

SUSAN ISKO

CULTURAL STRATEGIST FOR EXPERIENCE DESIGN, DIRECTOR

A cultural theorist and brand storyteller. With the cultural cachet and cultivated sensibility to scale human rituals into a brand presence worldwide.

Founding Member, World Experience Organization (WXO)

Former UN Security Council Interpreter . 6 languages . Amsterdam

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PROFILE

My core skill is reading culture. I code-switch and check for blind spots. Additionally, I surface the problem behind the problem and translate brand identities into physical space. I have a decade of brand experiences built end-to-end, across retail, fairs, festivals and nightlife, for luxury, lifestyle and beverage brands, direct and through their agencies. Alongside that, a rare second career: 17 years as a simultaneous interpreter at head-of-state level for the UN, which is where my code-switching skill originates. My craft fuses cultural strategy, brand strategy and memory science.

SELECTED WORK

Cultural Strategist for Experience Design, Director | CS°XD

2020 – Present

Independent strategy practice. End-to-end behavioral and cultural strategy for live, spatial and experiential brand activations across retail, hospitality and events, with specialization in multi-country activations and social purpose themes including DEI and accessibility. Methodology: cultural strategy (D. Holt tradition), UX/service design, and memory science.

Agency engagements: Ex-R (Hong Kong, 2026), WINK (Amsterdam, 2025), LINKVIVA (Dubai, 2025), Publicis Groupe (Lausanne, 2022–2024), MCH Global (Amsterdam & Zurich, 2019–2023), RTS (Lausanne, 2021–2022).

Selected projects:

- **THE BOND, for Ex-R Hong Kong (2026):** Touring luxury immersive experience on the human-pet relationship, built as the client's own IP format. The concept: tell it from the animal's perspective, not the owner's.
- **TAG Heuer (2022):** The brief was a booth. The question was why anyone should stand in it. Ran a mobile ethnography audit of the brand's presence at Watches & Wonders, built audience personas and journeys from it, and used the findings to redesign the booth around three original immersive experience concepts.
- **Anthropic (2026), self-initiated pitch:** Eight cultures, eight philosophies of what creativity is, each mapped to one of Claude's product features and grounded in memory science. Built as eight rooms touring art and creativity fairs. The concept decided what every room does. Live at creativitybyanothername.lovable.app.
- **Radio Télévision Suisse / RTS (2021–2022):** Gen Z were turning the TV off. Rather than treat that as a content problem, I reengineered the role of live experience inside RTS's public-service mission and wrote the business development strategy for it. Designed the first Swiss-wide experiential-literacy survey with EPFL eM+ Lab and LINK Institute. Built new audience segmentation, created new branded experiences, and deployed a gamified app (Muse) with EPFL engineers for real-time behavioral data capture. Data analytics frameworks and visualisations across 35 festival activations.
- **MCH Global European Expansion (2022–2023):** Led strategic groundwork and go-to-market strategy for European expansion. Market analysis informed the Board's decision on the new European HQ location. Sourced the first client through cold outreach. Hired and led a cross-disciplinary team of strategists, designers and producers, and held creative direction on the pitch.
- **Adyen (2023):** Employer branding campaign of five live experiences targeting underrepresented POC talent in fintech, built on financial psychology, cultural strategy, and social listening of Dutch Black fintech communities. Led an all-female team, several of whom now lead their field.
- **Geneva Airport (2022):** Playful touchpoint campaign communicating sustainable travel commitments. Benchmarked international airport interaction design.

Founder | Career Console for Interpreters

2026 – Present

Self-initiated digital product for conference interpreters. Designed the offer, vibe-coded the web app, built the sales funnel, and sell direct to the profession through the AIIC channel.

Founder & Creative Director | The Inner Ear Events Agency
2017 – 2020

Founded a boutique agency producing next-generation branded cultural experiences in music and nightlife. Clients included Asahi, Urban Daddy and Evian One Resort. Produced 26 bespoke branded experiences in the first 18 months, including a flagship at Art Basel Miami and a Boiler Room collaboration. Ceased operations due to COVID-19.

Senior Simultaneous Conference Interpreter | United Nations (Freelance)
2009 – Present

17+ years, 2,083+ days in the booth. Head-of-state level interpretation across six languages. Qualified by competitive examination and security-cleared for the UN System (Security Council, General Assembly, Human Rights Council), US Department of Defense, NATO, etc.

EXPERTISE

Concept Development . Brand Storytelling . Communication Strategy . Spatial Experience Design . AI-Human Interaction in Physical Space . Experiential Creative Direction . Cultural Strategy . Client & Stakeholder Leadership . Multi-disciplinary Team Leadership . Memory Science . Environmental Psychology

LANGUAGES

English (native) . French (bilingual) . Russian (fluent) . Spanish, Turkish, Italian (intermediate/beginner)

AI FLUENCY

Prototyping is how I pressure-test whether an idea holds in space. It is never the idea.

Shipped: 11 web apps built and published solo in Lovable, January to September 2026, one of them sold as a paid digital product with its own funnel.

Claude ecosystem: Building with Claude Code; designing Claude sub-agents for WXO research.

Continuing education: Claude for Marketers certificate (2025) . Claude Code for Everyone (2025) . AI Creative Tools Sandbox, BWAT Academy, Brussels (2026) . Digital & AI Business Strategy, CREA-INSEEC, Geneva (2025)

Tools: Weavy, Lovable, Base44, Emergent, ElevenLabs, Veo, Kling, Higgsfield, Nano Banana Pro.

Mentored by: David Granite, Creative Technologist, MCI Groupe

Mentoring youth: Safan Dollart, Armani France, Aléjandra Caceres, Mergube Ergul

DEGREES

Masters, Digital Marketing & Communication, CREA-INSEEC, Geneva (2020). Magna Cum Laude, top of class
Masters, Simultaneous Conference Interpretation, University of Westminster, London (2009)
Double Masters, International Relations & International Business, Sciences-Po Paris & MGIMO Moscow (2008)
Bachelor, Applied Linguistics, McGill University, Montreal (2005). Graduate fellowship awarded

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Psychology of Space, The Design Professor (2024) . **CAS, Experiential & Neuromarketing**, HES-SO Neuchâtel (2022) . **Strategic Planning Bootcamp**, Miami Ad School Europe (2022) . **Specialist in Events & Sponsoring**, SAWI Lausanne (2019) . **CAS, Contemporary Music Administration**, HES-SO Lausanne (2019) . **Digital Brand Content**, CREA-INSEEC Geneva (2019) . **Digital Marketing Strategy**, CREA-INSEEC Geneva (2018)

MEMBERSHIPS

World Experience Organization (WXO) . Art Directors Club (ADC) . AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters)