

Life & Work with Rana Florida



Today we're excited to be connecting with Rana Florida again. If you haven't already, we suggest you check out our [prior conversation](#) with them here.

Rana, always such a pleasure connecting with you and thank you for sharing your stories, insights and inspiring messages with our community. We're looking forward to getting the download and what you have been up to since our last interview, but first can you briefly introduce yourself to folks who might have missed the prior conversation.

As Chief Executive Officer of the Creative Class Group, Rana Florida manages new business development, marketing, consulting, research and global operations serving such diverse clients as Meta (Facebook and Instagram), BMW, Converse, IBM, Cirque du Soleil, Audi, Zappos, and Starwood Hotels – to name just a few.

As former Vice President of Marketing for HMSHost, the world's largest airport developer, she brings to this leadership role more than two decades of experience in corporate strategy, communications, and marketing. Prior to that, she was Vice President of Communications, for Disney on Ice and Disney Live! through Feld Entertainment. She helped found and launch, CityLab, a new digital platform for The Atlantic where she also worked on events and programming for The Aspen Ideas Institute and Bloomberg.

Well known as a writer on business and leadership – for Fast Company, Inc.com, the Huffington Post, and the Miami Herald – Rana has also served as a guest business analyst on The Today Show. and MSNBC's, The Cycle, has been a Fox News contributor for several years. She has been featured in the The New York Times, Vogue Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, Market Watch, CNN and The Globe and Mail .

Her one-on-one high profile business interviews have covered notables – from President Bill Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama to Andre Agassi, Nelly Furtado ,Tory Burch, and many more.

She is also heavily involved in philanthropy including The United Nations Global Network on Digital Technologies and Sustainable Urbanization for UN Habitat, The Olympics Committee, Canadian Freestyle Ski Association, Silver Art Projects at the World Trade Center, The National Ballet of Canada, St. Mike's Hospital Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit, Luminato Festival, Travel & Leisure Rebel Awards, Le Miami, The Design-Exchange, Isabella Blow Foundation, Girls E Mentorship, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Airports Council International, Council for International Visitors, and The Founders Junior Council of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Rana holds a Bachelor of Arts in communications and an MBA in marketing and management. Her book, Upgrade—Taking Your Work and Life From Ordinary to Extraordinary was a 'Business Best Seller,' by Tattered Cover, the largest independent bookstore retailer in the U.S. and The Globe and Mail, Editor's Pick.

Great, so let's jump into an update on what you have been up to since we last [spoke](#). What can you share with us?

This Spring Rana along with her business partner Amanda Elliott are excited to launch Creative Class Studio is an immersive art experience designed to inspire children to rediscover and unbox their creativity. Each month children will discover the work of an iconic artist. Rana and Amanda are mothers on a mission to reclaim childhood—the studio addresses a growing concern: children losing themselves to screens and devices, becoming disconnected from the world around them.

Remember the joy of childhood? Riding bikes, exploring the neighborhood, connecting with friends from dawn until dusk, using your imagination to build forts, tell stories, and create? That kind of unstructured, imaginative play is fading, and we decided to take action.

For years, Rana and Amanda have transformed the dead end of their street into vibrant, creative theme parties and events, bringing families and communities together. These gatherings became spaces where kids could engage with their surroundings, make friends, and explore their

imaginations. Through this immersive art studio, children will experience the magic of using their hands to create—no adults, no instruction. They are the artists.

Creativity Rules

At Creative Class Studio, we give children unstructured play where creativity reigns. Art isn't about perfection—it's about expression. Whether it's contemporary art, modern art, or abstract creations, the act of creating side by side strengthens bonds that no Wi-Fi signal can replace.

A Manifesto for Reclaiming Childhood

Every month, we design immersive experiences centered around artistic themes to foster connections within our neighborhoods. These “third places” become hubs for meaningful play and collaboration. Reclaiming childhood is not just our mission—it is our manifesto.

Let's get kids off screens—which are causing anxiety, depression, and loneliness—and bring them together to create. Children watch and learn. Let's put down our devices and welcome them into the world of art, encouraging them to connect and express themselves through creativity.

About Us

As a former Vice President of Disney Live! and Disney on Ice for Feld Entertainment, Rana Florida brings a multifaceted art background that reflects her passion for creativity, her leadership within cultural institutions, and her dedication to entertaining children while promoting the arts through writing, philanthropy, and community engagement. Her projects often focus on integrating art, design, and innovation into everyday spaces and experiences, particularly through urban revitalization and cultural events. Her eye for design and love for creative expression are central to her work.

Rana has served on several prestigious arts and culture boards, showcasing her deep commitment to fostering the arts including the Detroit Institute of Arts Founders Junior Council, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the National Ballet of Canada, and Silver Arts Projects which supports emerging and underrepresented artists through mentorship and studio spaces at the World Trade Center in New York.

Rana's passion for art and design extends into her writing, where she wrote Creative Spaces Column for The Huffington Post: Through her widely-read column, Rana explored how design and creativity transform workplaces, homes, and cities, blending her expertise in business with her love for art and innovation. She further emphasized the importance of creativity and design in everyday life through her work with HGTV, showcasing artistic home design.

Rana, alongside her husband world renowned urbanist, Richard Florida, has been instrumental in organizing art-centered events and fostering community engagement. Co-organizing events at global platforms like CityLab and the Aspen Ideas Festival, highlighting the transformative role of art in cities. They were also key partners in launching Art Basel Cities with an economic growth strategy for Buenos Aires. Rana and her husband are avid art collectors, particularly focused on contemporary and emerging artists. Their personal collection and support for the arts reflect their belief in the transformative power of creativity.

Co-Founding Creative Class Studio, alongside Interior Designer and Architect Amanda Elliott, this hands-on art space is designed to inspire children to connect through art. This immersive space aims to inspire children to disconnect from devices and explore creativity through monthly themes featuring iconic artists.

Alright, so let's do something a bit more fast-paced and lighthearted. We call this our lightning round and we'll ask you a few quick questions.

- **Favorite Movie:** The Outsiders
- **Favorite Book:** Rise of the Creative Class
- **Favorite TV Show:** The French Chef, Cooking with Julia Childs
- **Favorite Band or Artist:** Yoshimoto Nara – love his punchy, rebellious art characters
- **Sweet or Savory:** Savory always
- **Mountains or Beach:** Beach, my last name is Florida
- **Favorite Sport (to watch):** Hands down Tennis
- **Favorite Sport (to play):** Tennis all the way
- **Did you play sports growing up (if so which ones):** with 6 kids in the family, organized sports were too expensive, we rode our bikes all day
- **As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up:** I had no idea!
- **French Fries or Onion Rings:** Fries!!
- **Chuck Rhodes or Bobby Axelrod:** Love Rhodes intellect and Axelrod's ambition
- **Favorite Cartoon growing up:** Marge Simpson
- **Favorite Childhood movie:** Rebel without a Cause
- **Favorite Breakfast Food:** Tofu with chili peppers!

What do you want people to remember about you and your brand? What are some of things that you feel are most important, unique, special, etc?

I'm thrilled to announce the opening of the Creative Class Studio, a project I'm launching with my business partner, Amanda Elliott. This immersive art studio is designed to inspire children through the works of iconic artists while encouraging them to discover their own creative potential. Our vision is to create a "third place" for kids—a space beyond home and school—where they can connect with peers, step away from screens, and engage in unstructured, imaginative play.

The concept of the Creative Class was pioneered by my husband world renowned urbanist, Richard Florida, and as a lifelong art enthusiast, I've always prioritized exposing our children to art and creativity. Now, we have the incredible opportunity to expand that passion, share it with other families, and foster a love of art in the next generation.



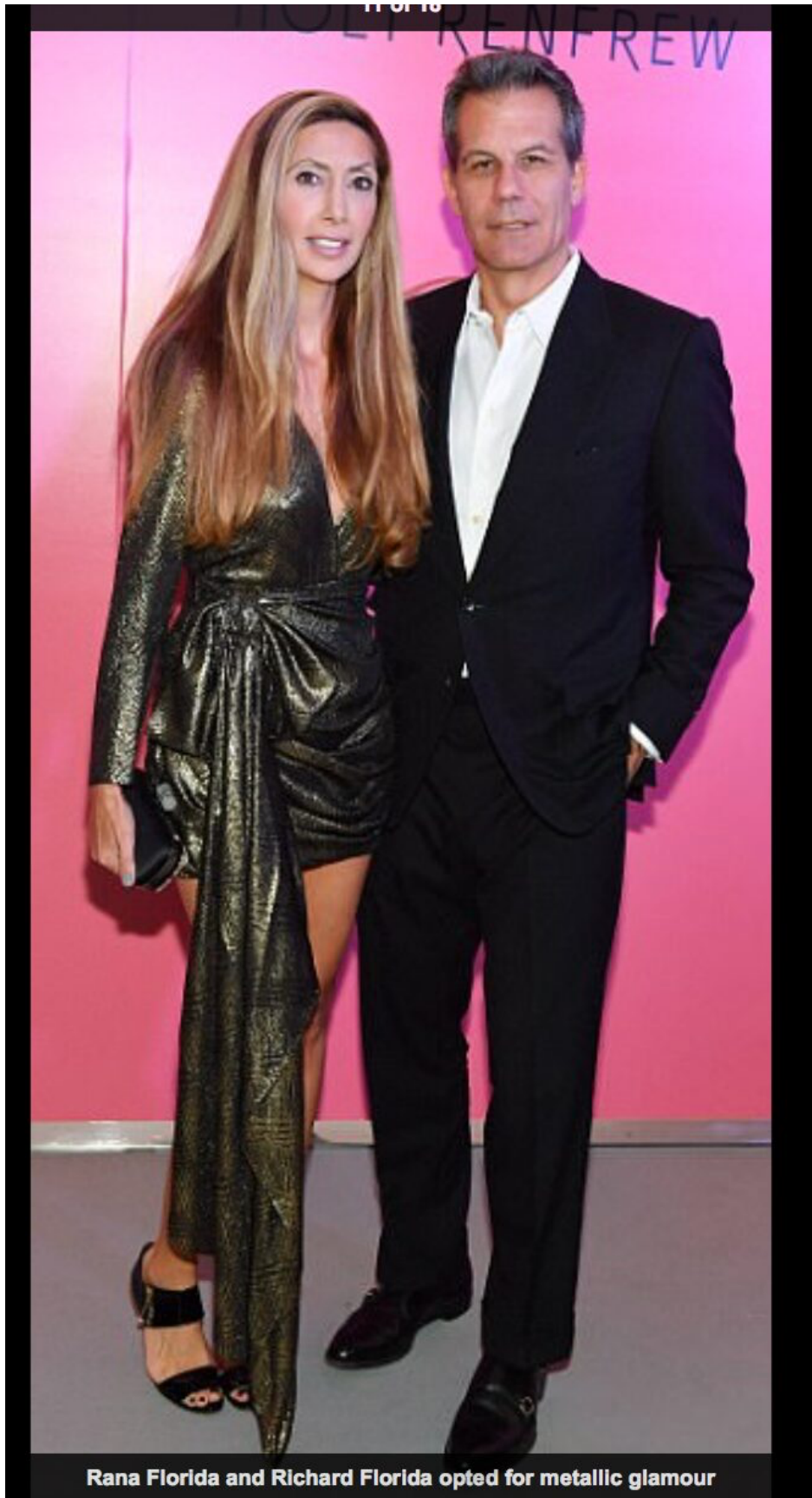








VOGUE



Rana Florida and Richard Florida opted for metallic glamour











Contact Info:

- **Website:** <https://www.creativeclasstudio.com>
- **Instagram:** creativeclasstudios
- **Other:** www.creativeclass.com and www.ranaflorida.com

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