



DARREN CHESNUT

HELLO, I AM A HANDS ON CREATIVE DIRECTOR WITH OVER 30 YEARS EXPERIENCE FOCUSING ON BUILDING BRANDS.



WORK EXPERIENCE

CENTURY MARTIAL ARTS
Midwest City, Oklahoma
1993 - 04/2023

Creative Director of Product Development, V. P. of Distribution Black Belt/Century, Inc.
(10/15 - 04/23)

Founded in 1976, Century Martial Arts is the premier leader in martial arts products and the largest manufacturer and distributor of individual contact sports equipment in the world. Tasked with creating a cohesively compelling visual story in support of CMA's customers and marketing efforts within this deadline driven, highly competitive industry.

- Created the overall look of all visual designs and branding of martial arts and sporting goods products from ideation through completion. (See visuals @ www.centurymartialarts.com)
- Simultaneously managed all aspects of buying for Century, Inc., including \$750K budget over-site for Black Belt Magazine and the MAIA (Martial Arts Industry Association) 100-page monthly magazine.
- Negotiated mutually successful contracts with vendors and suppliers for highest quality production equipment, and materials.
- Managed and brought to fruition a variety of successful projects in collaboration with executive management, marketing teams, R&D engineers, buyers; and well - known clients, including Bruce Lee, within the Martial Arts, Fitness, and Movie Industries.
- Collaborated with a multinational mass media company to develop training gear for Sony Pictures Cobra Kai TV series, including uniforms, bags, and retail apparel.
- Set up and managed CMA's booth at the annual Martial Arts SuperShow, Las Vegas. Recognized as exclusive photographer of martial art talent and celebrities throughout the event, including Red Carpet and Awards Ceremonies. Designed custom branded gear for Century's tournaments for SuperShow Europe.
- Conceptualized a creative approach to developing and implementing solutions for presentations, publications, and cross-channel campaigns to meet CMA's marketing and profitability objectives.
- Met with clients to ascertain creative design, project scope, and timelines, ensuring quality and on-time deliverables

CONT'D



ABOUT

CREATIVE DIRECTOR ~ VICE PRESIDENT

Manufacturing | Martial Arts Industry | S.G. Retail

Talented and results-oriented creative professional with experience leading teams, managing budgets, and developing strategies to engage target audiences. Offering a proven record of success in developing successful and innovative advertising and marketing campaigns that improve brand visibility and increase revenue. Possesses an exceptional eye for detail and a nuanced understanding of brand voice and messaging. Skills developed as Martial Arts 3rd degree Black Belt demonstrates mental toughness, commitment, and goal attainment - all qualities that are readily transferable to a variety of positions and industries.

TOOLS I USE



 Photoshop
 Illustrator
 InDesign
 Bridge
 After Effects
 Word
 Excel
 Outlook 365
 Figma
 FigJam
 Zoom
 Google Analytics
 MS Teams
 PowerPoint

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

University of Central Oklahoma,
Edmond, OK
Major: Graphic Design, Art in
Education
88 Credit hours
Adobe Certified Designer
3rd degree Black Belt in Jujitsu

Visual Director of Photography
(02/2009 – 2015)

CONT'D

- Directed and shot photos for print and digital media in collaboration with internal and external clients, plus well-known martial artists, martial arts schools, and fitness companies.
- Carefully reviewed each element against each client's unique specifications that produced results far beyond their expectations.
- Won Sr. Management's support to design and set up an in-house Visual Arts Studio, saving thousands in outsourcing fees; purchased, and maintained all equipment and supplies. (Continues to grow in profitability, 2023)
- Oversaw all color digital media including print ads, booth graphics, packaging, and product branding.
- Consulting with an outside company, co-developed a proprietary database for searching photography needs and documents.
- Collaborated with creative agencies to lead new product line development.

Art Director
(10/1996 – 10/2009)

- Managed two creative divisions including a 100-page monthly magazine and a marketing kit sold to martial arts schools. Provided artistic vision and leadership for professional graphic artists and designers in creating and executing aesthetically pleasing, high quality designs for the Martial Arts and Fitness industries.
- Grew creative staff from 4 to 14 professionals that consistently met and exceeded performance goals.
- Oversaw artistic teams' progress throughout each project phase, including reviewing and approving copy, designs, and visuals.
- Ensured on-time completion, quality, and delivery of products and services to complete satisfaction of customers.
- Directed photo shoots for hardlines, fashion, and lifestyle marketing pieces.

Senior Graphic Designer
(06/1993 – 10/1995)

- Launched CMA on to the World Wide Web which was critical to establishing the company as leading manufacturer of martial arts and fitness equipment products. Redeveloped packaging strategies and go-to-market in sporting goods retail; led catalog designs, ads, and packaging.

MIDWEST TROPHY MANUFACTURING (MTM)
Del City, Oklahoma

**Graphic Designer/
Assistant Art Director**
(1988 to 1993)

- Founded in 1971, MTM is a leading manufacturer of commemorative items for small to large organizations, e.g., corporations, sports teams, and national/international events such as the Super Bowl and the Olympics. Selected to manage a variety of special projects including creating marketing campaigns (products, catalogs, brochures) for corporate awards programs. This foundational opportunity was key to subsequent career success.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Launched company onto the World-Wide-Web setting the stage for sustainable growth, brand recognition and success; CMA is currently serving thousands of customers including martial arts schools, fitness companies, and sporting goods retailers.
- Spearheaded strategic re-branding campaigns for sporting goods that facilitated CMA's smooth transition from wholesale to the retail market during the Pandemic, including Academy, Dick's Sporting Goods, Walmart, Big 5, and Amazon.
- Designed a Limited Collector's Edition of a famous martial artist that proved to be the most profitable item in CMA's history.
- Won support for designing and setting up the first in-house Visual Arts Studio, saving thousands in outsourcing fees; studio continues to grow in profitability.
- Recognized consistently for exceptional visual storytelling, project management, and customer relations skills that have enhanced CMA's reputation and profitability within the Martial Arts and Fitness industries.

SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Product Branding/Art Direction
Visual Product Development
/ Presentations
Action & H.L. Photography
Digital Content Development
Project Development/Management
Conceptual Design/Implementation
Marketing Campaign Management
Vendor/ Contract Negotiations
Printing Prepress Checks
Team Leadership/Supervision
Social Media Marketing

REFERENCES

Angie Flom (405) 301-7974
Eldon Woods (405) 819-3899
Kari Watkins (405) 830-6114
Steve Turner (405) 823-8525



FOR FULL WORK HISTORY, VISIT

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