



Hi! I'm

OLIVIA POWELL

What is the world you want to live in?

It's a big question, I know. But it's what orients my practice as an experience designer, and I love helping people ask it about what they're offering – whether that's a city council meeting, a company workshop, a theater experience, a baby shower – and notice whether their experience is reflecting that world or simply replicating inherited defaults because... well, that's how a baby shower's always been done.

If you're not designing your experiences, someone else already has.

HOW I SHOW UP

Intensely thoughtful, playfully curious, poetic sensibility.

I like to ask unexpected questions, wonder aloud together, and find connections (especially on Miro boards)

INFLUENCES & APPROACHES

Radical participatory design
MDA (Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics) framework
Active imagination
Somatic & embodied practice
Systems awareness
Ritual design
Immersive design
Work That Reconnects

QUALIFICATIONS

Columbia School of the Arts & Digital Storytelling Lab –
Experience designer & facilitator, trained by and collaborator with Lance Weiler.

Royal College of Art –
Experience design & interactive storytelling Masters, distinction

Samana Coaching – Somatic and imaginal guide, trained by Julie Ann Otis

Dartmouth College – Media studies & narrative design Bachelors, Salutatorian

The Story Circus – Founder, intergenerational community & school for storytelling, imagination, and aliveness

Our responsibility

There's always an experience being had, whether you're aware of it, have designed for it, or not. From sponsored organizational events to local festivals and life rituals to the everyday routines of communities and individuals, it's easy – too easy – to default to what tradition, capacity, or expectation hand us.

As an experience designer, I help you examine every element of your experience and get strategic about what helps you realize the world you long to live in – and what doesn't. Especially for experiences with real reach, I believe designing for wonder, connection, and agency is a responsibility.

Questions I might ask

- What is it you're actually celebrating or marking here? Where is your purpose doing real work, and where is it just decoration?
- Where are people allowed to shape what happens vs. just receive it?
- How might this be not a thing that happens to your participants, but a thing they belong to?
- What would make this feel alive vs. an exercise of going through the motions?
- Are we being mindful of power and agency — who gets to shape this, before, during, and after?
- What kind of value is this experience producing, or extracting, and from where?

Selected examples:

You make the abstract and technical feel personal, playful, and yours to shape.

Blockchain Fairytales turned Miro boards into game boards and participants into wanderers moving through groups, artifacts, and "Creature Cards" to tell futures-oriented stories about an emerging technology most people find intimidating or abstract. The result: curiosity, imagination, and a more personal, tangible relationship to both the technology and the futures it might shape. Featured at Unfinished Live at The Shed, Slamdance, Festival of Arts & Ideas, and more.

Columbia Digital Storytelling Lab, 2023

You grow a small pilot into a differentiating, industry-leading experience.

When you have the opportunity to support small business owners with their professional skillfulness, confidence, and freedom, how does a generic online training that simply pushes information make sense? It doesn't. That's why I designed a business development experience that reflects – in its pedagogical structure, interaction design, and voice – how it exists to help business owners keep their dreams alive. 80% of pilot participants agreed it improved their perception of the client, and now an award-winning, international offering.

SweetRush client, 2025

What becomes possible when we create experiences with intention, imagination, and skill? Let's wonder together.

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