

LAUNDRY MONEY, NO ONE RETIRES ANYMORE

2025

HUMAN-DRIVEN AI CONCEPT DESIGN
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PORT FOLIO

LAUNDRY MONEY. NO ONE RETIRES ANYMORE

Laundry Money: No one retires anymore is a high-concept visual portfolio that reframes the unseen work of ageing women through the aesthetics of parody, editorial fashion, and unapologetic survival.

Each image in this series repositions older women as icons of resistance. Draped in synthetic gold, surrounded by poultry and pigs, seated in laundromats where the cycles never stop. Set against tiled floors, fluorescent lighting, and plastic bins full of everything and nothing, these portraits demand attention.

This is concept.

A domestic economy recast as empire, where style is defiance, cash is performance, and getting by is the real power move.

It's a story of what women carry, and conceal.

And the cost of keeping it all going.

ARTISTIC COMPOSITION

Each image is built like a domestic myth half editorial, half everyday epic. Laundromats become sets. Tiled walls and fluorescent bulbs, the stage. Choreographed clutter, vintage machines, and dollar bills placed with intent.

The styling is excessive by design. Faux gold. Floral polyester. Layers of kitsch worn like armour.

Aesthetic choices are sharp, theatrical, and entirely deliberate. Every fabric fold and chain link is a gesture. You've got chickens next to cigarettes. Piglets next to pearls. The absurdity is part of the message. These are not costume choices, they're survival codes, stitched with humour and held together by grit.

Colour carries tension. Pastels are undercut by heaviness, blood reds, plastic pinks, the off-white of machines too old to be retro.

The eye never lands comfortably, and that's the point.



*The goats weren't part of the plan, but neither was the overdraft.
She's been coming here for years, same basket, same boots, same fight to stretch five notes
into next week.*



She stopped labelling things years ago, what's luxury, what's borrowed, what's survival. Gold chains do the job of a pension. The laundry card's maxed out, but the posture isn't.



The pigs are hers. There's a ring on every finger because she earned every one. Pink wasn't the plan, it's just what was clean. And floral? Well, it hides the stains.



*They don't blink for cameras or creditors. One keeps the books. The other keeps the bird.
Rich? No. Resourceful? Always.
Power comes in pairs, and this pair's not done yet.*



She's not tired, she's calculating. The smoke isn't rebellion, it's routine. A pause between cycles, a breath before the next ask. And no, she doesn't want your help.



They've turned pension planning into performance art. They've dried tears, raised families, dodged systems. Now they're laundering bills and legacies.



The cow's collateral. Nothing here is ironic. This is what holding it down looks like, quiet, dignified, and slightly absurd.



The laundrette's seen generations come and go, but these two? They're staying. Someone's got to keep it clean, count the notes, and remind the world who's really in charge.



HUMAN-DRIVEN AI: THE PROCESS



1. Conceptualisation and moodboarding

This began as a study in survival, what it means to grow older as a woman and still carry the weight of everything: family, money, memory, identity. I pulled together references that felt honest and contradictory, cheap laundromats, rich textures, heavy gold, borrowed animals. It was about truth dressed up like resilience.

2. Prompt engineering

I wrote each prompt as if I were setting a scene from a lived life. A woman in florals crouched beside a goat. A laundry basket as a throne. None of it was random. Every detail, pattern, posture, props, was intentional. The AI handled the rendering, but the authorship remained human.

3. AI image generation

Once the prompts were locked in, I ran multiple iterations to explore different angles and atmospheres. It wasn't about volume, it was about finding the exact moment that felt real, surreal, and slightly off.

4. Post-processing and refinement

After that, I cleaned. Colour tweaks, contrast shifts, composition nudges. No heavy edits, just enough to bring out the quiet power and maintain the story's tone.

5. Curation and presentation

I picked the frames that spoke loudest. Each one earned its place. Then I wrote their stories, because images alone aren't enough. Context is part of the craft.





*She's seen it all, cleaned up after it, and kept the lights on through every storm.
The goat? More reliable than most pension plans.*



Another spin cycle, another round of holding everything together with a stare sharp enough to silence excuses.



There's a softness to the chaos. Behind her, piles of unfolded life. In her arms, a duck. Sometimes survival needs a little absurdity.



Laundry's spinning in the back. Rent's due in the front. You don't get to this age without breaking a few rules.

HUMAN-DRIVEN AI: EXECUTION

Material study:

The fabrics in this series weren't chosen for flair, they were chosen for weight. Velvet that's seen better days. Florals that speak of another decade. Chains that clink like pension coins. Everything styled to speak of survival, of fashion that doesn't ask to be noticed, it dares you to ignore it.

Composition experimentation:

Power sits in posture. Every stance, every sideways glance, is loaded. These women don't pose, they anchor. Their setting may be domestic, but their presence isn't. Each frame studies how bodies age, how space is held, and how glamour can look you dead in the eye with a cigarette hanging from its lips.

Cinematic influence integration:

There are nods to high fashion, sure. But this isn't couture. It's council estate-meets-catwalk. The laundromat becomes the runway, and every image flirts with parody while telling the truth. References span riot zines, post-Soviet style, vintage mafia matriarchs, and the overlooked iconography of everyday British life.

Emotional resonance:

Lighting is harsh where it needs to be, soft where it matters. There's no smoothing out the creases. The goal isn't perfection, it's power. You'll find irony in gold-stacked wrists sorting dirty laundry, and tenderness in the middle of all that toughness. Because strength isn't always loud. Sometimes, it just keeps showing up. And it always brings a goat.



Laundry Money: No one retires anymore is a visual protest staged in laundromats, where women who've carried generations on their backs now carry gold around their necks for the drama, and the metaphor. This concept doesn't glorify the grind but it questions why it never ends. Synthography meets social commentary, and the glamour? That's just strategy. When power won't listen, style speaks louder.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Michelle Pontes is a visual storyteller, creative director, and synthographer reimagining iconography through the lens of fashion, feminism, power, and AI. With a background in marketing and concept design, she builds bold visual narratives that collide iconography with futurism.

Her work plays with contrast, softness in hard places and rebellion dressed in silence. She uses AI as a co-creator, bending its logic toward human emotion and cultural tension.

In Laundry Money, No One Retires Anymore, Michelle stages defiance. Women become icons of resistance. Goats and gold chains replace status symbols. And the laundrette? It's not just domestic, it's warpaint.

This is storytelling as survival.

This is Human-driven AI concept design.

Michelle Pontes collaborates with brands, publications, and creative teams looking to challenge visual norms. Her work sits at the intersection of concept design, AI-led image creation, and sharp creative direction. For those building new narratives or breaking out of tired formats, Michelle brings a clear eye, a strong point of view, and visuals that speak louder than strategy decks.

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