

# Leah McDowell

Award-winning Art Director seeking a new challenge in gift design

## PERSONAL OVERVIEW

Award-winning, proactive Art Director with 10 years' experience in ideation, design and delivery of illustrated book and gift products in collaboration with internal stakeholders and freelance illustrators. Works from brief through to execution on all her projects, and leads teams that have designed and produced a list of beautiful, reader-focused, innovative titles that are extremely well-respected by booksellers and readers across the world.

## SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Highly-developed typographic and print design skills and an exceptional knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite.

Excellent illustrator and freelancer briefing and management abilities that are utilised on a daily basis.

Experience delivering successful, creative solutions for branding and packaging, which have contributed to increased publisher reputation and sales.

Thorough knowledge of digital and print production.

Advanced interpersonal and negotiation skills and first-rate written and verbal communication skills that are utilised on a daily basis.

Advanced project management abilities, as demonstrated by the delivery of 140+ print projects per year.

Superb people-management skills, as demonstrated by over-achieving on projects with limited budget and resource availability.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Art & Production Director **Floris Books** 2013 – Present

**Key responsibilities covering illustrated children's non-fiction/fiction and adult non-fiction lists and related gift products:**

Concept development, design and project management of illustrated titles, including novelty children's books and gift products, in collaboration with internal stakeholders and freelance illustrators.

Design and project management of book and gift products from international author brands such as Elsa Beskow, Astrid Lindgren, Gerda Muller and Marit Törnqvist.

Freelance illustrator management, including commissioning, contract negotiation and creative direction.

Oversight of project schedules from manuscript to print-ready PDF for 140+ titles each year, including reprints, co-editions and new editions.

Management and professional development of staff, ranging from junior to senior, in the design and production teams.

Regular and ad-hoc company strategy planning and execution, and resource implementation.

### Freelance Graphic Designer **ELEMdesign** 2016 – Present

In pursuit of a wider range of design challenges, I work on freelance projects, including book design briefs and the development and delivery of creative confidence workshops.

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## EMPLOYMENT (CONTINUED)

Design & Production Executive Floris Books 2012 – 2013

Officer Cadet/Lance Corporal British Army 2007 – 2012

## EDUCATION

MSc Publishing Edinburgh Napier University 2011 – 2012 (Distinction)

Ba(Hons) Illustration Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design 2007 – 2011 (2:1)

## VOLUNTEERING

**Steering Group Member** Creative Edinburgh 2018 – Present

**Founder** Scottish book designer socials 2018 – Present

**Mentor** Kerning the Gap 2021 – Present

**Mentor** Creative Edinburgh 2018 – Present

**Mentor** Society of Young Publishers Scotland 2016 – 2020

**Event First Aider** British Red Cross 2014 – 2016

**Co-Chair** Society of Young Publishers Scotland 2012 – 2015

## AWARDS

**Trailblazer Award Shortlister** London Book Fair 2019

**Book Cover Award Shortlister** Saltire Society 2019

**Emerging Publisher Award Winner (Inaugural)** Saltire Society 2016

**University Medal Winner (top student of the year)** Edinburgh Napier University 2012

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR

My life outside of work is spent learning Japanese, playing video and board games, mulling over jigsaws, singing karaoke, gardening and learning to dance in the ballroom and Latin styles.