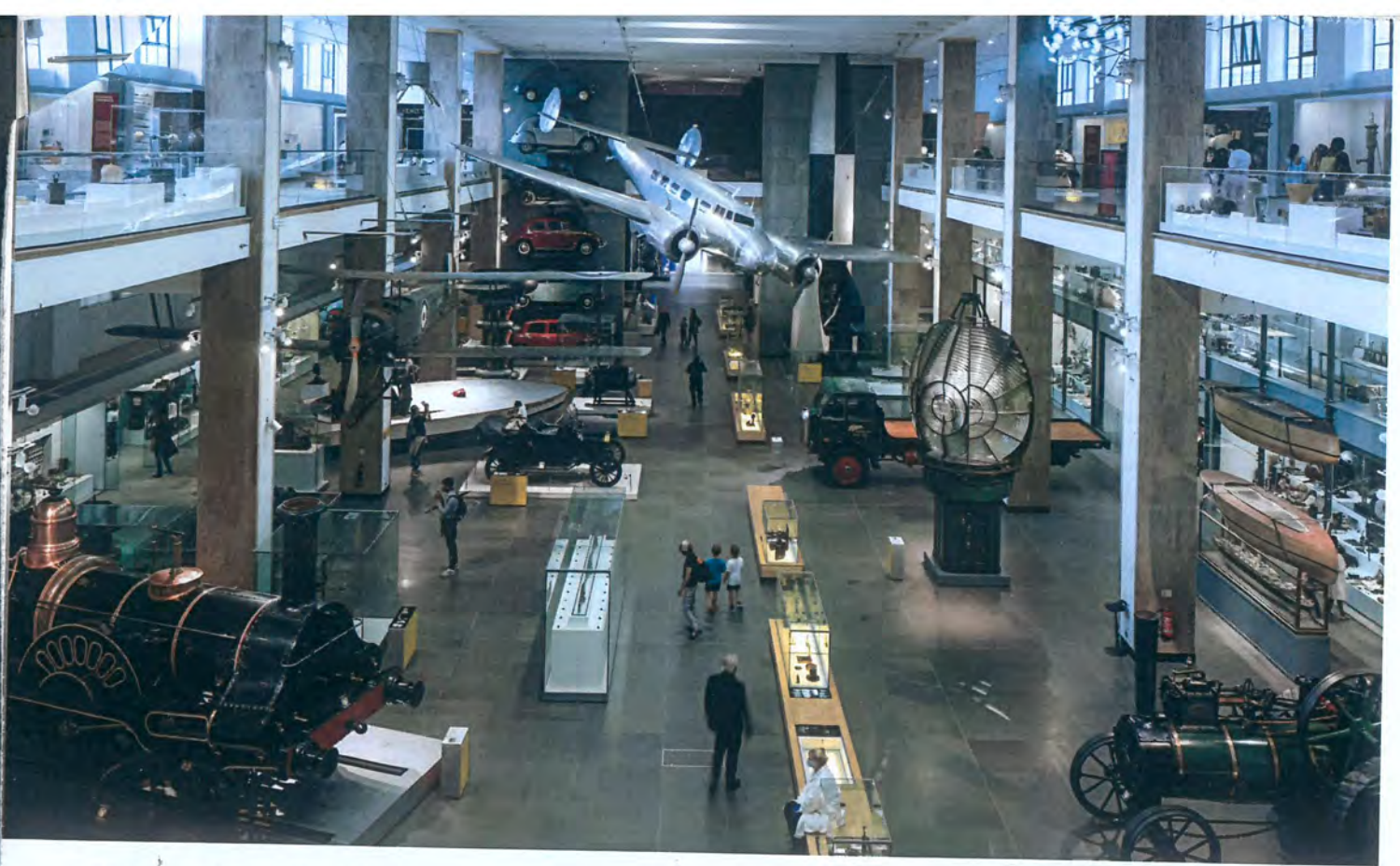


Design Lab

Project 03

Objects
and
Narratives
Future
Museum



Project 03

Objects and Narratives
#FutureMuseum

Design Lab ARTD6116

Launch: 20th March

Crits 14th and 15th May 2025

Formative Assessment

You will receive formative assessment in the form of discussion and feedback throughout the project. You are also required to attend a formative feedback review in March.

"Real museums are places where time is transformed into space"

— Orhan Pamuk, 2009

App Design?

The brief

Utilising your selected collection of objects from the Science Museum, explore imaginative ways to bring the objects to life and tell their stories tailored for a specific audience. Through innovative communication methods, you need to engage a specific audience into an immersive experience, bringing the significance of these artifacts to life in a memorable and impactful way.

Part 1: Preparatory research

Choose a group of objects from the content links. Explore the objects in lots of detail: What was the function? What materials? What narratives do they tell?

The whole collection is available at <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk>

There 200,000+ objects with images:

<https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/search/images>

Part 2. Choose a problem statement

to frame your projects and create a speculative product or experience that tells a story of your chosen object. This must be finished to the highest quality.

Brief Analysis

Theme - Design a speculative experience for the Science Museum collection

Focus - use lesser-known artifacts from the museum

Goal - Rethink how museum present this hidden or rarely displayed objects.
Explore alternative user interfaces beyond search boxes.

Medium - Can be an app, installation, web, AR or any digital format

Audience - General Public, museum visitors, or a speculative future audience

Experience type - Creative, critical, and immersive
Not necessarily functional - Speculative is encouraged.

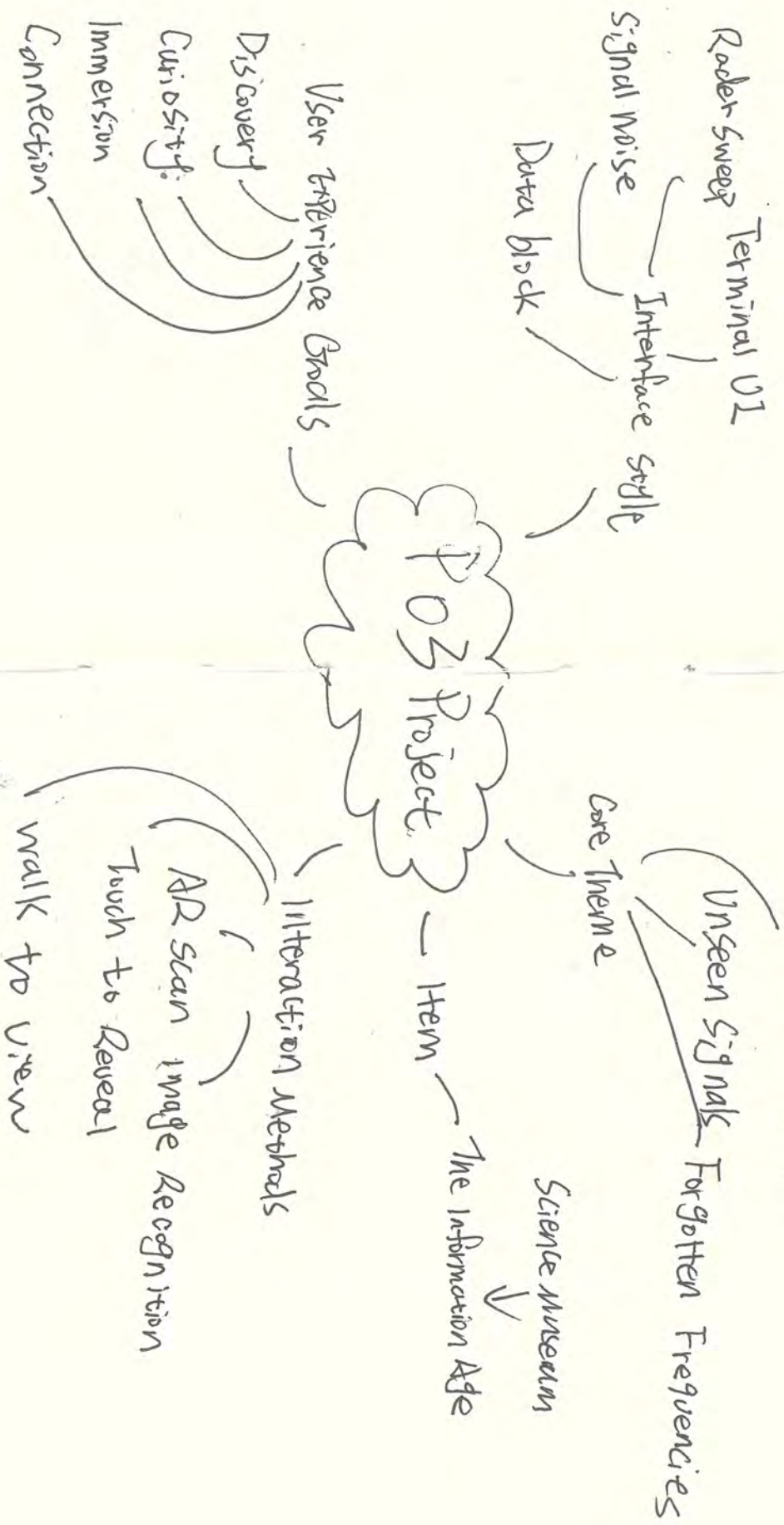
Design challenge - Reveal hidden signals and forgotten histories
Encourage new modes of interaction, discovery, and collection

Output - A clear prototype or concept

Document the Process (visual, interaction logic, rationale)

APP design ?

Digital Ghosts?



Initial Design Plan

Theme — Unseen Signals

A guide APP design based on The Information Age gallery

4 Unseen Collection

1. Collection-based artifact browser
2. Scrollable timeline of communication history ✕
3. Interactive map of museum rooms
4. Hidden object reveal interface
5. Swipe-to-discover UI

6. Artifact storytelling through voice and text

7. User-curated digital archive

8. Tap to ask the object (Q&A interaction)

9. Speculative museum companion app

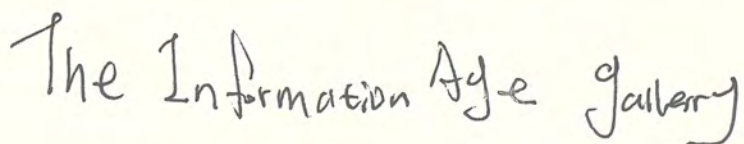
10. Texture-focused image zoom

11. Audio-guided micro-narratives

Project design ideation



T_h



(2)



Collection displayed by timeline layout



Selected Collection for APP Design ①

Morse Telegraph key and Sounder

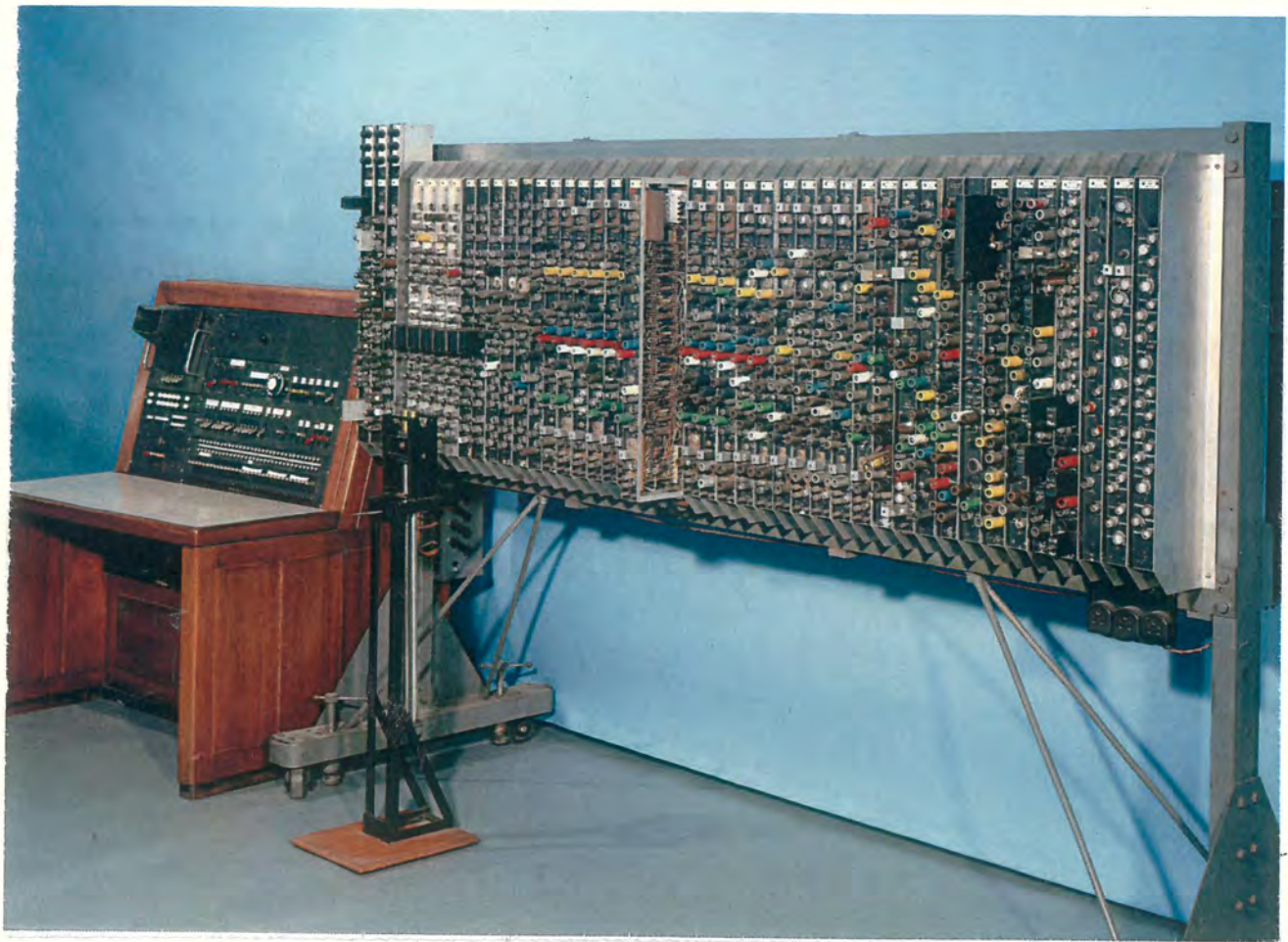
1. Enabled the first-distance electronic communication
2. Used Morse Telegraph Code to transmit message across wires
3. Marked the beginning of the electrical information age



Selected Collection for the A&P design ②

Marconi 1.5 kW Transmitter

1. Broadcast early radio signals to the public via the BBC
2. Shifted communication from wired to wireless transmission
3. Expanded access to real-time, mass communication



Selected Collection for the APP design ③

Pilot ACE Computer ←

1. One of the first general-purpose computers in the UK
2. Designed with input from Alan Turing's architecture
3. Transformed how information could be stored and processed

300 Words feed back

Logbook task *Museum Field Trip*

TASK

This task is related to Project 03 and should be undertaken over the easter period and completed by Wednesday 30th April.

Visit the Science Museum in London, or another major museum collection elsewhere

Consider how the 'display' engages with the audience and conveys its message. Take images and make drawings in your sketchbooks.

Write a brief reflective statement (up to 300 words), which can be typed or handwritten in your sketchbook. You will be asked to include this in your assessment on May 21st.

This should cover:

- *Describing the materiality of the walk around displays*
- *Reflect on the personal feeling they evoke and what is being communicated to you on a deeper level*
- *Who are the users of the exhibition space*

Please keep your responses concise, clear, and reflective of your specific field trip location

Deadline next week.

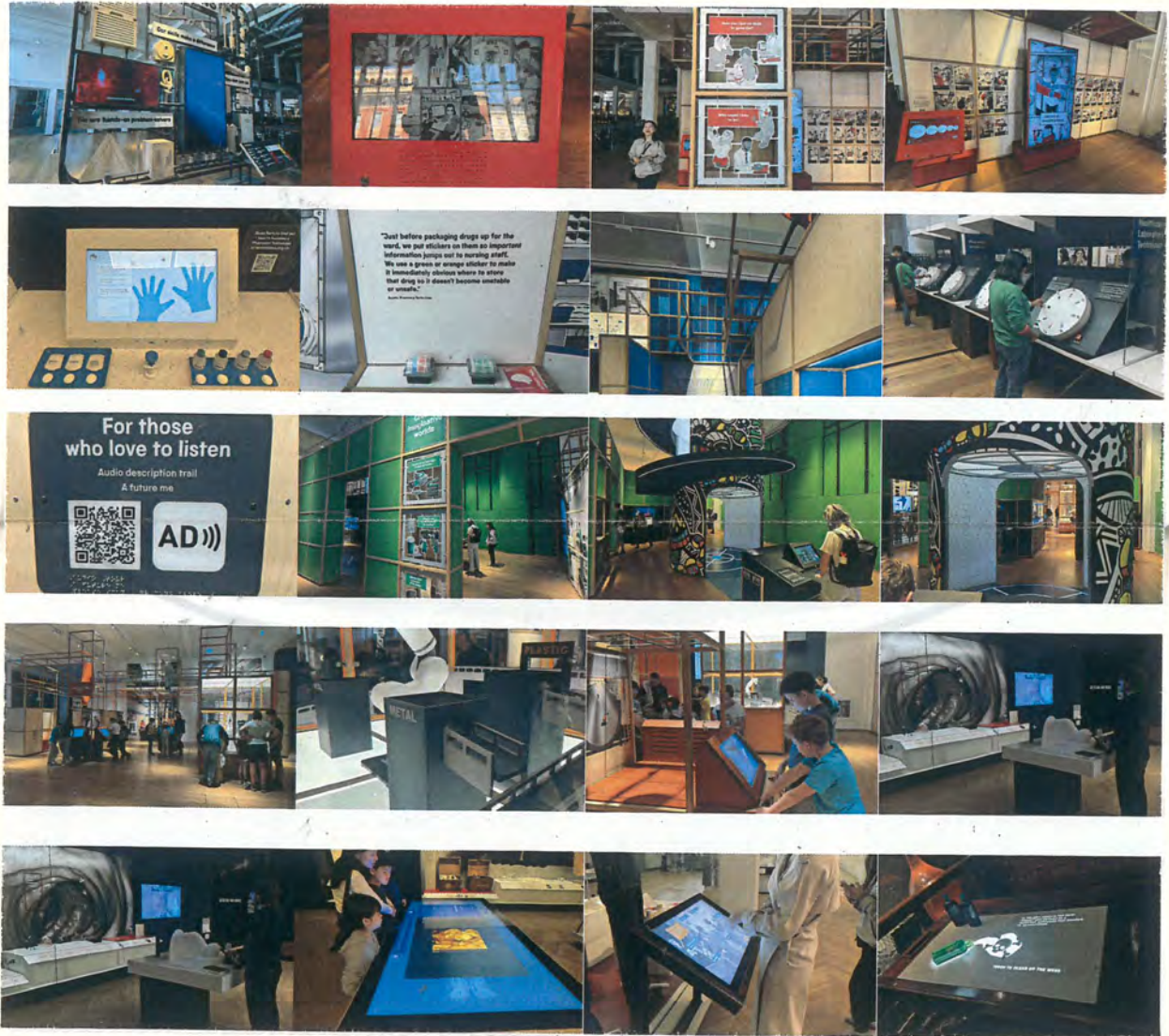
Deliverables: A 300-word logbook notes. This could be written into your sketchbooks. Be sure to reference your sources correctly and follow the academic integrity guidelines provided where appropriate. Please feel free to include images - drawings or photos, these must be your own!

I visited the Information Age gallery at the Science Museum in London. The space was full of objects related to communication technology. I walked through sections about radio, telegraphy, satellites, computing, and the internet. Each zone focused on a different historical period and type of communication. I paid attention to three specific objects: the Morse telegraph key, the Marconi transmitter, and the Pilot ACE computer. I chose them because they represent different stages in the development of how people send and receive information. The telegraph key showed early point-to-point messaging. The transmitter was used for radio broadcasting. The computer allowed people to process and store data digitally. I noticed that many of the objects were behind glass. Some had screens nearby for extra information. Other parts of the gallery had videos, interviews, or hands-on displays. I watched how visitors reacted. Younger people liked the interactive screens. Older visitors spent more time reading the text panels. What stood out to me was that many objects looked old but still important. Some were large and heavy. Others were small and easy to miss.

I thought about how much information we take for granted today, and how invisible the systems behind it have become. This visit made me think about how to show these objects in a new way. I want to use AR and interaction to help others notice the signals and stories that are not obvious at first. This will guide my app design. I want people to scan something real and uncover what is hidden.

Primary Research - Science museum

Installation Interaction Design



- ① Entertainment
- ② Visual appeal
- ③ Continuity
- ④ Audiovisual interaction



how might we

1. How might museums surface the lesser-known aspects of their collections?
2. How might the collection be interacted with to encourage exploration and discovery?
3. How might museums present alternative user interfaces onto their collections (rather than a search box)?

how might we

Question 1

Museums could use interactive, narrative-based technologies to draw attention to hidden or overlooked artifacts. By selecting objects that are not typically on display and connecting them through themes like “lost signals” or “forgotten systems,” these items can be reframed as entry points into untold stories. Instead of focusing only on iconic objects, we can foreground smaller, quieter technologies that shaped the way we communicate.

Question 2

By enabling users to “find” objects through physical movement and visual recognition, interaction becomes more spatial and embodied. Rather than browsing a static list, users engage by scanning real-world prompts (like printed pages) and unlocking multimedia content in context. This creates a feeling of discovery — as if the user is uncovering signals, not simply accessing a database.

Question 3

Museums can use image recognition, gesture-based input, and spatial AR to create interfaces that are physical and intuitive. Instead of typing, users can point, move, and activate — turning passive viewing into active interaction. These interfaces feel more like exploring a landscape than navigating a menu.



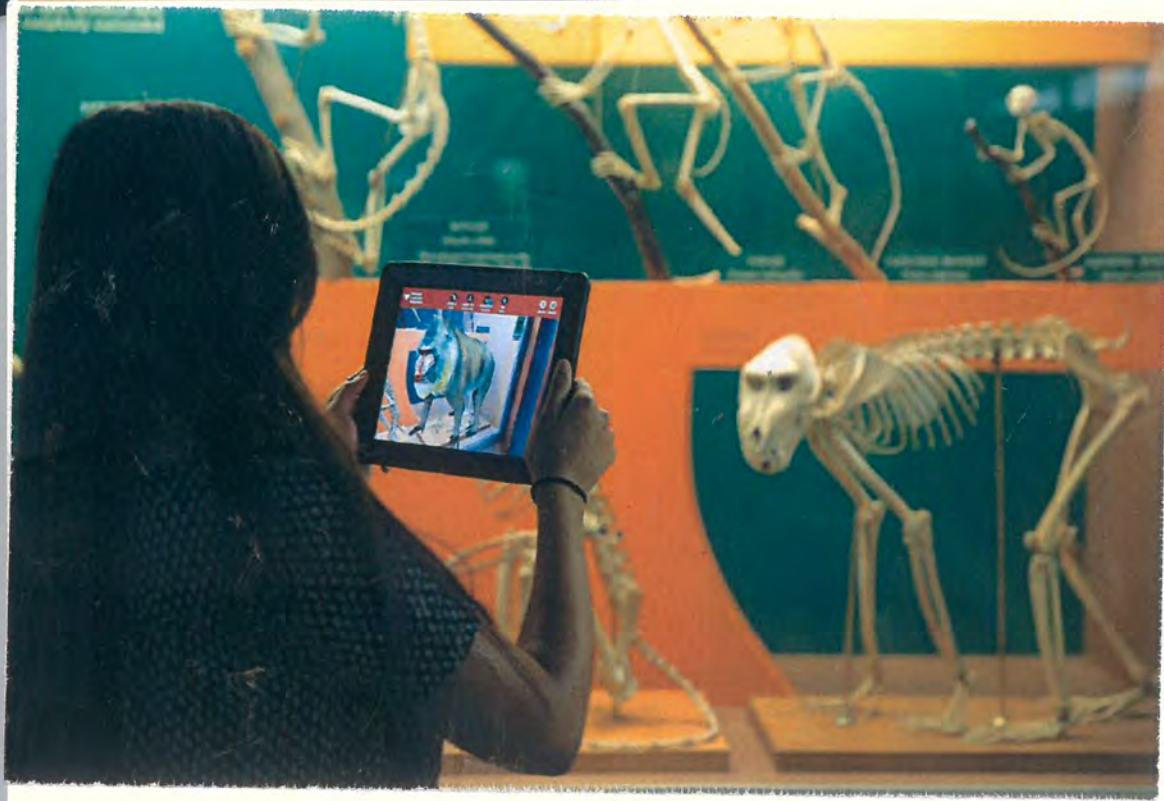
Related Case study ①

"Reblink" by Art Gallery Ontario

"Reblink" is an AR-based app where users can scan traditional oil paintings at the AGO with their phone. On screen, the characters come "alive" — using smartphones, taking selfies, or wearing modern clothing — creating a dialogue between past and present.

Key learning

1. Uses existing artworks without altering them, activating new interpretations through AR overlays.
2. Employs image recognition, interacting with the user's scanning action to enhance immersion.
3. Non-linear and full of surprises, encouraging users to scan different paintings for new experiences.



Related Case Study ②

"Skin and Bones" - Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

This AR educational app uses Smithsonian's Collection. By scanning skeletal specimens, users can reconstruct and animals move, make sound, and eat in their natural behaviours on-screen.

Key learning

1. Uses existing specimen recognition + 3D reconstruction + animated content to tell stories.
2. Each item includes a micro-narrative and dynamic response
3. Offers a multi-sensory experience (visual + auditory + interactive)



Related case study ③

“Story of the Forest” - National Museum of Singapore

Key learning

1. Combines image recognition and AR with exhibition materials, strengthening connection to the collection
2. Turns scanning into a mechanism of exploration
3. Allows users to collect interactive objects into a personal digital museum, enhancing engagement and a sense of ownership.

User Group Research

① Younger Visitors (15-20)

tend to ignore text panels, and prefer interactive or screen-based content

② Older audience (30+)

value history accuracy and often spend more time reading and reflecting

Many users enjoy discovering hidden or unexpected if it's delivered in a playful or narrative form.

Visitors rarely use search boxes in museum apps - they prefer visual cues and spatial triggers.

There's general curiosity about "what's not on display" or "how this technology actually worked."

Persona Create 1.



Jamie (the curious digital native)
21, student

Skips long museum texts, prefer quick visual engagement
Need surprise, interactivity, fast access to information
Feels disconnected from static museum exhibits

Insight - Jamie wants AR to feel like a hidden layer - scanning a page and revealing something no one else saw.

Persona Create 2.



Richard (the thoughtful observer)

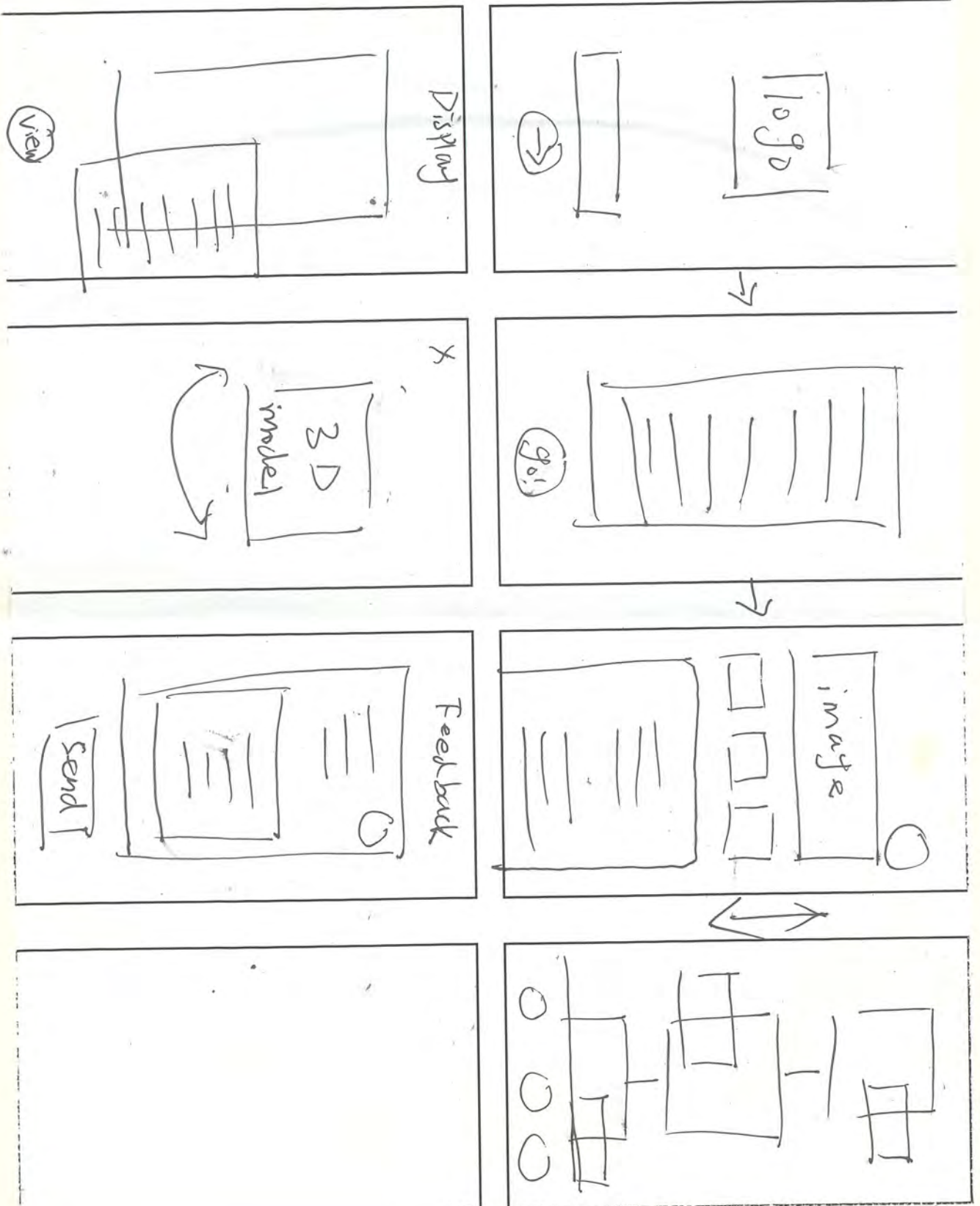
45, history teacher

Studies exhibits carefully, enjoys connecting learning value

Get overwhelmed by flashy, unstructured apps

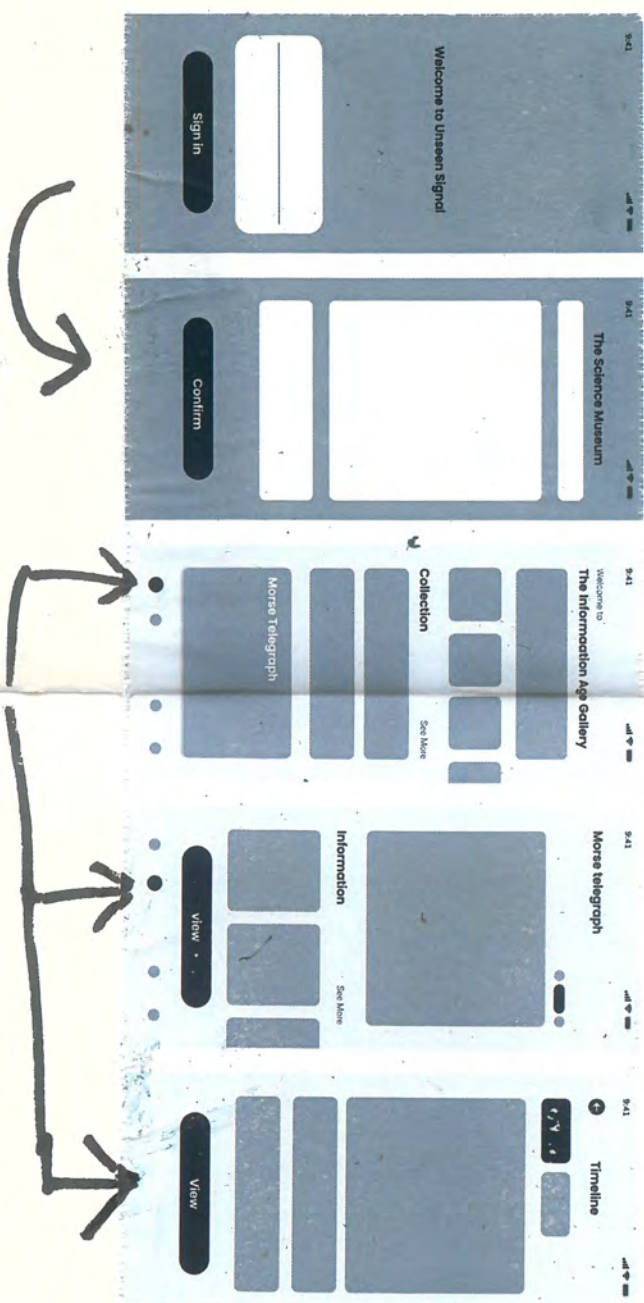
Insight - Richard values clarity and substance.
AR can help him visualize how unseen artifacts fit into the bigger communication timeline.

Story Board Draft



Time
line

low-fidelity draft



Collection - Cable, radio, computer
smart phone, VR device

Idea - Exhibition guide app

Line introduction typography
Interaction design (AR-3D model)

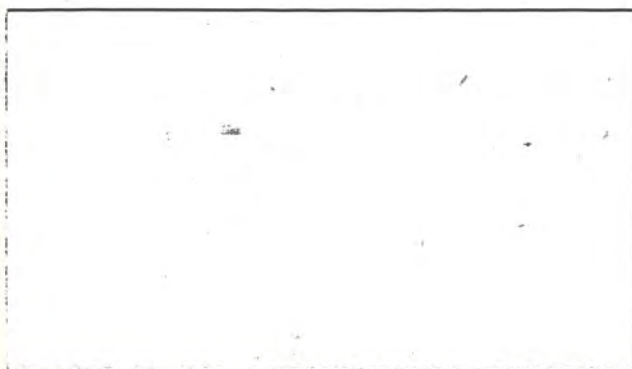
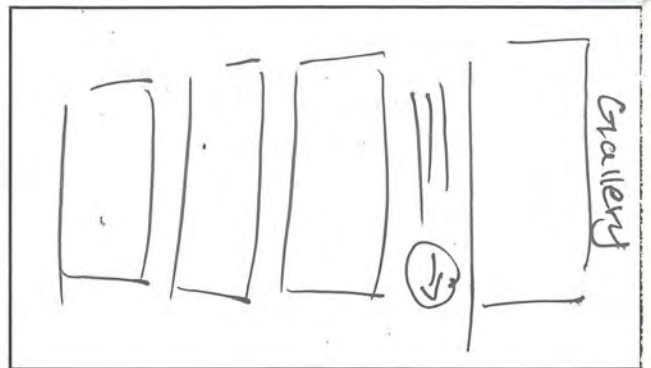
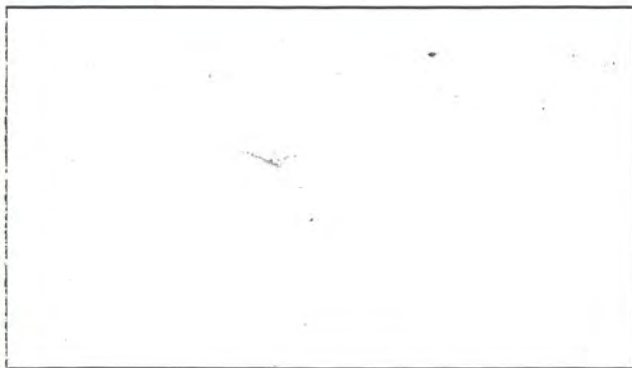
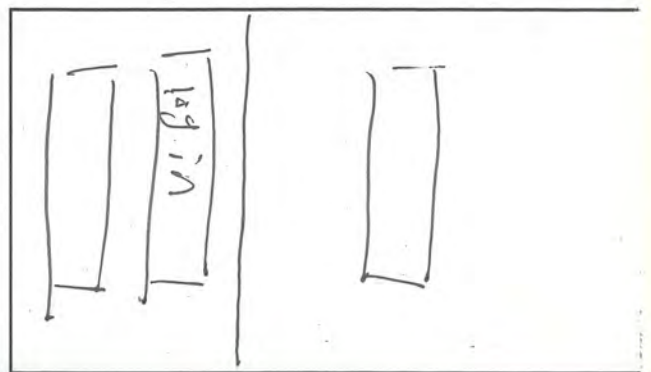
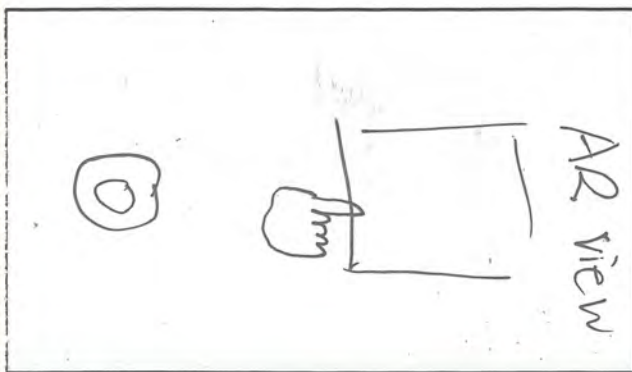
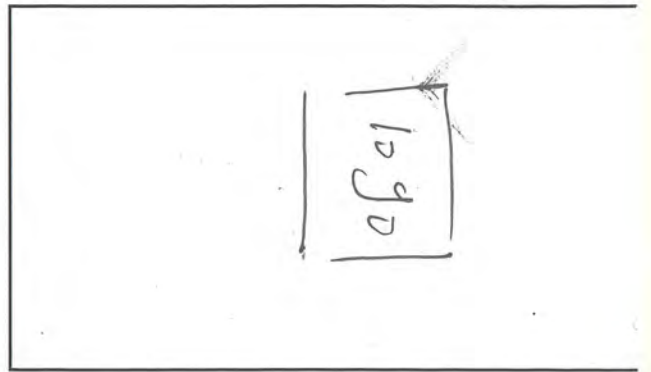
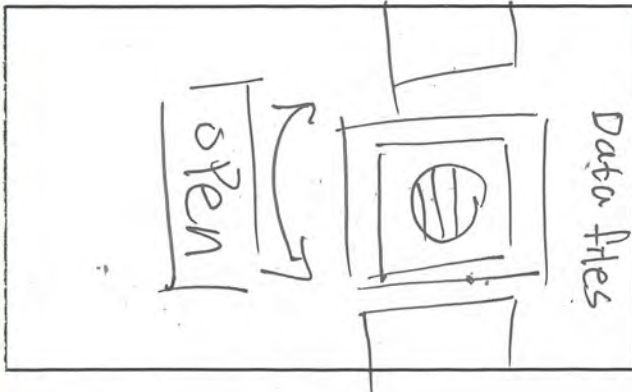
Information Age

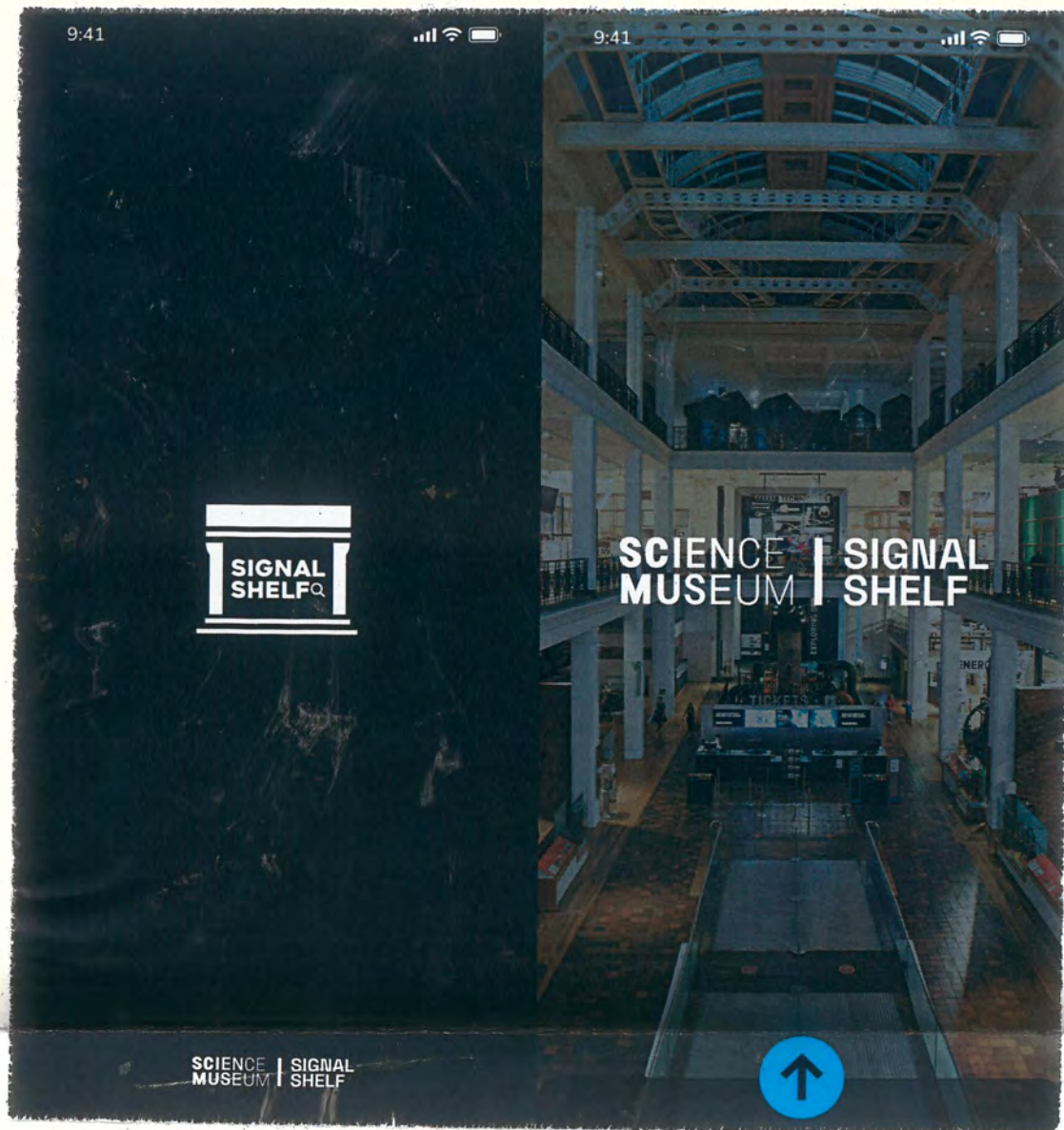
Crit feed back

The timeline design is too boring

Try a nonlinear experience flow with stronger visual appeal

Story Board Draft





logo design and welcome
page layout Version 1

**SIGNAL
SHELF_Q**

logo design
process

**SIGNAL
SHELF_Q**

**SIGNAL
SHELF_Q**

**SIGNAL
SHELF_Q**

**ARCHIVE
SIGNAL_Q**

**ARCHIVE
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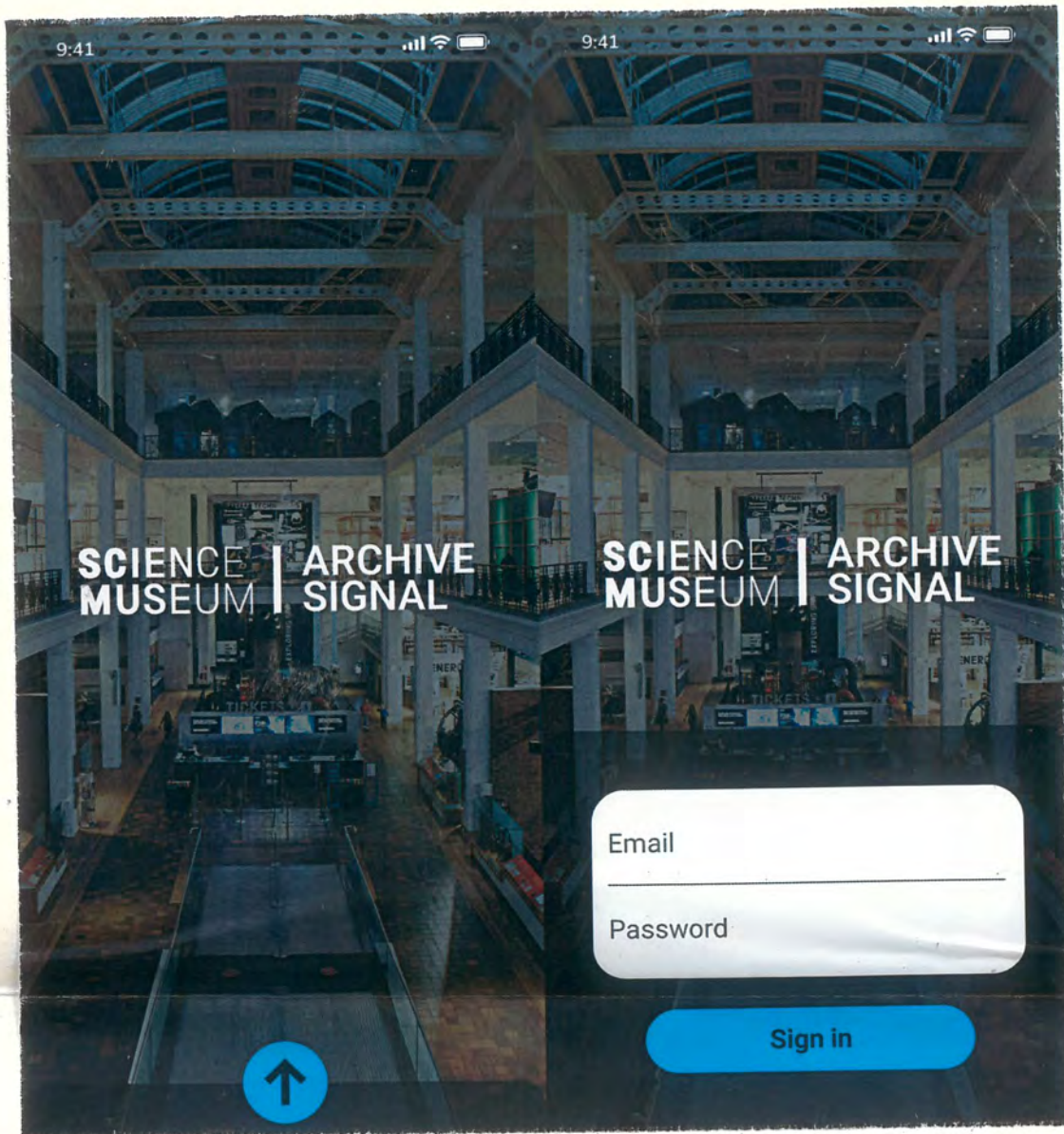
SCIENCE
MUSEUM

**SIGNAL
SHELF_Q**

**SIGNAL
SHELF_Q**
**ARCHIVE
SIGNAL_Q**



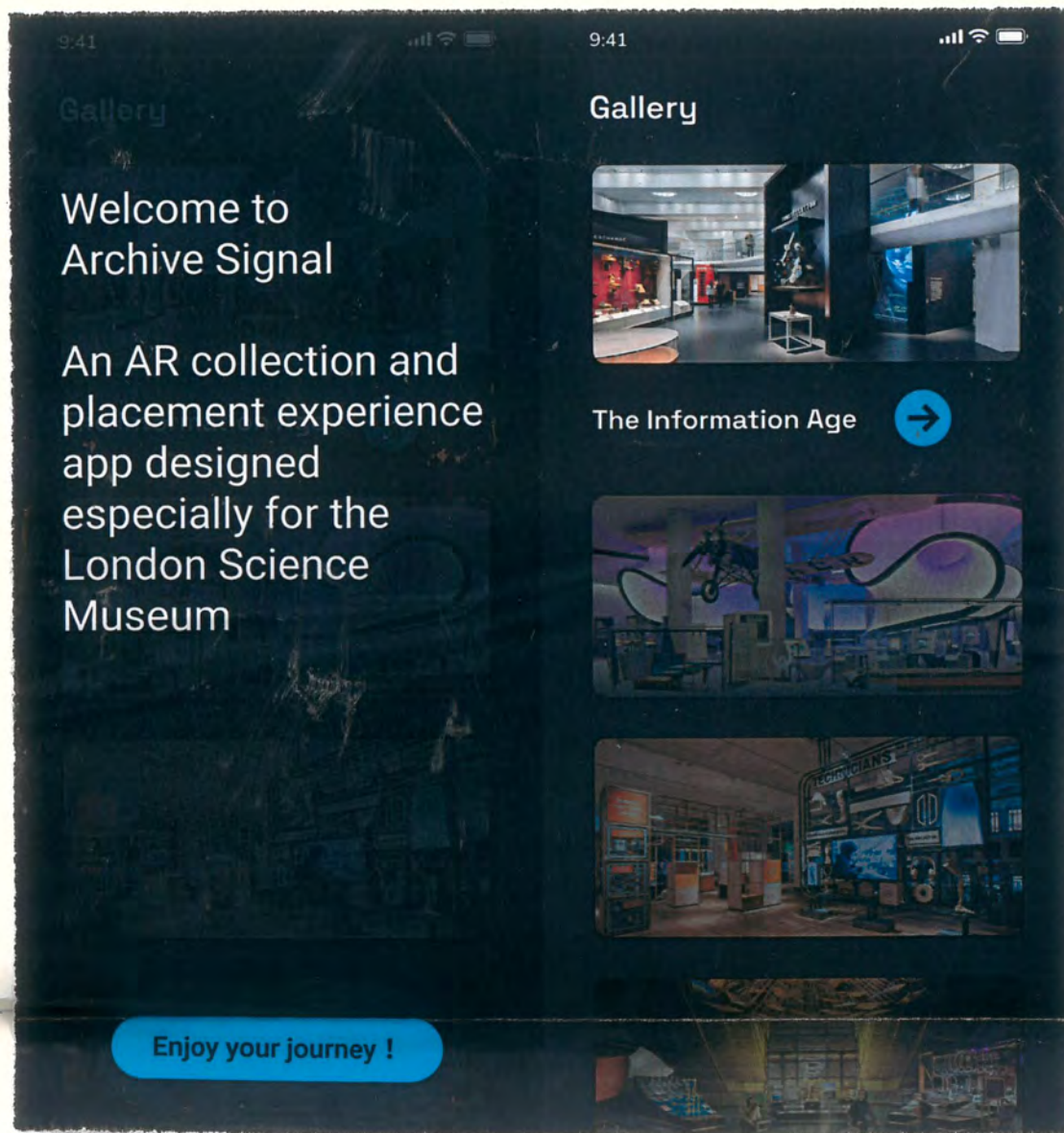
**SIGNAL
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Final Outcome ↗
Welcome page

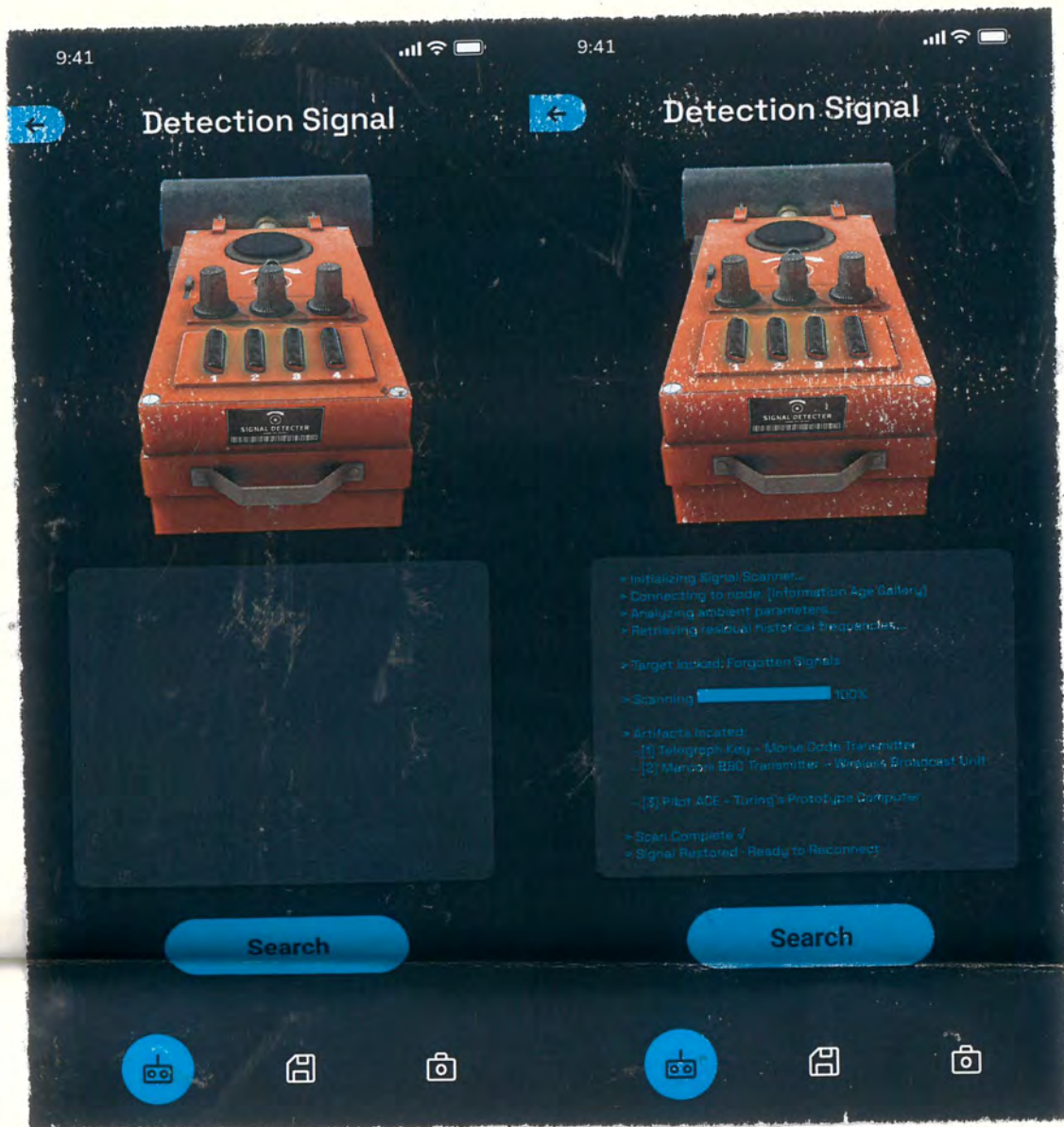
Name changed

Signal shelf → Archive signal



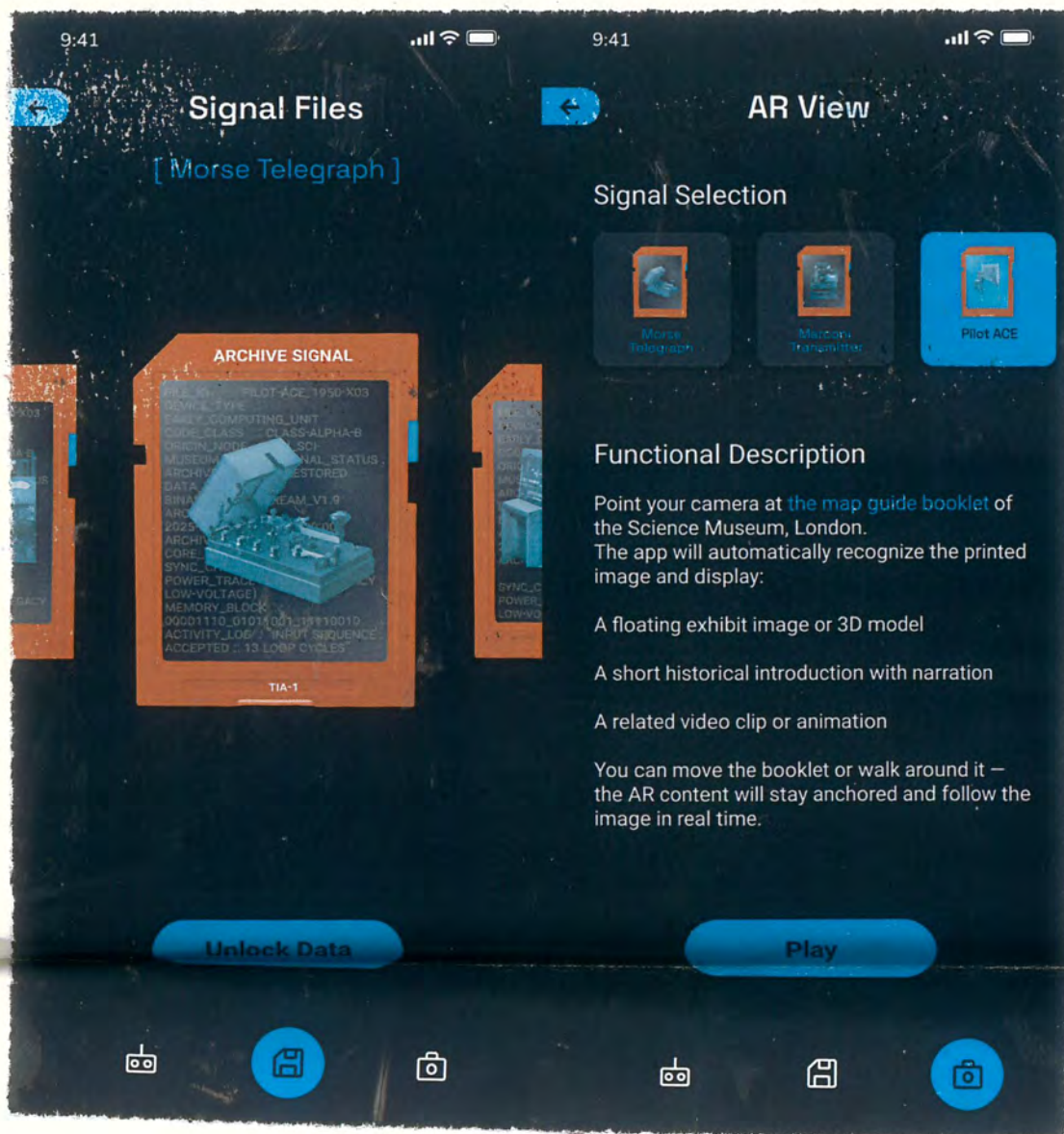
Final Outcome
Gallery selection page

: 'The information Age' Gallery

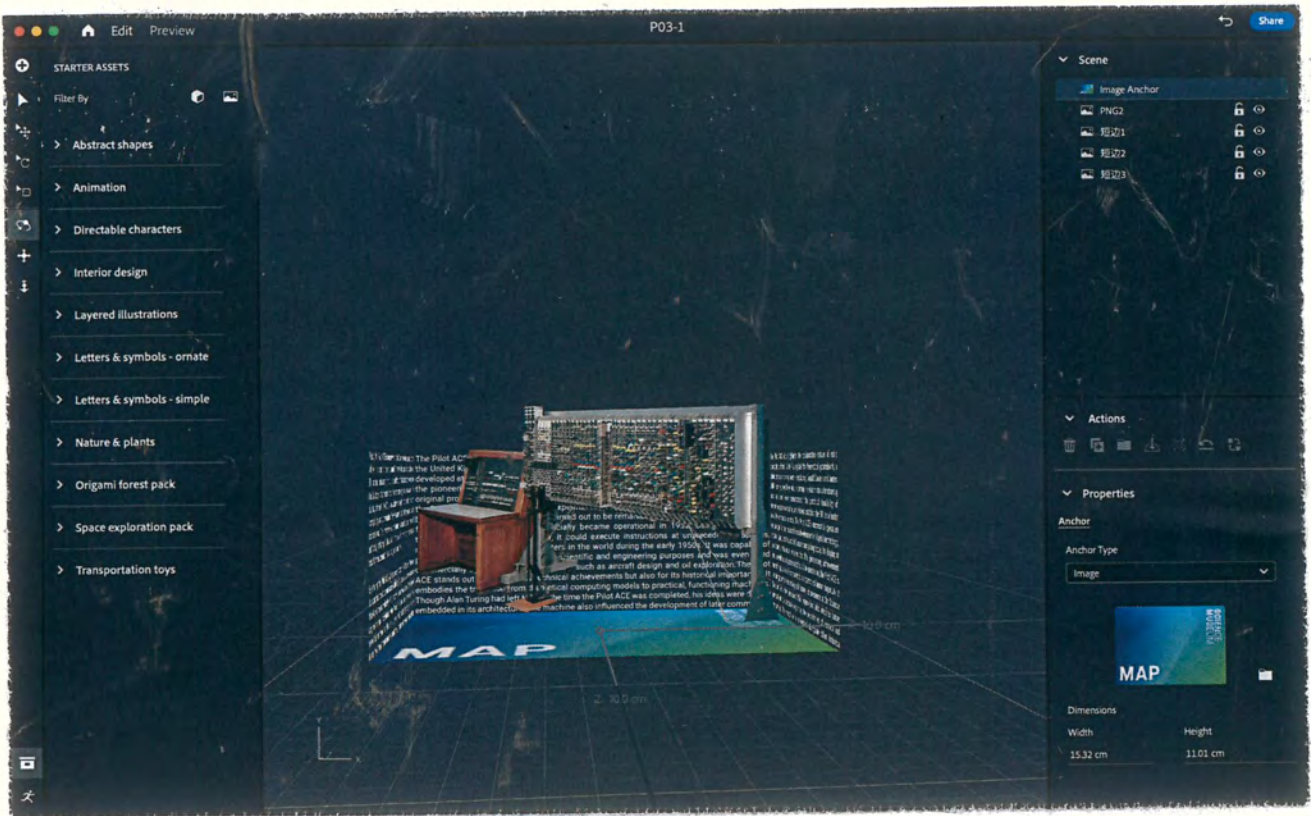


Function 1. - Detection Signal

Launch - Search animation - Finding out
3 Collections



Final outcome
Unlock Data / AR view page



3D modeling designed for AR view

AR identifiers as guidebooks for
Science museum





Promotion Production of the final outcome

