Discoveries

Quite often for me, characters pop in out of the blue. They appear in a sketch book or on my iPad when I’m doodling. Most of them are saved in a ‘miscellaneous’ file. But some of them tug at my imagination until I pay attention; it’s as if they are already characters in an unknown story they want me to discover.

After consciously creating expressive, relational characters to fit specific stories, it’s a treat to have these unexpected characters arrive effortlessly. Through simple, raw line-work, dynamic gestures, odd proportions, quirky expressions and physical attitudes, each one brings a story that I can choose to follow - or not.

Working as an artist in schools for decades, I learned how malleable and funny story-worlds can be, and how impactful they are in helping to stimulate original thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, empathy, and expressiveness. I learned this from children - many, many times.

Our stories always began with characters - like Mina’s crow, below. Through surface design, she created a story (within our greater group story) that was meaningful to her. If you and I were to translate her design, each of us would tell a different story. And that’s the point. We are unique, and the child in you is a unique, wonder-full storyteller.

As you continue to work on commissions, explore new media, and refine your illustration style(s), I encourage you to follow your curiosity when those quirky invitations from your imagination pop up. Who knows where you’ll go?

2nd Grade Illustrator & Storyteller, 2006

Tips from the archive:

2020 SCBWI National Conference Speaker:

Always ask: “Who am I writing this story for?”

“Picture books capture those tiny moments that fill our hearts. Dive into your inner child, search for those ‘sparkle moments’.”

Robin Chilstrom
Oregon Illustrator
February 2023 Featured Oregon Illustrators

Alexis Eastburn
Lezlee Ware

Oregon SCBWI Featured Illustrators

Visit the feature page to learn about Aubrey and Lezlee, view samples of their artwork, and link to their websites and portfolios! (click below)

Artwork: Chamisa Kellogg

Would you like to be featured?

To be considered, you must have an SCBWI Illustrator profile. About those profiles: we want your work to be seen - available to editors, agents and other folks, so we've made it easier to find your profile through the Oregon Illustrator Gallery.

If you haven’t set up a profile, HERE’S HOW!

To find out more or apply, contact Robin: Oregon-ic@SCBWI.org

SCBWI Opportunities - February 2023

Awards and Grants

Click the button below to visit the Awards and Grants application Page. Here’s what’s coming up in the near future:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Launch Award</td>
<td>Work in Progress Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opens February 1</td>
<td>Opens March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closes February 28</td>
<td>Closes March 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announced April 15</td>
<td>Announced September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Kite Awards</td>
<td>Don Freeman Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details coming soon.</td>
<td>Opens March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announced May 15</td>
<td>Closes March 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announced September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Cushman Late Bloomer Award</td>
<td>Opens March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closes March 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announced October 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Your Regional Team is now firming up 2023
Oregon SCBWI Events; we'll keep you updated over the coming months. In the meantime:

- **National Illustrator Virtual Events** are posted and updated bi-weekly on [Oregon’s Illustrators Page](#). If you've not had a chance to check out what other regions are offering, take a look.

- **March/April highlights for Illustrators below.**

---

**Picture Book Crossover**

**Visual Thinking for Picture Book Writers**
with Literary Agent
**MARIA VICENTE**
March 6th, 2023

---

**How to Plot a Graphic Novel**

**With Graphic Novel writer and illustrator MIKA SONG**
March 11, 2023

---

**The Picture Book Process**

**with SAHO FUGI**, Art Director of Picture Books, Littel, Brown Books for Young Readers
March 11, 2023

---

**Picture Book Crossover**

**Finding your story as an Illustrator with**
Literary Agent **CHAD BECKERMAN**
March 16th, 2023

---

**Western Washington Great Critique 2023**

**April 29, 2023**

---

**Publishing Path:** How to get your work
Illustrator as Designer:
JOHN HENDRIX, Book Jackets, Visual Storytelling and Hand-Drawn Lettering

May 22, 2023

John Hendrix

Here are Quick Links to essential SCBWI Resources, just for you!

Quick Link Page

KidLit Illustrators Talk Podcast
Oregon Illustrators are featured in this podcast: available on many of your favorite podcast providers. New podcasts posted bi-monthly. Listen HERE.

(Produced by Dreaming Earth Press - not a production of SCBWI)