



CRAIG DONNELLY

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Creative Solutions Leader with 26 years of experience partnering with enterprise brands, agencies, and media organizations to solve complex creative and business challenges. I help organizations translate ideas into scalable creative solutions by aligning strategy, technology, workflows, and cross-functional teams. Throughout my career, I've built trusted relationships with clients and stakeholders, guiding initiatives from discovery through execution while introducing new creative technologies and AI-driven workflows. Known for combining executive-level thinking with hands on creative expertise, I enjoy coaching teams, simplifying complexity, and helping customers turn business goals into meaningful outcomes.

Experience.

Founder & President

The Mood, Inc. / New York, NY / 2012 – Present

Lead a creative solutions studio partnering with enterprise organizations, agencies, and brands to solve business challenges through creative strategy, technology, and innovative workflows. Serve as a trusted advisor to clients, guiding cross-functional teams from discovery through delivery while translating business objectives into impactful creative solutions and long-term partnerships.

Independent Consulting & Creative Solutions

New York, NY / 2023 – Present

- Continued long-term partnerships with NBC News Marketing, MJM Creative (WPP), and Craft (McCann Worldgroup), serving as a trusted creative partner across broadcast, digital, experiential, and live initiatives.
- Partnered with MJM Creative to deliver large-scale visual experiences for global conferences and executive events supporting Coca-Cola, Deloitte, and Bentley Systems.
- Advised agency and brand teams on creative strategy, production workflows, and execution for clients including Ulta Beauty, AstraZeneca, Gilead, and JPMorgan Chase.
- Collaborated with Craft on multi-platform campaigns for Verizon and the New York Lottery, adapting creative solutions across out-of-home, venue, and digital environments to meet diverse audience and platform requirements.
- Developed scalable content systems spanning keynote presentations, out-of-home campaigns, broadcast graphics, and digital assets for healthcare, financial services, and consumer brands.

Adjunct Professor

Five Towns College / Dix Hills, NY / 2026 – Present

- Teach undergraduate and pre-college courses in Motion Design, Drawing & Imaging, and 3D Modeling & Animation.
- Design curriculum, develop Canvas LMS course content, and create project-based learning experiences that foster creative thinking, technical proficiency, and production workflows. Mentor students through coursework, independent study, and senior capstone projects, fostering creative problem-solving and portfolio development.
- Teach Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop, and Autodesk Maya while emphasizing design fundamentals, animation principles, and professional workflows.

Head of Growth & Partnerships

Laug Auf / Northport, NY / 2026 – Present

- Partner with the founder to develop growth strategy, business operations, and long-term organizational planning.
- Guide partnership strategy and community engagement initiatives that support long-term business growth.
- Develop operational systems, planning processes, and project workflows that improve accountability and execution.
- Support brand strategy, marketing initiatives, and business development through cross-functional planning and stakeholder collaboration.

Design Director

First Tube / New York, NY / 2021 – 2023

- Led creative strategy and visual development for large-scale live experiences, branded campaigns, and cultural activations supporting global brands including Bacardi, Progressive, Grubhub, Mastercard, Tito's, Traeger, Grey Goose, and New Balance.
- Partnered with clients and cross-functional teams to translate brand objectives into immersive visual experiences spanning live events, broadcast, digital, and social platforms.
- Directed end-to-end creative initiatives, delivering stage content, livestream graphics, social campaigns, and branded experiences that generated more than 100 million impressions and measurable audience engagement.
- Managed and mentored multidisciplinary creative teams, aligning design, motion, production, and technical execution across every phase of project delivery.
- Collaborated with production, technology, and client stakeholders to balance creative vision with operational requirements, platform constraints, and business objectives.
- Championed emerging technologies, including real-time workflows and AI-assisted creative tools, to improve production capabilities and expand creative possibilities.
- Contributed to First Tube's marketing efforts through social content, project showcases, and thought leadership that strengthened the agency's brand presence.

Creative Consultant

NBC News Marketing / New York, NY / 2018 – 2021

- Partnered with senior marketing and network leadership to develop creative strategies and visual campaigns supporting MSNBC programming, major news events, and network initiatives.
- Led art direction and creative development across broadcast, digital, and social platforms, delivering integrated campaigns that strengthened audience engagement and brand consistency.
- Contributed to network rebrands and visual identity initiatives, helping evolve MSNBC's on-air presentation and promotional systems across multiple platforms.
- Collaborated across creative, production, marketing, and editorial teams to align stakeholders, streamline workflows, and deliver high-quality work in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment.

Selected Campaigns & Recognition

- MSNBC – This Is Who We Are – Led creative development for MSNBC's brand campaign, recognized with a Promax Gold Award for Brand Image Promotion.
- MSNBC – Road Warriors (2020 Election) – Directed the creative development and motion design for MSNBC's election campaign, earning a Promax Bronze Award for Art Direction & Design: Animation.

Network Impact

- Contributed to MSNBC's most successful period of audience growth, supporting award-winning marketing campaigns and network promotions during record-setting ratings from 2018–2020.
- Developed creative campaigns supporting major news events, including the 2020 U.S. election, helping drive audience engagement during one of the most-watched periods in network history.
- Supported MSNBC's expansion into digital audio through the launch of the Bag Man and Why Is This Happening? podcasts, contributing to the success of Bag Man, which became the most-downloaded podcast in NBCUniversal history.

Creative Consulting & Studio Growth

New York, NY / 2012 – 2018

- Founded The Mood Inc., establishing a creative consulting studio serving agencies, broadcasters, and brands across television, advertising, and digital media.
- Built long-term partnerships with agencies including McCann Worldgroup, MJM Creative, and Nomad Edit, delivering creative strategy, motion systems, and campaign content across major brand initiatives.
- Became a trusted creative partner for Bloomberg L.P., supporting multiple business units with broadcast design, branded content, and ongoing visual communications.
- Partnered with NBC News, MSNBC, Today, Nightly News, HBO, truTV, MLB Network, and InDemand to develop broadcast campaigns, show packages, and promotional content.
- Balanced creative strategy with hands-on execution, leading projects from concept through delivery while expanding The Mood's client base and reputation through repeat business and long-term relationships.

Creative Foundations

Saturday Night Live | New York, NY | 2000–2012

- Became Saturday Night Live's first dedicated motion designer, helping establish the show's motion graphics and visual effects capabilities while supporting one of television's most recognized brands.
- Led motion design, compositing, and visual effects for the Film Unit, creating title sequences, integrated graphics, and visual storytelling for Digital Shorts, commercial parodies, and music videos.
- Developed broadcast graphics, animation, and visual systems supporting weekly live television under demanding production schedules.
- Collaborated with directors, editors, writers, producers, and technical teams to deliver seamless creative execution across live and pre-recorded productions.
- Adapted quickly to evolving creative trends and production technologies while maintaining the visual quality expected of a fast-paced weekly broadcast.
- Expanded beyond Saturday Night Live through concurrent broadcast design engagements with SyFy (2002–2004) and NBC Artworks (2004–2010), supporting network branding and promotional campaigns for Today, Nightly News, and Dateline.

TECHNOLOGY & CREATIVE EXPERTISE

Motion Graphics & Creative Technology:

After Effects, Cinema 4D (Redshift), Unreal Engine, Red Giant, Trapcode Suite, Plexus

Real-Time, Live Production & XR:

Disguise, Pixotope, Unreal Engine, Assimilate Live FX

Adobe Creative Cloud & Design:

Premiere Pro, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Audition, Media Encoder, Adobe Express, Figma, Canva, Adobe Creative Cloud

3D & Visualization:

Cinema 4D, Maya, Blender, Adobe Substance 3D, Vectorworks

AI Platforms:

ChatGPT, Runway, Runway Aleph, Google Veo, Google Nano Banana, GPT Image, Adobe Firefly, Adobe Project Neo, Midjourney, Flux, Kling AI, Hailuo AI, Magnific AI, Topaz Video AI, Wonder Studio, Meshy, Move AI, ElevenLabs, Suno, Figma Weave

AI Capabilities:

AI-assisted image generation, generative editing, video generation, 3D asset generation, compositing, upscaling, creative automation, and production workflows.

Collaboration & Production:

Notion, Asana, Frame.io, LucidLink, Slack, Dropbox, Google Workspace, Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Apple Keynote