



# SANA ASHRAF

VISUAL MERCHANDISER  
& EDUCATOR

## CONTACT

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## EDUCATION

**BACHELOR OF DESIGN**  
Major in Accessory Design  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FASHION  
TECHNOLOGY, INDIA  
2008 - 2012

## CERTIFICATION

**DIPLOMA IN ART TEACHING**  
KONSULT ART & DESIGN ACADEMY  
BANGALORE, INDIA  
2015

## HELLO

I am a highly innovative, persistent, and resourceful professional passionate about creative yet practical design solutions. My career, shaped by experiences at industry leaders like IKEA and Mahindra, has prepared me to bring fresh perspectives and energy to new challenges. After a recent maternity break, which enriched my resilience and outlook, I am excited to re-enter the workforce and apply my renewed enthusiasm and insights to dynamic environments.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### FOUNDER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Bangalore, India

BUBSTER PLAY | OCT 2022 - DEC 2023

- **Brand Creation & Management:** Founded Bubster Play, a boutique brand specializing in handmade playdough and sensory toys, which quickly gained a loyal customer base through targeted online marketing and pop up shops.
- **Product Development:** Designed and developed a range of eco-friendly, safe-to-use products, receiving positive feedback from over 95% of customers in post-purchase surveys.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaged with the parenting community through workshops and social media, resulting in increase in brand awareness and customer retention.

### FREELANCE PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT EDUCATOR

Bangalore, India

KONSULT CREATIVE LEARNING | OCT 2022 - DEC 2023

- **Portfolio Development:** Mentored and guided aspiring design students in developing portfolios that led to successful admissions to top universities in the USA, UK and Germany.
- **Curriculum Design:** Created tailored workshops and learning modules focusing on design principles, creative thinking, and presentation techniques.
- **Student Success:** Enabled over 100% of students to secure placements in their desired design programs by enhancing their creative portfolios and application strategies.

### VISUAL MERCHANDISER / ACTIVITY SPECIALIST

Kuwait

IKEA AL-HOMAIZI LIMITED | NOV 2017 - NOV 2020

- **Promoted Role:** Advanced to Shop Visual Merchandiser in April 2020 for IKEA's 360 Mall Planning Studio.
- **Optimized Layout:** Revamped the shop layout to create a cohesive product overview and a visually striking impact that enhances the customer buying process.
- **Innovative Smart Solutions:** Implemented strategies to boost store vitality across all media by collaborating closely with the commercial calendar, utilising the range to inspire customers and increase visitation.
- **Engaging Presentations:** Designed relevant, inspiring, affordable, and commercially viable range presentations that catered to various styles and price points, to reflect "Life at home" and exceed visitor expectations.
- **Performance Assessment:** Evaluated and improved product presentation performance through continuous assessment and functional reviews.
- **Dynamic Displays:** Created pop-up displays based on marketing briefs and commercial events.
- **Coached Team:** Planned and mentored colleagues in visual merchandising principles.
- **Trend Awareness:** Stayed updated on retail and home furnishing trends for cutting-edge presentations.

## COMPUTER SKILLS

SketchUp  
Revit  
AutoCAD  
Corel Draw  
Adobe Photoshop  
Adobe Illustrator  
Microsoft Office Suite

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### IKEA TALENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Shortlisted for pilot program  
2019

### IKEA CONCEPT REVIEW,

3rd position Globally  
Contributed towards enhancement of the store  
2018

### VM&RD Retail Design Awards

Best Store Front  
2013

### IN-STORE ASIA, 1st place

VM challenge  
2013

### Mahindra RISE Award

“Alternative thinking” & “Accepting no limits”  
2013

### TIME Awards

Visual Merchandising- Beanstalk  
2013

## HEAD- DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION

Bangalore, India

KONSULT ART & DESIGN ACADEMY | SEPT 2013 - MAY 2017

- **Drove Business Growth:** Developed innovative design solutions to enhance profitability and customer engagement.
- **Boosted Brand Visibility:** Designed and implemented marketing strategies for online and offline presence.
- **Led CSR Initiatives:** Managed 'Art for a Cause' to promote art education in underserved communities.
- **Created Visual Materials:** Designed all web and print marketing and communication materials.
- **Developed Educational Content:** Supported course development and advised students on creative careers, helping them build distinctive portfolios.
- **Organized Workshops:** Coordinated corporate workshops with industry leaders like McKinsey, Times of India, and Shell.

## EXECUTIVE VISUAL MERCHANDISER

Bangalore, India

MAHINDRA RETAIL | JUNE 2012 - SEPTEMBER 2013

- **Managed Budget and Execution:** Directed budgeting, planning, and rollout for 'Mom & Me' and 'Beanstalk' stores nationwide, crafting a unique brand identity.
- **Coordinated Visual Merchandising:** Oversaw the implementation of planograms, mannequins, graphics, and props in all stores.
- **Resolved Challenges:** Addressed store-specific merchandising issues while maintaining brand and visual guidelines.
- **Trained Staff:** Supported the training and development of peers, staff, and managers.
- **Styled Displays:** Designed and styled in-store and window displays, reflecting seasonal fashion trends.
- **Contributed to Manuals:** Assisted in creating training materials and visual standards guides.
- **Achieved Expansion Goals:** Opened 15 'Mom & Me' and 10 'Beanstalk' stores in 3 months, scaling to 100 'Mom & Me' and 25 'Beanstalk' stores nationwide through vendor and regional collaboration.

## SABBATICAL & CAREER BREAK

### MATERNITY BREAK

JAN 2021 - PRESENT

- Took a planned career break to focus on family responsibilities while continuing professional development through freelance work and entrepreneurial activities.

## CORE QUALIFICATIONS

Creative Instruction  
Portfolio Development  
Curriculum Design  
Student Engagement  
Critical Thinking  
Assessment & Feedback  
Material Exploration  
Resource Management

Project Management  
Communication & Collaboration  
Design Process  
Team Leadership  
Adaptive Learning  
Creative Thinking  
Detail Oriented  
Mentoring