

The N=1 Quality Ceiling

Testing a single design direction traditionally equals one full day of coding.

- 🧡 You default to whatever your first instinct is.
- 💚 Whatever you code, you keep.
- 💛 This is not a skill problem—it is a sample-size problem. You cannot compare what you have with what you could have had.



Input: 1-Paragraph Brief
(Mood & Feeling)

Process: 20 Minutes
(Claude Design)

Output: N=6 Distinct
Visual Languages



Widening the Search Space

Generating six distinct theme directions completely breaks the N=1 ceiling. The value is the variance—forcing you to see entirely different palettes, typography, and layouts before writing a single line of code.

Converging on Taste & Metaphor

AI's Role

Action: Narrows 6 options to 3.

Analysis: Articulates the distinct differences in font pairing, interaction language, and trade-offs.

Human's Role

Action: Exercises taste to make the final pick.

Example: Choosing the Film Stock metaphor for ÉLAN—a slow, tactile, intentional aesthetic that perfectly matches a private journal brief.



Pressure-Testing the Direction

Expanding the chosen metaphor across all app states. If it breaks, find out before implementation.



Settings: Translated to Development Preferences (ISO, exposure).

Empty States: Translated to Undeveloped rolls — shoot something today.

Error States: An app error elegantly translates into a damaged roll of film—a thematic light leak.

Machine-Readable Handoff & Verification



The Lock: HANDOFF.md becomes the single source of truth for the design system.

The Sweep: Playwright captures screenshots of every changed route and theme variant.

The Enforcement: Parallel AI subagents compare new screenshots against the locked reference.

PASS: Pixel-perfect match

FLAG: Surfaces specific spacing, color, or alignment concerns

BLOCK: Fix task opened automatically

