

# Samir Zahran (he/him)

Product-focused frontend engineer and creative technologist with a background in design/UX. I specialize in rapid prototyping, interaction development, and bridging design and engineering to bring ideas to life quickly and with a strong focus on detail, usability, and accessibility.

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I've spent the past decade working closely with designers, engineers, and stakeholders to turn ideas into real, testable experiences and I'm most effective as a hands-on IC, focusing on building, prototyping and refining product experiences through code. My work spans production systems, high-fidelity prototypes, and experimental interfaces across web, iOS, and WebGL.

## How I Work

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- Prototype early, often live in working sessions, to reduce ambiguity
- Translate ideas into interactive artifacts to drive alignment
- Focus on interaction details, performance, and accessibility
- Spend the majority of my time building, moving from scrappy prototypes to production-ready code

## Work Experience

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### Freelance

**Sr FE Developer & Creative Technologist**

**2024–present**

- Partner with teams to build prototypes and ship interactive web experiences
- Rapidly develop proof-of-concepts to validate product and interaction ideas
- Build production-ready components using React, WordPress, and modern frontend tooling

### Instrument

**Sr Developer (Associate Technical Director)**

**2019–2024**

- Built interactive prototypes to validate ideas and align teams early in the product lifecycle
- Implemented frontend systems and components for large-scale, design-driven products
- Collaborated closely with designers to refine interaction details and user experience
- Provided mentorship to developers when needed
- Shipped large products such as Microsoft Unlocked, BankBlackUSA, and Cortica

### This Also

**Sr Product Designer / Development Lead**

**2014–2019**

- Worked on native and web front-end development products
- Contributed to the studio's Medium page by writing two technically-oriented articles
- Led the ongoing development and maintenance of multiple versions of the studio website
- Rapidly explored and learned new skills on the job such as Swift development, ARKit, building command-line utilities and creating JavaScript libraries
- Shipped OOO, an iOS app developed in-house which was featured in the App Store
- Launched an iMessage sticker pack called Real NYC which was featured in a TV spot by Apple

- Created proof-of-concept prototypes for project work
- Collaborated with Google Creative Lab on numerous vision projects
- Prototyped interaction ideas for Xbox in the browser using WebGL and the Gamepad API

## 📌 Huge

Senior Product Designer / Product Designer

2011–2014

- Created high-fidelity wireframes and visual design concepts for client projects
- Produced interactive prototypes using web technologies
- Produced artifacts for user-testing sessions

## Education

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### 📌 Winthrop University

BFA, Visual Communication (Graphic Design)

2005–2010

## Notable Work

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### 📌 Microsoft Unlocked

→ <https://unlocked.microsoft.com/>

#### Turning an editorial vision into a scalable, living platform

I built and helped define the frontend architecture of Microsoft Unlocked, translating an evolving editorial vision into a flexible system of composable components.

To reduce ambiguity early, my team and I prototyped interaction patterns and layout systems, helping the team converge on direction before committing to full implementation.

After launch, I continued extending the platform with custom components, including an experimental WebGL module powered by GLSL shaders.

#### Impact

- Enabled fast iteration through a modular component system
- Helped stakeholders make decisions early via working prototypes
- Delivered a platform that supports ongoing storytelling and experimentation

### 📌 OOO

#### Exploring playful interaction in a native camera experience

OOO was an in-house iOS app designed to explore how interaction, sound, and motion could transform a simple recording experience into something more engaging and shareable.

I worked across both design and development, helping shape the product from early concept through launch. To quickly explore ideas, I built a series of interactive prototypes in Swift, testing different approaches to zoom, gesture controls, and audio-driven interactions, including pressure-sensitive inputs (3D Touch) to control zoom dynamically.

The app was eventually featured by Apple on the App Store, highlighting its unique approach to interaction and video creation.

## Impact

- Transformed abstract interaction ideas into working prototypes that guided product direction
- Helped define a distinctive interaction model through rapid iteration in native code
- Delivered a polished, expressive experience that was recognized and featured by Apple

## 📌 Daily Generative Art

→ <https://samiare.net/daily>

### **Building a daily practice to explore systems, motion, and creative coding**

Daily Generative Art was a long-running personal project where I designed and built a new generative sketch every day for over a year and a half.

The goal was to create a consistent space for experimentation using code to explore ideas around form, color, motion, and repetition without the constraints of client work or production requirements. Over time, the project became a way to deepen my understanding of systems thinking and mathematical concepts, while also improving my ability to prototype ideas quickly and let go of perfectionism in favor of exploration.

This daily cadence reinforced an instinct to build first and evaluate through output—an approach that directly informs how I work on product teams today.

## Impact

- Developed a rapid, iterative approach to prototyping through daily practice
- Strengthened intuition for systems, motion, and interaction design
- Built a large body of exploratory work that continues to inform product and interaction thinking

## **Tools & Technologies**

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JavaScript (ES6+), React, SCSS, WebGL, GLSL, Swift (UIKit), Processing (Java), WordPress, PHP