



Maria Norton

CREATIVE DIRECTOR | VISUAL DESIGNER | BRAND, STORYTELLING & INTEGRATED CREATIVE

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Creative director and visual designer with 15+ years building brands, programs, and experiences from zero, across action sports, retail, healthcare, education, and publishing, in Barcelona and California.

My work is hands-on and end-to-end: I design the narrative, make the artwork, produce the experience, and grow the community around it.

It's the pattern behind most of what I do: starting with no audience and scaling through participation.



CORE FOCUS AREAS

- Founding brands and building them from zero
- Editorial storytelling and visual communication
- Brand identity and digital transformation
- Community programs that scale through participation

HOW I WORK

I start with people, not briefs.

Before thinking about formats, channels, or deliverables, I look for the emotional center of a story. What does this audience need to understand, feel, or believe? What does this brand stand for beneath the messaging? What human problem are we actually trying to solve?

Once that becomes clear, the medium follows.

Sometimes it's a handmade magazine. Sometimes a mural. Sometimes a bilingual book that grows into a community experience. Sometimes an ambassador network built on trust before it had a name. Sometimes a creative program built from scratch in a mountain town where I didn't know anyone.

I don't start with what I know how to make. I start with what needs to exist, then I bring together the right ideas, people, and tools to make it real.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

4× social media growth at Mountain Hardware & Sports

7+ international markets reached with EMA

21 professional athletes representing EMA internationally

130+ students engaged annually at Creative Sonrisas Academy

800+ bilingual storytelling sessions delivered

2,000–4,000 organic views per post at Institut Ferrés Amat

2 bilingual books written, illustrated, and published

3 years as a featured speaker at ExpoHogar Barcelona



BRAND STORYTELLING & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

MOUNTAIN HARDWARE & SPORTS

A 40-year Tahoe retail institution with a strong local identity and loyal customer base.

The goal was to **modernize the brand's visual storytelling and digital presence while preserving the trust, heritage, and community identity** built over four decades.

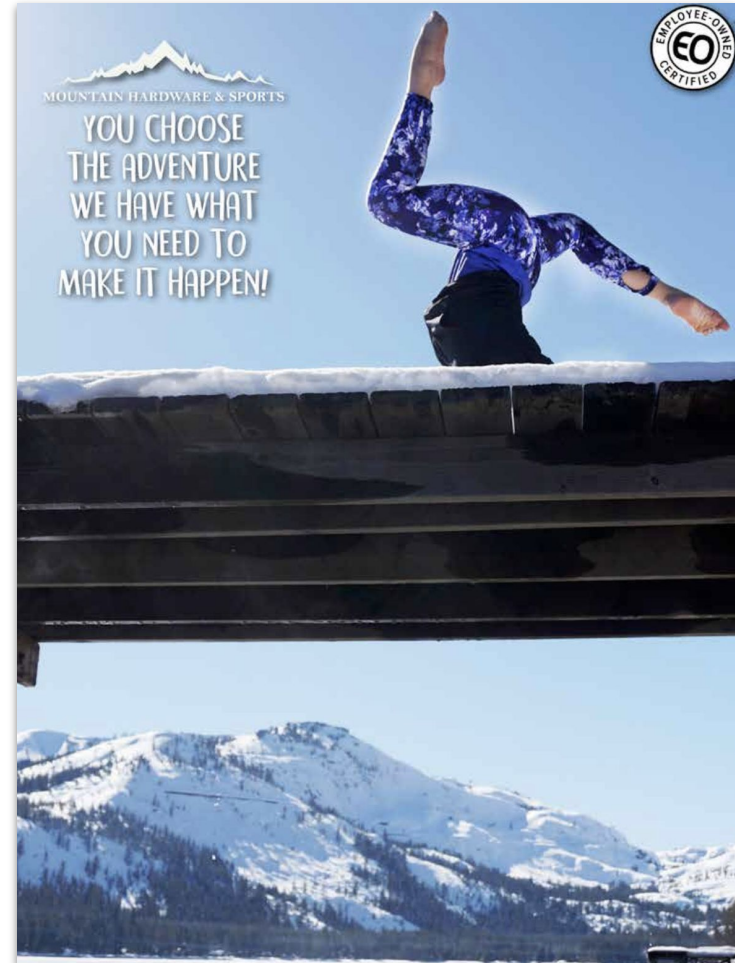
APPROACH

- **Evolved the visual language** to feel contemporary while maintaining the brand's heritage
- Led the company's first **social media and digital content strategy, creating story-driven campaigns** that connected retail, events, and online audiences.
- **Created keynote presentations** and conference materials for executive leadership, representing the company at trade shows.
- Connected **in-store experiences, events, and digital communication** into one narrative system
- **Led production of campaigns across digital, print, and in-store**, coordinating execution across teams and timelines



IMPACT

- 4× social media growth (500 → 2,000+)
- Created their **first online store**
- Doubled attendance at community events
- **National recognition** for marketing and social media excellence
- Created a **scalable storytelling system** connecting retail, events, and digital communication.



BRAND NARRATIVE & COMMUNITY BUILDING



EMA - PROTECT YOUR SMILE

EMA began as a **handmade project** developed in my home in Barcelona and grew into an **internationally distributed action sports brand**.

Built around the philosophy **Protect Your Smile**, the brand grew organically through community storytelling, limited-edition releases, and strong connections within the snowboard scene.

APPROACH

- Developed the brand identity and narrative from prototype stage
- Built an international network of snowboard athletes representing the brand
- Grew organically through rider culture, word of mouth, and limited-edition drops

IMPACT

- Distributed across **7+ international markets**
- Built a global rider network activated through events, edits, and collaborations
- The brand evolved into a **lifestyle identity**, not just a product
- **Strong customer loyalty** through limited-edition releases
- **Coordinated collaborators, partnerships, and production** across markets to scale the brand internationally



Professional snowboarder Marie-France Roy
wearing EMA

BRAND IDENTITY, EXPERIENCE DESIGN & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



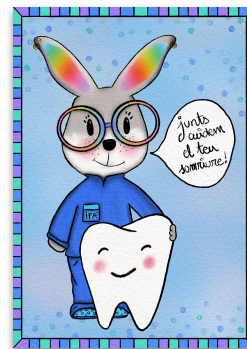
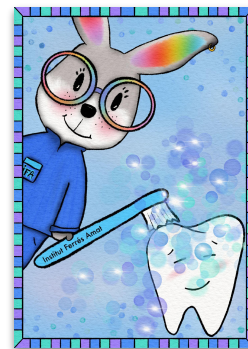
INSTITUT FERRÉS AMAT

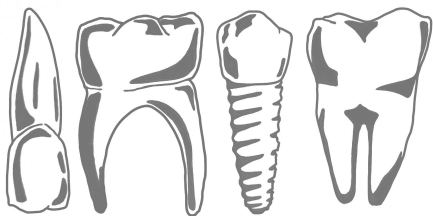
A **multi-generational dental practice in Barcelona** with deep community roots.

The challenge was to **build a brand system** from scratch, one that could speak to **adult patients with authority** and to **children with warmth**, while creating **experiences that transformed how families felt about going to the dentist.**

APPROACH

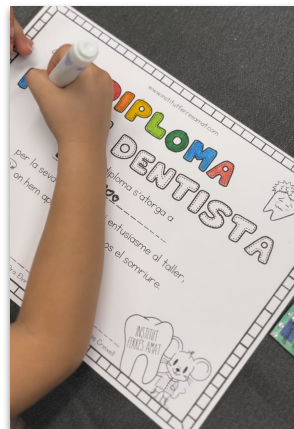
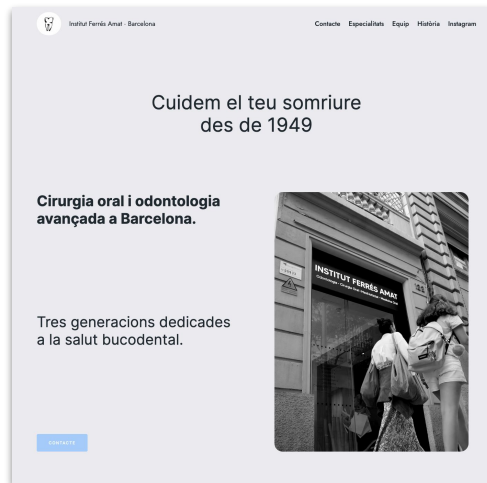
- **Full brand identity:** logo, visual language, photography, and tone of voice
- **Dual visual system:** sophisticated adult brand and hand-illustrated children's universe with original mascot character. **Illustrated installation,** treatment room mural, educational materials, and event collateral
- Full **website:** design, content, photography, and multilingual translation
- Recurring **community events:** games, activities, art, and custom diplomas to welcome kids to the dentist world in a fun, educational way
- **Social media and communications** managed end to end
- Master's in Oral Surgery and Implants: **communications and event planning** for an official master's degree, including a pointillism art class that trains fine handwork and precision





IMPACT

- **Logo concept:** each tooth represents a specialist and their department
- **Social media grown** from 200 to 1,000+ organically; 2,000 to 4,000+ views per post with no paid promotion
- **Two distinct brand worlds merged into one coherent identity,** authoritative for adults, warm and playful for children
- **Transformed the dental visit** into an experience children look forward to
- **Translated 75 years of family legacy** into a visual identity that feels both **rooted and contemporary**
- **Brand unified** across physical space, website, social media, events, and educational materials



NARRATIVE SYSTEM DESIGN & PROGRAM PRODUCTION



CREATIVE SONRISAS ACADEMY

Creative program integrating art history, visual art, and bilingual storytelling to support **language learning and community connection.**

Each experience is designed as a **structured system combining artistic exploration, clear frameworks, and repeatable formats** that enable consistency, scalability, and engagement across sessions.

APPROACH

- **Designed modular narrative frameworks** connecting art history, storytelling, and language learning
- **Created immersive creative environments** encouraging exploration and collaboration



IMPACT

- **100% organic program growth** without paid marketing
- **130+ students engaged annually** across after-school and summer programs
- **800+ bilingual storytelling and creative learning sessions delivered**
- **40+ original curriculum modules designed**



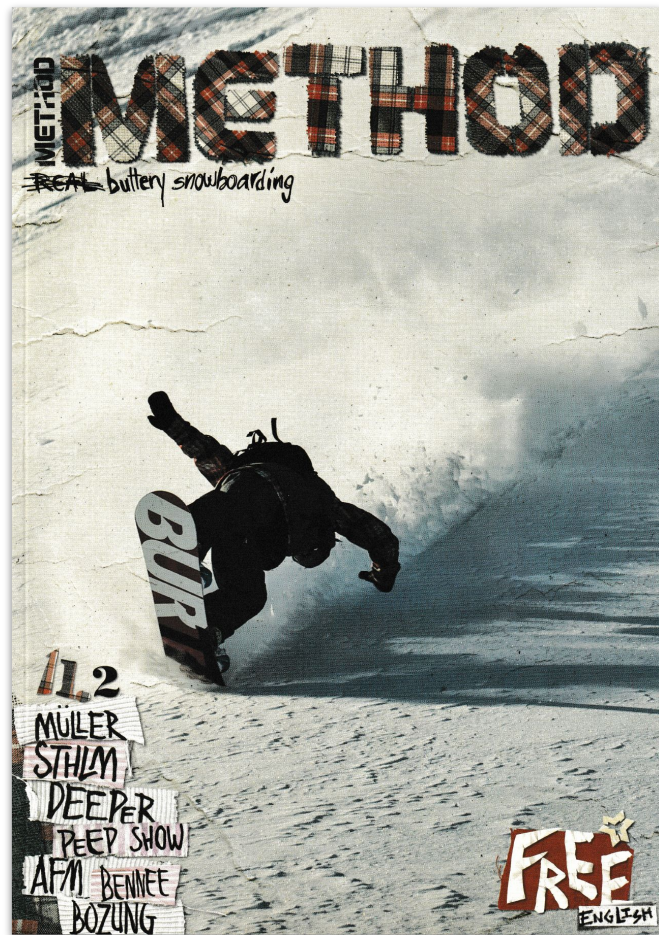
EDITORIAL DESIGN, VISUAL STORYTELLING & EVENT PRODUCTION

METHOD MAG

International snowboard magazine known for blending **handmade visual experimentation** with digital design.

All visual artwork and collage elements were **created by hand** and integrated into the editorial layouts.

Each issue pushed the visual boundaries of snowboard culture while reinforcing the magazine's **raw and radical identity**.



CONTRIBUTION

- **Built editorial layouts** by hand, mixing collage, paint, and digital design
- **Worked alongside photographers, writers, and editors** to shape visually driven features
- Ran editorial production and **coordinated workflows** across teams
- **Produced and represented the magazine at industry events and competitions**



VISUAL NARRATIVE, STORYTELLING & PUBLIC SPEAKING

EXPOHOGAR

Featured speaker at ExpoHogar Barcelona, presenting on **social media strategy and communications** for small businesses, three consecutive years.



TENGO UN FEELING & WHERE IS THE HAPPINESS?

Wrote and illustrated two bilingual **children's books**, developing narrative, visual system, and final production from concept through print.

Extended the project into live **storytelling experiences** and community events in Barcelona and California.



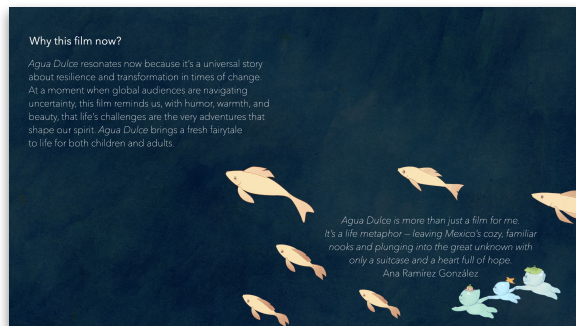
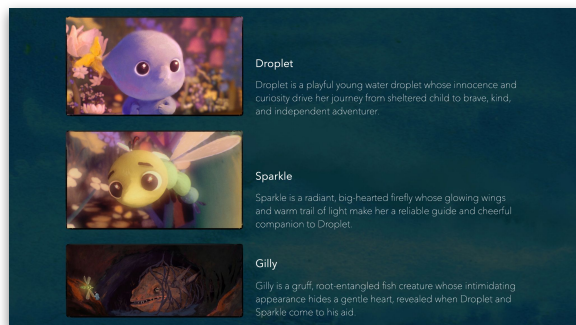
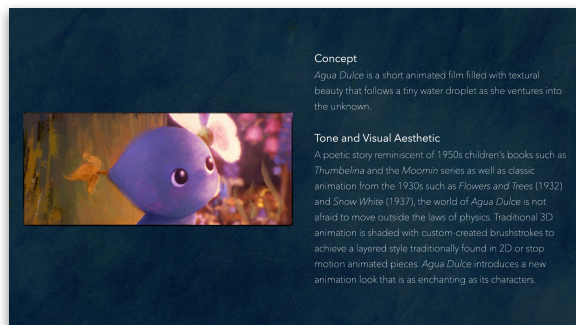
FILM PRODUCTION & NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

AGUA DULCE (*in production, targeting 2027 festival release*)

Independent animated short film developed by an international award-winning team, exploring new visual styles and techniques that challenge traditional animation approaches.

CONTRIBUTION

- Partnered with the director and executive producer across **creative development and production planning**
- **Coordinated multidisciplinary teams** from concept through delivery
- **Directed and produced the animated credits sequence**
- **Produced executive pitch decks, keynote presentations, and campaign materials** used by leadership for festival submissions, investor meetings, and talent recruitment.
- **Managed and created organic social media content** for the film's Instagram campaign, growing the account 40% through storytelling-led posts with zero paid promotion.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Finding the story in the moment



Two-time Grand Prize winner, Lomography International TEN AND ONE Photo Awards.

