

VARNIKA KUNDU

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Varnika Kundu is a highly skilled and technical multi-sensory designer operating at the intersection between user experience design and multi-sensory prototypes. Her work incorporates emerging technologies like spatial mapping, multidimensional modeling, and algorithmic generative frameworks to push traditional design practices and deliver real value to businesses and consumers alike. Her deep understanding of sensory design principles and aesthetics is evident in the successful launch of numerous products and experiences for mixed reality productions, cultural heritage institutions, and AI-driven consumer products.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Multi-Sensory Computational Designer at ZENDA, LLC.

August 2022 – Present | New York, NY

- Leading multidimensional design and prototyping sensory representations of end-to-end business operations for a collaborative enterprise tool.
- Integrating analytics, AI, and 3-D gamification by developing simulation environments for focussed visualizations that lead to the tool's differentiation and success in the market.

Lead Designer at Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC)

July 2022 | Washington, D.C.

- Spearheaded data visualization, website design, and development of multi-sensory case studies and carbon calculator for 'Sustainability Tools in Cultural Heritage' for a Tier II National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Grant.
- Achieved unprecedented success with 43,000+ online views.
- This novel approach led to the American Academy Rome Prize in 2022, and was showcased at the 50th annual American Institute for Conservation conference in Los Angeles.

User Experience Designer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

September 2021 – December 2021 | New York, NY

- Led the redesign and development of the Art Bio Matters initiative website, resulting in an impressive 87% surge in online traffic, expanding its reach to 57 countries.
- Developed a multi-sensory approach to collaborating biological materials research virtually around the world during the lockdown.
- This novel approach was marked by a grant renewal from the renowned Richard Lounsbery Foundation.

Visualization Designer at Pratt Institute

May 2021 - May 2022 | Brooklyn, NY

- Created a visually stunning and seamless sensory experience for the NEH-funded sustainability tool project.
- Represented design from Pratt Institute in a cross-disciplinary collaboration with environmental engineers from Northeastern University and FAIC.

Teaching Assistant at Pratt Institute

August 2020 - May 2021 | Brooklyn, NY

- Continuing the legacy of Rowena Reed Kostellow teaching 3-D design principles as a TA at Pratt Institute's Industrial design department
- Mentoring the next generation of designers to push the boundaries of form and function.

Industrial Designer at Tellus Technologies

June 2020 - August 2020 | San Jose, CA

- Created tactile prototypes for a cutting-edge biomaterial startup in collaboration with scientists and engineers from Harvard and MIT Media Lab.
- Represented the organization at the exclusive U.S. National Science Foundation's Innovation Corps immersion program at UC, Berkeley.
- Contributed to the visual branding design for a brighter, more sustainable future.

User Experience Designer at Lane 23 Productions

May 2020 - June 2020 | Lake Arrowhead, CA

- Designed the AI-powered 'Koolio.ai' Digital Audio Workstation, creating an exceptional audio-visual experience across both web and mobile platforms.
- Leveraged strong understanding of sensory needs and behavior to create visual elements, experience workflows, and design prototypes that maximized engagement and satisfaction.

Associate Sensory Director and Lead Experience Designer at YM Movies Pvt Ltd

July 2017 - July 2019 | Chennai, India

- Led the exhibition and sensory design of 'Le Musk', a multi-sensory virtual reality film, using mixed reality technologies, holographic displays, scent dispersal units, and spatial rendering.
- Spearheaded collaboration with Intel(US), Positron(US), IFF (US), The Feelies (UK), and AromaJoin (Japan) to exhibit works at Cannes Film Festival in 2019 and 2022, and standalone exhibitions in LA and Toronto.
- Represented work for 'Le Musk' showcased at Cannes Film Festival 2019.

Experience Designer at YM Movies Pvt Ltd

Nov 2016 - June 2017 | Chennai, India

- Worked with A.R. Rahman, a world renowned Academy Award-winning music composer, on his groundbreaking multi-sensory project 'Le Musk'.
- Implemented solutions for the film's sensory interaction and booth design for the film's prelude that was showcased at the NAB 2017 event.
- Promoted to design lead with creative and technical expertise in multi-sensory design.

Design Assistant at Minotti Ahmedabad

May 2016 - Jul 2016 | Ahmedabad, India

- Created proposal decks for prospective Indian clients for an internationally known Italian furniture company.
- Provided assistance for a variety of interior and spatial design projects.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) - Member | 04 April 2023 – Present

AIGA is a professional organization for design practitioners, educators, and enthusiasts, dedicated to advancing the field of graphic design.

Amazing Design People (ADP) list - Design Mentor | 03 February 2023 – Present

ADPlist consists of highly qualified design mentors from around the world who have been thoroughly vetted. Only 30% of applicants are approved to become mentors within the community. Varnika was recognized as a top 1% Mentor in Design for the month of April 2023.

Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) - Member | 13 December 2020 – Present

IDSA is a highly esteemed and influential professional organization for industrial designers in the United States, whose members are highly regarded for their expertise and contributions to the field. Varnika led and managed the do_connect Mentorship Program; a collaboration between Pratt's IDSA student chapter and the Industrial Design Department.

EDUCATION

Masters in Industrial Design, Pratt Institute

August 2019 - May 2022 | Brooklyn, NY

Bachelor of Design in Accessory Design, National Institute of Fashion and Technology

August 2013 - May 2017 | Chennai, India

EXHIBITIONS

1. <https://everythingimmersive.com/events/le-musk-toronto>

“Le Musk- A Cinematic Sensory Experience”

LIGHTHOUSE IMMERSIVE

Toronto, Canada

February 2023 – Present

Lighthouse Immersive is an immersive art company that produces large-scale exhibitions, attracting thousands of attendees to experience and interact with art in a unique and innovative way. Their exhibitions have been known to attract large crowds, and their previous exhibit, "Immersive Van Gogh," reportedly sold over one million tickets.

2. <https://infinityfestival.com/photos-videos/>

“Le Musk- A Cinematic Sensory Experience”

Infinity Festival Hollywood

Los Angeles, CA

02 November 2022 – 05 November 2022

Infinity Festival Hollywood is an annual event that celebrates storytelling and innovation in content creation, bringing together top creators, technologists, and thought leaders from various industries.

3. <https://lemusk.com/>

“Le Musk- A Cinematic Sensory Experience”

LE MUSK THEATER

Los Angeles, CA

November 2022 – February 2023

A standalone VR theater and exhibition, located in Sunset Boulevard, with the advantage of being situated in a prime location in Los Angeles, known for its vibrant and dynamic entertainment industry.

4. <https://www.salonemilano.it/en/exhibitions/salonesatellite>

“Anora: Ambient Noses for Anosmia”

Salone Satellite, Salone del Mobile

Milan, Italy

18 April 2023 – 23 April 2023

Salone del Mobile is the largest and most influential furniture fair in the world, held annually in Milan, Italy, to showcase the latest trends and innovations in furniture and design. Salone Satellite is the young designer event of Salone del Mobile, dedicated to designers under 35.

5. <https://www.marchedufilm.com/programs/cannes-xr/>

“Le Musk- A Cinematic Sensory Experience”

Cannes XR, Cannes Film Festival

Cannes, France

16 May 2022 – 24 May 2022

Cannes Film Festival is one of the most prestigious film festivals in the world with over 40,000 attendees. Cannes XR is the virtual and augmented reality program of the Cannes Film Festival, showcasing the latest immersive storytelling experiences.

6. <https://www.editionmultimedia.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Cannes-XR-2019.pdf>

“Scent of a Song from Le Musk”

Cannes XR, Cannes Film Festival

Cannes, France

14 May 2019 – 19 May 2019

Same as (5)

7. <https://lemusk.com/>

“A Prelude to Le Musk”

Intel Booth, NAB 2017

Las Vegas, NV

April 24, 2017

NAB 2017 showcased the latest advancements in media, entertainment, and technology, with a focus on virtual and augmented reality, attracting over 100,000 attendees from around the world.

8. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/curative-mixed-reality-experience-ga-got-23d-tickets-221696218357>

“Curative - Mixed Reality Experience”

Gaea: A Garden of the 2nd and 3rd Dimensions

Brooklyn, NY

11 December 2021 – 12 December 2021

Gaea: A Garden of the 2nd and 3rd Dimensions (G:A GOT 2&3D) is an immersive exhibition at the intersections of art, science, and technology exploring technoethics and AI, showcasing mixed reality experiences, film, sculpture, interactives and more.

9. <https://www.varnikakundu.com/thebutterflyeffect>

“The Butterfly Effect”

Brooklyn, NY

11 May 2021 - 21 May 2021

"The Butterfly Effect" exhibition, designed and curated by Varnika Kundu, showcases a unique blend of science and art through visual representations of data on microplastics. The exhibition aims to raise awareness on the importance of reducing plastic waste by making the invisible visible.

10. <https://festival.nycxdesign.org/event/pratt-shows-design/>

"Anora: Ambient Noses for Anosmia"

NYCxDesign Week Exhibition

Brooklyn, NY

11 May 2022 - 18 May 2022

As part of NYCxDesign week 2022, Pratt Shows was a week-long exhibition that celebrated the creative and intellectual achievements of a diverse group of artists, designers, architects, photographers, filmmakers, researchers, scholars, and critical thinkers.

AWARDS & HONORS

Excellence in Academic Achievement - Winner | 17 May 2022

Excellence in Academic Achievement is awarded to one candidate per year who has made significant contributions to their department and disciplines. These awards are not linked to graduation with Honors or GPA.

Pratt Circle Award - Winner | 17 May 2022

Pratt Institute presents a Pratt Circle Award to candidates for outstanding academic achievement.

IDSA Graduate Student Merit Award - Pratt Runner-Up | 29 March 2022

GSMA Nominees demonstrate tremendous talent, breadth of skill, exceptional presentation ability, and who best embodies the industrial design graduate program they represent.

AICAD Post-Graduate Teaching Fellowship - Nominee | 02 December 2021

The Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design(AICAD) is a non-profit consortium of 39 leading art schools in the US and Canada. Only outstanding candidates are nominated to apply by the institution from which they earn their graduate degree.

Kostellow Fellowship - Winner | 25 May 2021

The department of Industrial Design at Pratt Institute grants one candidate per year with the Kostellow Fellowship.

Merit-Based Scholarship - Winner | 24 August 2019 - 18 May 2022

PUBLICATION

Kundu, V. (2022). Anora: Ambient noses for anosmia (Order No. 29213881). Available from Dissertations & Theses @ Pratt Institute; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2702463273). Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.pratt.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/anora-ambient-noses-anosmia/docview/2702463273/se-2>