it was about how I wanted to be a painter someday. My first handwritten book of poems was in fourth grade for my dance teacher at the time, and he said he couldn't keep the book but kept the poem that was about his class or dance, I can't remember now. I am currently editing a final draft and making illustrations for my collection of poems from the last five years. I am publishing this book with Notion Press, Chennai, and I hand over the final manuscript and front cover design in the fourth week of January. After this, the book will be available on all major e-commerce sites within India.

Over the years, our government has changed and grown, and the people around me and I have not always agreed with their decisions. We all learn from each other and grow, and I believe it is important to let our government know when we disagree with them. In these situations, I have participated in peaceful protests, for example - when the CAA and NRC were implemented, excluding the Muslim community, or when we didn't agree with the decisions regarding justice in cases of rape and murder. In times like these, conversations are more active and I make sure I do my research so I can participate, and help spread awareness if that's the most I can do.

SOFTWARES

Fluent

- Autodesk Fusion 360
- Keyshot
- Adobe Lightroom
- Adobe Indesign
- Adobe Premiere Pro
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Powerpoint

Basic

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe Xd
- Autocad
- Microsoft Excel

SKILLS

Fluent

- Wood and Metal work
- Technical weaving
- Technical sketching
- Paper Art
- 2D and 3D CAD
- Cyanotype and screen printing
- Coding - embedded C, C++, java, QBasic (beginning), html and css
- Arduino

Basic

- Analog photo development
- Painting

LANGUAGES

- English - Fluent, first language
- Hindi - Fluent, second language
- Kannada - Basic

These are the only languages I can converse in. I understand most other Indian languages and some dialects, and I have briefly learned some French and Korean out of curiosity of their syntax and word order.

HOBBIES

I like to bake often, the basics like cakes and brownies and cookies, experimenting with ratios. I play the guitar, my fascination comes from both music theory that I occasionally do courses on and finger picking. I cycled a lot until the pandemic came around, to and from places, as an alternative to evening walks. When I have access to material and tools, I enjoy making things like kitchen knives and foldable pocket knives, little stools and chairs, etc. I like to spend some of my time making customized gifts for close friends, jewelry or painted tee shirts, or custom phone cases. I write often, take pictures and edit them more often.

CONTACT DETAILS

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