

VIDEO ESSAY WRITTEN COMPONENT

Part1

Start Point

We live in a time where products no longer speak for themselves. Instead, they are wrapped—layer upon layer—in design, narrative, and trust.

This project began with a simple question:

When we buy a product, what are we actually buying?

I started by using the zipper as a visual metaphor—a symbol quite literally designed to be opened. The moment we see a zipper, our minds immediately associate it with “what’s hidden inside.” So I began placing zippers on everyday objects, creating visual fractures.

This led me to wonder: objects are never just physical things.

What meanings do they carry?

What layers lie beneath a simple item?

That became my starting point for “unzipping” the value systems built into everyday consumer goods.

Part2

Informational layers

I deconstructed a range of branded products into four informational layers:

- **Surface Layer**
What we first see—packaging, color, appearance.
- **Experience Layer**
The narrative and sensory touchpoints that make the product feel worth buying.
- **Object Layer**
The actual material, function, and form of the product.
- **Structural Layer**
The hidden infrastructure of desire—why we want to own it.
(For example, buying a Jo Malone candle isn’t just about scent—it’s about purchasing a calm, elegant lifestyle that the brand suggests.)

Through this layered dissection, I realized:

We’re not really buying the product—we’re buying into its projected value.

Part3

Brand collaborations

Then I noticed something even more symbolic: brand collaborations. Collabs don't improve functionality. They add stacked identities to create desirability.

- A cheap plastic bag, when rebranded as a "Balenciaga collaboration," suddenly becomes exclusive.
- A basic pen, when paired with Gucci, transforms into a "collectible item."

So I asked:

How does collaboration distort our perception of objects?

As Jean Baudrillard writes in *Simulacra and Simulation*:

*"We live in a world where signs have replaced reality."
We no longer consume use-value, but the illusion of value.*

Part4

Fictional brand collaborations

That's why I created a series of **fictional brand collaborations**.

I mimicked how capitalism manufactures "must-have" status—taking extremely mundane, low-cost objects (an old phone, gloves, a pen) and dressing them in the high-fashion language of exclusivity.

I designed every detail:

Hang tags, product catalogs, mock ads, and fashion photos.

Not to say "this is fake"—but to push the illusion to its limit, to make the absurd look normal, and let the audience question for themselves:

What makes something worth buying?

Why Apple x Nokia?

In the end, I chose to co-brand Apple and Nokia.

These two represent two eras of consumer imagination—

Apple: the minimalist, cult-like tech brand of today.

Nokia: the nostalgic, obsolete symbol of the "feature phone" era.

Their forced collaboration is an **extreme interpretation** of brand identity superposition. It exposes the absurdity of stacking meaning without function.