

alex

“systems”

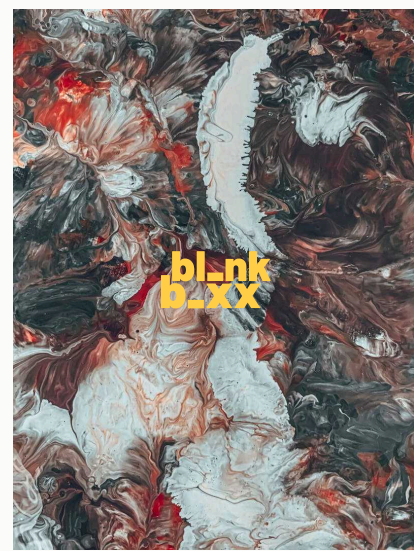
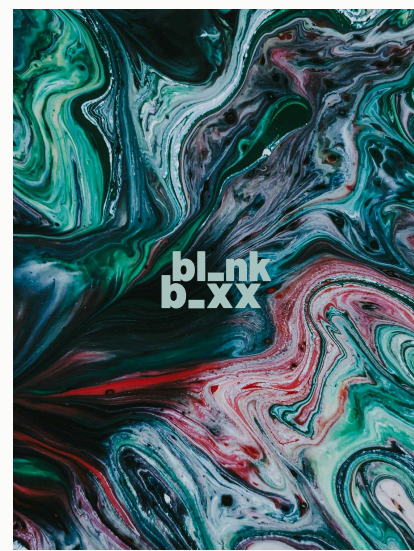
brooke

Visuals!



**bl_nk
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X Too busy

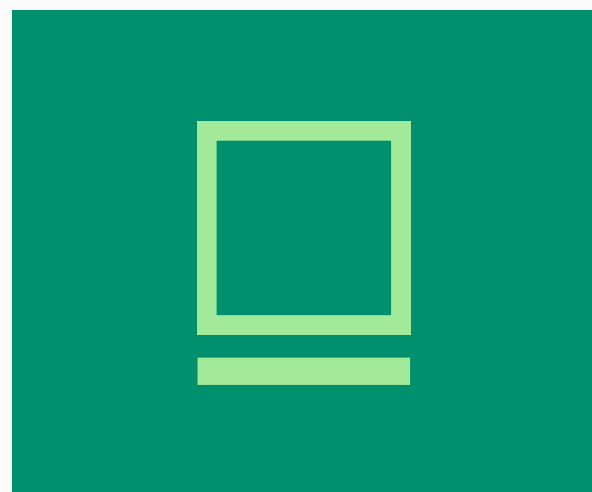
Thinking out of the Boxx

We had a lot of fun creating this identity for a digital creative agency based in the North East. The key thing they wanted was flexibility and a direction that felt human but also had a connection to where they're based.

We got to something like this off the back of having "creative compasses"—which I'll cover a little more later. That's acquired through conversation, storytelling, and understanding where the edge of the map is: how far can we go before you completely disconnect with what's been created. Designers I've worked with on this, and other projects (brand, product, etc.), know there's:

- What the client wants specifically
- What we think they need
- What's in between

I encourage them to play with the full spectrum, not take a brief verbatim. Read between the lines, have conversations, look around, try and test concepts early and often. And most importantly, have a solid "why". We don't go into rooms without a "why".



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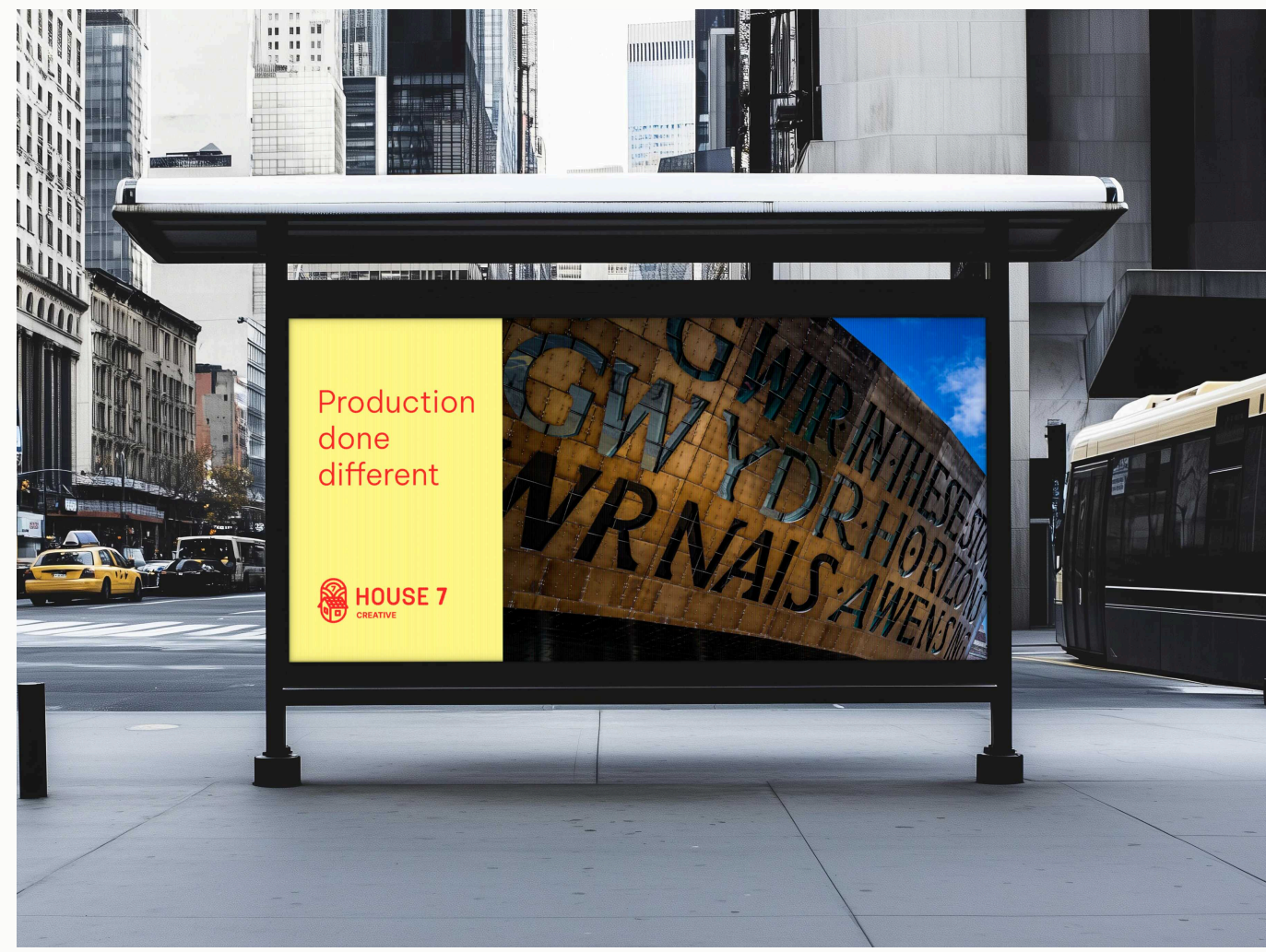
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Channels

YouTube and beyond →

Owned YouTube channels and digital platforms where we develop original formats, grow audiences and prove concepts at scale.

A Fresh Take On Media

We want to be the engine for tomorrow's creative media ←

Digital channels built for the modern consumer

We are actively developing topic-specific YouTube channels both independently and in partnership with talent and brands.

We produce regular content, build subscriber bases and develop distinctive voices for this dynamic and evolving audience.

From long-form series to hook-driven shorts we're always on the look out for the next big format

LOSE THIS TILE AND COPY →

Tell bold stories for on-the-go viewers

Launching in 2026 →

Check out our stable of owned channels ready to drop in '26

Strong brand building through digital channels

Distribution through fast-channel spaces ←

LOSE THIS AND COPY AND IMAGE

House Palette

Accents

Midnight	Glow	Fire	Just Purple	Lavender
C: 099 M: 087 Y: 044 K: 058	C: 002 M: 092 Y: 058 K: 000	C: 000 M: 092 Y: 083 K: 000	C: 033 M: 099 Y: 002 K: 000	C: 001 M: 012 Y: 000 K: 000
R: 001 G: 022 B: 056 #011638	R: 255 G: 248 B: 187 #FF7800	R: 255 G: 051 B: 051 #FF3333	R: 178 G: 034 B: 140 #80228C	R: 255 G: 228 B: 253 #FF6AFD

Avoid light on light.
Avoid dark on dark.
Don't pair light colours and thin fonts.

About the House Palette

Here, we have a palette that aims to be bold, fun, yet flexible.

Whether the task is to be more mute or cut through the noise. It can do both.

HOUSE 7

Film

Creative

The split

These are the colour separations for House 7's two key areas.

A deep yet bright combo brings the film aspect to life, while a vivid yet punchy combo allows the creative size to have an effective cut-through.

These are the primary and secondary and can be used at equal amounts.

The Future

The palette is forward looking, with the ability to cater to House 7's future endeavours.

The collective

Our advise is to drop any co-branding when referring to House 7 as a collective, especially when more branches are added.

It keeps things simple. It keeps things memorable.

Colour-wise, try keep things general: Midnight, Fire, and Just White.

This doesn't mean you can't use any other colours from the 'House Palette'. In fact, we encourage play.

Experimentation

I worked on this with our service designer, junior product designer, and content and graphic designer.

We were challenged with keeping the integrity of the brand while injecting balance into it from a visual and UX perspective.

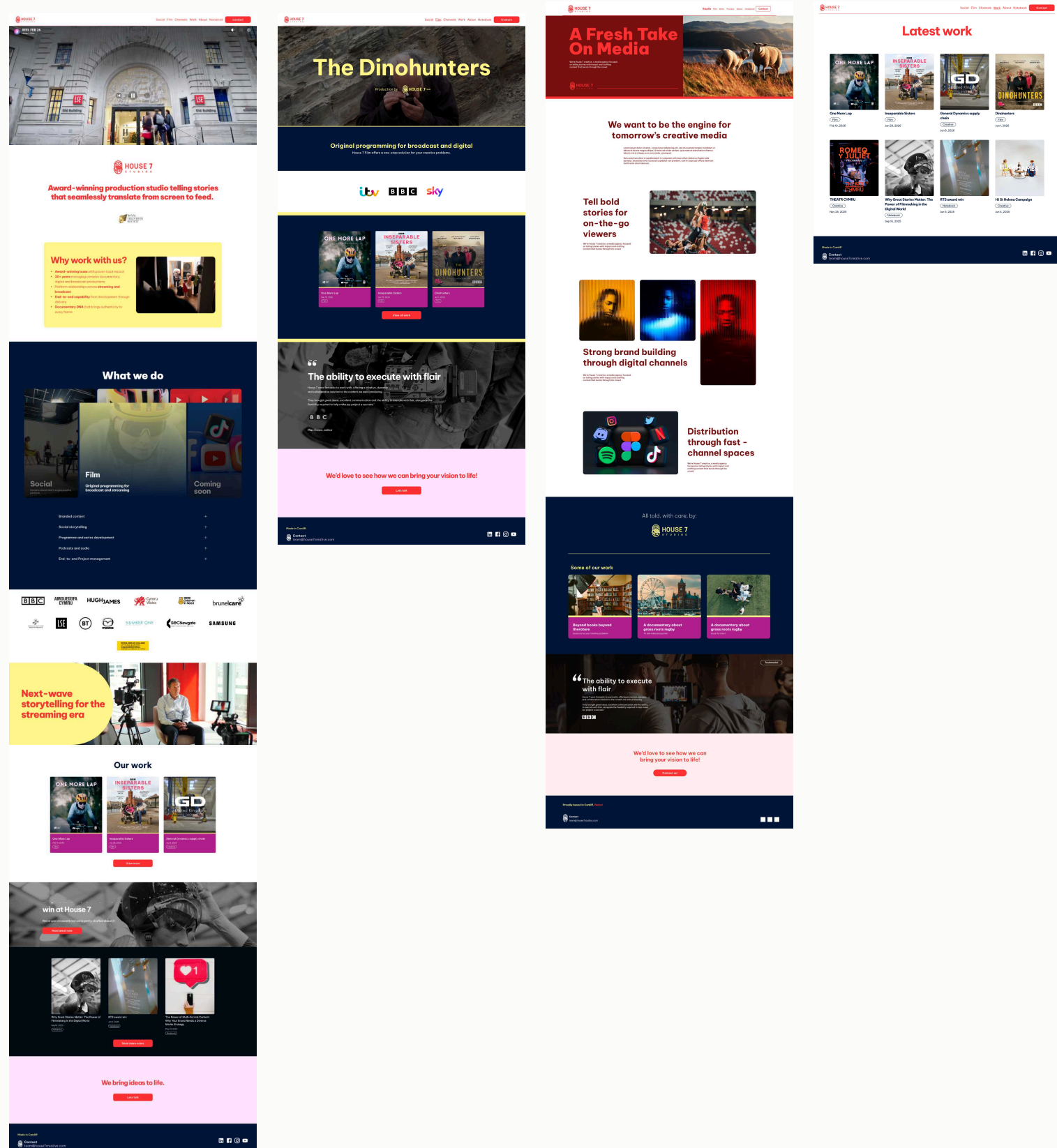
A benefit with this project: we didn't actually need that much contact with the client. They just wanted to know where they were headed, which we spent a lot of time carving out upfront. A few emails were passed just to check in—otherwise, we showed our trustworthiness, and they graced us with autonomy.

What the site was and what it is now is night and day. Before, it was an accessibility and branding nightmare. Now it's clarity, with a modern touch.

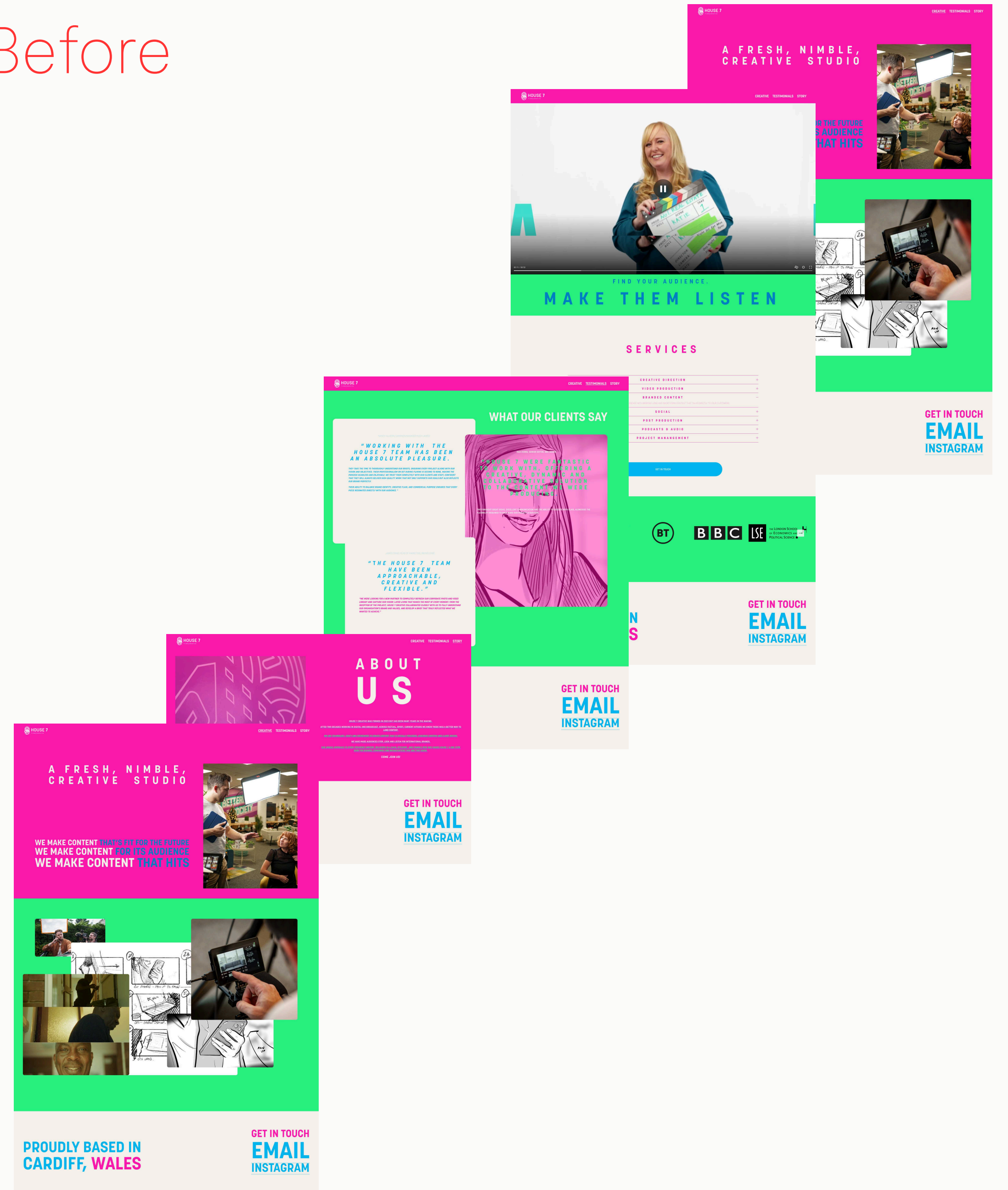
As the title suggests, this was also an experimental project, primarily with the tooling-to-time ratio. Our UX designer hadn't used Framer before, but it was the tool we chose to understand if it helped us get web ideas from design to implementation faster, while also providing the client with a more robust CMS option out of the box. Unfortunately, it wasn't as much of a plug-and-play as we'd hoped, so the quality wasn't to the standard we wanted. All that aside, I believe we still did a great job considering the client was relaunching in 2.5 weeks. I would welcome more uncertain, trial projects in the future.

The following page shows some screenshots.

After



Before



A vertical wooden pencil is centered against a dark background. The word "Process" is written over the pencil in four different instances: a small, light gray font at the top, a medium-sized light gray font below it, a larger light gray font below that, and a very large, bold white font at the bottom.

Process
Process
Process
Process
Process

Creative compass

Having a clear visual compass myself helps me steer my team in the right direction over time in a more direct and confident way.

I encourage them to do the same. Nothing profound—just something that can act as your nucleus whenever you're lost or stuck. Whether that's from a UX, art direction, UI, research, or even cultural perspective. They all need a nucleus.

I've shown the compasses from three perspectives on the right: brand, product, team.

Candid Adventure In motion Expressive Simple

Brand: Blank Boxx

Used to aid art and creative direction of the brand and work attached to it.

Simplicity Clarity Inclusivity

Product: Trader Support Service (TSS)

This project is immensely complicated, and it's easy to forget the base-level goal in the design team. It's one of the best litmus tests I've implemented. If lost or uncertain at any point, you know what to come back to.

Direct Iterative Unity Boldness "However"

Team: One Utility Bill / Pillar 2

More of a general team approach with this one. It's what enables the teams I've led to be the kind of people others always talk about—people you rely on to get difficult things done. It's how confident collaborators are developed, and great products come off the back of that.

What breaks the compass

Pointless meetings

(esp' with no aim, are long, or to fill a quota)

Being against critique

Unambitious leadership

**Sterile working spaces
and processes**

Siloed working

No recognition and praise

**When the team take the
hits and questions
instead of me**

Public & Private Sector

Process and Ways of Working

From NHS, to Pillar 2, to now, Trader Support Service – I've worked in high-stakes environments, dealing with challenging, demanding stakeholders and deadlines, while still delivering high-quality, high-impact services. The key? It's all in the team.

When they have room to explore, challenge, and make mistakes, they have that springboard to get to where they need to be.

Following are two case studies where process helped the team succeed.

One from **Pillar 2**, a top-up tax service that encourages the likes of Starbucks and other companies earning €750m+ p/a to pay a minimum 15% corporate tax rate.

Another is from **One Utility Bill**, a utility bills bundling service for B2B and B2C (I worked with both the UX and marketing teams).



Pillar 2 Top-Up Taxes

Navigating High Complexity

The OECD's Pillar 2 framework represents a significant shift in global tax policy, introducing a minimum corporate tax rate (15%) for the world's largest multinational enterprises.

My role was to lead the User-Centred Design (UCD) team at HMRC in creating the digital service for this legislation—a highly complex task with no existing blueprint. The challenge was twofold: first, to translate dense, evolving policy into an intuitive and accessible digital service; and second, to unify a fragmented, multi-disciplinary team that lacked the collaborative tools and processes to succeed.

When I stepped in, the design process was disjointed. Teams worked in silos, relying on low-fidelity components and static screenshots. There was no shared visual language or collaborative space, making it difficult to align on design direction, communicate effectively with stakeholders, or even for a content designer to see their work in context. With standard tools like Figma off-limits due to constraints, team morale and efficiency were suffering. We needed a new way of working, and as the UCD team lead, it was my responsibility to create it.

Fostering a Culture of Clarity and Collaboration

My first step was to address the tooling gap directly. If we couldn't use Figma, I would bring a Figma-like experience to the tools we did have. I took the initiative to build a complete, high-fidelity GDS (GOV.UK Design System) component library from scratch within Mural. This wasn't just a static kit; it included various states, like happy and unhappy paths, giving the team a robust, shared toolkit.

This Mural design system became the catalyst for a major shift in our workflow. Suddenly, designers, researchers, and content specialists could co-create visually in real time. Stakeholder demos transformed from static presentations into dynamic, live co-design sessions, which built strong rapport and significantly reduced revision cycles. The system became our single source of truth, creating the clarity and consistency we had been missing.

Building People to Build Great Products

My leadership philosophy on this project was simple: look after the team, and the team will deliver exceptional work. I focused on building a culture of psychological safety where everyone felt empowered to contribute. This meant being approachable, boosting morale, and actively mentoring every member of the UCD team.

I invested in upskilling the team. I personally trained members in interaction design principles and, for some, even taught them the basics of coding with the GDS Prototype Kit. This empowered them to build tangible, high-fidelity prototypes themselves, giving them full ownership of their vision from concept to a clickable demo. It broke down discipline-specific barriers and fostered a team of versatile, confident designers who could articulate their ideas with greater impact. The feedback I received consistently highlighted this supportive, empowering environment as key to our success.

Pillar 2 Top-Up Taxes (cont'd)

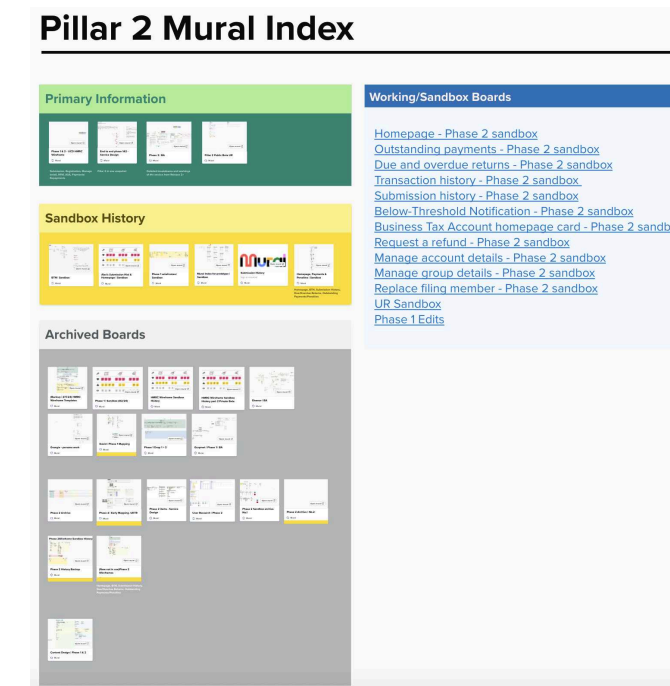
A Transformed Team and a Lasting Legacy

The results extended beyond just delivering a product. We transformed from a collection of individuals into a cohesive, high-performing UCD team. My initiatives directly led to an estimated 25% increase in project velocity and a 30% reduction in rework due to clearer communication and early stakeholder buy-in. We successfully guided the project through its critical GDS assessments, a testament to our improved process and quality of work.

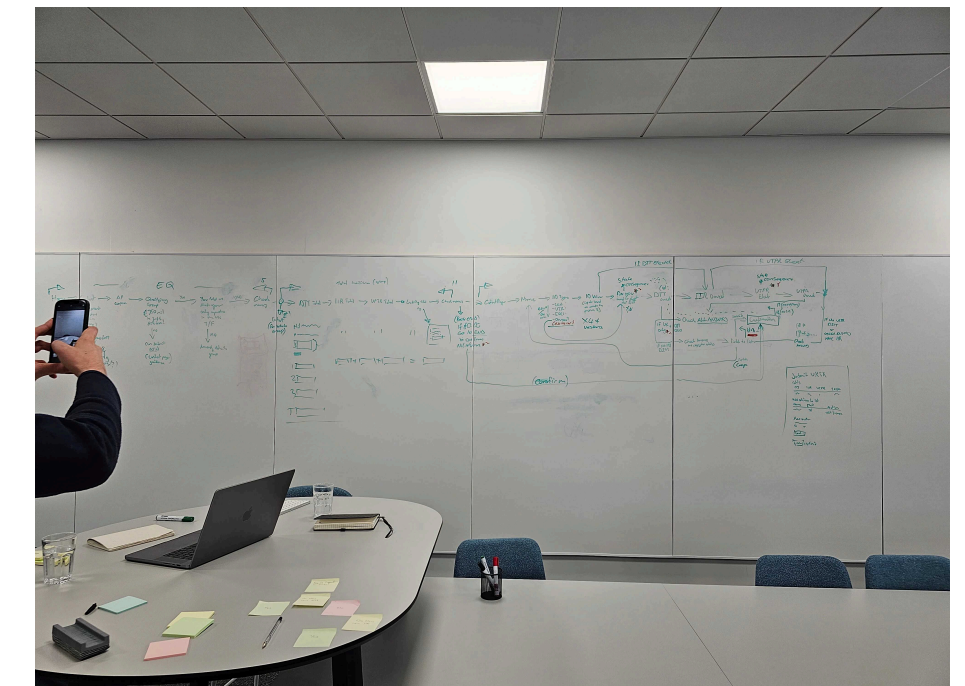
What I'm proudest of, though, is the lasting cultural impact. The Mural design system has evolved into a collaborative asset, now officially owned by the Pillar 2 team but actively used and enhanced by the wider UCD community at HMRC. It sparked a new way of working that outlasted my direct involvement. By focusing on people and process, we not only navigated a highly complex project but also built a stronger, more capable, and more collaborative design culture.



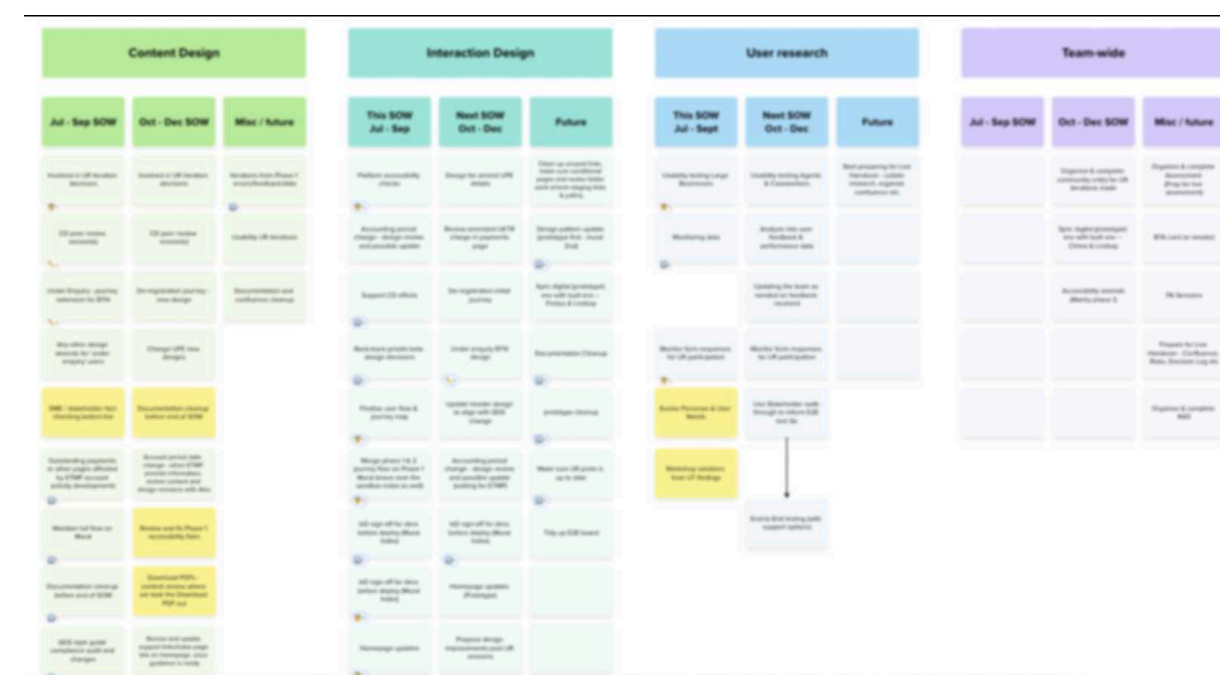
(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

(A) This is the master Mural board I set up for the UCD team to work async in. It was (and is) used as the source of truth for both internal and external teams and stakeholders.

(B) Because of the Figma restriction, Mural was the wireframe and mapping tool. Naturally, the number of boards stacked up. We needed a way to quickly jump between them, so I created an index for just that—keeping track of what's been made and by whom.

(C) I spent a lot of time remote, but I was keen to make sure we came together to map out problems we were having (both product and team-related). Sometimes it would be a 1-2-1, other times more of a collective session. This is from one of those sessions, unblocking a user journey.

This is a planning session for work ahead—preventing sporadic ROI-negative work, and stopping other teams from stealing unnecessary time from us. When you know what's coming, you tend to focus better on the present.



One Utility Bill

The Situation

I was the first senior design hire into a company consolidating three brands—UBundle, Notify, and One Utility Bill—under one roof. There was no design function, no brand guidelines, no critique culture, and no clear creative direction. The website had been outsourced to an external agency and was underperforming. When I arrived, the brief was broad and the remit was undefined.

That suited me. Within the first few months I'd taken ownership of the product strategy, the brand identity, the commercial funnel, and the internal creative culture. Not because someone handed me a job description that said all of that—because those were the things that needed doing and nobody else was going to do them.

The Work

The agency the company had hired to redesign the website wasn't delivering. Rather than manage the relationship into the ground, I pitched a different approach directly to the CEO and CTO: bring it in-house, let me lead it, and we'll ship better work faster. They said yes. The new site, built on brand guidelines I'd created from scratch, delivered a 20% uplift in lead-conversion revenue.

I set the creative direction for everything the company put out—the summer campaign, internal programmes like "Thrive", and even the office itself. I managed the budget, the contractors, and the creative execution for the office rebrand; building a theme around "we". This was shown in artefacts such as the team photo wall, multilingual welcome signs, and original photography of the Newcastle area. It sounds small, but it wasn't. It changed how the company felt to work at, and people talked about it for months.

Building a Designer

The work I'm proudest of at OUB isn't a deliverable. It's a person.

When I arrived, the junior designer on the team was talented but shy—reluctant to share her ideas, uncomfortable being challenged, and designing by instinct rather than intent. I started weekly critique sessions, first between the two of us, then this became a culture within the wider UX team. The rule was simple: lead with your "why". Don't defend a decision because it looks good, defend it because you can explain the thinking behind it.

Within the year, the junior designer's output and quality had doubled. More importantly, she'd become someone who could hold her own in a room—who could challenge and be challenged. She transformed from someone who needed direction into someone who gave it. That's the version of leadership I care about most: not building products, but building the people who build products.

This way of working established the critique culture that ran across the design and UX teams—a weekly space where no one was above anyone, where honesty was the expectation, and where new ideas could surface without fear. This was still running when I left.

Charmello

(Bonus case study)

Product

Charmello was a subscription audio platform I co-founded and designed end-to-end. Mobile app, web platform, brand, content strategy. Two distinct product phases: the first built around immersive audio drama ("audio cinema"), the second a strategic pivot into audio learning after market validation showed stronger demand.

Both versions were designed mobile-first. The drama phase leaned into a cinematic visual language to match the audio quality. The learning phase stripped that back for clarity and utility, prioritising content discovery and structured listening paths. The pivot wasn't cosmetic. It meant rethinking the information architecture, the onboarding flow, and the entire content model.

Process

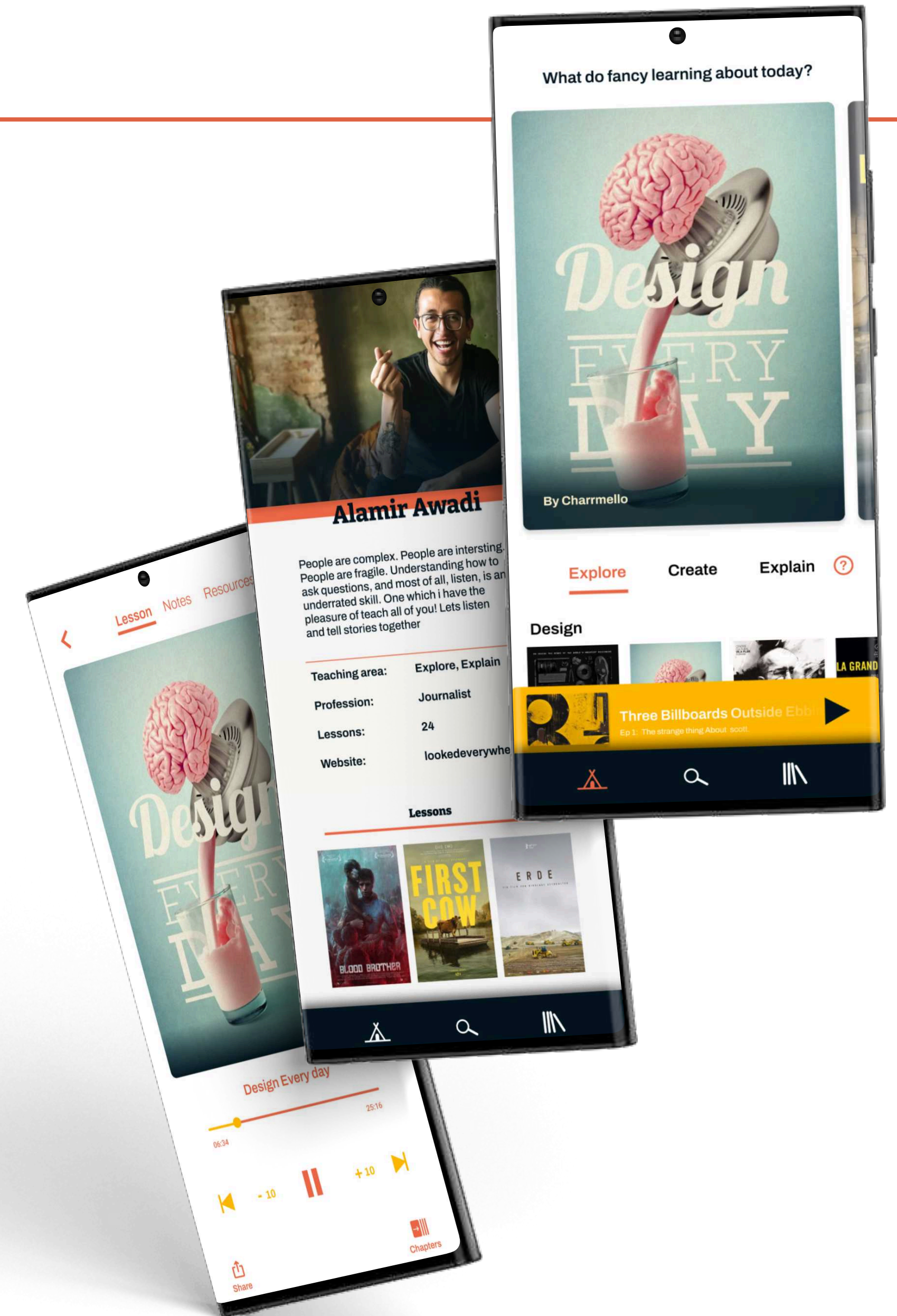
I ran a 100+ participant research programme before we wrote a line of product code. Landing page tests, prototype walkthroughs, one-to-one interviews. We secured 50+ pre-launch sign-ups for a product that didn't exist yet. That validation shaped every design decision from that point forward.

When the data told us entertainment wasn't the strongest market, we pivoted. That meant redesigning the app, rebuilding the content pipeline, and renegotiating the product's identity with the team. I led all three. I also managed the remote engineering team that built the Alpha platform, and contributed directly to the V2 codebase myself (MERN stack, Firebase) when we needed to move faster than the team could resource.

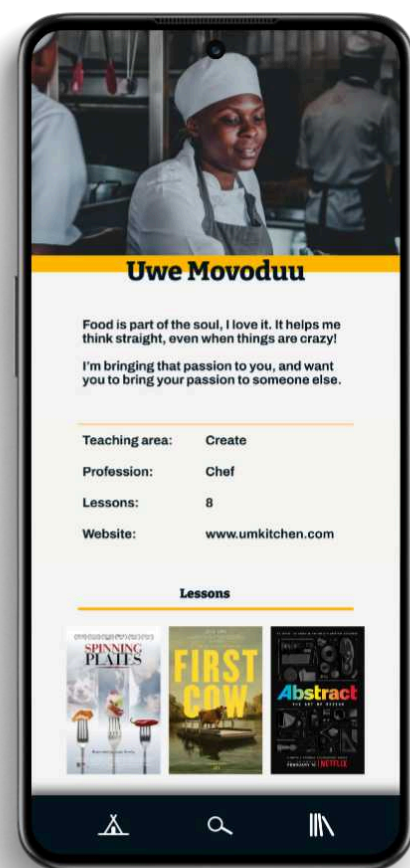
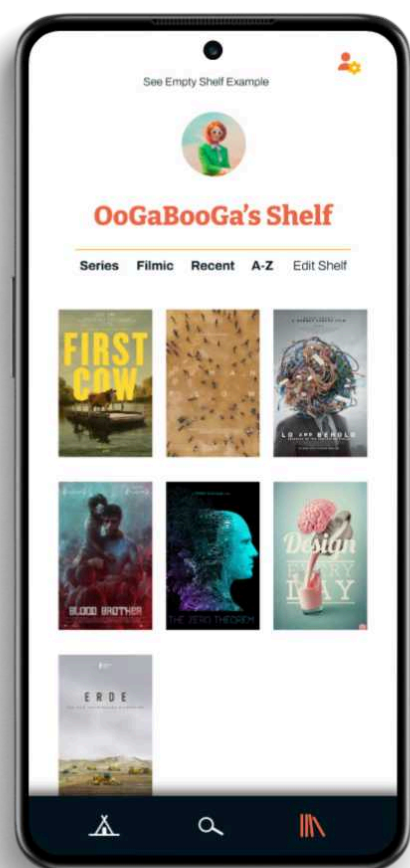
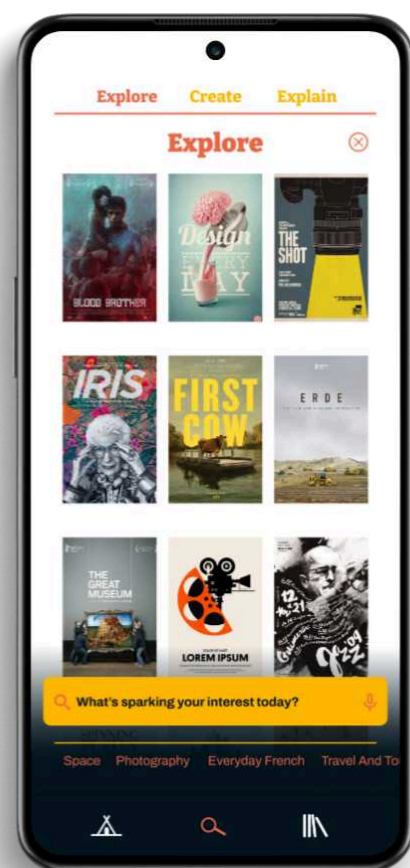
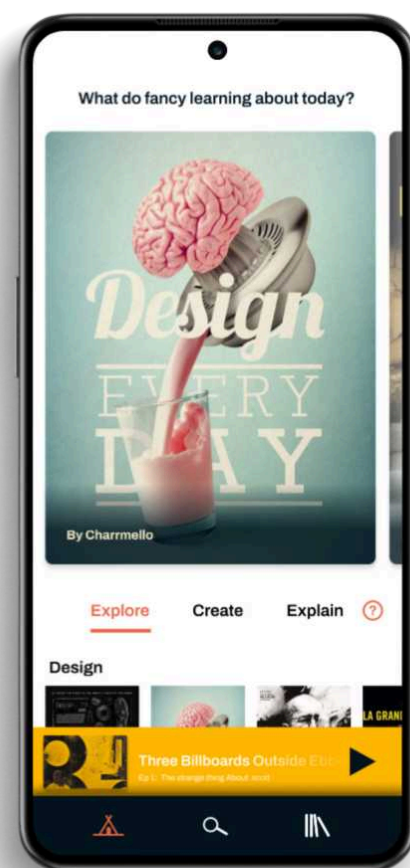
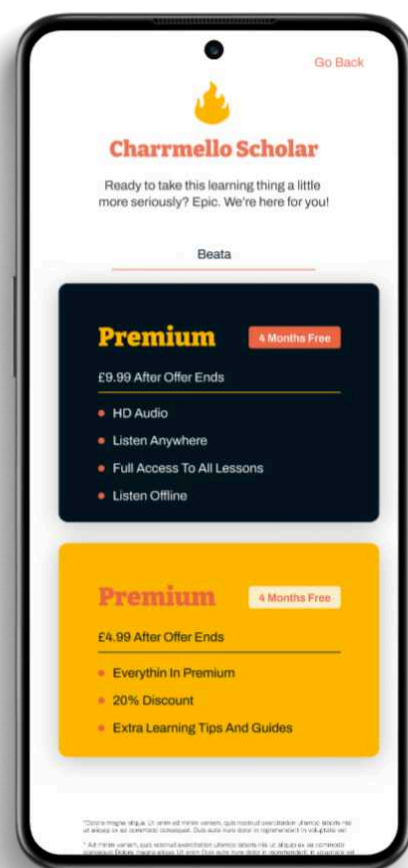
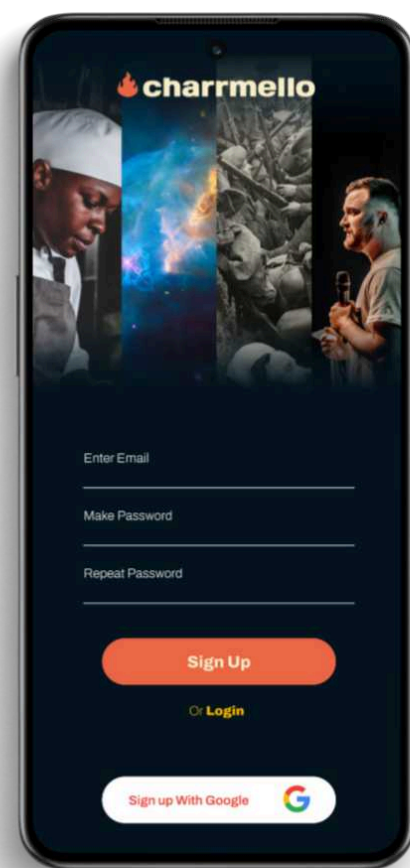
Learning

This is the project where I learned that conviction without evidence is just stubbornness. The first pivot was the right call. The second was harder. I paused the company after two years because I'd lost clarity on where we were heading, under pressure from voices I weighted too heavily. The market later moved in exactly the direction we'd originally identified.

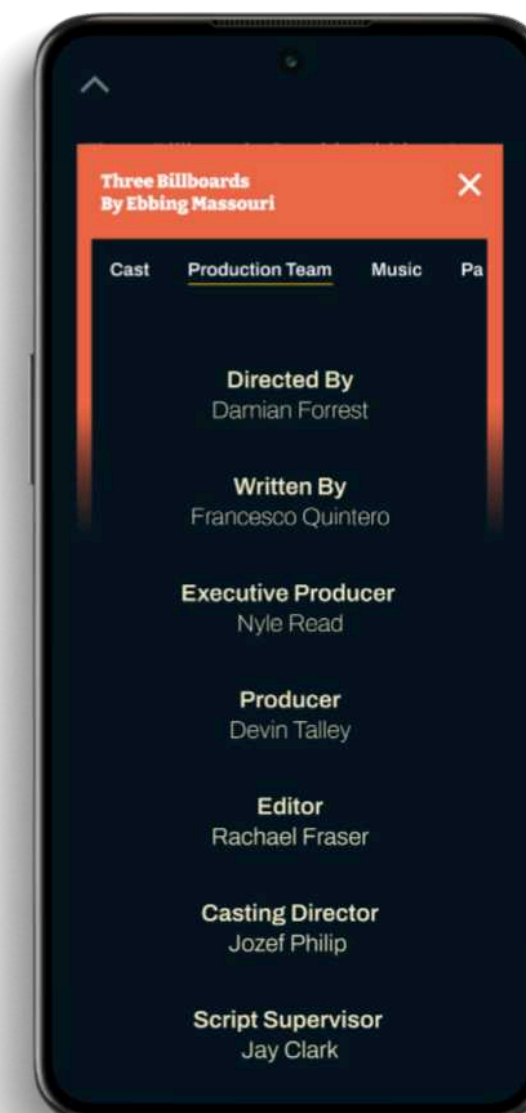
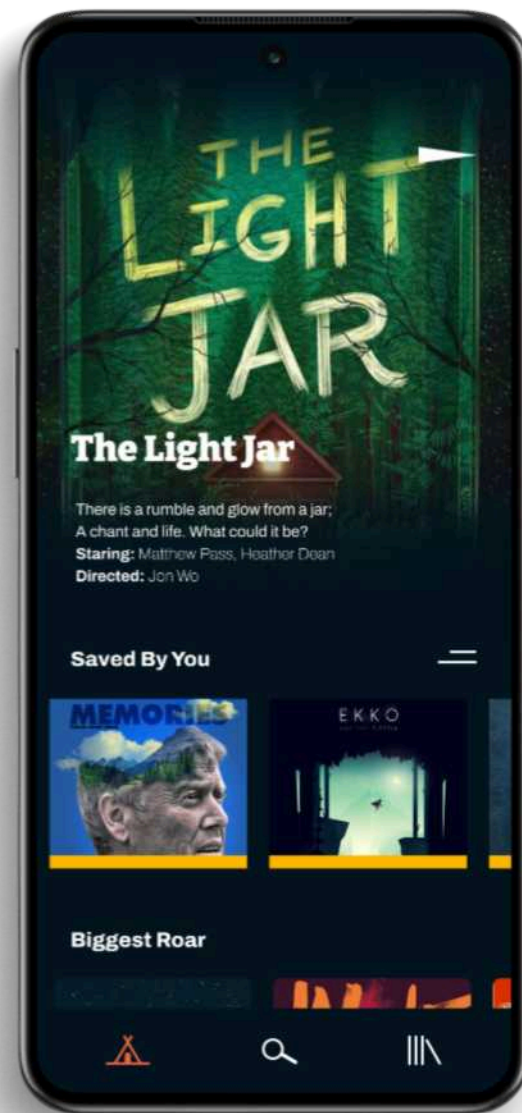
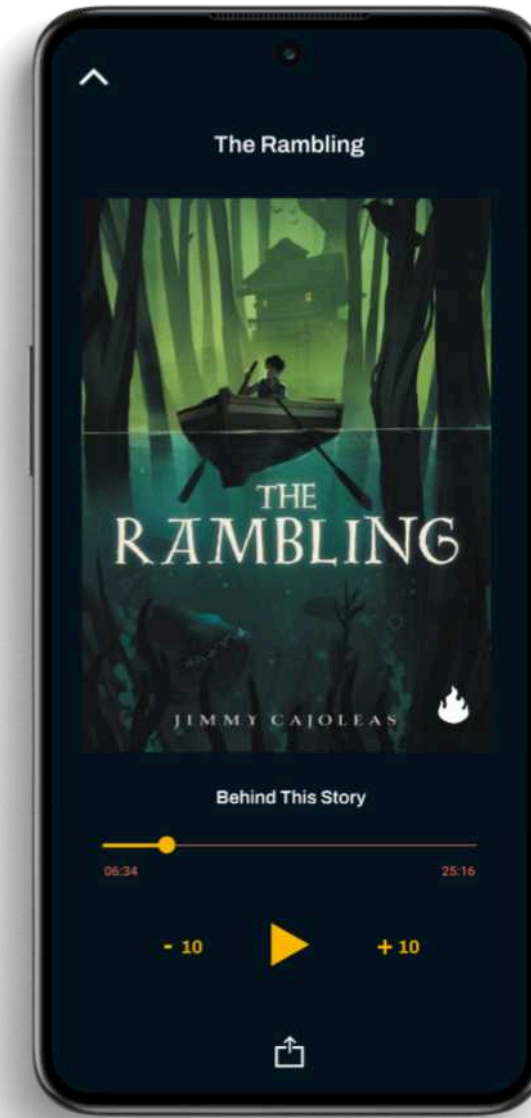
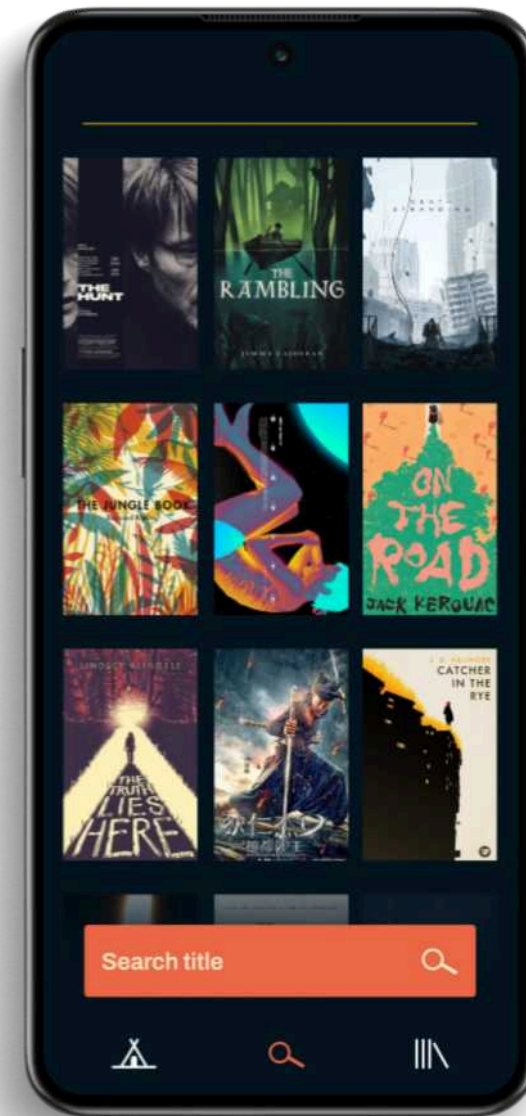
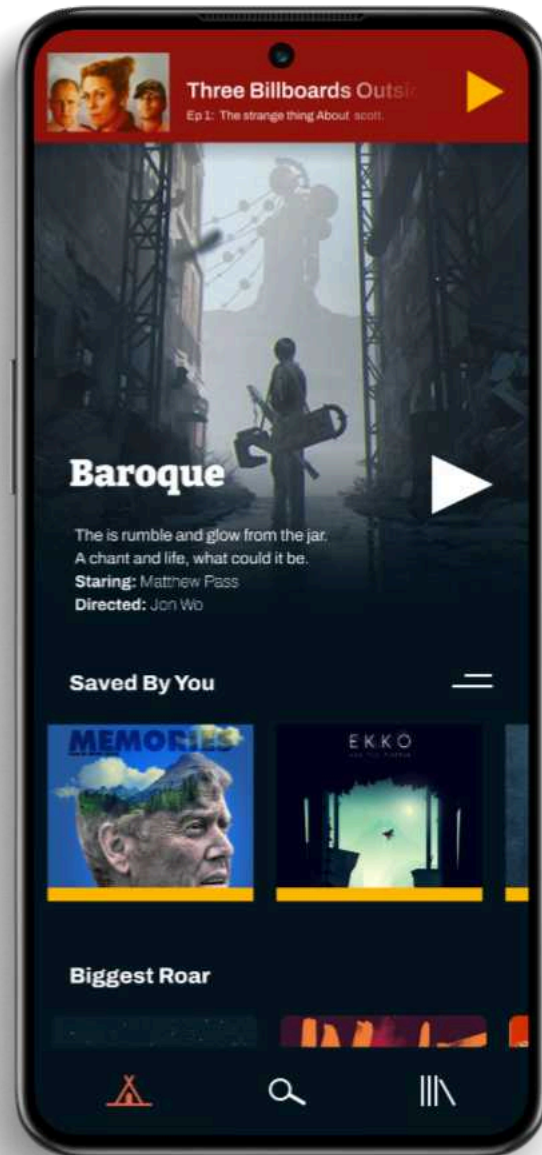
I don't frame that as a failure story. I frame it as the project where I learned how product decisions actually get made under real pressure, with real money, and real people depending on the outcome. Every team I've led since has benefited from that. I design differently when I've had to defend a product direction with my own time and capital on the line, not just a stakeholder's deadline.



Learning



Stories



Thinking



How I lead .

I don't believe anyone is truly ready for the next level. Someone taking a bet on you is the fastest way to get there. That's how every leadership step in my career has happened—not because I had all the answers, but because someone trusted me to figure it out, and I did.

At Pillar 2, my delivery manager gave me the UCD team not because I was the most senior person available, but because I was the one who could carry it. Eight to ten people across interaction design, content design, research, service design, and business analysis. Reporting, statements of work, reviews, stakeholder rooms. The lot. Not because I asked for it, but because I was already doing it.

The pattern repeats. At One Utility Bill, I walked into a role without a defined remit and built one. At Charrmello, I was designing the product, managing the dev team, and writing the audio scripts. At Accenture, I was the designer who crossed into Scala when no one else would bridge the gap.

I lead by making people around me more capable than they were before I arrived. I set the bar, protect the space for people to reach it, and get out the way. When a junior designer at OUB was too shy to share her ideas, I didn't lower the bar—I taught her to lead with her "why", gave her the safety to be wrong, and watched her output and confidence double within the year. That's not a management technique. That's what I actually care about.

The hardest part of leadership isn't making decisions. It's knowing when the team needs you to step in and when they need you to step back. I get that wrong sometimes. But I'd rather over-trust and course-correct than micromanage and never find out what someone was capable of.

What I Believe

Design is the last discipline that still has to justify its existence in most organisations. Engineering ships. Sales closes. Product manages. Design...explains. I've spent most of my career fixing that. The fix is never about being louder. It's about making design so embedded in the delivery that removing it would break the thing.

At HMRC (UK tax collection body), that meant building a design system that became the single source of truth for multiple agile teams. It earned that status by working better than whatever came before it. At One Utility Bill, it meant tying the funnel redesign directly to a revenue number the CEO actually cared about. Design earns its seat by connecting to outcomes, not by producing beautiful decks about outcomes.

Three things I've learned that I carry into every team I lead:

1 Process should disappear into the work

If your team is spending more time maintaining the process than doing the work, you've built the wrong process. Ways of working should feel invisible when they're right. The best litmus test: does a new starter understand how we work within a week without being told?

2 The best designers are comfortable at the edges of their discipline

I code. I write. I manage budgets. I run stakeholder rooms. None of that makes me less of a designer, it makes my design grounded in reality. I hire for this quality and I develop it in the people I lead.

3 Critique is a skill, not an event

I run weekly crits in every team I lead. It's the fastest way to raise quality, build trust, and surface problems before they become expensive. Be honest, be specific, and never make it personal. People who've been through my crits tend to carry them into their next roles.

You made it to the end! Your reward:

+447703661181

iamalexbrooke@gmail.com

+1 imaginary cookie

Thank you