

Case Study 2

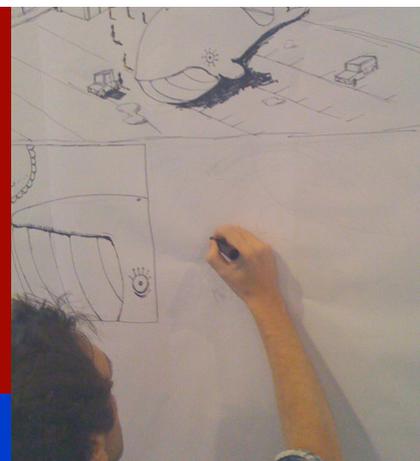
Mark Porter

Illustrator

'Don't just follow others be inspired and do something individual with it'

GNVQ in art and design, BTEC National Diploma, Degree in illustration

Providing information and advice



Who I am: I am a student on a degree course for illustration.

How I work: I do worry that many people at college simply see themselves as students and feel strongly that you need to start seeing yourself as an artist. I manage to combine my studies with developing personal illustration projects. Currently I am working on creating personal children's books, commissions for posters, activity books for local museums and have worked as a graphic facilitator for arts events. I struggle with being labeled as an illustrator since I feel it narrows down what I do - I prefer to be called a creative artist since I still also paint and sculpt.

I'm presently designing a book for the Iron Bridge Museums helping people understand the past through a contemporary medium - it has illustrations, interaction and pop-up sections. I've developed the main character - a boy who plays the violin and has a long scarf, both of which provide keys to the story. Like many 'picture books' today it is aimed at adults and children alike. I want people to understand and appreciate their past - knowing where they've come from.

I like very modern illustration (inspired by Oliver Jeffers) and exploring techniques, processes and media but am also fascinated with traditional processes (John Constable's landscapes are some of my strongest influences). Whilst ideas are key to my work it's also important to be able to draw well - you can learn a lot from still-life e.g. about colour and tone. It's also important to have the flexibility and openness to work across disciplines.

Getting there: Ever since I can remember I've wanted to draw - since six or seven years old. After leaving school at 16 I went to college where I studied for a GNVQ in art and design. I then did a foundation course in art and design which led to me starting a degree in illustration and animation. In fact, animation used to be my dream - but I tried this for some weeks and decided it wasn't for me. I have lots of ideas that I want to get down and felt that the process of animation stifled the development of these. Also, everyone said I was more of an illustrator than an animator. For me, comic book and children's stories allowed me to capture both aspects and still tell a story.

I am still learning about the commercial aspects of my work and realise that I will have to work hard to keep my own vision alive and maintain the integrity of my work whilst securing an income. I'd also love to teach and share what I have learnt to grow the potential of others.

What are the Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) that Mark needed to succeed?

What pathways could learners follow in order to enter this career? Learners could draw a progression pathway and consider their options.

Explore the links in the 'Finding out more' section of this site to research your options.

Linked Activity:
Illustration A02