

OUTLINE

THE OFFICIAL ILLUSTRATORS AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER ISSUE 3, 2012



ILLUSTRATORS AUSTRALIA: ABBOTSFORD CONVENT CONVENT BUILDING, C1.22 1 HELIERS ST, ABBOTSFORD VIC 3067 T 1300 720 181

Young at Heart

Australian Children's Illustrators



COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MELISSA WEBB,
POP GOES THE WEASAL

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Illustrators Australia

Abbotsford Convent Convent Building,
C1.22 1 Heliers St, Abbotsford Vic 3067

T **1300 720 181** within Australia

T **03 9419 1355** International

www.illustratorsaustralia.com

From the editor

What a year! I've up and moved to the USA for a while, and am studying a Masters in Fine Art (Illustration) at the Academy of Art in San Francisco. Editing Outline magazine, and being able to talk to all of you wonderful Aussie illustrators has been a much-appreciated link to back home.



What I love most about putting together each new edition is the opportunity to learn more about the featured illustrators and I have to say that being away from home has really opened my eyes to the sort of talent we have within Illustrators Australia, and that all of you are really an amazingly creative bunch. I've also been observing that Australian artists and illustrators support each other a lot more than their overseas counterparts, and groups like Illustrators Australia are not nearly as common as you might think. So on that note, thank you to Jody and everyone who has worked tirelessly to make Illustrators Australia such a wonderful organisation to be a part of! Happy holidays and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

Jessica Mack, Editor, Outline magazine

{OUTLINE SUBMISSIONS}

If you have an idea for an article, profile, or even a good book or website you'd like to share, email me at outline@illustratorsaustralia.com

Welcome to all our new members!

Jul: Tallulah Cunningham, Wern Chee (SpAE), Maciej Kasper, Lauren Mullinder, Bobby Haiqalsyah

Sep: Daniel Reed, Paul Nolan, Richard Ellis, Marguerite Sauvage, Penelope Gibbs, Liza Dezfouli, Kayleen West

Oct: Stacey Bennett, Anna Lloyd, Simone Downey, Marsha Wajer, Sophie Seahill, Diego Patino, Robin Taylor, Tracy Morrow, Larisa Williams, Peadar Thomas

Nov: Ben Pearmain, Ian Anderson, Alison Jane Rice, Kate Kingsmill

Dec: Mia Grant, Kate Kingsmill, Brian Petersen, Anna Trundle, Kym Burrows

Prez sez

Well since the last edition of Outline in June this year we have been busy busy busy!

We held once again the A3 show as part of the Northern Exposure Festival in Northcote, Melbourne, giving the members a chance to participate in an exhibition and to sell signed prints of their work. We will probably change that exhibition for next year but it's still under discussion.

Andrea Innocent went on a Tour and Talk for members in South Australia.

Of course we had the move to the Convent and the Seminar Part Two in September (you can see photos from the seminar [here](#)).

We also had a display of members works at the Hill of Content Bookshop and then the 9x5 Exhibition in November themed 'Carnivale'.

Book 13 was published in September and released out into the wild, and coming into December we have just finalised the IA Awards and they are now in the hands of the Creative Magazine, so keep your eyes open for results!

In the coming year we hope to be able to offer a new IA 'app' and some new ideas for a book. We will be sending out a survey soon to see what you think.

BIG thanks to everyone for helping run IA in 2012 with the seminars, exhibitions, website, performances and other events.

As this is the last issue for 2012 we would like to say a HUGE thanks to Jessica Mack who has been producing Outline Magazine from overseas in the United States, three great editions and lots of effort, thank you Jess!

Best wishes to you all for Christmas and have safe holidays, we will see you again in 2013!

Jody Pratt, President



9x5 Exhibition in November themed 'Carnivale'.

Christmas parties for the members

Thank you Anton Emdin for organising the NSW party, which was great! A good crowd enjoyed great food and talked up a storm at The Coopers Hotel. We look forward to getting together again next year with the members of Australian Cartoonist Association to celebrate the year past.

Thank you Tara Hale in Qld for organising the members there for a lovely, fun Japanese dinner.

Members in Qld can keep an eye on the IA Facebook page and their emails for the once-a-month get together at

Dr Sketchys, organised by Tara. This is a great chance to meet up with other illustrators and to hear what's happening at IA.

The members in Victoria got together at 'The 86' in Melbourne to hold the annual AGM and then drinks at the bar. It was a great night, lots of chatting, new and old members mingling and making suggestions for the year ahead, which is great!



New South Wales



Queensland



Victoria



IA'S NEW HOME

On the 16th of June 2012, Illustrators Australia moved from our lovely shared studio in Northcote to our new office at the Abbotsford Convent.

It was a good move, lots of helpers and all went well (except for Telstra who were a nightmare!)

We are now all settled in, we get visitors here and we can have coffee in the cafes and walk around the beautiful grounds.

There are many opportunities here for members, we have access to conference rooms where we hope to have talks, we are also discussing opportunities with other artists, who have studios here, about holding life drawing workshops.

Talks are also underway to hold the next 9x5 exhibition here at the convent and IA to be part of the next open day, where we can also set up a market for our members to sell and sign their wares.

You can see more info on our move on the IA website:

http://www.illustratorsaustralia.com/blog/ia_has_moved_premises

Don't forget to check out our Facebook page where you will find loads of photos and info from members:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/52137618424/>



{UP AND COMER}



Simone Downey

Simone Downey

Outline: Describe your illustration style.

Simone: My illustration style is best described as whimsical, cute, and sometimes sad, with human-like animals.

Outline: How did you get into children's illustration?

Simone: I started my journey in illustrating about two years ago, before that I hardly drew. Occasional rough doodles when talking on the telephone and a few character drawings for a class at university, but that's it!

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Simone: It wasn't actually intentional, I think it chose me or maybe deep down I knew it was in me, but hadn't realised it at the time. I started just drawing out of a challenge really. For some reason early on, I didn't think children would be my target market. I thought I was going more for the quirky adult thing, but as time went by, I realised my work was actually for children. It makes sense, because I have always been drawn to children, and children's subjects, even throughout university. Now that I think about it... when I applied for my uni course, I pitched a kids animation show...so it must of been in me. Also, not many people know this but a few years ago I worked in a kinder once a week, because I thought I wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. I wasn't drawing then, it was only a year later that I began to draw. I have a feeling that experience had some sort of effect on me, without realising it. Now that I am writing this, I realise it was so obvious that I was going to end up doing something related to children, but at the time it wasn't! How funny is that?

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Simone: I would say nature. Nature is a huge part of my inspiration. Observing, simple and beautiful things in

{▶▶CLICK!} Simone Downey

Website <http://nomuu.com>

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/nomuu>

Twitter https://twitter.com/nomuu_

Blog <http://www.ammiki.com/blog/>

everyday life. Things that we tend to not pay attention to, like a feather falling to the ground, wind that howls, trees and the sun glistening in between the leaves. I also gain inspiration from observing kids, and their little quirks and of course I love cute furry animals!

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Simone: I don't. When I get asked this sort of question, I do stop and wonder how these characters do actually form. There really is not that much deep thinking that goes into them. It's an automatic response within me that just starts to draw. I don't think about it too much. I may say to myself, I want to tackle a certain medium like watercolor or something more abstract, but I don't spend hours thinking about how I am going to approach my concept. It's very automatic, almost like I have no say in the matter. It's all about me being able to experiment and just do something that needs not much thought.

Outline: Who is your favorite children's illustrator, and why?

Simone: Oh as a child and today it was certainly E. H. Shepard. Oh my gosh when I think of When We Were Young and Wind in The Willows, that took me back to a magical time. I would say the simplicity of Dick Bruna's Miffy character also had an impact. These were the two illustrators that had a big impact on me as a child and has stuck with me ever since.



{UP AND COMER}

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for?

Simone: Well of course, children! From ages one to five.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Simone: Oh that's easy, a children's animated series. As I mentioned earlier when I applied for university I had come up with this simple character called 'Tilly' and her sidekick 'Tom' and I thought she was going to be the next big thing! You should see her, she was pretty simple. I was all 'I'm going to develop this character into a children's animated series, she's going to be loved by kids all over the world'. Then you get to university, and you start to experiment and work on other things and you forget what you really wanted to do. I'm sad that I didn't concentrate on her enough, now looking back on it. I may of realised my calling a bit earlier on if I did.

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Simone: It probably does. I am a big kid at heart. I always like to go back to the simple things in life and being a kid was all about that.

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Simone: My repeating theme would be nature and keeping things simple.

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Simone: I think tumblr is a great place to get inspiration, as is Pinterest. I love the Australian artist Kristina Sostarko from <http://inaluxe.bigcartel.com>. I also love Tali Galon <http://www.taligalon.com>, Helen dardik <http://www.etsy.com/shop/helendardik>, and Kate Hindley <http://www.etsy.com/shop/KateHindley> but I try not to look at too many blogs, books, art sites as I don't want to be influenced too much.

Outline: What's next for you?

Simone: I am working on an animated series at the moment with a scriptwriter, I have a few illustrations I am colouring in, but haven't finished them off and next year I will be concentrating on building my brand a lot more so I can do this full-time.

Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Simone: For me, social media and word-of-mouth. I have learnt if you have something that people love then they will spread the word for you. It also helps to have some business cards and a website with your illustration work showing. As soon as the cards or mobile website comes out I don't need to do much taking...they sell themselves. Get www.moo.com cards, with a different illustration on the back and show them to potential clients. I don't do markets really, but I am sure that would help.

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Simone: Make sure it's something inherently in you. You have to have a connection with children, and what it is to be a child. If you want to connect with children, you need to understand them. So observe children, spend time with them, get an artist residency in a school or help out in a local kinder, babysit kids or better yet have a kid - lol! Find out what kids love and learn from them. Also think about themes. I struggle with this a lot. It's good to do a series. So a set of illustrations that are specifically designed to work with one another. I am so random, that I find it really hard to do three sets of illustrations that match each other up. 🍎



Young at Heart

Spotlight on
Australian Children's
Illustrators





Annie White

Annie White

Annie White started out in advertising, but moved to full time illustration because there wasn't enough drawing for her liking. Since then she has mainly worked in children's literature, initially with educational books and later with picture books. Some notable clients include Scholastic, Hachette, New Frontier, Windy Hollow, Koala Books and Era Publications.

In addition to books and publications Annie has also been involved in a range of other interesting projects including murals for kindergartens, giant jigsaw floor puzzles, a rubber stamping range, cards and posters.

Outline: Describe your illustration style.

Annie: I illustrate in the old way with pencils, ink, watercolour and sometimes oil paint. (It's not that I don't want to try the digital approach I just haven't got around to it yet.)

I try to make my illustrations for children simple, clear and expressive with a sense of fun and movement.

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Annie: I'm drawn to children's illustration because I like children's stories.

People often give me lovely picture books for my birthday and I've kept all the favorites from my own and my children's childhoods.

Even when I paint or draw something inspired from a grown-up book that I'm reading, it seems to have a childlike quality to it.

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Annie: Inspiration comes from books with visual prose, all sorts of exhibitions, random sentences from snippets of conversation, and watching people.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Annie: When illustrating a text, I believe the drawing must support the words.

This is especially important in educational books, as the child is learning to read after all. But at the same time, the illustration shouldn't be boring. If possible it's good to do the opposite of the predictable as long as the communication is simple and strong.

Outline: Do you give thought to the grown-ups that are likely to also be reading the books?

Annie: The children are the main focus when illustrating the story but it doesn't hurt to consider the grown-ups particularly if they are reading the story for (hopefully) the 99th time. Humour and detail are helpful.



{CLICK!} Annie White

Website www.anniewhite.com



Outline: Who is your favorite children's illustrator and why?

Annie: Quentin Blake for his expressive lines and humour; Shaun Tan for his wonder and detail; Heath Robinson for his minutiae and imagination.

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for and why?

Annie: My favorite age group is early primary. They are clever and imaginative and have not yet started to curb their fabulous trains of thought or worry too much about what other people think.

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission?

Annie: When a new commission arrives, I read the text in a quiet place with no distractions and on the second reading make notes and thumbnails.

The first ideas are a good framework to build the book on.

Depending on the nature of the story, I may need to do some research but that usually happens when the illustrations are becoming more detailed.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Annie: Dream project work is illustrating picture story books, it's what I really like to do. I'm also interested in the writing.

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Annie: Not so much the 'weirdest' thing I've been asked to illustrate, but fairly challenging at the time were a series of brochures for The Geelong Health Resource Centre in the '80s. This client was government funded and produced information brochures on a wide variety of health topics that were of a serious nature but were handled with a light touch.

They included: 'Multiplication is not the name of the game yet' and 'Every Tom, Dick and Harriet'.

Another time, I was commissioned to illustrate a dinner scene featuring every dog that the (canine mad) client had ever owned in her life.

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

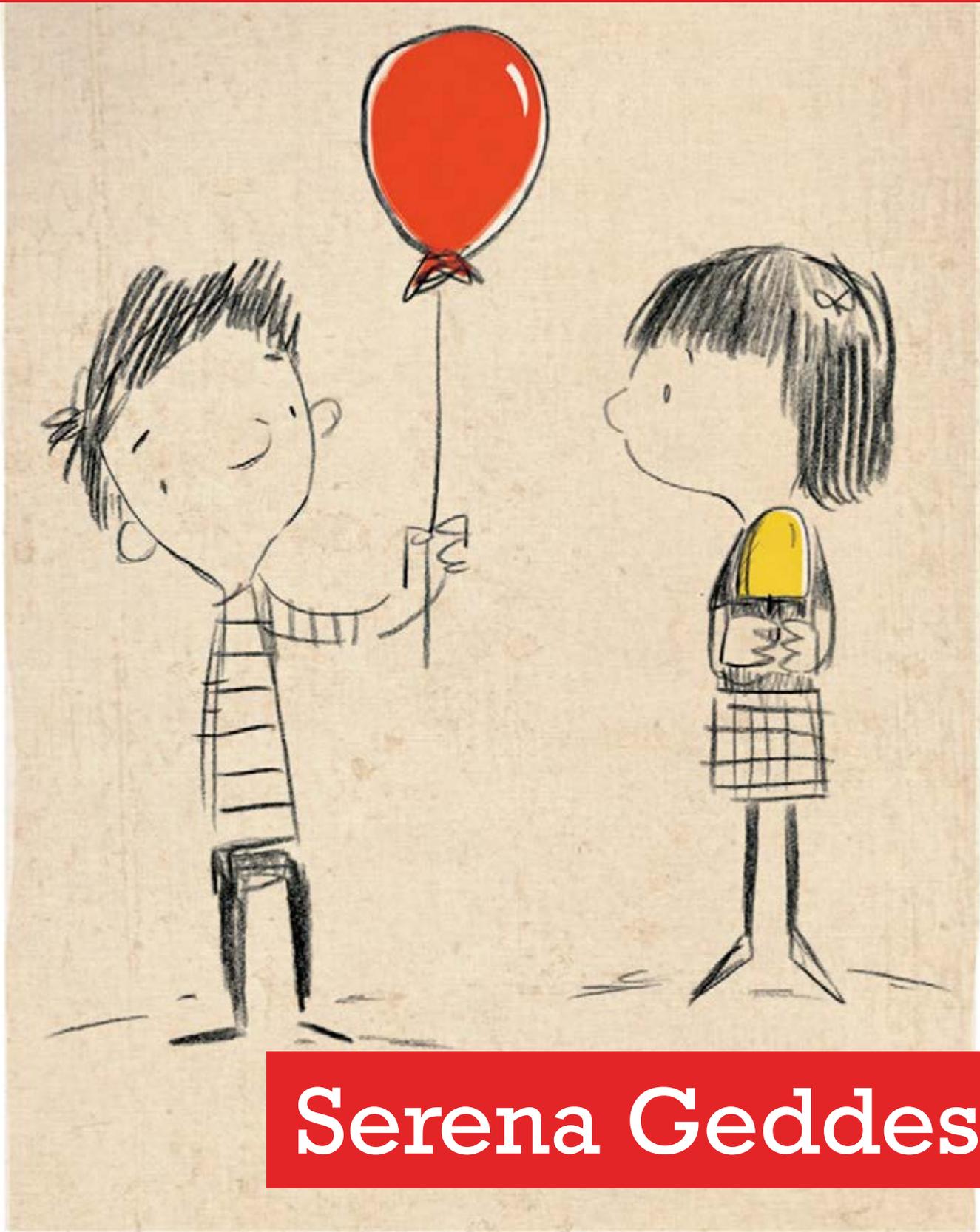
Annie: Illustrating for children prevents me from becoming jaded or ever taking things for granted. The world is a fresher and more vibrant place through children's eyes and I find it very worthwhile to listen to their interpretation of events.

Outline: Do you have a go to character or a repeating theme in your work?

Annie: I suppose the repeating theme in my paintings is characters in situations or just situations.

In my books I try to keep the characters as different as possible to try and represent the amazing variety of children that populate this earth.

Expression and movement would be a repeating theme.



Serena Geddes

Serena Geddes

Serena Geddes has worked for the likes of Disney, Random House Australia, the Five Mile Press, Copeland Publishing, PDC Creative, and Sydney Children's Hospital. She has just completed a picture book called *Gracie and Josh*, which was written by Susanne Gervay, and is currently working on her first author-illustrated picture book *Ameline*. In February, Serena is participating in her first exhibition, at Sydney Children's Hospital with four other artists.

Outline: Describe your illustration style:

Serena: I seem to have two styles, a cartoony, humorous, fun and quirky style using inks, watercolour and digital and in more recent years I have developed a simpler sketchy style using pencil. I am enjoying playing with this style as it's freer and seems to be more the style I am loving :)

Outline: How did you get into children's illustration?

Serena: I have always enjoyed scribbling on paper and dreaming up stories, though I never thought this could be a career. I spent most my years working in office roles before applying for a position at Walt Disney Studios in Sydney. Every six months Disney advertised for trainee in-betweeners and they usually had an influx of about 600-800 applicants for the two submissions per year. Only eight people were picked and I must of had some luck on my side as the culling process came with a test and for some reason this time they did not make us sit for it....I knew nothing of the animation industry or how it worked so it was a massive relief. I spent six years working for Disney as an in-betweener and Production Coordinator on sequels to *The Lion King*, *Peter Pan Returns to Neverland*, *Lady and the Tramp* and *Jungle Book*. This was where I gained most of my learning, I am still unable to draw to a model sheet let alone a mouse in trousers. :) I didn't think about a career in illustration until 2009 when I started illustrating children's books.

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Serena: It kind of just happened to be honest...there where three contributing moments that all came together at once that nudged me to take the plunge. I picked up a book by fellow Disney employee Tina Bourke, who had braved the world of children's books about six years earlier and she became my inspiration. I also picked up books that I thought were not so well drawn... (well crap came to mind*) and I thought if there is a publisher willing to print this then, surely they would want to publish my work and I used this as a benchmark to launch myself into the industry. The final contributing factor that cemented it all was that I lost my job two weeks later so it felt like the right direction for me to go, and illustrating picture books looked like a lot of fun!

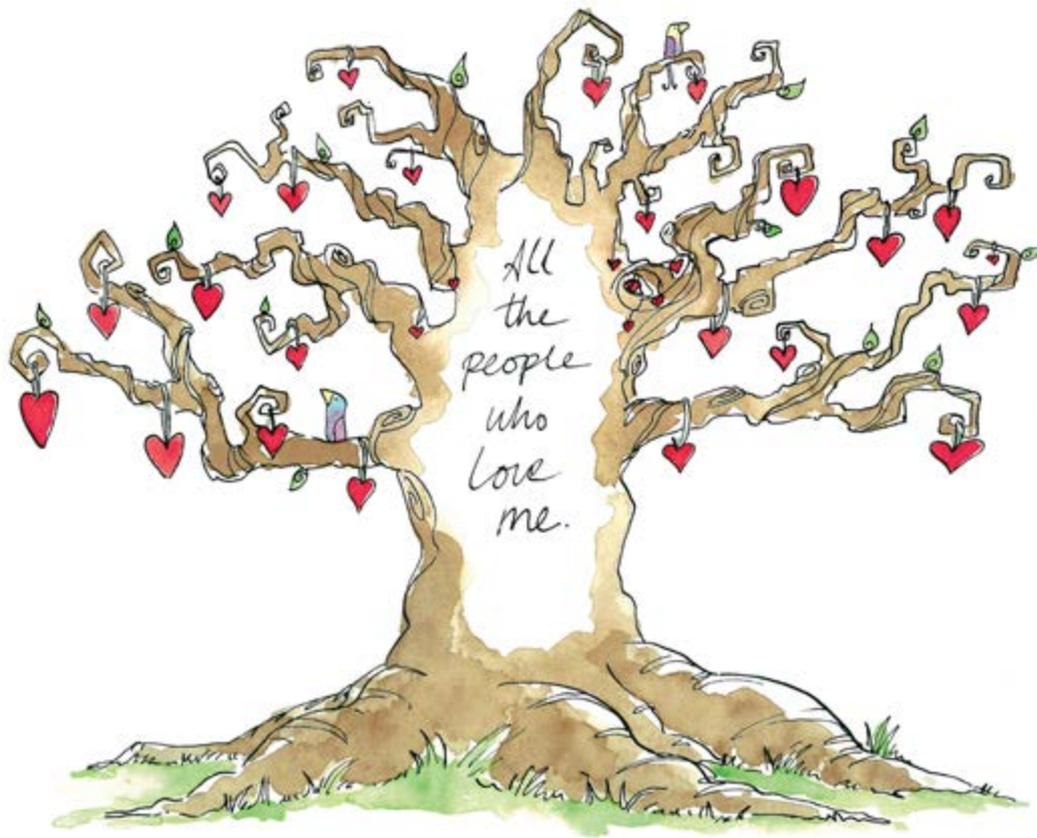
Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Serena: It varies with each project, I do find myself referencing my childhood quite often and the internet plays a big part when referencing material but with my most recent book *Gracie and Josh* I had to spend time with sick children and children with cancer. I spent a few days visiting at the Sydney Children's Hospital doing workshops and speaking with children suffering from illness. It certainly was a confronting experience but worth it, not just for the purpose of the book, but to be able to draw for and spend time with the children in the hospital.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?



* For the record, it was certainly not one of our IA member's picture books I was holding at the time....



Serena: Ermm....I am hoping there is no right or wrong answers to these questions as my response to this will sound like I don't care for my audience (I do!) but I find the less I think about trying to draw for others and more from my imagination and creative space, the freer it is and the more people seem to be drawn to it. I guess the advantage of the illustrator is our imagination is endless and often bigger than our readers. Tapping into that and splashing it onto a page is already capturing the audience's attention and ignites their imagination as well.

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

No its never been my intention to illustrate with a grown up in mind. But that may be because grown ups were once children too so I hope my work speaks to their inner child the way it does their children.

Outline: Who is your favorite children's illustrator, and why?

Serena: I don't have a favourite to be honest... I find I am drawn to different illustrators depending on where I am on my own little journey. I met Oliver Jeffers this year and I quickly learnt that the simplest looking illustration can sometimes be the most complex. I was sitting next to Gus Gordon at the time (also another favourite of mine) and find their styles appealing and similar to the way I will be illustrating my picture book Ameline. Creators like Shaun Tan and Tim Burton are also people I am referencing for another picture book I am developing called Disconnected. An artist whose work is all over my home and I love is Pascal Champion. I like him because he is awesome and amazing and is genuinely a really nice person.

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for?

Serena: I enjoy illustrating for ages 6 to 11. It's not a conscious decision, but I think there are a few contributing factors like:

- A. I am still taller than most of them.
- B. They still laugh at gross things like worm sandwiches, snot, mono-brows (I had one as a child) fart jokes and hairy nostrils.
- C. They think I am cool because I can draw.
- D. They were my most enjoyable years as a child and maybe that comes through in my illustrations.

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Serena: It depends with each project but in the instance of the Lulu Bell series, I met up with Belinda Murrell and spent an afternoon with her family looking at old photos. Lulu is based on her daughter when she was younger and a home Belinda spent some of her childhood in. Lulu's little sister I've based on Belinda's sister, Kate Forsyth, and want to work in as much of their memories as well as my own into the book. The second stage of preparation is the "freak out" stage and the questionable demands on ones abilities to actually create this work as pictured in my mind. Then, after much deliberating, it begins. :)

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Serena: To finish my first picture book Ameline have her published as a book series and made into merchandise..... simple right??



Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Serena: An elephant with a baboon's bottom in a bikini at the supermarket. It was a classrooms request for one of my school talks.

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Serena: I don't think I've ever grown up...

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Serena: Ha! Yes and it bothers me more than it should. All my characters have the same expression. Luckily none of my publishers have picked up on it. ;)

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Serena: I reference I-stock and Getty often and when I was illustrating Lily's Wish my publisher wanted Santa flying his sleigh over Big Ben, I'd never attempted scenery before so it was pretty daunting and I purchased the image and used it as reference for the illustration.

Outline: What's next for you?

Serena: In the coming weeks I will be preparing with author Susanne Gervay dates for promoting and launching our new picture book Gracie and Josh which is due for release in March 2013, I am at rough stage for the new series Lulu Bell, which I will be working on all four books over the next two months. I've received the go ahead for some concept designs for the revamping of Redkite a charity organisation, I am also working on Ameline's sigh* and some spot illustration for Copeland Publishing for their February edition.

Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Serena: I began by picking up books that I felt were similar to my own style and noted down the publisher and then sent them some samples. It pays to research your publisher don't send work to every publisher in the directory as your style may not suit their publications.

Social networking does help, I am finding its not what you know but who and I picked up my new series by speaking with the children's publisher who I met several times over the years at SCBWI Conferences and meetings.

Having an up to date website is always good (do as I say, not as I do... mine has not been updated in seven months... yikes!). Be patient, it takes time and the right manuscript needs to be on the publisher's desk that suits your style. Try not to take on board too much of everyone else's concerns and opinions about the industry, there is an obvious change with the merger of recognised publishing houses but this is only an adjustment to an inevitable change not the end of an era.



{PROFILE}



Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Serena: Stay positive, you will certainly get a lot of knock backs along the way, I still do, but continue creating and doing what drawings you love. Self-publishing is not an option to rule out as it gives you a finished product, is great practice and you can send your book along with your sample folio to publishing houses.

I'd highly recommend SCBWI (Society of Children's Books Writers and Illustrators) you do have to join US\$75 a year but it opens you up to so many contacts locally and overseas. They have quarterly meetings, conferences here and in the overseas and is a great way to meet fellow authors, illustrators, editors mentors and publishers. It has certainly helped me with getting to know the industry and I've met a lot of the publishers that I now am working for.

I attended a part time course at the Sydney University Centre for Continuing Education, which was a fantastic overview to the process and illustration run by Donna Rawlings and Wayne Harris.

Remember we all started out from the same place so ask as many questions as possible from authors and illustrators, and attend as many talks, workshops and meetings from those in the industry.

www.scbwi.org

<http://scbwiaustralianz.com>

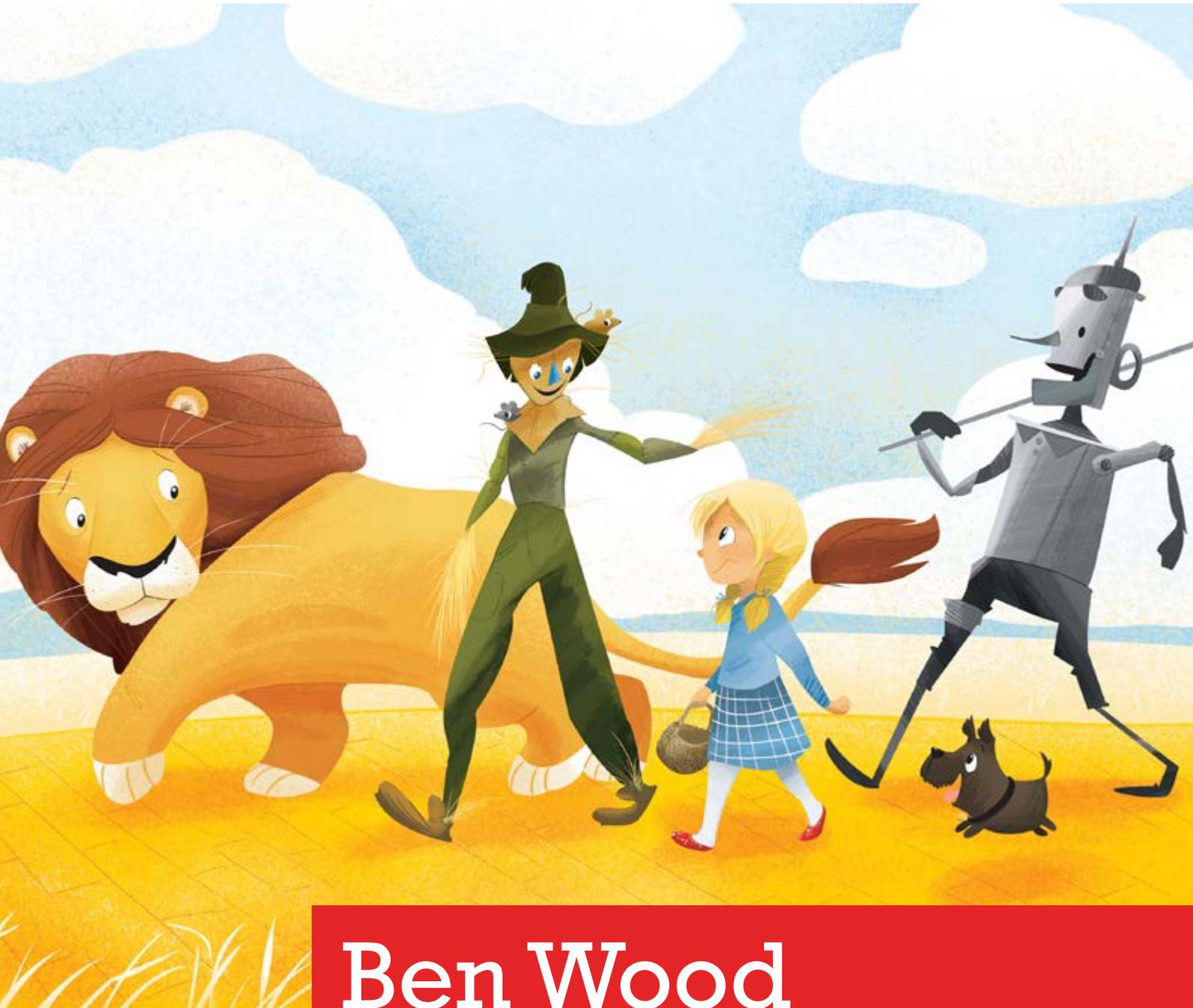
<http://cce.sydney.edu.au/course/CBIL>

●



{CLICK!} Serena Geddes

Website www.reeni.com.au



Ben Wood



Ben Wood

Having been illustrating professionally for nine years now, Ben Wood says he's always been an avid drawer, and just can't get enough! Ben has worked for clients such as Scholastic, Hachette, and BIC. He has also worked for a range of independent marketing and design studios, some international companies on iPad games, and regularly conducts school workshops in character design and book illustration.

On a fun note, Ben is a big Wizard of Oz fan and has had illustrations published in American Wizard of Oz magazines and earlier this year held an art exhibition of Oz-related prints and artworks, in Bendigo VIC. Ben also loves to sew and plans to sell his soft toys online along with prints and books next year.

In September this year *The Wattle Tree* (Hachette Australia) by John Bell, and illustrated by Ben, was released. You can read a review of the book [here](#)



{CLICK!} Ben Wood

Website www.benwoodillustrations.com

Twitter http://twitter.com/benwood_illos

Instagram http://instagram.com/benwood_illos

Outline: Describe your illustration style:

Ben: My style varies drastically job to job and is becoming harder to define over the years I think. I have distinct digital illustrations styles that focus on strong shapes and colour, yet also use a lot of traditional mediums for picture books and novels. Very character based though.

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Ben: I can't remember the defining moment where I can remember being drawn to it. I think illustrations are extremely important to kids in all their applications. From a product, a story, or a game, I think kids bring life to illustrations and pictures they see, and it gets their imaginations whirling.

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Ben: From everywhere! I think all artists tend to soak up the world like a sponge. For me, I'm always dreaming of things, getting distracted and always creating. I jot things down in a notebook, and sketch on any piece of paper I can get. I like to dream, and have a big imagination.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Ben: It really depends on the project. It comes down to making that world believable, even if it is only for one stand-alone illustration. Make it have a story, and children respond to that.

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

Ben: Working on how it reads as a story you do tend to fall back on adult assumptions I guess, but in terms of the worlds and the characters in them adults are not my intended audience, so no I do not.

Outline: Do you have a favorite artist or illustrator?

Ben: My favorite artist at the moment is Ken Done. I'm a real fan of all those colours and patterns he demolishes. Yum!

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Ben: I tend to collect colours and reference material as soon as a new project is confirmed. This can be from anywhere too, from magazines and photos to women's fashion.

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Ben: "Work for free for the exposure". Illustrators everywhere have heard this one, and it still strikes me as bizarre that companies try this.



Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Ben: I love everything bright and colourful, tend to get too excited by Christmas, and love drawings animals. So yes, I think it does.

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Australian animal characters are something I tend to do a lot of. Character is important to me, as is giving the illustrations a life of their own.

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Ben: The ASA (Australian Society of Authors) is a MUST for all illustrators working in the publishing world.

Books Illustrated — The best place to get prints of book illustrations, and find out about what is happening in picture book illustration in Australia.

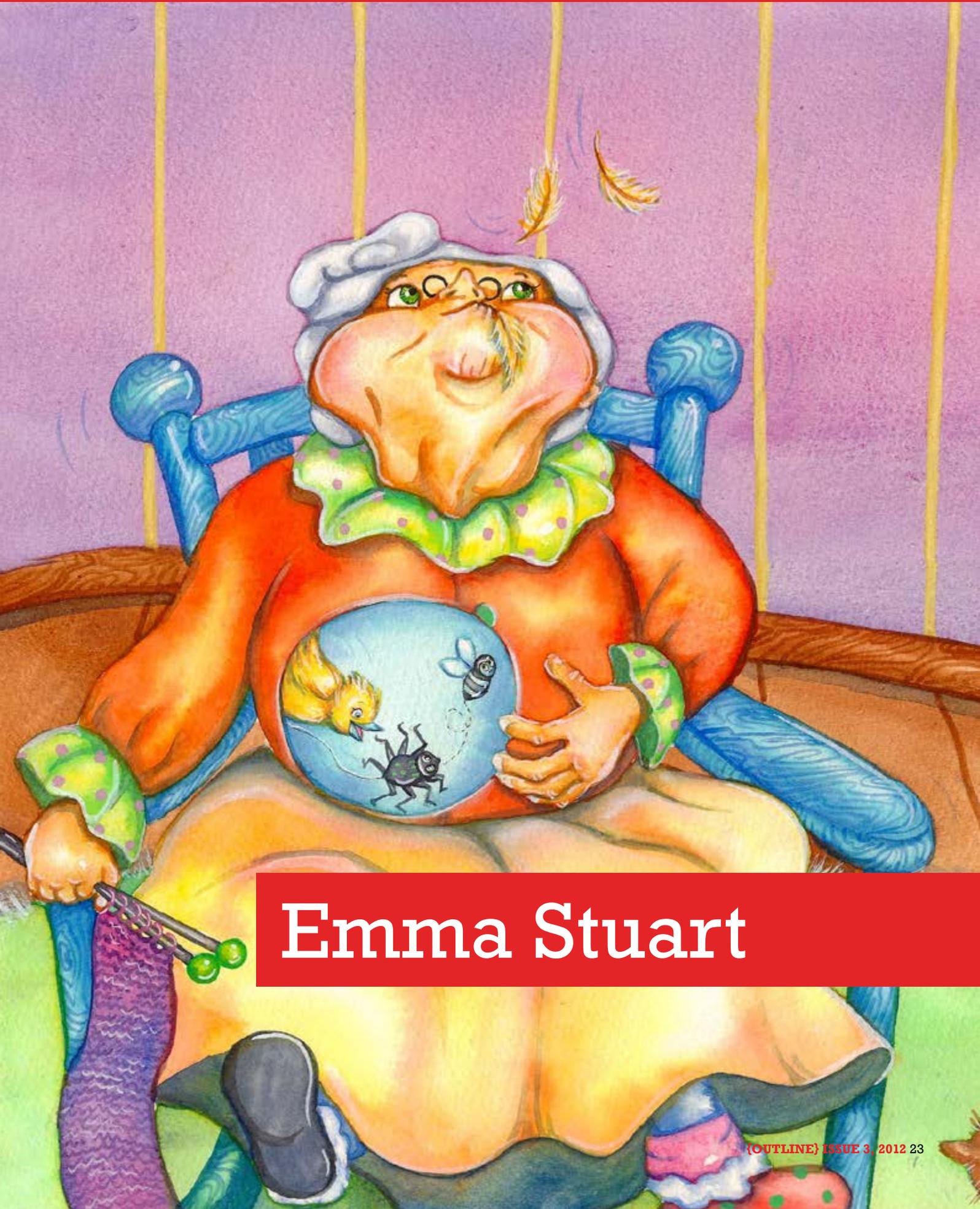
Outline: What's next for you / what are you working on at the moment?

Ben: Have been working on a few iPad games recently, creating characters and backgrounds. I can't wait to seem them completed! Also am working on a couple of books with Scholastic, which I can't wait to share.

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Ben: Try to be versatile in styles and themes. As children's illustration is such a specialized niche you must be able to cover a wide range of topics. 🟡





Emma Stuart

{PROFILE}

Emma Stuart

Emma Stuart had her first book published in 2001, and since then has had over 40 books published! She exhibits oil paintings regularly, and describes her illustration style as Beatrix Potter meets Gelati!

Emma has worked on a variety of notable projects including Smiley's Lost Laugh, It's Always Time for a Nursery Rhyme (Hachette), and is working on a series with New Frontier called Little Steps.

Currently Emma is also working on a series of six stories with author Tony Harris called Wombat Stories, about a mischievous wombat who gets into all kinds of trouble. You can find out more about it [here](#).

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Emma: My mother read to me and my sister pretty much every night before bed when we were little. Some books were illustrated, some not. But I always had a vivid imagination so it didn't matter if there were illustrations or not. We moved a lot when I was little also, from London to NZ, to Perth, to London, and back etc. I think I absorbed a lot of magic in those early years. Spending time in old British homes, walking on the beaches of new Zealand, driving across the Nullarbor plain in the family combi van... My parents are amazingly loving and inspirational people, my childhood was so enriched because of their passion for life. I love illustrating children's books because it takes me back to my childhood. It reminds me of the simple pleasure of falling into a world of imagination and simplicity. I'm also always surprised at the magic of it. I get a brief, with a character, a story, put pen to paper, ad paint - all of a sudden there's a little character staring back at me! It's like they always existed, they were just waiting for someone to bring them to life. And I have the privilege of doing that every day.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Emma: I've been told that my characters are a combination of real and imagined and that they have a certain warmth about them. I think if you just draw a dog in a cute style it won't win anyone's heart. It needs to have character and empathy so the reader feels like they've been friends forever. The eyes are important too - the bigger the better.

Outline: Who is your favorite children's illustrator, and why?

Emma: That's a hard one... There are so many amazing illustrators around, past and present. All I can go back to really is what I loved as a child - and how they've influenced my work as an adult. So it would come down to the old English illustrators such as Beatrix, Tolkien (who illustrated Mr Bliss, my favourite children's book of all time), Roald Dahl, Kate Greenaway... it is too hard!

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for, and why?

Emma: Little ones I think. I love the way they get obsessed with one particular story and want it read to them over and over and over and over and over (you get the picture) again! You know that the story will stay with them always. I don't know how many times my poor mum read me Mr Bliss!! And I still remember the story back to front! His girabbit (half giraffe half rabbit)!!

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Emma: I don't! haha. My studio is always in a bit of a mess, and something about that works for me. I'm usually pretty flat out and go from one project to the next within a few days. Sometimes if I've been working on a big project I'll lash out and have a clean up after - to re set.

{  **CLICK!** } Emma Stuart

Website <http://emma-stuart.com>

Facebook www.facebook.com/emma.stuartillustration





Outline: What would your dream project be?

Emma: To have time to sit down, write and illustrate my own stories!!

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Emma: A wombat riding a camel? No wait there's more... a jealous frog covered in green slime dreaming about being a rock star?? Um hang on..... "there was an old lady who swallowed a fly", the old classics can get pretty weird!

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Emma: I actually think it does. The brain is a funny place, you can burn new pathways just by doing different things everyday. Every book/ brief is different. I'm pretty sure I'm young at heart anyway, but my job definitely helps!

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Emma: I seem to get a lot of commissions that are Australian themed. There is magic about the Australian landscape that is definitely inside my head - the light, the colours, and the animals and flora. I've lost count of how

many gum trees I've painted with some kind of Australian animal poking its head out of or behind!

Outline: What's next for you?

Emma: I'm working on a few things. I've just finished the next book in the "Little Rockets" series for New frontier called "[Alice and the Airy Fairy](#)" — also working on Wombat Stories (just about to start book three). Last week I finished a great little story about a little girl who lives in the forest and all her friends are animals. And today I started a book about a little girl who worries that her house might be lonely when everyone goes out! So cute!

Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Emma: Just get going! Don't waste time worrying about what other illustrators are doing. It's like anything in life really, if you work at it for long enough it will happen. Set up a website so people can find you. Do the whole social media thing and join online portfolio sites (like Illustrators Australia). Never stop! And don't worry about re-sending emails... often editors don't get back to you because they simply get too many emails and they end up on the bottom of the pile! Once you're published though, and if it sells you're pretty set. The work keeps rolling in. ●



Karen Erasmus

Karen Erasmus

With a background in primary school teaching, Karen Erasmus is well suited to children's illustration and creating lively characters that capture the imagination of the children who see them. After leaving college Karen was approached by Hachette to create a new, fresh take on *The Night Before Christmas*, and since then they have initiated two new picture book projects, which will start next year.

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Karen: I have always enjoyed drawing funny little pictures, but never imagined I could make a living out of it. I went into primary school teaching despite having a hearing impairment and the noise was difficult to cope with. My favourite time of the day was the end. Story time. The kids would stare in wonder and let the words spin around them. It was magic. With my own girls I've read to them since they were tiny babies, and now they are avid readers and drawers with imaginations I could only dream of. I've never thought of myself as a collector but our collection of picture books is huge.

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Karen: My inspiration definitely comes from my own children and their friends. Trips to beach, parks and city and the photos I take of them running around with each other.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Karen: I try to create lively, lovable characters. I include odd little things for the kids to look out for. In *The Night Before Christmas* it was the mouse on each page and the interactions between the characters. In the next book it's chickens in odd places here and there looking at what's going on.

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

Karen: I do think about the adults that are reading the book and include things that they can talk about with children. But honestly, I don't think about it much. I show my sketches to my kids to get some idea of what they like.

Outline: Who is your favorite children's illustrator, and why?

Karen: Favourite children's illustrator; Emily Gravett because of her energy and quirkiness. There are many many more that I admire for their technique but she makes me laugh.

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for, and why?

Karen: 5-8 year olds because they really love interacting with books and talking about the pictures and my style of drawing appeals to that age group.

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Karen: I prepare by drawing constantly. Thumbnails, characters, movement. I find that the more I draw it starts to grow. I'm not naturally gifted and my first drawings are usually really bad.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Karen: I love working on picture books more than anything. My dream project would be to illustrate for a major writer and publisher.

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Karen: Yes, definitely.



{CLICK!} Karen Erasmus

Website www.karenerasmus.weebly.com

Blog www.karenerasmus.wordpress.com

Facebook www.facebook.com/KarenErasmusArt

With a little old driver,
so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it
must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles
his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted,
and called them by name:



Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Karen: I suppose the children I draw can look similar. I have to work at giving them individual identities.

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Karen: I look at Matt Phelan and Freya Blackwood because they're so good at using different angles and points of view in their illustrations.

Outline: What's next for you?

Karen: I'm working on the sketches for a very child centred '12 Days of Christmas' for next year. It's going to be very lively and I'm enjoying it immensely already.

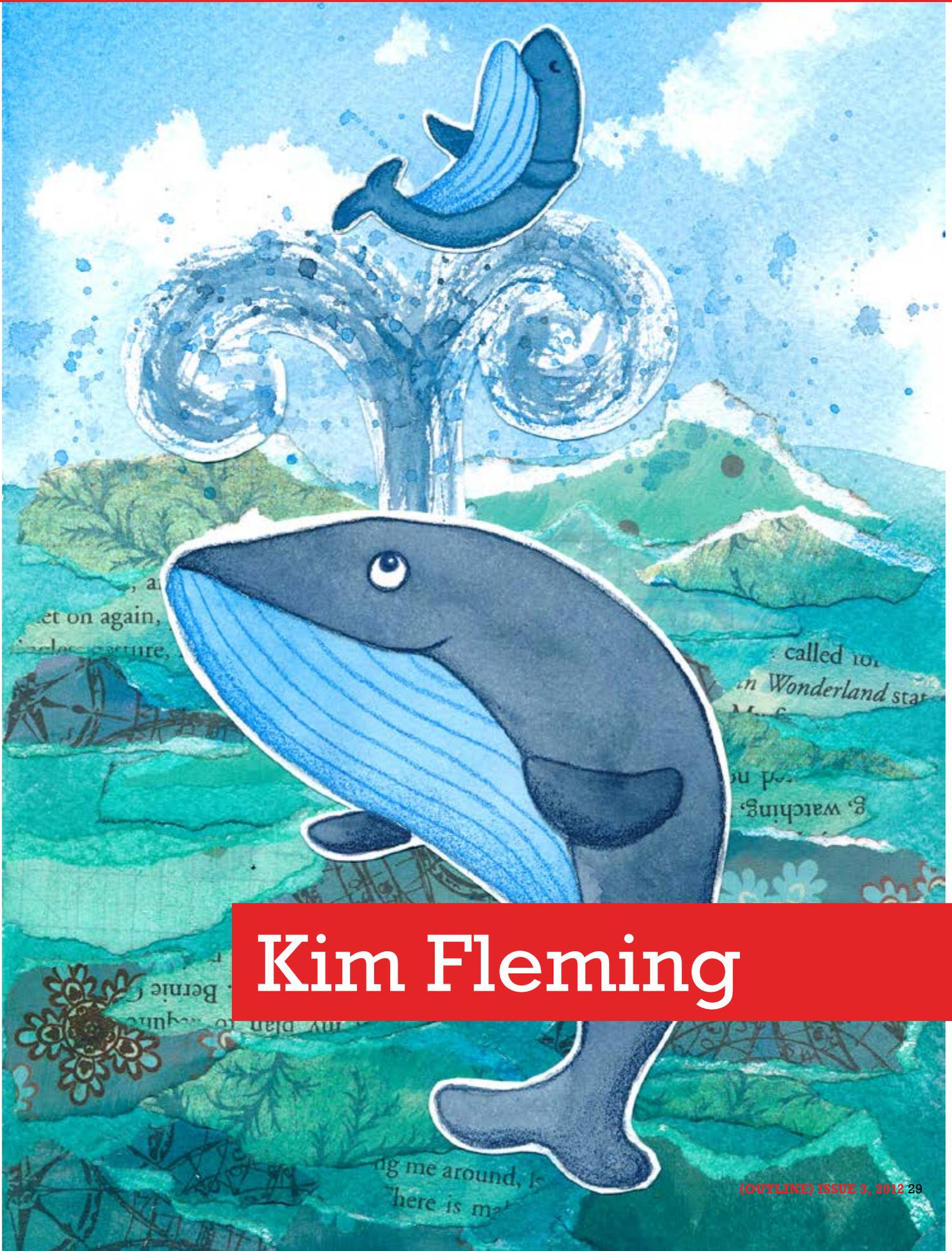
Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Karen: Do everything. Blogs, websites, Facebook, groups like Illustrators Australia. People have found me mainly through online media. Face to face promotion through markets and art exhibitions is very time consuming and costly. I've decided to focus on purely illustration exhibitions from now on.

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Karen: Advice. Keep at it if it's what you really want to do. Talk to loads of other illustrators, they are lovely people! ●





Kim Fleming

{PROFILE}

Kim Fleming

Kim Fleming's illustration style is whimsical and sweet, and usually involves children and/or animals. She often creates her work using big washes of watercolour, tiny details with pencils, and pattern/repetition with the collage. Kim has studied visual arts, including everything from oil painting to photography, since the age of six but discovered her passion for children's illustration after moving to Australia in her mid twenties.

Kim's first trade children's book was published by HarperCollins in 2010, since then she's worked with Allen & Unwin, Five Mile Press, and Bright Sky Press just to name a few!

Most recently Kim completed a project for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, an illustration for a wall frieze, which will be distributed to all schools, and childcare centres in Victoria. Kim's illustration will be featured alongside illustrators such as Ann James, Anne Spudvilas, Anna Pignataro, Andrew McLean, Mark Wilson, etc.

And on a side note, Kim also loves peanut butter and banana sandwiches, painting her toenails blue and her fingernails yellow, and has an impressive collection of polka-dot coats.

Outline: Tell us about your style

Kim: My style has developed over a number of years and I feel it is constantly evolving with each project I do. I think I get bored easily so I like trying new things with each illustration!

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Kim: I've never been a commercial artist, so children's illustration seems like the perfect mesh of doing something fun and whimsical, to a brief. Because my style is very 'cute' it is a good fit for children's illustration.

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Kim: Most of my sources are pretty standard such as the great art gone before me, and my fellow illustrators (read: blog browsing!) - but I also sometimes will create an illustration from a palette found in one of my collage papers, or be inspired by the many photos and memorabilia I have from my travels.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Kim: That is a difficult one because my audience is two-fold. The first and most important is of course the child, but the second is the adult who will buy my book and read it (hopefully over and over and over again!) so my





art has to be engaging to both people. I try to keep my art fairly simple and sweet so it is visually appealing, but I also love putting in little details that you may only see on the second or third reading, or things like a little animal who is not in the text but appears on each page for instance.

Outline: So you do think about the adult who is likely to be reading the book out loud?

Kim: Yes, though I find it is the text that really needs to take into account the adult who will be reading it. If the rhyme is off and difficult to read, or the ending is unsatisfying, it is probably the adult who will not choose that book to read again!

Outline: Who is your favourite children's illustrator, and why?

Kim: It is so hard to choose a favourite that I don't, because my favourite often changes. My CURRENT favourite is Jon J Muth. His watercolour technique is breathtaking and his composition and characters are very inspiring to me. He is technically incredible but also there is so much emotion and mood in his illustrations.

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for, and why?

Kim: My illustration style is very "cute" so the younger the better for me!

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Kim: Generally I will read the manuscript and jot down/sketch any ideas that spring forward, especially in that first reading. I often find those first ideas are the best and can be refined into something usable. Then I'll read it over and over and do some research. Sometimes I'll collect lots of reference images before I start drawing, other times I will find something that inspires me to get started right away. It just depends on the project and the subject matter.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Kim: I would love to illustrate a really quirky book, where the text is minimal so it lets the illustration fly free, with an editor who loves my work and gives me lots of creative license, that sells lots of copies so I don't have to worry about my next quirky book selling many copies at all! ;-)

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Kim: Toilets and what goes in them. Hmmmmmm!

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Kim: Definitely! I always pinch myself that people ask me to draw and paint for money. If you asked me as a child what I wanted to do when I grew up, that's what I would have said, so I feel like I am still that little girl!

{  **CLICK!** } **Kim Fleming**

Website www.kimflemingillustration.com

Blog <http://lil-kim.blogspot.com>

{PROFILE}

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Kim: I love trees. They are a symbol for so many things – strength, roots, family, home, growth, life, beauty, etc. Many of my illustrations involve trees or nature in some way.

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Kim: I love checking Drawn!, the Little Chimp Society and Illustration Age (the website formerly known as Escape from Illustration Island) for fun updates. I like www.colourlovers.com for colour palette ideas. I love Pamela Zagarenski (illustrator) and reference her style a lot. I also reference Judith Rossell's work too, her style and characters are wonderful, so warm.

Outline: What's next for you / what are you working on at the moment?

Kim: I am actually taking a little hiatus from book illustration at the moment - I have a young son, and book

projects are generally all consuming so I only really have time for one-off illustrations right now. But, I am working towards my first solo exhibition in 10 years, which will be held towards the end of next year. The artwork will still be in my signature children's illustration style.

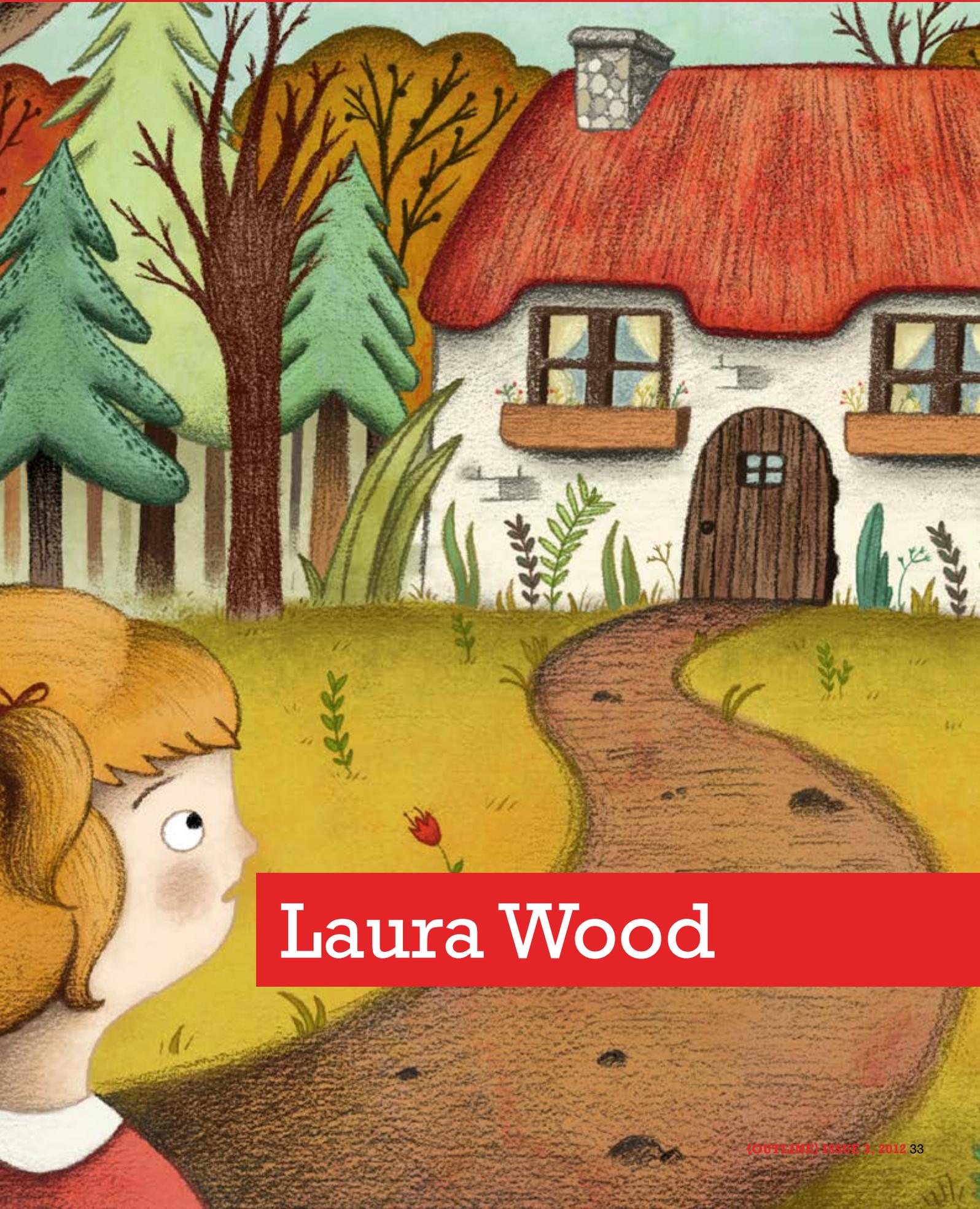
Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Kim: In publishing, I reckon the best way is to send out regular postcard mailers and also go to conferences and meet people face to face, of course with a kick-arse folio! And a web presence is a must.

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Kim: Get your kick-arse folio together and then get it out there! Make appointments with publishers and meet them face to face, they will appreciate it and remember you. Only put your best pieces in your folio and show that you can draw characters consistently. But most of all make sure your folio represents who you are and what you want to say. ●





Laura Wood

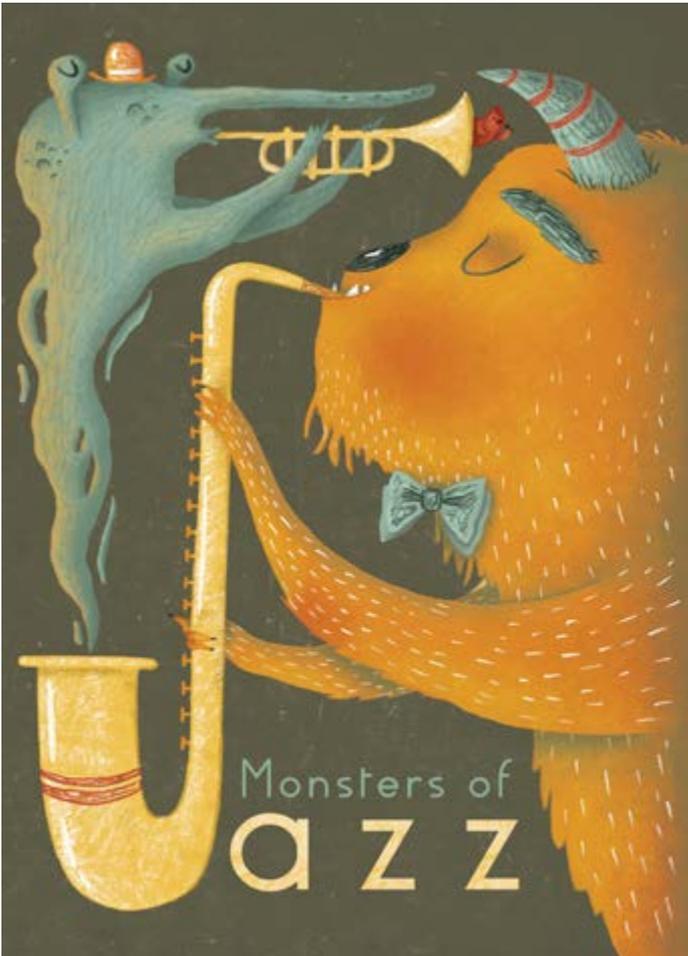
{PROFILE}

Laura Wood

Laura Wood was born and raised in Italy and after completing a Bachelor of Cinema and Multimedia, moved to Australia in search of new experiences. Once in Australia, she completed a diploma of Illustration and hasn't stopped drawing ever since.

Laura is currently working on her first children's book for Ladybird Books, and will soon be starting a book for Parragon in the UK (a classic story which will be part of a treasury book).

And here's something you probably didn't know about Laura...before coming to Australia she had never had pancakes, smoothies or mango. But now she's addicted to all three!



Outline: Describe your illustration style:

Laura: I believe my illustrations have a sunny style, earthy and pastel tones and a strong sense of narrative. I like to use textured lines to give a traditional feeling to my digital images. Several people told me I have an "European" style. I'm still not sure what that means!

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Laura: I like the whole world of illustration but I particularly like to do children's illustration because I feel it allows me to play with colours and characters creating the perfect world I would like to live in: sunny, safe and fun.

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Laura: I draw inspiration from absolutely everything: I consider life to be a constant flow of ideas and energy.

How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

At work, as in life, I give a lot of importance to my first, raw instincts. They're usually the ones that lead me in the right direction even before the real thinking process starts.

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

Laura: I actually try not to. The children's illustrations I prefer are the ones that don't try to wink at adults or parents but just focus on the child. I think they're the most honest and therefore successful.

{  **CLICK!** } **Laura Wood**

Website www.laurawoodillustration.com

Blog <http://laurawoodillustration.blogspot.com.au>

Society6 <http://society6.com/LauraWood>



Outline: Who is your favourite children's illustrator, and why?

Laura: My favourite illustrator of all times is definitely Quentin Blake. This is because, other than being awesome, I grew up reading Roald Dahl's books filled with Blake's fun illustrations. I've always loved his casual and playful touch.

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Laura: When I begin a new project, I always research a lot before even starting sketching. This way, I collect ideas and visual references that usually become essential to trigger the right idea.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Laura: My dream project would involve a children book series, my favourite writer, an awesome art director and lots of complementary ice cream! :)

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Laura: Absolutely! When I illustrate, I always try and remember what I use to like when I was a child and more often than not I find out I still like those things!

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Laura: I tend to draw little girls more than boys - I just can't resist cute hairstyles and girly clothes!

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Laura: I'd like to mention the blog of Canadian illustrator [Heather Castles](#). It has a section called Tips for Illustrators full with tons of tips, FAQs, experiences and how-to information for children's illustrators. It was very useful for me to learn some of the basics.

Outline: What's next for you?

Laura: At the moment, amongst other things, I'm working on my first picture book that will be soon digitally published for iPad and iPhone. I'm working on this collaborative project together with Blue Quoll Digital, a digital publishing house located in Brisbane. They create children's e-books inspired to classic stories and fairytales, adding a new twist in the plot and giving a completely modern approach to the classics. The story I'm working on is inspired to the classic tale of Goldilocks.

{PROFILE}

Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Laura: So far the best way to promote my work for me has been sending promos through mail and email. This is very fast and direct and a well-thought promo is always effective.

But I think an even more valuable way (even if a bit slower) is to go to events, seminars, openings and talk to people about your work and what you do. It's always surprising how many opportunities open up this way in the long run!

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Laura: For me one of the best things so far was to be found by my agent, Good Illustration Agency. Through them, I was approached by big publishing houses such as Penguin and Parragon at the very beginning of my career.

My experience with them so far has been very positive and productive so I would recommend illustrators who wants to move towards children's illustration to try and find one, especially someone who's starting out and doesn't know the market. **o**





Marjory Gardner



{PROFILE}

Marjory Gardner

Outline: How would you describe your style?

Marjory: I'd describe my style as happy, friendly, rainbow-colourful and full of detail. When some describe my style as 'cute' I cringe... but maybe I should just accept it!

Outline: How did you get your start in children's illustration?

Marjory: I always loved drawing as a child, but never thought of illustration as a career until Mr Scales, my year 12 art teacher at Blackburn High School suggested I do a graphic design course. I studied for three years at RMIT then worked there in the media department for a further three years.

After that I worked at a small design studio, then with Roland Harvey's studio, then I decided to go freelance as a children's book illustrator. To provide some steady income in those early days I worked part time in the PR department of the Red Cross Blood Bank, doing everything from posters and newspaper ads, to handing out leaflets in the Moomba parade!

Most of my early work was for educational publishers, but in the last few years I've done far more trade books. These have been for Brimax, Five Mile Press, and Windy Hollow Books. When I first approached trade publishers a lot of them said my work was 'too educational'. Now some of

them say my work is 'too mass market'. I'm trying to find a publisher that thinks I'm just right!

Outline: Where do you get your inspiration from?

Marjory: Where do I get my inspiration from? The story always come first. Because I worked so long for educational publishers the drawings always had to be clear to get the message across. But there is still always scope to add extra details or tell a second story in the illustrations — a dog looking for his ball that appears in every pic, butterflies, frogs and spiders in a garden scene, framed family pictures on the walls of a bedroom, or patterns on clothes, doona covers, curtains and carpets. All these things keep me entertained while I draw, and hopefully also are fun for children (and adults reading with them) to spot or look out for.

I love visiting schools and libraries to give talks and workshops, and I know that the children love those extra details, so I keep putting them in.

I've had some great trips to do workshops interstate, visited small country schools and remote indigenous communities, as well as city schools and gifted programs. I've also recently started talking to art teachers as part of their PD, and spoken to year 12 Visual Communications students too. I've especially enjoyed those; the students are really interested in art as a career, and ask insightful questions.



{CLICK!} Marjory Gardner

Website www.marjorygardner.com



Outline: Do you have a favourite age group to illustrate for?

Marjory: My favourite age group to draw for is three to five year olds. They love hidden surprises, bright colours, crazy patterns and totally accept animals doing funny things or wearing striped trousers and spotted hats. I struggle drawing for anyone older than 10!

Outline: What would your dream commission or project look like?

Marjory: My dream job would be a picture book commission (either a story given to me, or, my own story) working with an editor who gives me the freedom and encouragement to stretch myself, but also the guidance and insight to make my drawings better. I've worked with some wonderful editors and they make a huge difference. I often think they should get front-page credit too!

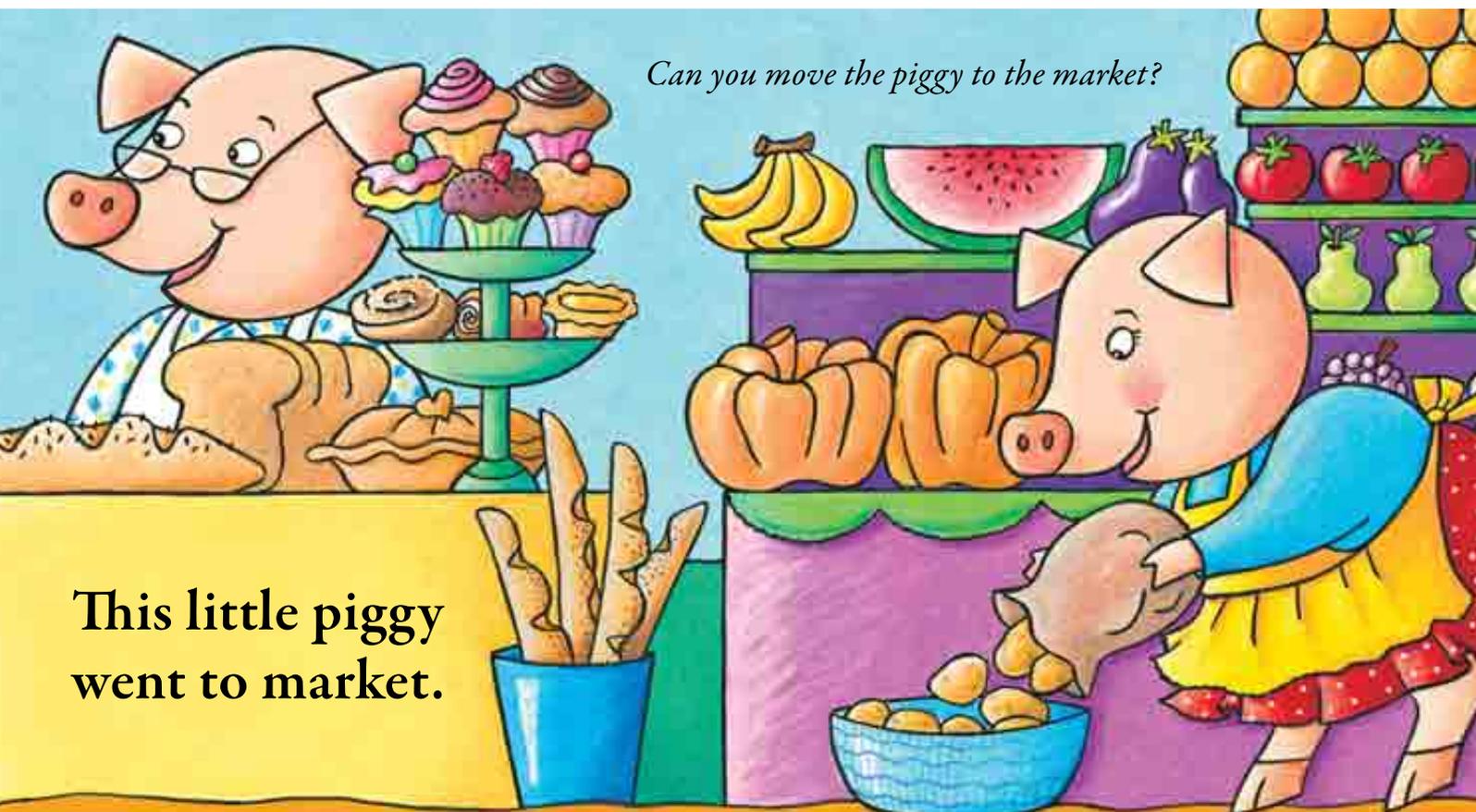
A long deadline would be nice too, though not too long. I do tend to work better (don't we all?) under pressure!

Outline: How do you prepare for a new project?

Marjory: When I'm given a new commission I jump straight in. It consumes me, whether walking the dogs, cooking dinner, or lying in bed when I can't sleep. The ideas come from who knows where, but I spend a lot of

time thinking before I even pick up a pencil. Then, no matter how bad, messy or inappropriate the first roughs are...at least they are a starting point. I draw my roughs in blue pencil or fine-liner, on tracing paper. I trace and re-trace, and photocopy, cut and paste till I'm happy. Haven't mastered Photoshop yet but I want to do a course. Does anyone know of a good short course in Melbourne specifically for illustrators? I did a night course in Illustrator at a TAFE two years ago and was overwhelmed, but I'm ready again, and I think Photoshop would be more appropriate for me. I do all my finished art by hand, with texta, colour pencil, and brush and ink. Sometimes I work in collage.

Outline: Are there any repeating themes or characters that you find yourself going back to?



Can you move the piggy to the market?

**This little piggy
went to market.**



Marjory: Repeating themes are the animals I draw, stripy marmalade cats, jack russell dogs (I have two!), grouchy lions, colourful birds with beautiful big beaks, and plenty of bees and butterflies.

Outline: What would you say is the best way to promote yourself as an illustrator?

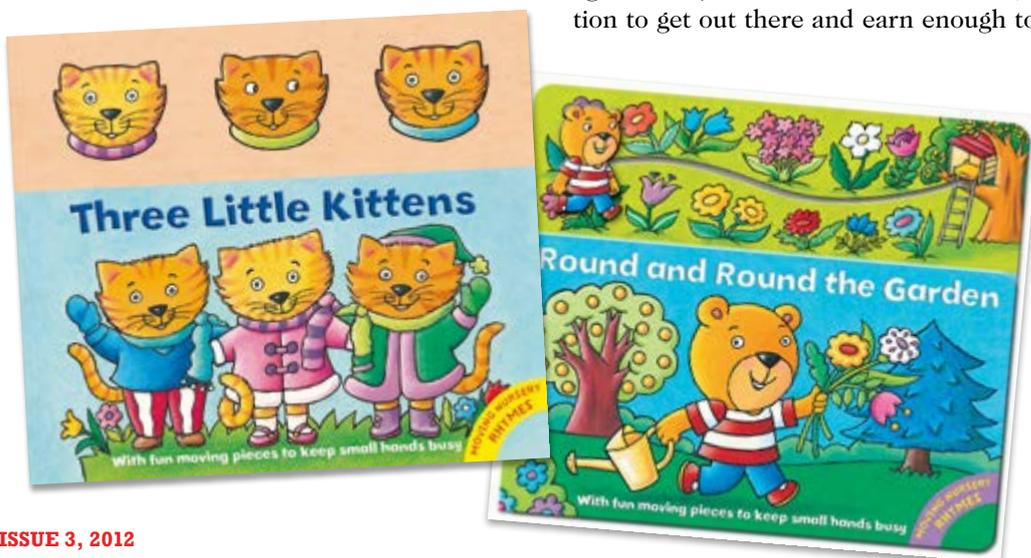
Marjory: Promotion is something I've had to learn to do. Sitting by the phone never makes it ring, but sending out those postcards, Christmas cards (of my own design), and keeping in touch does. I'm always on alert for any new publishers that come on the scene, or editors who move to a new publishing house. Being 'out there' takes a huge amount of time and energy and sometimes it is hard to stay motivated. That's when it's good to have the network of other illustrator friends. In October I went to London for three weeks. For the weeks leading up to my trip I googled British publishers, contacting them by email, then following up with posted samples and then finally, phone calls late at night here, to try to secure appointments. All that work got me two appointments in London, one of which led on to an appointment with an agent. I also flew for the day to the Frankfurt Book Fair. I spent eight hours trawling the English speaking publisher hall with my folio, handing out my promotional fliers and business cards, and showing my folio. Wonderfully, I landed a commission on the spot from one British publisher. Although this has sadly now fallen through as the illustrator I was to replace on a series decided at the last minute to continue, I am hopeful that as they liked me enough to commission me, they'll keep me in mind for a future job.

There are definitely some downsides to freelancing - periods of no work (so no pay!) cash flow problems, and sometimes feeling a bit isolated, but I wouldn't swop it for the world. I've learned to become my own publicist, and regularly send out postcards and reminders to editors, and I attend industry conferences and get together as much as I can. I belong to Illustrators Australia, SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators), ASA (Australian Society of Authors) and CBCA (Children's Book Council of Australia), all of which offer great support and friendship. It's also important to keep your website up to date!

I'm also registered with the Creative Net, Booked Out and Speakers Ink agencies, but also take bookings directly through my website.

Outline: What advice would you give to people wanting to get into children's illustration?

Marjory: I guess my advice to illustrators looking to move into children's illustration is go for it! Being talented and young at heart and having a quirky imagination obviously helps, but if you want to freelance, you have to seriously self-promote, always, always meet deadlines, never argue about money after you've agreed on the fee, and never be afraid to say what you think. After all, editors are paying you to come up with your own ideas, not just slavishly follow a brief. I also encourage holidays! There's nothing like a break (especially overseas) to keep you fresh, motivated, open to new cultures, cuisine, landscapes, dress (all of which will help your drawings) and to make you aware of overseas trends. And then when you come home again with your credit card to the max, there's the motivation to get out there and earn enough to jet off again! ●





Marsha Wajer

Marsha Wajer

Marsha Wajer is a freelance illustrator and digital painter with a penchant for children's books, character design, and editorial illustration. Some of Marsha's work includes *The Dove and the Ant*, *How Zebra Got His Stripes*, *Why Giraffe has a Long Neck*, and *The Coyote and the Turtle* (all by Era Publications).

Outline: Describe your illustration style:

Marsha: Colour and fun driven. I love rich, lavish, full bodied colours and characters that have to make me smile before they are 'allowed out' to a client.

I feel like I'm still exploring my style and so I'm looking forward to it growing with me.

Outline: Tell us a little about where you create.

Marsha: I live with my man, two cats - Orlando (named after the Marmalade cat series) and Anushka (Russian Blue), two sheep, Shauna and Shirley Baaasey in a little log cabin, snug in the Adelaide hills with smoke curling up from the chimney in the winter...bliss!

Outline: Have you always been interested in children's illustration?

Marsha: No not at all. I come from a science background but I've always been into art and making things (small ceramic figures, mosaics, fabric printing).

Only in recent times have I taught myself how to use a Wacom and explore digital art. Two years ago I picked up a pencil and made myself sketch on paper, and after some frustration (the eraser doesn't substitute for Undo!) I now love it.

I've just come back from 3 months in Los Angeles at the Concept Design Academy, studying illustration. This was the most amazing experience, being around and being taught by some of the most accomplished people! I now have an even greater drive to push myself to do better with each project.

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Marsha: Fun and more fun. Life's too serious. I prefer to 'imagine six impossible things before breakfast' and create something magical...and animals...I love doing animals characters

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

I try to focus on the emotion and the eyes of the characters to tell the story.

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

Marsha: Yes. I've only illustrated kid's readers at the moment so the images have to be fairly clear and match the text closely. Ideally I would want to put in more detail, hidden things, quirky framed pictures of cows, or little creatures looking out from under a bed, so that both adult and child have fun discovering things and can share that experience. My nephew and I found that the most fun when he was small.



{CLICK!} Marsha Wajer

Website www.marshawajer.com

Outline: Who is your favourite children's illustrator?

Marsha: Sven Nordqvist – He is a Swedish illustrator and author who created the Fundus series about an old man and a talking cat. I love it because it is so playful and unexpected. It's alive with personalities and improbable ideas like scissor birds and flute trees. And his style is simple line with watercolour but every bit of it is spot on in telling the story.

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Marsha: Well I usually make quite a mess. I surround myself with piles of books and photocopies and image references. And then I sit and sketch whatever comes to mind and see where it takes me. Housework gets ignored and cats have to vie for attention.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Marsha: As I mentioned – to do a full length picture book, perhaps of a new world with imaginary creatures. At the moment I have a hankering to draw dragons and fish and rubber ducks.

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Marsha: A Tanuki (Japanese racoon dog) turning into a Japanese kettle which then sprouts a head, legs and tail and dances for money!

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Marsha: No not in client driven work. In my personal work there seem to be some llama, fish, and pineapples repeating though.

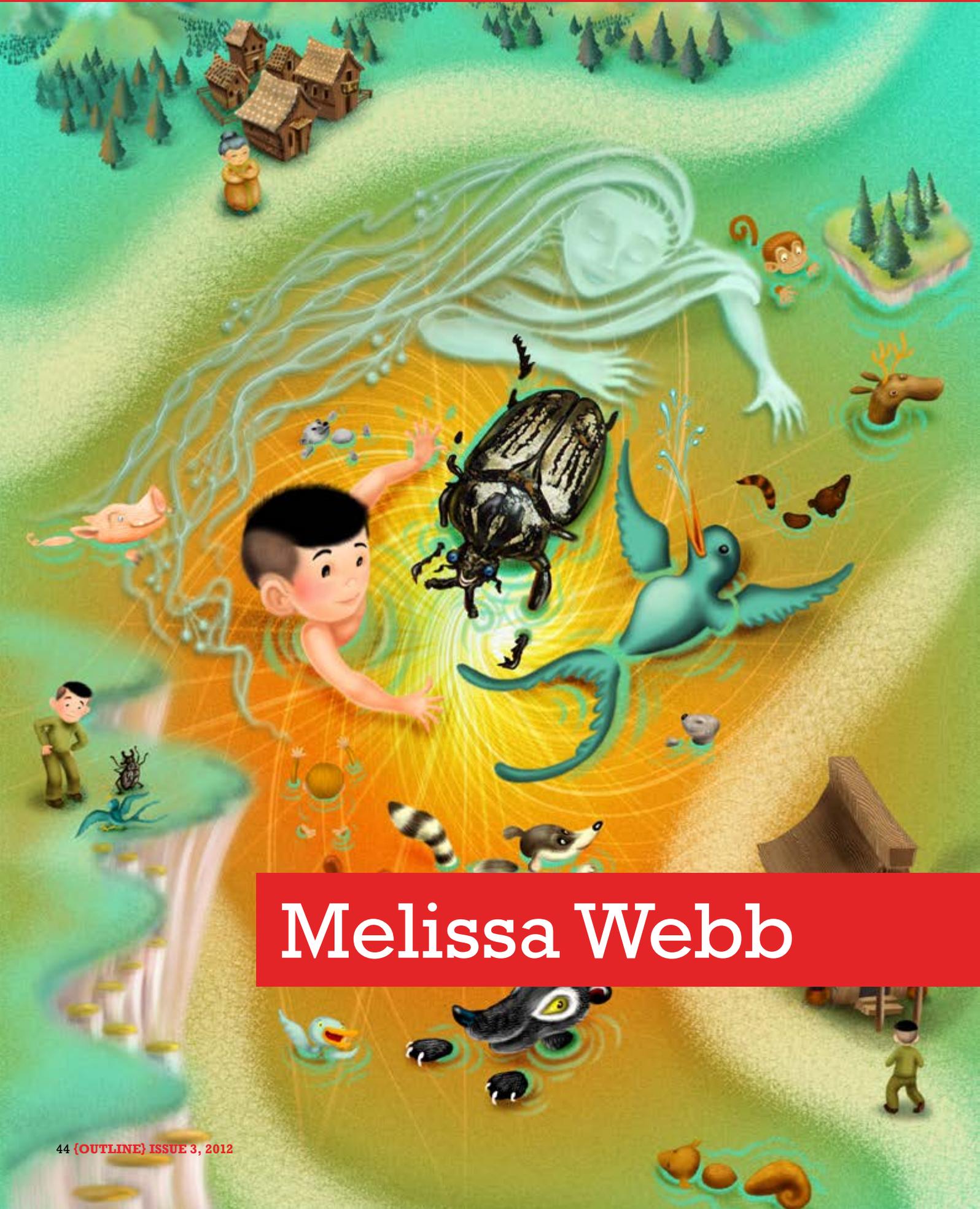
Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Marsha: So many. Some include: Sven Nordqvist , Shane De Vries, Chris Ayers, Rebecca Dautremer, Bobby Chui, Graeme Base, Aardman, Tim Burton, Nicoletta Ceccoli, Don Seegmiller, and ShaunTan....

Outline: What's next for you / what are you working on at the moment?

Marsha: The Magic Kettle (Era Publications) - a reader based on a traditional Japanese tale. A poor tinker saves a trapped Tanuki (raccoon dog). To thank him the Tanuki turns into a kettle and sprouts arms, legs, head in order to dance for money. This makes the tinker wealthy and so the Tanuki repays him. ●





Melissa Webb

Melissa Webb

Melissa Web has worked for a wide range of clients, with published illustrations in hundreds of books. Recently she completed a fish illustration project for Birdseye as part of a packaging revamp, so next time your in the frozen section of your local supermarket be sure to take a look!

Outline: Describe your illustration style:

Melissa: I seem to have a variety of styles that have evolved through the years. I find the medium influences the style and initially I was using Rotring pens producing very tight fiddly illustrations and fury when the pens blocked up, then I spent many years being fumigated using Pantone and Yoken markers. Things became fuzzier then. After that I used brushes and inks and developed a more flowing open style. These days I use Photoshop on a Mac and it seems anything is possible.

Outline: How did you get started in children's illustration?

Melissa: I have been drawing since I was little and once I left school I had an antique shop almost bereft of customers in Collingwood and I had plenty of time to draw. My friend Brett Colquhoun was an illustrator and he took me to Penguin with a folio and I started from there.

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Melissa: I have always enjoyed illustrating for children, I can remember how evocative and interesting I found illustrations in books when I was a child.

Outline: Tell us a little about where you work.

Melissa: I work surrounded by a menagerie of unreasonably demanding pets and possibly too many caravans. I only have two chooks now who are becoming geriatric and have lost interest in laying eggs. They like poohing though. I have an Italian greyhound called Ruby, a toy poodle called Pearl (ageing poodles aren't pretty) two tabbies called Minky and Ringo and a mutant Devon Rex/ Siamese cat who looks like most of her fur has been singed and has fallen out. Through nature not me. I do admit to collecting vintage caravans but seeing as I only have three, it doesn't seem unreasonable. So far.

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Melissa: I think my inspiration springs from the desire to connect and create something engaging. I still have some of my childhood books that kept me particularly entranced. These were books published in the late '50s early '60s by W. H. Allen London, classics like Sleeping Beauty, Hans Anderson, even Shakespeare. These were illustrated by mysterious people called Bevenuti, Maraja and Nardini and they are wonderfully exotic and beautiful with exciting lighting and ugliness too. I think I want to share some of that feeling.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Melissa: Apart from the way it looks it would be character and humour.

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

Melissa: Generally it is the wise committee of grown up publishers I need to think about in a lot of the work I do but I do want to entertain the adults as well.

Outline: Who is your favorite children's illustrator, and why?

Melissa: Apart from the marvelous mystery people who illustrated for W.H.Allen I was delighted to find books by



{CLICK!} Melissa Webb

Website <http://noisypics.com>

Blog <http://starkitecture.blogspot.com.au>

{PROFILE}



John Scieszka and Lane Smith while my boys were little. I particularly like *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* first published in 1993. I thought Lane Smith's illustrations were thrilling.

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for, and why?

Melissa: I like to illustrate for really young kids, I find the books I do for older kids have to be so much more informative and factual rather than fun and simply engaging.

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

I usually research like mad on Google then start providing roughs until I hit the nail on the head.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Melissa: I hope one day to produce a book that is uncensored, and I don't mean rude bits. Nearly all my work for publishers has involved a fair bit of tailoring and toning things down to suit others requirements. Sadly my cat's look too mental, my smiles too big and occasionally my humour is beyond the pale.

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Melissa: Recently I have been doing quite a bit of doctoring of other peoples illustrations in older books that are being re-marketed for different countries and have some special requirements to meet particular standards. My favourite amongst these has been handicapping various characters to meet disability quotas. So not only do I get to emulate another's style, I amputate arms and legs, I add calipers and guide dogs, blinding and maiming without a care and I get paid to do so. Happy days.

I spend my days riding Bucky,

chasing varmints, near and far



Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Melissa: More like tired and grumpy until I actually get to experience the children's interactions with the books. There is a lot of deadlines and compromises at the coalface.

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Melissa: I found a gorgeous artist a while ago, I don't go looking much. [Eyvind Earl](#) who was a Disney legend for doing wonderful background and fabulous stylised perspective.

You also gotta love [Mary Blair](#) who was another Disney artist. Also love Golden books for sure.

Outline: What's next for you / what are you working on at the moment?

Melissa: Right now I am tailoring images to be acceptable for the Middle Eastern market and drawing rugby playing dogs.

Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Melissa: A website is great, Illustrators Australia is great and I would advise the young folk to show off what they love doing just incase someone will pay them to do it.

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Melissa: If they are working in the educational market like I have a lot, be prepared to be versatile and patient and only revise things 4 times before you get huffy and keep a sense of fun to share with the kids. If it is picture books, be a breath of fresh air. **👍**





Nadia Turner

Nadia Turner

Nadia Turner's illustrations have an otherworldliness quality to them, a beautiful combination of characters and situations that draw you in. After finishing a Diploma of Illustration at NMIT, Nadia participated in the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) to help kick-start her freelance illustration business. Her first children's book was a non-fiction piece about spiders!

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Nadia: There's something super magical about illustrating for children...that moment when a kid sees your work and their eyes light up is just the BEST feeling! Plus nothing beats holding a finished book in your hands after months of work!

Outline: Tell us about some of your work.

Nadia: Well, I'm still really only at the beginning of it all so my client list isn't huge!

I've done a lot of work for Brolly Books, I also had a great time doing storyboarding for an amazing Indian project with William May (among many other things, he was the director of "Walking with Dinosaurs – the Live Experience" – which was the big stage show with the huge animatronic dinosaurs) Sadly William passed away a few years ago so no doubt a lot of his amazing projects would have been left unfinished...including this particular one based in India. Since then, lots of little projects, including a few CD covers and the like. And I've loved working with Georgie from Mouse Ink (www.mouseink.com.au) – a business that specializes in inspiring kids to be creative – we've got a book coming out with Brolly Books in a couple of months. Oh and recently I've been doing instrument commissions – painting on harps in particular so that's been a huge amount of fun!

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

I'm inspired by myth and story, exotic patterns and textiles, old photos of far off lands.... I love creating magical little worlds with intriguing characters and strange little buildings and wagons

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Nadia: Eeep, that's a tough one...I just go with my instincts and hope it works, lol!

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

Nadia: I really hope I put in enough detail and interest so the book isn't completely boring for the adult! And that the images I choose add to the text rather than just illustrate it...it's all a work in progress though, you get better with each project you do and learn a hell of a lot from the mistakes made in the previous ones!

Outline: Who is your favourite children's illustrator?

Nadia: Well, I just discovered, as of today, a new one – Levi Pinfold – how beautiful is Black Dog?! But my all time favourites would be Peter Sis (his book Tibet – through the red box, I first found at my high school library



{PROFILE}

and was probably what made me want to be illustrator). Also the awesome James Gurney and of course, Shaun Tan. They are all books that you can get lost in and just fall into the magic and adventure of other worlds.

Outline: Do you have a favourite age group to illustrate for, and why?

Nadia: Well, I've mostly done books for under six year olds, but I would love to do some more complex books for older readers, something that would have a lot of detail in the story and the illustrations. They are the sort of books that I'm drawn towards personally so I figure that that's what I'll be trying to emulate when I end up writing and illustrating some of my own.

Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

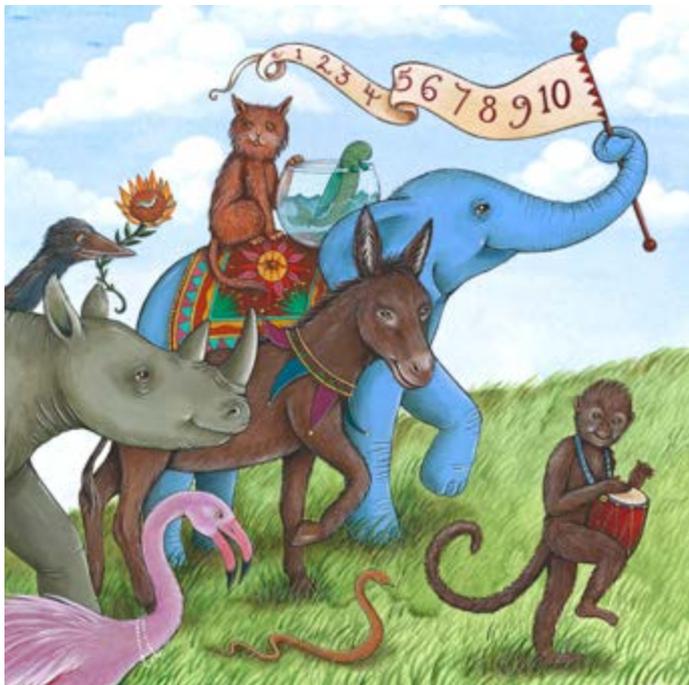
Nadia: Ummm well, first I clean my studio! Can't start something new in a mess, hehe! And then it usually involves some sort of research so a lot of hunting online for reference images etc and then I finally get to the roughs and final art...it always seems like the final art takes so much less time than the rest..and that just doesn't seem right!

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Nadia: I have to admit, I'd love to illustrate a book by Isobelle Carmody. I've loved her work ever since I was a kid so that would be a dream for sure. Ah well, maybe one day, fingers crossed!

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Nadia: Weirdest thing? A hippo on a roof? Or maybe the giant, house-sized walking puppets and their animatronic golden elephant friend...



Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Nadia: I would definitely say yes to that! I think children's illustrators are all big kids at heart! We're all just trying to hang on desperately to the magic of childhood, or at least I know I am that's for sure! And I love the fact that I can hang out in the kids section of the bookstore and call it research!

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

Nadia: Well, there definitely seems to be a theme of journeying in a lot of my work lately, characters who are travelling somewhere in strange modes of transport...I think my subconscious is saying I need a holiday...

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Nadia: I seem to spend a lot of time online lately, probably too much time! Reading blogs especially.

My favourites art/writing focused ones at the moment would have to be:

The Hermitage - <http://intothehermitage.blogspot.com.au>

The Drawing Board - <http://windling.typepad.com/blog>

The Book Sniffer - <http://booksniffingpug.blogspot.com.au>

Jackie Morris - <http://www.jackiemorris.co.uk/blog>

Katherine Langrish - <http://steelthistles.blogspot.com.au>

Outline: What's next for you / what are you working on at the moment?

Nadia: It's been a pretty quiet 2012 for me, which has actually been nice because I've been able to focus more on my personal work and be involved in a few exhibitions and such. But I'm itching to start doing some more book work

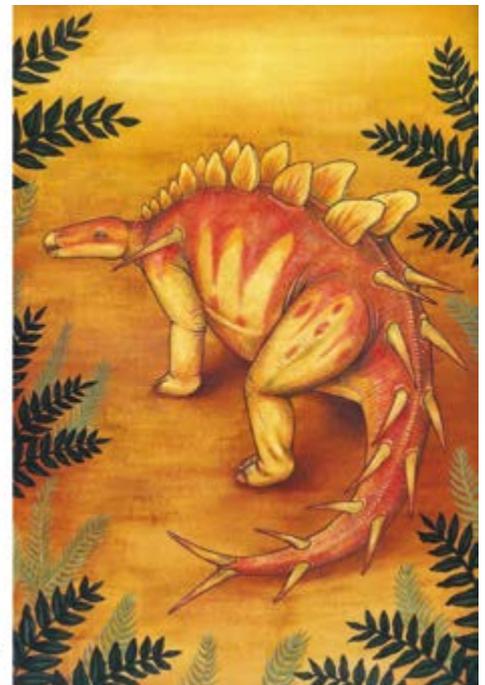


is for
Kentrosaurus

I am cousin
of Stegosaurus,
We both had
spikes and plates
along our backs —
which made it hard
to ignore us!

Say 'Kentrosaurus':
KEN-troh-SAWR-us

Kk





so at the moment I'm working on a story for a book that's going to be based on some work from an exhibition I had early in the year- Journey to inaccessible places. It's the first time I've tried this and the story needs a LOT of work, but I'm getting there!

Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Nadia: Having a good online presence is pretty much a must these days, especially when you're just starting out. But you need to put the effort in, and I need to take my own advice with this, otherwise you won't get much out of it. It's all about how you promote yourself these days!

Looking back though, I think that a lot of my clients found me through the IA website, so being a part of this sort of website is definitely a good thing.

I'd be wary about illustration sites that you need to pay to be on though, most of them are based in the US and there's just so much competition that there's no guarantee your work will be seen among the many. But that's just my experience, just because they haven't worked for me doesn't mean they won't work for someone else, just gotta do your research!

I've also found that in this world of the online, doing physical mail outs can sometimes work too - when I first started looking for publishers I made up these little handmade booklets with images of my work and sent them

off. I received good responses from all of those I sent them too and the following year got my first book because of them - they'd seen it, and kept it and thought of me when the right text came up. So it does work, eventually at least!

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Nadia: Well, first have a good kid friendly portfolio...and when you get some work be prepared for a lot of blood, sweat and tears for not a huge amount of financial reward, ha! There are probably a lot of better paid illustration jobs out there but there is something super special about having that finished product in your hands, so for me it's worth it. The industry's changing though I think, the GFC changed things a lot and the effects are still trickling down, not to mention all the new online apps and technology. It's probably much harder to get things published than before. So it will be really interesting to see what happens in the book world in the next few years. **O**

{CLICK!} Nadia Turner

Website www.waywardharper.com

Blog www.waywardharper.blogspot.com

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Nadia-Turner-Art/96373581294>

{PROFILE}



Nathaniel Eckstrom

Nathaniel Eckstrom

Outline: Describe your illustration style.

Nathaniel: It has an old-fashioned story book feel to it.

Outline: How did you get started in children's illustration?

Nathaniel: I began illustrating professionally around 2007. I have a background in graphic design so I was always incorporating illustration into everything I was working on. Even if it didn't fit! I first started illustrating for trade magazines so it wasn't exactly a children's audience.

Outline: Tell us a little about some of the projects you've worked on.

Nathaniel: I enjoyed working on the cd artwork last year for The Idea of North. I also worked on a small book titled Faber the Dragon.

I've just finished work on a children's book The Giant Bowl of Chocolate written by Marion Lucy released next year through Jojo Publishing. It's about a girl who is bored of her day to day routine and sets out to find something a little different.

I've also recently finished some packaging illustration for Cadbury and work for King Island.

Outline: Why are you drawn to children's illustration in particular?

Nathaniel: I love the art of storytelling and the freedom and expression it allows. I think there's so much scope in terms of style with children's books.

I enjoy creating fictitious scenery and characters. Nothing beats picking up a good old fashion picture book. I just think it's a beautiful keepsake.

Outline: Where do you draw inspiration from?

Nathaniel: Generally, it's an idea I've thought up. I'll use reference as well if I need to. Characters or their mannerisms sometimes form from people I've seen or know.

Outline: How do you decide what will best capture the attention and imagination of your audience?

Nathaniel: It depends on the brief. Sometimes you have a clear direction from an art director and other times it's left up to you. I try to give my pictures more of an insight into the story and illustrate what I like.

{CLICK!} Nathaniel Eckstrom

Website www.nathanieleckstrom.com

Outline: When illustrating children's books do you give thought to the grown-ups who are likely to also be reading them?

Nathaniel: I do and sometimes add extra background reference. I think it's easier when you've written the story yourself. In regards to what needs to be written and what's illustrated. For the moment I've only illustrated other authors works. Kids generally pick up on everything anyway.

Outline: Who is your favorite children's illustrator?

Nathaniel: Without a doubt, at the moment Oliver Jeffers. I have most of his books. His stories are sentimental and he illustrates to compliment his words.

Outline: Do you have a favorite age group to illustrate for?

Nathaniel: I've never been asked that or thought about it. People from all ages seem to enjoy my pictures. And I enjoy creating pictures for everyone.



{PROFILE}



Outline: How do you prepare for a new commission or project?

Nathaniel: I'll clean my desk space before I start. And then work on roughs. That's the most important part of the design process for me.

Outline: What would your dream project be?

Nathaniel: More children's books.

Outline: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to illustrate?

Nathaniel: A naked man on a couch watching television. The campaign never ran! Say no more.

Outline: Does illustrating for children keep you feeling young at heart?

Nathaniel: It does. I enjoy tapping into the playful side of things. Life can be too serious without it.

Outline: Do you have a go-to character or repeating theme in your work?

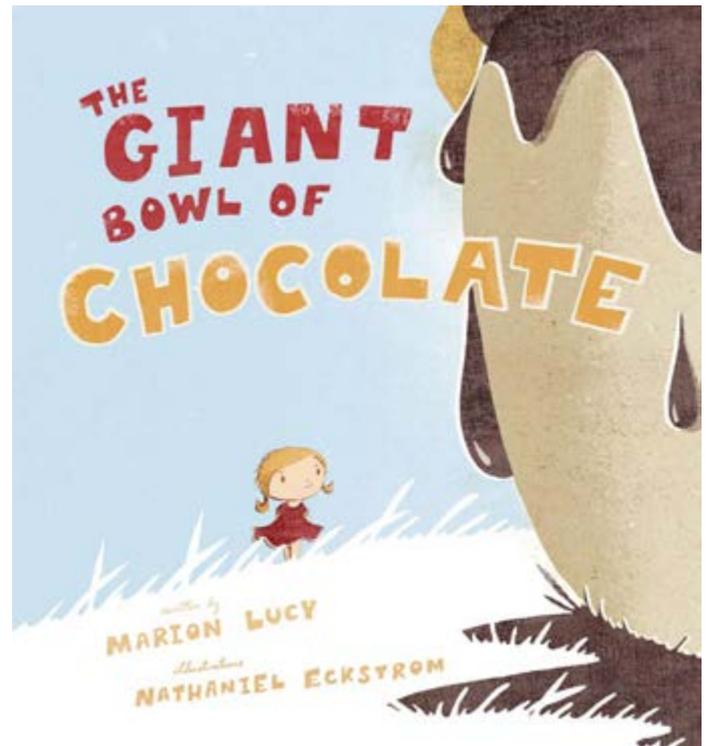
Nathaniel: I'm told I have a repeating melancholy theme which has led to more work based around that.

Outline: Do you have any go-to magazines, online resources, authors, or illustrators you'd like to share with us?

Nathaniel: I haven't bought a magazine in a long time. I used to buy them all the time. DPI, Juxtapoz, High Fructose all have great articles.

Outline: What's next for you / what are you working on at the moment?

Nathaniel: I'm working on illustrating a second children's book written by Spider Lee called The Hair Ball. A few more picture books next year. I've also been working on a new campaign for Nestlé.



Outline: In your opinion, what is the best way to promote yourself and get your work out there?

Nathaniel: Free online portfolio sites like Behance are great. Illustrator's Australia. My agent, The Drawing Book Studios, have been fantastic.

Outline: What advice would you give illustrators looking to move into children's illustration specifically?

Nathaniel: I would suggest start building a portfolio of child related themes. Contact publishers or anyone involved. Keep drawing and working on things that excite and motivate you. ●

