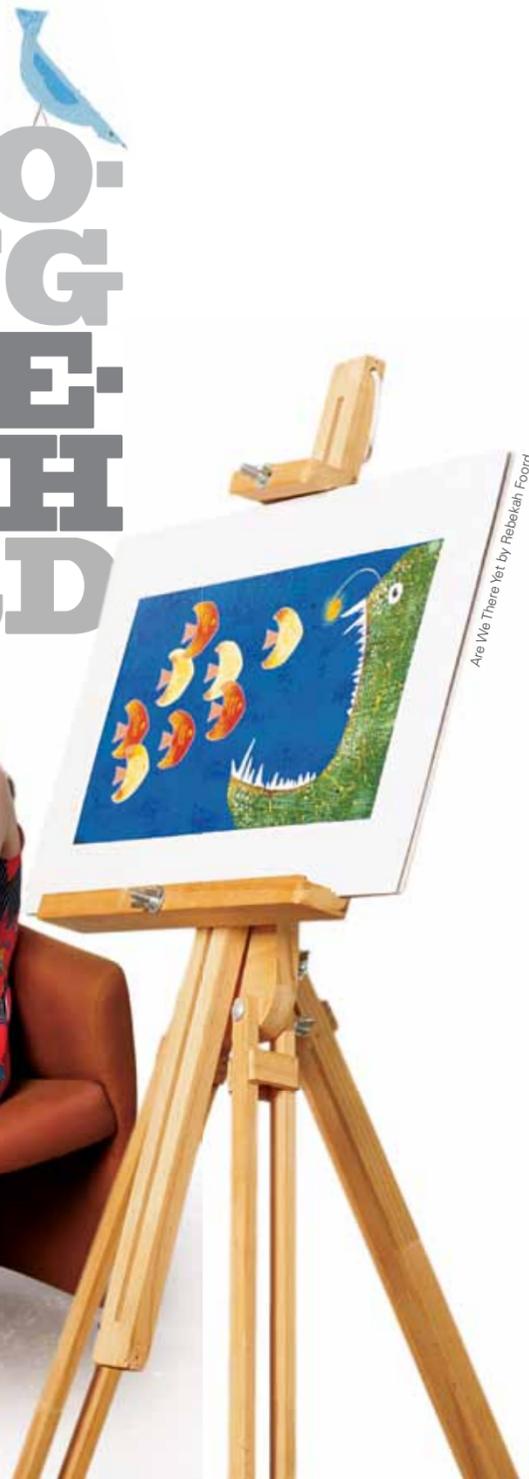


INTRO- DUCING RE- BEKAH FOORD

[ILLUSTRATOR]



Are We There Yet? by Rebekah Foord



Hanging out by Rebekah Foord



Gossip by Rebekah Foord

Less than a year since graduating with an Advance Diploma of Design and Illustration, Rebekah Foord already has a fistful of industry awards under her belt. Her illustrations are featured in several publications including Sydney's Child, The Artist Portfolio and Spoonful. In October this year she held her first solo exhibition at Brunswick Street Gallery, Melbourne. Quite an ambitious feat for an artist fresh from the cabbage patch. But Rebekah is not only ambitious, she's talented and driven as well. In addition to freelance commissions, she maintains a website, she writes a blog, she tweets, she sends out a newsletter and postcard mail-outs to art directors, in the name of self-promotion. With an average investment of five to ten years before emerging illustrators hope to establish themselves, there's no rest for the gifted.

Rebekah's creative brain was encouraged from an early age. Her grandfather, a professional painter, taught her to oil paint. There were weekly art classes, then a Bachelor of Fine Arts, followed by a wild stint in the Performing Arts. But it wasn't until Rebekah entered the hallowed gates of Enmore Design Centre that she found her niche.



One of These Things by Rebekah Foord



Her style is enchanting and quirky, drawing on the whimsy of vintage: its simple line-work, one-spot colours and distinctive palette.

Her animal illustrations have both charisma and vulnerability. Her work in acrylic and collage combines masking with a limited colour palette, to create the clean shapes and layered textures of her graphic style. Although her goal is children's and editorial illustration, Rebekah also works in graphic design for private industry (even designing a series of wall panels for the BAF!). "Illustration and graphic design complement each other. You need to understand layout and white space, design principles, in both genres."

Illustration heavyweights from its hey-day in the fifties are a huge inspiration for the young artist. She admires the freedom and lack of hesitation of Mary Blair's technique, known for her concept art for Walt Disney. "Her characters are awkward, angular, individual. She evokes mood and personality through the use of texture and colour. I think her concept art is a million times better than the final characters that emerge after they've been through the Disney sieve."

Old oak tree by Rebekah Foord

"Texture is really important to me. I want my work to have depth and personality"



Born This Way by Rebekah Foord

By contrast, Rebekah is drawn to the precision of Charley Harper's wildlife illustration, his highly stylized forms, particularly given that his work is pre-digital. "Harper uses very simple lines and clearly defined shapes and colours." The layering of patterns and flat colours creates the elements of depth and texture intrinsic to Rebekah's own artistic practice.

"Texture is really important to me. I want my work to have depth and personality". She employs a variety of techniques, using rough old paintbrushes, fabric, foam-core, even the kitchen sponge, to create the surreal textures and shadow that give her work character and a three-dimensional quality.

In spite of her appreciation of all things vintage and the spontaneity of hand-done work, Rebekah recognises the skill of digital art. "I don't think it has harmed the industry. In fact it has helped it to grow. It's created another genre." Not to mention the fact that it's "nerdy and fun" to learn new paintbrushes in the software. "There is room for traditional and digital art. I don't think they need to compete."



Blossom by Rebekah Foord

"Her characters are awkward, angular, individual. She evokes mood and personality through the use of texture and colour"

She takes her inspiration from the world at large, whether that's crazy tree roots, song lyrics or a trip to the zoo, fables, a snatch of conversation, or a nursery rhyme. "Recently I've been getting a lot of inspiration from sayings and catchphrases: "want to grab a bite" or "no bull". My dad will say to me, "That's the way the cookie crumbles" and an image will come into my head and I'll work from that.



Wanna Grab a Bite by Rebekah Foord

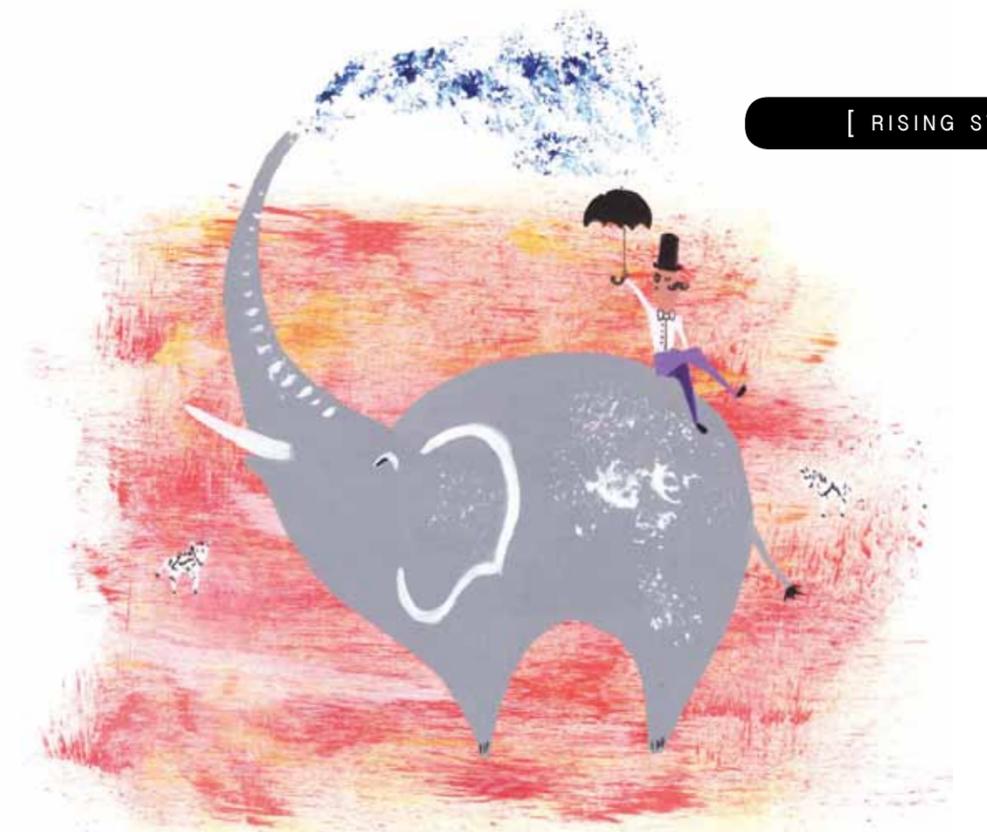
Inspiration can come from lots of different sources and I think it does and it should. You always have to keep your sketch book with you because you never know when you might need it."

It's a tough road for new illustrators struggling to differentiate themselves, faced with the pitfalls of self-doubt and working in isolation. With photography and readymade images available on the internet at a fraction of the cost, the competition is fierce. But for Rebekah the rewards far out-weigh the challenges. "I get a lot of joy out of self-expression. Someone having a chuckle at one of my drawings... I like creating something that wasn't there before. I like being able to picture something and make it happen on the page."

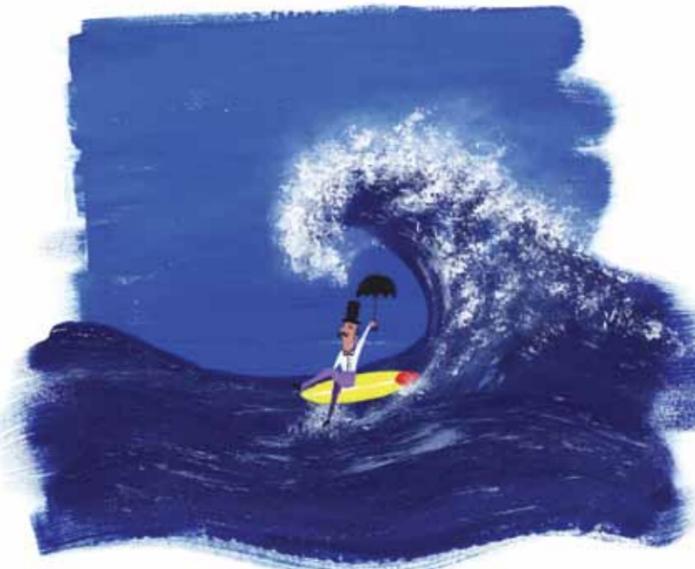
Rebekah feels she is still discovering her own individual style. But if the saying work begets work is anything to go by something tells me this won't prove a problem.

WRITTEN BY KAY HARRISON

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Africa by Rebekah Foord



Australia by Rebekah Foord