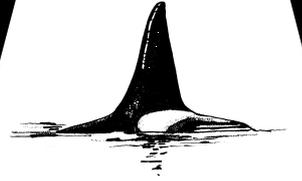


# ORCA



MAGAZINE



Friday  
Harbor  
Magic

Prayer Bundles  
& Killer Whales

Nebraska to  
British Columbia

+ The Soul  
of Orca



Killer Creative SINCE 2008



# The Soul FROM PRAYER BUNDLE TO KILLER CREATIVE. of Orca

An Origin Interview with Founder  
& Chief Creative Officer Jon Gelder

HOW A SALTWATER PRAYER,  
WILD ANIMALS, AND A LEAP  
OF FAITH TURNED A BIG-  
AGENCY VETERAN INTO THE  
FOUNDER OF A PURPOSE-  
DRIVEN CREATIVE POD.

**T**here are creative agencies and then there's Orca Killer Creative. Born not from a business plan but from a prayer bundle released into Pacific waters, Orca operates on instinct, trust, and a fierce commitment to meaning. This is not a place for churn-and-burn deliverables or layered org charts. Orca is a senior-level, fully remote pod of creative experts who know how to listen deeply, think strategically, and build creatively. Their process — Listen, Think, Build, — is more than a methodology. It's a mindset. One that has helped brands launch, evolve, and reconnect with their audience in powerful ways. But to understand Orca, you first have to understand its founder, Jon Gelder, and the wild moment that sparked it all.

## ORCA MAGAZINE

Let's start in 2008. The world's in chaos, banks are crashing, ads are still all glossy and corporate. You walked away from some of the biggest boardrooms in the business. Why?

## JON GELDER

I'd been in those stuffy boardrooms for too long: Verizon, Microsoft, AT&T, Cisco, Motorola, Intel. Big brands and budgets. But somewhere along the way, the work lost its meaning for me. I didn't just want to make "ads" anymore. I wanted to make meaning. Something deeper, wilder, something that felt alive.

## ORCA MAGAZINE

Sounds like you've always been chasing that passion. Where does that come from?

## JON GELDER

I think I was born with it. I was the kid with a pencil in my hand before I could even spell my name. Lines, shapes, light — that was my world. In eighth grade, my art teacher pulled me aside and said, "Look up communication arts. It's all about how you use art and copy together to move people." Boom. Fuse lit.

## ORCA MAGAZINE

But you took a detour first. A lot of people don't come back to their original path after leaving it.

## JON GELDER

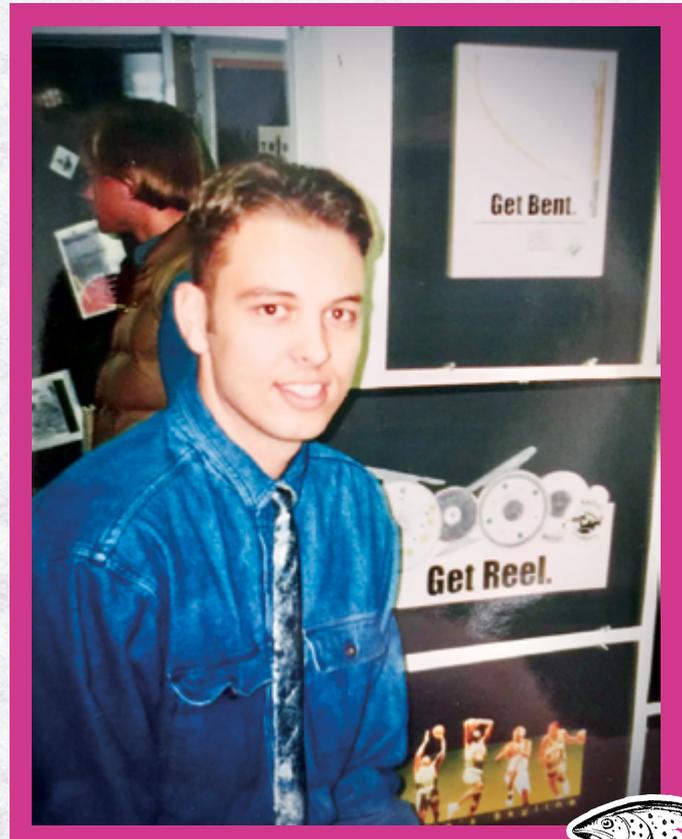
Yeah, there was a short-lived basketball scholarship in Montana that sidetracked me from art school for a minute. Dunking was fun — but so was design. Turns out, the universe had other plans. I found myself at The Art Institute of Seattle in '93, right in the thick of the grunge scene. Nirvana, Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains — all that raw honesty. For me, it wasn't just the music. It was the energy of the place itself — the trees, the mountains, the rain, the ocean. Especially the ocean.

## ORCA MAGAZINE

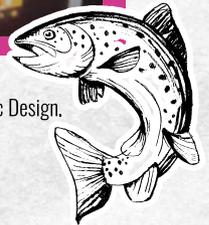
Tell me about the orcas.

## JON GELDER

That was the moment. I was salmon fishing off Victoria, British Columbia, just a 19-year-old kid from Nebraska who'd grown up in cornfields. A pod of killer whales surfaced thirty feet from our small fishing boat. Eagles in the air, salmon below, and these black-and-white giants cutting through the water like living gods. It was spiritual. It rooted me here in the Great Pacific Northwest. This is home.



Jon's portfolio show at The Art Institute of Seattle — June 1995, Graduated with an Associate Degree in Advertising Art Direction & Graphic Design.



A 19-YEAR-OLD KID  
FROM THE CORNFIELDS  
OF NEBRASKA, SALMON  
FISHING IN VICTORIA, B.C.,  
WHEN A POD OF KILLER  
WHALES SURFACED.



Orca pod sculptures from Jon's personal art collection



# ORCA WAS BORN FROM SALTWATER, SACRED BREATH, AND THE WILD.



**Friday Harbor, San Juan Islands — August 2008.**

After offering a prayer bundle to the Pacific, filled with hopes and dreams for a new creative venture, Heather and Jon watched as a pod of orcas surfaced in the distance. That moment gave birth to Orca Creative.

#### ORCA MAGAZINE

Fast forward to 2008 — you and your wife, Heather, out in a kayak. What happened?

#### JON GELDER

Ah, yes, Friday Harbor, Washington. We'd been talking about starting our own thing, something that honored spirit, creativity, and family. So we paddled out, just the two of us and this tiny prayer bundle of our hopes and dreams for this wild idea we had.

We let it go into the ocean. Not sixty seconds later, the orcas surfaced right out in front of us to say hello. I still get chills telling that story.

#### ORCA MAGAZINE

That's not just an origin story, that's legendary.

#### JON GELDER

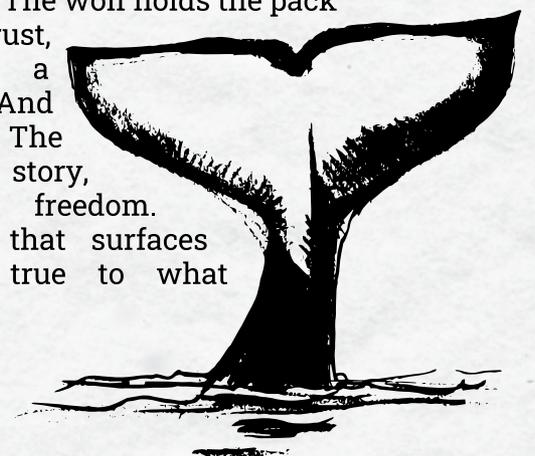
Exactly. Divine timing or Pacific magic — that was the soul spark. Orca Killer Creative was born from saltwater, sacred breath, and the wild. We built it to honor the natural world, the formline art of Pacific Northwest tribes, the animal spirits that guide us. Our totems are the owl, eagle, raven, salmon, wolf, and of course, the orca.

#### ORCA MAGAZINE

Tell me more about your totem animals and what they mean to you.

#### JON GELDER

These totems remind us who we are and how we work. The owl keeps us wise, seeing what others miss, trusting our instincts in the dark. The eagle reminds us to soar above the noise and keep a sharp eye on the big picture. The raven brings curiosity and a little mischief, stirring the pot, questioning what's possible. The salmon is all about perseverance, swimming upstream when others won't, always returning to our true purpose. The wolf holds the pack together, loyalty, trust, the power of a tight-knit team. And always, the orca. The guardian of our story, strength, family, freedom. The living spirit that surfaces when you stay true to what calls you.



# TOTEMS REMIND US WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WORK.



Original concept sketch of the Orca logo, circa 2008



Jon's handmade elk-hide drum artwork



Hand-painted illustration by Jon's son Jobi



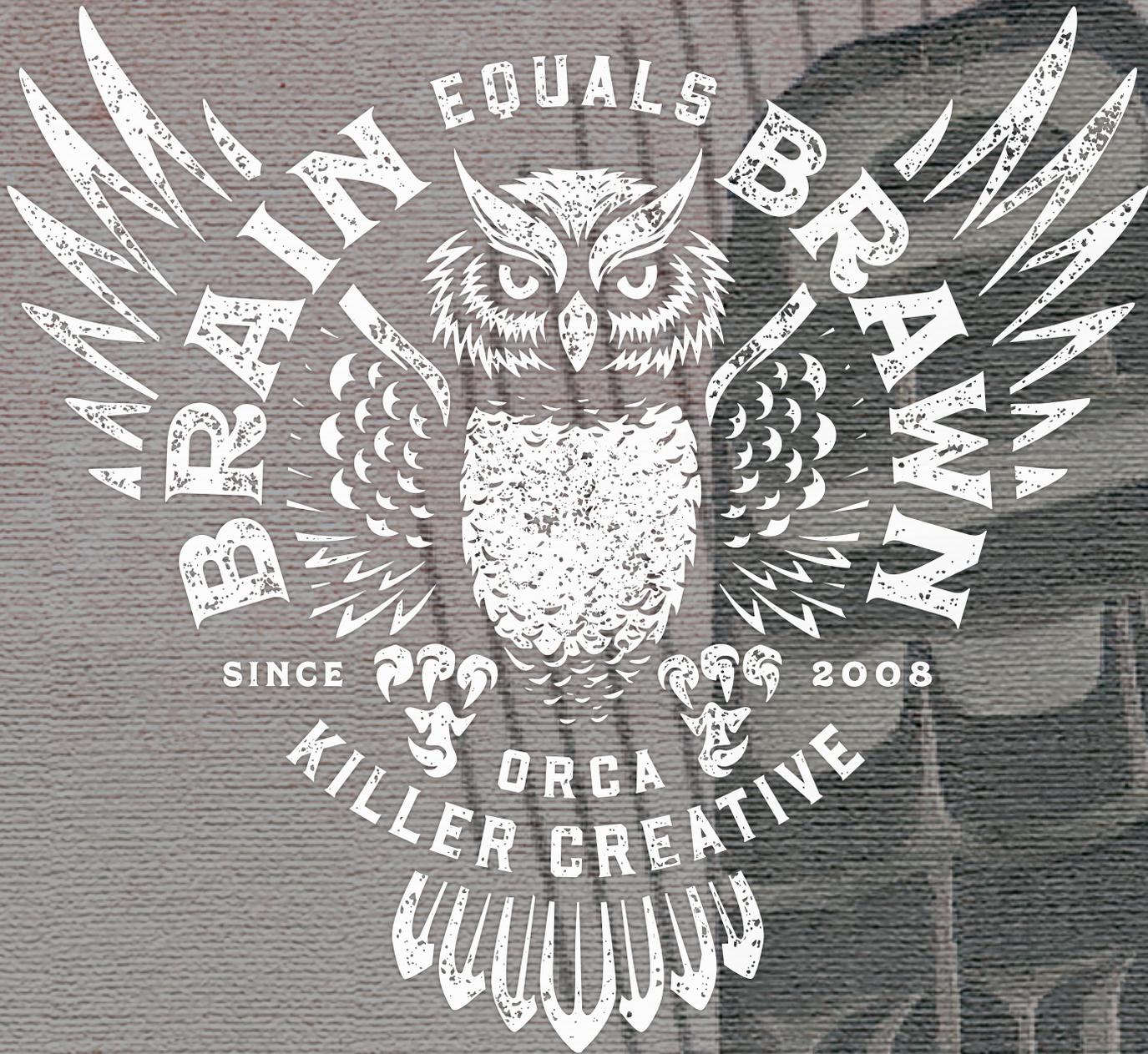
Raven sketch from Jon's notebook



Jon's wife Heather and her 24" x 36" canvas titled "Orca Love"



Jon's digital watercolor orca pod illustration



# ORCA

*soul over showmanship*





ORCA MAGAZINE

Alright, so bring me to today. What does Orca look like now? What do you do for your clients?

JON GELDER

Orca's grown into a full-blown force in branding and creative marketing. But our soul spark is the same. We're not a big agency machine – we're a tight pod of senior-level folks who've each spent decades in this business. That matters. There's no bait-and-switch. The people you meet are the people doing the work.

We're fully remote, and a lot of our clients are, too. It means our pod mates live where they do their best

thinking – some in the mountains, some by the sea, some under the big city lights. That freedom shows up in the killer work we make.

ORCA MAGAZINE

What makes your process different?

JON GELDER

The simplicity. First and foremost, we listen – I mean really listen – to what our clients want, what they believe in, where they want to go. Then we think. We take that trust seriously. We don't rush to crank out a shiny deliverable just to check a box – we figure out what's going to make people feel something and move the needle. Then we build it

with smart strategy, killer creative, and all the moving parts that bring it to life.

We have our hands in a lot – brand strategy, naming, visual identity, campaign concepts, design systems, videos, digital, social, print, plus all the senior-level thinking, rollout, and guidance it takes to bring it to life the right way. None of that works without deep listening first.

WE LISTEN  
WE THINK  
WE BUILD



WHEN OUR  
CLIENTS WIN,  
SO DO WE.

ORCA MAGAZINE

How do you know when you've got the right client fit?

JON GELDER

The best work happens when it's a true partnership. The best clients are the ones who want to collaborate with us, not just hand us a to-do list.

When we're in the trenches together, working side by side, the ideas get sharper. The results get better. And when our clients win, we win too. That's the kind of work we love to do and the kind of partnership that lasts.

ORCA MAGAZINE

What's the legacy you hope Orca leaves behind?

JON GELDER

Orca isn't just a marketing business — it's family. It's our life's work. It was born from wild inspiration and a little orca magic from the sea. We've come a long way from that prayer bundle, and the tide's still rising.



Orca Killer Creative studio, Chattaroy, WA — June 2025.

Gelder and Kidd gearing up for discovery sessions and a deep-dive brand audit, kicking off a full brand refresh and internal campaign for a new client.

**The tide behind Orca Killer Creative hasn't slowed.** If anything, it's grown stronger, especially with the addition of Kristin Kidd (KK) as Partner and Director of Account Service. With more than 25 years of experience inside top creative agencies and as a CMO on the client side, KK brings a rare dual perspective, a sharp eye for detail, and a deep understanding of how creative is conceived, developed, produced, and delivered. Her leadership adds even more value to an already senior team — elevating how we collaborate, how we listen, and how we build. For clients who value partnership over process, soul over showmanship, and lasting results over fleeting hype, Orca is the pod you want beside you. Our work is shaped by seasoned minds, fueled by authentic chemistry, and grounded in the places we live — the peaks, forests, coastlines, and open skies we call home.

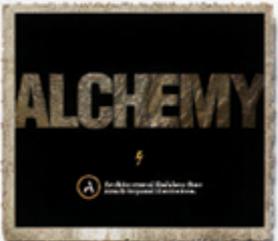
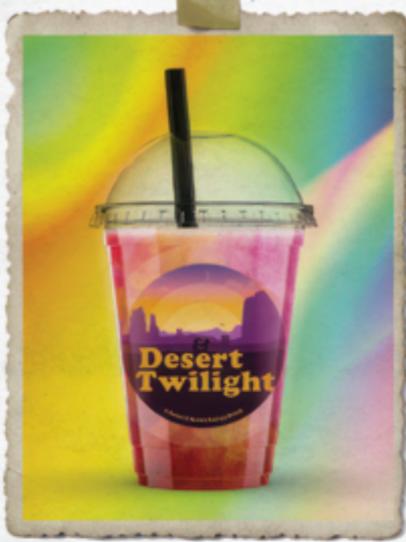
With the tide on our side and inspiration flowing deep, team Orca is cruising strong. Full of anticipation for the future and gratitude in the moment. Laughing, listening, and creating far from the shores of convention. We can't wait to see where the pod ventures next. **END** 🐬





# THE PERSPECTIVE OF A BIG SHOP. THE SOUL OF A SMALL ONE.

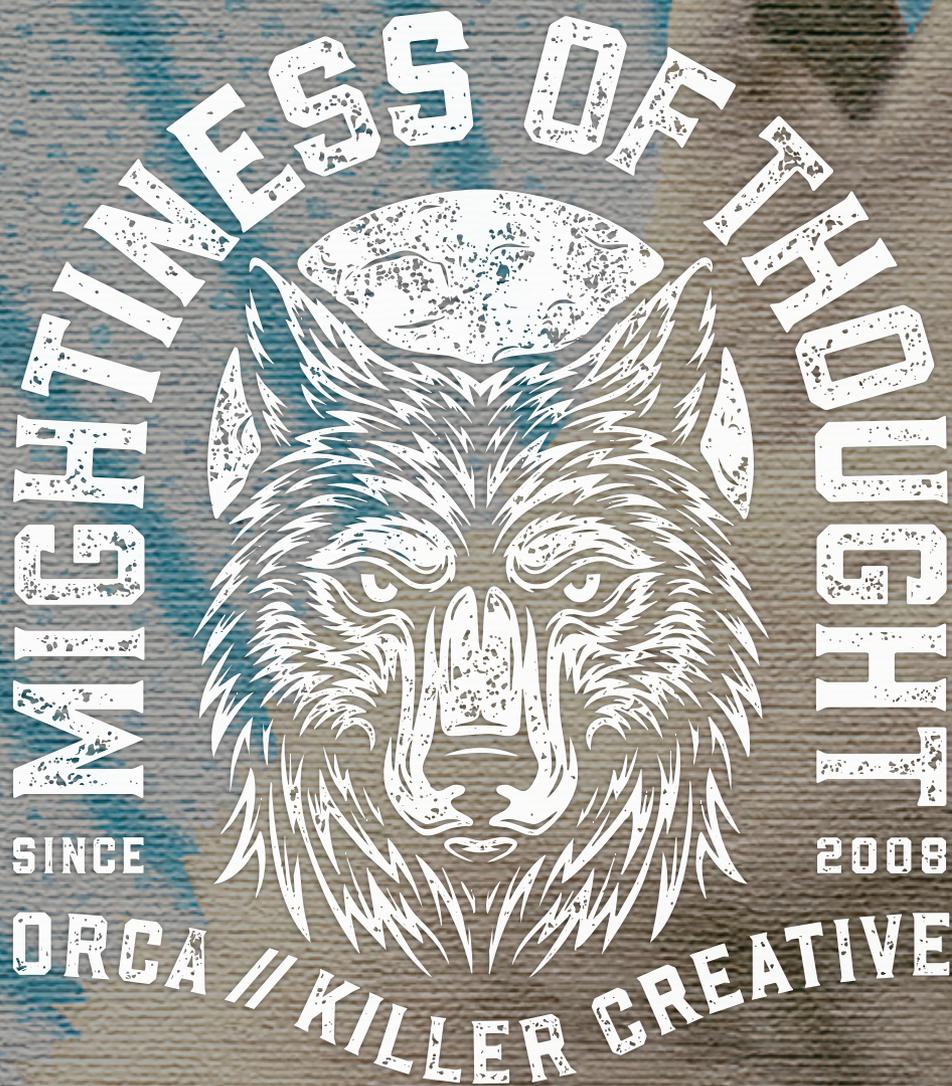
A curated look at some Orca magic—from bold campaigns to refined identity systems, each piece reflects the strategic clarity, creative power, and seasoned expertise our pod of creative pros brings to the table.





**Orca specializes in comprehensive branding, from big-picture strategy to style guides and environmental design.** We blend digital prowess in branded display and video ads, PPC, social media, email marketing, and e-commerce with superior content creation, website development, and expert marketing consulting. Our dynamic approach extends to event branding, TV and video production, motion graphics, and experiential marketing, supported by traditional media and innovative AR/VR experiences. Orca is your holistic partner for brand elevation and audience engagement of all kinds. Dive in at [OrcaCreative.net](http://OrcaCreative.net)





**LET'S MAKE SOME  
KILLER CREATIVE.**

→ JON GELDER  
jon@orcacreative.net  
509.615.2028

→ KRISTIN KIDD  
kk@orcacreative.net  
303.842.7278