



Blending Generative AI and Art Direction for the Visual Rebrand of a Sustainable Business Model

Tarsila Pereira Tenório da Silva

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ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
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TARSILA PEREIRA TENÓRIO DA SILVA:
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The rapid and revolutionary development of artificial intelligence (AI), especially in generative AI (GenAI) applications, is transforming not only the way we interact with machines, but also the way we function as a society. Whole sectors will rearrange in response to it, including the creative businesses.

This thesis was written with the aim of testing and exploring the capabilities of GenAI applications in different stages of the creative process. To develop a new set of skills when implementing AI tools in the design process, research was carried out by integrating ChatGPT and Midjourney in the art direction workflow, recreating the thesis commissioner, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi, visual identity. Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi is a tech start-up and Finnish-owned online store of rescued food, that sells high quality discounted surplus products with the mission of reducing food waste.

The outcome of this work was a clear demonstration on how generative AI models can assist in the execution of a creative brief, augmenting creativity and promoting divergent thinking. The biggest learning of this work was not based on content creation itself, but on the findings of how the power of generative AI applications lies in productivity enhancement and co-creativity, blending new and traditional creative methods. However, GenAI technology is still new and under development. A suggestion for future work is to continue exploring the use cases and learning how to take advantage of these tools in different projects and situations.

Key words: Artificial intelligence, Art direction, Human-AI co-creation, Augmented creativity, Visual branding, ChatGPT, Midjourney

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 1.1 | Company case..... | 5 |
| 2 | ART DIRECTION AND VISUAL BRANDING | 7 |
| 3 | RESEARCH METHODS | 9 |
| 3.1 | Lupton's design process..... | 9 |
| 3.1.1 | Defining problems..... | 10 |
| 3.1.2 | Getting ideas..... | 11 |
| 3.1.3 | Creating form | 11 |
| 3.2 | Expert interview as opinion gathering method | 12 |
| 3.3 | Data privacy and privacy plan | 12 |
| 4 | ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE | 14 |
| 4.1 | Generative AI..... | 15 |
| 4.1.1 | Tools | 17 |
| 4.2 | Generative AI as a co-creative agent | 18 |
| 4.3 | Expert interview: Integrating GenAI to the creative work | 19 |
| 4.4 | AI ethics and copyright issues..... | 22 |
| 5 | CONCEPTUAL IDENTITY REDESIGN | 24 |
| 5.1 | Defining the project..... | 24 |
| 5.2 | Ideation | 27 |
| 5.2.1 | Idea selection..... | 31 |
| 5.3 | Concept development | 33 |
| 5.4 | Process self-evaluation | 36 |
| 5.5 | Results | 37 |
| 6 | DISCUSSION | 40 |
| | REFERENCES | 42 |
| | APPENDICES..... | 47 |
| | Appendix 1. Semi-structured interview questions | 47 |
| | Appendix 2. ChatGPT custom instructions..... | 48 |
| | Appendix 3. Brand language concept template..... | 49 |

1 INTRODUCTION

After the emergence of Personal Computers, the World Wide Web and designing software have significantly changed the way we produce visual communication, from manual to digital (Thornton 1996), a new turn in technology is revolutionizing the world once again. The new, post-pandemic world we are living in, has boosted the speed of change in the way we use technology in communication. Social distancing made physical distances feel shorter, and video calls and streaming platforms were never as used. Consumer behaviour radically changed, and e-commerce and food delivery businesses took off unprecedentedly (Din, Han, Ariza-Montes, Vega-Muñoz, Raposo & Mohapatra 2022).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) today is understood as the capability of a computer to correctly analyse data from external sources, take insights from such data, and apply these insights to accomplish tasks and objectives (Haenlein & Kaplan 2019), using it as a way of simulating human intelligence and cognitive abilities such as, learning, problem-solving and decision making (Rossi 2016). Gates (2023) compared the development of AI to be as important as the invention of the microprocessor, the personal computer, the mobile and the internet (Gates 2023).

The rapid growth of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) over the past year is changing the way we produce content, creating new dimensions for creatives, consultancy agencies and clients (Ogilvy 2023, 4-7). It is yet unclear the full impact AI will have, not only in the way we interact with machines, but also the way we function as a society. (De Cremer, Bianzino & Falk 2023).

Working in a creative role, as an Art Director (AD) and visual communicator, I am eager to explore can this powerful tool be used as creative aid and collaborator during the design process and content production of a growing e-commerce start-up. The objective of this thesis is to test and explore the capabilities of generative artificial intelligence when applied to different parts of the design process, using the creation of the thesis commissioner, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi, brand visual identity development as a pilot project. The purpose of the research is to learn a new set of skills when working with generative AI in visual communication

projects, with the intention of improving the creative workflow, finding new ways of augmenting creativity and enhancing productivity.

Taking into consideration this study's theme of testing and exploring the implementation of AI in the creative workflow, this thesis seeks to understand "are there really advantages on the implementation of generative tools in the creative process" and "is it possible to art direct text-to-image generated content?"

1.1 Company case

This thesis commissioner Fiksu Ruoka Oy, commercially known nowadays as Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi, is a Finnish-owned tech start-up company born in 2016 with the clear mission of reducing food waste. Through the online grocery store, they offer customers a sustainable and affordable way of buying groceries with big discounts. The business model consists of buying batches of surplus products from different manufacturers, importers, and wholesale chains, that for one reason or another did not find their way to the stores and are endangered of becoming food waste.

It all started when Richard Lindroos, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi's founder and Chief of Financial Officer (CFO), who had a 15-year career in the logistics industry, realized the gruesome amount of food waste generated annually in the food industry by production excess leftovers. Currently, over 58 million tonnes of food waste are generated annually in the European Union (EU). A third of human environmental impact comes from food, and 6% of all emissions come from food waste. (European Commission 2023.)

By researching how to reduce food waste and create a positive impact, Lindroos noticed a gap in the market, getting the idea of an online store. Lindroos took the first steps into starting the business, establishing a warehouse for food waste in home garage, contacting suppliers, buying leftover batches of non-perishable goods and reselling online.

During the next couple of years, the company showed a considerable growth as new team members, CEO Juhani Järvensivu followed by Chief of Growth Officer

(CGO) Riku Poutanen, joined the company collecting two financing rounds and expanding the team. Shortly, the garage solution became too small, transferring the headquarters to an official workroom space. In 2019, Fiksuruoka.fi hit its first million kilos of reduced food waste and in 2020, the pandemic economy tripled its revenue to 12 million euros. A new funding of 19 million euros was collected and the year of 2021 ended with over 5 million kilos of saved food waste and 20 employees. By 2022, new markets opened in the Netherlands and later that year in Belgium under the Foodello name, now with two offices located in Helsinki and Amsterdam. By the second half of 2023 Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi hit the mark of 11 million kilos of reduced food waste. According to company data, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi as we know it today, has become the largest and most significant player at reducing food waste in the domestic market and a reference in e-commerce and logistics automation.

The company has teams of different expertise in-house, which reduces the need of hiring outside work and allows more fluent communication between operations. In brief, some of the teams and their main function include the procurement team, responsible for purchasing the products available on the online store. Product team develops the website and app. Marketing team is responsible for spreading awareness, while the brand team is responsible for keeping the brand image. All the functions support each other, creating the business' workflow and ecosystem.

As previously mentioned, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi is a data-driven tech start-up and is always looking for innovation, the company has already established practices of using artificial intelligence in marketing automation and recommendation systems. Since the popularization of GenAI, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi is also exploring possibilities and advantages on how to use generative models to improve efficiency and reduce repetitive work.

The different teams have each their own approach the use of AI, as for supporting the creation and analysis of surveys and interviews, improving user interface texts, translating product information to multiple languages, and creating bulk search engine optimization (SEO) descriptions. However, none of these use cases explore GenAI from the creative angle, nor experiment with generative image models, which is the objective of this research work.

2 ART DIRECTION AND VISUAL BRANDING

As a result of the constant change and evolution of this concept, there is no clear agreement on what the true definition of what a brand is. Regardless, there is a common understanding of brand as the overall emotional perception of an audience towards a company, whether intentional or not. (Motta-Filho 2017, 54-55.) In a holistic approach, not only alluding to the company's relationship with its customers but the relationship with suppliers, employees and all the other stakeholders. The brand identity, on the other hand, is the intentional manipulation of the messaging and the visuals (Motta-Filho 2017, 56). The translation of a brand's essence into essential communication elements such as the mission, vision, values and personality and putting them into action.

Visual branding, the brand's visual identity or identity design, uses identifying marks, such as logos, specific colors, typography, and other graphic elements as a meaning of differentiation, in order to distinguish themselves from others. (Airey 2019, 6). If done correctly and consistently, a strong visual identity provides immediate brand recognition and builds trust. In addition, visual identities can create an emotional bonding with the audience, growing added value for the brand.

When creating the visual communication, the Art Director's role is to bridge the strategy and the creativity, with the purpose of conceptualising a compelling visual storytelling for the brand (Nomon 2020). Art direction seeks to harmonically fuse together different elements, creating a concrete point of view. It is also part of the role to oversee all the visual aspects of a project, making sure they are aligned with the project's vision as well as brand principles, resonating with the audience in a relevant way. Differently from the Designer role, which is more focused on the production and technical skill, art direction focuses on visually translating the concept, rather than executing it to perfection.

At Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi, the brand team functions as an in-house creative agency. The team's role is to keep the brand image by overseeing the brand communication and supporting other teams with their needs. Brand team's daily tasks vary in scale, as for making sure product images look good in the online

store and call to action buttons are cohesive with the brand voice, to conceptualizing global level marketing campaigns and producing television commercials. Hitherto, the team is composed by the Head of Brand and Creative Director, two Art Directors, and a Copywriter.

As an in-house AD, developing creative solutions is a big part of the work, communication and collaboration with other professionals are also very important aspects of the role. The methods and tools most present on my daily work include workshops, brainstorming sessions, mood boarding and benchmark research as a form of ideation. Concepts are developed often with co-working sessions and concept presentations, as well as the creation of key visuals to show and present ideas to others.

It is also important to note that, even though Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi has a creative in-house team, occasionally some projects have the need of bigger production. Part of AD's role is to brief outsourced professionals on what the visual objectives and expected outcomes are. In addition, my professional background as a Visual Designer allows me to execute tasks beyond the conceptual level, developing an idea from its inception to the creation of the assets, when the final materials are ready to be used. Which is usually part of a Designer's role rather than the Art Director's.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

In this thesis, the “visual identity renewal project” refers to the company’s currently ongoing project to update their visual identity. It has started with strategy research during spring 2023 and involves a creative team, which is developing the company’s new visual branding in parallel with this thesis. The project team is composed of two Art Directors, including myself, and a Product Designer who are working on the project’s visual communication, which for the purpose of this study will be called the design group, as well as a Creative Director, a Copywriter, and a Lead Designer. The research’s practical project (Chapter 5), called “conceptual identity redesign”, refers to the use of the company’s visual identity renewal project as a pilot project to test and explore the fusion between generative AI and the creative process.

The “conceptual identity redesign” was presented to the thesis commissioner and evaluated by the creative team as being part of the visual identity renewal project. The identity redesign proposal was included as one of the many possible paths to the company’s visual identity update, and it was evaluated together with different concept paths also presented by the other designers. Both the “visual identity renewal project”, the company’s ongoing project, and “conceptual identity redesign”, the thesis practical project, followed Lupton’s (2011) design process explained in the following section, and had the same creative brief as starting point (Chapter 5.1).

In order to achieve the research goals and explore the integration of GenAI applications in the creative process, this study focused mainly on the understanding and testing of these tools in the art direction workflow during the development of the conceptual identity redesign process. This thesis also used a semi-structured interview with creative professional and AI pioneer, Leandro Righini, as an opinion gathering method and complementary literature.

3.1 Lupton’s design process

Designer and Writer, Ellen Lupton, divided the design process in three main phases: defining problems, getting ideas, and creating form. This process can be

used as a path to improve one's creative abilities, breaking concepts down to different steps and implementing it consciously, to help the practitioner achieve satisfying solutions. According to Lupton (2011), the thinking process happens both inside and outside of the brain. The design process uses tools that help professionals externalize and visualize ideas, making possible for the ideas to be "seen and compared, sorted and combined, ranked and shared". (Lupton 2011, 6-15.)

In this research, I followed Lupton's methodology as a guide to the creative work adapting each phase to fit the project's aspects and resources and, having as the main objective the inclusion of GenAI tools in the design process. In addition, working in-house means the creative team has enough knowledge about the business as well as practical expertise to make decisions internally, differently than in an agency-client creative project, as proposed by Lupton.

3.1.1 Defining problems

Lupton (2011) argues that certain methods help creatives to define and produce core concepts while others help to bring clarity to the project. It is beneficial to the project to define and investigate the root of the problem in the early phase of the creative process. (Lupton 2011, 15.)

The problem was defined in a creative brief (Lupton 2011, 56), that investigated the project's goals, serving the purpose of a navigation map and guide, ensuring all checkpoints needed to create a functional visual identity were matched. In order to gather the necessary information to form the creative brief, I facilitated a workshop with the creative team involved in the brand's renewal project (Chapter 5.1). The workshop was an adaptation from "Defining brand design principles, a how to guide" by Williams S. P. (2018), adjusted according to project's needs and already gathered information.

3.1.2 Getting ideas

Once the problem is well defined, solutions and concepts are deeper explored in the ideation phase. Ideas can be shared in different formats. However, before dedicating time and effort to exploring a single solution, multiple possibilities must be considered. In case no ideas are satisfying, ideation starts again using the same or a different tool. Finding ways to rapidly investigate, develop and communicate a core concept or idea in an understandable manner, is a good part of a designer's skill set. (Lupton 2011, 61.)

After the brief, I started an ideation session (Chapter 5.2) by collaborating with different generative AI tools, each supplied a different outcome. The outputs were then filtered until two different concepts were left. The concept ideas were developed just enough to provide visualization on what they could be later developed into. Next, they were compared using a concept presentation method (Lupton 2011, 108). From the two concepts, only one was chosen to be developed in the next phase and moved forward to be presented to the creative team.

3.1.3 Creating form

According to Lupton (2011), following research and ideation, one or more concepts are chosen to be further developed. Having numerous ideas is an important start, however only a few will make through to the third phase. Visually expressing ideas is a way of making it tangible, explaining how it works, what it means and what it communicates. While the first and second phases are meant for defining objectives and concepts to find a viable solution, the third phase focuses on well executing these ideas, a crucial manner to obtain a successful outcome. (Lupton 2011, 113.)

The creation of the form represents the visual concretization of an idea, materializing the concept and the project into reality. Once the ideation phase was finalized and a concept was chosen, I designed a template that visually communicated the idea by displaying essential elements such as logo, message,

colours, typography, and mockups, using an image generator, Midjourney, to create the brand's imagery (Chapter 5.3).

3.2 Expert interview as opinion gathering method

For this study, a semi-structured interview was chosen as the most suitable method for gathering qualitative information, such as insights and opinions (Wilson 2014, 24) from Leandro Righini, a creative professional who has previously, actively collaborated with AI in their work.

The goal of the interview was to get a better understating of how artificial intelligence can be used to assist the creative process. Semi-structure interviews can be used as a method in any part of the process (Wilson 2014, 26). In this case, it was used in the beginning of the research, to better put the studies into perspective and understand what the most ideal research path was. The selection criteria for the interviewee were to find a creative professional with considerably long work experience, as well as significant expertise of using AI as a creative agent on their work process.

3.3 Data privacy and privacy plan

The first principle when processing personal data is to protect the privacy and information of the interviewees, the thesis commissioner as other subjects, according to data protection laws and the University's policy.

Throughout this thesis, the participants' and company's privacy were carefully considered. The minimum amount of personal data, as well as company private information was collected. Personal data means any information which may be used to identify an individual. (Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman 2018.) The purpose of collecting data is to validate the research and it will be done only when a crucial part of the studies.

It is important that all parties participating in this research feel safe with how their data was handled. Taking care of the subjects' personal data also builds trust between participants and the research conductor. (Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman 2018.) Data protection was considered during all different phases of the research. A privacy note asking for the consent of collection and storage of personal data was sent in advance to the interviewee, with the purpose of explaining why and how personal data will be collected and processed. It informed that all the data was collected and stored by university-designated electronic tools, powered by Microsoft Office. File access was limited to me and kept for only the duration of the programme.

During company's workshop and feedback meetings, the participants also gave consent to be part of the thesis research and to be quoted when necessary. All data privacy was also considered during the execution of the project by actively replacing company's name and private data with synthesized information (Ribeiro 2023).

4 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Due to the lack of an officially agreed definition, a legacy of various works of science fiction and the dissemination of misleading terms, AI continues to be a mystified topic by popular belief (Helsinki University 2018). Artificial Intelligence is not a blend of humans and machines but an umbrella term and vast field of study in computer science (Schmidt 2016).

Intelligence can be a subjective and always-changing behaviour and so can AI. In the same way, if what we consider intelligent changes and tasks that before required expertise become common knowledge, then a software performing a task that is commonly used and adapted to daily life, is no longer considered intelligent and it becomes just another boring computer program. (Rossi 2016.) Artificial intelligence seeks to reproduce through computers, tasks that human mind can execute. Some are considered intelligent and need reasoning, like making decisions, and some are automatic, as for vision. However, all of them involve the use of cognitive skills that enables us to achieve our goals. (Boden 2016, 2.) As of today, AI refers to applications which can learn any task or subject, different models are able to complete different tasks, resolving problems or providing a specific service (Gates 2023). It can make decisions, learn, reason, and interact with us in a way that feels natural (Righini 2022).

Since its inception, AI has been the biggest aspiration of the computing industry, shaped by technological advancements and scientific breakthroughs. Due to the rise of machine learning (ML) and large improvements in computing power, AI has become not only a reality but incredibly sophisticated, as well as accessible to popular use. (Gates 2023.)

Although various AI applications, such as analytical tools have been long used before in fields like marketing and advertising as a way of making predictions or identifying patterns (Alto 2023; Ogilvy 2023, 21), generative models have recently caught the public and the industry's attention, raising large amounts of investments and causing innovation to come fast (Gates 2023).

4.1 Generative AI

Generative AI (GenAI) is a subfield of artificial intelligence, considered to be one of the most successful evolutions of deep learning (DL) frameworks over the past decade (Hu 2022). According to Alto (2023), to have a deeper understanding of generative AI it is important to recognize the overview of AI fields (Figure 1).

As mentioned before, artificial intelligence is a branch discipline of computer science and it can be seen as the foundational framework, representing a broader field of developing systems able to execute tasks that would typically require human intelligence (Stripling 2023). Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a branch of AI, inspired by linguistics. It gives computers the capability to recognize informal text and speech in the same way as humans can. (Theobald 2023.)

Machine learning is also a sub-field of AI, while deep learning and generative AI are sub-fields of machine learning itself (Alto 2023). ML is an algorithm in the form of a system or a software that trains a model from input data, it gives the computer the ability to learn on its own, without explicit needing to be programmed (Stripling 2023). Over time, the model learns and improves itself by training. The more it is used the better it will get.

Inspired by the architecture of the human brain (Figure 2), deep learning utilizes artificial neural network (ANN) models. ANN are made of multi-layers of interconnected neural nets consisting of an input layer, hidden layers, and an output layer (Dertat 2017). Based on the processing of multiple layers technique, DL models are able undertake even more complex patterns than traditional machine learning (Stripling 2023).

Generative AI is an even further sub-field of deep learning. Both machine learning and deep learning algorithms are typically utilized to generate predictions or identify patterns from input data. However, when we talk about GenAI, its purpose is to use those algorithms to generate brand new, synthetic content. (Alto 2023.) In this case, text and image models commonly use NLP to understand the relationship between the input (text) and the output (text or images) used to describe them (Theobald, 2023).

Generative AI models are trained on substantial amounts of existing datasets, which are able to generate brand content such as images, videos, text, audio and code through text-based commands (Hu 2022). The platform then recovers the trained data to create content that, in a certain way, mimics the style and structure of the original data, hence mimicking human creativity (Righini 2022).

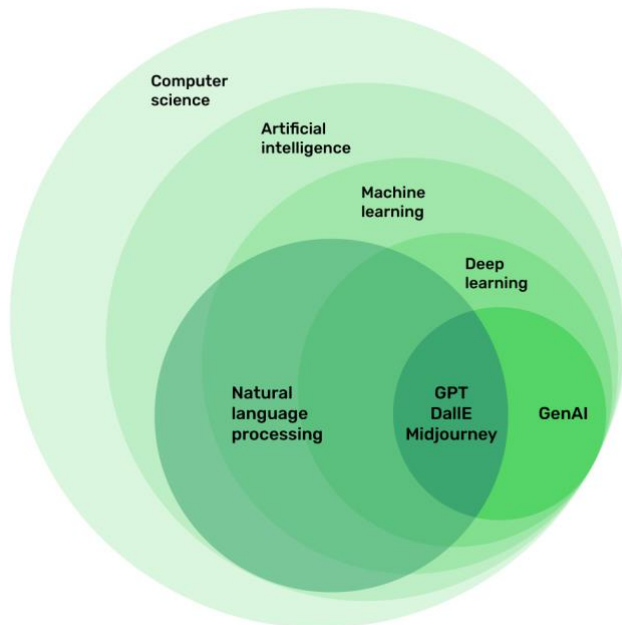


FIGURE 1. Relationship between AI fields

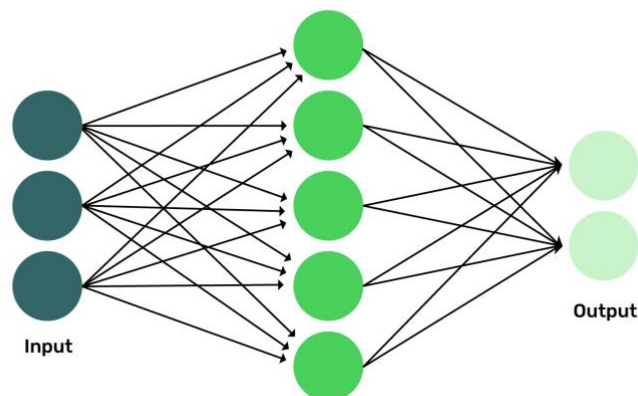


FIGURE 2. Simplified model of an artificial neural network

4.1.1 Tools

During this research, I explored mainly two models of generative artificial intelligence, text-to-text and text-to-image applications. Text-to-text applications use text as the input layer, which are called “prompts”, to generate a text output. Similarly, text-to-image applications use descriptive prompts to generate image outputs. (Alto 2023.)

OpenAI is an artificial intelligence start-up and inventor of ChatGPT, the text-to-text application used in this thesis. Since 2019 Microsoft has made multi-billion dollar investments into the company, heavily investing into their partnership (Metz & Weise 2023). With the fastest-growing user base, the platform reached over 100 million users on the first month from the release date (Hu 2023). ChatGPT, based on Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) model, uses NLP to generate answers in a natural way, allowing users to have an organic and cohesive conversation with the bot, utilizing a browser platform as the chat UI (Alto 2023).

Santana (2023) argues that ChatGPT is the most powerful AI created to date and will revolutionise the way we work. Integrating the tool to one’s work practices allows for great competitive advantage, independently of their professional role. However, to fully benefit from the tool it is important to understand the basics behind the model. Knowing how it works and comprehending its limitations makes it possible for the user to take full advantage of the application and create better content. Entering prompts in the correct way reduces the chance error, if the input prompt is not formulated correctly, the answer generated by the bot will also be misleading or incorrect. (Santana 2023.)

Briefly, to train the GPT model, OpenAI compressed all written content found online from the beginning of the internet until September 2021. Based on the immensely vast trained data, the model then uses statistics and ML to generate the text word by word, forming not only whole sentences, but long and contextualized answers. The answers are generated based in the machine’s interpretation of the input prompt. For that reason, to generate good outputs it is

important to give the chat a fair amount of background and context. (Santana 2023.)

The other used tool in the development of this research is Midjourney, the most popular text-to-image tool to date. Accumulating over 16 million registered users since its foundation by independent lab, Midjourney, in early 2022 (Krivec 2023). The version used in this project is the version 5.2, the application is integrated to conversation app, Discord. To generate images, the user needs to write a text prompt to the bot, by typing "/" followed by a command into the chat box. The tool answers by generating four different images in the same output, giving the possibility of upscaling, and creating more variations of the figures separately, as well as recreating the results with the same prompt. Once the user chooses to upscale the image, the bot offers the options of creating strong or subtle variations, as well as creating variations of only a part of the image, it also offers the option of zooming out in order to continue creating the scene from the selected image.

The commands used on this project were:

1. `"/imagine"`: To create images the user must type `"/imagine"` followed by the description of the image they would like the tool to create.
2. `"/describe"`: Used to generate 4 text prompts based on an uploaded input image.
3. `"/blend"`: Allows the user to upload from one to five images. The tool blends the input images together to generate a novel image without the use of any prompts.

4.2 Generative AI as a co-creative agent

Creativity is seen as a uniquely human trait, and it was considered to be less endangered by the AI revolution happening over the last decade, than manual labour, for example. However, the recent technological advances that gave generative models the ability to write copies, generate images and code are now challenging that perspective. (De Cremer et al. 2023.) The development of these

tools will undoubtedly change the dynamics of many industries, including the world of content creation (Davenport & Mittal 2022).

Generative tools such as Midjourney and ChatGPT may seem creative but given that creativity is based on subjectivity and intention, it can only exist in the human mind. As discussed previously, these systems classified as Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), have the capability of performing only specific designated tasks they are commanded to, but they are not able to understand nuances or subjectivity. (Ogilvy 2023, 34.) In order to use generative tools effectively, there is still a need for human involvement in different parts of the process, as for creating prompts, filtering and making decisions. Generally speaking, creative prompts yield creative outputs. (Righini 2023.)

Additionally, Righini (2023) argues that being a creative gives you a mindset and expertise on how concepts become creative solutions, which can be properly executed and turned into content. Instead, AI will revolutionize creativity by becoming an essential tool as Photoshop once did. And like with Photoshop, creative professionals will be given a very powerful aid to boost their skills (Righini 2023).

According to Laine (2021), when a human creator cooperates with at least one AI agent, there is what can be defined as co-creation and co-creativity (Laine 2021, 26). Overall, many seem to predict scenario of rapid innovation and the use of AI for augmenting creativity (De Cremer et al. 2023). Ogilvy (2023) argues that AI is not the death of creativity, but it is a creative renaissance in the era of human-AI co-creation (Ogilvy 2023, 4).

4.3 Expert interview: Integrating GenAI to the creative work

The following chapter is the description and summary of my interview with a creative professional and AI expert. It is important to highlight that the following statements are professional opinions, referring only to AI practices in the creative industry. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The interview happened during spring 2023, via Microsoft Teams application, with the objective of learning more about integrating Generative AI into the creative workflow. The interviewee was Creative Director, Filmmaker and Entrepreneur Leandro Righini. With over 20 years of experience in the industry and based in Helsinki, Righini has worked in film and television, screenwriting, sound production and has a passion for technology. During his time working with Nokia his interests in technology and filmmaking fused together, developing an enthusiasm for 360° video and photography. His work later evolved into the exploration of virtual reality technology in physical spaces, then to generative art, providing Righini with a pioneer exposure to generative AI technology and early access to applications such as Midjourney.

Righini believes that being early in technology opens doors, following closely what is new and understanding what is happening in the market is a general good practice. The development of artificial intelligence applications, its capabilities as well as its usability are developing in an incredibly accelerated pace, they are foundational, building on itself. Being an early adopter allows the practitioner to follow the process and develop practices, as well as understanding the always-changing prompt language, in the case of GenAI. (Righini 2023.)

Owing to the fact that general artificial intelligence is still a new and dynamic technology, users are still trying to figure out how it can be applied and what are the best practices. GenAI is a learning model, it has been trained on existing data and the prompts work as the programming language. It has not been fully deciphered yet, there are no clear guides on when and where it is beneficial to write the prompts in a more specific way or in a broader manner. However, users are quickly figuring out which text inputs the AIs are responding best to, and what is the right logic behind them. Different applications respond differently to different types of prompts. Righini (2023) adds that online communities, Discord channels and YouTube are a good place to learn from. (Righini 2023.)

The easy and affordable access to cameras has made a lot of people photographers, giving them a medium to express their creativity. In a similar manner, the popularization of AI tools will democratize the creative process, allowing anyone who has ideas to execute them, even without having the

operational skills to do so. This will bring a lot of new professionals to the market, changing the freelance and content creation economy as well as the creative agencies workflow. (Righini 2023.)

Righini argues that generative models need a human brain behind it. When used in a project, decision making is necessary each step of the way, being for creating the input, filtering, redoing the output or even determining if a content is good enough. In order to create adequate content, the creative professional, needs to understand the brief, to create a plan, as well as to know how and in which part of the project to use different generative applications. These professionals are called by Righini “creative agents”. To him, the power of generative AI does not lay in a single application but, in the combination of them to create a workflow. (Righini 2023.)

Utilizing AI applications can be quite useful, however, results can also be very generic. Typically, not being satisfied with the starting point will also lead to unsatisfying results.

“If you have an average script, you will have an average film. It’s all about the idea and where it comes from.” (Righini, 2023)

Nowadays, there are so many applications to generate content such as text, image, video, music and voice and more. The power of generative AI for the creative industry professionals, also lies in gaining the ability to blend different disciplines. It can be compared to orchestrating a symphony, even if you do not have the operational skill to do so, GenAI gives you the tools and possibility to put together a masterpiece. Another great advantage of using AI in the creative process is that it allows us to rapidly build up ideas from a concept, see how it looks and feel before perfecting it. (Righini 2023.)

Finally, Righini’s final tip for those who want to master the use of GenAI as a creative aid is to experiment, study, try, make mistakes, be curious and let your own creativity be your playground. In his opinion, the future of creative work will be divided from people who dared to experiment with AI and the ones who did not. (Righini 2023.)

4.4 AI ethics and copyright issues

Nevertheless, there are still a series of ethical and legal issues surrounding the topic of artificial intelligence and generative AI. The speed at which the technology is developing is unprecedented and governments are struggling to keep up to speed with the change. (Ogilvy 2023, 70.) Various questions have been raised about who owns the content created by generative tools and what classifies the breach of copyrights.

On one side of the spectrum, the training of learning models with data of unauthorized origin comes with a series of legal risks and intellectual property violations. While the United States court determines how the existing intellectual property laws will apply to GenAI platforms using unlicensed work to train its algorithms, big companies such as Open AI and Stability AI already face legal action. (Appel, Neelbauer & Schiweidel 2023.) Affecting mostly, but not only, content creators there is an urgent call for the institution of protective laws and trade unions to defend the workers' published content. It is also up to the professionals that utilise these tools, to understand the issues surrounding the theme and make ethical choices in their work.

On the other end, the commercialization of synthetic media also presents a series of uncertainties once the produced content cannot be fully copyrighted. Creators and agencies may need to explore other ways of monetizing their work, as they might not be able to claim exclusive rights of the generated content. For example, in the case of an agency using synthetic content in a client's campaign, neither the agency nor the client has full ownership of it, allowing others to be able to use similar texts or images in their own campaign. There are other options to be explored to protect the work created with AI, such as patents, that refer to the protection of the process and not the work itself. However, the legal landscape is still new and unclear, the only certainty is the need for transparency between creators and clients. (Jackson 2023).

Once synthetic content cannot be protected by law, the ownership of published AI content cannot be claimed. In the case of this thesis, for example, the ownership of the images generated by Midjourney is shared between the thesis

commissioner, owner of the paid account, and the platform which might use the content as training data to their models. (Midjourney 2023).

5 CONCEPTUAL IDENTITY REDESIGN

Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi has grown significantly in the past few years. After internal processes and deliberations, the company concluded that its old visual identity no longer reflected its desired position in the market. At the beginning of 2023, the company started a project to update its brand identity and visual communication.

The project incorporated the design process proposed by Lupton (2011) as a methodology. In this thesis, the focus was on the development of the visual identity, having as the main goal to learn and develop human-AI co-creativity during phases number two and three, ideation and creation of form, of the design process (Lupton 2011). Phase one, defining the problem (Lupton 2011, 15), was previously explored during a company workshop with the main stakeholders in the development of the brand's visual identity project and did not happen in collaboration with AI. The visual outcome documented in this thesis did not reflect the company's actual visual changes, once the research focused on the integration of GenAI tools in the creative workflow rather than developing the thesis commissioner's visual identity update itself.

5.1 Defining the project

The position and strategy work were developed by the company prior to this study, which originated the brand visual identity renewal project, and served as background work to the design process. Based on Lupton's (2011) methodology, the first step to the design process is problem definition (Lupton 2011, 6, 14). With the strategy defined beforehand, the next step was to organize a team workshop, as a way of acquiring the necessary information to build a creative brief (Lupton 2011, 56), as previously mentioned on chapter 3, Methods.

The workshop happened via Microsoft Teams using Miro, an online visual collaboration platform commonly used to facilitate workshops. Participants included professionals from in-house teams who were closely related to the brand work. The participant group was composed by me, as an Art Director and

workshop facilitator, a Creative Director, a Copywriter, and a Creative Producer forming the brand team, as well as a Lead Designer and a Product Designer representing the product team. At Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi, one of the goals of the rebrand was to align all brand work, from brand communications to the online store, being the product itself and the main customer-brand touchpoint.

The workshop started with the question: “Internally, we already know our values. We know what we want to say and where we want to be. Now, is the time to define how can we visually translate that to the outside world?”. After introducing the project and presenting the agenda, I asked the participants to write down which principles they thought represented Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi’s current brand, not revealing their answers yet.

Next, the participants watched a presentation about the strategy work, which reviewed past years’ communication materials, as well the current brand guidelines, followed by the desired position and path to follow. Then, I asked the participants to reflect on the presentation and think which feelings they imagine fit the future brand, writing down in sticky notes what adjectives better defined these feelings. After revealing and talking about their answers, the participants organized the notes and grouped similar ideas.

Once the exercise was finished, it was time to revisit the principles written by the participants at the beginning of the workshop. I asked the participants to talk about, from the principles they wrote, what would they like to change for the renewal project, as well as what they would like to keep. Once again, after the discussion, they grouped the notes and organized them from most common to least common answers. Lastly, in order to define the principles’ hierarchy, the group voted in what principles they thought were the most important. Each participant got two blue stickers to vote which answers they thought were the two most essential. Next, they got one green sticker to signalize one principle they considered significant but not essential, and thirdly, a pink sticker to choose a principle that would be a good addition to the pack.

After the session, I reflected on the learnings and gathered all the information, including not only the results of the workshop but also reflections on the current brand, its history, and its essence. Serving as a compass to the following phases of ideation and concept development (Lupton 2011). The briefing was as follows:

The goals of the visual identity renewal project are to align the visual communication with the brand identity and company strategy, as well as cross-team functions and other stakeholders. It is also important to ensure the brand is digitally and visually accessible, which in short means the biggest and most common barriers for users with disability have been addressed, such as colour combinations, contrast, text legibility.

In brief, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi is non-conforming by nature, a company that looks for innovative ways of saving food from becoming waste. With a mission to reduce food waste and a vision to be the largest and most significant player in doing so, its goal is to make sustainable shopping affordable for everyone, enabling customers to save money and consume responsibly and conveniently, offering high quality surplus products at significantly reduced prices. Therefore, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi has as its main talking points food waste and saving money. In addition, it was defined during the workshop that company's principles are:

1. **Credibility:** In order to be successful in their mission, the company needs to convey to its customers they are a reliable and trustworthy brand. That will encourage first-time purchases as well as increase customer retention.
2. **Sustainability:** Sustainable ecological, social, and economic principles are at the company's core; environmental sustainability is the reason why Lindroos started the company, and it has served as a decision-making guide. Besides having an ecological brand, sustainability should also be thought in the literal way, which is "the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level". The brand's new visual identity needs to be able to sustain itself, with all company limitations (low resources, many brand stakeholders and many non-designer professionals working with it).
3. **Quirkiness:** Even though the brand is credible and looking towards having a more mature communication, Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi still aims to be quirky, evoking "feel good" and warm emotions.

4. **Accessibility:** Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi believes that sustainable products and services should be available for everyone. It is important to be a democratic brand, with great quality products at low-price offers, as well as having accessible design for users.

Due to international growth, the company is represented by two different brand names, “Fiksuruoka.fi” in Finland and “Foodello” in the other markets, hitherto Belgium and The Netherlands. All markets act under the same brand identity and visual communication, differing only by name and logo. For that reason, to be suitable and have efficient communication globally, the new visual identity must be universal.

5.2 Ideation

The ideation process often means a way of establishing and communicating ideas or concepts, not only to oneself but also making it understandable to others. Before settling and devoting effort to a single solution, it is wise to explore different paths. Concept presentation decks are commonly used as a way to present and explain ideas. They are formed by a series of slides that present and display the ideas; each concept is presented in a different series of slides. The concepts are not finished in detail but elaborated to the point where they are just mature enough to represent an idea. The chosen concept was developed on phase three. (Lupton 2011.) Once the creative brief was clear, I explored different ways of using GenAI in the as a collaboration method for augmenting human creativity (Ogilvy 2023, 36).

When starting the ideation process, it was also important to consider the brand voice and brand messages, which were already defined and meant to guide the creation of the visual concept. The brand’s voice is kind and positive, but also impactful. A great deal of the messages focused on the price or sustainability aspect, some focused on both as for the main brand headline “Save food. Save money.”

I started the ideation process in collaboration with text-to-image tool, Midjourney, by feeding simple prompts and inputting key words that described the project's main concepts, such as "sustainability" and "rescued food". I also tested the tool's capability of recreating traditional ideation methods, like mood boards and mood-based colour palettes, themed by concepts including food textures and nature patterns. While some of the output images were beautiful and quite different, as for patterns created by nature, others were very generic. Prompts like "mood board of online grocery store visual identity", did not provide any source of inspiration and were not strong enough to build the identity redesign from.

For that reason, in the next test phase I tried Midjourney's describe mode ("/describe"). At this point, I used some pictures from concepts gathered online to get inspiration from, as well as images from the company's media bank. Some of the output prompts were confusing while others described an artist name as a style reference, which is already an intellectual property and ethical red flag on its own. When I replicated some of the output prompts as a simple input text ("/imagine"), the images showed little to no resemblance to the original picture.

Using an image of unknown ownership to generate prompts and the copyright issues that come with it were topics raised during the company's feedback meeting in the end of this process. When questioned, one of the participants on the meeting believed that using an unknown author's work as source of inspiration was no different than using traditional mood boarding for indulging creativity, in this case. The issue comes when there are no further steps taken to develop the generated image and the output is used as a replica of the artist's work.

The next experimentation round was using the blend mode ("/blend"), I tested this method by blending brand images from the company's media bank with images of different textures, such as nature textures, food textures and abstract gradients taken from free photography website sources.

During the benchmark research, I found a visual identity project that used the same blend mode technique. The visual branding was done by Brand Designer, Matty Brownell, on a guide published by UX Collective, on how he used

Midjourney to design the brand's visual elements by blending graphic inspiration images with brand asset images. Brownell claims the work is a result of mix and match, and re-blends of the images. (Brownell 2023.)

Considering I was in search of a concept to build from and not content creation, the generated outputs utilizing blend mode were still not what I was looking for. After no success with finding a concept in the trial rounds with Midjourney, I concluded a core idea was lacking and turned to ChatGPT for a different approach.

For the second round of ideation, I tested ChatGPT with the free GPT 3.5 version first before subscribing GPT 4, the plus version. GPT 4 gave better results expressing more complete and insightful answers. There were a few steps I followed to better perform this task.

The first step was to give ChatGPT enough context to provide insightful and relevant answers. I set custom instructions to provide the tool with information about my role, the company background, its principles, and the project's creative brief. I also told ChatGPT how I would like it to behave and to respond in the answers. To protect the company's privacy, I replaced the organization's name with "[Mybusiness]". Custom instruction can be found in Appendix 1.

The second step was to start the conversation. I asked ChatGPT to act as a senior Creative Director and help me come up with different concepts, as well as to mentor me by asking questions to reflect on. While looking for a core idea, it was also important to keep in mind that the visual identity must work in favour of the brand message.

I started the chat asking for guidance on where I should start. On top of giving an introduction on core visual elements, ChatGPT also suggested a few different concept alternatives, explaining its core idea, the relation to brand principles as well as suggestions for the visual elements. The first outputs rotated heavily around the idea of time, suggesting the use of elements such as hourglasses, clocks, and calendars. Another round of suggestions included the idea of vintage food and the visualization of old food having a new life, becoming usable again.

Many of the concepts also revolved around organic waste, old food, and trash bins, which are generally avoided in the brand communications due to negative connotation.

At this point, it was important to guide the bot to explore other options. One of the ways for generating new answers was to edit the prompts by adding some more pieces of information about the company, such as brand personality or telling that the store sells mostly pantry food rather than fresh food, for example. Another way was to continue the conversation, instructing the chat to exclude certain elements like trash bins or clocks. At this point I asked for bolder and more outside of the box ideas. The following rounds of answers included suggestions such as cartoons and comic elements as well as nature and recycling oriented symbols, but also some new and interesting concepts of which I picked two.

Concept one was called “Pixelated Earth”, it brought the technological side of the business. The concept played around with the idea that each pixel matters, comparably to the idea that every food item saved contributes to Foodello – Fiksuroka.fi’s mission. The visual representation of this concept revolved around combining tech-related elements, such as pixels and code snippets, with natural elements which represent the food and sustainability aspect. Neon greens and pastel blues colours also represent the merge of natural and technological elements. The reason why “Pixelated Earth” called my attention was for its unique and innovative point of view, bringing the company’s backstory and mixing two opposite worlds, the natural and the technological.

Concept two was called “Eco-Kaleidoscope” in which the core idea was the symbolism of the sustainable consumption, where each piece of the Kaleidoscope alluded to a part of the business. Visually represented by geometric patterns, diverse colours, and visual elements. “Eco-Kaleidoscope” concept was attractive for its proposal of unity and modularity. Both concepts were unique and could possibly be a differential between Foodello – Fiksuroka.fi’s and other similar online grocery stores. To help me better visualize each concept, the third step was to ask ChatGPT to generate different prompts I could use again in Midjourney.

5.2.1 Idea selection

After having some formed idea on how these concepts could look like, I went back to traditional mood boarding as source of visual inspiration. Through Pinterest, a commonly known image sharing platform, where users can find inspiration and designers can display their work, I created one collection for each concept. In those collections, I saved images of not only visual identities that resonated with the two concepts but also different photography styles, colour palettes, illustrations, and typography.

From the pre-selected images, I picked a couple I liked best and a few others that created some sort of cohesiveness to the bunch, as well as some of the output images from Midjourney. Next, I placed the images side by side in the vector graphics editor, Adobe Illustrator. Once all images were placed on a board, I started to imagine what is the unity between them and what kind of graphic elements could be used as a representation of this idea, making some rough sketches on what these elements could look like. At this point, I was looking for versatility and adaptability, since the graphics would need to work well different frame dimensions. I developed the elements just enough, so the visual idea was clear.

In order to keep Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi's existing awareness, the brand's main colour continued to be green. First, I started to observe what was the most prominent colours in the mood board and picked two, having green as default. Then, I tested khroma.co, an ML powered colour generator, to create a few colour combinations. I also tried a few different other free colour palette generators online for inspiration but concluded by choosing the palette manually.

A similar process was followed when choosing the typography. I tested a couple of font pairing tools before settling with ML powered platform, Font Joy (fontjoy.com). Since Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi media landscape is mostly online and present in three different languages that vary in word and sentence length, ideally, I was looking for an easy to read, condensed font for headlines. For a start, I selected the brand's current font as body text default and tried to pair it with different heading options. I saved some of my favourite styles for reference

but finished the process choosing the preliminary fonts from Adobe Font library. I repeated the same process for both concepts.

Next, I spread the elements in different artboards creating a slide presentation for each concept, forming two “concept presentation decks”, used as the method for presenting and filtering the ideas. In order to keep the concepts comparable, the slides, or presentation decks, followed a template containing the same elements in the same order.

For this study, the first slide presented the concept’s name and keywords suggested by ChatGPT to describe the mood and idea. For example, concept one, Pixelated Earth’s keywords were “tech”, “impactful” and “modern meets vision” as for concept two, Eco-kaleidoscope, its keywords were “geometric” multi-faceted” and “diverse”. The second slide displayed the mood board created with some of the generative images and other image references, mentioned earlier. The next, called the key visuals slide had the purpose of encapsulating the core identity and showing the concept’s idea in a glance. The slide was composed by the logo, the main brand tagline and graphic elements using the pre-defined colour palette and typography style. The fourth slide presented the pre-defined full colour palette. The fifth slide showed the typography style and fonts chosen for heading and body text. Lastly, the sixth slide, composed by graphic elements, presented a few vector graphics as well as a proposal for a new price tag and discount tag used in ads and in the online store.

Once both concept presentation decks were ready, they were evaluated and filtered. The “Eco-Kaleidoscope” concept seemed overly busy and very complicated to reproduce, it was difficult to find an effective way of executing the concept. Making the graphic elements work in combination with the other necessary elements to create the brand style, such as copy texts, the brand pictures or the offer product photos, which are in majority colourful on their own, was challenging. On the other hand, the “Pixelated Earth” concept showed flexibility, the supporting graphic elements were more versatile and allowed for bigger combinations of use, as well as potential for matching different size dimensions and photographic styles. It proved easier to execute and to be reproduced by the different stakeholders, who also work with the creation ads

and brand assets and have different levels of design knowledge. For that reason, concept one “Pixelated Earth” was chosen and continued to be developed in the next phase of the process.

5.3 Concept development

As previously discussed, according to Lupton (2011) the third phase of the design process is the creation of form (Lupton 2011). It refers to the final representation or development of an idea that was conceptualised during the ideation phase. In this case, the third phase is represented by the brand language (Lupton 2011, 132) as well as execution and visual representation via mock-ups (Lupton 2011, 137). However, the definition of an audience and the brand vocabulary steps were already concluded priorly to this project. Additionally, unlike Lupton’s suggested methodology, the final stage of the design process in this case, is the visual translation of the core idea and not the final execution itself. Meaning that in practice, the results presented in this chapter are not the final visuals but the materialization of my creative vision for this project, as well as the demonstration on how to put the concept into practice.

Previously, during the ideation phase, a visual idea was developed around the “Pixelated Earth” concept, having pre-defined graphic elements but no imagery styles. I started the concept development phase by using the elements presented in the concept presentation decks (Chapter 5.2.1) to build a brand presentation template, equivalent to Lupton’s brand language (Lupton 2011, 132). The template was built in Adobe Illustrator and displayed some of the existing brand elements such as the logo and main message together with the new elements, as colour palette, typography, and imagery. Its purpose was to give the audience the new brand’s look and feel, as well as to demonstrate how the new brand elements are used.

The template was in the format of a single long page divided into sections, the first one was composed by a header with the logo, the main brand message and an image placeholder, followed by the existing brand tagline and brand story. Next, was the display of the colour palette and typography use. The following

section had a few banners and advertising mock-ups, which were designed with the pixel concept graphic elements, existing copy texts from the company's copy bank and image place holders.

The technology portion of the idea was present and well represented in the pixel-like visual elements, however the earth, or organic part was still missing. The implementation of GenAI in this phase consisted in the generation of the novel images used as brand pictures, that would fit into the template's image place holders. The content served the purpose of finalizing the concept development, concretizing the core idea, the blending of food and technology.

During benchmark research I was inspired by Designer and Art Director Anastasia Natalenko, who published a case of brand identity that mixed real photos and generated photos in the brand template. Natalenko (2023) briefly described the process of using the real images as reference in the prompts, to generate synthetic images, created in Midjourney (Natalenko 2023).

I started to test the process Natalenko described. As the representation of the organic, natural world my idea was to recreate pictures of ready-made dishes and raw, ready to eat food. I used a photography from the company's media bank, of a scene composed by a plate of pasta bolognese and a few other elements, like a piece of parmesan cheese and a jar of unlabelled tomato sauce, in a light green background, as the reference image. The results were not exciting enough. I went back and tested ChatGPT generated prompts again, I also wanted to try a different perspective angle from the image. This time, I slightly changed the original prompt and input a bit different text a couple of times.

One of the output images called my attention as it looked like a mistake. The picture had a surrealistic aspect, not respecting the laws of physics in the real world (Figure 3). The input prompt was "/imagine a scene from the top with whole grain crackers, dried fruits, and zero-waste icons forming, in a light green background". Even though I asked a for scene from the top, the image was a mixture of a front view, simulating food displayed on a surface with a top view like there would be food flying on top of the other food, in the background. Another point that called my attention was that the whole picture looked like a landscape.



FIGURE 3. Output images from Midjourney.

Next, I asked Midjourney to create variations of the output image, highlighted in Figure 3. The results of the variations continued having this surrealistic aspect and felt interesting to look at, the images were unpredictable and imaginative, the idea seemed worth exploring. I then started the process of upscaling the images and asking for more variations of the ones I liked. Followed by upscaling and making more variations again, allowing the tool to be creative and come up with different, unique images.

For the different image placeholders in the template mock-ups, I experimented to change the prompts by describing the food categories of popular products at Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi online stores, for example pasta and snacks. I repeated the process of making variations and upscaling the ones I liked multiple times. During the process, the same surrealistic aspect continued to be repeated in some images that had different prompts.

The more I upscaled and re-generated some of the pictures, the more Midjourney gave similar results. However, the images had also curiously evolved during the process, starting to look each time more as a surrealistic landscape than as a mistake, alluding to different scenarios such as deserts, islands, trees, clouds, and moons. I continued generating different images until I had enough for a collection, selecting the images that had the most visual similarities, from the different food categories, to place them in the mock-ups.

After, I went back to Adobe Illustrator and replaced the images. None seemed to fit well with the header banner, the space would benefit from a close-up image. It was an interesting spot to try using the company's pasta bolognese image as reference once again. This time I wrote the prompt myself based on the other images in the collection: "/imagine an editorial photography of a dish with side garnished with playful elements, photo realistic, [URL link of reference image]". Some outputs were interesting, I repeated the process of upscaling and making some variations of them. Then, input the same prompt, only replacing the original reference image by one of the synthetic images. Then, repeated the process of upscaling, and making more variations, until I had one image that fit the banner spot. Once I had a good picture, I used Adobe Photoshop to remove the image's background, before placing it on the template banner in Adobe Illustrator. The final template and generated images can be found in Appendix 3.

5.4 Process self-evaluation

Using generative AI as a co-creative agent took a lot of testing and alternating between approaches to achieve results that fit the brief and subsequently the concept. The first tests using text-to-image tools to replicate traditional ideation methods, for example mood boarding, seemed to be inefficient and created generic outputs, with unseen potential for being developed into a concept.

The tested generative image model, Midjourney, had a different look and feel to its output images, which initially did not match my expectations. Specially during the ideation process, I was left with the impression that there was not much room for trying different ideas once all the images seemed to have a movie-like appearance. Because of that, my initial perception was that this brief was not ideal for experimenting with generative image models, once I thought the tool's content differed too much from the needs for creating a brand's visual identity. I was in search of inspiration to develop a concept and uniform identity.

Subsequently, I concluded that a stronger concept was missing. Also, a change of mind set was needed. By being too focused on the research question, I was

trying to direct the computer-generated images with the intention to get the tool to do what I wanted to, which I later came to realise it was not the right approach. Moving away from the image application to start a new round of ideation with ChatGPT, was a turning point on the project, providing solid core concepts that allowed the successful completion of the ideation phase and consequently the study overall.

After going back to Midjourney, I concluded that looking to reproduce real images, rather than utilizing the power AI as a manner of co-creativity, was not an ideal way to proceed. Allowing myself to let go of what I had envisioned it was right for the project and opening to new outcomes possibilities, for example permitting AI to generate ludic and playful images, was a way of getting ideas that human minds would not easily think of, it was the way of co-creating I was in search of.

I identify two turning points which were crucial for the result of this project. The first one was finding the core concepts utilizing a text tool rather than an image tool. The next was using AI-creativity and allowing the tool to “hallucinate”, instead of trying to reproduce ready conceptualized images.

In conclusion, I consider that the new brand identity fits the brief well. All brand principles are represented in this concept. The credibility aspect comes from the slightly more serious choice of colour and layout. Sustainability is also represented by the major use of green colour as well as the image collection representing food and nature. While accessibility and quirkiness aspects come from the copy text, quirkiness also comes from the choice of typography and ludic imagery. Both, second and third phases of the project were a combination of AI-generated content and traditional creation methods.

5.5 Results

During the development of Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi’s brand identity renewal project, the “Pixelated Earth” concept was presented alongside five other visual concept lines, developed by the design group. After seeing all the different lines, the project team, composed by the brand team and part of the product team,

made the decision to leave “Pixelated Earth” concept out of the process. Three out of the six concepts were chosen to continue being developed in the company’s next project phase. Even though this thesis practical project, the conceptual identity redesign, was concluded the company’s visual identity renewal project continues.

In a different meeting, once the design process was completed and I had finalized the conceptual identity redesign, I presented the research and results to the visual identity renewal team. The team present in the feedback meeting involved the Creative Director and Head of Brand, two Art Directors including myself, a Copywriter, and a Product Designer. All the participants had already seen “Pixelated Earth” concept deck during the development of the brand visual identity renewal project and were aware of the research work. However, only the Creative Director had followed parts of the process and guided decision-making moments during ideation phase.

According to the team, it was very interesting to see how the project progressed and to learn about the difficulties along the way. The group claimed to have got a much better understanding of the tools and what is the actual level of intelligence and cognition generative applications have nowadays. The team was allured in seeing where the technology is now and understanding the possibilities and limitations of the tools, for example learning how ChatGPT, a text-to-text application, can also be used as inspiration for visual projects.

Exploring GenAI as a font of inspiration and being able to turn single-level outputs into multi-levelled ideas, that can be worked on and continuing to create with it, is something many people are curious of learning at this moment. It was also considered a valuable knowledge to have in-house. For the “Eco-kaleidoscope” concept, it was nice to see the process on how a few pictures with not much context were transformed into a concept, a participant added. The images served as good inspiration, but the human expertise is what is needed to turn them into a finalized, ready to execute idea. The process served to understand how much human mind and craft are needed to make a concept tangible.

In addition, another use case spotted by the team was the challenge of expertise bias. Many companies hire consultancy agencies or third-party creative teams to develop projects, who could bring a different, new point of view on their designs. Since Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi's has an in-house creative team, the group works daily with the brand sometimes being too close to the projects. The use of artificial intelligence in this case, would help the team to envision new ideas, bring new angles to the problems and helping creatives to think more outside of the box.

Even though the visual concept met all the strategy and branding checkpoints described during the creative brief, the company's background story and technology aspect are only relevant internally, but it does not resonate with the audience. For the end users of Foodello – Fiksuruoka.fi's, the concept might be unclear without further explanation and steals focus from the main angle, which was being an online grocery store. Overall, the team considered the proposal of "Pixelated Earth" redesign innovative and well-crafted, but unsuitable for company use. Mentioning that, in conclusion these are the subjective nuances that make sense to human professionals but are not clear to the creative AI.

However, the research primary focus is the learnings of new skills, rather than developing the company's final redesign itself. The Creative Director and Head of Brand added:

"This is inspiration, and it pushes us to unseen places. If this [the conceptual identity redesign] is right for us or not, is not the question. This [experiment] opens new doors and raises the levels of what we can achieve."

In addition, a participant commented: If certain lines or ideas are not picked to be developed, it does not mean they are not valuable. The learnings on the process will prevail and they can also be used again in a future project or as source of inspiration.

In conclusion, even though the identity redesign was not chosen to continue being developed by the company, the project proved valuable to the thesis commissioner. Demonstrating how generative tools can support the creative process and be used as source of inspiration as well as consultation, in addition of creation of content alone.

6 DISCUSSION

Taking into consideration my novice level of experience and the lack of prompt engineering knowledge or prior hours of practice, it was difficult to give directions to the tools as I originally intended. Perhaps, if prior to generating content I had studied how to build and test prompts, hence prompt engineering, the level of mastery with which the research occurred could be different. Possibly having a smoother and more flawless process when art directing GenAI applications.

The result of this work was a clear demonstration on the use of AI as a tool for augmenting creativity and how it can promote divergent thinking, characterized by the blending of distant concepts into a single idea (Eapen, Finkenstadt, Folk & Venkataswamy 2023). Even though the computer-generated content presented as the result of this research seemed to have demonstrated some level of creativity, we are far from reaching a point where human minds will be eliminated from the creative process. Intelligent machines do not have a creative mind of their own, nor are able to comprehend nuance in the same manner as humans do (Anand 2023), depending solely on human cognition as well as guidance to achieve satisfying results.

According to Ogilvy's press release (2023), without a doubt the AI-revolution came to stay, it will revolutionize not only the way we work but also how we perceive content in the future. A creative renaissance is on the horizon. (Ogilvy 2023, 34-37.)

Additionally, besides the amount of content that can be produced in a short period and incredibly low budget, I believe that all the ethical and legal issues surrounding this topic put the possibility of fully replacing content creators in workplaces worldwide at a distant reality. In conclusion, I found best advantage of using AI tools was the blend of using generative applications with traditional design methods. As far as I was able to test, the greatest potential of integrating artificial intelligence to the workflow, lies on assisting creative professionals, not replacing them.

Alongside the excitement and hesitance that comes with change and innovation, there are also many questions about the effects of AI in our future. For example, would the excessive use of AI make society lose even more the ability of surviving and producing content in the offline world. Also, could the overload of synthetic content make us value human-made content more (Davenport & Mittal 2022) or what will be the way to ensure the information we are being fed is truthful, are valid concerns and points to think about moving forward.

As previously mentioned, AI-innovation is moving on an incredibly rapid pace. By the conclusion of this project, OpenAI released the possibility of using images in ChatGPT-4 prompts (Skalski 2023) and DALL-E-3 (OpenAI 2023a). Also, a beta version of GPT builder, which allows the user to customise a version of ChatGPT for a specific purpose (OpenAI 2023b). None of the updates were explored during this research.

While I can affirm the main goal proposed on this thesis, learning a new set of skills which can be applied in my professional life was achieved, my journey with AI is only at the beginning. There are still a great number of things to learn, as for prompt engineering and model training. My proposal for next studies is to continue exploring ways of integrating GenAI in the creative process, in the conceptualization and execution of different projects. Also, exploring the possibility, viability, and advantages of training a customised model with the brand's own content and brand identity guidelines.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Semi-structured interview questions

1. What is your background and your role in your organization?
2. How often and how do you use GenAI in your creative process?
3. In the pdf you mention the importance of the role that language, especially NPL, will have in the future. Can you develop more on that?
4. You also talked about the Creative Agents, professionals that will specialize in AI to create content. How do you see the life in the creative field in the future?
5. At last, what tips would you give to creatives who like me, are starting to use AI and implement it in their daily tasks?

Appendix 2. ChatGPT custom instructions

“I am an Art Director working for a business called [Mybusiness] and I am working on a brand visual identity project. Here is some information about my workplace: [Mybusiness] is non-conforming by nature, a company that looks for innovative ways of saving food from becoming waste. With a mission to reduce food waste and a vision to be the largest and most significant player in doing so, its goal is to make sustainable shopping affordable for everyone, enabling customers to save money and consume responsibly and conveniently, offering very quality surplus products at significantly reduced prices.

Therefore, [Mybusiness] has as its main talking points food waste and saving money. [Mybusiness] values are:

1. **Credibility:** In order to be successful in our mission, we need to translate to our customers that we are a reliable and trustworthy brand.
2. **Sustainability:** Sustainability is at our core. It is the reason why the company has started, and it has always served as a decision-making guide. Besides having an ecological/green brand let's also think of sustainability in the literal way, which is “the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level”.
3. **Accessibility:** We believe that sustainability is for everyone. We are a democratic brand, having low-price offers as well as accessible design.
4. **Quirkiness:** Even though we are credible, we still want to be quirky, we want to evoke “feel good” and warm emotions in a more mature way.” And “Imagine you are a Senior creative director mentoring me, the Art Director, in the visual identity project. Use your expertise to help me conceptualise ideas.”

Appendix 3. Brand language concept template

1(3)

Foodello

**SAVE FOOD.
SAVE MONEY.**

/prompt an editorial photography of a dish made of noodles with side garnishes and playful elements resembling nature, photo realistic, in light green background - variation

The online store of rescued food

We are on a mission to reduce food waste. Not all food produced ends up at the supermarket and this surplus harms the environment. Still, surplus is inevitable. We give these high-quality products a second chance. With Foodello, you choose which products you wish to rescue, with amazing discounts. We'll deliver them straight to your doorstep. Pay less for your groceries.

#003838 #0B8455 #CBFF78 #CBFFC5 #EDED44 #EF7929 #6D63F6


SAVE FOOD. SAVE MONEY.

The online store of rescued food.

It's hard to say no for this offer. It's way too yummy. Order now or you will regret later.

Brand language template, part 1: Header banner, brand story, colour palette and typography.


**SUSTAINABLE
MADE AFFORDABLE.**



The online store of rescued food. **Foodello**

/prompt
a scene from the top, with different kinds of chips, dips, popcorn, garnishes and zero-waste icons, in a light green background - variation


**TREAT YOURSELF.
AND THE PLANET.**



The online store of rescued food. **Foodello**

/prompt
a scene from the top, with whole grain crackers, dried fruits, and zero-waste icons forming, in a light green background - variation


**CHEAP BUT
SUPREME.**



The online store of rescued food. **Foodello**

/prompt
a scene from the top, with dried pasta in different formats, tomato sauce cans, crated cheese and zero-waste icons forming, in a light green background - variation

**EATING
WITH AN
IMPACT.**




The online store of rescued food. **Foodello**

/prompt
a scene from the top, with different kinds of chips, dips, popcorn, garnishes and zero-waste icons, in a light green background - variation

**F-F-FANTASTIC
PRICE.**

- 50 %

2 kpl
2,90
5,80



The online store of rescued food. **Foodello**

Brand language template, part 2: Advertising mock-ups



Brand language template, part 3: Brand imagery