



Azure Kingfisher



Black Swan



Crimson Rosella



Diamond Dove



Eastern Yellow Robin



Fairy Penguin



Green Catbird



Hooded Robin



Island Thrush



Jabiru



King Parrot



Laughing Kookaburra



Magpie Goose



Noisy Pitta



Orange Bellied Parrot



Pink Galah



Variegated Fairy Wren



White Plumed Honey Eater



Xanthotis



Yellow Billed Spoonbill



Upland Sandpiper



Variegated Fairy Wren



White Plumed Honey Eater



Xanthotis



Yellow Billed Spoonbill

Fiona Sinclair

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Fiona has a great insight into the world of illustration and design education, having worked as a teacher for 25 years and now “teaches the teacher” with her role as Education Officer. Fiona shares her experiences within the education industry as well as her own design business.

Outline: What was your path to your current role, and could you tell us a little about it?

Fiona: After 25 years as a teacher of Visual Communication Design at Secondary School level, a part time illustrator and Typography and Graphic Design teacher at TAFE, I took the plunge away from the classroom and into the office to become the Education Officer for Visual Communication Victoria....and I'm loving it. This is a part time position, so still gives me plenty of time to illustrate, design and manage my small design business www.fionasinclairdesign.com.au

VCV is an organisation that supports Secondary School teachers of Visual Communication Design. My day includes talking to teachers of Design about Vis Comm, preparing a monthly newsletter filled with information and inspiration about exhibitions, resources and events, preparing Design resources to help teachers with their teaching, organising seminars for students and teachers of Design in regards to Industry, skills and Curriculum, editing the VCV website, reading design books and writing reviews, and, generally, having a fantastic time. There is a Council of dedicated Design teachers who assist with the running of VCV, and keep me in touch with what's happening in the classroom.

Outline: What do you love about your job?

Fiona: I love being able to share my passion about Design and teaching with others who are busy in the classroom inspiring students and managing all of the other administrative duties that are a part of being in a Secondary School. My role is to make their job in the Design classroom relevant, easier and packed with current information about the state of Design.

My most recent resource that I produced is a CD called 'Thinking about Design' and it outlines the design process from getting an initial brief, to the final output and evaluation. It examines Design Thinking, Copyright and Intellectual property, target audiences and the design elements and principles used to create design work. This provides the teachers and students with a resource to enable them to complete some of the outcomes required for VCE Visual Communication Design.

I get to meet up with the Education Officers from a range of organisations; Heide, the NGV, other teacher



associations, lecturers from Tertiary Institutions, Industry professionals, AGDA, AGIdeas organisers and the many people who are engaged with design in some form or another. I have sought illustrators from IA to present workshops and often contact Jody for advice about possible presenters. It's a great crowd to mix with.

Outline: How do students and teachers feel about Design in Secondary School in your experience?

Fiona: Teaching Design in Secondary Schools can be one of the most rewarding jobs. Students at senior levels are keen to learn about design and seem to soak up

{PROFILE}



is an alphabet inspired by Australian birds and letterform to create an alphabet. The TAFE students did a pretty good job with their alphabets also!

I was teaching a digital drawing unit at Secondary School and TAFE that focussed on creating pattern repeats to create seamless patterns for textile applications. I developed lots of pattern examples to find out what problems the students would encounter when they attempted the task, and got so excited about the process that I ended up opening a shop on Spoonflower, where my patterns can be purchased as lengths of fabric. With all of this happening, I designed and published a website with links to all of my work.

Outline: You mentioned you have 25 years experience as a teacher. Do you feel that secondary school design teaching changed significantly over this time?

Fiona: I began as a teacher of Graphic Communication in 1983, was sent to regional Victoria, and taught students, mostly boys, at Secondary school how to produce 3rd angle orthogonal drawings of car components - so yes, it has changed, thankfully! Freehand drawing and concept development has a greater focus, and Graphic Communication is now called Visual Communication Design. A new VCE study has just been released this year for Visual communication Design and there is a focus on Design Thinking and Typography, to my sheer delight!

Outline: What aspects of design and communication inspire students the most?

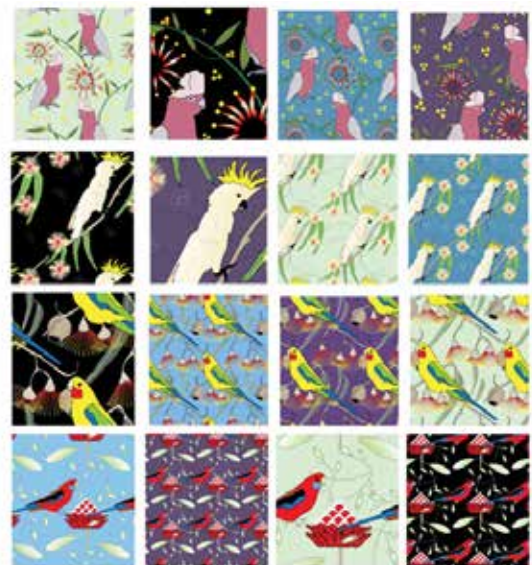
Fiona: One thing that I have learnt as a Design teacher, is that not everyone is creative. And not everyone has ideas. I

information so readily. Students at younger levels are often waiting outside the design room door, after lunch, ready to break it down to begin their art and design lesson!

Now, as Education Officer, I can share all of this with the teachers, most of whom have as much passion and excitement about design as I do. Like IA, working for a not for profit organisation that has a membership full of energetic, generous and creative people can be a fun space to be in.

Outline: Could you tell us a little about your own illustration practice? Are you influenced by your role working with teachers in a design capacity?

Fiona: I have been inspired by teaching Typography at TAFE. I was introducing Typography to the Certificate IV and Diploma students of Graphic Design at Box Hill Institute of TAFE, and I decided to see how difficult it would be to create an original alphabet, and what Adobe Illustrator tools would be useful to execute the task. I got so carried away that I completed an alphabet by combining Australian plants and letterforms constructed in Illustrator, called it Typotany, and applied it to tea-towels, cards and gift wrap, and now it sold throughout Australia in a range of Botanic Gardens and Art Gallery outlets. This has led to my second product range called 'Words of a Feather' which



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Website <http://www.fionasinclairdesign.com.au/>



see it as a learned skill and students love to be inspired to think creatively. There is nothing better than inspiring a student to come up with an original idea that they can take ownership and be excited by their idea. Sometimes, this is the very first time that the student has developed an idea! As a teacher, you just have to set up the framework - provide exciting lessons, exposure to inspirational role models, go on excursions to challenging and contemporary exhibitions and build up student's skills to produce work. Not a big ask, really.

Outline: Are there any stories of student's work that has really astounded you?

Fiona: I am astounded by students who are only 17 or 18 and have a commitment to design and the creation of original work. What about parties? Why aren't you rebelling against your parents? I admire the maturity of students who are motivated, can instigate independent projects and follow them through to a great design. There are probably 1 in 100 who create the images for Tumblr, that the other 99 reblog. It's those 1 in 100 who I love to meet and work with.

Outline: Are there any current resources (perhaps that you are discussing with teachers!) that you can recommend to the IA members? Eg exhibitions, online resources etc.

I create Resources for Visual Communication Victoria and my most recent one is a CD that explores the process of Design and follows the process that I have been through to create a range of products. Included is a section describing how to create pattern repeats and some task for students to complete.

Lots of information regarding great resources comes by the VCV office and I either put these up on the VCV website, or in a newsletter to members. This year I started with a link to a Typography video that was lots of fun. I thought

that it was a great way to start the year with your students. Have a look to see what Type you are?

<http://www.pentagram.com/what-type-are-you/>

At present there are two great exhibitions that I have promoted to teachers, that IA members might be interested in - the Polish posters exhibition at the Ian Potter, Melbourne University, and the design exhibition by Stephen Banham, Cluster: Exploring the stories and patterns behind Melbourne street names at the City Gallery, Melbourne Town Hall until 30 July 2013. 📍

