

# Mary Kahle

## Multidisciplinary strategic program manager and design researcher

Seeking to apply 10+ years of professional experience – operating at the intersections of evidence-based design, generative research, project management, and strategic program development. Co-creating unique opportunities for cross-functional stakeholders to develop meaningful solutions to real-world problems.

## EDUCATION

**MSDes, Design Research**—*Drexel University, 2023*

**BFA, Apparel Design**—*Rhode Island School of Design, 2012*

## RESEARCH, DESIGN, AND STRATEGY EXPERIENCE

**Freelance Consultant**— *Research and Strategic Development*

June 2023 - Present

**Urban Manufacturing Alliance + MassDevelopment TDI (MA/Remote):**

Led comprehensive ecosystem mapping and analysis of Massachusetts textile/soft-goods manufacturing landscape.

Conducted mixed-methods research including stakeholder interviews (N=31) and industry survey (N=25) to inform cross-sector strategic recommendations.

Co-organized multi-stakeholder conference with 65+ participants in Fall River, MA. Designed and facilitated small-group ideation sessions to develop strategic action plans for economic development initiatives.

**Boston Figure Arts Center (Somerville, MA):**

Led customer research survey (N=138) and collaborated with the board to develop 1-year and 3-year strategic marketing and program expansion plans.

**Greener Partners (Philadelphia, PA):**

Developed a mixed-methods study, aligned 3-year strategic plan initiatives with the CBO mission statement to advance organization, employee, and community partnership goals.

**Sojourner Consulting (Philadelphia, PA):**

Conducted community-member interviews (N=50) for comprehensive social impact assessment of Philadelphia's Chinatown development.

Synthesized qualitative research findings to inform city decision-makers on community impact of proposed 76ers arena construction, translating community voices into policy-relevant insights.

**Zenda LLC, NYC (Hybrid)**—*Design Research Consultant*

June 2022 - June 2023

Co-led market research and developed visual communications for seed-round sales pitch and product launch of [business process management platform](#). Created service blueprints, user journey maps, and process maps to improve Fortune 100 banking client experience, reducing customer onboarding time from 45 days to 1 day.

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## SKILLS

**Design**— Creative Direction, Human-Centered Design, Project Management, Rapid Prototyping, Systems Thinking, Storytelling, Digital/Print Campaigns, Visual Communication

**Research (Qual. & Quant.)**— Contextual Inquiry, Customer/User Journey Maps, Data Analysis/Synthesis, Ethnography, Interviews & Coding, Market Research, Service Blueprints, Trauma-Informed Research, Usability Testing, Workshop Design/Facilitation

**Computer**— Proficient in key Adobe Creative Suite and Microsoft Office Suite apps

**Prototyping Tools:** Rhino 3D, Figma

**Research and Collaboration Tools:** Airtable, Dovetail, Miro, Mural, Nvivo, Otter, Paperform

**Project Management Tools:** Asana, Trello, Monday, Notion

**Advanced Manufacturing:** Industrial sewing, 3D printing, laser cutting, knitting machine operation, die cutting, wood shop, ceramics, ultrasonic welding

**AI Tools:** ChatGPT, Claude

## **Design Futures Lab, Drexel University—*Design Researcher***

January - June 2023

Managed development of 'Every Space for Every Body' - low-cost, open-source design interventions for urban accessibility. Utilized speculative design to bridge science, design, and public health approaches. Facilitated weekly co-design workshops with cross-functional teams.

## **Center for Functional Fabrics, PA FDC, Drexel University —*Design Research and Product Engineer, Graduate Fellow***

September 2021- June 2022

Developed and tested functional wearable technology prototypes for DOD and NSF-funded projects. Conducted usability testing and comfort assessments on smart-wearable devices integrating electronic components with textile substrates.

Collaborated with engineering teams to optimize ergonomic design, material selection, and manufacturing processes for regulated technology products. Created detailed documentation of design iterations and testing protocols for scalable production.

## **Social Impact Innovation Hub, Drexel University — *Design Research Team Lead***

January 2022 - January 2023

Secured grant funding (20% acceptance rate) and developed Business Model Canvas for peer-to-peer digital service toolkit. Conducted mixed-methods research and ecosystem mapping to provide actionable recommendations for university food insecurity programs.

## **Kahle Studio LLC, New York, NY —*Founder, Creative Director***

June 2014 - September 2021

Led cross-functional teams in fashion and lifestyle business operations, managing \$300K annual budget. Produced 8 collections yearly (150+ SKUs) for retail partners. Implemented sustainable supply chain models and responsible manufacturing practices.

Increased customer engagement through macro trend analysis, user research, and brand storytelling, resulting in features in The New York Times, Vogue, WWD, and international media reaching 20M+ consumers annually.

Directed multiple projects commercializing new concepts into fashion and lifestyle products.

Encouraged experimental, innovation-lab-style environment for employees' continuous learning through mentorship and hands-on peer-to-peer training and workshops, empowering professional growth.

## **PARKER/ VINCE, New York, NY— *Patternmaker, Fit Specialist***

February 2020 - September 2020

Drafted and managed 30+ seasonal RTW styles using Gerber CAD. Increased efficiency and reduced manufacturing risks

## **CERTIFICATIONS**

**IRB Citi Training**, Human Subjects, Social-Behavioral, and Conflict of Interest, 2021

**Healthier Materials and Sustainable Building**, The New School, 2021

**Gerber Accumark and Pattern Design Certified**, 2019

## **SELECT PUBLICATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

***Sound Sponges: A Speculative Approach to Tangible Urban Interaction and Urban Prosthetics for Persons with Hearing Impairment -***

*S.Bahrami, M. Kahle, N. Koltick*

Virtual Presentation at Media Arts and Design (MAD) 2024 Conference

***Makerspace Communities and Ecosystem Strategy: Co-Creating Social and Operational Infrastructure,***

MS Thesis, Drexel University, Proquest.com, 2023

An ecosystem analysis, mixed-methods research of the social impact of makerspaces, resulting in a co-designed ideation card deck/workshop facilitation tool.

***Graduate Student Spotlight, Design Research Thesis***

DEZEEN.com, 2023

***How Albert Einstein's Former Secretary Became the Face of a Buzzy Brooklyn Label,***

Vogue.com, 2018

***LVL3 Looks, Artist of the Week,***

lv3official.com/kahle, 2018

***The Science of KAHLE,***

The New York Times Style Section (print & digital), 2016

**MARCHESA, New York, NY — *Patternmaker, Fit Specialist***

July 2019 - January 2020

Developed 50+ complex eveningwear and bridal collection patterns through draping, drafting, and CAD.

**Naeem Khan, New York, NY — *Patternmaker, Private Client Fit Specialist***

May 2018 - Jun 2019

Coordinated production timelines for atelier, production, and sales teams. Managed BOM and troubleshoot production delays.

**VIRGINIA SIN, New York, NY — *Product Designer, Fabricator***

April 2018 - March 2019

Researched, designed, and developed ceramic home goods prototypes for mass production. Led concept-to-market development of dinnerware line, managing material testing, prototype iterations, and manufacturing process optimization for international retail distribution, including West Elm.

**MOSES NADEL, New York, NY — *Lead Designer, Patternmaker: Leathergoods and Homeware Product Development***

January 2018 - August 2019

Managed development of 15+ private-label handbag prototypes and production runs (50-300 pieces). Utilized advanced manufacturing equipment and leather construction techniques for functional prototype development.

**WES GORDON, New York, NY — *Designer, Production Assistant***

November 2013 - May 2014

Contributed to CFDA Fashion Fund 2014 collection prototype and sample development. Supported development of 130+ samples per collection, focusing on rapid prototyping and iterative design processes.

**ALEXANDER MCQUEEN, LONDON, UK — *Design Intern***

January - March 2012

Assisted Creative Director Sarah Burton in developing innovative fabric manipulations and dye techniques for Fall 2012, Fall 2013, and Spring 2020 collections.