
Libby Cole

BIO

Libby works closely with clients to envision project outcomes. She helps craft strategies that prioritize people and provides guidance throughout the process. Libby is an empathetic facilitator—she creates a space for people to share openly. Guided by workshop and conversation insights, Libby leads the design of smart, iconic visuals. Having worked in the design field for over 15 years from corporate to non-profit, Libby is an expert at making complex information easy to understand, engaging to look at, and innovative. She is a graduate of College for Creative Studies where she studied graphic design. She joined The Work Department as a designer soon after its founding in 2010, became partner in 2014, and is now owner.

RELEVANT PROJECTS

Public Design Trust | Detroit, MI and Saint Etienne, France

Founded Public Design Trust, a collaborative of thinkers, creators, futurists, and civic servants. Curated and presented “Footwork: The Choreography of Collaboration” in Saint Etienne as part of Detroit’s designation as a UNESCO City of Design. Rooted in Detroit’s rich heritage of social, cultural and political innovation, the exhibition explored imagined futures as the definition of work itself changes in the city.

Detroit Future City (DFC) Working with Lots | Detroit, MI

Through workshops and conversations with DFC and a network of over 50 stakeholders, collaboratively composed a shared definition of green infrastructure that simply and clearly outlined ways the practices will benefit Detroiters. Paired the language with accessible illustrations to design a visually impactful book that helps prepare residents with information and approaches to shape land use.

Detroit Head Start | Detroit, MI

Plan, design, and implement city-wide campaign to boost enrollment in Detroit’s 65 Head Start centers with project partners. Evaluated existing early childhood enrollment process and brands in Detroit. Facilitated participatory design workshops with over 30 parents and caregivers to craft multi-lingual campaign messages (in Spanish and English) and develop a unified brand identity. Built website and social media tools to help more local families learn what Head Start offers.

New America Resilient Communities | New York, NY

Demonstrated the potential impact of community wireless networks in a communication tool used to recruit small businesses in New York to host routers. Designed multilingual print and digital materials that transform complex technical information into words and visuals that are easy to understand.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

2008-PRESENT

Founder & Designer, I Miss You Already | Detroit, MI

I Miss You Already is a boutique line of screen-printed goods, printed locally in Detroit and sold online and in select shops across North America.

2011-2014

Adjunct Graphic Design Faculty, College for Creative Studies | Detroit, MI

Taught several senior-level visual communication studio courses to students in their final semester before graduation. Developed curriculum and led critiques.

2008-2011

Freelance Designer | Detroit, MI

Conceptualized and executed graphic designs. Integrated imagery, messaging, and graphic elements, while ensuring consistency across media and maintaining brand standards for a variety of clients.

2007-2008

Designer, Stop Studios | Durham, NC

From concept to completion, executed graphic applications such as collateral material, environmental graphics, publications, and brand identities.

2005-2007

Designer, Skidmore Studio | Detroit, MI

Generated concepts and design elements with other creatives, researched clients and audiences, presented creative work, and prepared files for required output for a studio with both direct and agency clients.

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

2017

“Could Detroit Show Us the Way to a New Future of Work,” Metropolis Magazine

2015

Better World by Design, Brown University | Providence, RI

2014

Maptime: The State of Detroit Community Mapping, Tech Town | Detroit, MI

COMMUNITY

2018-PRESENT

Member, Corktown Business Association Board

EDUCATION

2004

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design, College for Creative Studies | Detroit, MI