



## Getting to know our members! Interview with Tracy Krushensky

For any new member tuning in, one of my goals this year is to start getting to know each and every one of you more thoroughly through these short interviews. Today we are meeting creator Tracy Krushensky! I hope you enjoy the interview with her!

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Can you tell us about yourself as a creator? What kind of art do you create? How did you get to this point?

I am an artist on a journey of becoming an author/illustrator for children's picture books.

Seems like my journey's path has been by guess and by gosh but creativity has always been in my blood. Sketching was a constant pastime throughout my childhood. Inspired by high school art classes, I declared Art as my original major in college. As fun as that was, I switched my major to Microbiology because the employment prospects seemed greater at the time. Since then, I busied myself artistically with personal projects and took multiple classes through adult education courses in Chinese Brush painting and watercolor to indulge my creative side.

In 2019, my daughter and I started our own business, Laree Designs, LLC. We are both artists finding our voices. I work in Chinese Brush, watercolor, or alcohol ink while she works in complimentary mediums such as acrylics, woodburning and engraving. Both of us work in pen and ink and digital art as well. Our products include cards, ornaments, trivets, coasters, and original works of art. We have an Etsy shop and sell original POD fabric/wallpaper designs on Spoonflower. I feel like I am coming full circle in my creative process with the bonus of having my daughter by my side!

# Passing Time

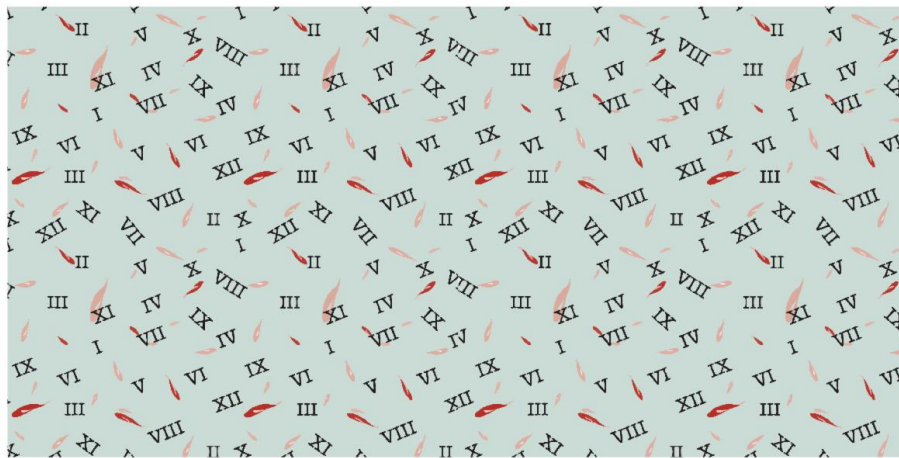
by T. Laree Krushensky



Wall Clock



Windblown Flowers



Numerals and Petals

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#lareedesignsllc

## What are you hoping to get out of SCBWI?

Ideas for children's books have pursued me through the years but I have never acted on them. In 2018, I was researching how to write children's books. That's when I discovered SCBWI and joined on the spot! It was important to me that I had an avenue that would feed the lifelong learner within me once I retired from Montana State University. With SCBWI, I really feel like I hit the jackpot! Not only did I get access to all the SCBWI workshops and webinars, but I also found an inspiring community of fellow writers and artists!

## What is the most important thing you have learned as a creator so far?

Create what inspires you and follow your passions. Creating for the sole purpose of sales or for a 'market' can be very frustrating, shutting down the creative juices.



**What is the thing you struggle with the most in your creative journey?**

Focus! Focus! Focus! I have way too many ideas, interests, and projects, either in process or fighting for space in my head. It is easy to get overwhelmed. Last year I completed a King size quilt (24 years in the making). What I may be lacking in focus I make up for in perseverance.

**Who are the creators you look up to?**

Norman Rockwell is my all-time favorite artist! His art finds a way to invite the viewer into the scene at hand. Amazing! Picture book illustrators who also amaze me are Richard Scary, Tomie dePaola and one of my new favorites, Montana's own rising star, **Eric Castleman**.

**If you could only read one picture book for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?**

The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams. There are so many different subtle takeaways from this story, brought to light based on the current stage of life the reader is in.

If you were given an all-expenses-paid trip (including travel, housing, and meals cooked and delivered to your doorstep) to any artist's retreat in the United States—where would you go and what would you do while there? (Let's say, this was a 7-day retreat, you had absolutely no book project deadlines to meet holding you back, and your kids/spouse were going to have as much fun as you do while you're gone—so you'd not be worrying about "other stuff.")

I would have to say ICON12 The Illustration Conference. It's not an artists' retreat but a biennial illustrator's conference scheduled for Minneapolis, MN July 10 – 13. This would be a full-on learning experience for me.

Finally, if you could ask just one thing of the next person who is going to be interviewed, what would it be?

Aside from writing or illustrating, what is your next go-to for a creative outlet?

Where can we find more of your work/ follow you/ get in touch with you?

I can be followed on Instagram @[krushenskytracy](#) (personal account) or @[lareedesignslc](#) (business account) to follow both my daughter's and my latest creative endeavors. Original fabric and wallpaper designs can be found on [Spoonflower.com](#) under LareeDesigns. More original works on ornaments, cards, trivets and Print On Demand items can be found on Etsy.com under [LareeDesignsLLC](#).



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Thank you so much Tracy for letting me interview you! I hope that you reading enjoyed the interview, I know I did! Please reach out to Tracy and get to know one another and help us build this community!

Hope your new year is off to an amazing start. See you at the next Co-working session on the 20th at 1pm!

Cheers,

Jeanne Bowman  
Montana-IC

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