

Renato Valdés-Olmos
Design Leader & Product Engineer

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A design leader who ships. Over 20 years I've built products, brands, and the teams behind them at Lyft, Grammarly, Honor, and my own startups. At GrowthX I worked as a forward-deployed design engineer, writing production code. I'm as comfortable directing a design org as I am closing the gaps marketing and engineering can't. Netherlands-based; remote for U.S. companies (EOR or contractor) or hybrid across Europe.

Scope Led design, product management, and research orgs up to ~60 people, managing principal ICs through directors (up to Senior Director); teams representing roughly \$20M in annual compensation, with operating budgets up to ~\$1.5M.

Selected Experience

GrowthX AI, Founding Designer → Head of Design San Francisco (remote), 2025 – 2026

- Founding designer at an AI-native growth company; led design across product and brand, and hired the founding design team.
- Forward-deployed design engineer: shipped code directly to production for GrowthX's own product and for several of its largest customer accounts (customers include Reddit, Ramp, Webflow, Lovable, and Superhuman).

Noord Ventures, Co-founder & Investor Amsterdam, 2024 – Present

- Co-founder of an early-stage venture studio; I invest in companies and operate inside them on product, brand, and go-to-market.
- Founded and operate Oak & Velvet, building its brand and product end-to-end; drove product, brand, and positioning at Fitnessse (US) through its raise; led Antfarm's (NL) brand.

Peak, Entrepreneur in Residence Amsterdam, 2023

- Entrepreneur in Residence at the early-stage VC; advised on investment decisions and coached portfolio founders.
- Founded Peak Performers, a gathering series convening Amsterdam's high-agency product and design operating leaders, including leaders from Booking, Shopify, and others.

Pitch, VP of Product Berlin, 2022 – 2023

- Led product and design at the \$600M-valued Berlin presentation platform, a ~40-person org spanning core experience, AI, and growth.
- Ran ~6 PMs and ~25 product designers, a research team, and an 8-person brand and marketing design team (incl. motion).
- Introduced a qualitative-metrics framework with PM and data science/analytics; shipped session recordings and Pitch's first AI features.

Grammarly, Head of Design San Francisco (remote), 2020 – 2022

- Built and led the design org, scaling the team from 5 to ~60 (staff and contractors), across an AI writing product used by 30M+ people daily as Grammarly expanded into enterprise (Grammarly Business) and reached a \$13B valuation (2021).
- Drove a design strategy that moved Grammarly from a browser extension to an OS-native AI communication assistant, the foundation of the platform now known as Superhuman.

Lyft, Senior Director, Product Design San Francisco, 2018 – 2019

- Senior design leader for the core rider experience; led the redesign that turned Lyft from a ride-hailing app into a multimodal transportation platform (shared rides, bikes, scooters, transit, AV), and shipped the “Walk & Save” ride mode, ahead of Lyft's 2019 IPO.

Honor, Founding Designer → Head of Design San Francisco, 2014 – 2018

- Founding designer: developed the brand and first product prototypes in-house, then built and led a 20-person team spanning product design, brand design, design ops, and user research.
- Honor's brand became a real asset in fundraising and recruiting as the company raised \$115M (Series A–C, incl. a16z), expanded across four states, and won Best New Startup (2016 Crunchies).

Human, Co-founder & CEO San Francisco, 2012 – 2016

- Co-founded and led design for an iOS activity tracker; Apple “Best of App Store 2014” and a Webby Award. Acquired by Mapbox, 2016.
- Users tracked 3M+ activities a day across 900 cities; created Human Cities, a data-visualization project (55M+ activities mapped) covered by 200+ outlets.

Andreessen Horowitz, Design Advisor (GenD) San Francisco, 2016 – 2018

- Coached portfolio founders and heads of design as part of a16z's design network (concurrent advisory).

Earlier Cardcloud, Founder & CEO, assets acquired by Moblio (2008–2012). Postmachina, Creative Director, design studio (2005–2008). Headland, Interaction Designer (2003–2005). Netherlands Cancer Institute, Interaction Designer (2000–2003).

Capabilities Design leadership & org-building, Product & design strategy, Brand & product marketing, Design systems, Shipping in code (React/TypeScript), AI product design, UX research, Fundraising & venture

Education MA, Interaction Design, HKU (Utrecht)

Languages Dutch, Spanish, English, German (basic), French (basic)

Awards Webby Award, Best New Startup (2016 Crunchies)