

Local Illustrator Takes the Page by Storm

by Shaugnessy Sparks, News Correspondent for Raisykinder Publishing



Raisykinder Publishing, a company based out of Bellingham, Washington “dedicated to publishing quality children’s literature that [they] hope will spark children’s imagination, creativity, and love of reading”, has a rising star within their staff.

Their illustrator, Tessa Asato, a recent graduate from Western Washington University, uses her main form of black line drawing to create the characters of the book series The S.O.S Boys of which two books exist: The S.O.S Boys: Mystery on Orcas Island and The S.O.S Boys: Espionage at one Hundred Fathoms. Her distinct artistic form

brings the characters to life as she uses simplistic lines to create complex details. Not only does she use her talent for art for these children books, she has also expanded to other types of media such as posters, bookmarks, and presenting plaques.

In promotion of The S.O.S Boys books, Tessa made posters of the characters, which were matted and framed and donated to St. Joseph’s Peace Health Pediatric Center in June 2014, using the same black line technique shown in the books. To continue with her impressive abilities, she also helped present a plaque to a young girl at Western Washington University’s Grandparents University Summer Program, who created a character for the most recent book in the series, The S.O.S Boys: Espionage at One Hundred Fathoms.

Not only has she used her skills for this company and their books, she has also had her work displayed in art shows at WWU, which continued to catch the interest of Rosanna Porter, the owner of Raisykinder Publishing and author of The S.O.S Boys books, towards Tessa’s art. Rosanna states, “When I was looking for someone to illustrate my S.O.S Boy Mystery book series, Tessa Asato’s art professor at Western Washington University suggested Tessa and shared with me some samples of her art. I was

impressed with Tessa's skilled use of lines with varied weights, widths, directions, and curves to create the illusion of texture and form. They gave her drawings a more dramatic effect. She has a unique style all of her own. Since my books are for the upper elementary and middle school students, I needed an artist whose drawings contained effects that would attract older readers. Also, Tessa's sense of humor is depicted in her drawings and this combines to complete the perfect illustration. She is a very talented artist."

Tessa has also illustrated a book for Dr. Gaye Green, the former chair of the Art Department and current professor at Western Washington University. The book is entitled "Why Jade was Spade".

Before entering the illustration world, Tessa was working on getting her bachelors degree in fine arts. Throughout her education, she worked with printmaking and creating large-scale drawings. She says that a lot of her work is self portraiture, in a cartoon/ humorous style, which reflects in her drawings with the S.O.S. Boys and her other drawings with Compass Rosie a newspaper article travel piece. During her free time, Tessa illustrates and tries to produce her own work. While she is not illustrating for the upcoming S.O.S Boys Mystery book, she is working on a thirty-six by thirty long paper scroll with the intent of making a visual diary of her transition from life in college to life after. She also states that she is interested in creating comics, but wishes to finish her previous art projects and illustrations before continuing on to the next masterpiece.

Rosanna says she "[is] thrilled to have Tessa illustrate her third book in the S.O.S Boys Mystery series, and to have her illustrate the Compass Rosie newspaper series for me." Many of the books Tessa has illustrated have been nominated for awards. The books she illustrates are available online at Amazon, Raisykinder Publishing's website, and local book stores in Bellingham. The new book in the series will be released in early summer 2015, with Tessa's illustrations filling the pages.

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