

Karen Avila

Creative Director

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PROFILE

Creative Director with 17 years of building brands from every seat in the room: product design, agency leadership and in-house brand building. I have directed teams of ten and I have been the entire department, delivering for names like Cartier, Louis Vuitton and DAMAC. Today I work AI-augmented, with human craft setting the standard and AI expanding the speed and range.

EXPERIENCE

Creative Director & Head of Marketing

December 2024 – Present

WELF · Part of Welfare Group · Dubai

WELF is a Dubai wealth management firm serving high and ultra-high-net-worth clients. I run its entire marketing and creative operation, covering brand, web, content, campaigns and events. I started completely solo, using AI as my team, and later grew the function by bringing on a designer I direct.

- Directed the branding of WELF from day zero, covering brand strategy, tone of voice, messaging and visual identity, and named the WELF Spectrum, the firm's client methodology.
- Designed and built the group's digital home, from site structure to launch.
- Created the yearly marketing and communications strategy across social media, email marketing, events and digital advertising.
- Run the content engine end to end: WELF Insights articles, email newsletters, inbound campaigns, social content and video production, including the visual direction of the firm's podcast.
- Led the strategy and execution of digital advertising campaigns: media buying, creatives, copy, funnels, landing pages and email sequences.
- Built modular template systems and an AI writing system trained on WELF's tone of voice, keywords and messaging, cutting production time from days to hours.
- Led the launch of the brand, reaching 8K+ followers on Instagram and 75K+ on X within the first month.
- Created a second, confidential brand for the group's digital-asset arm: voice, visual language, brand book and website.

Creative Director

December 2023 – December 2024

Welfare Group · Dubai

Built and grew the group's in-house agency serving its companies across the real estate, blockchain and wealth management industries, hiring and leading a team of eight across graphic design, film, social media and copywriting.

- Created the branding and marketing strategy for each brand in the group, from target audience and brand persona to positioning, messaging and manifesto.
 - Directed the execution of creative assets across advertising, branding, events, video, websites and digital marketing, ensuring brand consistency at every step.
 - Created the workflows, SOPs and SLAs for every project type, and built a Notion project management system keeping all creative operations and stakeholders aligned through tasks, revisions and delivery.
 - Created the strategy and concept, and led the creative operations, of quarterly events and activations for the group's sub-brands.
 - Oversaw the production of 50+ videos.
 - Hired, onboarded and mentored the team, hosting bi-monthly creative workshops on value proposition, branding strategy, tone of voice and design workflow.
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Creative Director

One11 Creative Agency · Dubai, UAE

February 2021 – September 2023

Led and mentored a multidisciplinary team of 10+, including graphic designers, 3D artists and copywriters, across the fashion, food & beverage, hospitality, automotive and government industries.

- Conceptualized, directed and supervised the execution of 20+ advertising campaigns for Cartier, Louis Vuitton, Tumi, DAMAC, Dubai Police, Dubai Investments, Nissan, KIA, Chevrolet and 20+ more brands.
- Planned and delivered campaigns from a 360° perspective: digital assets, organic and paid reach, sponsorships, influencer marketing, events and activations.
- Built branding and marketing strategies from research to rollout: audience, positioning, messaging, content pillars and competitive analysis.
- Participated in 40+ client consultations, providing expertise on creative direction, content creation, schedules and production support.
- Cartier's event and advertising campaign introduced One11 to the KSA market and became a trending Twitter topic for over two days.
- Oversaw the production of 100+ marketing assets for xNARA, driving 49K+ followers, 18K+ email subscribers and 1.5K+ new users within the first month.
- Collaborated on and oversaw the production of the region's first interactive video in the automotive industry, for Chevrolet, reaching 500K views.

Creative Director

Karen Avila Creative Studio · Independent

January 2013 – February 2021

Ran my own studio for over ten years, leading a small team across branding, graphic design, illustration, video production and social media strategy.

- Created the brand strategy and identity design, with collaterals from stationery and brochures to websites and apps, for 40+ brands across Mexico, the US, and Europe.
- Oversaw the design, prototyping and development of ten websites.
- Planned and analyzed paid and organic campaigns across Facebook, Google, Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram, improving ROI, ROAS and engagement, and reducing average bounce rates by 10%.
- Developed the concept and art direction of more than 2,000 creative assets.

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

Brand, product, textile and accessories designer (2009 – 2013) for brands across the US, UK, Switzerland and China, including Krasny, Origany, Danny Bill London, Palestyle, Satchel & Page, Focus Wallets, and Lalla Alia.

SKILLS

Creative direction · Art direction · Brand strategy & positioning · Brand identity & rebranding · Marketing strategy · 360° advertising campaigns · Events & activations · Social media & content creation · Copywriting · Website design & build (Framer) · Presentations, brochures & packaging · Leadership & team management · Project management · Design thinking · Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign) · AI creative workflows · CRM Management · HubSpot (Marketing Suite)

EDUCATION

Universidad de Guadalajara · Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Design, Major in Consumer Products (2007 – 2011)

LANGUAGES

English (fluent) · Spanish (native) · Italian (beginner)