Assem Bentahar

Design Director

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Based in Tunisia · **Available to relocate** · English and Arabic

SUMMARY

Design director with 15 years in product, web and brand design. Founder of Semas Studio, leading product design for clients in the US, Europe and the Gulf across edtech, marketplaces and mission-driven platforms. Led design for two startups funded by the Google for Startups Black Founders Fund in its inaugural 2020 cohort, an education app with 2.5M+ downloads, and a 967-screen platform program for UNCF. Built and led a design team of five.

EXPERIENCE

Founder and Design Director, Semas Studio
2011 to present

Selected engagements:

UNCF TechHub and Ernest E. Just Life Science Society
2021 to 2024

Design Lead, via Brickroad (US agency)

Led design of two platform programs for the United Negro College Fund, 967 screens on one shared system: a professional network with five member roles, a summit builder, a federal grants directory and 38 transactional email templates. Later merged into HBCUv, UNCF's digital learning platform.

Productions.com
2020 to 2024

Design Lead, via Brickroad (US agency)

Led design of a marketplace for film and television production with five kinds of user: production companies, crew, vendors, grant funders and community groups. Built one component system that let a small team serve all five, later carried into the UNCF platforms. Won the Google for Startups Black Founders Fund, inaugural 2020 cohort.

Superhood
2018 to 2021

Design Lead, Semas Studio · Superhood Oy, Helsinki

Design and illustration identity for a neighborhood platform: a branded banner system, the posting flow from camera to publish, and the rules for reporting and comments. Piloted by the City of Helsinki in four districts in 2023; live in 63 cities across Finland and Germany.

Possip
2017 to 2019

Design Lead, via Brickroad (US agency)

Led design of the parent-feedback platform for US schools: a comment queue, a four-axis sorting system, an escalation form and a section-by-section weekly report, plus a district view for administrators. Won the Google for Startups Black Founders Fund, inaugural 2020 cohort.

LearnMatch
2018

Design Lead, Semas Studio · Vision Education, Austria

Three-month engagement: interface and app icon for a gamified language app localized into 35+ languages. 2.5M+ downloads, the Comenius EduMedia Seal in 2020, and the same interface still in production eight years later.

Earlier work, 2011 to 2017: dozens of projects for clients in Europe and the US, mainly websites, dashboards, web apps and mobile apps, alongside branding, motion and print design.

Team and system

Built the studio's design team: interviewed more than forty designers, hired five, each tested on a real task inside a live design system. Maintained an internal component library applied across client projects, one standard reviewed against every screen that shipped.

RECOGNITION

- Google for Startups Black Founders Fund ×2, inaugural 2020 cohort: Possip and Productions.com, both designed under my lead
- Comenius EduMedia Seal, 2020: LearnMatch
- Learning Technologies Awards, 2nd place, 2019: LearnMatch
- City of Helsinki pilot, EU-funded program, 2023: Superhood
- USCIS-approved O-1A petition (Extraordinary Ability), 2020

SKILLS

Design leadership and team building · Design systems at scale · Product design for platforms, marketplaces and edtech · Permissions and multi-role products · AI agent workflows: Claude Code and Codex agents with custom skills, rule files and automated design QA · Design-to-code collaboration · English (professional), Arabic (native)