

# THE 3D SKILLS REPORT

This report has been written by It's Nice That and supported by Adobe

**It's Nice That** ×  **Adobe**

in October 2022





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# Introduction

In recent years, world events have accelerated the shift to online. Seeking new ways to express their ideas in our digital-first world, a new generation of artists have been adding 3D skills to their creative toolkits.

The result has been an explosion of immersive fantasylands, eerily lifelike avatars, and hyperreal subversions of the world we know. With experts claiming that the metaverse – a network of virtual, interactive and social 3D worlds – will play a sizeable role in our digital futures, it's likely this is just the beginning.

In the midst of this boom, we wanted to take stock of what's happening and where 3D design could be going next. What factors have been driving the trend, to what extent is it translating into actual client briefs, and what role will 3D play in the creative industries of the future?

Through surveying a sample group of almost 90 leading 3D designers across Europe, we set out to answer these questions. We asked for their thoughts on all areas of the discipline, so that we could deliver their insights to you, creating a first-of-its-kind report into the emergence of 3D design within multiple industries.

Created by Adobe and It's Nice That, this report will deep dive into 3D capabilities, the current demand for 3D skills, and the future of 3D and creativity. We'll chat to expert practitioners along the way, including Loulou João, Tomorrow Bureau and Random Studio, as well as hear from Adobe about its new suite of 3D tools, Adobe Substance 3D.

The 3D revolution is upon us. Read on to find out how to future-proof your own career or your team's success.





# 1 | 3D Capabilities







From candy-coloured immersive realms to uncanny avatars, the boundaries of what's possible in 3D design are constantly expanding. As emerging talent continues to amaze the industry, it's natural to wonder, "but how?"

In this chapter, we hear from trailblazing talent Loulou João, delve into how artists are learning 3D skills, and explore if the barriers to entry are equal for everyone.



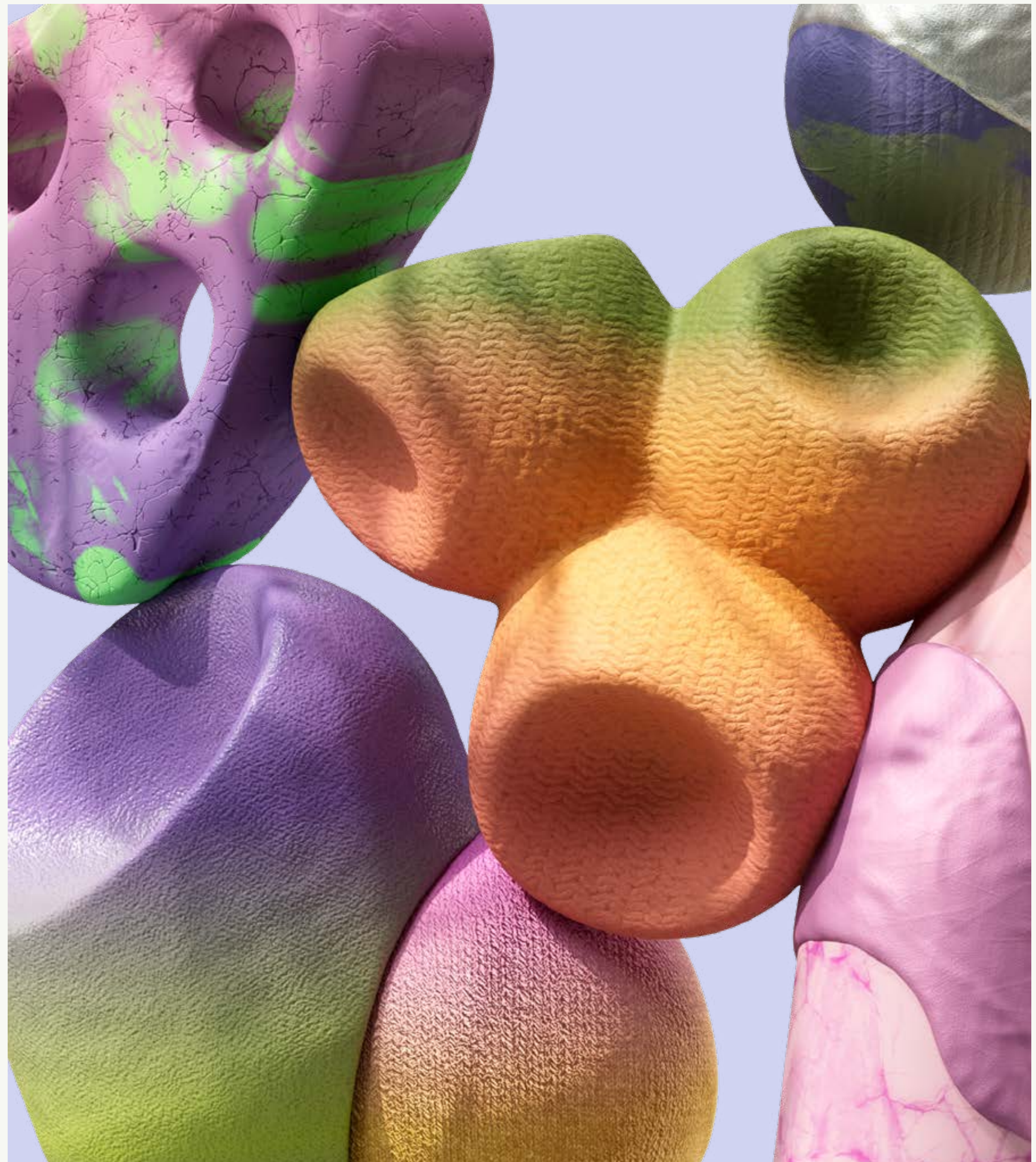
# 70% of creatives with 3D skills are self-taught

Of the creatives surveyed who have some skills in 3D, more than two thirds (70%) taught themselves. Less than a quarter (24%) learned 3D skills at university, and the others learned on the job or through a part-time course.

# The most common design skill (88%) amongst respondents was modelling

Of the creatives surveyed that already have 3D skills, 88% have skills in modelling, 84% in rendering, and 81% in both lighting and texturing. Other 3D skills these respondents have include animation, virtual photography and game design.

Of these creatives with existing 3D skills, 40% would most like to learn lighting and texturing, 36% animation, and 35% modelling.







The learning curve in 3D design is not as steep as you might expect. 61% of the 88 creatives in the survey rated the difficulty of learning 3D skills as “average”. A quarter (26%) rated it as “difficult,” and just 2.5% rated it as “very difficult”.

However, lack of time is, by far, the biggest barrier to improving 3D design skills. 78% of respondents said 3D skills are important to learn – but often lack time to develop them.



# THE GENDER DIVIDE IN 3D DESIGN

The 3D world is still  
male-dominated

78% of creatives said there are more men than women in the world of 3D design. Respondents shared a range of reasons why they thought this might be the case, including the following:





There is a lack of female-identifying and non-binary representation in tech generally, as a result of being excluded from tech fields growing up.

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The lack of role models in 3D design: there are not enough female-identifying and non-binary tutors and this can lead to a sense of imposter syndrome.

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The sectors that have been the focus for 3D design development (VFX and game design) are also male-dominated.

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Sexism in 3D design practices (e.g. using naked rendered women as design benchmarks).

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Stereotyping (e.g. “It’s a nerd thing”).

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Gender expectations and male gatekeeping (e.g. “It’s too technical”).

“It can be hard for a woman to feel welcome in the ‘boys’ tech club,” said one 3D artist.





# ARTIST Q&A

With Loulou João,  
Ghent, Belgium

Undoubtedly, one of the most exciting 3D artists around at the moment is Loulou João. Her bubblegum-hued 3D dreamscapes, full of quirky characters and nostalgic objects, play with the medium in a way that hasn't been done before. Contrasting their aesthetic, Loulou's 3D creations often explore challenging subjects: from self-doubt and imposter syndrome, to the oversexualisation of women belonging to the African Diaspora.

Graduating less than two years ago, Loulou has already worked for global brands like BMW, MTV and Spotify. Along with her agent, Jolene Lloyd Jones from Snyder, Loulou sits down with It's Nice That to discuss how she started working in 3D, and why it's historically been such a boys' club.





**Q** How did you start working in 3D?

**A** Loulou: I studied illustration at university. I did mostly etching in my studies – all black and white, no colour at all. I liked etching but didn't think it could turn into a full time practice. My partner was working as an architect and introduced me to 3D visualisations. He told me I should get into 3D software.

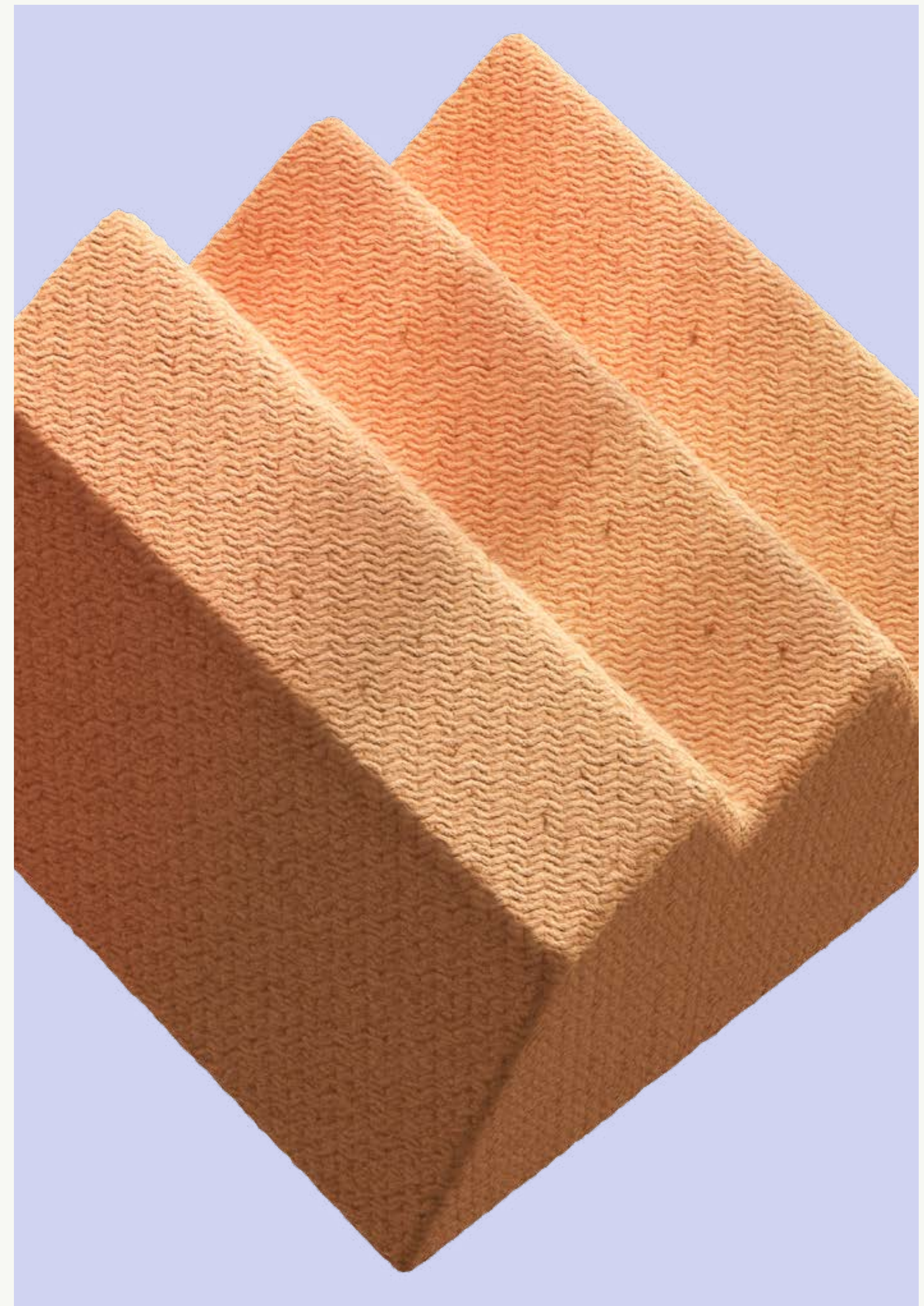
**Q** How did you find it?

**A** Loulou: At first I was like, "I hate this programme, I'm never going to be able to work with this!" After graduating, I'd spend all day looking up YouTube tutorials and I treated it like a job. After three months, I felt really comfortable with the programmes.

**Q** Why were you so motivated to learn 3D?

**A** Loulou: It feels like you can create your own universe. With drawing, everything stays on paper, whereas 3D is more of an immersive experience. I also grew up watching 3D children's shows like *Barbie* and *Bratz*, and playing video games. 3D was this new thing and I always found it very interesting.

I love that you can use 3D art for other outputs – you can turn your work into a sculpture, assets for a video game, or 3D print it, for example. There are a lot of ways that you can use 3D art, which is really fun.







**Q** In our survey, people said it's only averagely difficult to learn 3D software. Would you agree?

**A** Loulou: Yeah I do, because there are so many people making tutorials online. If you didn't have access to those, it would be very difficult, but there's such a big 3D community and you can learn so much on YouTube by yourself in your free time.

I think the most difficult part is having the discipline to keep going. The interesting thing with 3D is that, if you have an idea, there are multiple paths you can take to come to the same result; there's often a hard way and an easier way to create what you want. I've had a lot of times where I haven't been able to see a solution, and I'll be crying and think, "I'll never be able to be fluent with this!"

**Q** Tell us more about the 3D community?

**A** Loulou: Especially on Instagram, I have a lot of people I talk to every once in a while. We'll ask each other questions about how to do certain things. The animation route that I'm taking is more cutesy style stuff, which is a different niche, but there are other people that do it as well. Sometimes we get together to share tips and tricks, which is really nice.



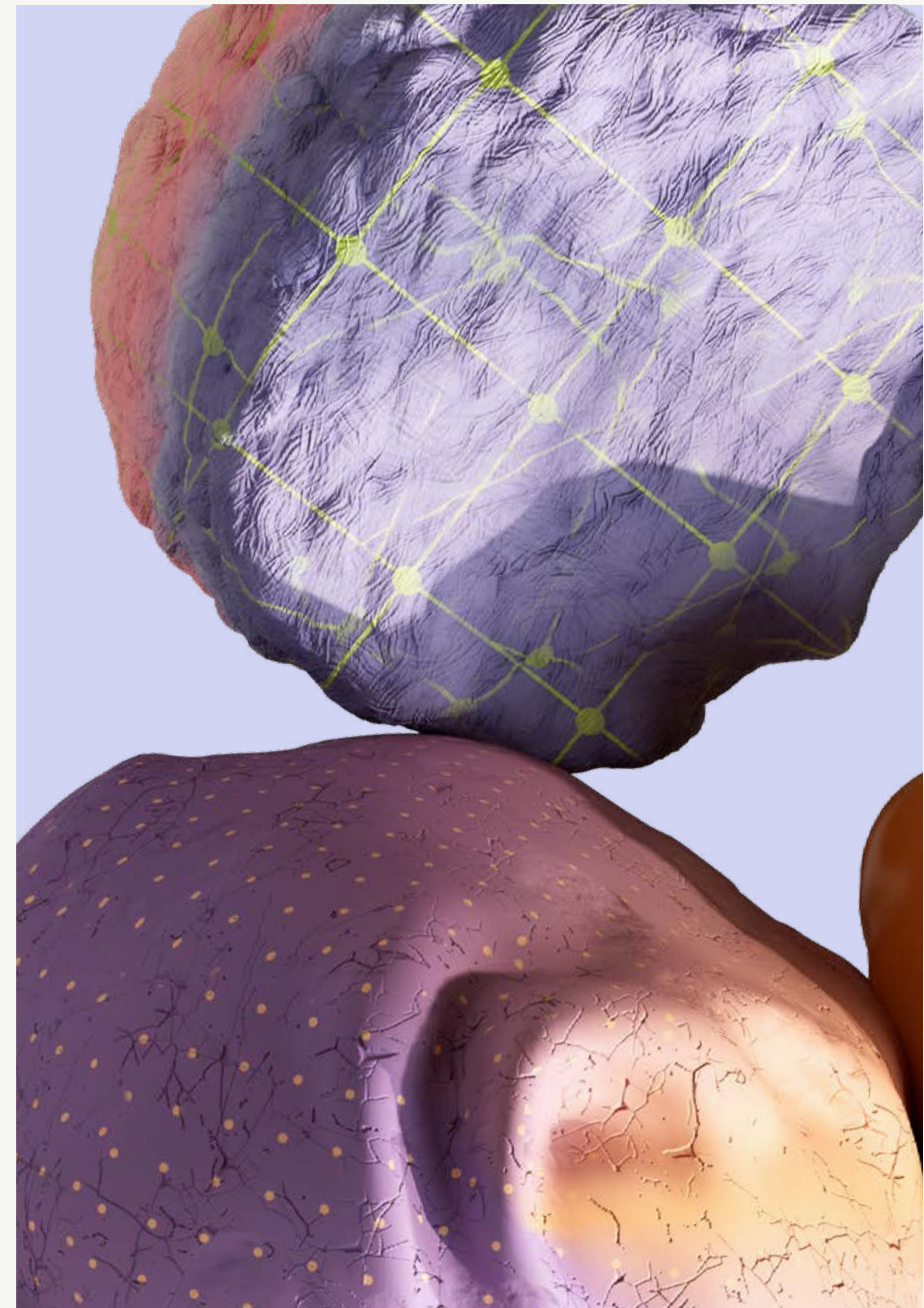
**Q** What's your creative process like?

**A** Loulou: I have a visual archive of what my world is about, and I often read philosophy books, which get everything going. I have a very visual mind, so if I read something inspirational I translate it into images in my head.

I think it's also important for people to know, especially when doing animation, that it's not something you do alone because it's so complex and takes so much work. Now everything that I do is with my husband - he quit his job so we can work together. Usually, I'll come up with concepts and a mood board, and he'll start doing the modelling so while it has my name on it, the visual execution is very much collaborative.

Jolene: You can't deliver 3D work as fast as you can 2D illustration, and a lot of the time the clients don't understand why. As an agent, you have to educate clients about how much work goes into a 3D artwork.

A lot of the time clients don't understand how much work goes into a 3D piece of artwork, or an animation. It is quite rare for a large job, or a medium-sized job, to be delivered by one person. Instagram and other social media platforms have been amazing for highlighting participants and putting their name out there - especially in aspects like animation when you consider sound design, production and so on. Even as agents we've had to learn how to up-skill and educate ourselves as this becomes a much more sought after offering.







**Q** Why do you think 3D art and design is so popular at the moment?

**A** Jolene: We've seen an unbelievable influx of clients wanting 3D art. People are wanting that other-worldly universe, because ours hasn't been the best over the past few years. Loulou's world is the perfect place to escape to.

**Q** Do you think that 3D art is male dominated?

**A** Jolene: 3D art and animation has always been such a man's world, with very shiny, harsh images. We made a conscious effort not to look for those kinds of 3D artists as an agency, but we struggled.

Loulou: Everything that's related to tech is male dominated, so 3D has the same problems that tech has. Girls aren't being told that they can do this too, that they don't have to create that super high-tech watch. Girls are not being motivated, or just don't think they can do it. But I do think that's changing.



# TAKEAWAYS

## It's all about DIY learning

3D capabilities are overwhelmingly self-taught, with 70% of creatives in our survey saying they learned their craft in this way. Picking up the skills is only of “average” difficulty, thanks to a supportive online community sharing free tutorials and advice. However, learning is time consuming, with a lack of time cited as being the biggest reason why creatives aren't skilling up.

## 3D is a team effort

There are many different skills within the 3D space and the work can be labour intensive, particularly for 3D animation. Because of this, creatives should be prepared to collaborate on projects. At the same time, clients must be aware of the amount of work involved.

## The gender divide is closing

3D is a man's world according to 78% of creatives in our survey. There are multiple drivers behind this: from the medium's historically macho aesthetic, to a lack of representation in tech generally. But as 3D art is becoming increasingly popular, more women and non-binary creatives are getting involved. Having more diverse perspectives enter the field is helping to push the boundaries of what's possible in 3D.





# 2 | Industry Demand for 3D







3D design might be creatively exciting, but it's hard to know how much work is out there beyond the medium's traditional home in gaming and VFX. We take a look at the current demand in the creative industries for 3D skills, plus how creative decision makers – like Tomorrow Bureau's Jack Featherstone – are building teams to meet it.



# 63%

## 3D skills are in high demand

Of the independent creatives surveyed, 63% said there is high demand for 3D skills - meaning they are having to turn clients and projects down due to the volume of work coming in. Of the in-house creatives, 80% said clients ask for 3D skills at least five times a year. Almost a third (33%) said they ask at least 30 times a year.



# 64%

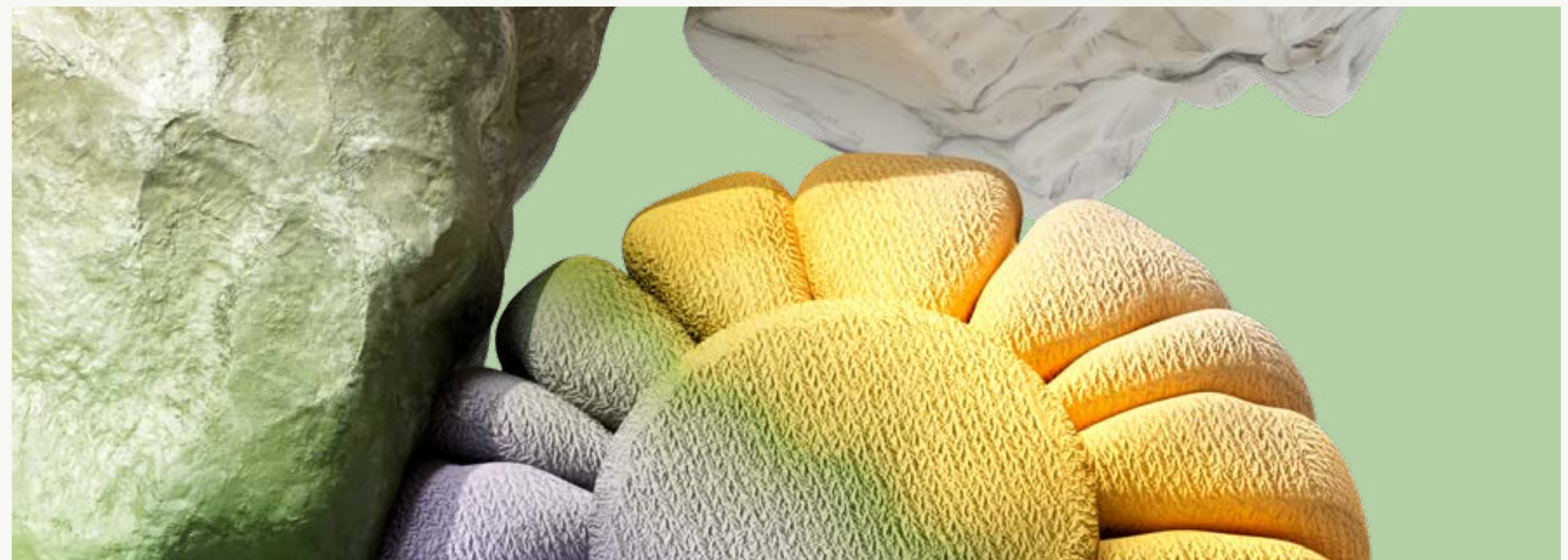
## The tech industry is most likely to ask for 3D skills

When asked about which industries most commonly request 3D creative work, 64% of the 88 creatives in the survey said “the tech sector,” and 48% said “the music industry”.

# 36%

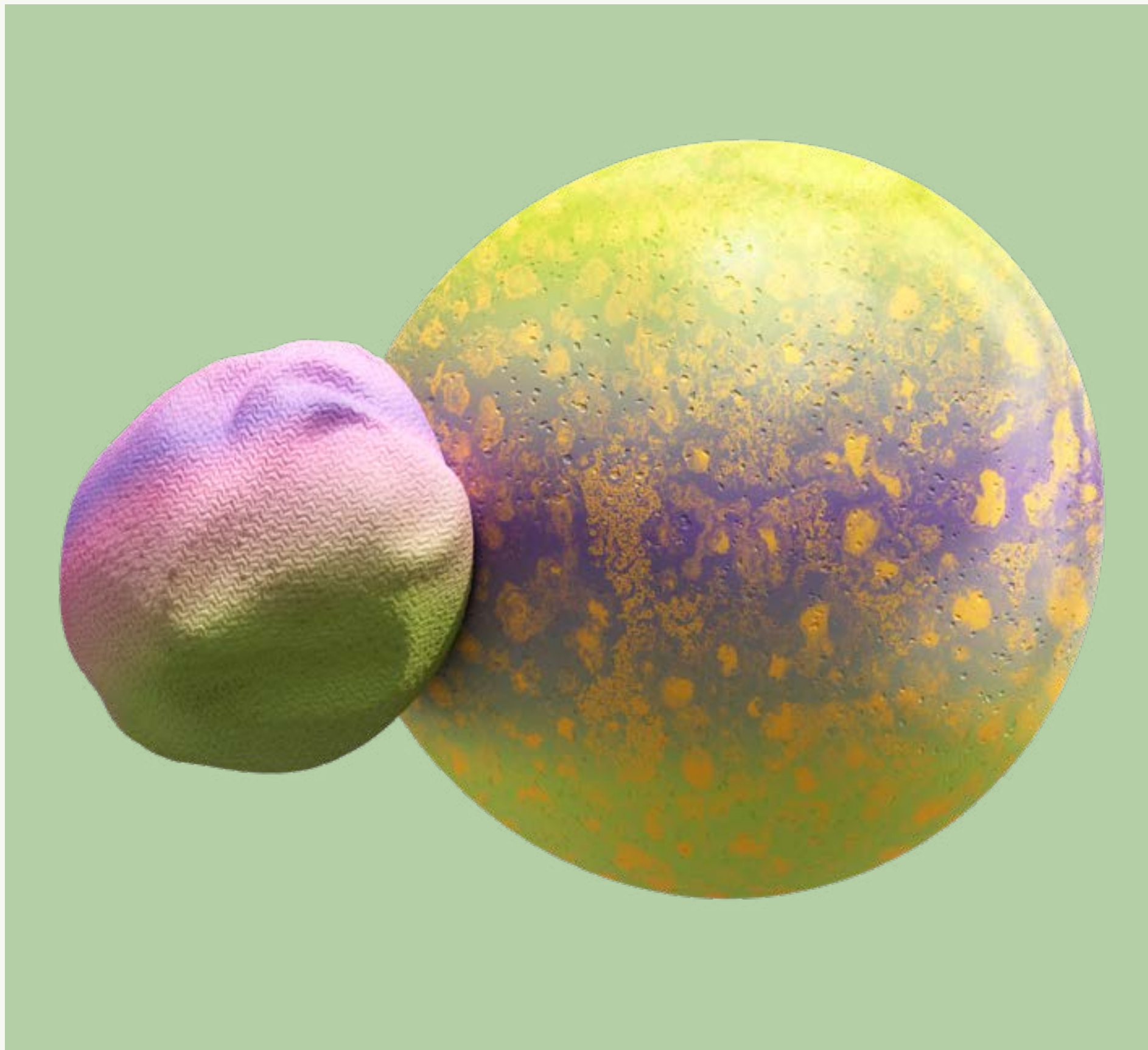
## Animation is the most in demand 3D skill

Around a third of respondents (36%) said animation was the most in-demand 3D skill, followed by product design (21%) and character design (15%).





# FREELANCE VS IN-HOUSE SKILLS



Creatives are actively searching for people with 3D skills, even for non-3D roles

Creatives want 3D skills in-house, and many will pay for training

Of the people surveyed responsible for hiring creatives, 83% said they “sometimes” or “always” look for 3D skills when hiring someone for a non-3D-specific role, such as a designer or animator.

Nearly two thirds of creatives responsible for hiring (65%) said they’d ask a member of their team to create a project involving 3D art or design. Only 35% would hire a freelancer or specialist studio.

Nearly three quarters of creatives responsible for hiring (74%) have asked a team member to develop 3D skills, or would support them to do so through paid-for training.



# 3D STUDIO Q&A

Jack Featherstone,  
Tomorrow Bureau,  
London, UK

Since 2019, digital art and design studio Tomorrow Bureau has been pushing the boundaries of 3D aesthetics. The London-based studio works across a range of disciplines, from industrial design to branding. But alongside its commercial work for brands like Nike's House of Innovation and Apple, the studio pursues its own practice exploring "speculative digital realities." We sit down with co-founder and creative director Jack Featherstone, who set up Tomorrow Bureau after ten years working as a designer and graphic artist, to find out more about the state of 3D design today.





**Q** After building a career in graphic design, why did you decide to learn 3D?

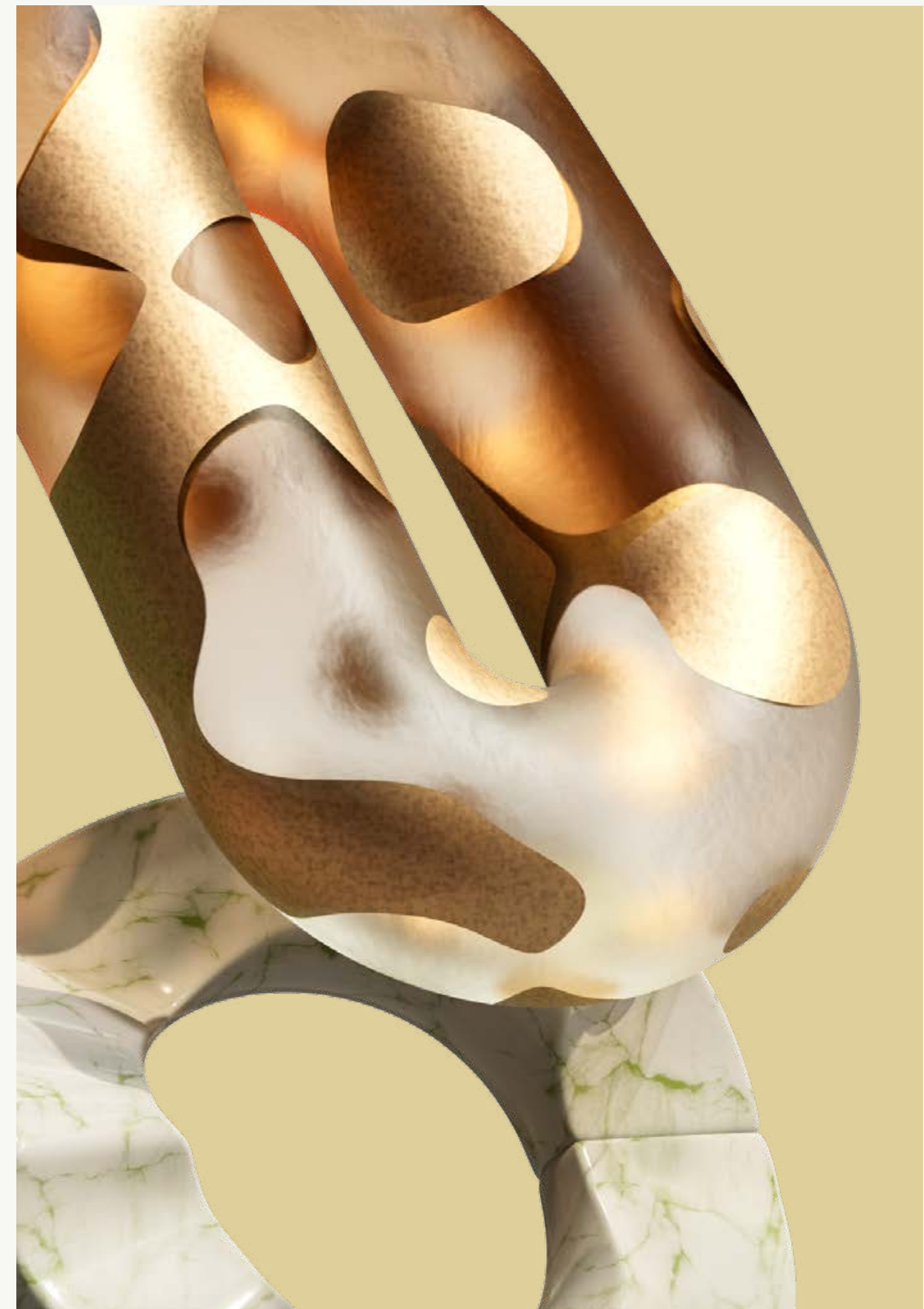
**A** I saw the creative potential in it. I was able to combine sculpture, moving image, abstract visuals, graphics, branding – everything that I was interested in creatively, I was able to achieve in 3D.

While I'm very jealous of the technology that 22-year-olds have access to today, all the skills I learned before working in 3D definitely helped me a lot. It's very important to understand composition and colour; what makes a good image, what fulfils a brief, how to dissect an image, and how to make a good piece of moving image in film. I was doing a lot of 2D animation before I even touched 3D.

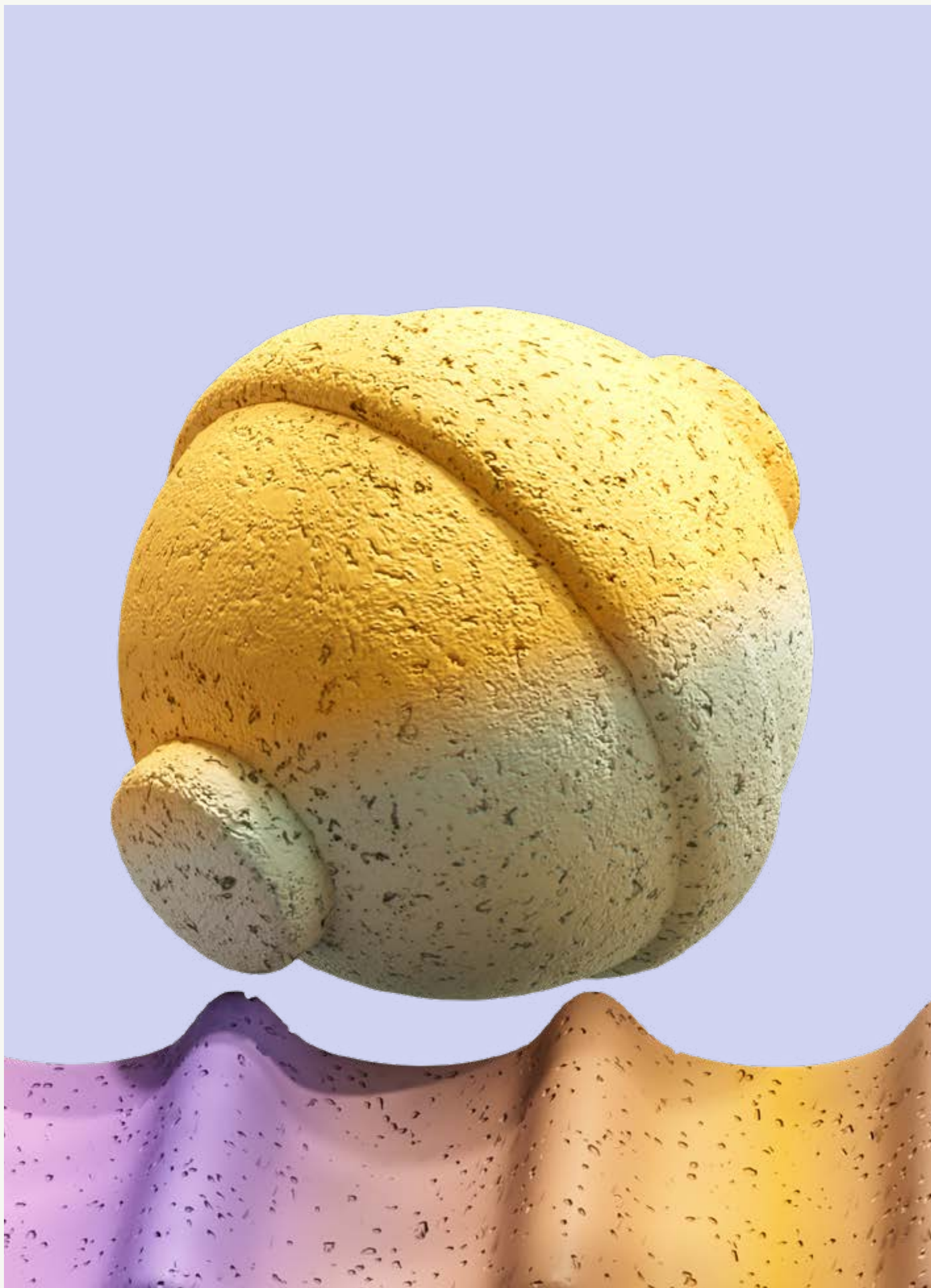
**Q** What do you look for when hiring young 3D artists?

**A** One of the problems that we see with young designers getting into 3D is that they can do very specific things – often because they're copying things that they have seen on social media – but when it comes down to being able to be more flexible or solve wider problems, the base education just isn't there. I would encourage people to try and look outside of 3D to other design disciplines.

For example, if someone has been a ceramicist for ten years, they're going to be able to make some really beautiful objects in 3D, and bring a certain integrity and understanding to the medium. If someone has never done ceramics and tries to make some in 3D, they're just going to be copying, without any understanding of how ceramics are made.







**Q** In what ways have 3D art and design evolved recently, and what's driving this?

**A** There's an explosion happening right now, and that has been happening for the past year. There have been multiple factors driving this: the biggest one is GPU (graphic processing unit) power. Every year, GPUs get more powerful, making it easier to make really beautiful images.

GPU power has totally blown open the whole industry, as now there's a lot of talented people out there starting to use 3D. Whether their background is sculpture, photography, design, or fashion, they can apply their knowledge of those visual languages to 3D.

Secondly, during Covid-19 I think a lot of people stuck at home suddenly found they had the time to dive in and learn software. Now we're starting to see the fruits of their labour.

Lastly, social media is driving not only a desire for content from brands, but the desire for artists to be constantly sharing things. These days, most artists probably make work predominantly for social media.

**Q** Have you experienced an increase in demand at your own studio in the past couple of years?

**A** We are definitely getting more requests from clients for 3D where it's their first time commissioning it. They'll have a lot of questions about the process and how it works. I think this is a good indication of where it's going.



**Q** Which industries are most commonly asking for 3D?

**A** The biggest increase in 3D has come from fashion houses. Fashion has always been where the most interesting 3D work has been made, but there used to be only a few brands brave enough to commission it. It was often associated with quite wild, progressive aesthetics, whereas now you're starting to see it filter into more traditional, conservative brands. Anything that's product based, like handbags and trainers, you often see in 3D. We are also seeing more and more digital clothing being created - that's a big growing sector.

And then obviously, technology. It makes a lot of sense for headphone brands to make a piece of content in 3D, because they can get a product film done before the headphones have even been manufactured.

**Q** What 3D skills are most in-demand at the moment?

**A** Traditionally, 3D was very specialised - you'd become very good at a certain thing, and then you'd fit into a wider pipeline. But now, as the tools are getting better and easier to use, people are able to get pretty good at a wide range of skills. Things are getting less specialised, because people want to make beautiful things and learn everything.

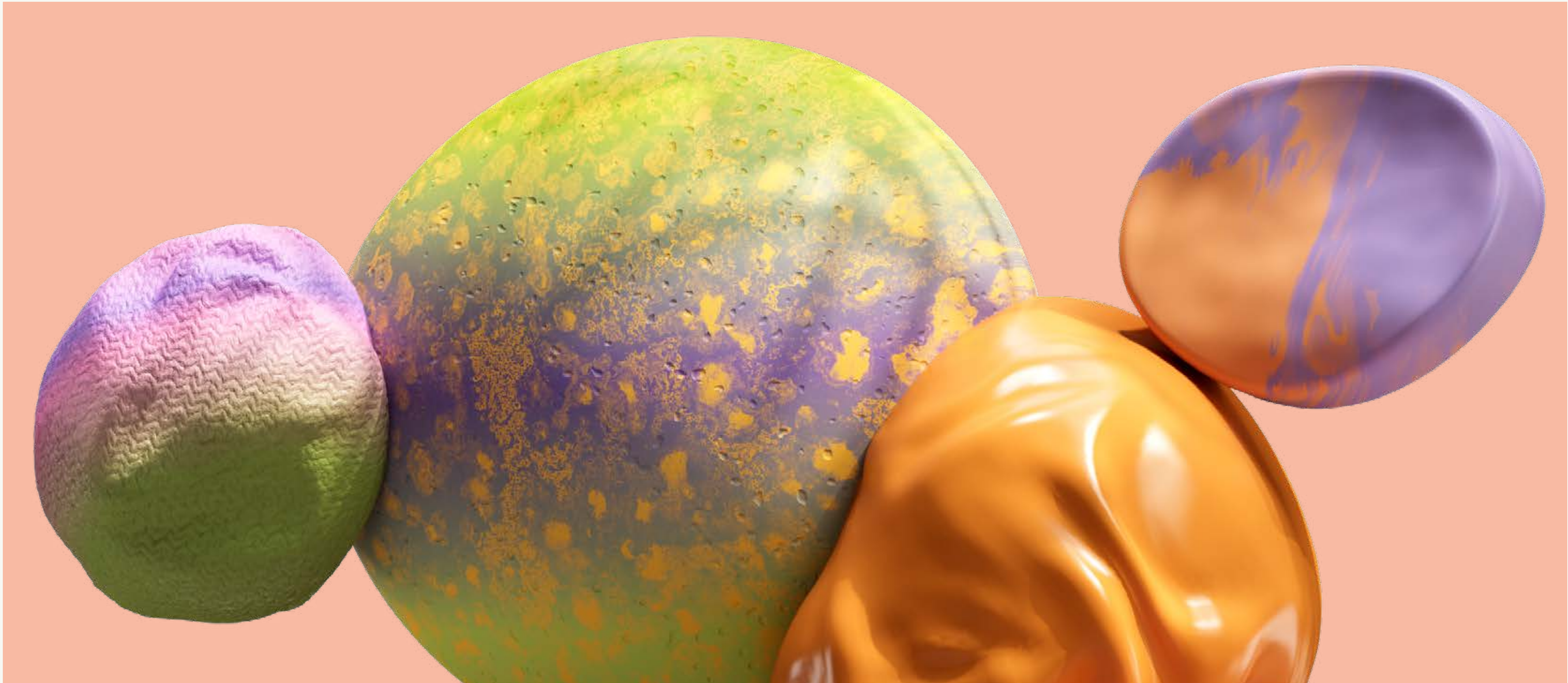
Generally, people are after simulations, lighting and texturing, and art direction. Once you put all of that together, you're essentially making a film, so the more skills that you can harness, the more you're becoming just a digital filmmaker. At that point, more top level skills are required, like communication skills and direction. Then you're really into the realms of more traditional filmmaking - organising how the shots should be put together, building a narrative, and delivering films.





**Q** Is most of your talent in-house, or do you also work with freelancers?

**A** We're constantly working with freelancers alongside our designers in-house. We're not a big studio, so everybody has to chip in where they can. We do have one specialist, but the rest of our designers are generalists, so they have to solve problems and work across the board. Most of 3D is problem solving.





# TAKEAWAYS

## 3D is in high demand across a range of sectors

The majority of independent creatives in our survey said there is currently high demand for 3D skills. While requests most commonly come from the tech sector, other types of clients (e.g. in the fashion sector) are starting to ask about 3D too.

## Creatives want to see 3D skills across disciplines

The vast majority (83%) of people surveyed who are responsible for hiring creatives look out for 3D skills when hiring a non 3D-specific role. The leaders will hire freelance talent if they need to, but are eager to see 3D skills among members of their team.

## 3D generalists are on the rise

As it gets easier for people to learn a range of 3D skills, 3D artists are becoming less specialised. Having skills in other design disciplines is also an advantage for creating authentic work, tackling a brief and problem solving.





# 3 | The Future in 3D







The creative industries can be guilty of getting obsessed with shiny new things. Is 3D design another passing fad, or is it set to play a broader role in our future? With insights from industry experts within Adobe and Random Studio, we find out where 3D is going and how to avoid getting left behind.



# 97%

Almost all of the 88 creatives in our survey (97%) expect to see demand for 3D skills increase in the future.

When asked why, people said:

The digital and physical worlds are merging (e.g. the metaverse, digitalisation, NFTs, digital art, digital avatars, and AR/VR). Now you can show clients how products will look via 3D mockups.

3D design tools are getting quicker, cheaper and easier to use. Free tutorials on YouTube are lowering the barriers to entry (although you need spare time to learn it).

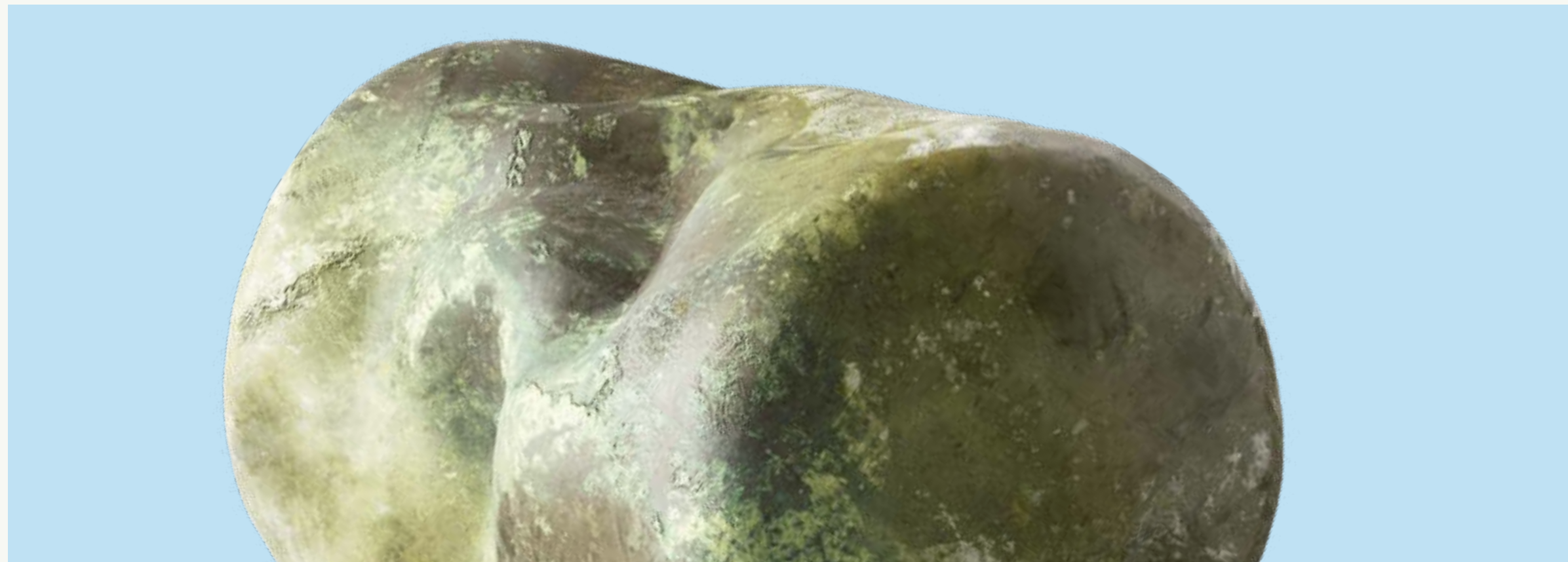
It offers aesthetic possibilities – 3D design looks great, and some said that it's the future of art.





**“3D is the future, it gives us the freedom to create what we want in any field,”**

said one respondent.



**“Our 3D team grew from one to five people in a year,”**

said a senior producer at a design agency.

**“3D is becoming a standard of mainstream commercial aesthetics, and there are more artists than ever,”**

said one creative director.





# 3D PREDICTIONS



## Fashion is expected to be the biggest growth industry for 3D design

73% of respondents listed fashion among their top three industries in which they expect 3D design to become more popular in the future, way ahead of media at 38%.

## 3D will move in-house

Over half of creatives in the survey (57%) believe that, in the future, it will be necessary for all designers to have some 3D skills.

## Skilling up will be widespread

69% of respondents think generalist agencies and studios will bring 3D skills in-house.







“Perfect photorealism will become more and more accessible, and whether to go for a conventional shoot or a CGI production will become almost only a matter of budget,”

said one creative at a 3D studio.

“By seeing how the technology is developing and becoming more user-friendly, it will almost feel like we are using a pen and paper,”

said an independent creator.



“The more accessible the software becomes, the more people of various backgrounds will be able to experiment with it. I feel like this accessibility will lead to more exploration and discovery,”

said a 3D artist.



# ADOBE SUBSTANCE Q&A

Frédéric Kohler,  
Paris, France

Few are as well placed to provide context on the boom of 3D design than Paris-based Frédéric Kohler, who has been working at the heart of 3D software for seven years. Frédéric was a sales director at industry-leading 3D tool Allegorithmic, before it was acquired by Adobe in 2019 to form Substance 3D. Here, Frédéric, who is now director of business development at Substance 3D, tells us why the company's new suite of 3D tools is set to transform the creative industries and beyond.





**Q** Why did Adobe decide it was important to add 3D tools to the Creative Suite?

**A** Adobe understood that the world of creativity was switching to 3D. Some industries have been using very complex 3D software for some time, such as gaming, VFX, or the automotive industry, which has been using 3D software in the manufacturing process.

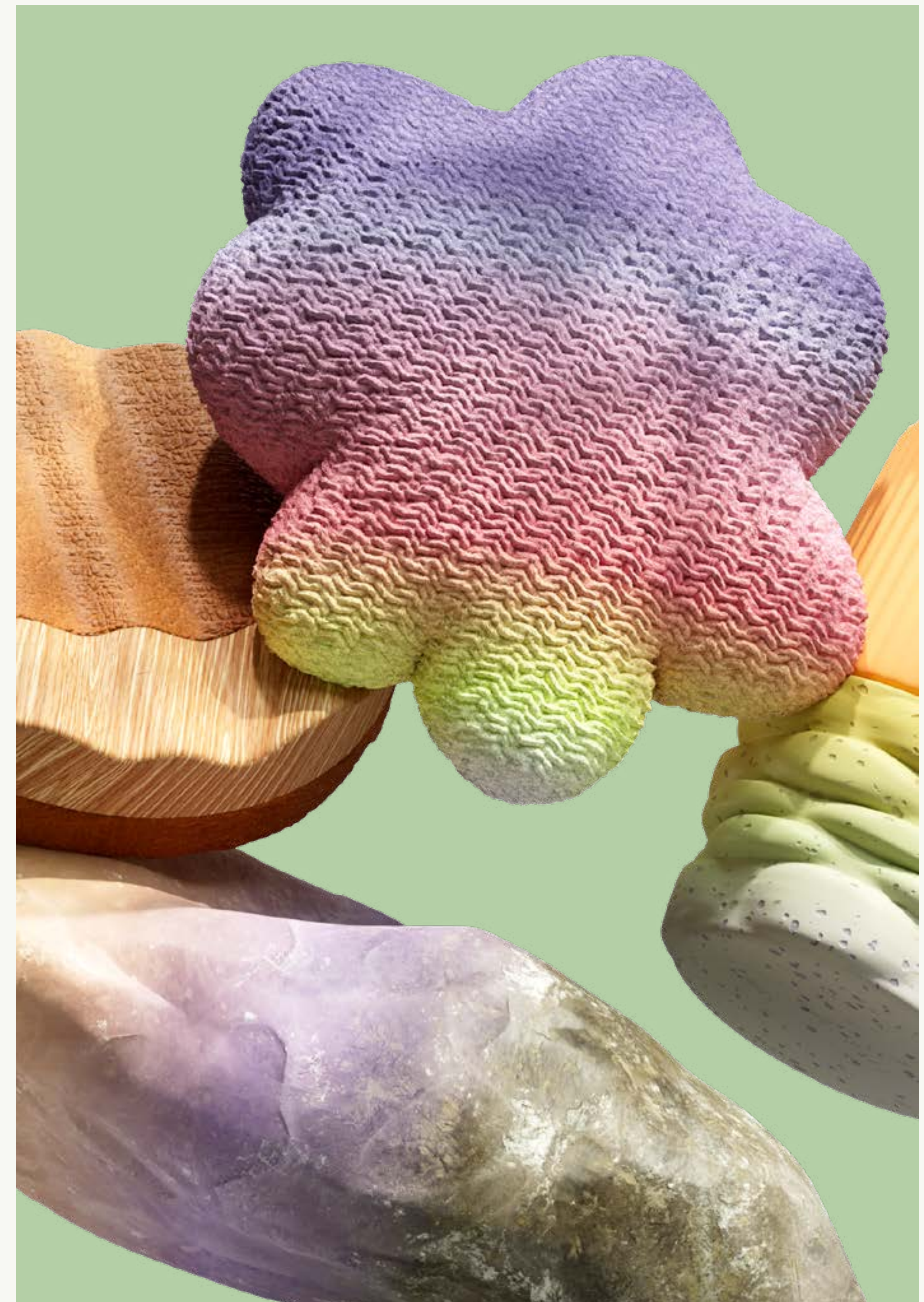
Now 3D is booming everywhere, in every industry, whether the sector was using 3D before or not at all. It's literally a revolution that is coming now - graphic designers are starting to understand that using 3D tools can help them to save time, save money, and do better work faster.

But even outside of the creative industry, it is exploding. For example, in medicine people are starting to train surgeons by simulating surgeries in VR. The same thing is happening in defence, where governments are creating immersive battlefield experiences to train troops in "real" conditions.

**Q** How is Substance 3D different from software that's already out there?

**A** Substance 3D provides the first end-to-end pipeline for 3D asset creation. From modelling to aggregating images or experiences in VR and AR, it has everything you'd need. Whatever 3D software you're already using, whether it's Houdini, Blender or Unreal Engine, for example, it will integrate with Substance 3D.

But most importantly, Substance 3D is designed to be easy for even 2D creatives to use.







**Q** Tell us more?

**A** So this is where the revolution is happening. Before Allegorithmic was acquired by Adobe, the product was mostly used by 3D artists. We had a few pieces of software: Substance Designer, which was very technical and advanced, and Substance Painter, which was easier but still required some background in 3D.

Since working with Adobe over the past three years, we've been creating Substance Stager - software designed to make photography virtual so that you don't have to create images in a studio. The way it works is super simple. We've also made Substance Sampler, which is a software for creating 3D materials. It can turn an image you took with your smartphone into a 3D material.

The idea was to make sure anybody could use these programmes with just some Photoshop experience. When you look at the UX and UI of both pieces of software, it looks very similar to Photoshop, so creatives will find it very familiar. For both programmes, the learning curve is just a few hours, even for people who've only worked in 2D.

Now, the creative crowd represents 18 million people globally, and we know at least five million of those would like (and are willing to pay) to be able to create images in 3D. Only a few (100,000) people were able to access and use the old generation of software. So this is really the start of something big.





**Q** Where do you think demand for 3D art is going to be the strongest?

**A** I think the next big sector for 3D is retail and ecommerce. With Sampler and Stager, we're not only talking about upskilling millions of people around the world, but we're talking about replacing photography. This can have a huge impact on ecommerce. If you look at a giant retailer like Amazon, they have 20 photography studios working around the clock to shoot all of their products. Now, you can make the products in 3D and create all of the different variations of materials and colours with just a click. Amazon already has hundreds of designers working to replace photography.

They don't have any other choice because they know that customers want to see at least eight to ten images of the product. Customers also want personalisation. For example, if they are buying a sofa, they want to see it in AR in their living room first. Plus, 3D is one of the best ways to save millions of dollars because photography is super expensive.

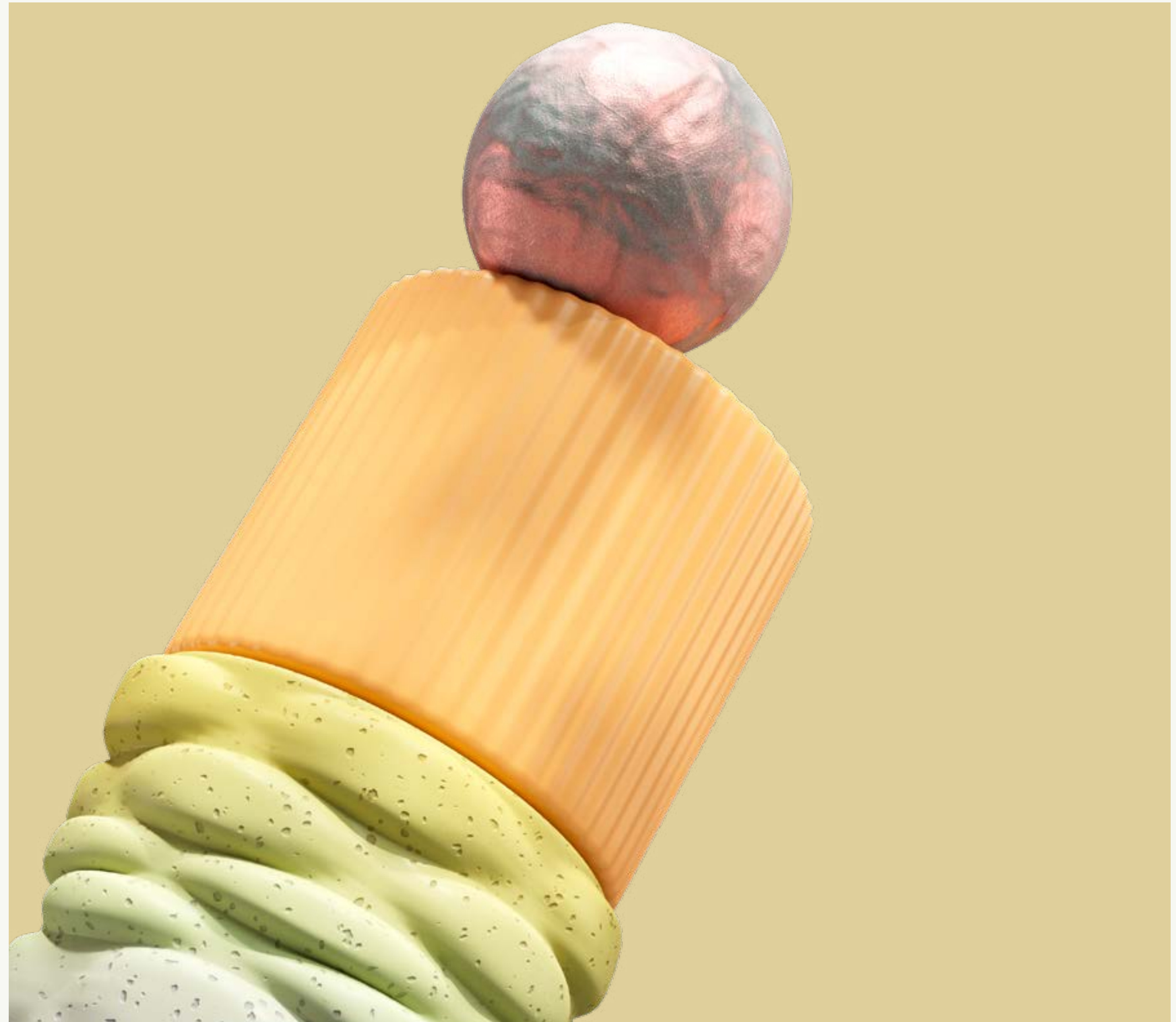
Then, obviously the metaverse is on everybody's lips. To be ready for the metaverse, brands will need a very comprehensive 3D pipeline to create any kind of asset. Soon it will explode and every customer will want to have an immersive virtual experience.



# STUDIO Q&A

Random Studio,  
Frédérique Albert-Bordenave and  
Kyle Kobel,  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Amsterdam-based Random Studio works at the cutting edge of experiential and spatial design. Working with a variety of spaces – from retail and pop-ups to installations and fashion shows – the studio creates experiences that feel pulled from a future dimension. Always aiming to trigger “a sense of wonder,” Random Studio’s roster of clients includes Alexander McQueen, Prada and Dom Pérignon. We caught up with the studio’s creative lead Frédérique Albert-Bordenave, plus senior creative and 3D department lead Kyle Kobel, to reflect on the future of 3D in the creative industries.





**Q** How does Random Studio work with 3D?

**A** Frédérique: I've been at Random Studio for around six years. In that time, we've always dabbled with 3D as a visual output, but when we started using 3D as a tool in our process, it became something really fundamental. Now it's unavoidable, we use 3D in every project; that's why Kyle started his initiative to build a proper 3D team.

Kyle: I now run a team of five people who are all 3D generalists. As a studio, we've been moving more towards experience and spatial design. The best way to visualise a lot of these projects, as we are developing them, is with 3D software.

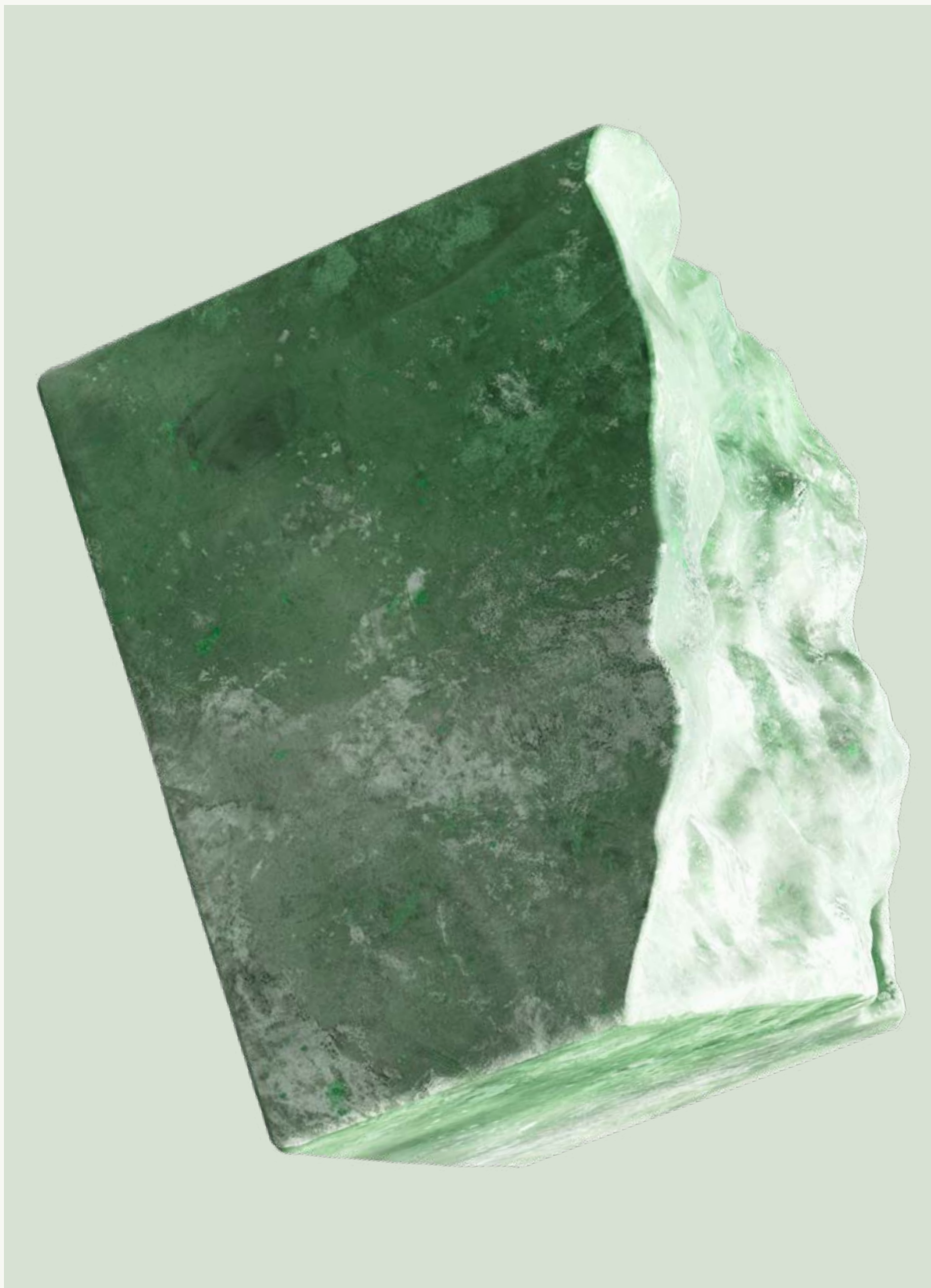
**Q** Can you tell us more about the benefits of using 3D in your design process?

**A** Kyle: It's so much easier to be able to show a client a 3D model or walk them through a space in VR. We've recently started using real-time engines, instead of offline renderers, so you can design in real-time and get immediate feedback.

Frédérique: 3D lets you see and show the client more things simultaneously. It means the client doesn't have to use their imagination to understand what you're going to create, and allows for less miscommunication. It can also help to manage their expectations.







**Q** Can you give an example of when you used 3D to develop a spatial project?

**A** Frédérique: We designed a shop window for Alexander McQueen in London. The aim was to launch their Curve bag with an installation inspired by the tide. We worked with Kyle and his team to animate individual bags.

Kyle: There's really no other way we could show the client what 350 moving bags suspended in a window would look like. So we went through a long process of animating all of these bags together to achieve different tidal effects and wave patterns.

**Q** Does showing work in 3D first have any downsides?

**A** Frédérique: It's always a bit of a gamble with clients. Sometimes they'll understand that you're showing them a mood, not a finished piece - but other times they'll get hung up on the details like, "why is this red?" when you're just trying to show them an idea.

That's why I think mixing elements and changing the types of 3D that you show clients can be useful; you could show them more of a sketch at the beginning, and then a more refined version at the end. It's good to visually build layers of understanding, instead of feeding them everything at once.

Kyle: There's definitely been a few occasions where we've pushed for an idea that we liked, rendered it beautifully, and the client said "no". Maybe the visuals didn't do it justice. If we'd held back and just talked the client through the idea with references, we might have pushed it through.



**Q** Do you agree with the people in our survey who believe that, in the future, all designers will need to work in 3D?

**A** Kyle: Yes. I wouldn't be surprised if there's a future in which people's ability to realise things in 3D is no more alien than drawing an idea down on a napkin. I think that's probably the reality that we're heading towards. Especially with the metaverse and the fact that everything will need to be commodified in the 3D space. If that's going to be the reality, then it makes sense to understand how to design in 3D, even just at a base level.

Clients are already expecting to see something fully realised in 3D, so that they can understand it immediately. It's becoming more like a standardised tool for the creative industry. If you don't know 3D, then you're gonna have some difficulty in the future.

Frédérique: In the future, all creatives, not just designers, will feel more comfortable if they are well versed in 3D. I don't work so much in 3D anymore in my position, but knowing it and understanding it helps me as a creative and as a colleague. I understand the language of 3D. It also manages my own expectations of when things can be ready.





# TAKEAWAYS

## Demand for 3D design will rise

The one thing almost everyone in our survey agreed on (97%) was that the demand for 3D skills is only going to increase. While 3D artwork itself is no doubt here to stay, the medium will have a broader role in the creative industries - as a tool for creatives to develop and communicate their ideas.

## Traditional creative skills will remain valuable

Developing ideas in 3D can have its downsides, and works best when combined with traditional methods. So there'll still be a place for traditional creative skills in the future, like sketching out an idea and bringing it to life with references.

## Creatives can get ahead by skilling up now

The majority of creatives in our survey think that every discipline will require 3D skills in the future. 3D is coming in-house and it's becoming part of the creative process. Skilling up now could land you ahead of the curve.





# Conclusion

Thanks to technology democratising access to 3D software and training, 3D design is transforming from a niche specialism to a mainstream form of creative expression. Whereas once 3D was dominated by men working in VFX or gaming, new kinds of artists are exploring the medium for the first time, including more women and non-binary creatives from varied disciplines. Different types of clients are also experimenting with 3D, most notably from the fashion and music industries. All this has led to swathes of inspiring, fresh takes on what can be achieved with 3D.

But 3D design is also starting to play a major role in the creative process. 3D visualisations are helping studios

develop their ideas and get them over the line. In the future, especially if the metaverse takes hold, creatives expect to see demand for 3D design to rise, and for the medium to become a dominant means of communication.

As the digital and physical worlds become more inextricable, it would be wise for any kind of creative to start learning 3D skills. But to really future-proof their careers, designers need to combine 3D skills with more traditional crafts, such as storytelling, composition and fulfilling a brief. 3D is after all, a creative tool. Triumphant in the virtual design world will be no different from the physical one, where it's the ideas, message and talent that count.





# About the survey

The survey conducted for this report was sent to creative professionals and agencies in March and April 2022. 88 people responded. 64% (56) identified as male, 30% (26) as female, 5% (4) preferred to self-identify and 2% (2) did not disclose their gender.

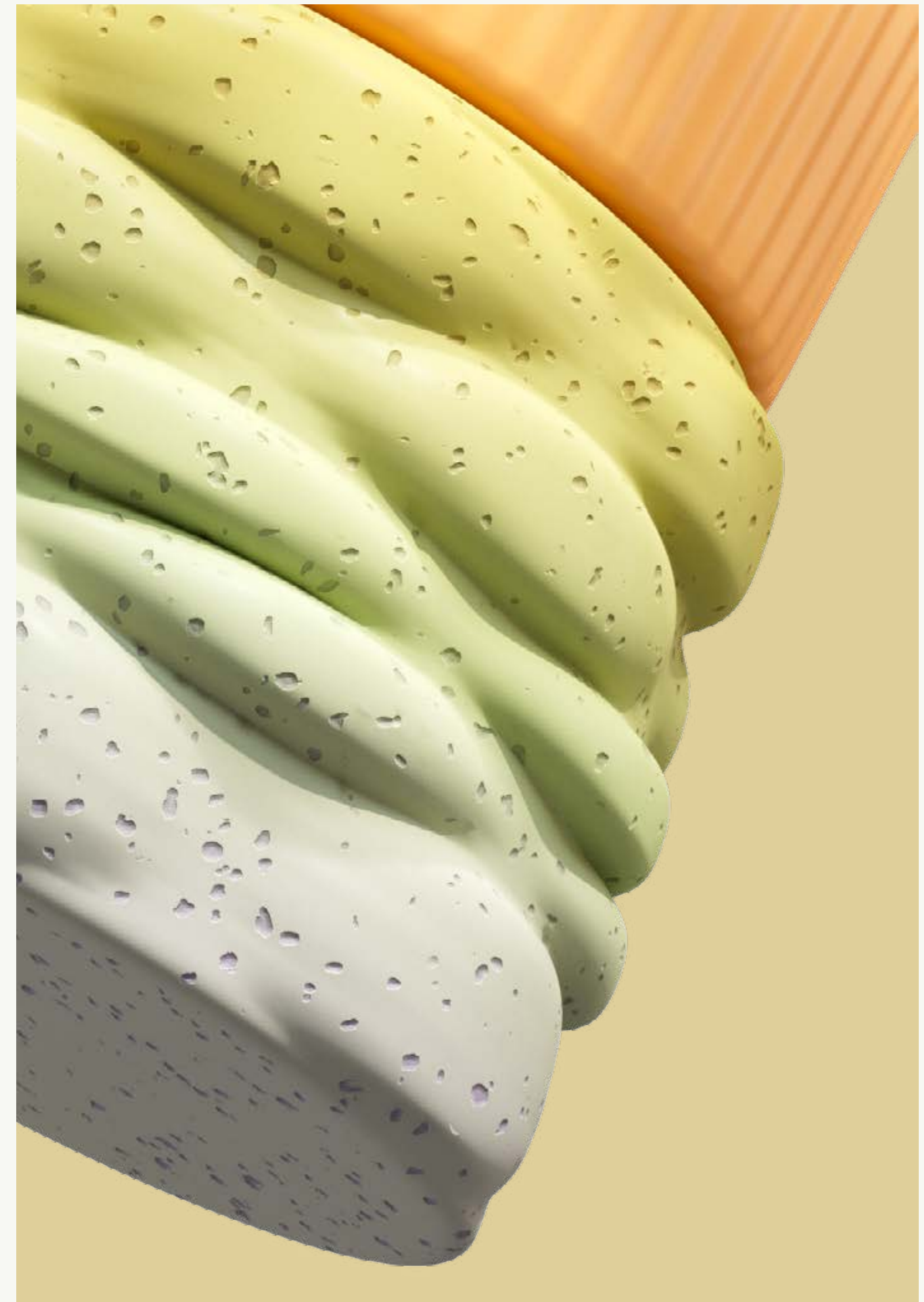
Respondents were based in 22 different countries, mostly in Europe. The most common were the UK (32 respondents, 36%), Germany (12, 14%) and France (9, 10%).

55% (48) of respondents described themselves as independent creators and 45% (40) said they worked in-house at a studio or agency, permanently or on a freelance basis.

Survey participants worked for a range of design, animation, specialist 3D, advertising and production agencies.

35% (31) described themselves as 3D artists, 26% (23) as creative directors and the remainder as art directors, animators, producers, designers, illustrators or other roles.

Almost three quarters of survey respondents were senior level and above; over half the respondents (51%) described themselves as head of their department and a further 23% (20) described themselves as senior level.





# Survey Participants

Thank you to those who took part in the survey to create this report.



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BlinkInk  
Bounty Studio  
Brink Helsinki  
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Connor Campbell Studio  
Daisy King Club  
Daniel Almagor  
Daniel Margunato  
David Martin  
David Padilla  
Design Lad  
Double Up Studio  
Drasik Studio  
DXR Zone  
Encho Enchev  
Eva Münnich  
Facultative Works  
Fon & Fa  
Foreal  
Frame  
Frantic  
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George Jasper Stone  
Grizzle  
Harriet Davey  
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KOD3D  
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Loulou João  
Luca Struchen  
Lucy Hardcastle Studio  
ManvsMachine  
Messieurs.ch  
MNFST  
Modem  
Mooni Studio  
Moth  
Nebula Studios  
No Shame  
Orbital Vision  
Panama Papers.Office  
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# Colophon

This 3D Skills Report was commissioned by Adobe, and written and produced by It's Nice That.



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