



# Take 3: Illustrators

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Revelations about **Alexis Deacon**, **Polly Dunbar** and **Sophie Windham**.

**Alexis Deacon** <!--break-->

## Biography

Deacon studied Illustration at the University of Brighton, and graduated with a first class honours degree in 2000. He was shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal 2003 for **Beegu** and won critical acclaim at the very start of his career.

## Technique

Alexis's techniques vary but underneath it all is drawing. He tries to avoid tracing roughs or redrawing spreads which means he sometimes uses a photocopier to keep the spontaneity of the first image. For **While You Are Sleeping** he used pencil and wash direct on to paper primed with linseed oil.

## Quote

?Drawing is a compulsion. I spend a lot of time thinking about how to draw and hardly any time as to why. However the joy of bringing something new into the world has a lot to do with it.?

**Polly Dunbar**

## Biography

Dunbar made her first book at school. Since leaving Brighton Art School she has illustrated romper fantasies **Flyaway Katie** , **Dog Blue** and most recently **Shoe Baby** , written by her mother, Joyce Dunbar. Was ?most promising new illustrator? in **Publishers Weekly** Cuffie awards 2004.

## Technique

Polly works in mixed media, using collage, felt tips, crayons, airbrush and sometimes just a simple pencil line. Brilliant colour and graphic exuberance give her art great emotional impact, making her characters (and such characters!) really alive and full of feeling.

## Quote

?I try to keep my work fresh by surprising myself, by having fun with it. If I'm too serious, the pictures fall flat. Sometimes pulling the facial expressions of characters while drawing them helps me draw them right!?

**Sophie Windham**

## Biography

Windham was a teenage art-school drop out, travelled a lot, had exhibitions in Venezuela and Los Angeles but had to draw on the kitchen table. Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal for **Unicorns Unicorns** . Lives in her dream house in Hereford with her family and three ducks.

### Technique

For years Sophie made very slow and detailed pictures in watercolour, but recently, of **Harold and the Duck** , she has switched to much speedier and satisfying pastel and crayon. She is fairly sure this won't last forever but finds it very appealing for now.

### Quote

?Being an illustrator is like keeping a little joy of childhood. I'd love it if a pig knocked on my door wearing a top hat and a waistcoat. I'd invite him in to tea and every cake would have a cherry on top.?

Deacon's **While You are Sleeping** (Random House) is published in October, Dunbar's **Shoe Baby** (Walker) in August and Windham's **Harold and the Duck** (Bloomsbury) in June.

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