



The Letterpress Project

Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

An interview with Kerry Hadley-Pryce

Q1. What are your earliest memories of books and reading? For example, did you have a favourite or inspirational book?

I was a massive library-dweller, and, as a child, don't remember actually owning many books, but it was Alice in Wonderland that was my cathartic moment. I remember being completely absorbed by it.

Q2. What inspired you to become an author / illustrator?

I can remember always wanting to write – physically hand-write, that is. My parents used to buy notebooks for me, and I used to scribble what I called 'details' into them even before I could write. I loved the look of handwriting on a page (still do) and used to be fascinated watching people actually hand-write anything. Unsurprisingly then, as soon as I could, I was writing words and stories – there are notebooks somewhere full of them. The earliest one that I can remember that makes any sense at all is a story called 'The Dark Night'. I wrote it when I was about six or seven years old, about a long car journey.

Q3. For you, what makes a successful book or illustration?

Hard question, this. I like unusually structured novels – short ones, I like. A novel that makes me work a bit harder to get to grips with.

Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books / plan your illustrations?

I don't. I think if I started doing that, it'd be a killer for any sense of creativity I had at the time.

Q5. What future do you think the physical book has? For example, do you think the electronic book will replace the physical book?

There was a big hoo-haa about e-books replacing physical books a little while back, but I think the existence of e-books has strengthened the need for physical books, actually. Any book lover will talk about the feel and smell of the paper, the cover etc. of a book, and I don't think that will ever go away. If I look at my own collection, there are many books there that aren't available as an e-book, and vice-versa. I like the way e-books have opened up reading possibilities in different ways. The days when most of my luggage was packed with holiday reading books have gone now, and I'm grateful for a stacked Kindle – but that often means I have two versions of one book (the physical book at home, and the electronic version travelling with me.) I think we're living in exciting times as far as publishing is concerned, and I think e-books have done that for us. There's no doubt, though, that readers have a different relationship with words printed on paper to words on a screen, and I daresay there's room for some research there. And of course, it's impossible to get a signed copy of an electronic version, so...

Q6. Are you a book collector? Is there a special book you'd love to own?

I'm not a collector of anything, no. I love Paul Auster and have read all of his novels, and I have a signed copy of 'Leviathan' I'm pleased to say. Sophie Calle is also brilliant, and a special book of hers I already own is called 'Take Care of Yourself' which is a project, rather than a novel – a massive undertaking and a beautiful book (impossible to get as an electronic version, I hasten to add!)