

Henry Lemon

Hello! I get lots of emails from illustration students looking for advice so I thought I'd pull together all the FAQ's here.

What is the best part about being an illustrator?

I get to draw every day. I absolutely cannot believe my luck to make a living doing something which doesn't feel like work. There is nothing I would rather do.

What is the worst part about being an illustrator?

Probably the admin, like any other business there are boring jobs that need doing but at least I get to do them in my PJ's with the radio on!

Where do you find your inspiration?

I spend a lot of time visiting galleries, museums and gardens, I also love Outsider Art, Indian Miniature Painting, Van Gogh's and Hockney's drawings, Bonnard's colour, Rococo chocolate's packaging, Joanna Concejo and Jill Barklem.

How did you find your style?

By drawing lots and lots I eventually found a range of marks and approaches which were as natural and automatic as my handwriting.

How do you make your work?

I draw everything by hand using a Pigma Micron 005 black pen, if its client work I usually colour it digitally using Photoshop (as this allows for quick tweaks and changes).

Do you have a studio?

Yes I have a studio in my flat; it is my favourite place in the whole world. The walls are covered in drawings and postcards; there are coloured paper banners across the ceiling, lots of art materials and inspiring books. I have two desks, one has my laptop and lots of room for drawing, the other holds my printer.

How did you become an illustrator?

- I set up as self employed with the HMRC <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed/tmastarting-up-in-business.shtml>
- After lots of reading and learning about creative businesses I decided to write a business plan. Although I can see that this approach would not be for everyone, I found it a fantastic process to help me understand exactly what I wanted to do and then to break it up into smaller tasks in order to get there. Business Link <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk> and Shell Livewire <http://www.shell-livewire.org/> can help you through the process of writing a plan.
- I then designed my branding (for website, stationery etc) and created my website.
- Finally I spent days in WHSmiths/ Waterstones looking for magazines/ papers and publishers who might be interested in the type of work I did. I put all their contact info into a spreadsheet and sent out a promotional mailout.

How do you get illustration projects

I spend a lot of time and money on marketing my business. The most important thing is the website but you also need to direct people to look at it (the internet is a very big place!) I have found direct mailers to be the most successful form of marketing for me. Once you get going your published work serves as great marketing and people approach you as a result of seeing your work

Where did you study/ who are your clients?

Download my CV from the About page of my website

Do you have any advice for aspiring illustrators?

- Draw all the time
- Learn as much as you possibly can about entrepreneurship, small creative business models, self employment and marketing.
- Write a business plan
- Read "How to be an illustrator" by Darrel Rees
- Join the AOI (the Association of Illustrators)
- Be ambitious
- Work very hard