

FOCUS

I help clients figure out which problems are worth solving, then design the solution and partner with the engineers building it. My background runs across product, UX, AR/VR, and 12 years of AAA game design: game design taught me to think in systems, and UX taught me to keep the person using them at the center. I spend a lot of time on what's coming next, prototyping against emerging tools and platforms early enough to know what they'll actually be good for. I approach each project as a creatively technical designer, and when a project calls for it, AI coding tools have closed the gap between designing a solution and shipping one.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ABCD (Freelance)

Dec.'25 – Present

SR. CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIST

[Multiple Projects](#)

ABCD (Aaron Butler Creative Design) is my independent practice. I help clients figure out which problems are worth solving for their product and their users, then build the solution: apps, tools, and websites. I approach each project as a creatively technical designer. I've shipped work both alongside engineering teams and end to end on my own, using AI coding tools to close the gap between designing a solution and shipping one.

SMX (Full-time)

May.'23 – Sep.'24

SENIOR SIMULATION UI/UX DESIGNER

[Project STORMBREAKER \(USINDOPACOM\)](#)

Owned simulation UI/UX for Project STORMBREAKER, a next-generation warfighting planning tool, working directly with military planners, end users, and leadership across all branches to find what they actually needed. Ran design sessions in person and remote, and delivered detailed Figma prototypes that engineering counterparts built to. The project was rebuilt on a new foundation partway through, moving from Unreal Engine to a browser stack, which cost the simulation its third dimension and meant reworking carried-over designs for top-down interaction.

Brilliant By Nature (Full-time)

Mar.'20 – Mar.'23

CO-FOUNDER

[NeighborNET](#)

NeighborNET, our first project, is a mobile app enabling location-based resource sharing to build resilience in communities before and after disasters. Brilliant By Nature brings together creatives, change-makers, designers, artists, educators, and activists around biomimicry and our connection to nature.

Microsoft Federal (Contract)**Nov.'22 – Apr.'23**

SR. CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIST · 3D EXPERIENCE EXPERT

[Wargaming Engine](#)

Owned UI/UX design for the simulation half of a next-generation warfighting planning tool built in Unreal Engine. Designed the SmartCard system, a modular, data-driven card that let planners build unit hierarchies on a live map, alongside the map interactions for placing, grouping, and embedding objects at scale. Worked directly with military planners at Technical Exchange Meetings, sketching in the room and returning with prototypes.

Microsoft Studio Alpha (Contract)**Aug.'21 – Nov.'22**

SR. CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIST · 3D EXPERIENCE EXPERT

[Nextgen Simulation Engine](#)

Sr. Creative Technologist on a 60-person Microsoft org building a general-purpose simulation engine, where any customer could load their own data and interact with it in real time. Designed for use cases as varied as urban air mobility, weather effects on experimental aircraft, and logistics planning, which meant a UI that had to work out of the box for a space agency or a defense agency alike. Created the SmartCard concept, a customizable entity card with attachable subcomponents, plus the real-time visual language for reading speed, direction, altitude, and destination at a glance, and modeled a custom 3D asset library to shared scale.

Smashing Ideas (Contract)**Aug.'19 – Oct.'19**

SENIOR UX DESIGNER

[Unreleased Mobile App](#)

Explored and realized a complex user-centered concept for the client. Rapidly iterated interactive prototypes used in focus groups and IDI testing; assisted leadership in a design-thinking workshop on-site; created an internal marketing video.

VREAL (Full-time)**Mar.'18 – Aug.'19**

SENIOR UX DESIGNER

[Vreal Desktop App](#)

Worked across disciplines on feature and UI development for the Vreal desktop app, a platform for streaming and watching VR gameplay. Designed in-VR interactions alongside the desktop experience, exploring wrist-mounted menus, quick-access controls, and notification systems for users who couldn't see their own hands. Created feature specs, wireframes, user flows, interactive prototypes, and motion studies, and gathered feedback through user testing.

Mega World Studios (Contract)**Jun.'17 – Feb.'18**

UI/UX DESIGNER

[Cats In Mechs \(Mobile Game\)](#)

Reworked the UI and UX of Cats In Mechs, a mobile game already in development, covering mission select, combat, upgrade, and level-complete flows. Brought a game designer's eye to the gameplay itself alongside the interface work.

Microsoft HXT (Contract)**Apr.'16 – Dec.'16**

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCE DESIGNER

[HoloLens, Microsoft 365 Layout](#)

Designed key features for HoloLens and Dynamics 365 Layout, which let people place 3D models as holograms in physical space to bring designs to completion at real-world scale. Created design docs and artifacts, worked across disciplines on feature development, and drove product decisions through research, customer demos, and interviews.

Stanford University (Contract)

INNOVATOR

Autodesk ReMake, Project Play

Oct.'15 – Nov.'15

Spent six weeks with a team of Innovators conducting user interviews, brainstorming, and creating prototypes to help Autodesk find new use cases for their photogrammetry software, ReMake, and experience creation software, Project Play.

Game Development

GAME & LEVEL DESIGNER

12 years designing for AAA studios — Insomniac Games, Yager Development, Guerrilla Games, Electronic Arts Los Angeles, Climax Group, Black Ops Entertainment. Full role history, shipped titles, and case studies at aaronbutler.com.

2003 – 2015

EDUCATION

Art Institute of California Los Angeles, Santa Monica, CA

Bachelor of Science in Game Art & Design

2001 – 2004

HARD SKILLS

Software - Affinity Suite - DaVinci Resolve	Wireframing Software Figma	3D Packages Blender
Game Engines Unreal	Task Tracking - Perforce - Git - DevTrack - JIRA	AI / LLMs - Claude Code - Claude AI