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

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CREATIVE DIRECTOR & PRODUCER | VISUAL DESIGNER

BRAND, STORYTELLING & INTEGRATED CREATIVE

Creative director, producer, and visual designer with 15+ years building brands, products, 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.



CORE FOCUS AREAS

· Founding brands and building them from zero

· Creative production from concept to delivery

· Brand identity and digital transformation

· Brand experiences and live events

· Editorial storytelling and visual communication

· Community programs that scale through participation



HOW I WORK

I start with people, not briefs.

Before formats, channels, or deliverables, I look for the emotional center of the story. Once that's clear, the medium follows: a handmade magazine, a mural, a bilingual book, an ambassador network.

From there, I make what needs to exist, bringing together the 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 to 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 outdoor retail institution with a loyal local following. The goal: a contemporary identity that kept its mountain town character.

APPROACH

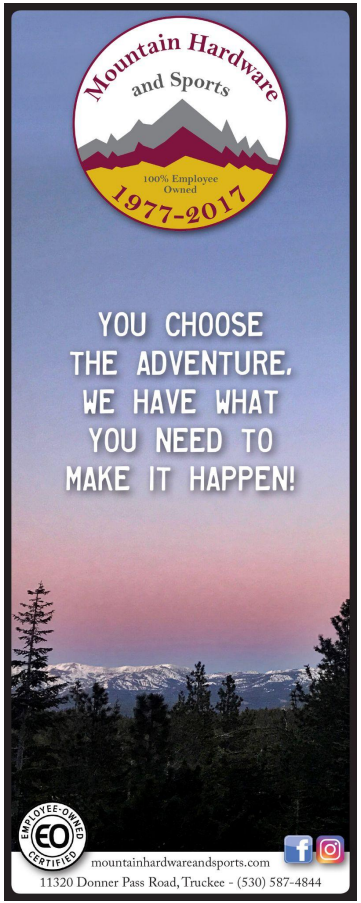
· Evolved the visual language to feel contemporary while maintaining the brand's heritage, including a logo redesign with special editions

· Led the company's first social media and digital content strategy, connecting retail, events, and online audiences

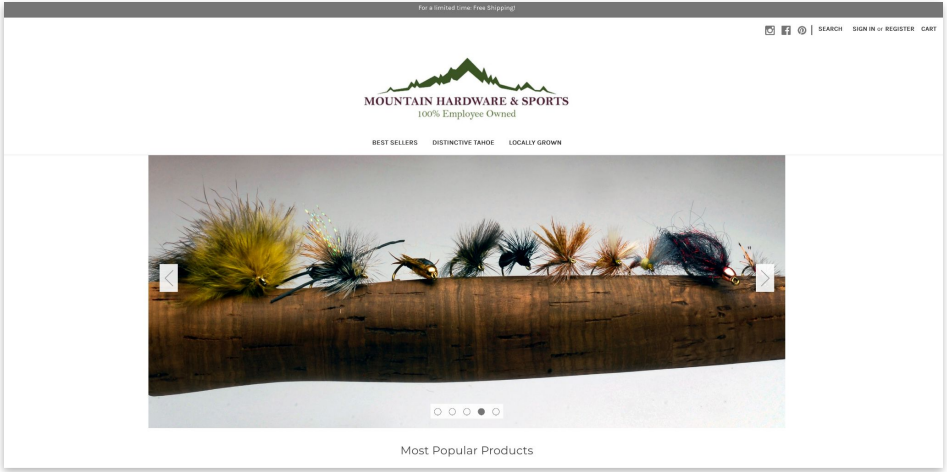
· Organized community events and charity fundraisers

· Represented the company at trade shows and created keynote presentations for the President and Vice President





Left: early ad with the original logo. Right: 40th anniversary edition of the redesigned logo



IMPACT

· 4× social media growth (500 → 2,000+)

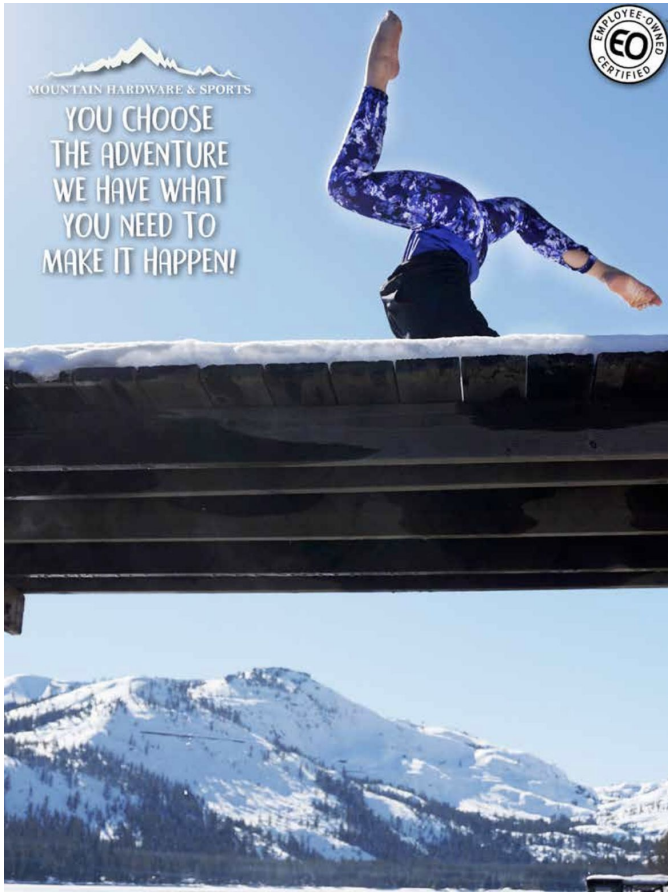
· Created their first online store: design and photography

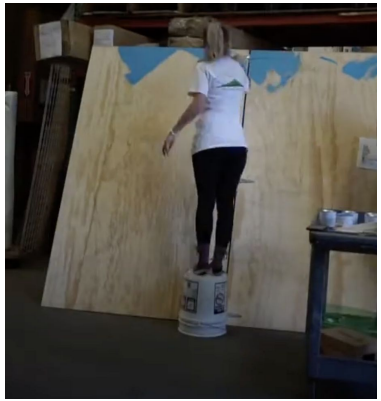
· Doubled attendance at community events

· Negotiated co-funded advertising with brand partners, including GoPro

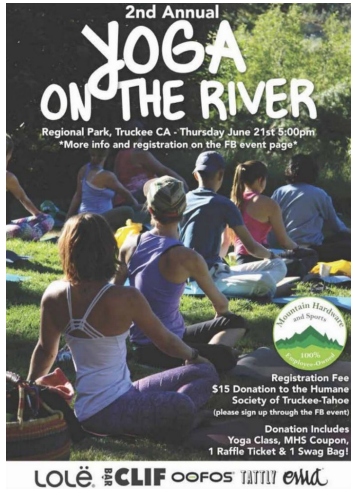
· Moved print to digital: replaced the twice-yearly catalogs and Yellow Pages listings with an online catalog and Google Business Profile, cutting costs while holiday sales grew

· Won the company's first ESOP National Award for Marketing and Social Media Excellence









COMMUNITY EVENTS

A year-round calendar of events that brought the community into the store, and the store into the community.

· Ladies Night: an evening shopping event the night before Thanksgiving. I added a VIP social media contest whose winners shopped 30 minutes early

· Eggstravaganza: created an Easter game where every customer picked an egg hiding a discount at checkout

· Yoga on the River: created a yearly fundraiser for the Humane Society of Truckee Tahoe, co-hosted with brands like Lolë

· 40th anniversary party: a community celebration, with a face-in-the-hole mural I designed and painted

· Also: Halloween Pet Contest, free photos with Santa, the Air Show VIP tent, and the first annual golf tournament



40th Anniversary Community Party: food trucks, live music, a kids' corner, a photo booth, and gifts

BRAND NARRATIVE
& COMMUNITY BUILDING



EMA - PROTECT YOUR SMILE

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

Built around the philosophy Protect Your Smile, it became a lifestyle people wanted to be part of, through community storytelling, limited-edition releases, and international athletes representing it across the snowboard scene.

APPROACH

· Developed the brand identity and narrative from prototype stage

· Built an international network of 21 professional snowboard athletes

· Grew organically through rider culture, word of mouth, and limited-edition drops

· Designed the Nonus, a bandana that needs no knot (in Catalan, *no nus*), later imitated by other brands

· Launched the *Protect Your Dreams* summer collection: straw hats, reversible bucket hats and the Muka, made for the beach and for spring days on the snow

IMPACT

· Distributed across 7+ international markets

· Built a global rider network activated through events, edits, and collaborations

· Kept the brand active year-round, not only in winter

· Became a lifestyle identity, not just a product



Summer campaign: concept, copy, photography, and product



Professional snowboarder Marie-France Roy wearing EMA



EMA winter catalog: design, photography, and product

BRAND IDENTITY, EXPERIENCE DESIGN & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



INSTITUT FERRÉS AMAT

A multi-generational dental practice in Barcelona. The challenge: one brand system that speaks to adults with elegance and trust, and to children with warmth and playfulness.

The goal: create experiences that transform how families feel about going to the dentist.

APPROACH

· Brand identity: logo, visual language, photography, and tone of voice

· Dual visual system: a sophisticated adult brand and a hand-illustrated children's universe with original characters and educational materials

· Website: design, content, photography, and multilingual translation

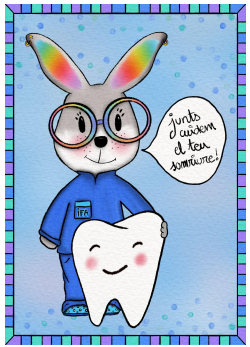
· Community events: games, art, and custom diplomas that welcome kids to the dentist in a fun, educational way

· Social media and communications, managed end to end

· Master's in Oral Surgery and Implants: communications and event planning, including a pointillism art class that trains fine handwork







IMPACT

· Logo concept: each tooth represents a specialist and their department

· Social media grown from 200 to 1,000+ organically, with 2,000 to 4,000+ views per post and no paid promotion

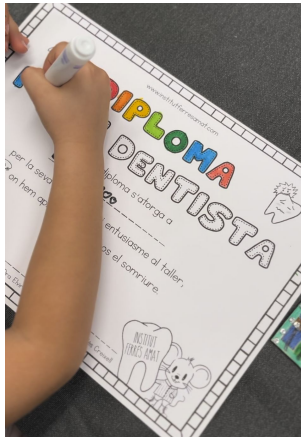
· Two brand worlds in one coherent identity: elegant for adults, warm and playful for children

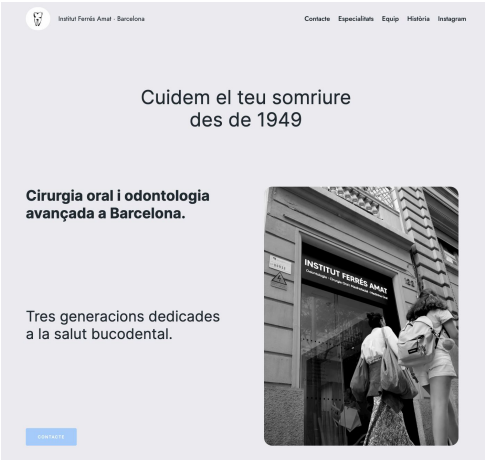
· Turned the dental visit into something children look forward to

· The mural that disappears: my illustration printed on a custom roller blind. Down, the room belongs to children. Up, it's calm again for adults

· 75+ years of family legacy translated into an identity both rooted and contemporary

· One brand across the space, website, social media, events, and educational materials









NARRATIVE SYSTEM DESIGN & PROGRAM PRODUCTION

CREATIVE SONRISAS ACADEMY

Founder-led bilingual art program teaching Spanish through art history and making.

Every session is built from scratch: the theme and artists, the story, the worksheets, the materials, and the class.

APPROACH

· Brand identity and communications: logo, website, newsletters, and promotional materials

· Community building and PR that grew the program through families, schools, and local partners

· Modular narrative frameworks connecting art history, storytelling, and language learning

· Immersive creative environments that encourage 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

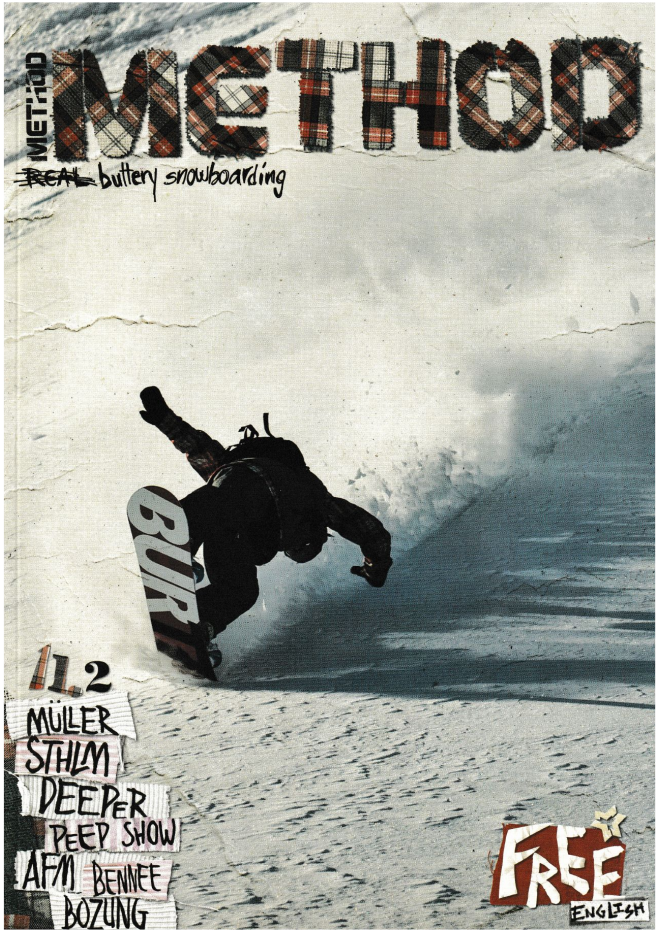
METHOD MAG

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

Titles were made by hand for each issue, then photographed and set into the layout: cut from fabric, modeled in playdough, written in honey, or transferred onto bacon.

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





CONTRIBUTION

· Designed layouts alongside the Art Director, mixing collage, paint, and digital design

· Gave every story its own handmade treatment. This title is written in real honey

· Worked with photographers, writers, and editors to shape visually driven features

· Produced and represented the magazine at industry events and competitions



EVENT PRODUCTION
& BRAND EXPERIENCES







Years of trade shows, premieres and brand events across the snowboard industry. Two booths at ISPO Munich, the world's largest sports business show, each with the opposite challenge.

Also: snowboard movie premieres in Barcelona and Andorra that brought top riders to town, Vans events in Grandvalira, Total Fight, and national industry conventions with the Mountain Hardware leadership team.

METHOD MAGAZINE

A known magazine: people already wanted to stop, so the goal was to make them stay.

· An open lounge for riders and industry, with DJs and magazines to grab

· A live artist painting the walls during the show

· Interviews with pro riders

LES ETTES

A new women-led cosmetics brand in the snow, surf and skate world. The goal: make people notice it.

· A white wooden house with painted branches, standing out from the big brands

· A skate movie screening co-hosted with Element

· Drew crowds to the booth and sold products on site



FILM PRODUCTION & NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

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

CONTRIBUTION

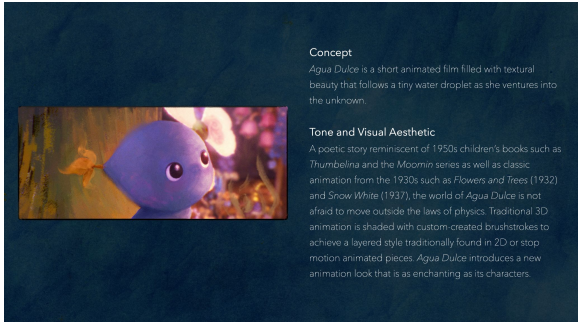
· Partnered with the director and executive producer on creative development and production planning

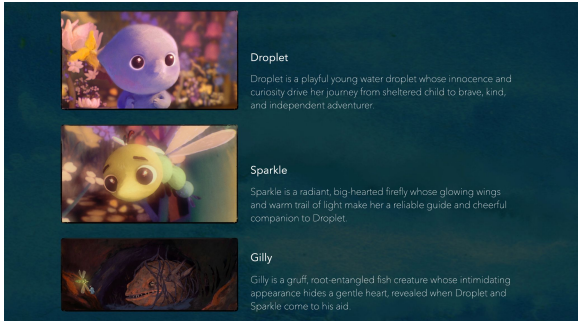
· Coordinated multidisciplinary teams from concept through delivery

· Directed and produced the animated credits sequence

· Produced pitch decks, keynote presentations, and campaign materials for festival submissions, investor meetings, and talent recruitment

· Created the film's organic Instagram content, growing the account 40% with storytelling-led posts and no paid promotion







Presentation design: Maria Norton. Character art: the Agua Dulce team

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 the narrative, visual system, and production from concept through print.

Extended them into live storytelling and community events in Barcelona and California.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Campaign Art Direction
& Photography

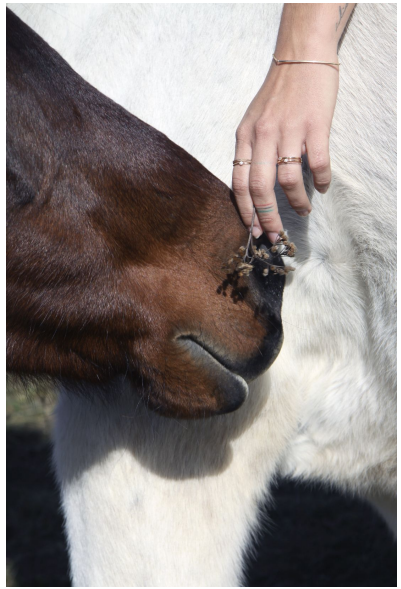








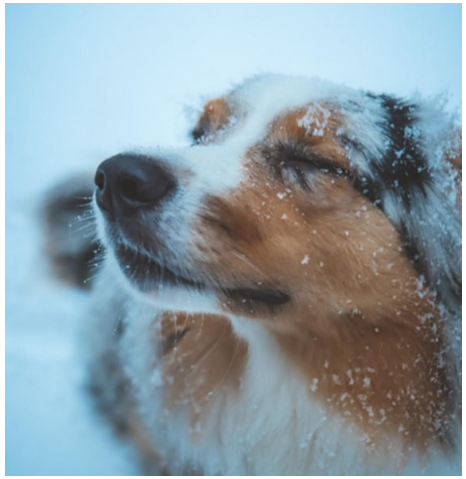
Two-time Grand Prize winner, Lomography International TEN AND ONE Photo Awards.

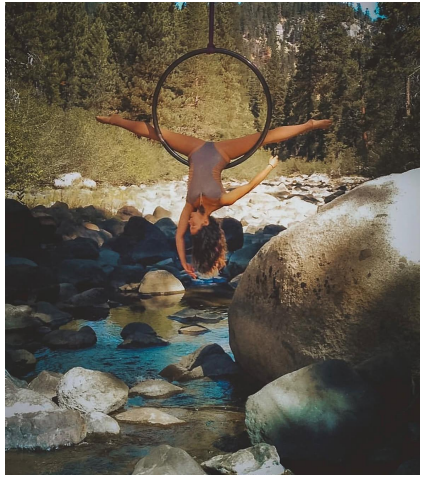


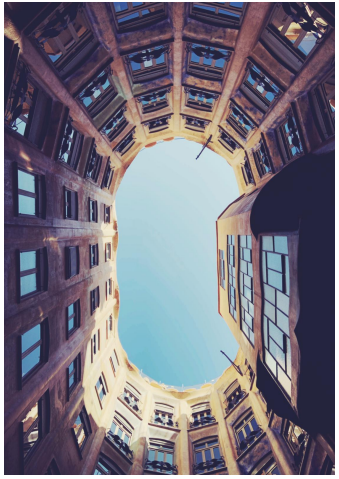














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