

Mario Alberto Ramirez

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Portfolio: marioalbertoramirez.com · github.com/Hyphysaurus · hyphysaurus.itch.io · soundcloud.com/hyphysaurus

SUMMARY

Game designer and writer who ships what he designs — levels, systems, and the interface around them. Seven years teaching ELA and Spanish to elementary and middle-school students in the Bay Area came first, and the classroom habits carried over intact: pacing, feedback specific enough to act on, and knowing the exact moment an audience is lost. The recent work is playable rather than presented — five browser games in Godot, live web products, a published npm CLI, and a portfolio that is itself an explorable pixel world running on a purpose-built TypeScript canvas engine — designed by me, implemented with AI tools I direct and review, and disclosed as such. Bilingual, English and Spanish.

DESIGN WORK

Portfolio site, game engine and Valewood · marioalbertoramirez.com · live

An editorial site built around a playable centerpiece: Valewood, a top-down Godot game, embedded and played in the browser. One content source writes every project once, for the gallery and the résumé alike. Design owned end to end — layout system, type system, palette, motion and game UI — and the decisions below are mine: what shipped, what was rejected, and why. The implementation, including the TypeScript canvas engine the site runs on and Valewood's GDScript, is written with Claude Code under my direction and review rather than hand-authored; the site's credits page says the same thing.

- **Type system of four faces, each locked to one job** — a blackletter for the masthead, painted signage for uppercase labels, a serif for editorial text, and Atkinson Hyperlegible for anything under 12px. The small text had been set in a code-editor face drawn for 13–15px and was doing work at 10–11px; Atkinson was drawn for legibility at exactly that size.
- **Killed the project grid for full-width bands.** Measured against the live page, three of five grid rows left a ~150px hole — a collage rags at its outside edge, so a hole in the middle reads as a missing card. A band is two full-height columns and cannot hole. It also fixed the hierarchy the grid had flattened, where an npm CLI carried the same weight as a shipped game.
- **Time-of-day palette** driven by design tokens, with the phase chosen before the browser paints anything so the page never flashes the wrong theme. Contrast across every token pair is checked automatically and fails the build.
- **In-game UI drawn from nine-slice sprite frames** with margins measured off the source art rather than guessed — scaling the whole image would have dragged the frame weight up with it. Panel content insets from each frame's own margins.
- Responsive down to touch, with on-screen controls; keyboard navigation preserved deliberately, including keeping Tab free for page chrome rather than binding it to a game action.

Mythic Grounds · mythicgrounds.com · live · Next.js, Neon Postgres, Vercel

Directory of 200 sacred sites across 56 cultures. Designed the browse, map and detail experience, and shipped it solo — same working method as above.

Procreate Missions · procreate-missions.vercel.app · live

A 60-day illustration curriculum as a single-file web app — deliberately no framework, so the whole thing stays one readable document that loads instantly.

Games — Tidekeeper · Bannerfall · Spall · Koma · Burning Bridges · Godot · playable in browser

Five games, five different problems. **Tidekeeper**, a restoration platformer: bring a poisoned watershed back to life one creature at a time. **Bannerfall**, a tiny-army RTS with MOBA-style lanes, three-tier elevation, hero abilities and a data-driven faction economy. **Spall**, a shooter where cover is a resource you spend — plasma fire eats the map down to open ground and every gun destroys differently. **Koma**, a Beyblade-meets-gauntlet arena brawler built for a jam. **Burning Bridges**, a wisp crossing a chain of ignited bridges over the Styx, built start to finish in seven hours. Across all five: level and encounter design, HUD and menu design, the feel pass, and the pixel-art pipeline that feeds them. Every one plays in a browser, no download.

HOW I WORK

Most of this is built by prompting Claude Code directly, and by driving my tools through MCP bridges I set up myself — Ableton, Aseprite, Krita, Blender and Godot — so the model acts on the real project instead of describing it. When the subscription runs out mid-month the work carries on by hand, which is where the slower trial-and-error learning happens. I'd rather say that plainly than let a portfolio imply otherwise.

EXPERIENCE

Language Arts Instructor — Art of Problem Solving 2025 — Present

- Lead small-group instruction in literary analysis, rhetoric, and narrative construction.
- Give written feedback on student writing under tight turnaround — specific enough to act on, which is the same discipline as a useful design critique.

ELA & Spanish Teacher — Stratford School 2020 — 2025

- Taught grades 4–8 across ELA, Spanish, and bilingual sections at three Bay Area campuses.
- Designed curriculum and instructional materials, then revised them against what actually happened in the room rather than what the plan predicted.
- Coached Speech & Debate; ran small-group SPED/ELD intervention; sustained parent communication, often translating in Spanish.

ELA Teacher — Voices College-Bound Language Academies 2018 — 2020

- Taught ELA in a dual-language elementary setting in San Jose, moving from associate to lead-teacher responsibilities.

SKILLS

Design	Interaction design · visual design · typography and layout · design systems and tokens · motion · responsive and touch · accessibility (WCAG contrast) · level design · narrative design
Build	HTML / CSS · TypeScript · React / Next.js · Tailwind · Canvas · Node.js · Godot 4 / GDScript · Postgres
Tools	Figma · Claude Code · Cursor · Procreate · Aseprite · Blender · Krita · GIMP · Git · Vercel
Audio & broadcast	Ableton Live · Serato · RCS Selector · OBS
Languages	English (native) · Spanish (native) · French (beginner, reads) · Portuguese (beginner, reads)

EDUCATION

B.A. International Relations — University of California, Davis 2014 — 2017

- Emphasis in Peace & Security studies in Latin America. IGETC transfer scholarship from Ohlone College.
- Relevant coursework: CTS175 Game Design.

General Education — Ohlone College 2010 — 2014

CBEST — passed June 2018 · Certificate of Clearance, CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing