



## EXPERIENCE BY DESIGN

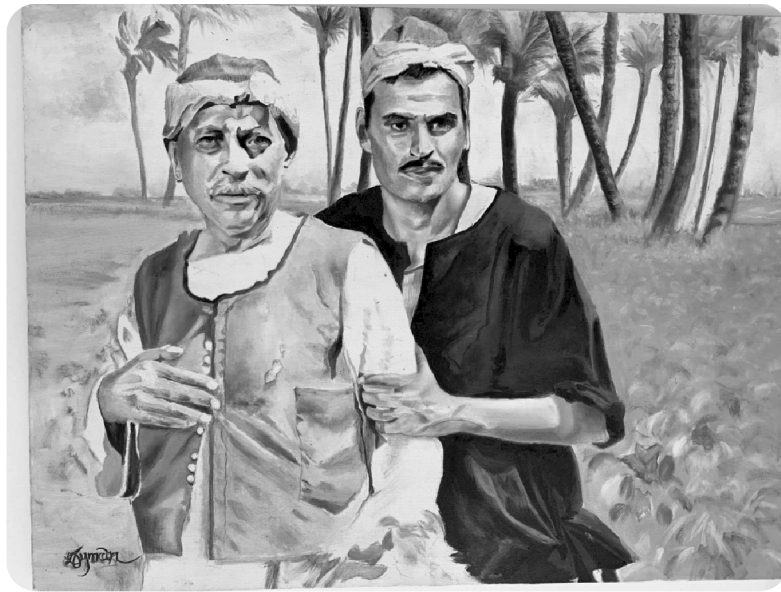


March 19, 2022 · Experience Design

# {human(ness)}

LAB NOTE- 1

Humans and humanness, the connoted meaning of these words lie at the overlap of many others: humankind, the human race, humane, homo sapiens, humanity, etc. While humanness is a relevant term for many disciplines, it has special relevance for the work of designers. The design team can design their process in a way that the outcomes enhance humanness.



*Artist- Ayman Emam, The Earth Movie(2018)*

## PROCESS: DESIGN BY EXPERIENCE, EXPERIENCE BY DESIGN

The work of a designer, in its earnest, is an endeavour to channelize human behaviour into experiences. The process followed by the designer determines the quality of the experience. These experiences are most memorable when they are created in nurturing environments through functional objects and meaningful exchange.

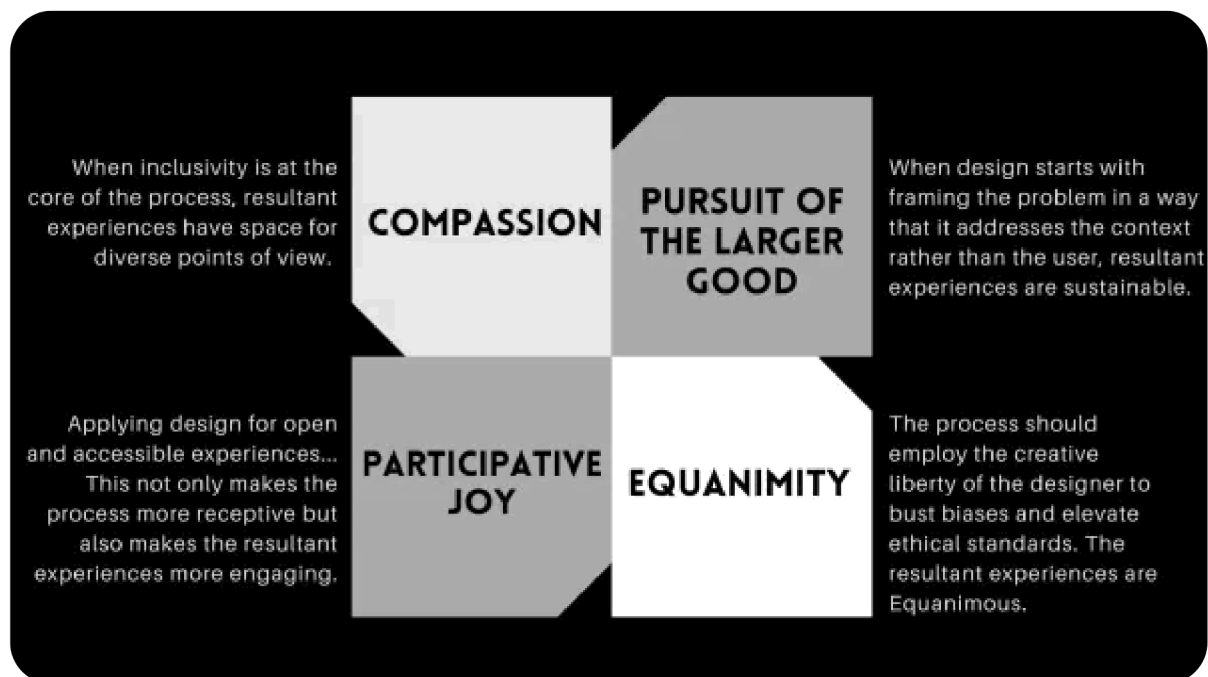
Being informed of the influences in a given context, helps the designer steer the process in a way that the resultant experience is anchored in humanness. The context comprising of factors like social set-up, economic status, geographical location, political circumstances, cultural and familial influences, shape humans and humanness.

## FACTORS THAT ENHANCE HUMANNESS

Given the diverse factors, there are infinite ways to direct the impact of a designed experience. If the experiences need to be meaningful, at each step of the process, the perceived outputs should pass the

sieve of humanness. The sieve of humanness comprises of four distinct strands:

- The more we gather, the richer we are... When inclusivity is at the core of the process, resultant experiences have space for diverse points of view. This is the strand of **Compassion**.
- Employ system-level thinking to shape the context... When design starts with framing the problem in a way that it addresses the context rather than the user, resultant experiences are sustainable. Experiences that enhance humanness must **Pursue Larger Good**.
- Busting biases, upholding ethics... The process should employ the creative liberty of the designer to bust biases and elevate ethical standards. The resultant experiences are Equanimous. **Equanimity** Enhances Humanness.
- Applying design for open and accessible experiences... This not only makes the process more receptive but also makes the resultant experiences more engaging. **Participative joy** thus is the last strand in the sieve.



## FACTORS THAT DEGRADE HUMANNESS

The elements that degrade humanness in an experience are behavioural in nature. While it is difficult to generate an exhaustive list of elements, a few are listed below:

- Elements in an experience can heighten fear of missing out & creating a perception of scarcity. Touchpoint sequencing in the design process can be employed to these emotions and **dampen GREED.**
- Elements that breed biases, cause deep-rooted aversion & makes the experience transactional. The design process must eliminate these elements and **reduce AVERSION.**
- Parts of an experience may encourage sedentary behaviour, which makes the experience passive. The design process can counter these elements by reconnecting with the natural state, inducing eudaimonia and **fight SLOTH.**
- Some experiences diminish focus span and multiply apathy. These experience get rooted in hedonism and become self-defeating as the user engagement tapers. Well-appointed objects and environments can help the process **watch out for TORPOR.**
- Information asymmetry in an experience creates doubt. This creates uncertainty, degrades interactions and in turn humanness. To counter these, the design process can employ communication to **quell DOUBT.**
- Elements that create zero-sum games in an experience create anxiety. Space can be made in the process to improve lower the pace

of experience & use the space to improve the quality of interactions. Doing so the experiences can **reduce WORRY**.



Pursuing this holistic approach, factors that degrade the quality of humanness can be suitably dampened. The resultant process becomes robust, once both ends of the spectrum have been addressed. This builds consistency of moments in an experience, which in turn improves overall quality.

A design approach anchored in this framework should not be an after-thought. It should be engrained in the design methodology, in order to create a qualitative difference in the human experience.

The more integrated they are in the design strategy, the more meaningful are the experiences. Experiences become meaningful when they enhance humanness.

## ABOUT LAB NOTES

At **figments** EXPERIENCE LAB, *crafting experiences is a science that blends intention, transaction, and evolution. The raison d'être for each design at figments is to enhance humanness.*

*We believe and practice that design can guide factors to be controlled and explored, to enhance the quality of humanness. Our belief guides the design process and draws a parallel from learnings concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy.*

*The LAB NOTES are an endeavour to explore this thought from its genesis in our process to its application in our use cases. The note is not an argument, it is a perspective. The aim in sharing these notes is to make you a part of our journey & invite constructive criticism.*

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THE AXIS OF MEANING IN A DESIGNED EXPERIENCE- →

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