

# VIRTUAL PERSONA

**Let's start!**



Presented by Christ-Vie Matumona





# AGENDA

- 1** Introduction
- 2** Engagement Pack
- 3** Blog Post
- 4** Show plan





# HEY,



I'm Christ-Vie, a UX Researcher specialising in Digital Ethnographic research and Branding. I work with both qualitative and quantitative Data, focusing on Digital Anthropology within the UX Research sphere, with a keen knowledge of exploring deep cultural and geographical nuances.



find out more





# KEY THEMES

**Question:** Can AI replace persona?

**Key themes:** User Research (UX), Netnography, persona digital research and AI.

**The socio-technical assemblages:** Virtual User and Persona

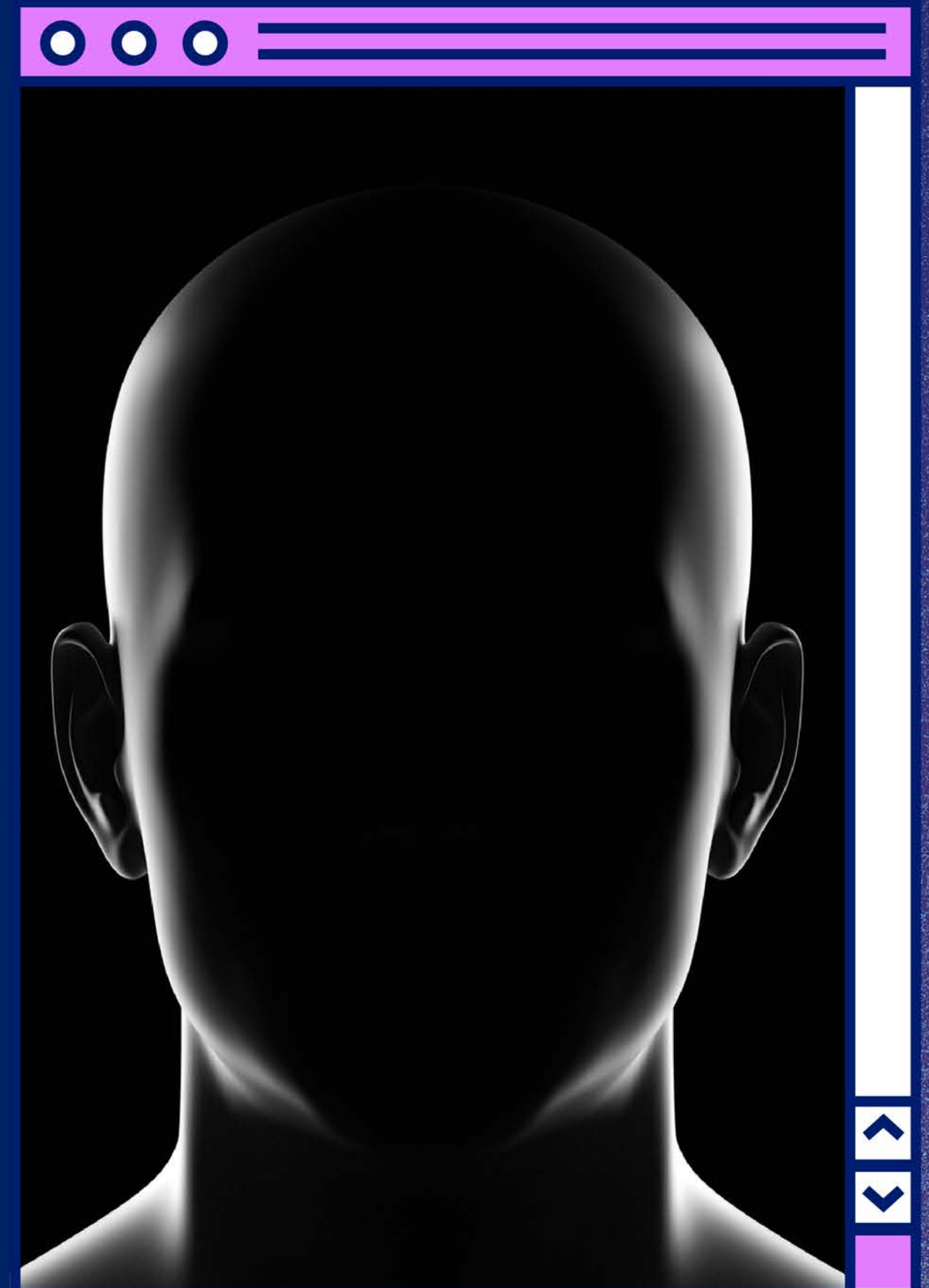






# INTRODUCTION

The rise of AI has disrupted **numerous industries**, **sparking concerns that certain job will be taken** away by AI. However, many researchers view it as a trend or a tool that can support research but won't change the interaction between participants and researchers. Within this engagement package, we aim to **analyse various key methodologies within UX** research industry that have grown due to AI or have been used **alongside other methodologies** within the **scope of research**.







# CONTEXT

In this project, **the socio-technical assemblages** that I wanted to focus on within the UX industry are the use of **personas in research with the implementation of AI**. I want to explore the impact of AI in the UX industry. As a UX researcher, the basis of my **project and artefacts relies on users and synthesising data from real participants**. This builds a narrative for my persona is to build empathy and a rapport with users' and stakeholders.





# IMPORTANCE OF PERSONA

(Kaplan, 2022)

- Providers research and designers with users' goals, experiences, and behaviours.
- Target users and create product in the best interest of the users and stakeholders to improve KPI's.
- Promote empathy.
- Inform design decisions.





# QUESTIONS?

As a researcher, I started to ask myself questions about the topic of AI and personas through my research, analysis, and exploration. These questions have helped to support my prototyped interaction.

- **Is it User Experience if users are not involve?**
- **Why do we need users?**
- **Is cutting corners in research worth it?**





# NETNOGRAPHY

Netnography is a specific type of qualitative social media research that adapts ethnography research to understand social interaction and communication in a digital context. The word “Netnography” is a lexical blend of “networks” or “internet” and was coined with ethnographic research by Robert Kozinets. The basis of Netnography is rooted in observations. **(Wikipedia Contributors, 2023)**

The unique aspects of Netnography are that it includes a blend of multimedia elements such as memes, audio, visual, graphic, and textual elements. The data is analysed using semiotic analysis with categorical structures. Netnography uses different forms of research methods, such as observation, interviews, diaries, and surveys, after a rapport has been built. **(Wikipedia Contributors, 2023)**





# HOW DOES NETNOGRAPHY WORK?

**Netnography requires general observation** and ethnographic research with the inclusion of guidelines from traditional cultural anthropology and ethnography research while adapting to the cyberculture of the research environment. This means entrenching yourself in the language and visual communication study of the environment **"for a time and in an unpredictable way, as an active part of the face-to-face relationship in that community"** (Van Maanen 1988, p. 9). Therefore, cultural participation and observation become paramount for the researcher.

(Kozinets, 2011 p. 3-4)





# HOW DOES NETNOGRAPHY WORK?

The data **collected consists of field notes** about the cybercultural field experiences combined with artifacts such as memes, images, quotes, text, video, and images. The positive outcomes of these artifacts are that they are transcribed; therefore, there may be fewer variations in memory, freeing the researcher from the use of field notes to interpret data. **This becomes an introspective reflection rather than a retrospective analysis.**

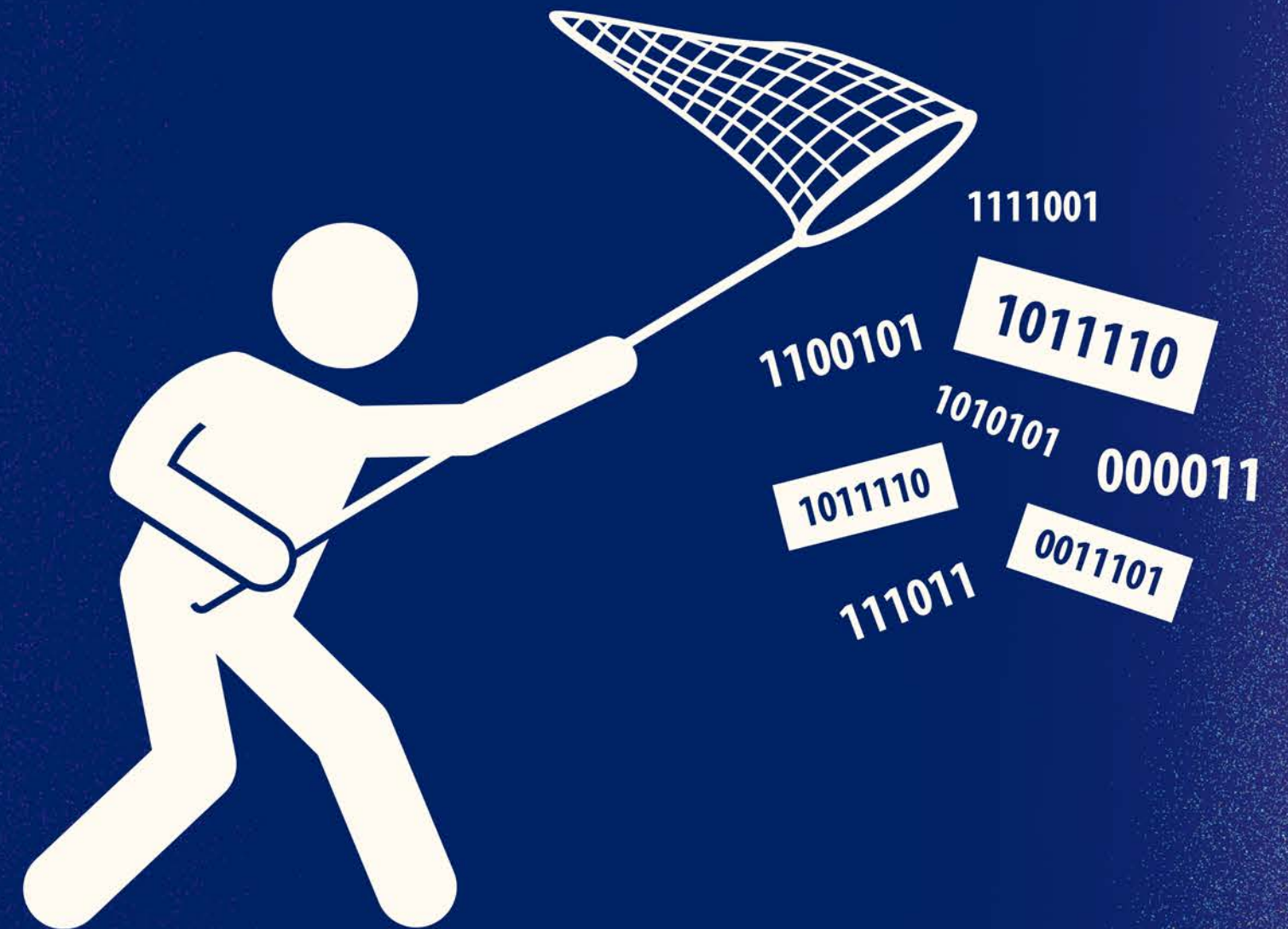






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(Kozinets, 2011 p. 3-4)





# DISADVANTAGE OF NETNOGRAPHY

- The researcher must be familiar with the language and environment that they are studying.
- Participants are not aware of being part of a research study. There are legal issues that involve online research and privacy laws.
- There can also be an issue with the validity of the data due to quality and sampling bias if they are not reflective of the target population being studied.

**(Moradeke Owa, 2023)**







# NETNOGRAPHY VS ETHNOGRAPHY

NETNOGRAPHY	ETHNOGRAPHY
Time -consuming	Cost effective
Requires a lot of resources	Quick and less time consuming
Offline (physical data collection)	Online (virtual communities)
Primary data	Secondary data
Direct observation	Passive observation

**(Moradeke Owa, 2023)**





# NETNOGRAPHY & PERSONA

**As a UX researcher**, my field is based on building rapport and trust with participants. This is vital to understanding our demographic. In netnography, the sense of dishonesty and misrepresentation is amplified. **Virtual communities are composed of people who rarely meet or interact face-to-face.** The information that is shared within these communities can be dangerous because the virtual world is different from the real world. **When they collide, they can cause havoc.**

**Turkle (1995)** argues that **"the internet identity is constructed, multiple, decentred, and often considered a work-in-progress."** (Kozinets, 2011, p. 14) Netnography should be taken as part of desk research and pilot studies, not a representation of participants.





# AI TOOLS FOR UX RESEARCH

In this area, I want to focus on how AI and research can be used in collaboration with a focus on the impact of **personas and in the social context.**

In research, **AI is divided into technological and social subjects.** There is a big gap between each discipline. AI is seen as a technical discipline; therefore, the implementation of AI and the social sciences, particularly within UX research, means that there will be some positive and negative outcomes that can be explored. **The disconnect between technical and social disciplines has meant that distinguishing between human material and non-human material has become difficult (Latour and Woolgar, 1979).** However, when it comes to UX research, empathy cannot be created by a machine; it needs to be backed by emotions.

**(Dahlin, 2021)**





# HOW UX RESEARCHERS ARE USING AI

AI has made data analysis easier for researchers, especially by providing AI tools to help support UX artifacts. Typical UX analysis takes longer to extract data, but AI has made it possible to work faster. AI is built with the **Natural Language Processing (NLP) feature**. This feature is vital because the AI has been trained to recognise patterns in order to make predictions. **(AI for UX Research: How Artificial Intelligence is Changing the Design Game, 2024)**

Most researchers are using AI for visualisation, task automation, sentiment analysis, social media monitoring, and contextual analysis. **(AI for UX Research: How Artificial Intelligence is Changing the Design Game, 2024)**





# SYNTHETIC USERS

Synthetic users **imitate human behaviours**; they support UX researchers and market researchers in a digital environment. Synthetic users are promoted by researchers looking for a **specific target demographic to research online**. Synthetic data streamlines research and provides assumptions based on prompts from researchers.

While some view "**Synthetic users**" as a recent trend, in the **medical realm**, they address limitations in image processing, especially **for diagnosing rare diseases and ensuring diverse data representation across ethnic groups (Bouzit & Li, 2024)**. To mitigate data bias and ensure accuracy, synthetic data undergo extensive training for medical applications (**Bauer et al., 2021; Google Research, 2020; Kohlberger & Liu, 2020**).



# SYNTHETIC USERS

## *The pros and cons of synthetic data in UXR.*

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User experience research, implements diverse set of methodologies, such as surveys, focus groups, interview etc...These process are time consuming. Researchers have started using AI tools to streamline their tasks. GenAI and ChatGPT generate human-like texts or images to support tasks, planning, and qualitative data annotation for researchers. (Bouzit & Li, 2024)

The UK government has been investigating the use of synthetic data and users and their usefulness within the government department. A key benefit of synthetic data is that it provides data testing and sharing capabilities internally and externally. (Kohli, 2021) This collaboration improves services for better analysis.





# SYNTHETIC USERS

**Synthetic tools** aren't substitutes for real users; they're meant to boost research efficiency, particularly in **online pilot studies (Bouzit & Li, 2024)**. However, relying solely on synthetic data for hypothesis **formulation may lead to biased** results and overlook phenomena emerging later in the **research process**.







# ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

(Artificial Intelligence: examples of ethical dilemmas, 2023)

- **Biased results-search engine technology is not neutral as it's based on paid advertising. The search engine prioritises the most clicked. This relies on user preferences and location.**
- **Gender biases**
- **Stereotypes**
- **Plagiarism**

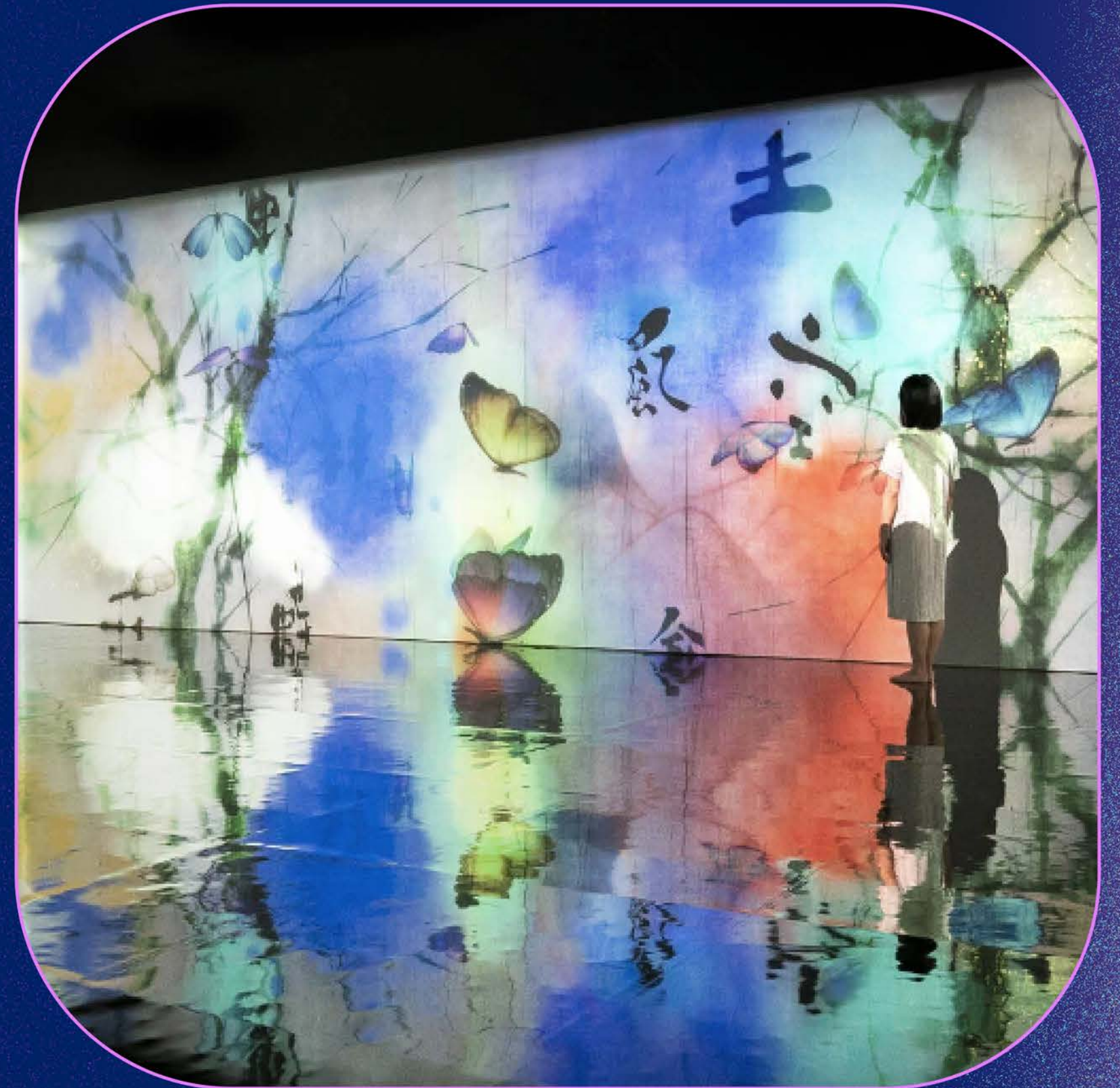




## EXHIBITIONS-AI- MORE THAN HUMAN

In this exhibition, the relationship between AI and humans is explored through different disciplines such as artists, scientists, and researchers.

The exhibition explores creative and scientific development in AI, demonstrating its potential to revolutionise our lives. The exhibition includes artists, scientists, and researchers offering unprecedented surveys of AI. **(AI: More than Human | Barbican, 2019)**

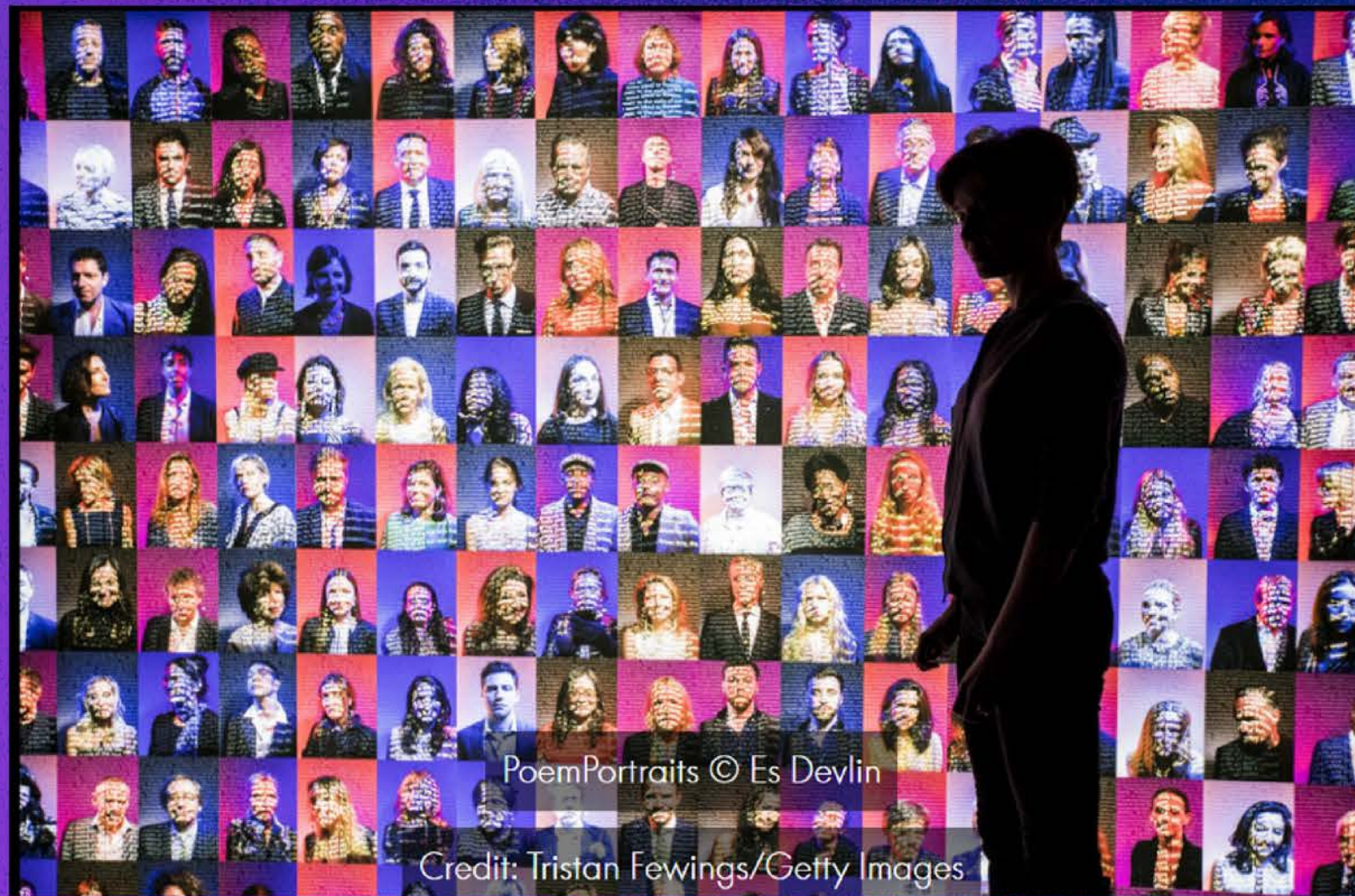


**(TeamLab, 2019)**





## EXHIBITIONS-AI- MORE THAN HUMAN



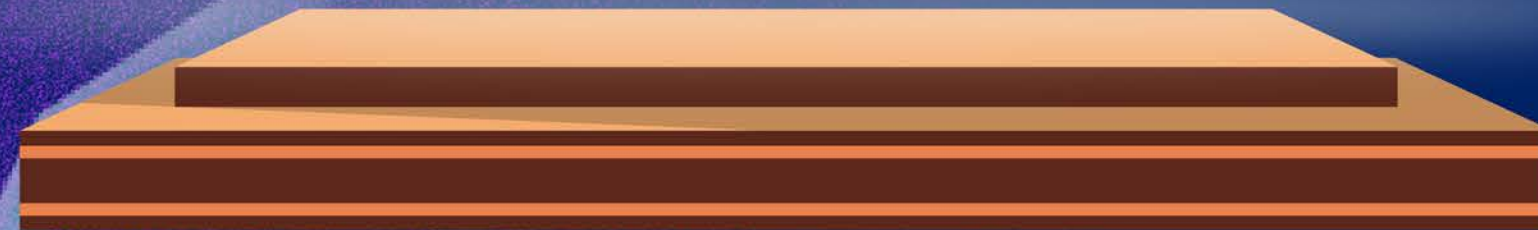
[FEWINGS AND IMAGES, 2019]



[ISHIGURO ET AL., 2019]



# SHOW PLAN

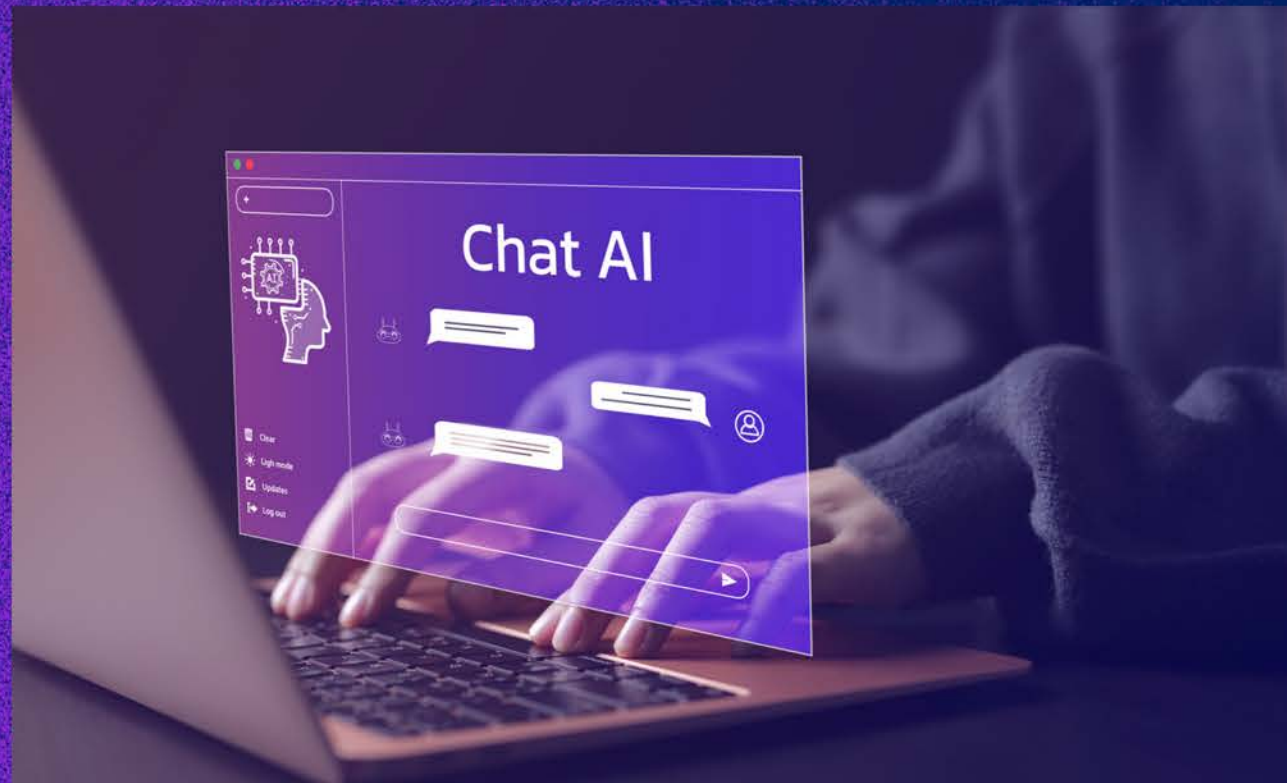
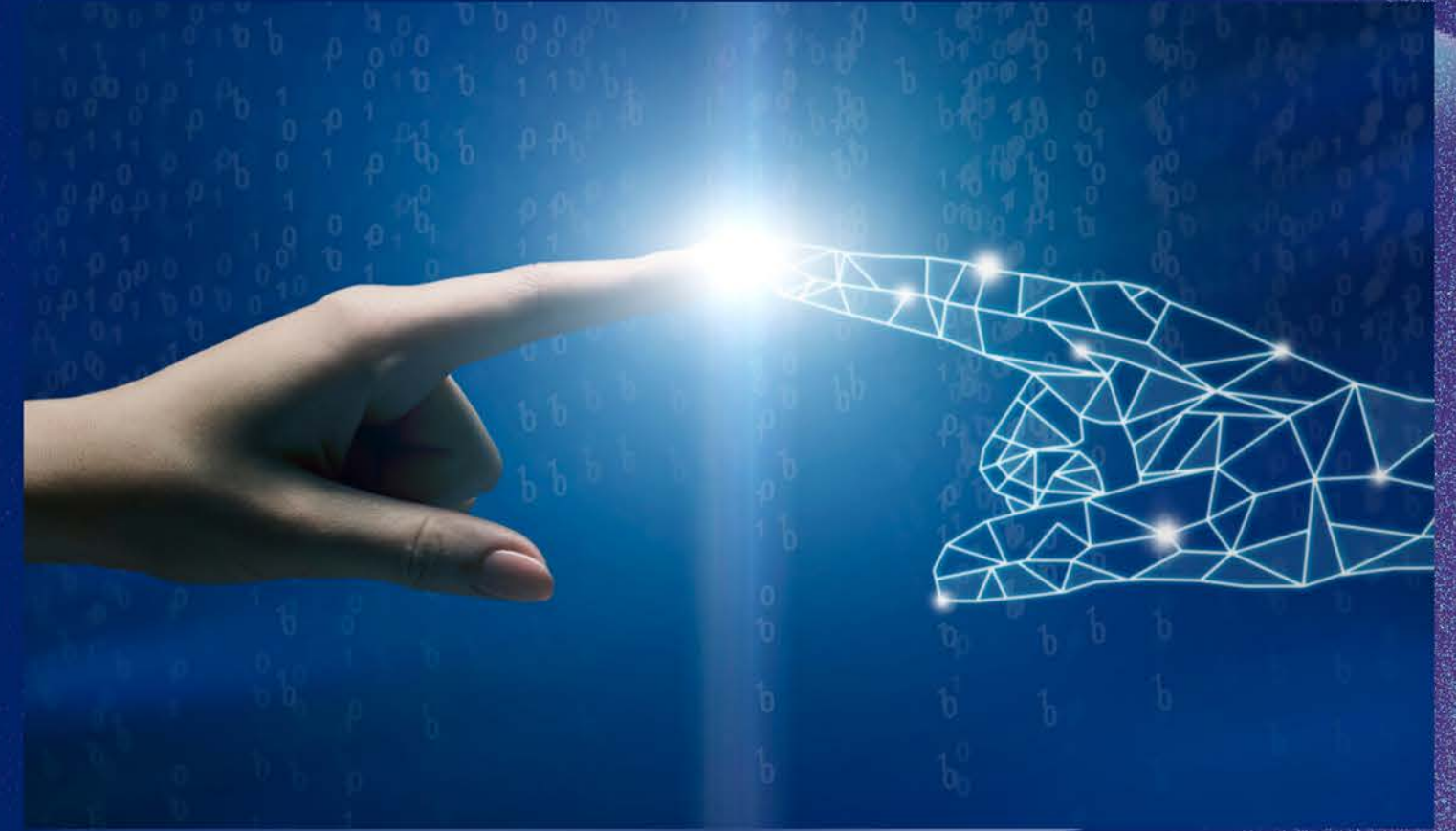
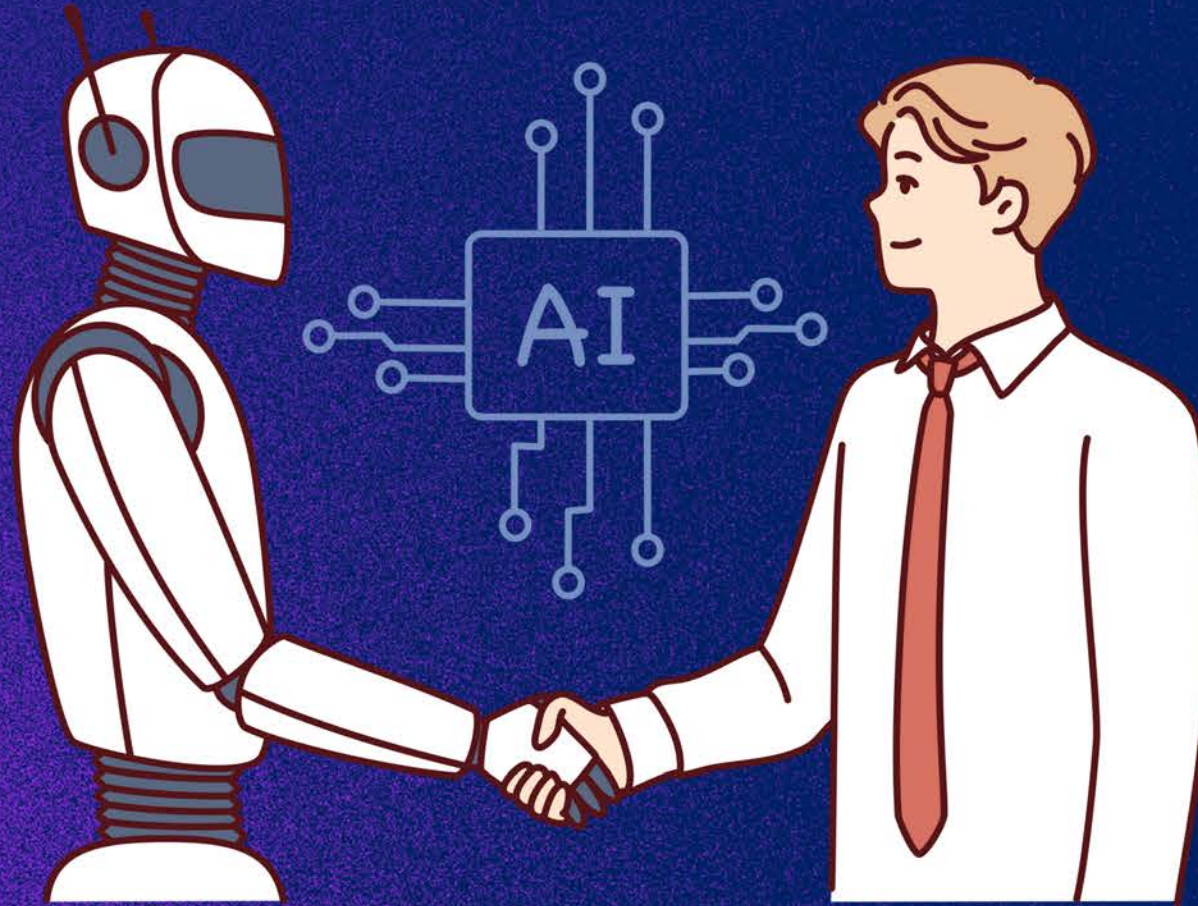




Show Plan



# MOODBOARD

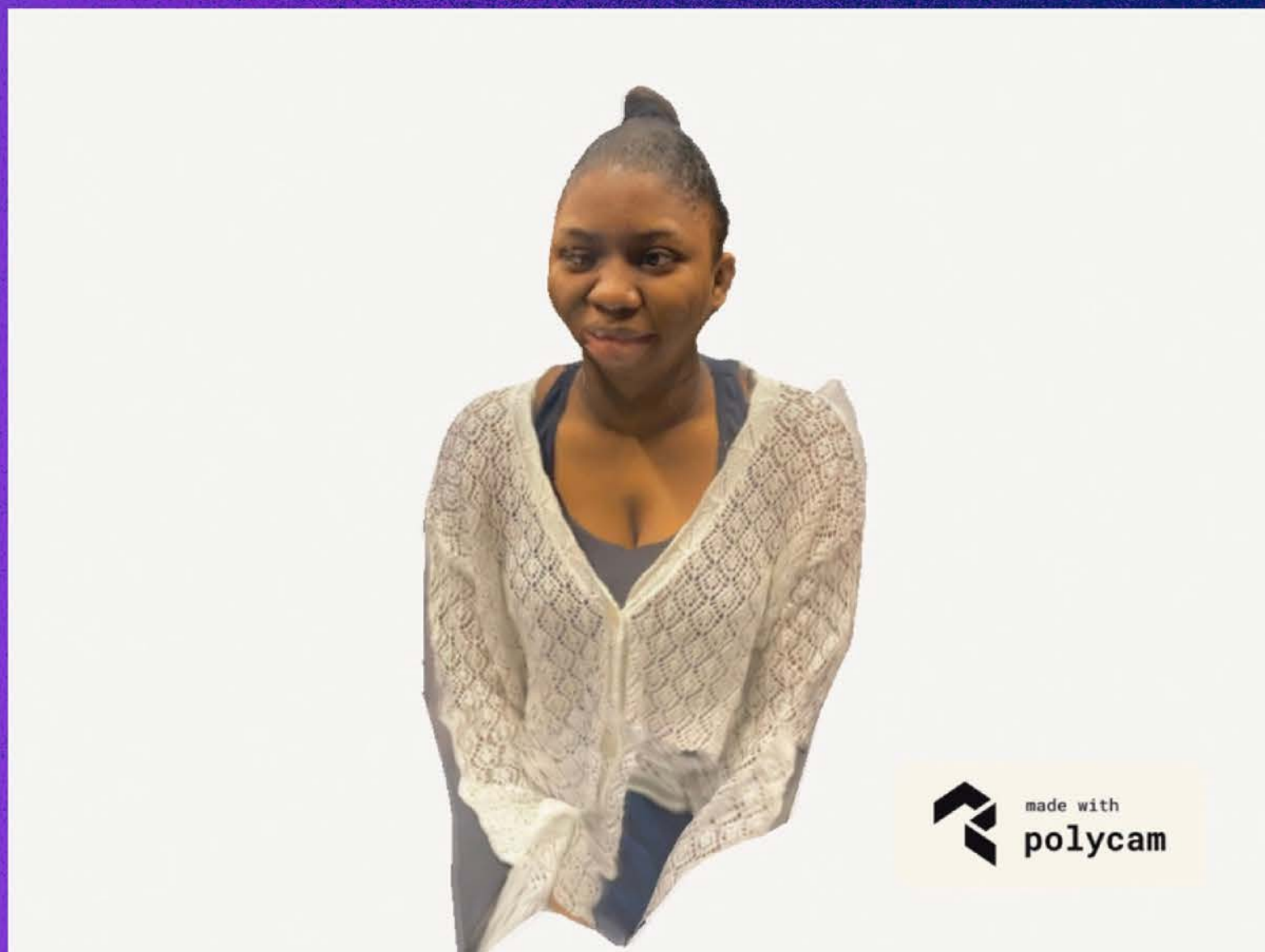




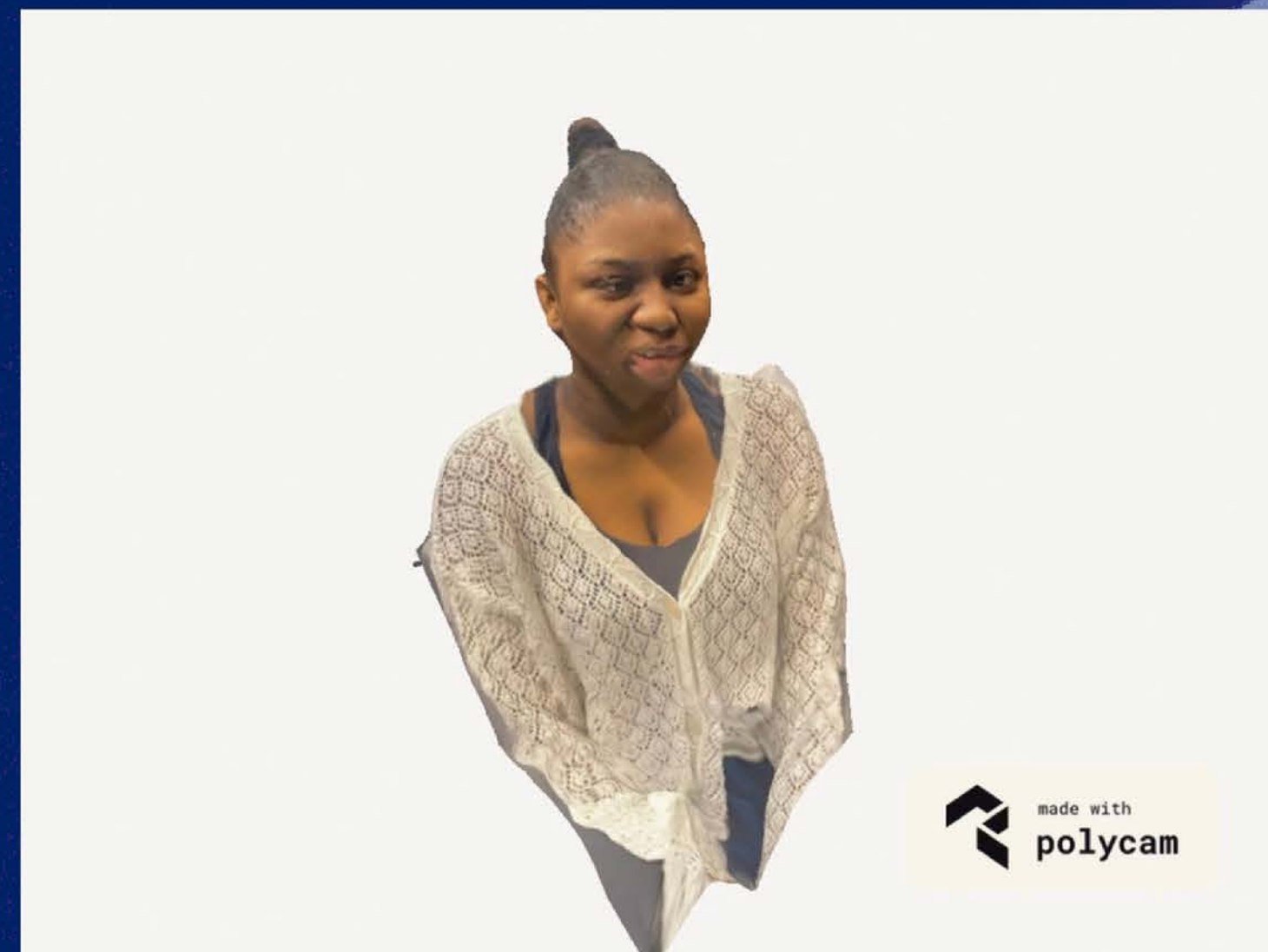


# LO-FI AVATAR

In this section, I played around with Polycam 3D scanner to create my own avatar.



I used a 3D scanner to create my online avatar.



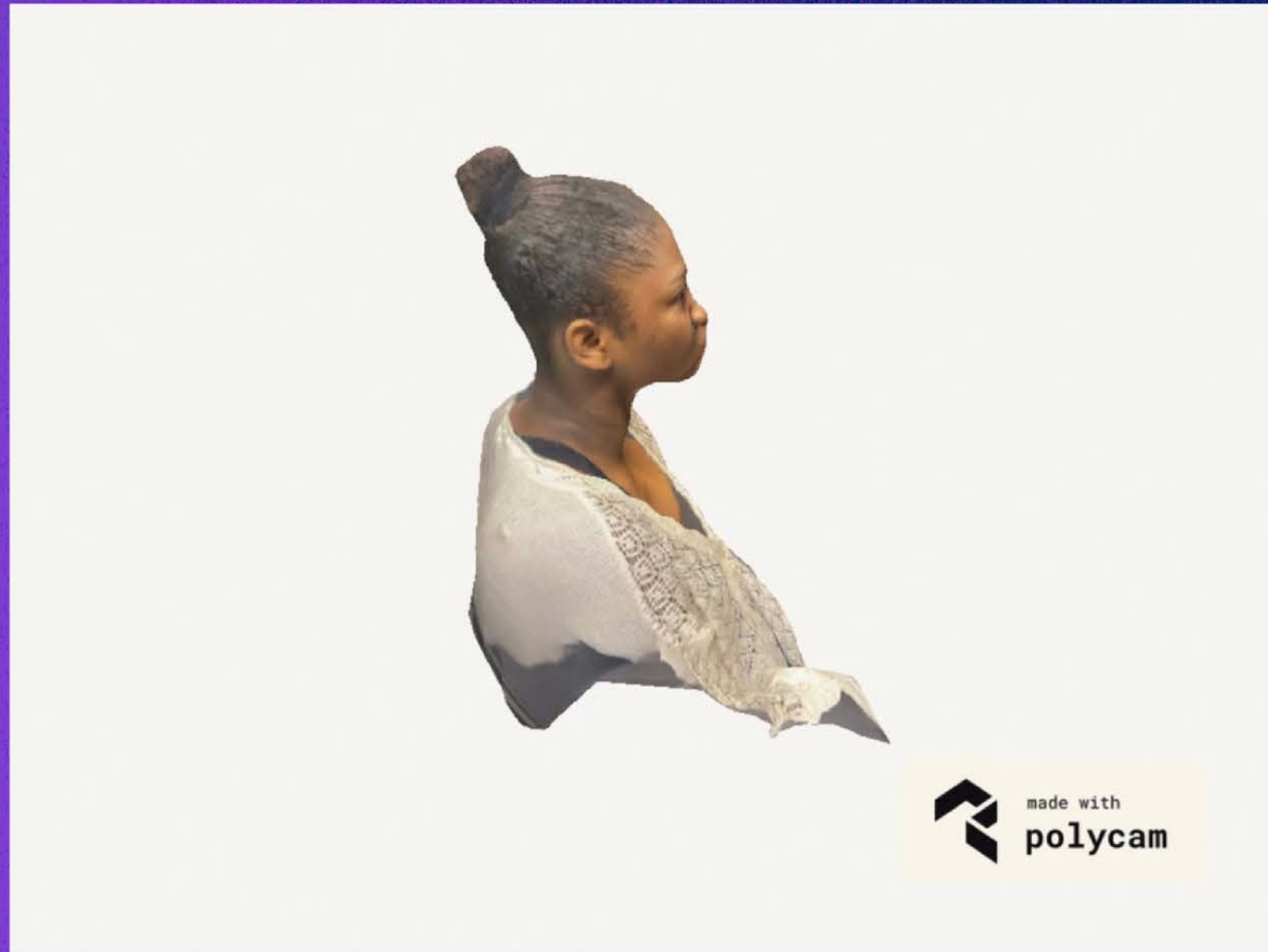
My attempt at creating an avatar.





# LO-FI AVATAR

In this section, I played around with Polycam 3D scanner to create my own avatar.







# CHATGPT & PERSONA

Attempting to create a persona using ChatGPT and Midjourney to create a final product of a persona based on AI.

Here is the prompt

21

**You**

create a persona for a care leaver with a midjourney

OpenAI. (2024, May 7). "Create a persona for a care leaver with a midjourney" [Chat transcript]. Retrieved from ChatGPT conversation.





# CHATGPT & PERSONA

I asked ChatGPT to put it into a template.

21 You  
put in a template


OpenAI. (2024, May 7). "Create a persona for a care leaver with a midjourney" [Chat transcript]. Retrieved from ChatGPT conversation.

 ChatGPT

**Name:** Sam

**Background:** As a care leaver, Sam has experienced the challenges of navigating life without the traditional family support system. Their journey has been marked by obstacles, but they refuse to let their past define their future.

**Journey Stage:** Sam is in the midst of their journey, experiencing both setbacks and moments of personal growth. They have learned to embrace their unique experiences, using them as fuel to propel themselves forward.

**Passions and Goals:** Sam is passionate about advocacy and giving back to their community. They use their voice to raise awareness about the issues facing care leavers and advocate for positive change within the system. In addition, Sam is focused  building a fulfilling life for themselves, whether through further education, pursuing a career, or exploring creative outlets.

**Personality Traits:** Resilient, determined, optimistic, compassionate.

**Key Message:** Sam is a shining example of resilience, strength, and hope. Despite the challenges they may face, Sam approaches each day with determination, knowing that every step forward brings them closer to their goals.





# CHATGPT & PERSONA



## Sam User Persona

### Sam

Age: 26  
Status: Undergraduate  
**Customer Profile:** As a care leaver, Sam has experienced the challenges of navigating life without the traditional family support system. Their journey has been marked by obstacles, but they refuse to let their past define their future.

#### Journey stage

Sam is in the midst of their journey, experiencing both setbacks and moments of personal growth. They have learned to embrace their unique experiences, using them as fuel to propel themselves forward.

#### Goals

Sam is passionate about advocacy and giving back to their community. They use their voice to raise awareness about the issues facing care leavers and advocate for positive change within the system. In addition, Sam is focused on building a fulfilling life for themselves, whether through further education, pursuing a career, or exploring creative outlets.

#### Personality traits

Resilient, determined, optimistic, compassionate.

#### Frustrations

**Systemic Barriers:** Sam often feels frustrated by the systemic barriers they encounter, such as limited access to resources and support services designed for care leavers.  
**Emotional Strain:** The emotional strain of navigating life without a traditional family support system can sometimes overwhelm Sam, leading to feelings of frustration and isolation.  
**Unmet Expectations:** Sam's frustration may also stem from unmet expectations about their journey, such as difficulties in achieving their goals or feeling like they're falling behind their peers.

Here is the final result for my presentation using a template from a website called Vennage to put together all the information from my previous prompt from ChatgGPT.

**(Vennage Editor, 2024)**





# ISSUES



**Sam User Persona**

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Resilient, determined, optimistic, compassionate.

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**Systemic Barriers:** Sam often feels frustrated by the systemic barriers they encounter, such as limited access to resources and support services designed for care leavers.

**Emotional Strain:** The emotional strain of navigating life without a traditional family support system can sometimes overwhelm Sam, leading to feelings of frustration and isolation.

**Unmet Expectations:** Sam's frustration may also stem from unmet expectations about their journey, such as difficulties in achieving their goals or feeling like they're falling behind their peers.

- The paragraph is very vague and not specific to my research or project.
- There are a lot of factors missing, such as pain points, income, and surnames, which make people more familiar. This feels like a vague copy-and-paste paragraph.

**(Venngage Editor, 2024)**





# CREATIVE CRITIQUE

Here are some critiques and feedback from UX experts and professionals:

- Create another 3D scan of the avatar for your persona on Polycam without the image being distorted.
- Test different AI persona builders and draw conclusions on the best and worst.
- Sketch the interaction to show the process.







# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Using Netnography for a pilot study should be industry standard.
- UX researchers and designers should only use trained AI tools because of the nature of our field.
- UX researchers should do one research study with participants and one without compare and contrast.







# GROUP OUTCOME

- My project addresses the fear that many of my peers feel about AI and the industry taking their jobs.
- My work focuses on giving a balanced view of AI.
- I provide tools that are beneficial for streamlining and allowing designers and researchers to have efficiency in their work.







# CONCLUSION REMARKS

In conclusion, I have learned that it's important to what I am truly passionate about in the field of UX research. I have found amazing authors and researchers that have ignited a passion for focusing on digital anthropology because it relates to UX but also links to cultural, geopolitical, and digital research within the UX scope. In this project, I was able to learn about some new methodologies, such as synthetic users and Netnography, in depth.





# THANK YOU!

Don't hesitate to contact me

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