AYA WILLIAMS

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Product designer with 12+ years building accessible, intuitive products centered on user needs. Passionate about creating AI experiences that elevate people—technology that feels like a trusted collaborator rather than a tool. Experienced shipping AI products in startup environments and enterprise software for thousands of users, from conversational robotics interfaces to complex B2B SaaS workflows. Deep builder mindset with strong prototyping skills (HTML/CSS/JS/React) and hands-on AI/ML product knowledge. Track record of executing end-to-end in ambiguous, fast-moving environments while collaborating cross-functionally with engineers, AI researchers, and product managers. Driven by the challenge of making AI ethical, pro-human, and useful for diverse user contexts.

SKILLS

AI Product Design: Conversational UI, chatbot UX, human-robot interaction, LLM-powered experience design, AI-assisted workflows, generative AI tools
Product & UX: End-to-end product execution, complex workflow design, user research, usability testing, interaction design, design systems, accessibility (WCAG 2.2), information architecture
Prototyping: HTML, CSS, JavaScript, React, Webflow, Figma prototyping
Design Tools: Figma, Adobe Creative Suite, Sketch, InVision, Miro, Framer, Zeplin
Collaboration: Cross-functional team leadership, stakeholder management, Jira, Asana, Confluence, Slack, GitHub, Agile/Scrum
Languages: English (Native), Russian (Fluent), French (Professional Proficiency)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Creative Director 2023 – Present
SWURL LLC | Denver, CO
Founded professional development platform connecting creatives with cross-functional mentors to address echo chambers limiting career growth.
- Led end-to-end product strategy and design—branding, website, mobile app UX, and Kickstarter video—in resource-constrained startup, resulting in comprehensive product suite ready for launch.
- Conducted user research with 30+ users to validate product-market fit, iterating on prototypes based on feedback to inform algorithm development and feature prioritization.
- Built interactive prototypes using Figma and HTML/CSS to communicate vision and test with users, securing early adopter commitments through a builder-first approach.
- Sourced and developed team members for key roles, establishing design processes and quality standards from zero.

Product Designer II 2021 – 2023
Paychex | Remote
Led design for B2B enterprise HR and payroll platform serving thousands of organizations, redesigning complex administrator workflows causing user friction.
- Redesigned billing and access management workflows for thousands of administrators, conducting research and collaborating with engineering to ship solutions that reduced support tickets.
- Championed WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards across the product suite by presenting business case to stakeholders, establishing design system guidelines for trustworthy, inclusive experiences.
- Mentored 3 junior designers through design critiques and pair-designing sessions, developing their skills in user research, stakeholder communication, and shipping in agile environments.
- Drove adoption of agile design practices, transforming a waterfall environment into a collaborative, iterative workflow that improved cross-functional alignment and design velocity.

Product Designer 2019 – 2021
Hanson Robotics LTD. | Hong Kong (Remote)
Designed conversational AI interfaces for robotics products where no established interaction patterns existed for human-robot collaboration.
- Designed chatbot interfaces for AI-powered robotics by collaborating with AI researchers to translate complex capabilities into intuitive interactions, establishing novel design conventions for frontier AI products.
- Created user flows balancing AI capabilities with user understanding through prototype testing and iteration, building trust and confidence in AI-driven experiences.

- Managed design projects across distributed international teams (Hong Kong, Russia, Paris), ensuring design consistency and successfully shipping features on schedule.

Lead Designer & Design Manager2015 – 2019
Independent Consultant (Freelance) | Remote
Led design teams for startups and established companies across web, mobile, and emerging technologies in fast-paced, ambiguous environments.
- Managed teams of up to 12 designers across 40+ projects, establishing processes and maintaining quality standards to ship products on schedule.

Product Designer2013 – 2017
e-on Software | Paris, France (Hybrid)
Sole designer for 3D software company, improving usability of complex tools for professional 3D artists.
- Designed UI for technical 3D visualization software through French-language collaboration with engineering, conducting user research to create intuitive interfaces balancing power-user needs with discoverability.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Experience Haus — Assistant Instructor, Design Thinking Workshop | *Facilitate Design Thinking workshops for corporate teams, coaching on prototyping and creative problem-solving*
Independent — Creative Mentor & Coach | *Coach artists through career transitions, building strategic roadmaps and sustainable creative practices (2021–Present)*
Batiste Leadership, NY — Strategic Consultant | *Advise on product decisions and organizational strategy over 6+ year partnership (2019–Present)*

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Computer Graphics Design — Rochester Institute of Technology
Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Film / Animation / Video — Rhode Island School of Design

CERTIFICATIONS

AI/ML Product Management (2024, 100%) | AI for Designers — IxDF (Top 10%) | WCAG 2.2 Accessibility | Google UX Design & Project Management

SPEAKING & TEACHING

Brown University, Guest Speaker (2024) | Art for Healing Workshop (2024) | The Colosseum, Featured Artist, Los Angeles (2024)