

THE BRANDING OF ZARIN HERAT: REIMAGING AFGHAN SAFFRON THROUGH HERITAGE AND CRAFT

**A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of**

MASTER IN DESIGN

in

LIFESTYLE AND ACCESSORY DESIGN

by

MUNIRA BAHAR

(Roll No. 24/MDLD/03)

Under the Supervision of

Asst prof. Varun Singh



**DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN
DELHI TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
(Formerly Delhi College of Engineering)
Shahbad Daulatpur, Main Bawana Road, Delhi-110042. India
May, 2026**

(i)



DELHI TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
(Formerly Delhi College of Engineering)
Bawana Road, Delhi-110042

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I Munira Bahar (24/MDLD/03) hereby certify that the work which is being presented in the thesis entitled “The Branding of Zarin Herat: Reimagining Afghan Saffron Through Heritage and Craft” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Design, submitted in the Department of Design, Delhi Technological University is an authentic record of my own work carried out during the period from Jan/2026 to May/2026 under the supervision of Assistant Professor Varun Singh .

The matter presented in the thesis has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree of this or any other Institute.
on.

Candidate's signature



DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN
DELHI TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
(Formerly Delhi College of Engineering)
Bawana Road, Delhi-110042

CERTIFICATE BY THE SUPERVISOR

Certified that Munira Bahar (24/MDLD/03) has carried out their search work presented in this thesis entitled “ The Branding of Zarin Herat: Reimagining Afghan Saffron Through Heritage and Craft” for the award of Master of Design_from Department of Design, Delhi Technological University, Delhi, under my supervision. The thesis embodies results of original work, and studies are carried out by the student herself and the contents of the thesis do not form the basis for the award of any other degree to the candidate or to anybody else from this or any other University/Institution.

Signature
Mr.Varun Singh
Assis.Prof.

Department of Design,
Delhi Technological University,
Delhi

Place: Delhi
Date: 28/05/2026



DELHI TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
(Formerly Delhi College of Engineering)
Shahbad Daulatpur, Main Bawana Road, Delhi-42

PLAGIARISM VERIFICATION

Title of the thesis "The Branding of Zarin Herat: Reimagining Afghan Saffron Through Heritage and Craft"

Total Pages _____ Name of the Scholar: Munira Bahar

Supervisor

(1) _____

Department of Design

This is to report that the above thesis was scanned for similarity detection. Process and outcome is given below:

Software used: _____ Similarity Index: _____, Total Word Count: _____

Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to sincerely thank my supervisor, Assistant Professor Varun Singh, for his unwavering support, insightful criticism, and encouragement during this research. I was able to develop my thoughts more clearly and finish my task in a more deliberate and significant manner thanks to his guidance and encouragement.

Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. R. C. Singh, the department head, for his assistance and for creating an academic setting that promoted discipline, creativity, and learning throughout the project.

I am incredibly grateful to Delhi Technological University's Department of Design for providing me with the chance and platform to work on and carefully create this project.

Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to everyone who took part in my survey and helped me comprehend customer viewpoints, which really enhanced the research portion of this project.

Lastly, I would want to express my gratitude to my family and friends for their encouragement, tolerance, and help in finishing this thesis. Throughout this journey, their support provided me courage and self-assurance.

Munira Bahar

ABSTRACT

This project explores the designing of a culturally based and aesthetically advanced brand identity of ZARIN HERAT, a luxury brand of saffron inspired by the history of Herat, Afghanistan. The main aim of the project was to create a brand that would represent the Afghan saffron as a cultural as well as a craftsmanship and identity product besides a valuable product. The first objective of the project was to come up with a visual system that would not only capture the cultural and historical essence of Herat but also communicate the richness of saffron. In so doing, the company will be in a position to introduce the Afghan saffron to consumers in India and other foreign markets in a manner that is meaningful, memorable and current.

This project explores the development of a culturally-based and aesthetically advanced brand identity to ZARIN HERAT, a luxury brand of saffron that is inspired by the history of Herat, Afghanistan. The main idea of the project was to create a brand that represents the Afghan saffron as a representation of culture, craftsmanship, and identity, in addition to being a valuable product. The first objective of the project was to design a visual system to not only capture the cultural and historical importance of Herat, but to also communicate the richness of saffron. In so doing, the company will strive to package Afghan saffron to its Indian and other foreign customers in a manner that is meaningful, memorable and current. The outer frame of the logo, which provides the mark with a powerful sense of place and heritage, was inspired by the pointed arches of the traditional architecture of Herat, and its large shapes, such as the huge shapes of the Friday Mosque of Herat in particular.

The pattern was formed under the influence of Timurid manuscript painting, which evolved into an important means of expression of the cultural identity of Herat beyond the architecture. The effects of this influence are two visual layers, one a narrative heritage illustration influenced by the narrative aspect of manuscript painting and the other by the influence of manuscript borders and ornament. The illustration was inspired by the journey of saffron, its growing, picking, making preparation, and selling. This enabled the visual system to pass on a more significant story of labour, values and cultural continuity besides adornment.

The colour scheme was achieved by combining the product and the location. Blue shades are inspired by Timurid tiles and the medieval architecture of Herat; the use of ivory to provide a touch of softness and balance using a manuscript feel; deep crimson was based on the saffron threads, and the use of golden tones was a symbol of rarity and the meaning of the word Zarin. The typographic choices supported the brand throughout with elegance, readability and a sense of timelessness.

To gain deeper insights into how the Indian audiences perceive the saffron, the desire in high-end presentation, and receptivity to branding based on heritage, the project also included a consumer study. The findings confirmed the hypothesis that saffron can be placed as a product of offering, quality, and culture on top of being a food additive. It resulted in an extension of the ultimate brand applications into presentation materials, stationery and packaging.

The final product of the project is the cohesive corporate identity that balances between tradition and modern design, emotion and clarity, heritage and simplicity. Afghan saffron is depicted as an account of persistence, beauty, and ethnic pride as opposed to a mere product by ZARIN HERAT. This project transforms branding into a form of reintroducing and preserving the Afghan heritage in a fashion that would attract modern consumers in most market places.

Contents

CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION	II
SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATE	III
PLAGIARISM VERIFICATION	IV
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	V
ABSTRACT	VI
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
1 CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 ABOUT THE PROJECT	2
1.2 PROJECT BRIEF	4
2 CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	21
1.1 RESEARCH PART AND SURVEY	21
3 CHAPTER 3 DESIGN AND ANALYSIS OF SYSTEM.....	24
3.1 THE DESIGN PART	24
3.2 PATTERN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.....	26
3.3 PROCESS AND RATIONAL	28
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	29
8. REFERENCES	30

LIST OF FIGURES

S.No	Title	Page.no
1	Timurid manuscript	7
2	Friday(great) mosque of Herat.	7
3	Logo exploration	8-9
4	Timurid manuscripts of Herat	10
5	primary pattern	11
6	Secondary pattern	11-12
7	Packaging design	13-14
8	Business card	15
9	Stationary	15-16

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT THE PROJECT

ZARIN HERAT is a branding project of a luxury Afghan saffron brand inspired by artistic and cultural heritage of Herat. The purpose of the project was to present saffron as something more than a high-quality ingredient, or spice. It was seen as an item that was a symbol of identity, talent, history and care. The project has been based on the connection between the product and place since saffron is one of the most valuable products in Afghanistan and Herat is famous due to its saffron as well as its rich cultural heritage.

It was aimed at developing a brand that is easy to understand by a contemporary customer and which would be so embedded in the Afghan culture. The project explores the idea of how legacy can affect the entire identity of a brand, in terms of logo, pattern, colour, typography and narrative, rather than the consideration of heritage as an ornament. Besides ensuring that the brand is attractive to the customers in India and other overseas markets, the aim was to create a visual language that appears to be sophisticated and meaningful.

The development of the project involved brand thinking, experimenting with design, and cultural research. The old buildings of Herat, Persian calligraphy, Timurid manuscript art, and the aesthetic values of the saffron were mentioned. These influences created a brand identity that was delicate, valued, patient and refined. The name of the brand, ZARIN HERAT, was selected to give the brand name a sense of richness and location; Herat gives the brand its identity as a city that is beautiful, craftsman and culturally memory and Zarin gives the brand name a sense of something golden and priceless. The creation of the logo that would possibly be a mixture of the brand name, the saffron shape and the spirit of Herat in one symbol was also a big part of the project. It was later renamed Zarin, three saffron threads because of an inquiry into Khata Shekasteh, a traditional Persian calligraphic style. The art of Timurid manuscripts became a great source of inspiration because the design process was expanded to the development of patterns.

This enabled the brand to express Herat in terms of artistic heritage, narration, and decoration in the form of building.

The concept also considered the perception of modern customers towards saffron. It was essential to present saffron in a manner that appears authentic and at the same time be friendly, elegant and unique since the brand is targeted at broader markets. Consequently, ZARIN HERAT emerged as a brand that could manage to maintain heritage in a modern way. Selling saffron is not the only activity that entails selling the product, but rather creating an identity that grants the product the respect it deserves, given that it has a rich cultural diversity that people must enjoy.

The final aim of the project is to apply design to reintroduce Afghan saffron. It makes a grounded and present day brand by combining product, legacy and storytelling. ZARIN HERAT is an effort to embrace the creativity and cultural diversity of Herat at the same time conveying the value of saffron with branding words..

1.2 Project Brief

1.2.1 Project Title

“The Branding of ZARIN HERAT: Reimagining Afghan Saffron Through Heritage and Craft “

1.2.2 Aim

My projects objective is to transform ZARIN HERAT into a brand name of saffron that people can be really identified with. The thing about saffron is that it is a special product. Individuals take saffron very carefully. ZARIN HERAT All about saffron and there is much history and tradition, behind ZARIN HERAT and Afghan saffron. The initiative intends to demonstrate that Afghan saffron is not an expensive item but it is an element of Afghan art and tradition as Ill.

This project is inspired by the city of Herat which is a place endoId with much beauty, history and art. It is aimed to make a brand that people will like and not forget, a brand that will be true to the city of Herat and Afghan saffron. The project also desires to make the saffron a bit more familiar to people all over the world in a manner that is both real and pleasing to the eye.

The brand will be accessible in India and other nations because the project is considering how design can assist individuals in believing and valuing the quality and cultural worth of saffron. The project would like to make a brand that is not only pleasant to view but has a wonderful story and meaning behind it so people can adore the use of Afghan saffron not just to use it.

The project is also interested in knowing how old Afghan and Persian art can be utilized in branding. The brand name will take the form of calligraphy buildings in Herat, old book art and the form of saffron threads to demonstrate that it is a product with a rich history and sophistication. Ultimately the project envisions achieving the following by developing a brand that venerates the Afghan saffron, commemorates the spirit of Herat and leaves an impression on people so that it can shine in this day and age market with the confidence and pride of the Afghan saffron and ZARIN HERAT.

1.2.3 Objectives

The main goal of this project is to create a brand image for ZARIN HERAT. This brand image should show the value, beauty and cultural importance of saffron. I want ZARIN HERAT to feel thoughtful and special not like any other product.

- * To achieve this I need to create a name, logo, colors, typography, patterns and brand applications that all work together.

- * The second goal is to show how ZARIN HERAT and saffron are connected to Herat.

- * Herat is famous for its saffron. It also has a history of art and culture. I want to use Herat as inspiration, for ZARIN HERAT not as a place.

- * This way ZARIN HERAT will have a sense of origin and be part of a bigger cultural story.

I also want to take visual references and make them modern.

- * I will look at calligraphy Herat's buildings and old Timurid manuscript art.

- * Our goal is to make ZARIN HERAT look rooted in heritage but still modern and appealing to today's consumers.

Another goal is to make people aware of and appreciate Afghan saffron more.

- * I will create a brand experience that shows how special ZARIN HERAT is.

- * This includes packaging, storytelling and visual identity.

- * I want to show that Afghan saffron is a high-quality product with a heritage and emotional value.

Every design decision for ZARIN HERAT from the logo to the patterns has a reason behind it.

- * I want ZARIN HERAT to look good but to tell a meaningful story about saffron, Herat and Afghan heritage.

Lastly I want to show how branding can express culture.

- * ZARIN HERAT is not a product; it's a way to preserve and share Afghan heritage.

- * I believe design can help make heritage feel relevant and accessible today.

- * This project is, about branding ZARIN HERAT and also about using design to give form to identity, memory and place.

- * ZARIN HERAT is a way to share the story of saffron and its cultural importance.

1.2.4 Scope

My project is on developing an identity, on behalf of ZARIN HERAT. This is a brand that is selling saffron. My source of inspiration was the heritage of Afghanistans.ZARIN HERAT brand aims to demonstrate its origins.The reason why ZARIN HERATs products are saffron.its special is because it is of Afghan origin.Those who operate ZARIN HERAT wish to demonstrate how beautiful the culture of Herat is in the form of a brand. I had a strategy to build the brand so that all its elements can be related to the culture that the product is associated with, as Ill as the appearance of the brand.

The project has a main parts:

1. Learning about the culture

I began by getting to know as much as possible about Afghanistan, and Herat, in particular. I observed the art, the history and how people in Herat utilize saffron. I also examined writing pictures in Persian during the Timurid era the old structures in Herat and the appearance of saffron. This allowed us to learn about the culture and feelings, behind ZARIN HERAT. These are the things that I used to inspire our design.



Figure 1:Timurid manuscript.

Source : the metropolitan museum of art

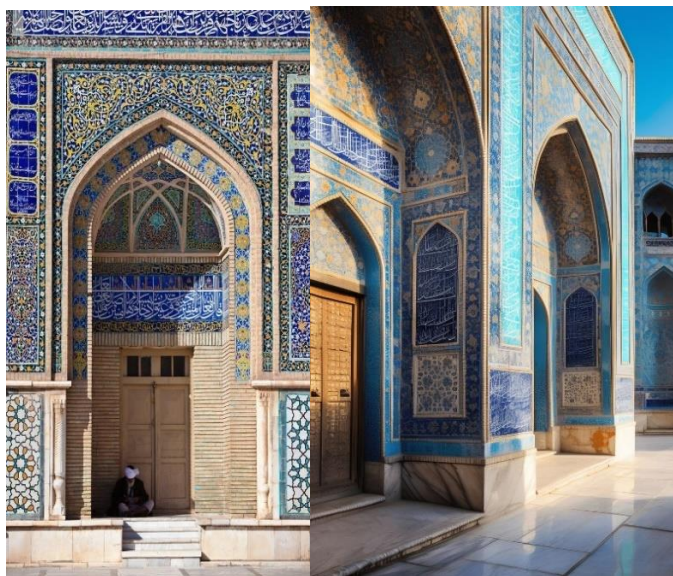


Figure 2: Friday(great) mosque of Herat.

Source : wikipedia

2. Brand. Concept Development

I developed a brand name and concept, of a product that actually feels like it is real and associated to the product as ill as the origin of the product. I named it ZARIN HERAT as ZARIN HERAT sounds like something and it is closely associated with Herat.

Saffron was the central theme of ZARIN HERAT. Saffron is a music of tradition and worth and civilisation. I ensured that ZARIN HERAT is a representation of the heritage and worth and refinement of saffron.

3. Logo. Finalization

The name of the brand is inscribed in a logo I created. It appears to be saffron. It is also revealed in the logo what Herat is about. I experimented with numerous designs. I Ire writing a type of writing called Khate Shekasteh. I also had threads which resemble the saffron color and arches which resemble the Herat buildings.

I wanted to create a logo that is perfect in ZARIN HERAT. I desired the logo to depict the relationship betIen ZARIN HERAT and saffron and Herat. The logo ought to be an illustration of ZARIN HERAT and what it all is, about which is saffron and Herat.

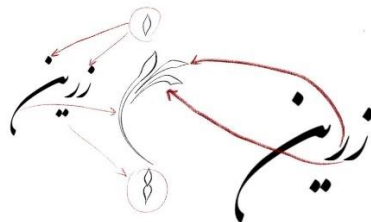


Figure 3: Logo Exploration.

Source: The author.

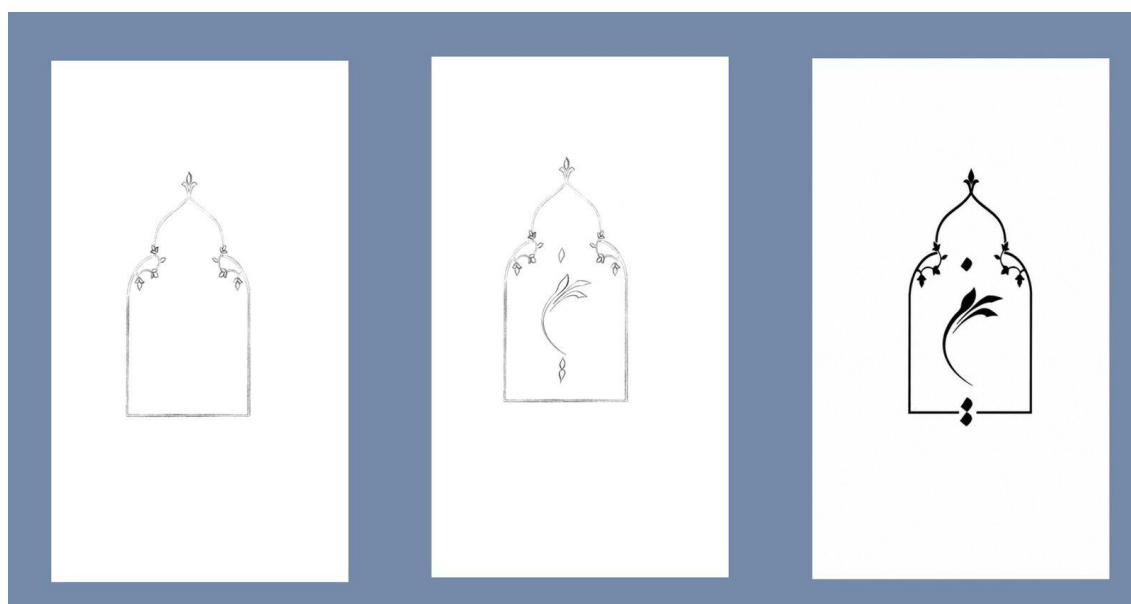
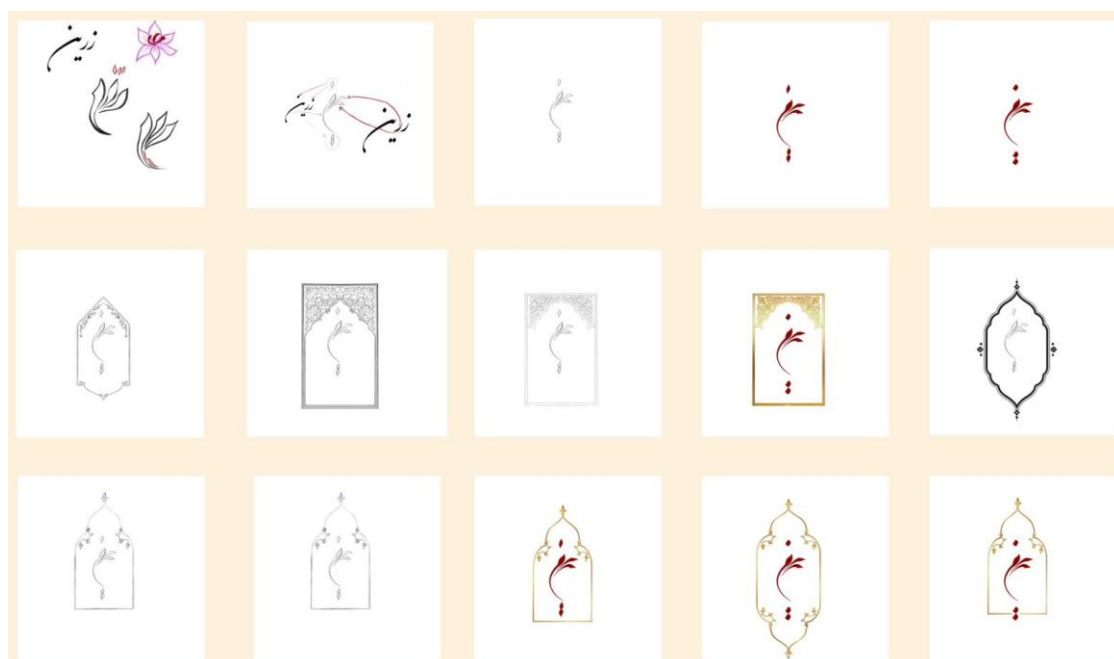


Figure 3: Logo Exploration.

Source: The author.

(9)

4. Process of creating Palette of Colours

Using red blue colours, gold and ivory I came up with a colour system which makes sense. These colours are selected as they are reminiscent of saffron threads, which is the meaning of the word Zamin in Herat and the old tiles and buildings. I wanted ZARIN HERAT to feel prosperous, in balance and unity with its culture. These colours assist in doing that.

5. Pattern Design

I created a few patterns of ZARIN HERAT based on old manuscript art and Herat's art history.

I created a layout and drawing that demonstrates the process of saffron after it has grown and when it is harvested, ready and sold.

All our patterns revolve around demonstrating ZARIN HERAT's heritage and affection, towards saffron.



Figure 4: Timurid manuscripts of Herat
Source : the metropolitan museum of art

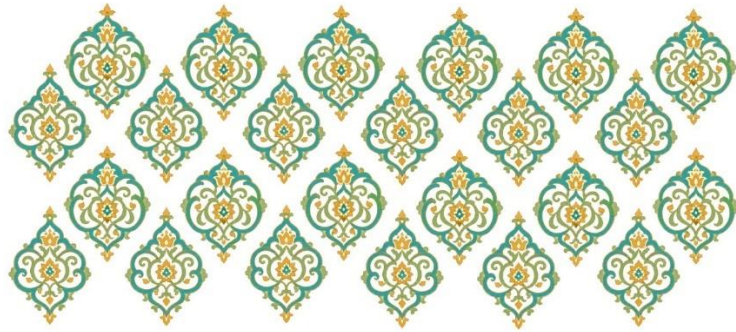


Figure 5: Primary pattern
Source: The author

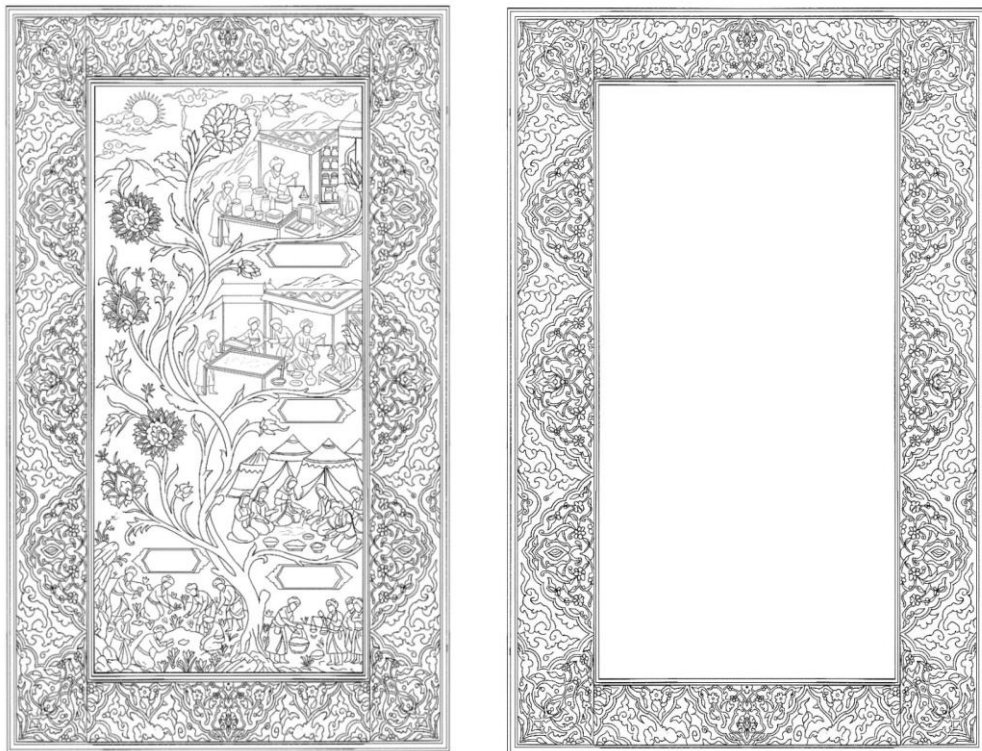


Figure 6: Secondary pattern.
Source: The author.



Figure 6: Secondary pattern.
Source: The author.

6. Typography Selection

I selected some fonts which are easy to read and appear classy.

These fonts are suitable to ZARIN HERAT's style. Will be utilized in logos, packaging, presentations and other brand materials to ensure that everything looks the same and elegant.

It is aimed to have a still developing visual language that serves ZARIN HERAT.

7. Packaging Design

I transferred the ZARIN HERAT brand name to the packaging details, such as labels, boxes and containers. I did not simply view packaging as a surface. It helped us also to narrate the story of ZARIN HERAT and its cultural spirit. I had an intention of conveying the worth of the product and what ZARIN HERAT is.

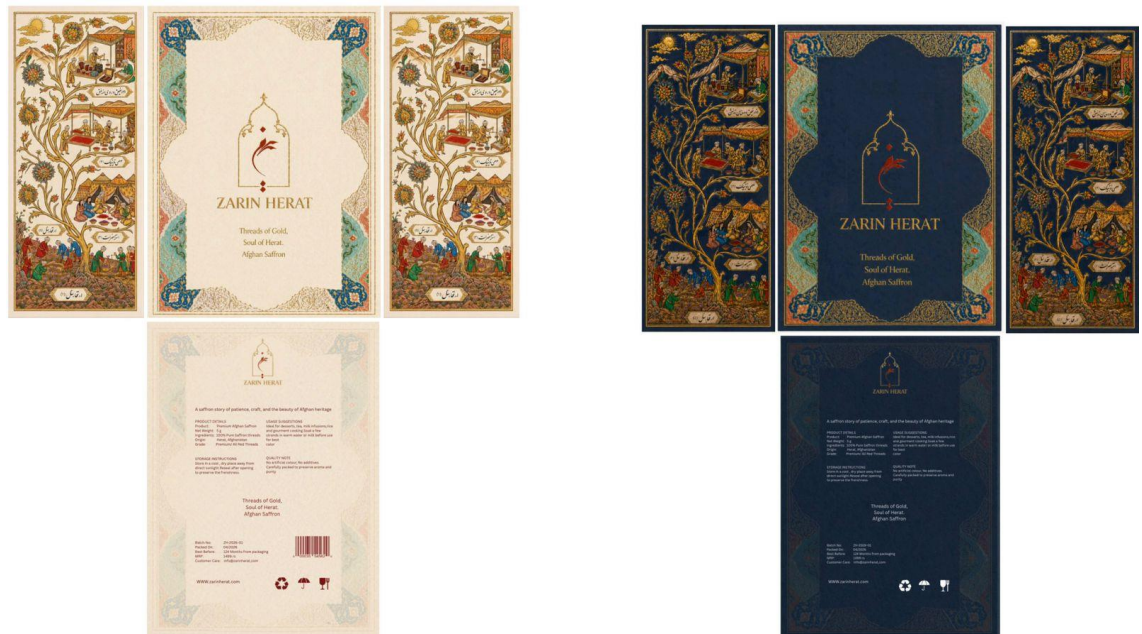


Figure 7: Packaging Design.
Source : The author.

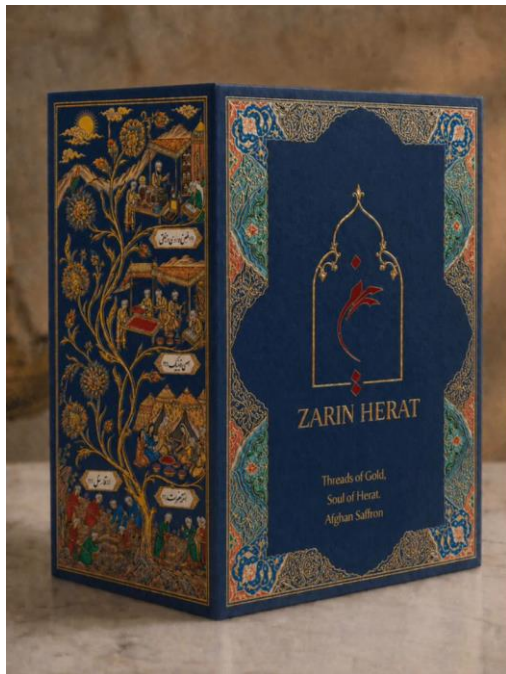
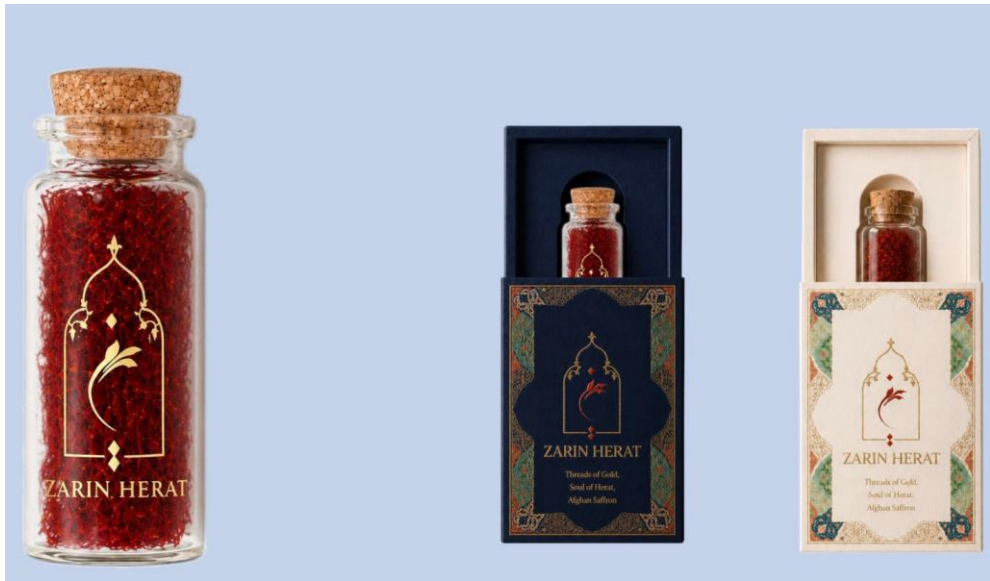


Figure 7: Packaging Design.
 Source : The author.
 (14)

8. Stationery And Supporting Things

I create something, such as business cards and stickers with our brand on them. I also create items to be used in presentations and other visual items that represent what our brand looks like on things. This element of prove that our brand would be good on lots of things and it will always look the same.



Figure 8: Business card.
Source : The author.



Figure 9: Stationery.
Source : The author.
(15)



Figure 9: Stationery.

Source : The author.

9. final thesis and presenting

I prepare all I did and place it into a large piece of paper and a presentation. This is what I learnt the thoughts I thought I had what I attempted why I made the decisions I made. What I came up with. This section of the project brings everything together in order to have a record of how I created our brand.

1.2.5 Expected Deliverable

A brand identity system of ZARIN HERAT, a high quality Afghan saffron, is a deliverable of this project. I intend to design a brand that unites tradition, value of the products and contemporary branding.

The project deliverables include:

- * A finalized brand name
- * A logo system
- * A colour palette

- * A typography selection

- * A pattern language inspired by Herats heritage

The brand story will be supported by a narrative heritage illustration that shows the journey of saffron.

The deliverables also include:

- * Packaging design, for saffron

- * Stationery

- * Supporting brand applications

These applications will demonstrate the brands flexibility, consistency and storytelling potential across touchpoints.

The final project will include:

- * A documented design process

- * A thesis/report

- * A presentation

My report will include research section, concept development, visual explorations, reason and concluding results. I would like to introduce ZARIN HERAT as a branding project which is aesthetically elegant, culturally significant and appropriate to the contemporary audience.

ZARIN HERAT brand identity system will be a demonstration of heritage, product value and contemporary branding. ZARIN HERAT brand will be a story through identity.

1.2.6 Methodology

I was very organized in working on this project. I began with research. Relied on that to guide my design decisions. My wish was to make ZARIN HERAT become real and meaningful. I also wanted it to be really good and associated with saffron and the city of Herat.

I broke the process down into stages:

1. Research & Cultural Study

Our first lesson was about saffron and the city Herat. I went sightseeing the city art and architecture. Studied Persian calligraphy. I even studied manuscripts and how saffron is applied. This enabled us to learn the culture and history of the city and made our design decisions.

2. Brand Strategy Development

Once I conducted my research I clarified what ZARIN HERAT is all about. I made decisions on the kind of values and personality of the brand. I wanted ZARIN HERAT to feel valuable and be part of Herat culture. I also determined how I wanted individuals to experience the brand upon interacting with it.

3. Visual Exploration

During this phase I generated numerous visual concepts about ZARIN HERAT. I went playing with the logo. Attempted to write the name Zarin in various forms with Persian calligraphy. I was also inspired by the form of saffron threads and Herat architecture.

I studied manuscripts and illustrations to find ideas to use as patterns and elements of storytelling.

4. Design Refinement

I found a lot of ideas and settled on the strongest ones and developed them. I finished the logo by transforming the name Zarin into three threads of saffron and framing it based on Herat arches. I also chose a color palette and typography that complemented the brand identity.

5. Pattern & Narrative Development

During this stage I evolved a pattern and narrative components to expand the brand language. Our design was made on the basis of ancient manuscripts and an illustration narrating the saffron story. This contributed to making the brand identity even more beautiful and meaningful.

6. Brand Application

I used the brand identity in such aspects as packaging, labels and stationery. This assisted us to visualize how the brand would be functioning in life and how it would convey its story.

7. Research Validation & Documentation

A survey was done to determine the reaction of people towards saffron as a premium product. This assisted us in justifying our design choices. I had also written down the procedure in a thesis and a presentation that brought it together. This was a documentation of the project start to finish, our research, design choice and final results. ZARIN HERAT had become a brand, and had a strong identity.

Brand Personality

ZARIN HERAT enjoys a very nice brand personality. It has a great attachment to its history. The brand is as saffron. Very useful, simple in structure. It is a time consuming and prudent process to make.

ZARIN HERAT is not a brand; it has a modest, graceful style that is derived by its meaning, craftsmanship and cultural background.

In its essence ZARIN HERAT resembles a warm brand. It is cooking with the spirit of Herat and shows saffron in a beautiful and sincere manner. All the components of the brand including the logo and the patterns depict a mindful and civilized personality.

The brand is timeless as Ill. Although it has been expressed in a manner that it is nonetheless closely tied to tradition and its location. ZARIN HERAT appreciates being real rather than being glitzy. It appreciates beauty based on a tale, rather than mere appearance. This renders ZARIN HERAT to be high-end and intimate.

On the whole, ZARIN HERAT can be portrayed as a brand with its roots. It celebrates tradition with sensitivity, elegance and sophistication. ZARIN HERAT is a brand.

Mission

The vision of ZARIN HERAT is to demonstrate to people what Afghan saffron is about using a brand that values its history the manner it is produced and how beautiful it is. ZARIN HERAT is determined to ensure that a bit of Herat is incorporated in whatever it does today so that people can feel like they are receiving something which is real, nice and worthwhile.

Vision

ZARIN HERAT vision is to be an image of what it is like to be an Afghan with the help of saffron to share the nice things the rich things and the cultural spirit of Herat with people in India and elsewhere. ZARIN HERAT aims to develop a brand that will never be forgotten but will always be special and will always be linked to the origin, in history.

CHAPTER 2

The research part is about understanding people who buy food and gifts in India.

Market Survey: Understanding Indian Premium Food & Gifting Consumers

I conducted a survey to find out what people feel about saffron and how they purchase it and whether they prefer brands that are related to traditions. I am curious how people perceive saffron not as the one they use but also as how it looks, how it is used as a gift and how people feel about it. As I said above, ZARIN HERAT is a brand that incorporates heritage to bring saffron to the Indian population and other nations I had to find out whether people will be interested in such a brand.

Objective

My question was to understand how individuals in India between the ages of 18-35 years are with saffron. Would they be interested in a brand that is a combination of old Afghan ideas, nice packaging and stories, about the past? I also wanted to know what makes people make decisions to purchase saffron such as whether it is of good quality, the origin, the way it is packaged and what the brand claims to be about itself.

Sample Group

Total respondents: 150

Age group: 18–35 years

Location: Urban cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune and on

Profile: I am talking about college students, young professionals, people who buy gifts and consumers who like premium food products

Survey Findings

The questionnaire revealed that many individuals are already familiar with saffron. Actually 82 percent of those I surveyed indicated that they use or purchase saffron on a regular basis. 18 Percent responded that they do not purchase saffron. This informs us that saffron is an existing product to many individuals. It is not a unique thing.

When I inquired people about where they purchase saffron, 47 percent of people purchased it online. This is where people normally purchase saffron. Subsequently, that 25 percent indicated that they purchase it in specialty food stores, 18 percent in supermarkets and 10 percent in grocery stores. This demonstrates that individuals prefer purchasing saffron in locations that are convenient to visit and are in a pleasant setting.

People are also very concerned about the packaging and presentation of the was saffron. 69 Percent of the individuals I intervield noted that packaging and its appearance matter a lot. 28 Percent responded that they are somewhat important and 3 percent that they are not important. It demonstrates us that the manner of presentation of a saffron brand may leave an impression in people.

Individuals also liked the concept of a brand founded on tradition and heritage. When I ask them that whether they would give a chance to a brand that is tradition inspired 83 percent answered yes 13 percent answered maybe and 5 percent answered no. This demonstrates that individuals are willing to give a brand with a narrative and significance a go.

I also enquired on what people like a saffron brand. The significant fact was that the saffron is good in quality and pure. This was said by 72 Percent of people. Following that 68 percent answered the region of origin of the saffron was important and about the packaging 55 Percent liked it and 48 percent liked the story behind the brand. 44 Percent replied to us that the price matters and 40 percent responded that the reputation of the brands is important. What it teaches us is that the most important thing to people is trust and quality. Another thing they prefer is a brand with a good story and appearance. When I questioned whether or not people would consider saffron a gift with a package 67 percent said yes 29 percent said maybe and only 4 percent said no. This demonstrates that saffron could be regarded as a luxury product and a pleasant gift provided it is properly packed.

Lastly I inquired of what packaging would make people like saffron more. 43 Percent responded that they prefer cultural packaging. 38 Percent indicated that they prefer decorative packaging and 19 percent preferred minimalistic and modern packaging. This is significant as it demonstrates that individuals prefer culturally and traditionally oriented saffron packaging, as compared to a simple one.

Conclusion

This means that the survey findings inform us that Indians are fond of the concept of a saffron brand that looks and feels special. They believe that saffron is something that is very expensive and they like to present it as a gift.. Only when the packaging and presentation is good. Individuals like it when the brand has a background and culture and they need to be assured that the brand is genuine and credible.

Insights

I have now heard that not only good quality saffron would make a brand successful. People are more concerned with the quality they are concerned with the origin and source of the saffron. They desire to hear the product story. Many people preferred that ZARIN HERAT saffron is made in a place and is Ill packaged. They prefer that the brand is related to its heritage. It informs us that ZARIN HERAT saffron fits in the market due to its purity and a rich culture, as Ill as appearance. It also demonstrates that the brand, which is associated with its tradition, can still be trendy, and people can do so in a considerate and contemporary manner.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 The Design Part

Logo Exploration

The brand name زرین was the first version to be used in the development of the logo of ZARIN HERAT. It is indeed a project concerned with the Persian culture and hence it was only natural to start with the name in its own script and not only the English version. In this manner the logo was culturally rooted and could build on the brands identity.

The word زرین in Khate Shekasteh is a beautiful and expressive Persian script, and I first examined it. I did not make too many changes in the script, it was close to the form I had. I wished to see how beautiful the calligraphy was. Whether the name would be a cultural element in itself. This was a classy and realistic version. It remained a more of a fancy word than a brand symbol.

I then thought of using the name with the saffron flower such that the logo would be more in touch with ZARIN HERAT being a saffron product. This helped us to establish a connection, between the written name on the one hand and the natural form of saffron on the other. It also provided us with the opportunity to create a logo that was symbolic and associated with the product, not a typed word. At last I discovered the course. I renamed it زرین in such a way that it appeared to be three threads of saffron. This was the solution, as it had two meanings: it was still the brand name but it also resembled the product. This rendered the logo more intimate and unique. It was tightly connected with the main concept of ZARIN HERAT. When the central calligraphic form became more evident I introduced a frame which was inspired by the historic architecture of Herat with its pointed arches. This assisted us to associate the form of saffron with the city. Thus the last direction was one that united the name, the product and the place in a single composition. It was also significant as the process of creating the logo allowed us to develop the logo step by step, beginning with the script and then evolving to a symbol and finally a form that articulates the core of ZARIN HERAT.

Final Logo Description

The last logo of ZARIN HERAT is one of the methods to respect the Afghan saffron and the cultural background of Herat. It combines the handwriting and the pretty form of saffron strings and it takes some ideas of the old buildings of the city as Ill. the aim was to make the logo which look nice and have the sense and it clearly says what the brand is and what it is selling and where it is made.

In the Persian word زرین zarin here is spelt in the center of the logo, with Khate Shekasteh, which is a traditional Persian script that appears pleasant and flowing. The term was altered to a bit to resemble three saffron strings. This has been done intentionally to allow the logo to have two meanings at the time. It can be interpreted as the brand name ZARIN HERAT. It may also indicate what is being sold by the brand, which is saffron. This renders the logo unique and related to the product.

The three threads of saffron indicate what ZARIN HERAT is like: delicate, valuable, careful and refined. They bend gently and accordingly the logo appears to be attractive and since it is founded on calligraphy it remains affiliated with the Persian art. The logo demonstrates that the saffron is not merely a product but also something significant and valuable to the culture.

The external component of the logo resembles the arches of buildings in Herats. This was to identify the brand with Herat more as Ill as to provide the saffron threads with a sense of place. It is as though it is a frame that maintains the brand to the city. It reminds us of the history, structure and memories of the city. This is not a logo of saffron is saffron, of Herat.

All these combine to create a soft and strong old and new, traditional and modern logo. The last design demonstrates that ZARIN HERAT is such a brand: a fine and significant appearance feels good and relates to culture and a great story to share about ZARIN HERAT.

3.2 Pattern Development Process

ZARIN HERAT pattern development began with the discovery of a language that would be compatible with the logo and reflect the artistic aspect of Herat to the brand identity. The current logo was already employing calligraphy, saffron colors and building structures to convey the brand such that the pattern needed to introduce something new to the tradition without replicating the same concept. This is what made us consider Timurid manuscript art, the borders, decorations and how stories are told in manuscripts of Herat.

Our research led us to two ideas. The initial thought was to develop a design which was inspired by the beautiful borders and decorations in Timurid manuscripts. This assisted us in developing a design language, which seems classy, cultural and could be reused numerous occasions on packaging and other branding materials. The second concept was to make an illustration which narrates a story, inspired by the manner in which manuscript paintings narrate a story. Here I have taken a growing branch to demonstrate the process of how saffron is cultivated, harvested, processed and marketed.

These advances assisted the pattern system to be more than an appearance that looks nice. It gave ZARIN HERAT the opportunity to represent Herat in the architecture of the logo and in the other elements in artwork, details and narrative. Consequently the pattern system gave the meaning to the identity as well as to the cultural atmosphere of ZARIN HERAT and made it look rich and expressive in a soft manner.

Final Pattern Concept & Inspiration

The last pattern concept of ZARIN HERAT was inspired by the past of city of Herat and the necessity to create the visual language more than a decoration. In the logo the name ZARIN HERAT is written in saffron threads and/or buildings but the pattern was designed to depict the softer side of ZARIN HERAT. The pattern was inspired by the Timurid manuscript art, particularly the pretty borders, floors and stories on Herat manuscript pages.

The last pattern was created in two sections. First there is a pattern which is inspired by the edges of ancient manuscripts and rhythm of ornamentation. This trend was designed to assist ZARIN HERAT in packaging and other items having a visual texture that was of a cultural significance. Second is a picture, which narrates about the heritage of ZARIN HERATs growing branch, which depicts how saffron is cultivated, harvested, processed and marketed. This was significant as it allows the pattern to narrate the tale of saffron not what it appears to be.

This concept was unique to ZARIN HERAT since it presents Herat in a manner that is not merely, regarding buildings. The pattern introduces the memories of art, craftsmanship and attention to detail, in the city by means of manuscript art. Consequently the last pattern concept brings richness to the brand identity of ZARIN HERATs. Helps position ZARIN HERAT as a brand that is related to the products, place and heritage simultaneously.

Colour Concept: Telling Herat's Story Through Colours

3.3 Process & Rationale

I aimed to narrate a saffron Herats history and the sentimental worth of ZARIN HERAT. I have selected colours that are beautiful and have special meanings. I also wanted ZARIN HERAT to identify with Herats identity using colours that demonstrate the richness of saffrons and artistic history of the city.

The colours that I have chosen are the different shades of blue golden and ivory. These colours mirror the product and its history. They will assist ZARIN HERAT to stand out and create a brand that is valuable and memorable.

Key Design Decisions

1. Deep Red - Rich, Warm and Value.

The dark red color is a result of the use of saffron strands that are the core of ZARIN HERAT. This colour is a symbol of affluence and warmth. It grabs attention. It renders the brand luxurious and emotionally intimate yet stays in touch with saffron.

2. Herat's Artistic Legacy

The blue hues are courtesy of Herats tiles and buildings. These are tones that add depth and serenity. They strike a chord with the coziness of saffron. They associate the brand with Herats heritage.

3. Preciousness and Identity

The golden coloring is a reminder of the word Zarin meaning of gold. Gold is a representation of something classy. It renders ZARIN HERAT high quality and serves to convey its worth.

4. Ivory – Softness and Balance

The palette is softened with ivory. It gives support to the more powerful colours. I derived the idea using manuscript pages and natural materials. This color contributes to the palette being soft and balanced.

5. A Herat Identity, Not a Generic Luxury One

I wanted to establish a colour identity which would be special to ZARIN HERAT, not necessarily luxurious in general. Red, blue, gold and ivory makes ZARIN HERAT feel like it belongs, to its culture and aesthetically distinctive.

Conclusion

This is a project on developing a brand identity, a saffron brand that can be meaningful and one that can be associated with culture. ZARIN HERAT perceived saffron as a product of tradition and art but not merely a product. They wanted to make an exploration of saffron in a manner that reveals its significance in culture.

The brand is based on heritage. Saffron is an element of Afghan culture and ZARIN HERAT attempted to represent it. The project employed the use of calligraphy, Herat's architecture and Timurid manuscript art in coming up with a brand identity. Afghan saffron was the secret, to product, story and culture in a single transparent brand language.

The result is the expression of how branding can be used to convey identity and retain value. The logo, designs, colour scheme and the direction of the packaging are all in keeping with the spirit of Herat and Afghan saffron. Every detail was made to be beautiful and striking. The project introduces ZARIN HERAT as a brand related to heritage. ZARIN HERAT is a brand which appreciates culture and Afghan saffron. The richness of saffron is reflected in the brand identity. It presents tradition in an innovative manner.

REFERENCES

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Afghanistan: One Country One Priority Product. Rome: FAO, n.d. Accessed on 21 Jan 2026.
2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Geographical Indications and Origin-Linked Products in Afghanistan. Rome: FAO, n.d. Accessed on 23 Jan 2026.
3. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. City of Herat. Tentative Lists. Paris: UNESCO, 2004. Accessed on 25 Feb 2026.
4. Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Art of the Timurid Period (ca. 1370–1507). New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002. Accessed on 12 March 2026.
5. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Central and North Asia, 1400–1600 A.D. Chronology of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d. Accessed on 10 March 2026.
6. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ja'far Baisunghuri, "Laila and Majnun at School", Folio from a Khamsa of Nizami. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d. Accessed on 10 March 2026.
7. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Decorative Drawing. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d. Accessed on 10 March 2026.
8. Penn Museum. Persian Calligraphy. Expedition Magazine. Philadelphia: Penn Museum, n.d. Accessed on 10 March 2026
9. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Afghanistan*. One Country One Priority Product. Rome: FAO, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
10. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *A female-owned saffron business leads the market in Herat*. Kabul/Rome: FAO, 2020. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
11. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Saffron cultivation and goat farming improves income of women-headed families in Herat*. Kabul/Rome: FAO, 2023. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
12. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Geographical Indications for Sustainable Food Systems in Afghanistan*. Rome: FAO, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.

13. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. *Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam*. Paris: UNESCO, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
14. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. *Afghanistan – World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
15. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. *Emergency Consolidation and Restoration of Monuments in Jam and Herat*. Paris: UNESCO, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
16. UNESCO. *Restoration of Monuments in Herat: Afghanistan (Mission Report)*. Paris: UNESCO, 1976. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
17. Metropolitan Museum of Art. *The Mantiq al-tair (Language of the Birds) of 1487*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
18. Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Mir ‘Ali Haravi – ‘Unwan from the Shah Jahan Album*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
19. Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Page of Calligraphy Illuminated with Animals and Plants in Gold*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
20. Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Islamic Calligraphy*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
21. Victoria and Albert Museum. *Calligraphy in Islamic Art*. London: V&A Museum, 2024. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
22. Victoria and Albert Museum. *Islamic Middle East – Explore the Collections*. London: V&A Museum, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
23. British Museum. *Album; Calligraphy*. London: The British Museum, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
24. Smarthistory. *Prince Baysunghur’s Rose Garden (Gulistan) by Sa’di*. Smarthistory, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.
25. Smarthistory. *The Simurgh Returns Zal to his Father*. Smarthistory, n.d. Accessed on 25 May 2026.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of the survey:

Consumer survey on Indian premium food & gifting market

Purpose of the study:

To know about consumer awareness about saffron and their buying habits and receptivity towards heritage branding.

Respondents:

Number of total respondents: 150

Age range: 18-35 years

Living place: Urban cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune, etc.

Type of people: College students and working individuals along with gifting shoppers and premium food product consumers. Sample Group:

Questionnaire:

1. Do you use or buy saffron regularly?
2. Where do you usually buy saffron from?
3. How important is packaging and visual presentation when choosing saffron?
4. Would you be open to trying a heritage-inspired saffron brand?
5. What attracts you the most to a saffron brand?
6. Would you consider saffron as a gifting product if it had premium packaging?
7. What kind of saffron packaging would attract you more?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY ANALYSIS

1. Do you use or buy saffron regularly?

- Yes – 82%
- No – 18%

Analysis:

This shows that most respondents are already familiar with saffron and regularly use or purchase it. This suggests that saffron is not an unfamiliar product to the target audience, and there is already basic market awareness.

2. Where do you usually buy saffron from?

- Online platforms – 47%
- Specialty / premium food stores – 25%
- Supermarkets – 18%
- Local grocery / spice stores – 10%

Analysis:

The highest percentage of respondents buy saffron through online platforms. This indicates that digital marketplaces play an important role in saffron purchasing behavior. It also suggests that premium saffron branding should work well in online retail presentation.

3. How important is packaging and visual presentation when choosing saffron?

- Very important – 69%
- Somewhat important – 28%
- Not important – 3%

Analysis:

A large majority of respondents consider packaging and visual presentation important. This confirms that branding and packaging design strongly influence consumer perception in the saffron category.

4. Would you be open to trying a heritage-inspired saffron brand?

- Yes – 83%
- Maybe – 13%
- No – 5%

Analysis:

Most respondents showed openness to a saffron brand built around heritage and cultural storytelling. This supports the core concept of Zarin Herat as a brand rooted in place, history, and craft.

5. What attracts you the most to a saffron brand?

- Purity / quality – 72%
- Region of origin – 68%
- Elegant packaging – 55%
- Cultural storytelling – 48%
- Price – 44%
- Brand reputation – 40%

Analysis:

Purity and quality were the most important factors, followed closely by region of origin. Elegant packaging and cultural storytelling were also significant. This means consumers value both product authenticity and brand presentation.

6. Would you consider saffron as a gifting product if it had premium packaging?

- Yes – 67%
- Maybe – 29%
- No – 4%

Analysis:

The findings show that saffron has strong potential as a gifting product when presented in premium packaging. This supports the decision to develop Zarin Herat as a refined and gift-worthy saffron brand.

7. What kind of saffron packaging would attract you more?

- Traditional and cultural – 43%
- Luxurious and decorative – 38%
- Minimal and modern – 19%

Analysis:

Traditional and cultural packaging received the highest preference, followed by luxurious and decorative packaging. Minimal and modern packaging received the lowest preference. This suggests that consumers are more attracted to saffron packaging that reflects heritage, richness, and cultural character.

APPENDIX C

OVERALL SURVEY INSIGHTS

The survey indicates that consumers in the Indian premium food and gifting market are highly receptive to a saffron brand that feels culturally rooted, premium, and visually refined. Most respondents already recognize saffron as a valuable product, and many are influenced by packaging, region of origin, and quality when making purchase decisions. There is also clear interest in heritage-inspired branding and gifting-oriented presentation. These insights strongly support the concept and visual direction of **Zarin Herat** as a brand that combines Afghan saffron, cultural storytelling, and premium identity.

APPENDIX D

DESIGN PROCESS MATERIALS

This appendix may include supporting process work that led to the final outcome of the project, such as:

- Initial logo sketches
- Persian calligraphy exploration
- Frame and arch explorations
- Saffron thread studies
- Pattern development drafts
- Border development inspired by Timurid manuscript art
- Packaging layout sketches
- Typography trials
- Color palette testing
- Early mockup trials

These materials help document the evolution of the brand identity and show how the final design was developed through research, experimentation, and refinement. Your report already includes logo exploration, pattern development, typography selection, and packaging application as key stages of the process.