



Visual Artist | Illustrator

PORTFOLIO 2025

Hi, I'm
Hafsa Zahid Umar

As a visual storyteller with a Bachelors in Fine Arts and over seven years of industry experience in art, design, and creative direction, I have always believed that great design is about more than aesthetics—it's about emotion, narrative, and cultural resonance. With this belief at the heart of my work, my practice now lives at the intersection of art and storytelling. I'm passionate about turning the ordinary into the extraordinary, exploring cultural nuance, and finding the common threads that connect us all. Having grown up between different cultures, I aspire to keep creating with empathy, curiosity, and a deep respect for diverse perspectives.



Education

Bachelors of Fine Art (Honors)
Beaconhouse National University
2013-2017

Experience

Creative Director 2020 - Present
Motioncue

Lead Illustrator 2019 - 2020
Motioncue

Graphic Designer 2017 - 2018
Ogilvy

Skills

Illustration
Storyboarding
User Interface Design
Digital Painting
Sculpting
Research and analytics

Softwares



Interests

Travel • Documentaries
Hiking • Singing

My Artistic Journey, and my future with BSBI

As a visual artist with a Bachelor's in Fine Arts and over seven years of experience in design, illustration, and creative direction, I have always believed great design is about more than aesthetics – it's about emotion, narrative, and cultural resonance. With this belief at the heart of my work, I am excited to apply for the Master of Arts in Visual Communication at the Berlin School of Business and Innovation.

Pakistan has a rich cultural heritage and artistic legacy including Mughal art, miniature painting, intricate textiles, and centuries of colorful storytelling. But while our culture is vibrant, it is a developing country, and does not have a lot of options when it comes to actual opportunities for creative fields, especially for women. I've had to make my own path in a field where female representation is rare. This struggle taught me the importance of learning, leading, and creating space for others like me. It's one of the biggest reasons I'm drawn to your program and what it offers – a chance to grow not just as an artist, but as a person, by getting to learn in an environment that celebrates diversity and brings together creative minds from around the world. Design is truly a universal language – one that allows us all to understand and interact with each other no matter the background and that is just so profound.

My career began at Ogilvy and led me to my current role as Creative Director at a leading animation studio, where I've led projects for brands like Microsoft, Unilever, and Procter & Gamble, across art direction, storyboarding, and character design. While this experience has been rewarding, I need a more efficient educational environment as there is so much more that I want to learn and explore in the vast field of visual communication. So I'm eager to dedicate myself fully to academic inquiry, collaborative learning, and cross-cultural exposure.

The MA Visual Communication programme at BSBI excites me because of its interdisciplinary approach, studio-based learning, and focus on solving design challenges in evolving media environments. The opportunity to study disciplines like motion graphics, UX design and virtual/mixed reality design all in one programme is ideal for the type of multifaceted creative work I want to continue pursuing. I'm very excited to work with mentors and peers in a studio-based setting, where dialogue, critical thinking and creative risk-taking would be encouraged, exposing me to new disciplines. I believe these values are essential for any modern creative wanting to grow, push boundaries of visual narratives and use design as a language for empathy, connection, and cultural dialogue.

I believe that to truly understand people and tell powerful stories, you have to step outside your own world. For me Germany, offers that opportunity, with its thriving design scene and openness to creative experimentation and a mix of cultures, histories, and perspectives. Hamburg, with its artistic legacy and creative energy, feels like the perfect place for this. Being in a hub of top agencies, studios, and cultural events would give me the perfect exposure to art, technology, and innovation. I imagine its energy and artistic community would highly encourage conceptual depth and be incredibly inspiring for someone like me with very limited resources, who's eager to learn and evolve creatively.

I also hope to bring something valuable to the classroom by sharing the understanding I've gained of diverse visual languages and communication styles, having led over 120 creative projects across tech, healthcare, education, and AI. I'm a blend of Eastern and Western influences as I was born in the Middle East, raised in South Asia with a lifelong exposure to Western media. This mix helps me view the world and my art with more inclusive, human eyes. I aim to contribute a perspective that builds bridges, challenges stereotypes, and nurtures empathy.

This is more than an education for me, it's an opportunity to grow into the artist I dream of becoming. For this I'm ready to move to Germany and give my full focus to the program, to stay open to change, and share my Eastern design roots with the global creative community, even if it means putting other professional opportunities on hold. Pursuing this degree means everything to me, but covering the full cost is a real challenge. If I could receive support toward my tuition fees, it would be truly life-changing. I'm ready to manage my living expenses, but without help, balancing both would be very difficult. I'm full of drive, dreams, and a deep desire to contribute – I just need the chance.

Thank you for considering my application. I'm eager to grow within the vibrant BSBI community and contribute to it with all the energy, curiosity, and cultural perspective I carry.

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Illustration & Sketching

Urban Jungle

I love creating animorphic characters, all oozing cool and a sense of calm. Set in a city-meets-wild backdrop, it blends street style with untamed energy, celebrating individuality, attitude, and creative freedom. I wish to see a world where this level of peace in diversity is not just tolerated but celebrated.



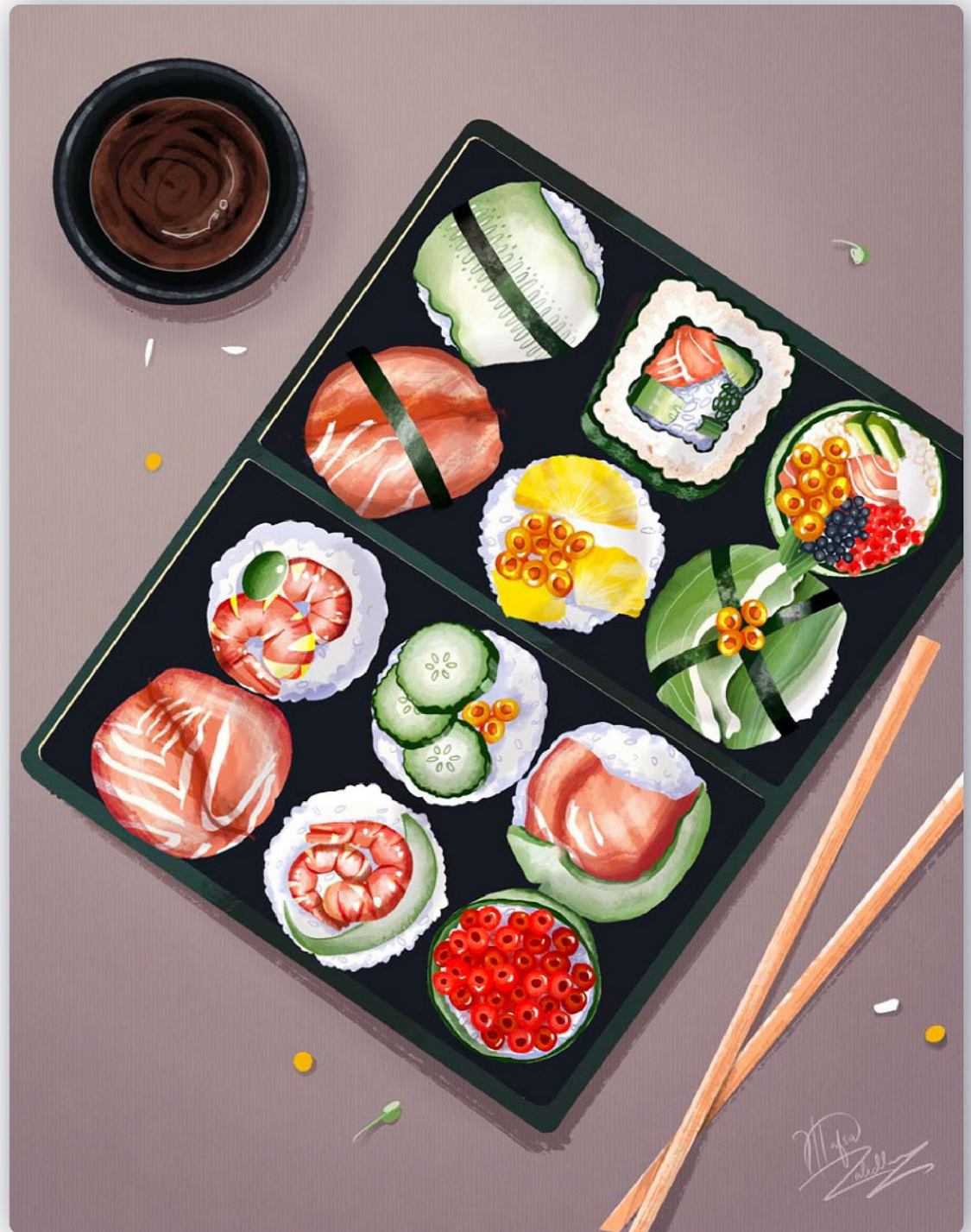
Hipster Shiba Inu

An illustration of a carefree Shiba Inu with a hipster vibe. True to my love for animorphic characters, this Shiba is lost in its own world—unbothered, stylish, and full of personality. The piece blends vibrant color with nostalgic charm and a touch of playful rebellion.



It's 'Maki' me hungry

This piece is inspired by my love for sushi and its artistry. Each piece is carefully detailed to reflect the precision, beauty, and craftsmanship of master sushi chefs. The illustration celebrates sushi not just as food, but as a visual and cultural art form.





Mural Design

A series of murals I designed, each featuring a unique creative character deeply immersed in their passion. One depicts a writer, a content generator surrounded by words and ideas in motion. Another shows an artist, lost in her own colorful world of imagination. The third features a 3D artist interacting with his digital creations, blurring the line between reality and invention. Each mural celebrates the beauty of focus, talent, and creative flow.

KONG.

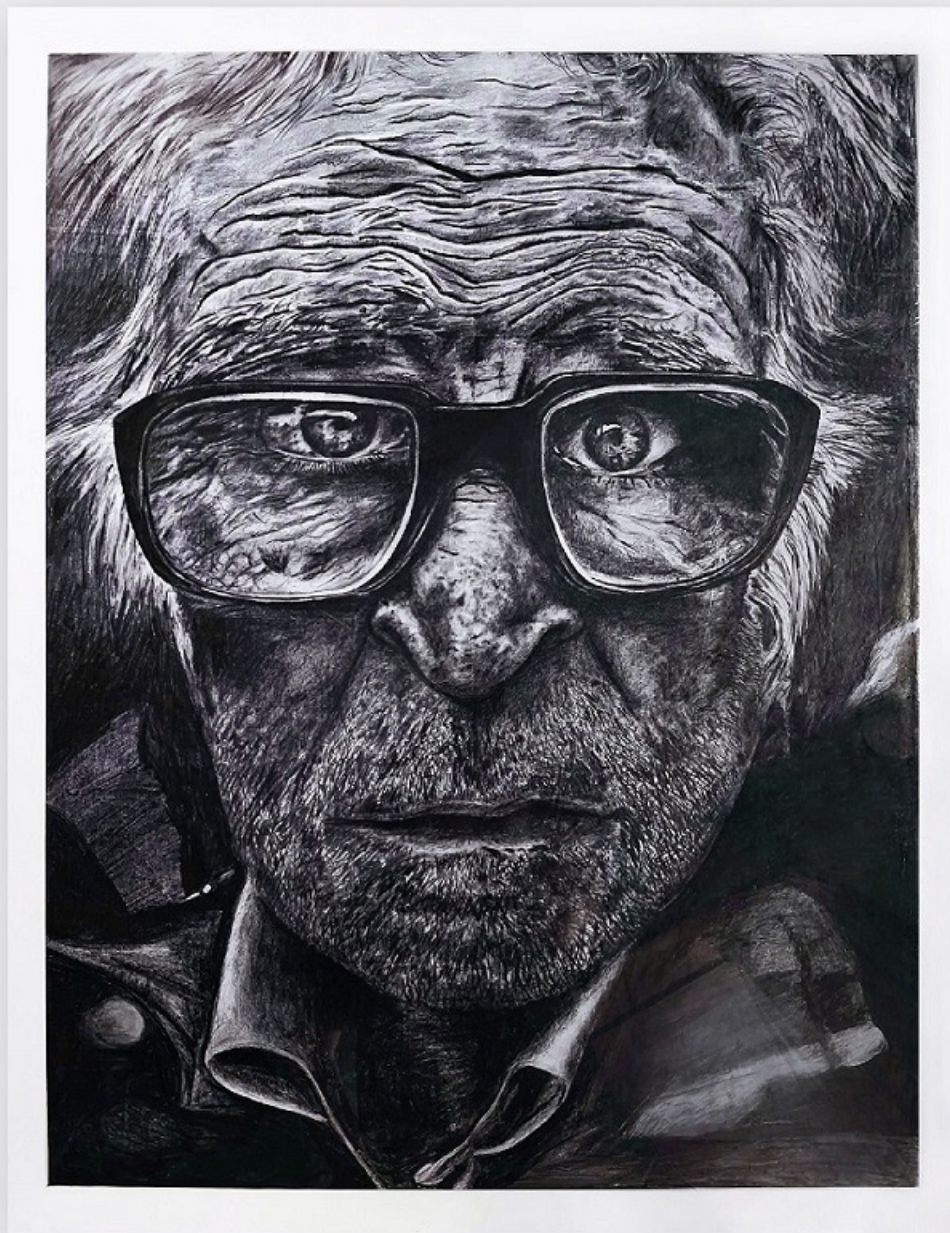
I illustrated a giant King Kong towering above the world, so massive that he wears the Colosseum as his crown. The piece plays with scale, turning one of humanity's greatest architectural feats into a mere accessory. It's a bold, surreal take on power, perspective, and the limits of human creation.





Pencil Sketches

2 x 3 feet



2 x 3 feet

A large, stylized red number '02' is positioned on the left side of the image. The '0' is a thick, rounded shape, and the '2' is composed of a curved top and a horizontal base. The number is rendered in a vibrant red color with a slight gradient, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

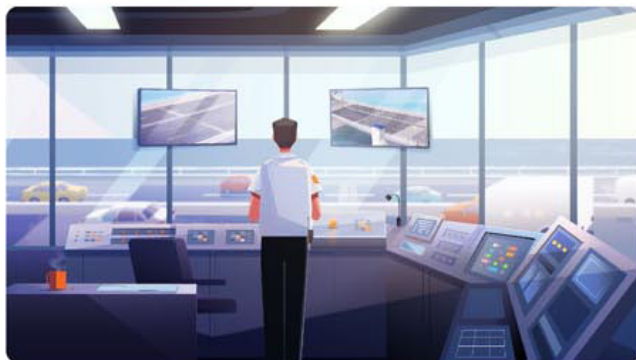
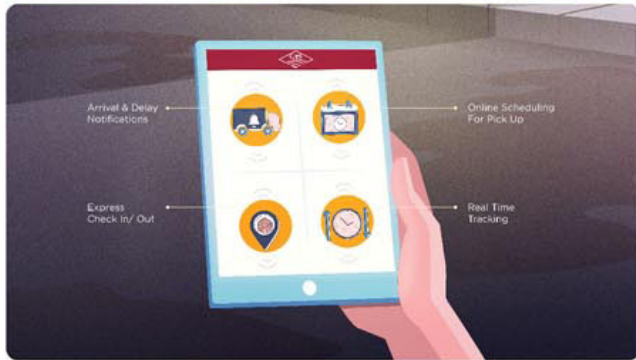
2D Storyboard Illustration



Coopersmith Ports of America

STORYBOARD FRAMES

A 60 second explainer video for Coopersmith Ports of America portraying the transformation from outdated systems to a streamlined, high-tech process.



Scope: To highlight the contrast between outdated methods and C/PA's modern, efficient operations. I aimed for a look that reflects their large-scale capabilities. Visual focus was on open port spaces and key cargo elements. The emphasis was on showcasing automation, credibility, and operational scale. Selected frames showcased here.

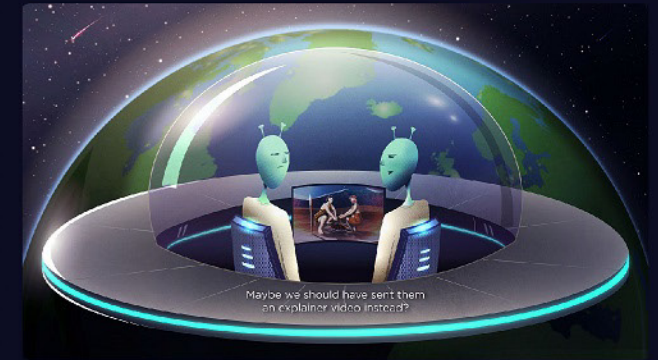
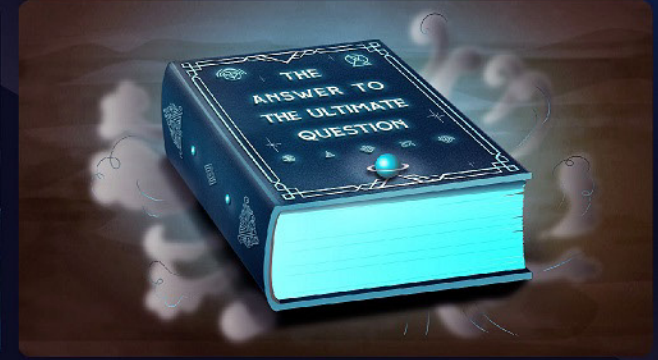
My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration



'How not to change the world'

STORYBOARD FRAMES

A short ad for explainer videos – with a playful take on why clear, engaging video content beats dense information every time.



Scope: The story follows two cavemen who receive a book from aliens containing the secrets of the universe—but they toss it aside, uninterested in long reading. The twist: the aliens regret not sending an explainer video instead. My focus was to make the characters and environments as engaging as possible, in order to further support the idea that strong visuals can often times override lengthy words. Selected frames showcased here.

My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration



'Taken'

STORYBOARD FRAMES

A short awareness video highlighting how child abuse can shatter a child's innocence, peace, and sense of safety. Made for Awaami, an agency which produces content on social issues for social media.



Scope: To highlight the contrast between the joy of childhood and the silent pain abuse can cause. I tried to create visuals which would be surreal, somewhat symbolic yet familiar. The goal was to create a moving reminder that protecting children means preserving their right to a safe, carefree childhood. Selected frames showcased here.

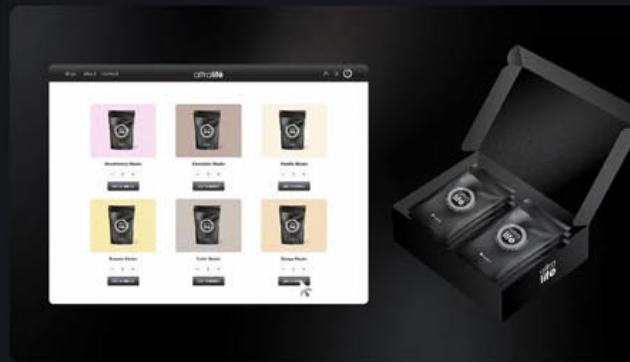
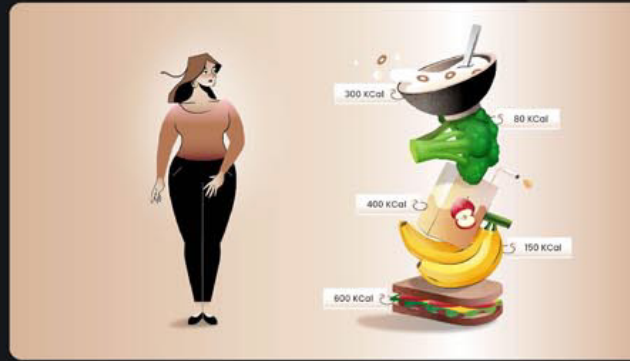
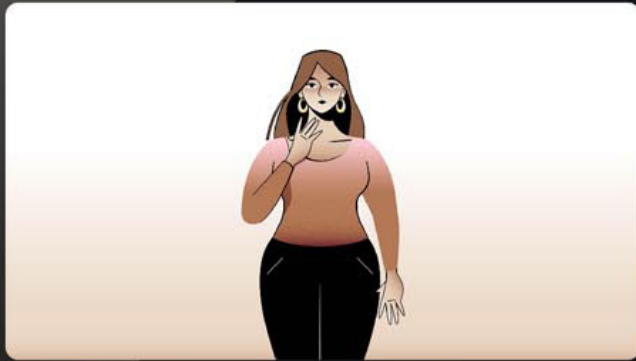
My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration



Altralife by Nualtra

STORYBOARD FRAMES

A 60 second explainer video for Altralife by Nualtra, a leading provider of Total Diet Replacement products for the NHS Low Calorie Diet programme.



Scope: For Altralife, I created a light and uplifting story around a woman feeling overwhelmed by diets, who finds success and ease with their shakes, soups, and bars through the NHS Low Calorie Diet programme. The video highlights her positive journey while showcasing the food as both healthy and appetizing. We kept the visuals fun and on-brand, drawing design inspiration from their brand guidelines, color palette and product packaging. Selected frames showcased here.

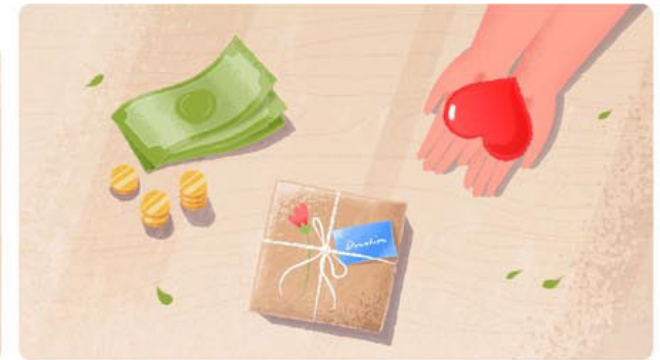
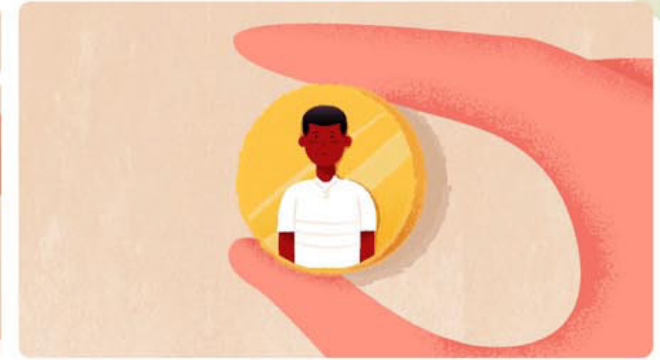
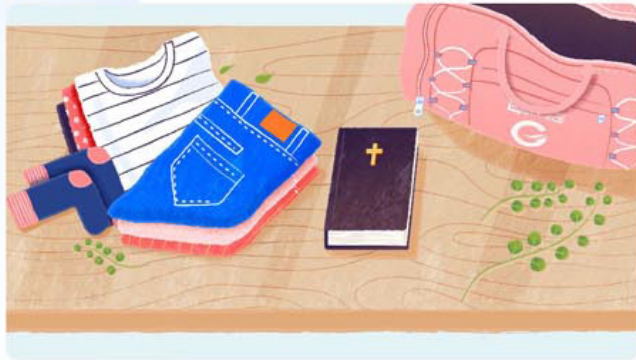
My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration



Resource Ministry Grace Church of Glendora

STORYBOARD FRAMES

A 60 second promotional video for the Grace Church of Glendora's Resource Ministry highlighting their mission to support children affected by abuse and neglect and restore dignity to families. It serves as both an appeal and a guide for volunteers looking to make a meaningful impact.



Scope: As the subject of this video was about giving, and to promote goodwill, we decided to give the whole video a hand-drawn touch and give the characters a very soft edge, and keep the colors very vibrant to highlight the element of hope and belonging. We then experimented with brushes and textures, to accentuate the illustrations and give a soft, human touch to them. Selected frames showcased here.

My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration

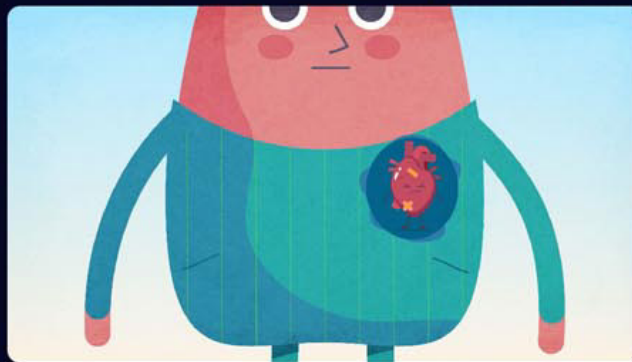
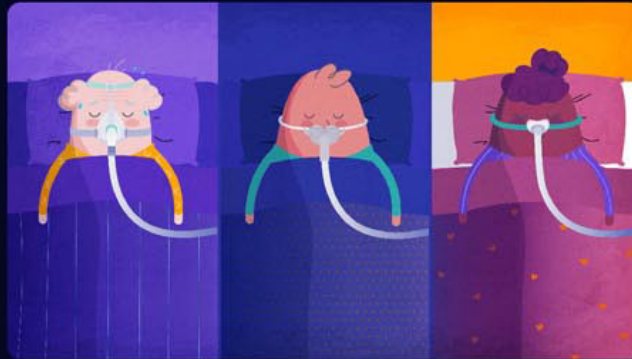
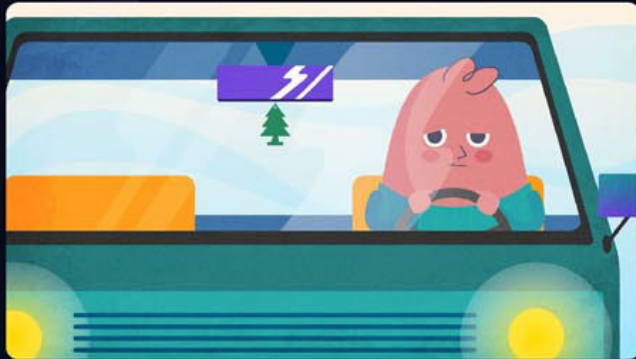
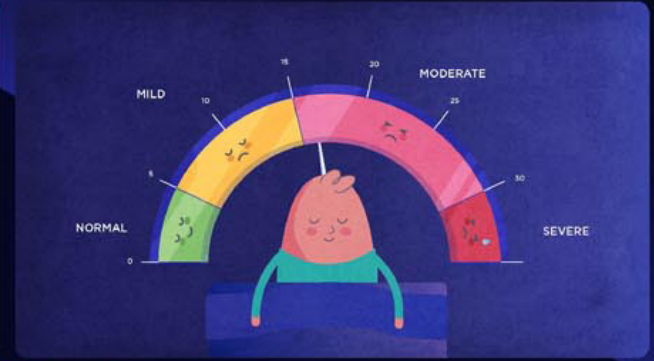
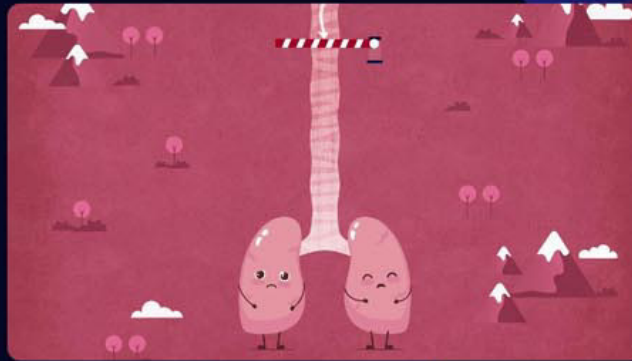
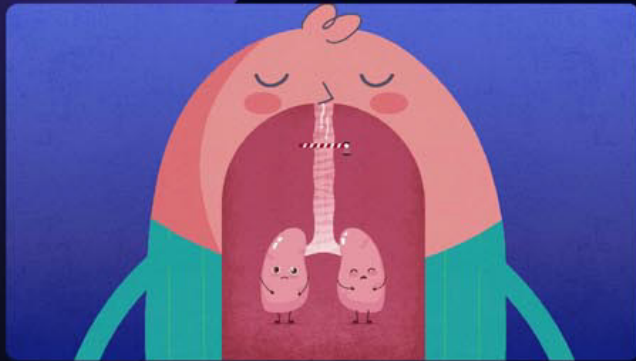


OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA

Renuma

STORYBOARD FRAMES

A 60 second explainer video for Renuma, the simplest way to diagnose and treat sleep apnea from home. Their services cover sleep monitoring, equipment support, and hassle-free supply updates without doctor visits or insurance headaches.

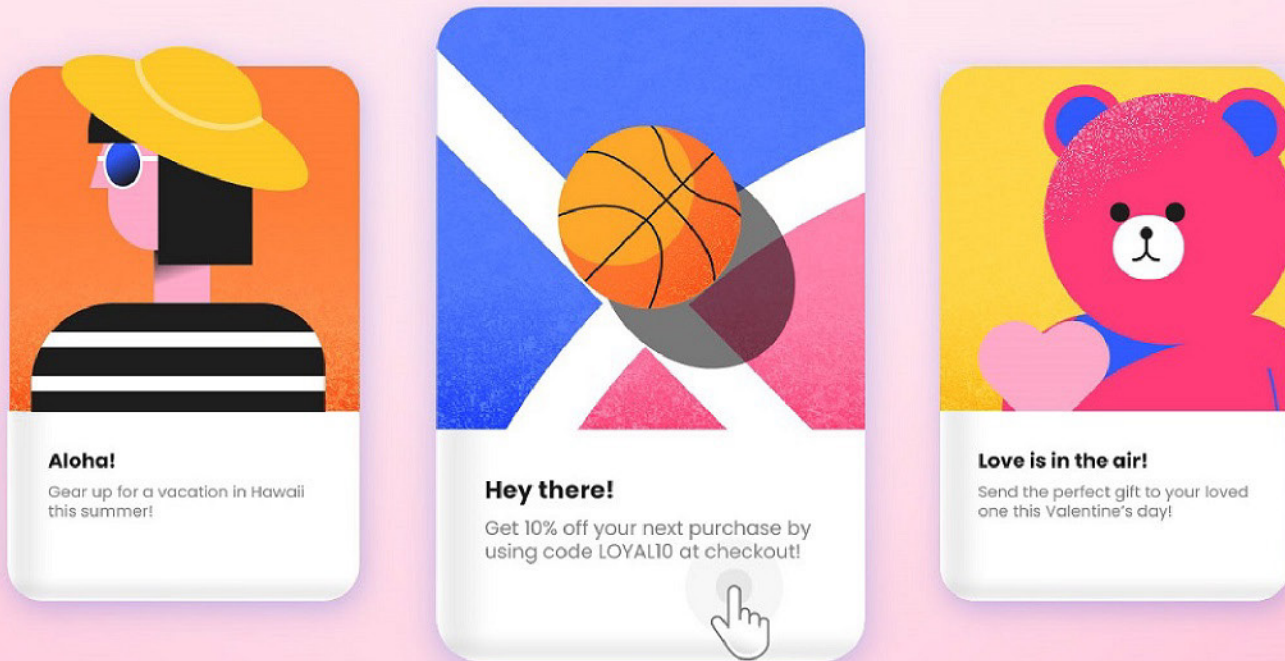


Scope: The client wanted a simple, playful style to make the topic approachable and easy to understand for patients. To achieve this, we used bright, inviting colors and cartoon-style characters that feel friendly and non-intimidating. The overall design and storyboarding were kept light and engaging to draw viewers in without overwhelming them. Selected frames showcased here.

My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration

A large, stylized teal number '05' is positioned on the left side of the slide. The '0' is a thick, rounded shape, and the '5' is also thick with a curved bottom. A horizontal teal bar is positioned behind the text on the right.

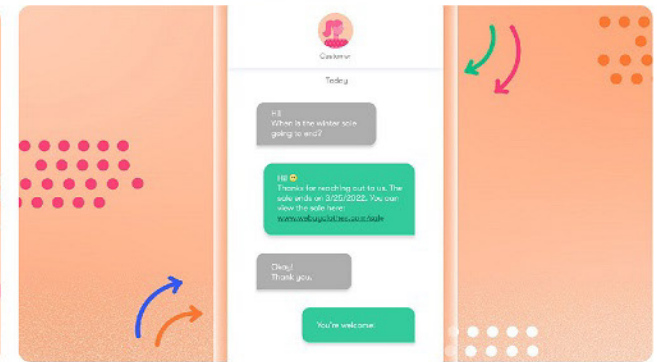
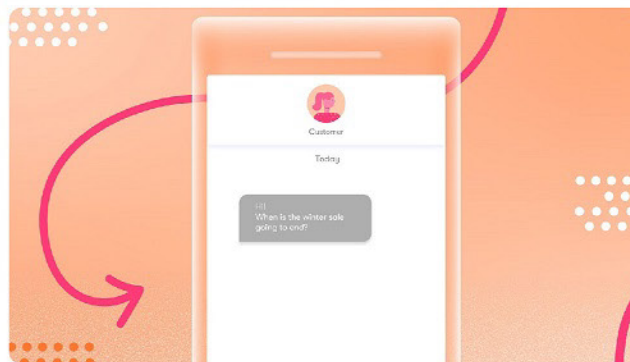
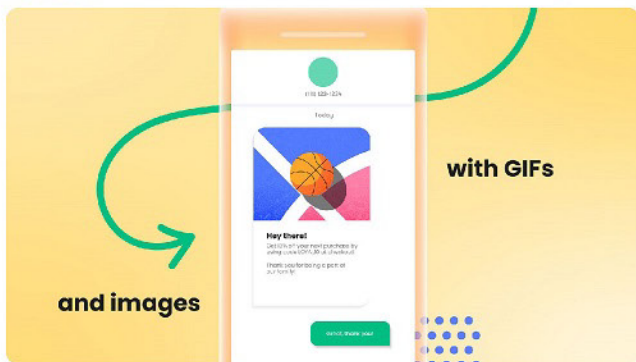
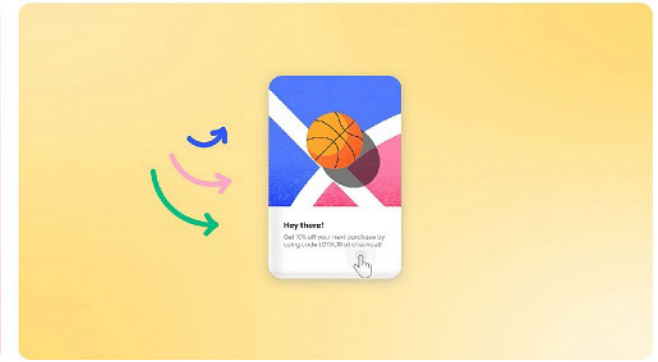
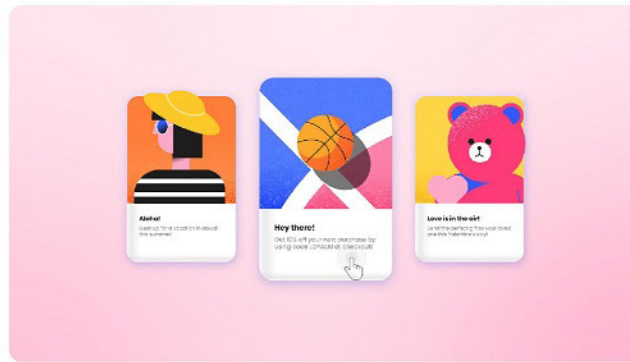
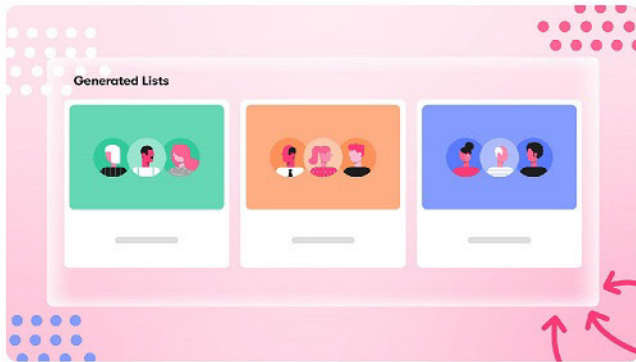
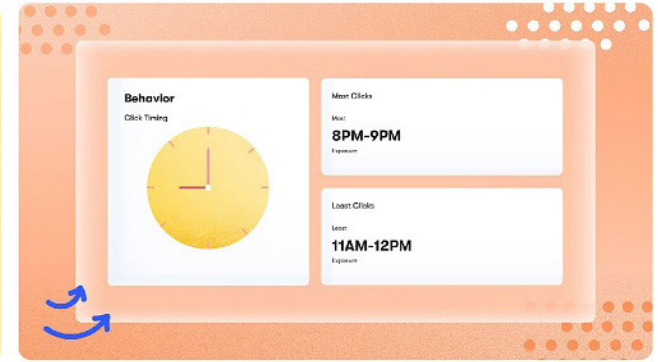
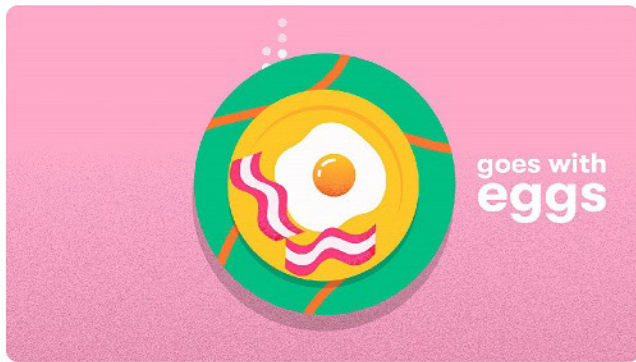
Interface Design Storyboard Illustration



Sendlane

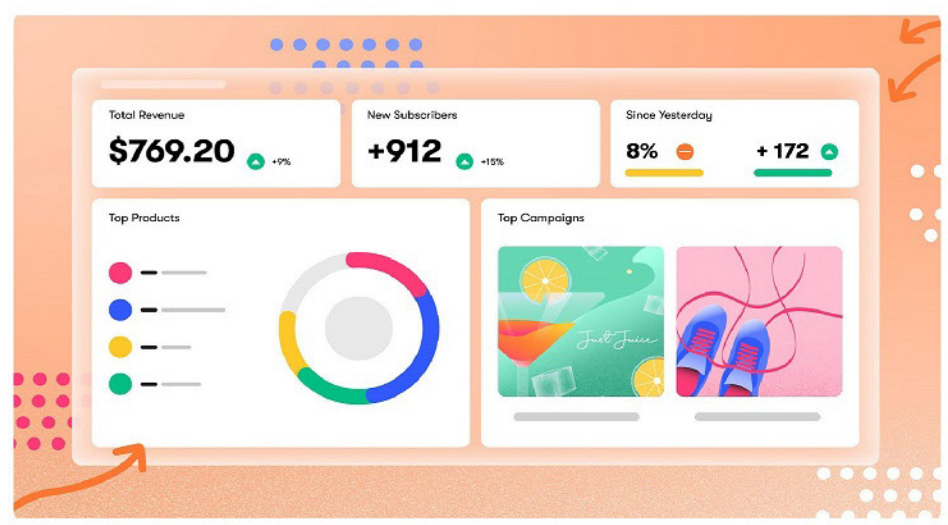
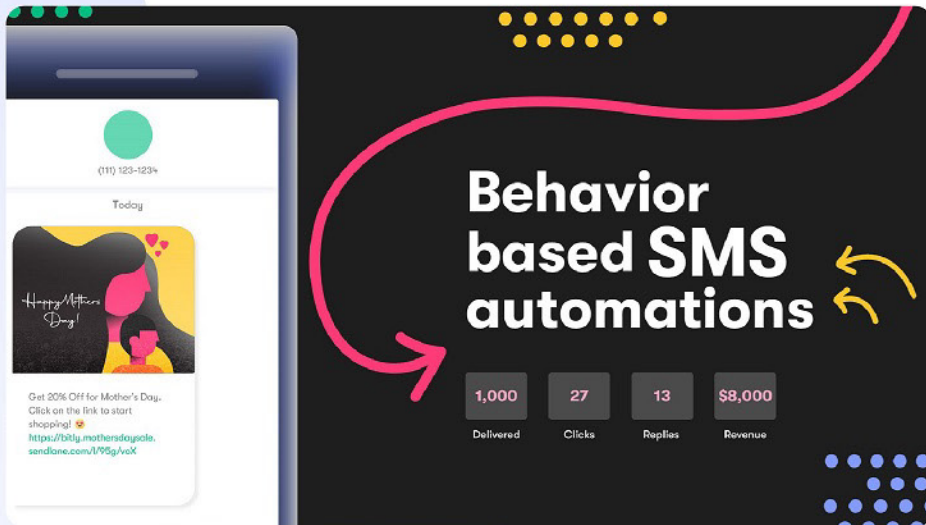
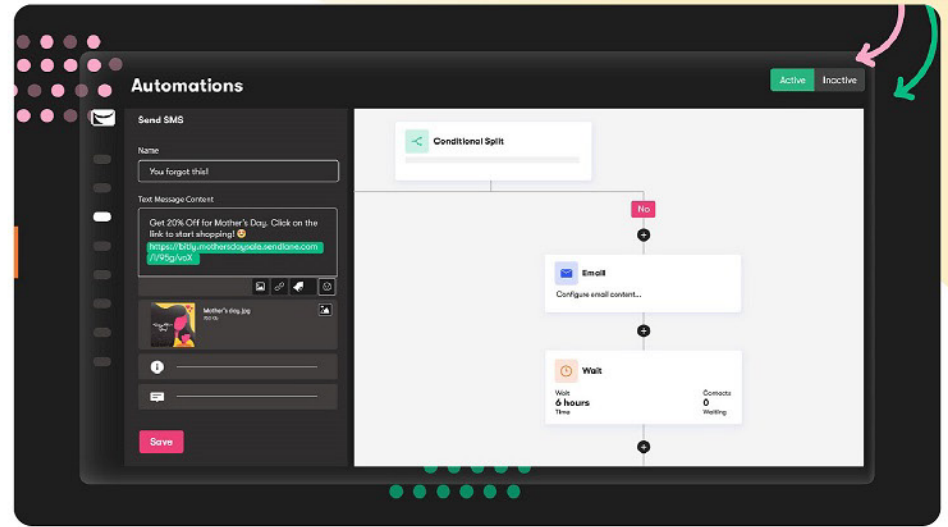
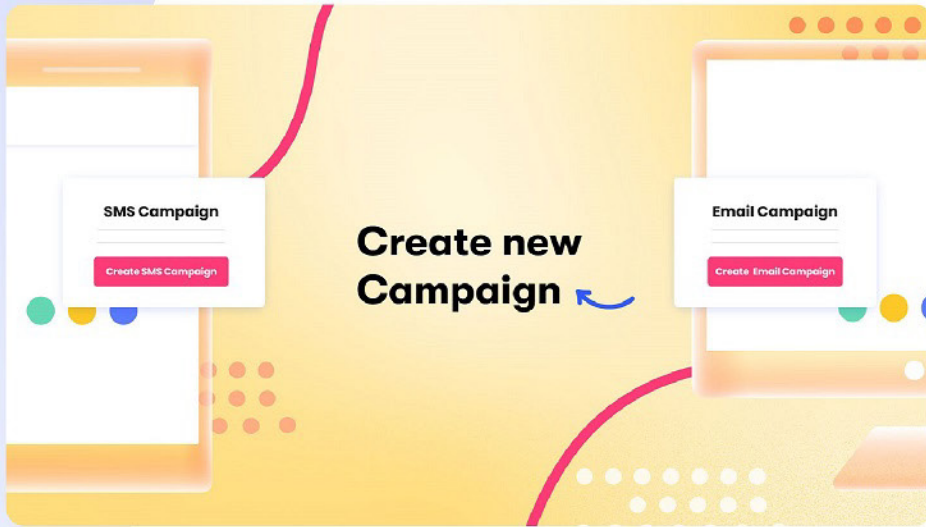
STORYBOARD FRAMES

A 60 second explainer video for Sendlane, a platform that helps eCommerce merchants drive more sales with personalized, data-driven emails, SMS, forms and reviews.



Scope: To portray Sendlane's unified marketing tools—email, SMS, reviews, and forms while showcasing key features like automation, analytics, and deep-data integration through a colorful, playful visual style which would emphasize ease of use, transparent pricing, and customer ROI - taking design inspiration from their brand guidelines. Selected frames showcased here.

My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration





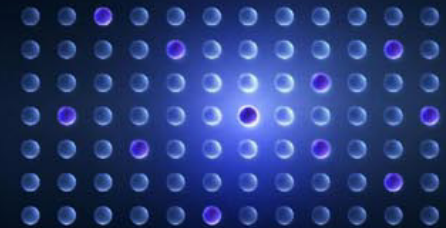
Horizon3.ai

STORYBOARD FRAMES

A 60 second explainer video for Horizon3.ai's NodeZero platform, which automates penetration testing and vulnerability management across networks. It helps organizations find and fix security weaknesses with actionable guidance.

How do you
know

your security
tools are
effective?



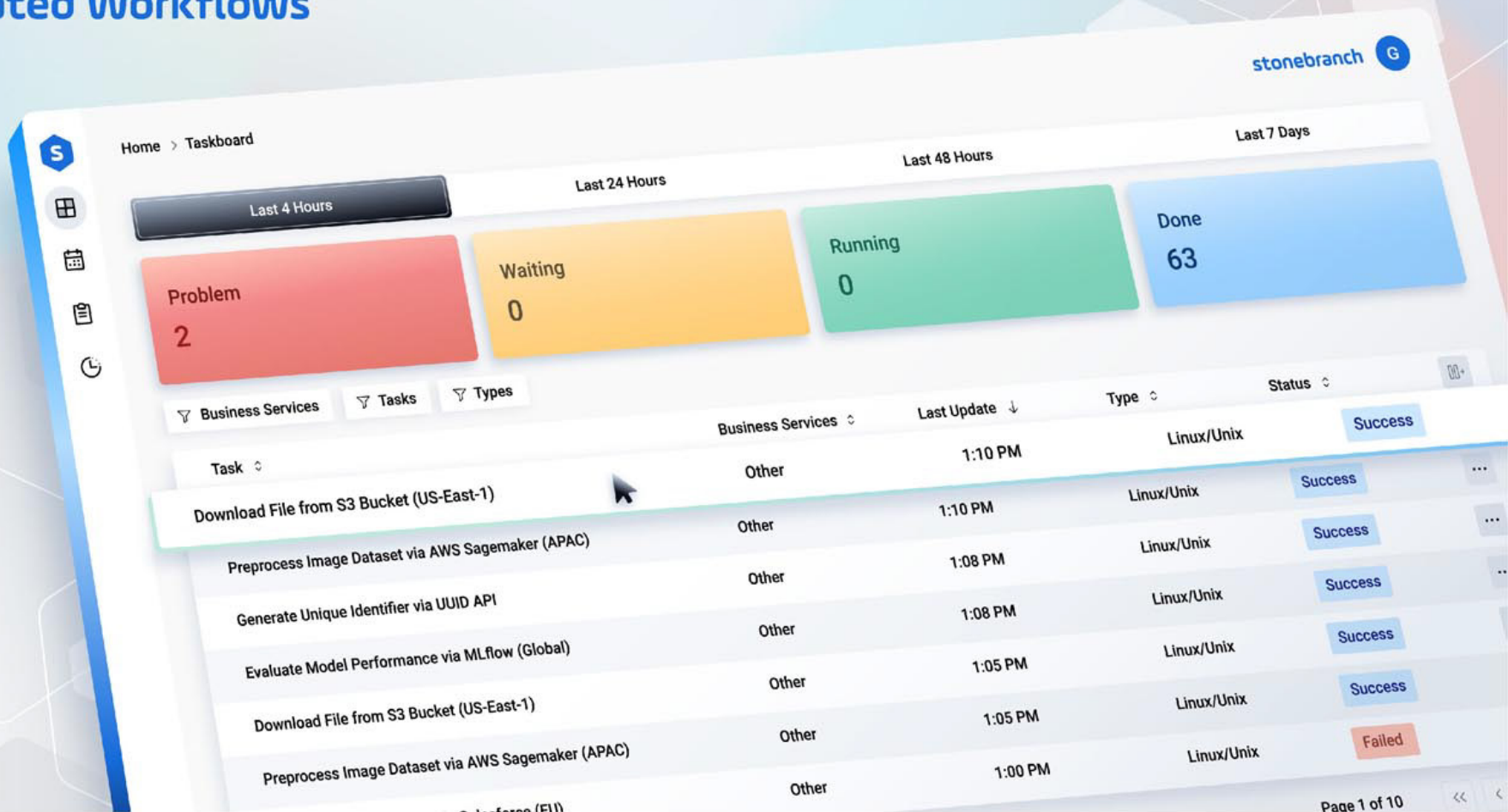
Run Pentest



Scope: The aim was to show how NodeZero finds and helps fix security problems across large, connected systems. It focuses on making networks safer using automated testing. We had to illustrate the highly technical process in very simple terms, all while retaining a sense of professionalism and reliability that is associated with their services. The goal was to give the video a futuristic vibe, presenting a sleek digital world where complex technical processes unfold in a clear, simplified way. We chose a dark theme to align with and enhance their brand colors. Selected frames showcased here.

My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration

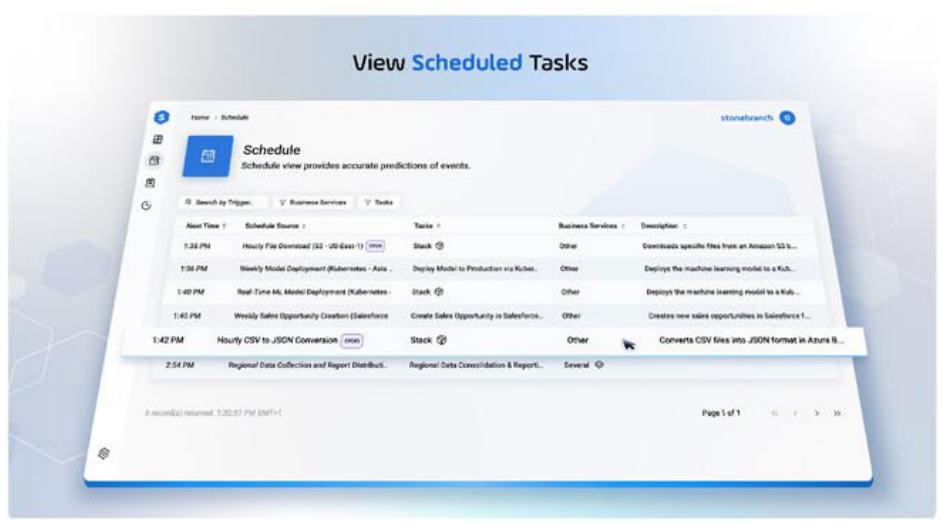
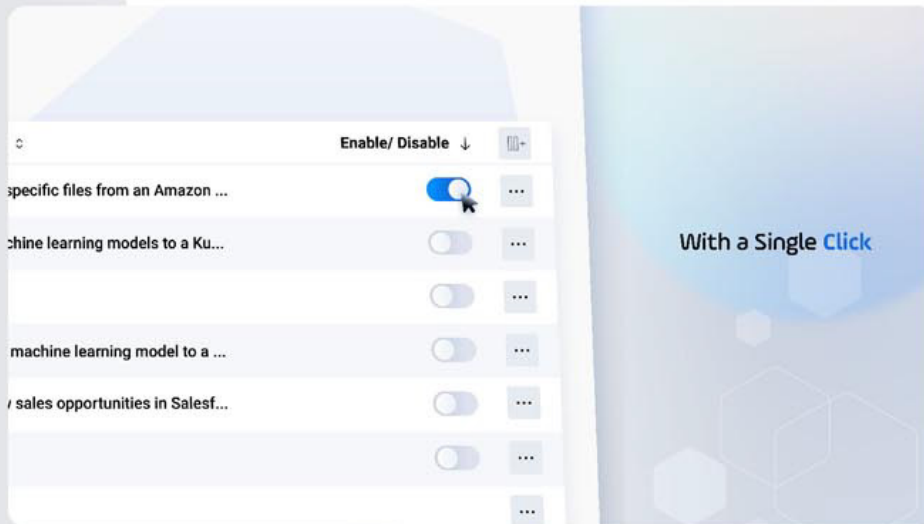
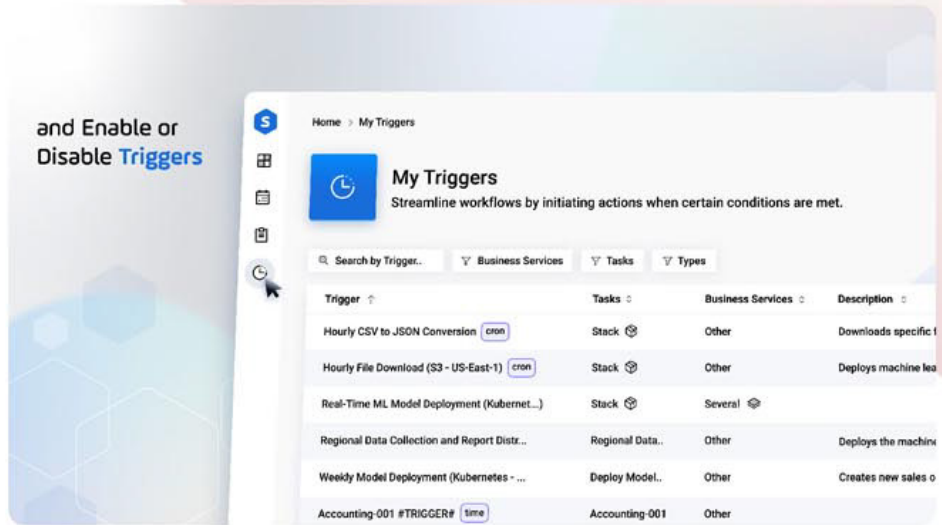
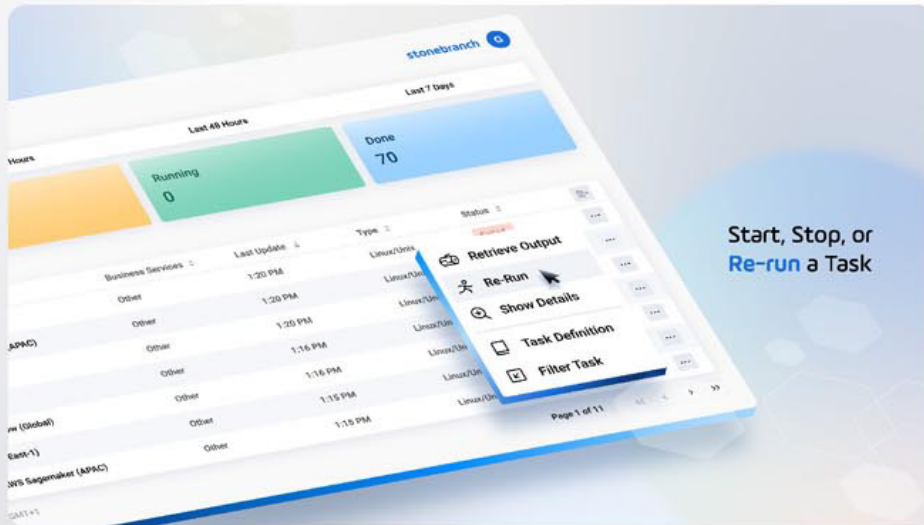
You can Access and Manage Automated Workflows



Stonebranch

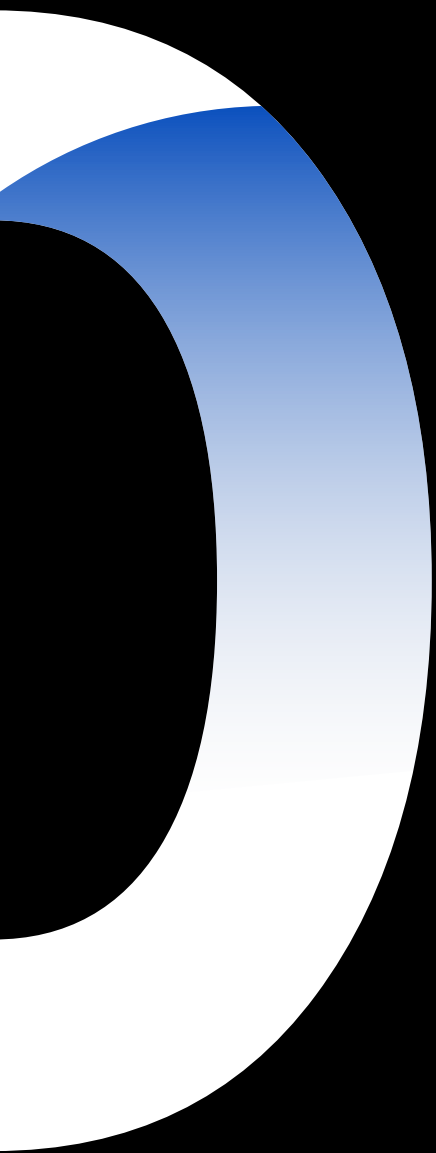
STORYBOARD FRAMES

A 60 promotional video for Stonebranch, a service redefining IT automation with powerful, user-friendly solutions built for both on-prem and cloud environments. Their platform gives businesses full control to manage and scale hybrid IT systems.



Scope: We showcased their platform in a clean, approachable style that reflects its ease of use. The color palette and design elements were drawn from their branding, and the UI was simplified to highlight a smooth, seamless user experience – aiming for an overall look which is modern, tech-savvy, and innovative. Selected frames showcased here.

My Role: Creative direction, ideation, storyboarding and illustration




Calligraphy



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A large, bold, blue number '05' is positioned on the left side of the image. The '0' is a simple circle, and the '5' has a thick horizontal top bar. The entire number is a solid blue color.

Logo & Package Design



The Real Food Co

LOGO & PACKAGE DESIGN

Playful logo design for The Real Food Co, a health and wellness brand offering healthy recipes, and home-made meals - with a mission to challenge diet culture and encourage mindful eating. I also designed packaging for their home-made low-calorie, high-protein ice cream, made by hand with love, wellness and nutrition in mind.



Sticker Design



Packaging Design



Packaging Mockup



Sticker Mockup

A large, stylized orange number '06' is positioned on the left side of the image. The '0' is a thick, rounded ring, and the '6' is a thick, rounded shape with a circular cutout in the center. The number is rendered in a vibrant orange color with a slight gradient, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

Visual Art & Installation



Preserved Goat and Cow Bones

This series of installations were a part of my Thesis show. I explored the essence of life preserved in the remains of the dead, scavenged as byproducts of various kitchens. I took that very same aspect and gave shape to entirely new anatomical structures while reviving these characteristics, highlighting that these useless piles of remains, too, were once the foundation of life.



Preserved Goat and Chicken Bones, Epoxy Resin

As part of my thesis show installation, I created a series of miniature sculptures inspired by the natural forms of animal bones. I let their shapes guide the process, allowing each one to evolve into whimsical characters and imaginative scenes. The work blends organic structure with playful storytelling. I was questioning the boundaries of the grotesque and their coexistence with the preset standards of beauty, and how they may change with familiarity or association.



Oil on Canvas, hair, 4 x 3 feet

'She Wore it Differently'

Challenging traditional ideals and questioning how our perceptions of beauty are shaped by learned norms by placing something conventionally beautiful in an unexpected, unflattering place. It invites viewers to confront the discomfort of the unfamiliar and reconsider what they define as beautiful.



Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, 2.5 x 3.5 feet

'Regression'

A painting about abuse, and the lasting impact it has on the subconscious. The girl is in a landscape of her own making, or rather one that has been fashioned in her mind by her abuser. She is oddly comfortable being submersed, but the depths show the damage that has been done.

Every piece tells a story
- thank you for listening!