

MELISSA DOWELL

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Product Designer | Infrastructure & Design Systems

Artist turned designer for complex technical systems. I'm equally happy building your app from the ground up as I am reworking legacy platforms with an existing user base. To me, product design is three specialties that only work as a set: research to understand an industry and the people in it, prototypes in code to actually test the experience, and craft in the aesthetics and fine details. Plenty of companies treat that like a menu. I don't. Nothing gets lost between the research and the release, and that's why the work holds up.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lead Product Designer | Turngate *May 2023 – Aug. 2026*

- Founding designer at a seed-stage cybersecurity startup, joining pre-product to help shape the concept and owning all visual language and experience design through launch and three years of iteration within a small team.
- Designed the integration and investigation experience across a dozen data sources spanning cloud identity, SaaS, and AI platforms, unifying inconsistently structured audit records and event streams into a coherent interface.
- Worked alongside a data scientist to design for the platform's expansion into AI agent observability, building the interface for monitoring MCP and agent activity (session duration, token consumption, cost, and prompt and tool-call history) so teams could audit what autonomous agents actually did and trace it to downstream effects.
- Built the Figma design system governing every screen in the platform, architected on atomic design principles with a shared token layer and linked to a 189-component React library in Storybook for component maintenance. Designed to WCAG 2.1 AA and regularly tested for keyboard navigation and screen reader support.
- Researched and piloted MCP-based connections between Figma, Claude Code, and the team's repositories to shorten design-to-code handoff, working alongside the dev team and contributing merged pull requests to the front-end codebase.
- Initiated generative research with security practitioners during the ideation phase to define core problems in log investigation and incident response, translating findings into the product's foundational workflows.
- Ran usability sessions at major design milestones to pressure-test new workflows against how practitioners actually work, surfacing usability gaps and functional issues ahead of release.

Product Designer (Volunteer) | Armadillo Stock *Feb. 2023 – Present*

- Part of the founding UI/UX team for a community-built licensing platform connecting illustrators directly with art buyers, contributing from initial concept through full product design. Mentored founder and junior designer in UX principles and using Figma.
- Created the initial design system, component library, screens, and prototypes; handed off to the volunteer engineering team and partnered with developers through implementation to protect the intended experience.
- Led product research interviews, creating the framework of questions for art buyers, illustrators with experience in licensing their work, and illustrators who have never licensed their work to build the first principles for the site.
- Launched V1 of the website, which anchored a Kickstarter campaign that raised over 140% of its goal to fund the platform's build and launch.

Senior Product Designer | Songtrust / Downtown Holdings *Aug. 2021 – Apr. 2023*

- Redesigned the core experience for a music rights-management platform to collect mechanical royalties that required memorability over efficiency; users returned only a few times a year so the interface had to be

relearnable every visit. The forms could not be validated for accuracy in advance, and any mistakes recorded came back from collection societies months later.

- Translated a marketing-led brand refresh into a functional product design language, extending the art direction's palette, typography, and visual themes into accessible components and interaction patterns the brand work had not addressed.
- Initiated the company's first design system alongside the lead engineer during migration to React, conforming UI components across the product and bringing them to WCAG 2.1 AA standards.
- Raised the organization's UX maturity by establishing quantitative and qualitative research practice: surveys, interviews, adding Mouseflow for behavior analytics, and built the Songtust research repository in Dovetail.

UX Designer | Plasma Computing Group / ONE Tech (now MicroAI) *Apr. 2018 – July 2021*

- Sole UX designer for ONE Tech, an IoT endpoint monitoring platform launched in 2018, which later pivoted into an edge AI platform for embedding machine learning into industrial machinery and IoT endpoints.
- Designed data visualization dashboards for multiple clients on Plasma's proprietary C2M IoT platform, composing screens from a constrained widget library and specifying custom visualizations where the standard set couldn't carry the data for automotive, telecommunications, manufacturing industries.
- Designed digital forms and contracts for a major Australian agriculture client, converting a pen-and-paper process into a tablet application that worked offline in rural areas.
- Worked directly with US and overseas engineers who owned the data pipelines and integrations.

Product Development Manager | FCTRY *Apr. 2016 – Dec. 2017*

- Owned product design and technical drawings across all product lines, managing overseas factory production and third-party laboratory testing against US and international compliance standards.
- Ran in-person user research for consumer product development through prototype testing, focus groups, and surveys and translated findings into design direction presented regularly to the CEO and product team.

Vice President | Dr. Sketchy's Anti-Art Group LLC *Jan. 2009 – Dec. 2019*

- Led the build of a multi-tenant platform consolidating a scattered network of independent branch websites into one destination, so fans worldwide could find their local branch while each branch director independently ran their own events, ticketing, photo gallery, and blog.
- Managed a developer, designer, and QA tech through architecture, migration of blog entries off Wordpress and self-hosted websites from existing branches, and launched under a fixed deadline for a project that was months behind schedule.
- Redesigned the branch application and director onboarding flow from a Google Forms and Docs process into a workflow managed on the multi-tenant platform to improve data organization and security. Oversaw interviewing, onboarding, training, and offboarding branch directors internationally, designing the internal tooling as one of the people who had to use it.

EDUCATION

MS, Human Centered Design & Engineering — University of Washington, 2022

BFA, Illustration — School of Visual Arts, 2006

SKILLS & TOOLS

Design & Prototyping: Figma (design systems, interactive prototypes, Figma Make), Storybook, Chromatic, Adobe Creative Suite

Design Engineering: React, Claude Code, MCP-based design-to-code workflows, Git, GitHub, Linear, HTML5, CSS, JavaScript, Python

Research: Generative and evaluative research, usability testing, surveys and interviews, Dovetail, Hotjar, Mouseflow, Typeform

Domains: Security operations and incident response, AI agent observability, IoT and edge systems, enterprise SaaS, complex data visualization, manufacturing, and illustration-for-hire

Practice: Design systems, component libraries, accessibility (WCAG 2.1 AA), information architecture, design-to-engineering handoff, technical workflow design

Fabrication: Fusion 360, Blender, rapid prototyping, 3D printing, CNC

SPEAKING & RECOGNITION

Women Who Code DFW — Led UX programming for the chapter, recognized for Outstanding Technical Programming (2023); delivered “UX Overview with Melissa Dowell,” an international talk grounding UX foundations in their HCI origins for an engineering audience (2021)

New Orleans Game Developers — Invited talk applying “The UX Team of One” research and design practices to game development, 2023

Sound Sustainability — UX researcher and designer on hearing health project; grand prize winner, Hollomon Health Innovation Challenge, 2021