

Kirrily Schell

With a dark, inky, playful style Kirrily's business name "Ink Winks" captures her work so aptly! This animation teacher, illustrator and comic maker shares the best animations that have inspired her own work, as well as her career path.

Outline: We'd love to hear about your career path and illustration/animation highlights.

Kirrily: I always felt when I was little that drawing would be a major part of my "grown-up" life. My favourite memories of childhood are drawing comics with my siblings. We always had piles of paper to draw on and would sit down in the playroom listening to my brother's Kim Wilde tapes and we'd draw things... stories and comics. We'd draw about a little group of friends, or a quirky little family dealing with an alien invasion in the local playground, for example. Largely my drawing was inspired by my older brother Terry. He could draw so much better than me, and I'd often get him to draw a guest panel in my own comic stories. At the time we didn't really call them comics. Though they would sometimes end up in a stapled mini-comic format. Often they were just gathered together in folders.

My drawing always came as a spontaneous urge and, I suppose, from my imagination (...or copying my brother). We did read a lot of Peanuts comics and also Pop-eye and Archie comics. I never practiced observational drawing. Still life drawing came later at Art School.

In year 12 I made friends with a girl called Anna Simic, she and I used to go to the weekend Trash n' Treasure markets and buy these mini ring-bound blank page sketchbooks. We'd both draw obsessively in them. For years I always had one of these in my back pocket with artline felt tip pen. It would function as a kind of diary, quite personal, with loads of little characters page after page. I still have those sketchbooks somewhere around here, in an old suitcase... They helped to get me into art school, they also worried the lecturers a little I found out later (worried about how I would engage with all the other aspects of the art world I suppose ...like still life drawing. Which I hated, at the time.)

Art School was an incredible experience. So many great friends were made, it was a really inspiring place. I engaged in so many more aspects of the visual world than what I ever new was possible. I really began to learn how to articulate ideas, how to utilise colour, shape, form, marks, gestures, space and so on. I loved printmaking, etching in particular; I really enjoyed sculpting and painting.

I studied Animation and Interactive Media at RMIT and finally realised a life long dream, to bring my drawings to life.

Drawing animation with pencil on paper is my favourite way to animate, however it can be a slow process to get your animation actually finished! See an example of my beginnings in animation

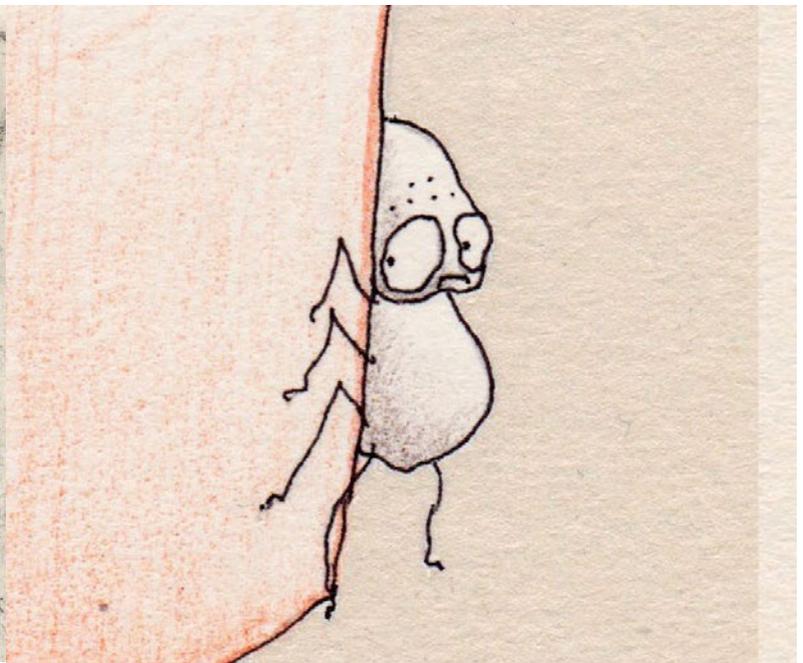
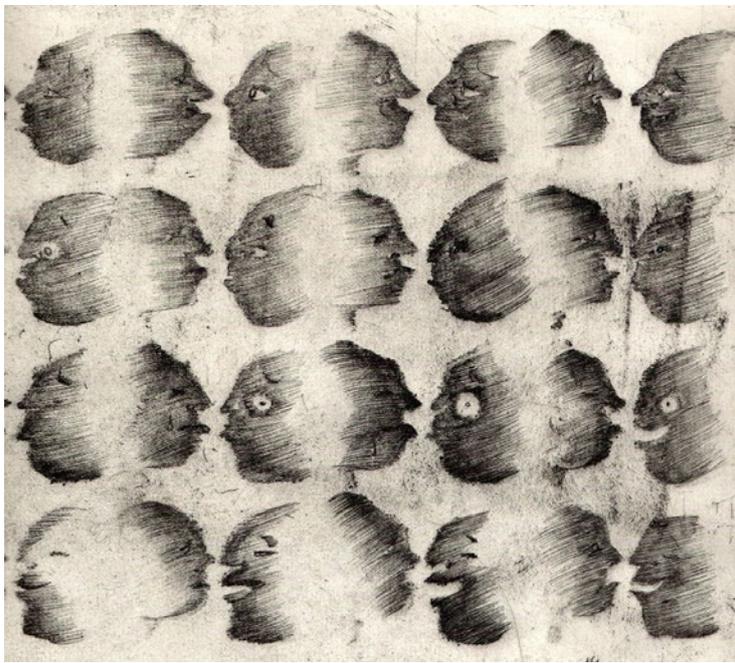
Δ <http://inkwinks.com/animation/needamiracle/>

Outline: What programs do you use to create your animations?

Kirrily: I usually dart around the Adobe suite. I love using Flash and Photoshop. I also use After Effects and a bit of Final Cut Pro. I fiddle around a bit in Garageband and Audacity to create sound effects or tracks for the animations.

Outline: What are the usual industry software programs used?

Kirrily: Various 3D animation programs, Maya, 3D studio Max are a few examples, Toon Boom studio, Adobe Flash, Adobe After Effects. Adobe PhotoShop has a more sophisticated animation option these days. There are a lot of free trial applications around also. An animation colleague put me onto "Pencil", a free bit of software if you're looking to experiment on your computer. There are quite a few



available for tablets and smartphones, and of course free versions are worth a try though they are peppered with advertising.

Outline: What are your favourite mediums for creating your illustrations?

Kirrily: I will always favour felt tip pens, though I absolutely love ink and go through stages of using nothing but (I really love Victor Hugo's ink drawings). I love water-colours, gouache and pencil. I love to combine all of these with digital, scanning in and manipulating the images or parts of them in PhotoShop.

Outline: Could you tell us about your experiences teaching animation at RMIT and through workshops etc?

Kirrily: I've taught various animation and related classes at RMIT and a few other Universities (Vic Uni, Holmesglen (Tafe) at Glen Waverly offers a Higher Ed animation course now). I have been teaching the short course "Introduction to Flash animation" for many years at RMIT, and this has been a really fun packed class, my favourite one to teach. Teaching animation to artists up in Canberra at Megalo Print Studio was also great, as the artists all produced such interesting work.

It has also been a great experience to work with kids in Aurukun, Jabiru and Yirrkala, as well as mentoring an animator Jason Japilijari Woods in Yuendumu. I've had some great opportunities to work elders in Yirrkala. A nice one to have a look at is "Worr'wurr ga Nyiknyik". Written, illustrated, narrated and directed by Nyalung Wunungmurra. I used her illustration, scanned it into PhotoShop to adjust it into layers for animating, which I did in Flash. This is the kind of project many animators would more likely create in AE, easy camera moves, and cleaner look to some of the motion. Flash was perfect for this project, I was really happy with the final work as was Nyalung.

△ <http://inkwinks.com/animation/>

worr'wurr-ga-nyiknyik-by-nyalung-wunungmurra/

Outline: What do you find is the biggest challenges for students learning in this area?

Kirrily: Initially the actual process of animation can be confronting for enthusiastic beginners. There are so many components to grapple with. Character and set design, staging and composition, transition and edit, 'acting' and movement, timing, sound effects, software and file management ... it goes on. Personally I believe you are off to a good start if you love drawing (even if you end up working in 3D). That said one can make great animations without drawings of course. I guess it is the same with illustration as you can create images and animation with puppets, collage, 3D and so on.

For beginner animators it can be tough to realise how much time it is going to take to get an animation completed, often this involves working long hours. There are many techniques and ways to design animation however, and with the various digital imaging software applications around, students have many options to work with to design and animate their own project in a way that suits their vision.

Outline: You also create comics, and I'd love to hear of the way comics and animation differ and tie together - both sharing movement and story. What do you love about each or find challenging?

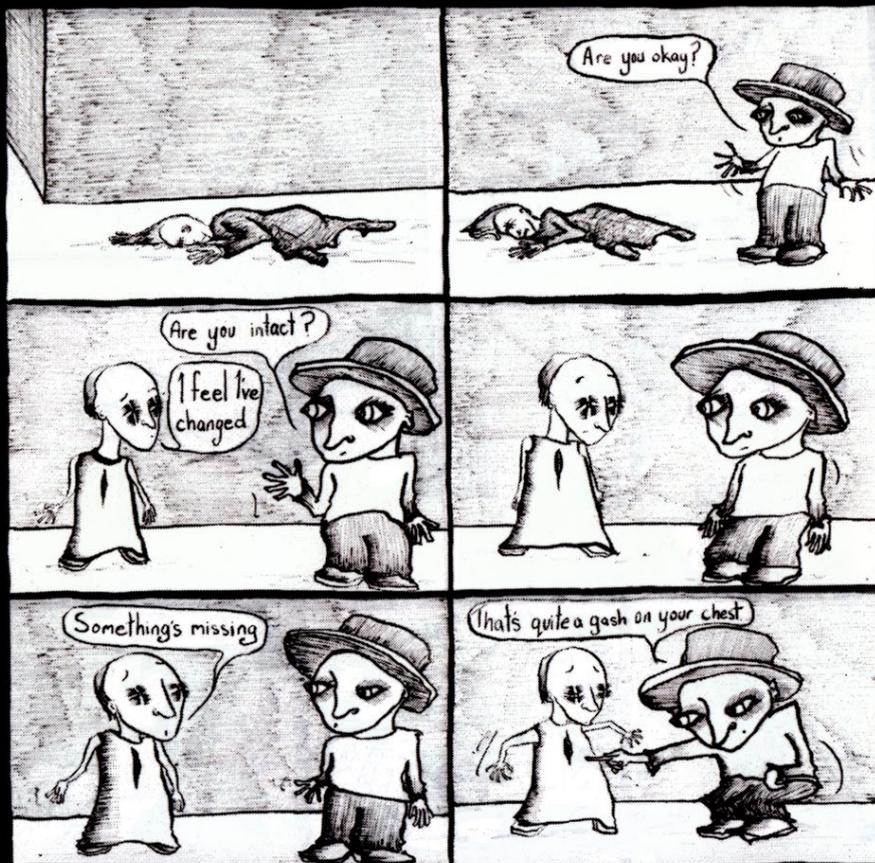
Kirrily: I love the movement of line, I love bringing a character to life and allowing them to gesture, react and maneuver about the screen. Though when I think



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about it I do favour drawing a comic. I prefer to tell a story with/through a comic. That may change one day, but at the moment I feel I can tease out an idea more thoroughly in a comic, perhaps because of the closeness I feel to my drawings on paper, and that the process of animating can sometimes go through so many stages of production that the immediacy and connection with the character or story can feel a little distant. Which may be a good thing sometimes! I do love to experiment with animation though, exploring layers, colours, movement, loops and sound. Work in progress showreel of three experiments

Δ <https://vimeo.com/18943560>

The timing in a comic works (and is designed) very differently to animation. Both are designed to deliver a sense of time and place, however one exists in a moment of time, like theatre or music, the other can be gazed at, pondered over, pages flipped backwards and forwards. Both however, can swallow you up in an imaginary visual world.

I love the way a comic can be designed to allow for reflection. It is a soundless place, that can be descriptive, poetic, flavoured with subtexts, woven narratives, ...many of these elements are present in animation, but they really are two different worlds.

In animation, there are so many elements to play with, to create, to try to get to work – to tell your story. Sound, the way figures move, the way the whole composition moves, (the camera moves!), visual design, colour and composition, story structure, concept and so on. Comics deal with many aspects similarly though they have a different freedoms, the page and the panels can be designed or factored in as one of the story elements

‘talking’ the same language as the lines or enhancing the theme.

Some of Kirrily's Favourite Animations:

Wendy Tilby and Amanda Forbis, *When Day Breaks*. You will love this

Δ https://www.nfb.ca/film/when_the_day_breaks

Painted and wonderful Georges Schwizgebel's animation "Jeu"

Δ https://www.nfb.ca/film/jeu_en

See Chris Hinton's animation *Flux*

David O'Reilly is just fresh and bent. Something snaps when you see his animations – if you can sit through them. He's on some sort of edge.

Paul Driessen is my absolute favourite. I am in love with his line. Both his still and his animated line. See "Killing of an Egg",

Δ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z-XTeyV8Dk>

or "2D or not 2D"

Koji Yamamura... See his animation *Mt Head* (Atama Yama). Beautiful drawings, lovely compositions, great animation.

Atsushi Wada, beautiful simple drawings, careful timing and both his characters and animation technique are really something. I feel both bemused and full of wonderment

perhaps unique and imaginative in the way that places or worlds created by many illustrators are unique. I don't think an illustrators work needs to move or be interactive to come to life, not at all. But I do like the idea of this ongoing presence, popularity, and development of games, interactives, apps etc to be open to such beauty and richness as a work like *Botanicula*, or uniqueness of individual illustrators (if they are interested in that kind of thing!). ...And perhaps to be another avenue for illustrators to get paid work.

Outline: Who are your comic illustration heroes?

Kirilly: I'll be brief, here are several must reads.

Ben Katchor, George Herriman, Rutu Modan, Tezuka Osamu, Guy Delisle, Joost Swarte, Geoffrey Brown

Outline: Where do you turn for inspiration (online and off)?

Kirilly: Well, I have listed many online. I find inspiration in what is around me. I love to day dream and I find at times when I don't have time for this it is more difficult to resolve creative ideas or projects. A recent comic project for online poetry magazine, *Cordite* had me drawing spiders. I drew so many spiders before coming up with the

final character design. I am constantly amused (it shouldn't be funny) by my 18month old son's pout when he gets upset. Somehow my spider drawings evolved to incorporate his "upset" face. This spider image (below) captures him exactly. Here is the whole comic

Δ <http://cordite.org.au/poetry/pumpkin/schell-sant/>

{CLICK!} Kirilly Schell

Website <http://www.inkwinks.com>

