

Brian McCrea

Creative Director | Brand & Design Systems Leader

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Creative Director with 20+ years of experience building brand systems and visual identity for technology, fintech, and consumer organizations. Known for stepping into complex, ambiguous projects— - translating competing perspectives into focused creative strategy and high-craft execution. Equally comfortable presenting a brand vision to a CEO and opening Figma to explore concepts. Deep experience in design systems, multi-channel campaigns, cross-functional leadership, and AI-assisted workflows.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Brand Systems
Creative Direction
Leadership
Stakeholder Alignment

Narrative Design
Art Direction
Brand Strategy

Visual Identity
Design Systems
GTM creative

Editorial Design
Cross Functional
AI-assisted Design

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance | Remote

Design Systems Lead | 2026–Present

Independent practice building design systems and brand infrastructure for growing software companies, pairing brand strategy with AI-assisted production workflows to move from foundational decisions to working files fast.

— **Payroll & HR Software Platform** Engaged to build a complete design system from the ground up: semantic token architecture across color, type, and spacing, a full component library built on true variant architecture, and documented hierarchy ready for engineering handoff. Used Claude connected directly into Figma to work inside the live file, compressing a process that typically spans a full quarter into two weeks.

Intuit — Intuit Accountants | Plano, TX

Creative Lead | Senior Visual and Brand Designer | 2017–Present

Led design for visual systems, brand expression, and multi-channel creative within the Intuit Accountants ecosystem, a portfolio of tax and accounting software serving millions of professionals. Stepped into complex, cross-functional projects to bring alignment, clarity, and craft to work that spanned pricing, brand, web, product, and marketing.

Selected Work

- **Packages (Value Communication System)** Co-led strategy, narrative, and visual system design for a bundled product packaging initiative. Ran six rounds of prototyping and 30+ customer interviews to shift communication from feature lists to benefit-led tiers—deployed across pricing pages, brand, web, and product surfaces.
- **Lacerte Tax Brand Refresh** Served as creative director for the Lacerte Tax brand refresh, rebuilding the brand foundation and unifying voice and visuals across a redesigned website, email journeys, direct mail, a 52-page product brochure, and a premium customer kit.

— **The Balance Sheet** Conceived and launched The Balance Sheet, a short-format editorial newspaper for tax professionals during peak season—a fast, affordable proof of concept that demonstrated the brand could be more human, more helpful, and less product-focused.

Impact & Scale

— Set creative direction for multiple product lines within the Intuit Accountants portfolio over a 9-year tenure, partnering with product marketing, content design, web, and executive leadership on high-visibility initiatives.

TEXSOM | 2014–2017 *Creative Director* | Dallas–Fort Worth, Texas

TEXSOM advances beverage education through conferences, publications, and international competitions. Served as sole designer and creative director for three years, building and unifying the organization's visual presence as it grew in global scale and reach.

— Defined editorial identity and visual system for *Sommelier*, TEXSOM's inaugural publication—shaping typographic rhythm, layout structure, and photographic tone to feel modern, credible, and human

— Led creative direction for the annual TEXSOM conference across identity, signage, credentials, programs, sponsorship materials, and digital touchpoints, building a repeatable event framework that refreshed annually without losing cohesion

— Directed visual identity for the TEXSOM International Wine Awards across print, digital, and environmental applications, unifying the awards program with the broader editorial and event ecosystem

Focal Point | 2003–2013 *Senior Graphic Designer* | Chicago, Illinois

Focal Point designs architectural lighting where precision and restraint define the brand. As sole in-house designer for nearly 10 years, built and evolved the visual system that communicated that discipline clearly, consistently, and at scale.

— Developed a visual design framework grounded in quiet grids, deliberate spacing, and restrained typographic hierarchy, guiding the brand's evolution into something more unified, premium, and confident over nearly a decade

— Proposed and designed the annual Specification Guide, replacing costly binder systems with a premium hardcover catalog—a first for U.S. lighting manufacturers, cutting production costs by ~50% while improving how customers understood the full product range

Unilever | 2000–2003 *Senior Graphic Designer* | Chicago, Illinois

Created digital and print assets across Unilever's North American brand portfolio, gaining foundational experience in consumer goods brand systems at Fortune 500 scale.

SKILLS

Leadership: Creative direction, brand strategy, design systems, cross-functional team leadership, stakeholder alignment, agency and vendor management **Design:** Brand identity, visual identity, editorial design, narrative design, art direction, typography, campaign creative, GTM creative **Tools:** Figma, Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, Adobe Workfront, Adobe GenStudio **AI:** ChatGPT, Claude, Google Gemini, NotebookLM, Midjourney, Adobe Firefly

EDUCATION

BFA Graphic Design, Louisiana State University

AWARDS

Adobe Creative Jam — Judges' Choice Award & Audience Choice Award

2026 HOW Magazine — In-House Design Award of Merit

2025 Communicator Awards — Gold Award of Excellence

2024, 2023 Davey Awards — Silver Award

2022 Graphic Design USA — American In-House Design Award

2021 Communicator Awards — Silver Award of Distinction

2019 Annual Specifier Award — Best Company Catalog | 2018