

License to create: Illustrators and authors

By Dana Horrocks.

“Artistic License” Illustrator Talk with Brian Deines (S9)

Fresh from his tour of the Lower Mainland with TD Canadian Children's Book Week illustrator Brian Deines began his presentation by admitting “I'm not a normal presenter.” From there he charmed the small but attentive crowd with the stories behind his paintings and a look into his creative process.

An Alberta native, Deines has always incorporated the warm prairie sky into his paintings. As a child and budding artist he never had the opportunity to see examples of art in real life. Brian took a trip to Europe after highschool and he was able to see fine art for the first time. It is for this reason that he always brings his own originals to hang and share with his audience because he believes children need to have access to examples of art.

Brian described his own creative process and he began by showing the audience an actual manuscript that he received from his editor. He then draws up a storyboard or progression of sketches to show to the publisher, and they work together to finalize the ideas. At this point Brian takes several photographs for each piece, draws up beginning sketches and gets painting with his signature oil paints on canvas. The results are breathtaking.

The talk finished with Brian telling the story that inspired his images of northern lights, or the aurora borealis in his books *The Circle Game* (2011) and *Skysisters* (2000). To say that his story left the crowd with a sense of awe would not begin to describe the hush that fell over the room, and to retell it, would be an injustice. For those that missed it, his picture books begin to communicate the magic of his storytelling, and be sure to see Brian when he visits again!

“License to Groove- Growing up Industrial” Author Talk with Dennis Bolen and Soressa Gardner (S16)

The session titled “License to Groove” did just that, through a rich collaboration between Soressa Gardner's soundscapes and Dennis Bolen's words. Carellin Brooks, who serves on the Vancouver Public Library Board when not writing or teaching in UBC's Department of Women's and Gender Studies, moderated the session.

Carellin, a friend and colleague of Dennis and Soressa, had the obvious pleasure of introducing these two esteemed artists and preparing the audience for the performance to follow. Soressa is a sound artist who uses her vocals and electronic mixing to create soundscapes and soundtracks for various artists and venues. Dennis himself is an author of several collections of short stories and novels, and has worked in many capacities around Vancouver as a founding member of sub-TERRAIN, teacher, editor, and social critic.

The resulting combination of these two was like nothing else at the conference. Dennis read a sampling of biographical poetry he is currently working on accompanied by a rich soundscape created by Soressa which included a jazz drum kit, various beats and her own vocals. He joked about what it means when one starts to write a biography, and shared his excitement about his return to poetry because it is the perfect medium for capturing memories.

Next Dennis read from his latest book *Anticipated Results* and admittedly chose the only story in this collection that did not come soaked in booze. It was an emotionally tense portrayal of the relationship between a father and his adult daughter that again was heightened by the sound creation of Soressa. As he closed the book and the soundscape faded out, the spell cast by these two loosened its hold on the small group. Carellin took this opportunity to facilitate a discussion about how Dennis and Soressa create and perform together, how to sustain young poets, and the role of the library in their work.

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