

ILLUSTRATOR INTERVIEW

Stella
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PAVIA - ITALY

GIVING WORLD
ILLUSTRATOR



1. What is your technique and medium of drawing and painting?

I paint with Procreate (but switching to Photoshop soon), so it's a pictorial style but all digital! Sometimes I like to integrate photographic details and textures, I like the contrast between photos and painting.

2. How do you get inspired to produce a piece of artwork?

I usually let the words (for a book) sink in until an image comes to my mind. But sometimes it's just something I see while I have a walk, a colour, a detail, and then I start wondering how can I build an illustration around that. Illustration for me is both technical and emotional, and I enjoy both sides. I mean that sometimes an illustration starts with composition or a color palette, because I want to try a new perspective or I've fallen in love with some colors together, but then memories and feelings get attached to it.

3. What artist inspires you?

When I was younger and I used to paint with oil colors, I was in love with Van Gogh and Tiziano. Two worlds so far away from each other! If we talk about picture books, I love Paolo Domeniconi and his dreamy style, Carll Cneut (who has been one of my teachers), Mazzoni, and pop surrealism, like Benjamini Lacombe. Oh and Brian Froud, I've been obsessed with his fairies for such a long time!

4. What do you do to overcome a creative block?

Uhm, I'm not sure I have proper creative blocks, because it doesn't happen to me to really stop creating in a way or another. I get bored too easily to stop finding creative activities, haha, and also it's my job, so I can't afford to just rely on inspiration.

Something that happens to me, on the other hand, is that some days I draw, but I don't like what I do, nothing looks convincing to me. I've learned that it's cyclical, for example, if I've just finished an illustration which was important to me or that I like a lot, probably it takes some time to step out of it, so, instead of beating myself up, I just keep working and then something shifts and I'm back again. Sometimes an illustration just takes some more love and time to change from ugly to lovely, I keep repeating this to myself when I think "Oh this is hideous" (and it happens a lot!). Also, I often need to shut up my inner judging voice, because sometimes it's the one talking me out of love. That's why I listen to music while I work, often the same songs I know by heart and I can sing, it keeps my rational mind distracted enough to let the hands do their job without being constantly interrupted.

5. When did you start illustrating?

Uhm, this is a tricky question, haha. I think I started to be interested in children's book illustration in 2013 when I went to Macerata for a course with Carll Cneut. I had tried illustration before, but being a mainly self-taught painter (I started painting when I was 15), it had been really hard to shift from a painting idea to tell a story through images. They are again two separate worlds, it might sound strange if you're not into visual arts, but it needs a great mind shift! But the real moment I said "Man, I want to be a children's book illustrator" was in 2019.

6. What does art mean to you?

Uhm, hard question, I think my English is not good enough to express this and you'll need to edit my answer haha. I think art is the way I see the world. It's not something separate from me, it's the beauty I look for everywhere, it's something I respond to because there's like a transmitter implanted in me. But I also think this "transmitter" is something I've received with my education. That's why it's so important to me to make art accessible to children.

7. Tell us an unexpected fun fact about you, that might come as a surprise to others.

I love volleyball and cosplay; once I got to do both at the same time, playing dressed up as a pirate. (I also cosplayed Daenerys at Lucca Comics for a couple of years and Vanellope from "Wreck-it Ralph")

8. Where are you from and what places would you love to visit one day?

I'm from Pavia, in northern Italy, the old capital of Longobardi's realm, but now I live in Edinburgh and I must admit I'm in love with this country. I love to travel so I'd go pretty much everywhere if I could. On my bucket list for the near future, there's a journey to Japan (we have relatives there so I hope we'll be able to organize a big reunion!)

