

KÉZIAH MAKOUNDOU

CREATIVE DIRECTOR | CULTURE CATALYST

(646) 217 - 2939 ■ keziah.mak@gmail.com ■ [LinkedIn](#) ■ www.makgraphic.com

Innovative and culture-driven creative leader with over 15 years in developing and executing creative concepts and designs that align with strategic business goals. Specializing in editorial, marketing, and branding within the lifestyle, fashion, sports, and beauty industries, delivering impactful design solutions for clients. Proven ability to lead and inspire teams, stay ahead of trends, and shape culture with cutting-edge designs that resonate with target audiences. A storyteller at heart, crafting compelling visual narratives to drive innovation, continuous improvement, and business growth. A creative leader eager to create transformational change that impacts businesses, audiences, and clients.

Creative Direction | Design Solutions | Strategic Thinking | Project Management | Branding | Client Relationships | Data Analysis | Storytelling
K4 | Woodwing | Wrike | Adobe Creative Suite | Figma | WordPress | *Bilingual in French and English*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

NEW YORK ROAD RUNNERS (NYRR) | New York, NY 2021 - Present

STUDIO TEAM DESIGNER

NYRR is renowned as the world's foremost community-running organization that orchestrates 100+ events annually, highlighted by flagship races, impacting over 600,000 individuals.

- Partnering with the head designer to [create powerful, original designs](#) that reflect NYRR's essence in products and events.
- Establishing and maintaining strong client relationships to ensure high retention rates and secure future design projects.
- Collaborating with internal and external stakeholders in developing creative briefs aligning design strategies with race-specific objectives and brand vision.
- Bringing visually captivating concepts to life, crafting designs for coveted race medals, eye-catching t-shirts, signage, and engaging social media assets that resonate with audiences and amplify the heartbeat of the organization's mission.
- Surveying and collecting insights from target audiences/runners and translating client input into innovative design solutions, balancing creative expression with strategic objectives.
- Co-leading design reveals and merchandise launches, infusing each reveal with creativity and playfulness.

AFROPOLITAN MAGAZINE | Manhattan, NY 2016 - Present

CREATIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER

Delivering insights and creative authority in shaping the magazine's vision, ensuring each issue vividly captures and authentically represents African traditions, trends, and perspectives while shaping an inspiring and uplifting space that celebrates Black culture.

- Championing Afropolitan's mission of [promoting African excellence globally](#) by forging strategic partnerships towards business development growth and collaborating with artists, designers, and influencers.
- Delivering creative direction in photoshoot productions from concept to execution, coordinating with teams of creatives, including photographers, stylists, and models, to bring our visual concepts to life, adhering to timelines and brand integrity.
- Engaged with the 250K readers/followers and stakeholders through social media, events, and community outreach initiatives, leveraging emerging tech platforms to create immersive storytelling experiences for our audience.
- Cultivating strong client relationships, identifying new business opportunities, and driving growth for future partnerships.
- Guiding teams to execute 5-figure project budgets, ensuring cost-effective yet cutting-edge creative output across all platforms, from print publications to digital media and events.
- Imagined, designed, and brought to life editorial features and visual concepts, capturing the multifaceted African lifestyle, including fashion, cuisine, music, and travel, and featuring celebrities such as Boris Kodjoe, Maxwell, Bonang, and Masego.
- Gathering insights and data through social media to strategically shape our creative direction, ensuring it resonates with our diverse audience's interests and concerns.

MEDIAPLANET | New York, NY 2016 - 2022

FREELANCE SENIOR DESIGNER

Championed the design of quarterly print campaigns across Health, Tech, and Lifestyle sectors, delivering brand presence.

- Achieved notable campaign acclaim, earning prime placements as inserts in [publications like USA Today and the LA Times](#).
- Leveraged tech for campaign management, overseeing the creative process from initial design, reviews, and approvals.
- Partnered closely with copywriters and project managers to ensure content reached audiences with ease and effectiveness.
- Collaborated with Lead Designer to create editorial layouts that followed contemporary design trends and set new ones.

BERLIN ROSEN PR FIRM | Manhattan, NY

2018 - 2020

FREELANCE SENIOR DESIGNER

Specialized in designing [political campaign materials](#), collaborating closely with Creative Directors and editorial teams.

- Ensured consistency in branding and messaging across all materials while infusing creativity and innovation.
- Designed and executed engaging campaigns for various political candidates nationwide, from local mayors to U.S. senators, driving them toward electoral success.
- Developed visually striking assets, including flyers, brochures, direct mail materials, logos, and social media content, all crafted to communicate campaign messages and resonate with target audiences.
- Kept a finger on the pulse of design trends, political developments, and emerging technologies, continuously refining campaign strategies for maximum impact and relevance.

THE REAL DEAL MAGAZINE | Manhattan, NY

2013 - 2016

ART DIRECTOR

The Real Deal is the preeminent real estate news outlet, with a daily readership comprising millions of professionals and investors.

- Executed [the creative direction of the entire creative department](#), cultivating collaboration and innovation.
- Conducted brainstorming sessions with editorial team to ideate innovative content strategies and coordinate execution.
- Effectively steered teams of designers, illustrators, and freelancers, delegating tasks and handling photo research.
- Engaged in the creative process, refining layouts for the front of the book, feature stories, and pioneering cover designs.
- Collaborated with the sales team to address their marketing design needs and strengthen brand presence and outreach.

POPULAR MECHANICS | Manhattan, NY

2012

SENIOR DESIGNER

A publication renowned for delivering cutting-edge news and insights into innovations and inventions across diverse domains.

- Led the magazine's redesign and transformation, providing a fresh and cohesive visual identity in collaboration with the Creative Director and Art Director.
- Pioneered a new layout and aesthetic for the front of the book and featured sections of the publication.
- Coordinated with skilled illustrators to produce captivating artwork that complemented the editorial content.
- Championed the magazine's digital evolution, optimizing its appearance for iPad users while maintaining its brand essence.

UPTOWN/VIBE MAGAZINE | Manhattan, NY

2008 - 2012

SENIOR DESIGNER (2010 – 2012) | JUNIOR DESIGNER (2008 – 2010)

Contributed to the evolution of Uptown/Vibe Magazine's visual identity.

- Collaborated closely with the Creative Director and Art Director on [the redesign project for VIBE magazine](#).
- Led the design of the front-of-the-book pages, data design pages, and feature layouts, influencing the overall aesthetic.
- Supported the Creative Director, contributing to executing the editorial vision and ensuring alignment with design goals.

EDUCATION

Master's in Graphic Design and Visual Communication, Intuit/Lab | Paris, France