

Book illustrators "Found Art" AND MOSAICS in Muizenberg

MARIANNE ELLIOTT
Regional Librarian, Southern Region

During Youth Week in June this year Muizenberg Library decided to introduce learners to Art as a possible career. Two book illustrators were approached to share their experiences at the library. The local high schools were invited to send interested pupils to attend and advertisements were placed in the local papers.

Lyn Stonestreet (née Gilbert): illustrator

On 13 June Lyn Stonestreet, (she mainly uses her maiden name, Gilbert) addressed pupils and answered their questions.

Lyn, who lives in Lakeside, was born in Durban and completed her secondary and tertiary education in Pietermaritzburg - she completed a degree in Fine Arts at the University of Natal. She also taught Fine Art at Westerford Girls' High School in Natal. Lyn's first love is painting. An example of her work is featured in **Dictionary of South African artists** (p106, 1977 edition),

and her work is represented in the Rhodes University Premier Collection.

Lyn worked in the Eastern Cape for 18 years. She was asked to develop a basic design course that can be applied to any craft and subsequently presented this course at various workshops held in Xhosa communities in the Eastern Cape. Her love for and work with the Xhosa communities enabled her to do realistic and convincing book illustrations.

Lyn started book illustration in 1991, after reaching the end of her teaching career. Although she does not have a passion for writing children's books, she enjoys illustrating stories. The skill and intelligence required in the illustrating process appeal to her. She was encouraged by Niki Daly to start illustrating books. Her first attempt was to illustrate **Tabu and the dancing elephants**, by Rene Deetlefs. Another title illustrated by her, **The song of six birds**, also by Rene Deetlefs, has been translated into the 11 official languages by Biblionef and won the Vivian Wilkes Award. Anne Walton, art director for **Madiba magic: Nelson Mandela's favourite stories for children**, used work of accomplished artists as illustrations for the book. Lynn was asked to contribute as well. (See page 44.) Buffalo City in New York bought the entire collection of original paintings used as illustrations for the book.

Although royalties are received for picture books (and reprints of titles), it is not the case with text books. Drawings of a few different artists could be used in one book, without recognition given to specific illustrations done. The artist also needs to produce realistic, prescribed images. Examples of her illustrations are in Oxford publications of English study books. Because illustrating text books does not require imaginative creativity,

Lyn regards it as her 'bread and butter'. An advantage of book illustration is that one works from home according to your own schedule.

Interested artists can submit their portfolio to publishers and if accepted, they could receive regular commissions, collaborating with an editor freelancing for

the publisher. Competency and the ability to meet deadlines are required to be successful (Lynn has had to complete 144 full colour drawings within 20 days!). The Society for Writers and Illustrators arrange international workshops to assist illustrators to develop their technique and story-telling. Marjorie van Heerden has run courses as well.



Lyn Stonestreet and Christo de Beer, librarian at Muizenberg Library

Book illustration

Titles available

A useful title for the lay person who wants to start illustrating children's books is **Illustrating children's books**, by Martin Salisbury. This book contains a brief history of children's book illustration, including examples of contemporary accomplished illustrators. A variety of media that could be used are discussed, with examples of book illustrations done in the particular media. Aspects such as character development, the picture book, illustration for older children, non-fiction illustration and design and typography are covered as well. The final chapter deals with how to get published: professional approach, commissions, contracts, et cetera.

Also available is **Children's book illustration, step by step techniques**, by Jill Bossert.

Other titles on children's book illustration are:

The art of Maurice Sendak, 1980 to the present, by Tony Kushner.

Children's book covers, great book jacket and cover design, by Alan Powers and Mitchell Beazley.

Children's literature in the elementary school, by Charlotte S Huck, Susan Hepler and Janet Hickman.

A Dossier on the work of Niki Daly, the South African candidate for the Hans Christian Andersen Illustrator Award 2002.

How to write and illustrate children's books and get them published, consultant editors TP Bicknell and FTrotman.

South African children's book illustrators, compiled and edited by HE van Zyl and MM Botes.

A treasury of the great children's book illustrators, by Susan E Meyer.

Van Patrys-hulle tot Hanna Hoekom bevat 'n histories oorsig van, en styl en tegnieke in Afrikaanse kinder- en jeuglektuur.

The very best of children's book illustration, compiled by the Society of Illustrators.

When we were young: two centuries of children's book illustration, by William Feaver.

Titles on botanical illustrations

For the amateur who wants to learn how to do botanical illustration, the following titles are available:

The art of botanical illustration, by Martin Rix.

The art of botanical painting, by Margaret Stevens.

Botanical illustration: painting with watercolours, by Siriol Sherlock.

Techniques of great botanical artists are shown. Different techniques in watercolour are illustrated as well as their application to botanical illustrations. Finally aspects such as presentation, pricing, composition, lists of botanical names, useful contact addresses and web sites are provided.

How to draw plants: the techniques of botanical illustration, by Keith West.

South African botanical art: peeling back the petals, edited and introduced by Marion Arnold; authors John Rourke...[et al.].

The art of bird illustration, by Maureen Lambourne, again focuses on birds.

Titles on greeting card illustrations

Book illustrators who want to illustrate greeting cards may want to look at **The complete guide to greeting card design & illustration**, by Eva Szela.

The **Writers' & artists' yearbook** has a section with information on issues around getting greeting cards published and publishers to contact. This publication also has a useful section on how to go about children's book illustration, with lists of children's book publishers to contact.

General titles on book illustration

Action! cartooning, by Ben Caldwell.

Art & illustration techniques, by Harry Borgman.

The complete idiot's guide to creating a graphic novel, by Nat Gertler and Steve Lieber.

The encyclopedia of illustration techniques, by Catharine Slade.

Illustrating for science, by George V Kelvin.

The New guide to graphic design, edited by Bob Cotton.

The New guide to professional illustration and design, consultant editor Simon Jennings.

Starting design and communication, by Brian Light.

The streetwise guide to freelance design and illustration, by Theo Stephan Williams.

Writing and illustrating the graphic novel, by Mike Chinn.

Web sites

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, <http://www.picturebookart.org/programs/exhibition.asp>

The Illustrator's Portfolio - Illustrations by South African top artists, <http://www.illustrators.co.za>



Sue Beattie and librarian Niki Aron with three pupils in front of Muizenberg Library

Muizenberg on foot

On 15 June this year Sue Beattie (also a book illustrator) decided to take the visitors on a journey through Muizenberg, to meet a variety of artists and see their work.

Newly Defined

The first stop was at Newly Defined on Atlantic Road, where articles for sale are made up of 'found' objects, presented in a new or different context. An ancient, sand-blasted fridge, for instance, made an unusual cupboard. A table with sturdy wooden legs has the metal frame of a door mat or crane's hook mounted under a glass top. The moving metal handles of a clock on a hollow horizontal metal bar reveal the mounted object and functions as a clock. These creations are put together at a workshop adjacent to the shop.

At Le Petit Gallery, tiny, as the name suggests, the loose figure drawings in black and white on brown paper by Chris Lary were viewed. The Grassy Park-born artist completed a diploma in Graphic Design at Michaelis (University of Cape Town). He has worked for various advertising agencies and compiles story boards for film companies on a freelance basis. He has also exhibited at the Everard Read Gallery.

Other 'found' projects

We turned into Palmer Road, where unusual flower pots, such as toilet cisterns and bowls and tractor tyres feature as unusual plant containers with colourful flowers. Under the patio ceiling a row of various shapes of single shoes decorate the wall. Evidently Riaan, who lives there, found the shoes on the beach and spray painted them a uniform white colour. A dense row of ties form a curtain along the top of a window. Sue told us that Riaan has a policy of using anything that he picks up within six months. His 'art' is similar to the items in the Newly Defined shop, where 'found' objects receive a new identity. We were told that Riaan trained as a medical doctor, but prefers fashion design

for a living - examples of his designs are at India Jane in Kalk Bay. He also produces chandeliers made from coloured glass.

Interesting gates which adorn many properties in Muizenberg, were welded by artists Angela McPherson, Harry Kentrotas and Andrew Lord, from 'found' metal objects (old spanners, other tools and machine parts) together with metal bars and sheeting.

Across the road there are life-sized three-dimensional contours of cows made of bent metal bars, mounted at roof height against a house. The owner, Harry, is a provider of movie props. These shapes were made to be filled with leafy branches, to form a topiary for a movie. They were mounted at the back of his house, so we walked around to enter through the front door. The outside stoep, passage, rooms and back yard are densely covered with all kinds of creations made of 'found' metal objects (and parts thereof). One can spend ages looking at these interesting objects. The house reminds one of the Owl House in Nieu-Bethesda and seems more of a museum or shop than a home.

Unusual art

Around the corner is Lynn Delamot's house. Her property is accessed through a decorative gate, featuring a dragon. She plans to have its eyes flash with red lights. Lynn produces fine art in paint, pastels and other media, but also illustrates books for an additional income.

In her studio we viewed some of her work, amongst others, a Mona Lisa in curlers (see photograph) framed in a 'gilded' frame, made from 'junk' that her friends collected and that was sprayed silver afterwards. She likes to work with interplaying layers as well - a framed charcoal drawing made on tracing paper, reveals coloured shapes placed behind the paper. She uses unusual 'canvases' for her work, for example, an old plastic kitchen table cloth or an old canvas blind. Another painting was done in ink and bleach. One painting appeared attractive from a distance, but as one approaches closer, it reveals some horrible images. Occasionally Lynn uses images that evoke an uneasy feeling in order to attract the viewer's attention for a specific reason.

Except for the school book illustrations and maps Lynn draws, she also does photography on a commission basis to be used as illustrations in books. She showed us an example of a colourful, giant-size Dagwood sandwich produced on commission.





Top left: The visiting learners viewing some of the figure drawings of Chris Lary at Le Petit Gallery

Above: One of the rooms filled with creations of 'found' metal objects

Left: The interesting entrance to Harry's house with some of the metal creations

Far left: A group of stylised cows and other welded objects

Below left: Harry enjoying some music in his home filled with creative objects on every wall

When we arrived, Lynn was in the process of creating a dragon in mosaic as a splash back against the wall above her kitchen sink. Small tiles are part of the design, and the addition of pieces of mirror reflecting the light, makes it come alive.

A sand-blasted design on the window in the bathroom was also made by Lynn. The opaque character of the sandblasted glass makes it ideal for a bathroom window and the design personalises it. It is apparently less complicated to produce than it appears: The glass pane is covered with masking tape, a design drawn on it and the shapes to be sand blasted cut away. The sandblasting of the sheet of glass is done by a professional.

Next stop was Sue Beattie's house. She had small metal cows on her stoep that were birthday gifts from Harry.

Sue used to have a business where she made and sold stained glass windows and other objects, but because molten lead is poisonous, she could not continue indefinitely. She did sandblasting at that time as well and passed on her knowledge of the process to Lynn. Sue creates mosaic pictures and signs and teaches the technique



to others. During our visit she demonstrated how to go about making a mosaic. The coloured pieces of tile and stone are arranged to form a design. She then pastes paper on top with a starchy glue and when dry, turns the whole design upside down, with the paper at the bottom. Lastly grouting is poured over the pieces that are then left to bond together.

When Sue is commissioned to do book illustrations, she receives a rough drawing or description of what is needed, which is then drawn accurately. Her research for a selection of visual information (photographs or pictures in books) that can be photocopied is done in the local library. Coloured photographs of old **National Geographic** magazines are also useful references.

The Dance Studio

We ended our journey at the Dance Studio in Palmer Road, where belly dancing and other types of dancing are taught.

(A children's modern dancing group was rehearsing for a concert at the time.) The patio in the back of the Dance Studio was also decorated with colourful mosaic pictures, incorporating a fish pond. After having been on our feet for two hours, we sat down in the kitchen of the studio and enjoyed the refreshments provided by Sue - all in all - an interesting and inspiring afternoon!



Above: Lynn Delamot's current creation of a dragon made from small tiles and pieces of mirror serves as the splash back for her kitchen sink

Top left and centre: Unusual creations by Lynn Delamot made with interplaying layers, framed in a 'gilded' frame, made from 'junk' collected by friends and sprayed silver afterwards. Note the Mona Lisa in curlers

Left: Also by Lynn is a sand-blasted bathroom window in Art Deco style

Far left: Visiting students admiring a lovely mosaic mural and doorway frame made by Sue Beattie

Below left: More examples of Sue Beattie's colourful mosaics



Related titles in Provincial Library stock

Baird, Helen. **Mosaics by design: stylish ideas, essential techniques and over 60 step-by-step projects for every home and garden.**- Lorenz Bks., c2004.

Benton, Suzanne. **The art of welded sculpture.**- Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1975.

Elliot, Marion. **Tin: 25 step-by-step practical ideas for hand-crafted tinwork projects.**- Southwater, 2004.

Frith, Ann. **Pebble mosaics: step-by-step projects for inside and out.**- David & Charles, 2004.

Genis, Alet. **Metaalkuns: meer as 30 stap-vir-stap projekte vir die huis.**- Metz P., 2004.

Genis, Alet. **Scrap-metal craft.**- Metz P., 2004.

Kilby, Janice Eaton. **The metal craft book: 50 easy and beautiful projects from copper, tin, brass, aluminum, and more.**- Lark Bks., c2000.

Paton, Becky. **Garden mosaics: 25 step-by step projects for your outdoor room.**- North Light, 2004.

Rodgers, Carole. **Beaded jewelry with found objects: incorporate anything from buttons to shells.**- Krause, c2004.

Rothenberg, Polly. **The complete book of creative glass art.**- Allen & U, 1974.

Ruth, Karen. **Welding basics: an introduction to practical & ornamental welding.**- Creative Pub., c2004.

Topal, Cathy Weisman. **Beautiful stuff!: learning with found materials.**- Davis Publ., c1999.

Vance, Peggy. **The mosaic book: ideas, projects and techniques.**- Conran Octopus, 1994.