



Donnie Bauer



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Social

-  LinkedIn: [donniebauer](https://www.linkedin.com/in/donniebauer)
-  Instagram: [donnie.xyz/](https://www.instagram.com/donnie.xyz/)
-  Vimeo: [donniebauer](https://vimeo.com/user/1234567890)
-  Behance: [donniebauer](https://www.behance.net/donniebauer)

Skills

- Creative Direction
- Live-Action Direction
- Client Relations
- Team Building
- Sales Strategy
- Presentations
- Pitching
- Deck Design & Development
- Creative Writing
- Design
- CG
- Styleframes
- AI (Stills)
- Video & Audio Editing
- Mentoring
- Management

Accolades

- Creative Arts Magazine Feature
- AICE Award Winner
- AICP Design & Animation Finalist
- Promax BDA Award Winner
- Maxon Cinema 4D NAB Presenter
- Half Rez Keynote Presenter

About Me

Donnie is a Director, Creative Director, and Designer based in Chicago, USA. Prior to his current freelance stint, he most recently served as a full-time Director and Creative Director at The Mill, where he led multidisciplinary teams of artists and producers delivering design-driven solutions. His work spans live-action, CGI, animation, and motion design, with a particular strength at the intersection of these disciplines. With over a decade of leadership experience, Donnie has pioneered projects across broadcast television, entertainment, large-scale installations, and arena concerts. Recent collaborations include the US Open, Starbucks, Evan Williams, Pepsi, Fiat, MINI Cooper, and Amazon.

Experience

2025-PRESENT
DIRECTOR & CREATIVE DIRECTOR
FREELANCE

I'm a freelance Director and Creative Director collaborating with brands, agencies, and studios across live-action, CGI, animation, and motion design. I lead projects from development through production, finishing, and color grading. I support pitching and bidding with executive producing teams, provide directing reels, staffing guidance, and team-building insight. Since The Mill's closure in February, I have led projects for clients such as PepsiCo, Halo Top Ice Cream, Philadelphia Cream Cheese, the US Open, The Cosmopolitan Hotel, Fremont Street Las Vegas, Wholly Guacamole, and Snap Inc. (Snapchat).

2018-2025
DIRECTOR, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, HEAD OF DESIGN
THE MILL

During my seven-year tenure at The Mill, I served as Creative Director, Director, and Head of Design for the Chicago office. I helped grow and mentor the design team while expanding the studio's Cinema 4D and Houdini capabilities. I supported sales and business development through pitching, new business presentations, and maintaining client relationships. As a CD, I played a key role in winning work, building teams, and leading cross-disciplinary efforts across design, animation, and visual effects. My hands-on leadership made me a trusted presence for artists, producers, and clients throughout all stages of production.

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Tools

- After Effects
- Cinema 4D
- Premiere Pro
- Photoshop
- InDesign
- Lightroom
- Google Slides
- Figma
- Milanote
- Miro
- Basecamp
- Topaz Suite
- MidJourney
- Ableton Live
- Reason
- Canon 5D

Education

2001-2005
Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)
School of Art & Design
Northern Illinois University

Major: Time Arts

Program Highlights:

- Graphic Design
- 2D Cel Animation
- After Effects Motion Graphics
- 3D Animation (3ds Max)
- Audio as Art
- Interactive Installation
- Video Art

More?

For more details about my education, work experience, and professional network, please visit my [LinkedIn](#) profile.

Experience Continued

2016-2018

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, DESIGNER, ANIMATOR
FREELANCE

I collaborated closely with creative teams at studios, agencies, and directly with clients to conceive and execute a wide range of animation projects. My responsibilities have included design, 2D and 3D animation, rigid body dynamics, layout, lighting, and shading in Cinema 4D, rendering with V-Ray, Arnold, and Octane, compositing in After Effects and Nuke, and editing in Premiere Pro. Studios & Brands include: Possible Productions, Digital Kitchen, Reebok, Pitchfork, Getty Images Group, Riot Games - League of Legends.

2007-2016

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, DESIGN DIRECTOR, DESIGNER, ANIMATOR
OPTIMUS DESIGN

I worked closely with the ECD and EP on company-wide management initiatives, leading pitches and presentations for new business while assisting with project budgets, schedules, and resource planning. I assembled animation teams based on project scope, establishing workflows and pipeline strategies, and directed live-action shoots while serving as VFX Supervisor. I introduced new software and techniques to elevate team output and quality. Beyond management, I contributed to design, style frames, 2D/3D animation, lighting, shading, and rendering in Cinema 4D, compositing, video editing, and finishing.

2006-2007

LEAD DESIGNER & ANIMATOR
MODE PROJECT

Collaborated with small teams and worked independently to design and animate projects across After Effects, Cinema 4D, Photoshop, and Illustrator. Contributed style frames for pitch decks, organized assets for the team, and executed full design and animation for TV network bumpers and promos. Composed accompanying music using Reason and Ableton Live. Clients include: Ecko Unlimited, Chase Bank, Obama Presidential Campaign, Bally's Total Fitness.

2005-2006

DESIGN INTERN
DIGITAL KITCHEN

Assisted with general studio operations, including upkeep, errands, and on-site support for shoots. Captured photography and created art assets for use by full-time designers and animators. Participated in style frame development and actively observed review sessions with designers and creative directors to gain insight. Supported green screen shoots, including setup and breakdown, ensuring smooth production workflow.

