

AKANSHA KUKREJA

RESUMÉ

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY
DIRECTION + DESIGN**

OPERATIONS

NEW YORK, MUMBAI, MELBOURNE

INFO

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ABOUT

Originally from Mumbai, India, Akansha (she / they) is an independent director, multidisciplinary designer, and illustrator working with companies – big and small to bring their ideas to life. She has spent the last five years in Brooklyn, NY and is currently building a home in Melbourne. She has earned an MFA in "Designer as Author & Entrepreneur" from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Her work combines culture, intuition and disposition across mediums such as typography, film, illustration and writing to communicate compelling visual worlds. She loves working with brands in a full service design capacity – from ideas and concepts, through naming and tone of voice, strategy, brand identity and printed matter, environmental design + digital design. After gaining some experience in leading design and director roles, she now runs her own practice collaborating with creatives, agencies, start-ups and large brands from based in different corners of the world. She's also an amateur scuba diver and ceramicist sometimes.

APPROACH + ATTRIBUTES

Her approach to design is through stories and finding inspiration in the seemingly unrelated. She prefers her process to be research-based and iterative to arrive at design decisions that keep the audience at the forefront. She has experience with (and loves) working with nimble teams in fast-paced work environments, prioritizing respectful collaboration and timelines. She has also worked in larger agencies and startups with over 300+ employees, but prefers creative intimacy. Her articulate and over-communicative collaboration style ensures successful collaborative environments where the people, project and clients are on the same page.

VALUES + LOVES

Her love for fashion, art, editorial design and film comes through in her work. She's a big believer in working with brands that have purpose – both for-profit and not-for-profit. Design with good reason will always win the pitch, while generally quiet, Akansha leads presentations with teams and clients in order to advocate for proposals and ideas to showcase what her team can bring to the table. Along with being a scuba diver, she's currently building her ceramics collection under the label "Objects From Dirt" and is using creative code with her amateur processing and p5.js skills.

EDUCATION

MFA DESIGN – SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS, NYC

This course titled "MFA – Designer as Writer and Entrepreneur" is a program designed to push visual design beyond the purpose of communication, this MFAD program requires students to dip their feet in documentary filmmaking and production, writing, type design, intellectual property law, and design research. The outcome for this MFA is a thesis designed as a business – research, audience, pricing models, production, prototyping, user testing and advertising.

BFA VISUAL COMMUNICATION – SRISTI SCHOOL OF ART, DESIGN & TECH, INDIA

Graduated with a double major in visual communication and business design

WORK EXPERIENCE

BLURR BUREAU, MELBOURNE + NYC LEAD SENIOR DESIGNER

As the first full-time hire at global agency Blurr Bureau, I worked directly with the clients and contractors under the bureau model. Being the senior lead designer, my projects included industries across real estate, development, healthcare, wellness, hospitality, and more. With collaborators across the globe I helped set up processes and design systems in Figma, Streamtime and Notion to help optimize work flows across the company. With no project manager initially, I wore many different hats to work directly with the creative director at Blurr Bureau find a steady drum beat across the company.

TIA, THE MODERN MEDICAL HOME FOR WOMEN CREATIVE DIRECTOR, CREATIVE LEAD, SENIOR DESIGNER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

- Worked closely with creative executive suite, CEO and president to secure \$100 m USD in Series B funding.
- Responsible for hiring a team of designers, writers and project managers to build the creative team.
- Managed and mentored a marketing team of 8 (designers, copywriters & project managers) across projects for membership acquisition, growth and clinic launches in 4+ cities across the United States. Led and managed team of 10 marketing associates on social media strategy and content creation.
- Led the creative team with VP of Creative to redesign and launch Tia's new brand ID across digital, print and clinic spaces in New York, LA, Phoenix and SF.

CREATIVE LEAD

- Served as the project lead for 10x campaigns across growth, acquisition and content engines prioritising education for women on primary healthcare, GYN, mental health and wellness. Managed brand campaigns from conception to finish relating to each vertical while directly reporting to VP of Creative.
- Design strategy and concept for OOH Campaigns for clinic launches across America, directed junior designers and copy writers towards execution.
- Worked closely with project managers and other project leads to fulfil company targets.
- Developed & produced video campaigns across acquisition + marketing for women's health and equity with third party film and animation vendors.

SENIOR VISUAL DESIGNER

- Part of the core team that designed and presented Tia to investors for seed round of funding, which was successfully completed as the highest funding received by 2 female founders in the US – \$32m USD.
- Operated in a nimble creative team as the only visual designer, partnered with a copywriter to work across digital & print design – including information design across social media, email campaigns and events.
- Initiated projects from strategy to design to production under the of Head of Design – including the shift of services to telehealth, Covid vaccine drives (LA & NYC) with digital and print campaigns. Served as a key player in information design & healthcare education and dissemination, retaining subscribed members / patients through Covid-19.

SIEGEL + GALE, NYC SENIOR DESIGNER

Served as a senior designer working closely on America's largest brands such as H&R Block, Carrier, CVS Health and AARP across identity, packaging design, web design and illustration in close collaboration with copywriting and production teams. Involved in designing presentations and client interfacing from sketch to production on rebranding campaigns.

THOUGHT OVER DESIGN, MUMBAI SENIOR BRAND AND PRODUCT DESIGNER

- Lead UI/UX and Brand Identity designer for FMCG, Architectural Design, Healthcare, Lifestyle & Wellness Brands.
- Involved in key strategy design, copywriting and client interfacing for small startups and global brands based in India.
- In charge of mentoring junior designers and copywriters for conceptualising and iterating as per the company's design philosophy. This included an onboarding program designed and initiated by me.
- Worked in close collaboration with the company's founder to redesign the website to improve client acquisition.

WORK EXPERIENCE

NORBLACKNORWHITE, CANADA & INDIA JUNIOR DESIGNER

- Served as the solo designer for Norblacknorwhite, an inclusive fashion label based out of Canada and India and their parent company Wetheppl. I was involved in designing textiles, product sketches and communication for the marketing of their multi-company umbrella brand.
- Initiated and designed experimental textile patterns and collages, and was involved in ad-hoc art direction for fashion photography to create an inclusive fashion brand – one of the first to do so in India at the time.

INDEPENDENT CREATIVE CONSULTANT, ART DIRECTOR, SENIOR DESIGNER

Across the 9+ years I've formed relationships through freelance gigs ranging the creative spectrum across the globe (primarily NYC, LA, Singapore, New Delhi, Mumbai). These connections have often employed my services ranging from brand strategy, art direction, website and brand design, brand system extensions and more. I love working with founders directly to help develop their vision into the world – however, I often work with agencies and studios on a freelance basis across a number of industries like food and beverage, real estate, healthcare and wellness, interior design and more.

SELECTED PRESS

Under Consideration (Tia)
Abduzeedo (Tia)
Forbes (Women's Stress Signatures)
Print Magazine (Tia)
Mind Sparkle Mag (Flings)
The Dieline (Flings)
Compound Butter Magazine (Feature)
Homegrown (Feature)
The New Indian Express (Feature)
Hindustan Times (Feature)

TALKS

RGD, Canada: Design Rethinkers 2021
Designing for Women in Healthcare

SVA MFA Design Jury 2022
Jury panel for final thesis decision-making for the graduates of 2022

TEDx New York City
(PW: ros1glo)

SKILLS & CAPABILITIES

TECHNICAL

Adobe Suite – Illustrator / Indesign / Photoshop / Aftereffects / Premier Pro
Creative Code – Processing & p5.js
Figma Advanced
Web Design – Readymag, Semplice, Wordpress
Organizational – Notion, Slack, Streamtime

TECHNICAL

Photography
Art Procurement and Production
Food Styling
Set Design
Sculpting and Pottery

FOR COMMISSIONED ART AND ILLUSTRATION: PLEASE CONTACT MY CREATIVE MANAGEMENT: ARUL@CRITICAL.ASIA