Varun Sangani

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Education

10/2023 – 01/2026 | **Hochschule Rhein-Waal**, Kamp-Lintfort, Germany
M.Sc. in Usability Engineering (HCI), Grade 1,5 (German grading scale)

- Choosing HCI after architecture meant putting users into the design process: asking for their feedback while designing and prototyping, and keeping them at the center of decisions. This shaped user-centered projects with more than 100 participants, from interviews to usability tests, including *KaLink*, a community app for international students and long-time residents of Kamp-Lintfort, built on research, tested in two rounds and presented to the city. Also wrote scientific papers in Strategic Usability, HCI and UX Psychology.
- Worked with Coduct GmbH, Code Leap AG and Evonik AG on real workflow problems, from research to design suggestions, including a five-day design sprint with Evonik.
- Master's thesis: *Investigating the Challenges of Agile Project Management at RWE*, which asks why Scrum is hard to adopt in an established German company.

10/2016 – 08/2022 | **Navrachana University**, Vadodara, India
B.Arch in Urban Design and Architecture

- Completed various design projects in Gujarat on urban, traditional and vernacular building methods, including heritage conservation documentation in the villages of Diu. Attended and led hands-on workshops in pottery, lino cut and rammed earth construction.
- Researched how politics, religion and culture shape public spaces, starting with the communal segregation of Juhapura, a neighborhood on the western periphery of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, which is widely recognized as one of India's largest Muslim ghettos.
- Bachelor's thesis: *Spatialising Protests*, which investigates the idea of a "designated protest place" in New Delhi, in the world's largest democracy.

Experience

11/2024 – Present | **Planwerkstatt GmbH**, Bedburg-Hau, Germany
Junior Designer (02/2026 – present), Working Student Designer (11/2024 – 01/2026)

- Translated brand experiences of German automotive manufacturers and other premium brands into trade-fair spaces, working in 2D and 3D from first sketches to final visualizations.
- Contributed to concept development and design decisions, curated materials and finishes, and coordinated the day-to-day work of trade-fair projects with clients and colleagues.
- Designed how visitors enter, move through and talk about temporary public spaces, so that products and brand messages are understood through experience and not only through text.
- Worked across disciplines with designers, project managers and sustainability consultants, and brought sustainable choices into temporary and permanent spaces.
- Supported social media outreach and built the company website and digital content, extending brand presence from the fair stand to online.

10/2024 – 09/2025 | **Hochschule Rhein-Waal**, Kamp-Lintfort, Germany
Academic Tutor to Prof. Dr. Kai Essig

Module: Human-Computer Interaction (04/2025 – 09/2025)

- Planned and delivered lectures on Neural Networks (MLP, CNN), Transfer Learning and LLMs in UX Design for MSc students.
- Curated interactive demos, such as the browser-based Machine Learning Experiments, to show how neural networks work in practice.
- Planned and executed interactive sessions with the class, guiding students from the task to the result.
- Refined lecture content and prepared the course together with Prof. Essig.

Module: UX Psychology (10/2024 – 03/2025)

- Planned and delivered lectures to MSc students on how color and culture shape the choices users make in different parts of the world, and how UX designers and developers can base their decisions on it.
- Taught how application and website design differs between Eastern and Western cultures, and how to prepare, design and develop for each.
- Planned and ran interactive exercises where students applied cultural insights to design tasks, and guided them as they worked.

08/2022 – 06/2023 | **ADA Studio**, India
Architect

- Took on more responsibility for design development, detailed drawings and client communication on projects, with guidance from senior architects.

07/2021 – 07/2022 | **SSDesignStudio**, India
Working Student Architect

- Prepared design drawings, 3D models and presentation material for client projects, and supported site coordination alongside studies.

01/2020 – 06/2020 | **CSA Studio**, India
Architecture Intern

- Assisted with site visits, measured drawings, drafting, model making and presentation sheets as part of the compulsory internship of the B.Arch program.

04/2019 – 07/2019 | **The Red Studio**, India
Design Intern

- Assisted Prof. Percy Pithawala in developing exercises and studies on space, form and deconstruction for foundation-year students.

Research Projects and Publications

07/2026 – ongoing | **Wetterbank: A Fictional Smart Bench That Starts Conversations by filing complaints about the weather**
Design fiction project, research proposal

A design fiction aimed at understanding how autonomous systems will shape our encounters in public space, as they move from our homes onto our streets.

06/2025 – 09/2025 | **Investigating the Challenges of Agile Project Management at RWE**
Master's thesis, Hochschule Rhein-Waal, with Ayush Bhamu, Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Kai Essig and Mr. Jan Ely

Investigates the organizational dynamics, structural barriers, and cultural challenges surrounding Agile adoption—specifically Scrum—within established German incumbents, using a qualitative embedded single-case study of RWE.

01/2021 – 04/2021 | **Spatialising Protests**
Bachelor's thesis, Navrachana University, Supervisor: Prof. Pratyush Shankar

Studies how the capital of India, New Delhi, can support or inhibit protests through its spatial characteristics. Examines the idea of a "designated protest place" and the role of urban public space in the culture of dissent in a democracy.

Skills

Research methods	Qualitative and quantitative user research, interviews, focus groups, field research, usability testing, eye tracking (Tobii); mixed methods with data triangulation
Analysis	Statistical analysis (ANOVA) in JASP; synthesis of research insights; research documentation and reporting
Design	Speculative design and design fiction; prototyping; participatory workshops and design sprints; inclusive design and accessibility audits (WCAG)
Tools	Figma, Adobe (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator), Miro, MS Office, HTML/CSS
Languages	English: C1 · German: A2.1

Extracurricular Activities

03/2024 – 02/2025 | **Hochschule Rhein-Waal**, Kamp-Lintfort, Germany
AStA – Head of Political Education

10/2020 – 02/2021 | **Navrachana University**, Vadodara, India
Approach, Student-led Magazine – Co-Editor

References

Prof. Dr. Kai Essig
Master's thesis supervisor
Hochschule Rhein-Waal, Kamp-Lintfort
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