AI's Role in the Industrial Design Process

DESIGN LAW 2026

BANNER WITCOFF

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STERNE KESSLER GOLDSTEIN & FOX

Our Speaker

Dylan Brockhaus
Senior Industrial Designer
Garmin

FĒNIX
22
08
VO2 MAX 55
FĒNIX 8
10

GARMIN
5%
72°
22
NW
Feels like 75°
inReach MESSENGER
OK

2148
345°

My Original Understanding of AI

AI as a visualization tool

Sketch → AI Visualization

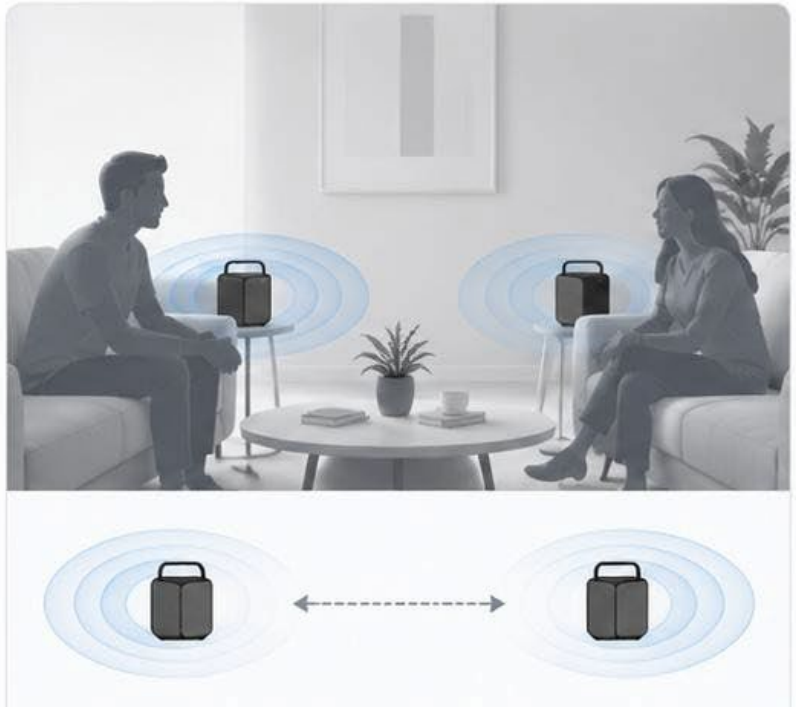
How Far Into the Design Process Can AI Actually Go?

Brief / Modular Speaker

AI Design Sprint

The Problem Came First

One Product. Different Listening Experiences.



SHARED LISTENING

CONNECTED SPACES

SPATIAL AUDIO

One modular system. Multiple configurations.

Working in Language

AI enters the process before the first sketch

Designer

I'm exploring a modular speaker system for shared listening. The speakers need to be wireless, portable, and functional individually, but should combine into one more powerful system.

I want the assembly to feel intuitive and integrated. I'm considering magnets, symmetry, and a central hub, but I'd like to keep those as possibilities rather than fixed requirements. The overall form is still open.

AI

That gives us a useful starting point. You've established the required experience without prescribing the physical solution.

One question worth testing: **when the modules are assembled, should they simply become easier to carry and charge, or should the combined system offer a fundamentally different listening experience?**

That decision could influence the architecture before we explore any forms.

Design decisions happen before the image.

Initial Design Framing

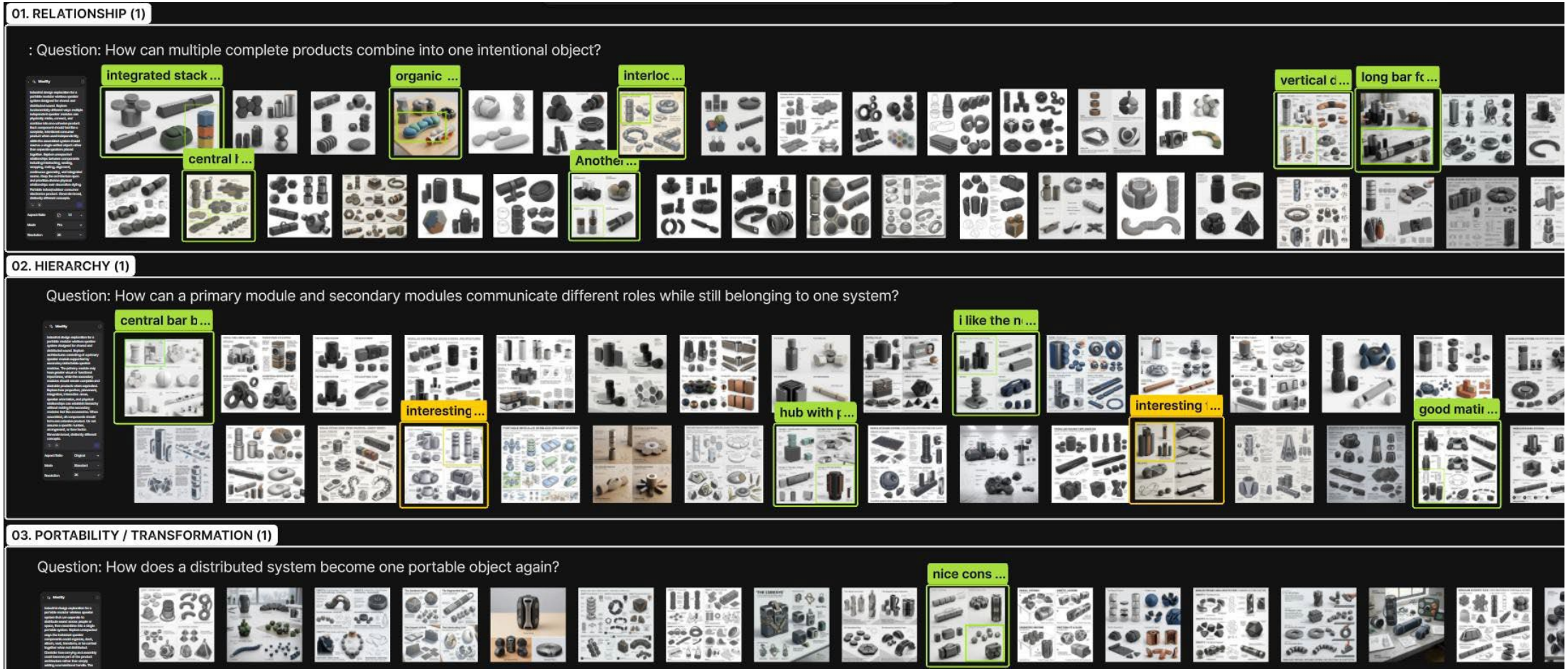
Requirements, ideas to test, and design intent

KNOWN	Modular · Portable · Shared audio experience
HYPOTHESES	Magnets · Symmetry · Central hub
DESIGN INTENT	Intuitive · Integrated · Modern

What stays fixed? What remains open?

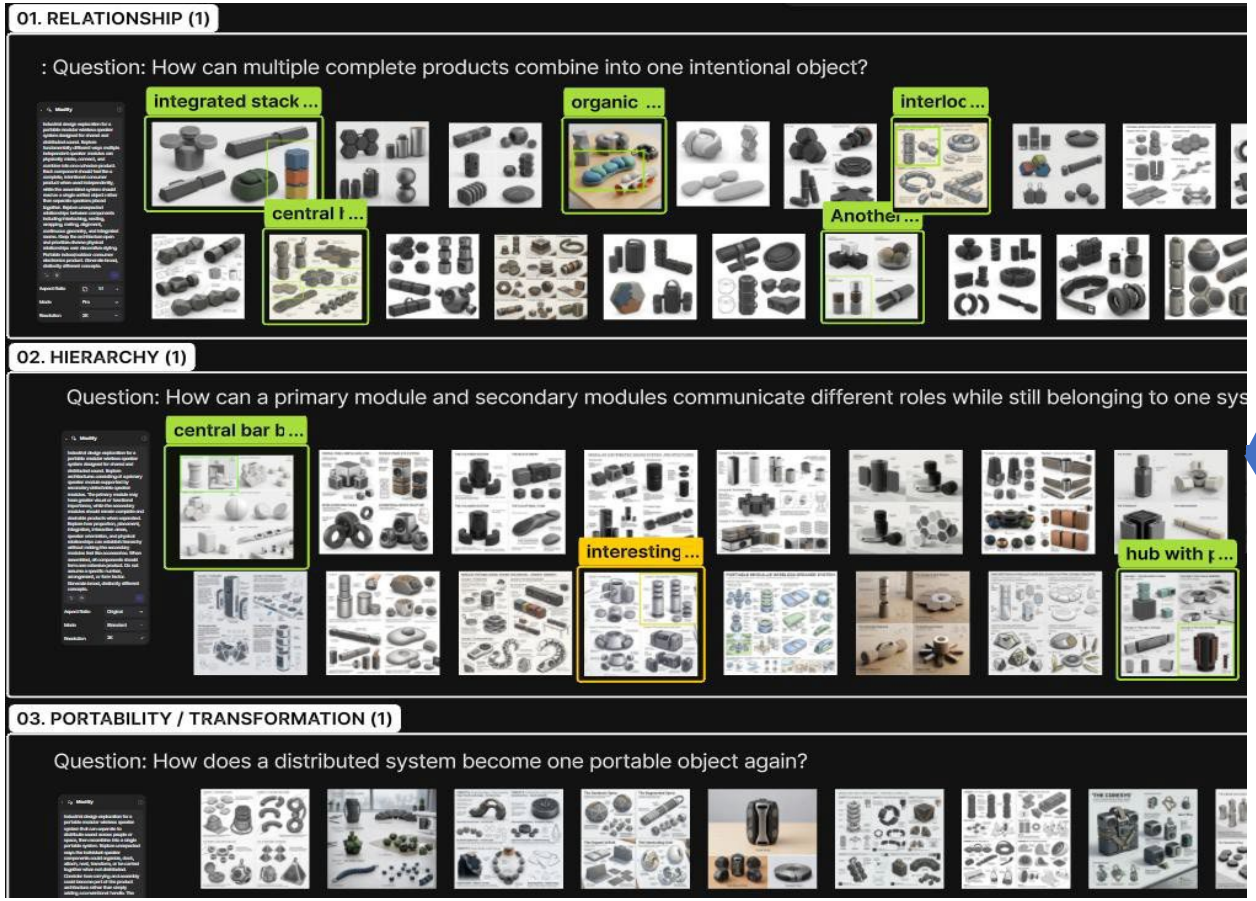
Broadening the Exploration

One design brief. Hundreds of possibilities.

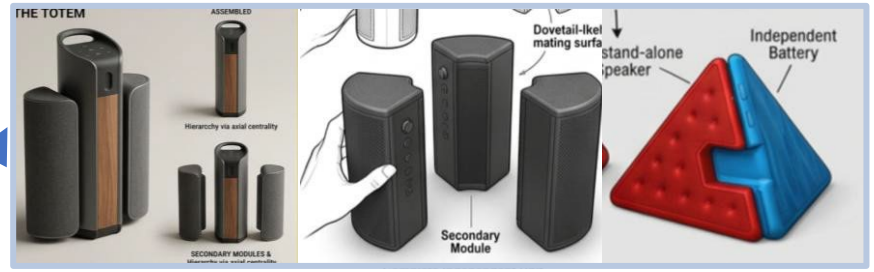


From Generation to Direction

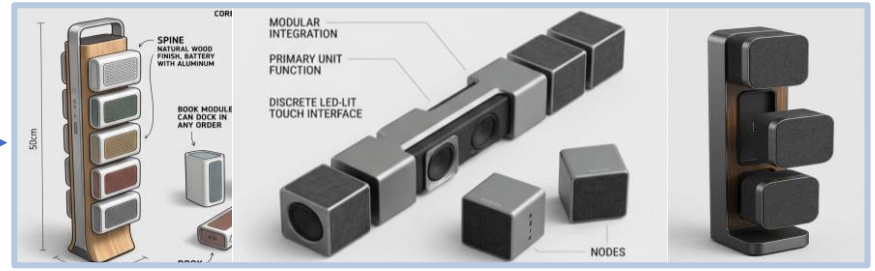
Generate → Evaluate → Redirect



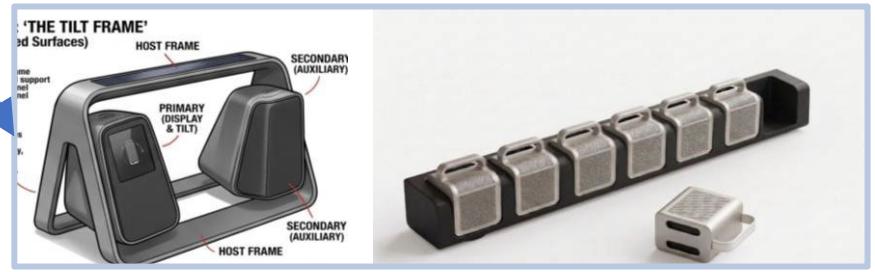
INTERLOCKING



REPEATING / LINEAR

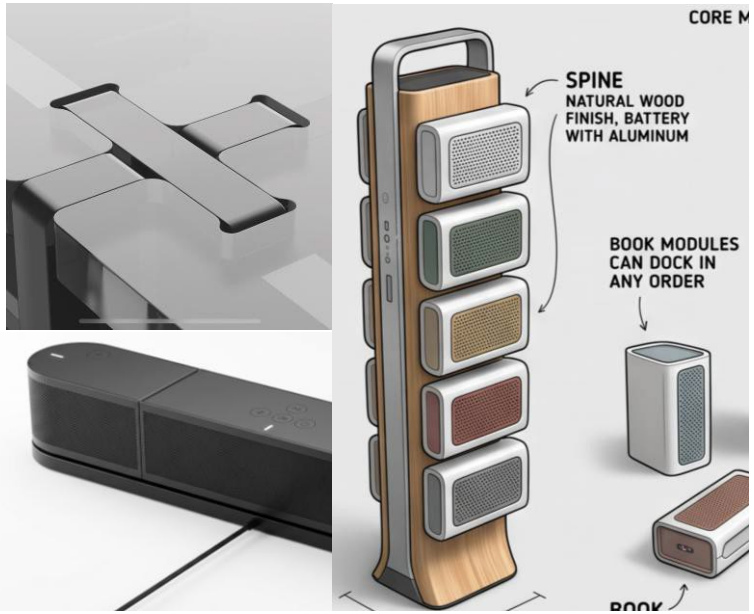


PORTABLE

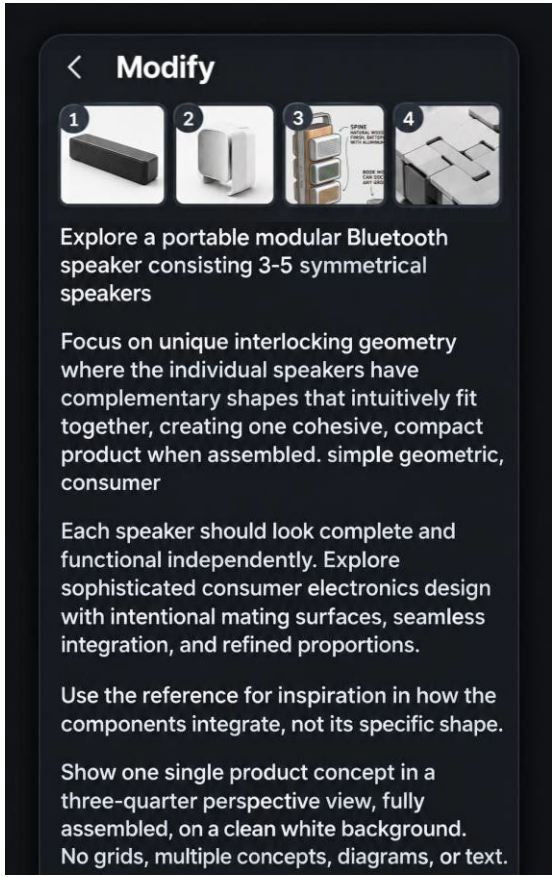


Guiding the Next Generation

Building on Ideas Worth Exploring



VISUAL INPUT



WRITTEN DIRECTION

REFINED OUTPUT

Three Directions Emerge

From Exploration to Distinct Product Architectures

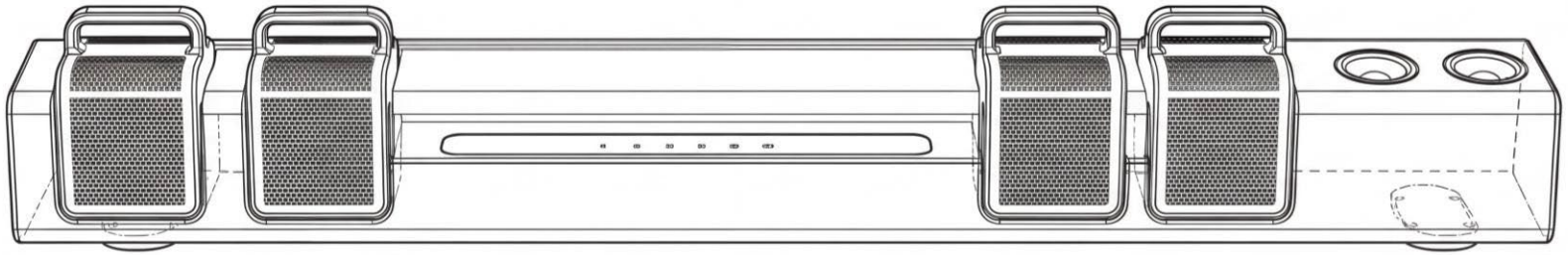
A INTEGRATED HUB

B UNIFIED SYMMETRY

C CENTRAL HOME BASE

Choosing Direction C

Selecting an architecture, not a finished design



Modular · Portable · Shared audio experience

DIRECTION C

CENTRAL HOME BASE
A common home for independently functioning speaker modules.

An architecture worth developing, not a finished design.

From Architecture to Detail

One direction. Many design decisions still to make.

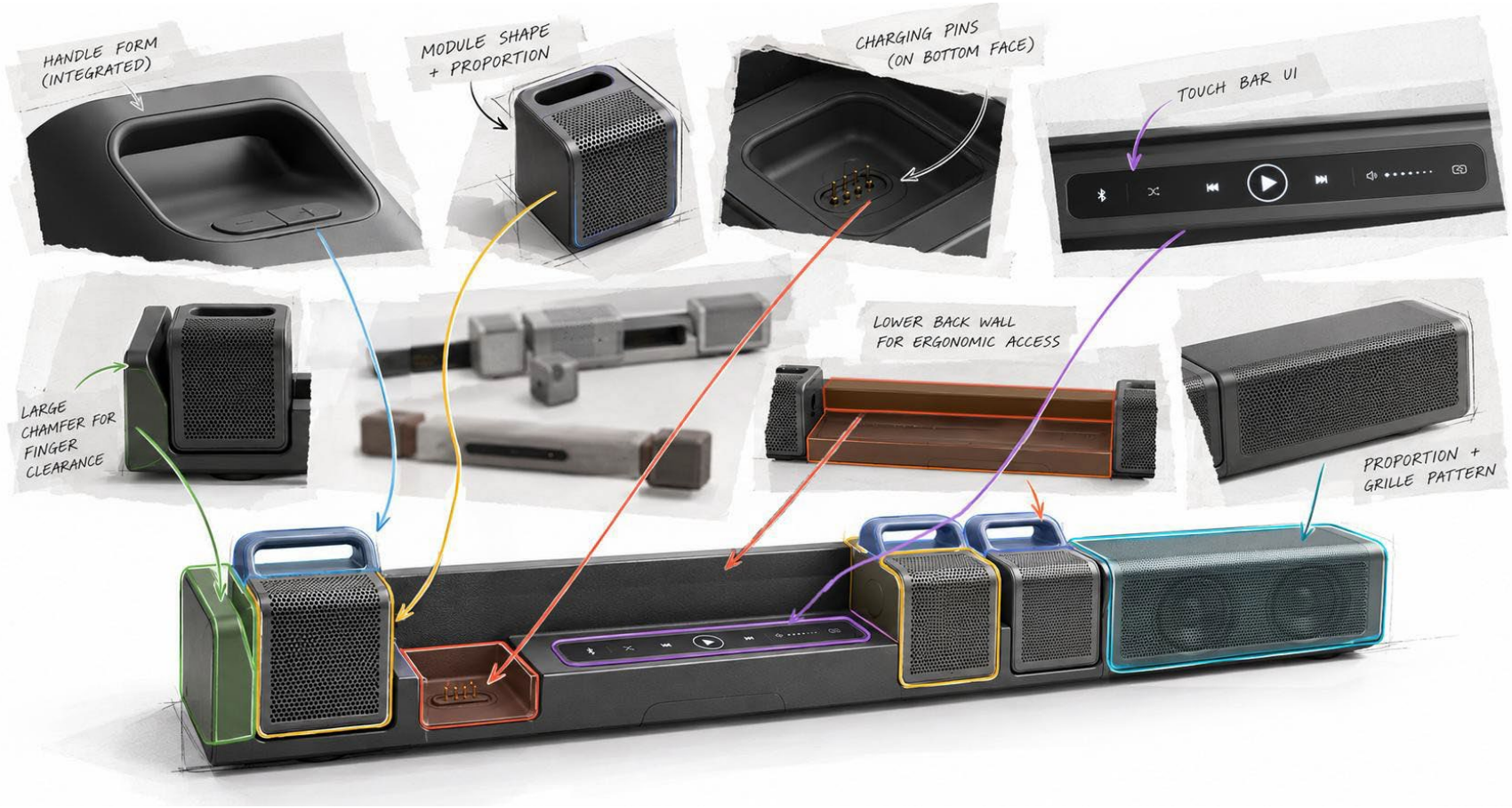
HANDLE + ACCESS
How do you remove and carry a module?

BUTTON PLACEMENT + DESIGN
Where should interaction happen?

DOCKING INTERACTION
How do the modules return to the base?

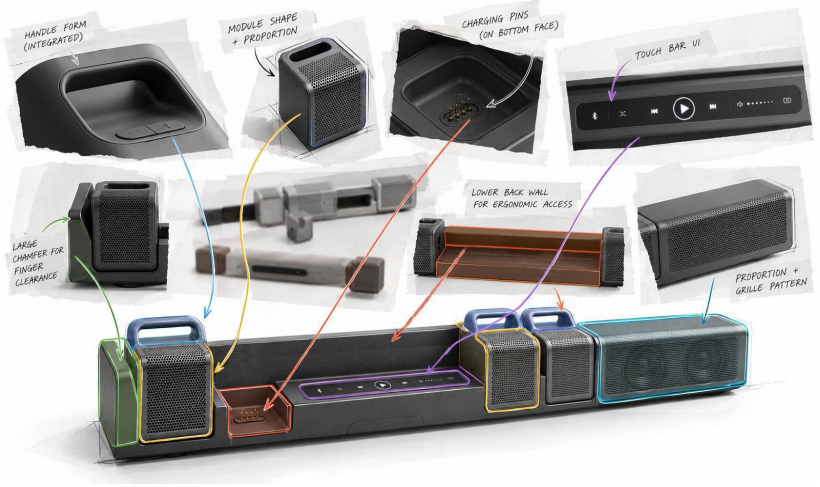
Building the Design

Selecting, combining, and modifying ideas across generations



When the Process Becomes Less Linear

Generated Imagery · Manual Modification · CAD · Refinement



COMBINE IDEAS

CONTROL THE GEOMETRY

REFINE THROUGH AI

Not a handoff. An ongoing exchange.

The Final Concept

A refined conceptual proposal

What the Final Image Doesn’t Tell You

One visible artifact. A complex history of contributions.

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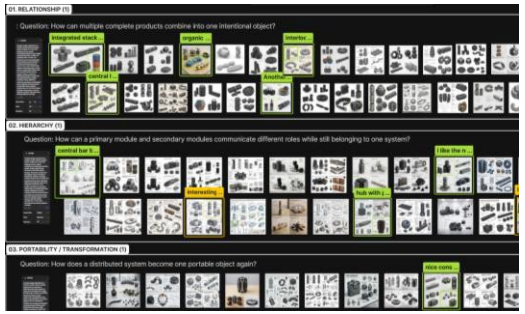
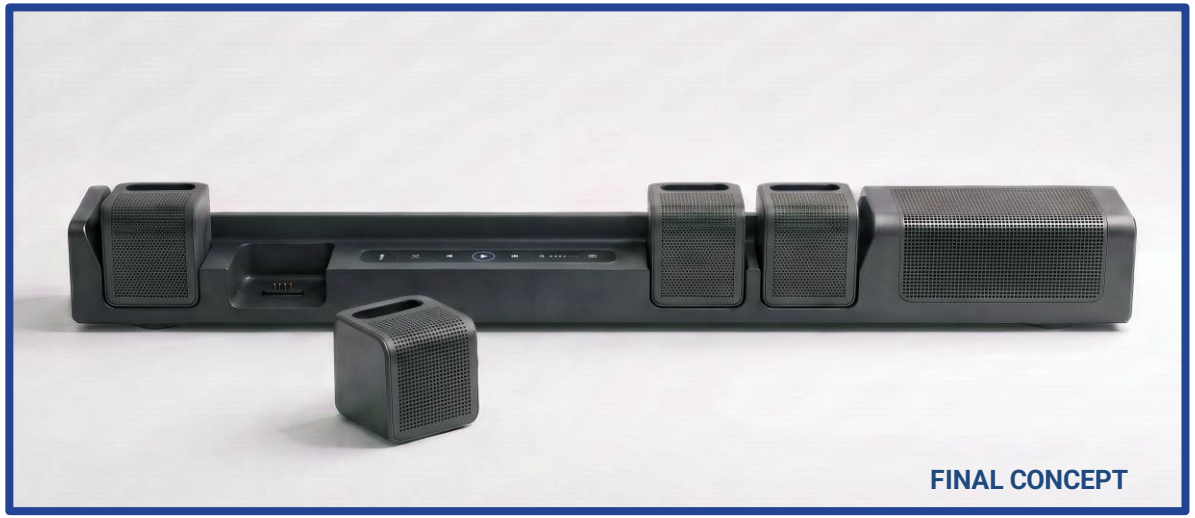
FRAMING

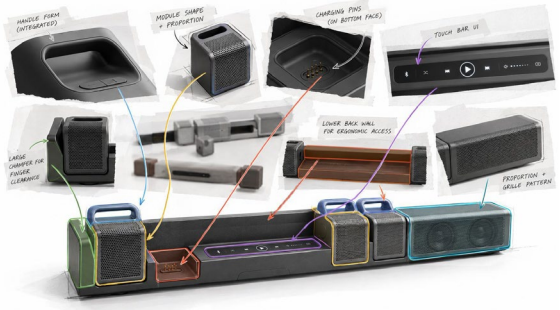


GENERATION + SELECTION

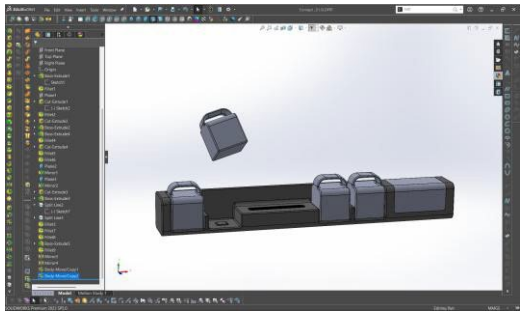


FINAL CONCEPT

DETAIL REFINEMENT



MODIFY + SYNTHESIS



CAD PROPORTION REFINEMENT

The Further AI Enters the Process, the Harder the Line is to Draw

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Thank you.

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