

Stephan von Falkenstein

Creative Director · Product Designer · AI Product Engineer

NEW YORK · OPEN TO REMOTE

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SUMMARY

Senior creative director and product designer who writes the production code. More than two decades across fashion, media, brands and software, from NowThis, American Express and Red Bull to Spotify. Since 2025 I design, build and ship AI products end to end with my own agent system: a solar-system engine with a grounded AI assistant, a private on-device dictation app published in the Microsoft Store, and the CMS that runs my sites. Looking for a senior full-time role in design, product or AI engineering; open to contract work.

SKILLS

Product & UX	Product design, UX research, interaction design, prototyping, mobile and responsive design, e-commerce UX, information-dense interfaces
Design systems	Design tokens, component libraries, brand systems, cross-platform identity, vertical video format systems
AI engineering	LLM integration, grounded generation (model limited to computed facts), AI agents and agent memory, local speech recognition, local models, latency and cost measurement
Engineering	JavaScript, HTML, CSS, Canvas 2D, PHP, SQLite, Python, service workers / PWA, payments (PayPal server-side verification), Windows desktop apps, MSIX packaging, automated testing
Creative	Creative direction, art direction, brand identity, campaign and social content, short-form video, photography and retouching

EXPERIENCE

AI Product Engineer & Lead Developer

AUG 2025 – PRESENT

Vonfal AI · own product studio · New York / remote

- Design, engineer and ship products solo with an agent system I built, from concept and interface to payments, hosting and store submission.
- Mars Deck** (marsdeck.net): live solar-system map computed in the browser, 6,205 real bodies, zero network calls to draw; AI assistant grounded in computed positions so it cannot state an unverified number; 808 automated checks.
- WREN** (wren.vonfal.ai): private push-to-talk dictation for Windows that runs entirely on-device; replaced a 696 ms language-model clean-up step with a 0.063 ms rules pass; packaged as MSIX and published in the Microsoft Store (Oct 2026).
- EchoBorn** (echoborn.net): community platform with its own computed game-cycle engines and live paid checkout.
- EchoHex**: modular PHP/SQLite CMS with on-page editor and self-updater, running behind several live sites.

Creative Director

SEP 2018 – PRESENT

Safehouse Lab · New York

- Creative direction, brand and design systems for an independent media and design lab; VR and AR research, live-streaming production and web builds.

Senior Product Designer (contract)

SEP 2015 – MAY 2016

NowThis News · New York

- Designed layout systems for vertical, square and wide video built for sound-off mobile viewing: captions, overlays and type.
- Designed a playlist format that cut a 20-minute interview with Vice President Joe Biden into eight standalone, shareable clips.

- Delivered a cross-platform channel rebrand and prototyped a gesture-based news app, including format-aware sharing.

Senior User Interface Designer (contract)**AUG 2015 – OCT 2015**

American Express · New York

- Made the card ordering process responsive for mobile, working with UX research and contributing to UI design systems.

Creative Director (contract)**MAY 2014 – OCT 2015**

Tigerspike · New York

- Improved UX and UI workflows within the UX department for enterprise clients including American Express and IHS Markit.

Senior Product Designer (contract)**JUL 2014 – DEC 2014**

IHS Markit · New York

- Designed responsive layouts for data-dense engineering software used in defense and aviation.

Muse Template Developer**2013 – 2017**

Adobe Muse ecosystem · ThemeCloud · New York

- Designed and built themes and widgets for Adobe Muse, plus a membership with hosting and a customer CMS; wound down when Adobe discontinued Muse.

Art Director (contract)**JAN 2012 – SEP 2013**

Red Bull · New York

- Art direction for Red Bull Stratos event marketing, branding guidelines for the New York Red Bulls, and a responsive redesign of the World Rally Championship website with the Red Bull online team.

UX/CX E-commerce Consultant (contract)**JUN 2012 – NOV 2012**

Riedel, the wine glass company

- Customer and user research for the online shop; contributed to the redesign of riedel.com.

UX Research Scientist (contract)**JUL 2011 – SEP 2011**

Spotify · New York

- Member of the UX and UI research team for Spotify's first iPad app.

UX & Social Media Consultant (contract)**JUL 2011 – MAR 2012**

Havas Life · Calidris 28 · New York

- Senior UX consulting for Havas Life (Jul–Nov 2011); social media, advertising and a B2B dropshipping strategy for Calidris 28's US launch (Jul 2011 – Mar 2012).

Art Director & Senior Partner**JUL 2009 – SEP 2011**

20th Street Media · New York

- Moved local businesses and brands onto modern web and social platforms; clients included McCann, BMW and Justin Timberlake.

Earlier**2002 – 2009**

- Digital Art Director & Partner, Project 35 Inc. (2008–09) · Social Media Strategist, Obama for America (2007–09) · Visual Designer, Frank The Plumber (2007–08).
- Fashion model in Miami, Hamburg, Tokyo and Milan (2002–09): years on set with photographers and creative teams that shaped my eye for image and brand.

EDUCATION**Communication Design (coursework)**Design Factory International · Hamburg
