

RYAN O'CONNOR

Director of Innovation | Creative Director | Design Team Leader | Driven Motivator

<https://www.ryanconnor.design/>

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY:

As a visionary leader at RedPeg Marketing, I spearhead innovative design and deliver world-class brand experiences for top-tier clients like Nike, Meta, and GEICO. With over 15 years of expertise in branding, art direction, and digital marketing, I excel in creating immersive, user-centered solutions that drive traffic, awareness, and engagement. My relentless curiosity and passion for design fuel my pursuit of excellence, ensuring that every project not only meets but exceeds expectations.

SKILLS:

Creative Direction & Leadership: Proven ability to inspire and lead multidisciplinary teams, ensuring high-quality execution.

Visual Design & Branding: Expertise in typography, color theory, print and digital executions, and user-centered design solutions.

Digital & Physical Design: Proficient in UX/UI, 3D design, branding, graphic design, motion, and immersive environments.

Time Management & Organization: Strong ability to manage multiple tasks in fast-paced environments.

Technology Integration: Proficient in Figma, Adobe Suite, and related design and production software.

Communication & Presentation: Excellent skills in articulating design concepts, presenting to executive leadership, and collaborating cross-functionally.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Nike GameChangers Program: Creative Lead** - Spearheaded a transformative initiative to elevate Nike leaders by developing sub-branding, graphics, physical environments, and experiential tactics. [See project details](#)
- **Nike Learning & Development Program:** Creative Lead - Designed immersive experiences at Nike HQ to enhance executive leadership development through strategic art direction, graphic look oversight and experiential design. [See project details](#)
- **Meta Suite at Capital One Arena:** Creative Lead - Transformed a traditional suite into a Meta-branded digital entertainment space, integrating cutting-edge technology and design.
- **ESPN X-Games Digital Worlds:** Creative Lead - Created a virtual interactive world, significantly boosting digital engagement and setting new standards in digital design.
- **Altria IQOS:** Led retail design efforts over three years, crafting permanent and temporary retail experiences, including storefronts, mall installations, and mobile vehicles.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Innovation, Sr. Creative Director, RedPeg Marketing, Alexandria, VA | June 2022 - Present

Transformation and Strategy:

- Transformed RedPeg into a creative agency with a human-centered approach.
- Developed and implemented "Contextual AI," enhancing team efficiency by 33%.
- Led the creation of an agency-wide Creative Ethos, fostering a collaborative culture.
- Redefined agency brand position, visual identity, voice, and market presence through website, social media, content, and case studies.

Leadership and Execution:

- Directed the **Leading Nike Development** program for 400 VPs, including immersive elements and a 600-piece perceptual art installation.
- Spearheaded the **Nike GameChangers** program, developing sub-branding and physical environments to augment leadership initiatives.
- Championed AI and advanced technologies to elevate brand experiences for clients like Nike, Meta, Marriott, and GEICO.
- Developed creative leadership within senior creative leaders, including personal leadership philosophies, growth plans, and thought leadership activities.
- Led creative direction, pitches, vision, and strategic alignment on our highest-profile clients - Nike, Meta, In-N-Out, Marriott, VW, Santander, and GEICO.
 - *"The Dream Team! Thank you. This thinking is brilliant. I sure am happy I get to rub shoulders with such incredible people."* - Dir Executive Leadership & Development | NIKE, Inc.

Creative Director, Astound Group, Las Vegas, NV | February 2022 - June 2022

- Led the creative vision and specialty architecture for Faraday Future's flagship store, integrating digital innovation with luxury retail design to create a unique consumer experience.

Senior Art Director, GMR Marketing, Milwaukee, WI | September 2016 - February 2022

Art Direction and Graphic Design:

- Led the art direction for ESPN X-Games, developing the graphic look and digital gameplay, significantly boosting digital engagement.
- Directed high-end retail design for IQOS by Altria, focusing on cohesive visual identities for storefronts, mall installations, and mobile vehicles.
- Spearheaded the graphic and visual design for U.S. Bank experiential events, including video content creation and directing a pre-recorded award show with David Koechner.

Architectural and Experiential Design:

- Introduced architecturally-based problem-solving in 3D design, enhancing the team's capabilities and design output.
- Managed the creation of innovative experiential marketing campaigns for Fortune 100 companies using advanced technologies.

Senior Designer 3D, GMR Marketing, Milwaukee, WI | July 2011 - September 2016

- Spearheaded the creation of virtual and mixed reality spaces, utilizing advanced 3D design and rendering techniques to produce captivating and interactive experiences.

- Utilized expertise in 3D design and visualization to create immersive and interactive experiences, driving innovation in marketing and user experience design
- Designed and executed the U.S. Bank experiential events, including directing a pre-recorded award show with David Koechner.

Adjunct Professor, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, *Milwaukee, WI* | 2008 - 2010

- Taught 6 semesters of undergraduate and graduate level design studios focused on advanced architectural design and innovation. Several students went on to elite architecture programs.
 - Developed a curriculum specific to my design vision, led a design studio solo and spearheaded a study abroad trip to Chile.
 - Developed and led graduate level design studios with a unique curriculum based on temporary architecture and changes in context.
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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Architecture, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, *Milwaukee, WI*

- Urban Planning Certificate
- Graduated Summa cum Laude

Master of Architecture, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, *Milwaukee, WI*

- Recipient of the Henry Adams Medal, signifying academic excellence and relevance to innovative architectural design.

Cultivating Creative Collaboration, IDEO U, Online Certificate, 2019

- Unlocked my team's ability to generate new ideas and reach better solutions by tapping into diverse perspectives.
- Overcame inertia and uncertainty by guiding my team through an iterative process designed to spark creativity and gain alignment.
- Established the cultural conditions that teams need to thrive with thoughtful rituals and agreements.
- Turned tensions between ideas into opportunities for our biggest leaps forward.

INTERESTS & PROFICIENCIES

- **Sports Enthusiast:** Lifelong athlete with a passion for hockey, soccer, baseball, and track; inspired by Nike's innovative approach to sports and design.
- **Speculative Design Thinking:** Envisioning future possibilities and exploring design's impact on the world.
- **Mentorship & Development:** Fostering growth and development in emerging design talent.
- **Lifelong Learner:** Continuously seeking new knowledge and skills in design and technology.
- **Design for Social Impact:** Leveraging design expertise to address social and environmental challenges.

PUBLICATIONS

- **Contributor & Editor** | "*SkyCar City: A Pre-emptive History*", 2008.; Engaged as a contributor student and editor for "SkyCar City," authored by Winy Maas and Grace La, published in September 2007. This 240-page hardcover book, rich in color illustrations, delves into futuristic urban mobility and architecture concepts, demonstrating a collaborative academic effort. Available on [Amazon: SkyCar City](#). ISBN: 9788496540583.

PORTFOLIO:

- [Nike Learning & Development Program](#)
- [Nike GameChangers Program](#)
- [Meta Suite at Capital One Arena](#)
- [Skycar City](#)
- [ESPN X-Games Digital Worlds](#)
- [U.S. Bank Experiential](#)

Explore my detailed projects and creative journey on my [website](#).