

### **3. SKILLS**

**KATKA A.**

**/**

**UMA B.**

**/**

**AISHWARYASHREE**

You can't work on new ideas with old tools. The design workforce will lose its agility when run with the skillset indoctrinated by legacy institutions, creative agencies and cultural machines, now that its infiltrated with a non-human, silent competitor, and the world around us adapts to it. To redefine this skill, **The New Skill**, as we call it, the bank of references that follow embody the restructuring of the job of a creative from being primarily a craftsman to a 'vibe-curator'. And a 'Vibe-curator' isn't the "fake job" that lives on and for the fringes of design work, but instead, is built on the layered and experiential basis of (and introducing the number one skill on our roster) **media-literacy**.

A focus on media-literacy might seem tangential to a standard design practice, but while the design brief still runs the show, what changes for Gen Z - the upcoming workforce - is the approach of tackling it. Craft is getting cheaper and plasticky with automation, and at the same time, craft is getting rarer and more precious, and it isn't lost on the workforce. The independently hosted website of 'AI Slop Bores Me' illustrates this by mirroring an AI technology at its smoothest, most sycophantic function, a chatbot- and proceeds to insult it by turning it upside down, with - arguably- an equally unreliable human volunteer answering questions inputted by the user. The human suddenly becomes the USP, the unexpected hook that makes it interesting. System hacked.

The skills of this future designer seat themselves in being uniquely specific and inimitable or in pure subversion of the expected format or medium: and more often than not, **in irony**, that eventually folds itself into pure sincerity. Think about the MS-Paint 'Graphics Designer Needed' AD, which feels deeply human-centric as opposed to a job-listing on LinkedIn with an AI-assisted EasyApply button.



— CityLosAngeles-Jobs (@Citylajobs) January 18, 2018

In this humanistic and media-literate sphere, the creative's next skills are then headed towards knowing oneself, and being able to project it- through **self-marketing and distribution**. The textual work of *Internet Anthropology* on Substack, creates cultural symbols on their platform that contextualizes their work and approach, and in turn, creates a loop for its like-minded audience, a platform and a marketplace for the exchange of ideas. Longevity which, in the current industry enamored by replacement culture, feels rare and fickle, is found in fostering community. Here we propose our next skill: **Social communication**. Being silent is isolating in a world fueled by noise, so a real, simple connection is, paradoxically, the next big thing - human to human.

Gen Z, and generations that have followed, are being raised in hyper-stimulated and accelerated environments: every interaction is cadenced with a pop-up, a splitscreen, a soundbite, and false urgency fluttering in and out of every scroll. It begs for the skill of **accommodating for others**. Accommodating and rephrasing practices through the lenses of mental well-being, patience and empathy, that lets us operate well in the world that seems to constantly corner us.

Our next skill to highlight is Gen Z's need to **develop new systems** in response to media culture: the capitalist bearings of the industry seems to have saturated the bank of design solutions that designers and creatives can adopt and engineer. We propose new systems churned out from iterative innovation with new systems springing from diversity, dissent and debate. Taking in view Gemma Copeland's *Cooperative Practices* - a lot of the new systems exist in spaces currently invisible in the mainstream design pathways. Collaborations, moonlighting, freelancing, bartering, contributions, volunteering are examples of people-centric, unconventional systems of work that help redefine the industry - and while the goal is not make to feed it to the mainstream, it is, rather, to keep it running well enough that the definition of a design industry does not become a monolith.

And lastly, as this exploration of future skills take up updated shapes in this new generation of design industry, it is important that we view them as **people-centered than product-centered**, and led by the kind of media literacy that helps us recognize that we, eventually, have a steering control over the systems within which we operate as a mass.



References:

1. Internet Anthropology (2025). Internet Artifacts On Digital Companionship. [online] Substack.com. Available at: [https://internetanthropologists.substack.com/p/internet-artifacts-on-digital-companionship?r=a578o&utm\\_medium=ios&triedRedirect=true](https://internetanthropologists.substack.com/p/internet-artifacts-on-digital-companionship?r=a578o&utm_medium=ios&triedRedirect=true) [Accessed 14 Apr. 2026].

+

2. Itsnicethat.com. (2025). New Views: what do Gen Z think about the future of the creative industry? [online] Available at: <https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/ones-to-watch-new-views-a-gen-z-outlook-on-the-creative-industry-050625>.

+

3. youraislopbore.me (2026). your ai slop bores me. [online] your ai slop bores me. Available at: <https://youraislopbore.me> [Accessed 14 Apr. 2026].

+

4. Are.na. (2026). THE NEW SKILL. [online] Available at: <https://www.are.na/aishwaryashree-na/the-new-skill> [Accessed 14 Apr. 2026].

+

5. Kleinian. (2026). Kleinian. [online] Available at: <https://kleinian.com/?srsltid=AfmBOopbvYdS9C-Ti4Sy-uk9oLKoRLPEaL9WC8T-SOFTsXjqVX9g1VEj4> [Accessed 14 Apr. 2026].

# @KLEINIAN

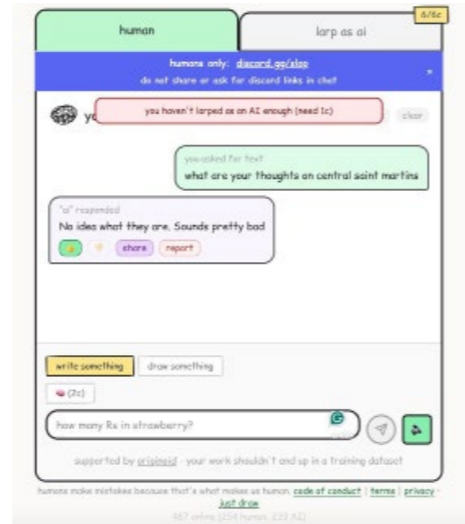
+ Kleinian, a “modern archaeologist” (an evolved job), turns the digital media into rock-fossils and redefines our existing idea of “findings”.



#genzthebest

# @AISLOPBORESME

+ “youraislopbore.me” is a website where verified humans pose as ai to answer your questions, modelled after chat gpt, a parody. To ask more than one question you have to take over the role of ai yourself, “larp as ai” and answer questions sent to you by the people of the internet by the best (or worst) of your abilities.



<https://youraislopbore.me>

10

# @ITSNICE THAT

Gen Z creatives reflect on what it's like to enter the creative industry at a turbulent, ever-changing time. They speak of their inhibitions, reservations and expectations of the industry that helps gather problems that can lead themselves to modern system building in pursuit of solutions.



#genzthebest

# @INTERNETANTHROPOLOGY

Another redefined archeological practice is collecting cannon internet events as found objects. This becomes a pacing practise when the internet seems intimidatingly vast and regulation feels impossible.

11



Search Are.na

# Are.na / aishwaryashree NA / THE NEW SKILL

Info	
Started	10 minutes ago
Modified	3 minutes ago
Length	2

This channel appears in

[Connect](#) →

View

- Grid
- Table



YOUTUBE

Situationist Movement: the myth of the cre...



YOUTUBE

when graphic design is not my passion