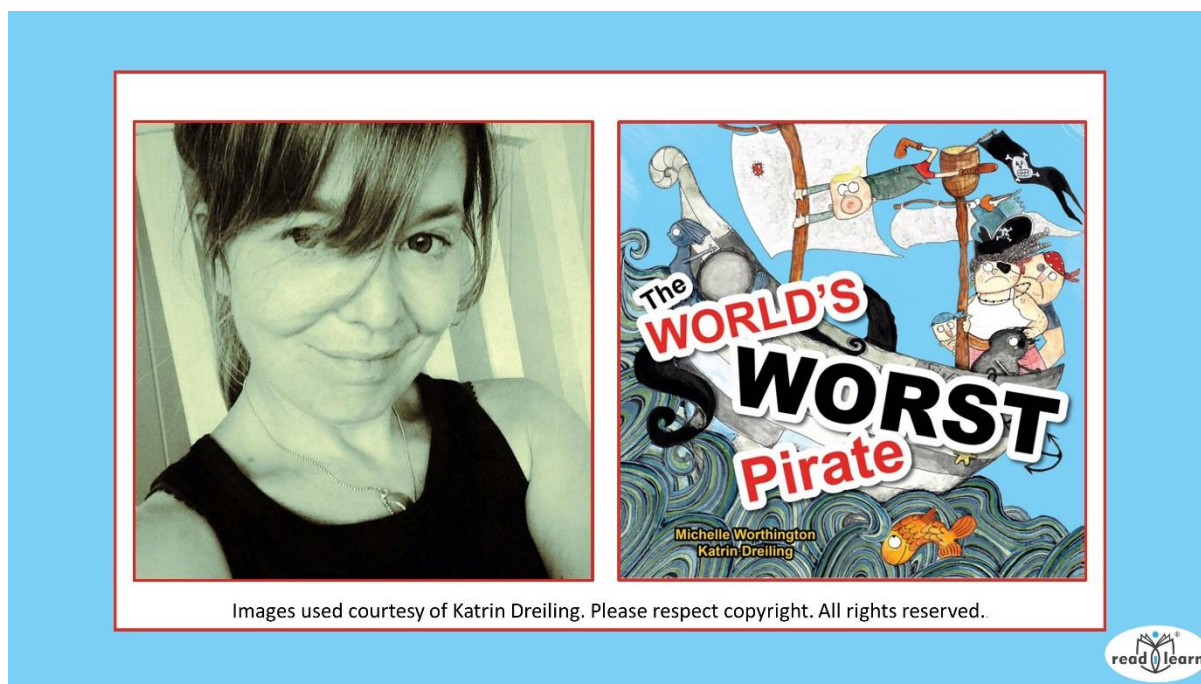




## Illustrator Spotlight: Katrin Dreiling



Katrin Dreiling, Illustrator

***Katrin, The World's Worst Pirate was listed as a Notable Picture Book in the CBCA 2018 Book of the Year awards. Congratulations. Since it is your very first published picture book, that must have been very special. How did it make you feel?***

It was very special to me indeed. When a friend of mine texted me about our Notable listing I almost dropped my phone into the SpagBol I was cooking in a happy shock. I hadn't expected this at all.

***When did you know you wanted to be an illustrator?***

I have always been drawing and coming up with stories ever since I was little. But for several reasons I did not choose this passion of mine to become my profession. Only four years ago I gave up my teaching job to finally make this career happen and I haven't looked back since.

***Do you have a special place for working on your illustrations?***

I usually work in my tiny studio from home. It is not much bigger than a cupboard and guarded by my very big Golden Retriever 'Loki'. Even though it is a small room and often overcrowded and messy I love the light that falls in especially in the mornings. I also love that during after school hours I'm not locked away from my children and their friends but in the middle of the house and in the middle of their lives. It is very inspiring for my work, too.

***What time of day do you most enjoy working?***

Having three very active children means that I have to make the most of the time they are out the house at school. I usually work on projects that require daylight from 9am to 3.30pm and then again do digital or paper work in the evenings.

***What things do you most like to draw (paint or illustrate)?***

I very much enjoy drawing old, vintage things because they look fascinating to me and usually work really well with ink (my favourite medium). Recently I have drawn a gramophone and a typewriter and felt that the results were pretty quirky. Just the way I like it 😊 Apart from that I continuously create human or animal characters on the side. I have just started a series of quirky vegetables, too...

***You have contributed a lot of humour and additional details to Michelle Worthington's story with your illustrations. Where do you get your ideas?***

This might not sound very exciting, but I am just telling how I see the world with my illustrations. It just happens. And as mentioned above, I do get a lot of inspiration from my children and their friends...we have lots of children living in our street and the house is always filled with them and their ideas.

***What media do you mainly use for illustrating?***

I love to mix things up but always include ink somehow. I work traditionally with watercolour, ink, acrylics, coloured pencils, oil crayons, paper collages anything really but also 'clean up' and add more elements digitally.

***Why did you decide to illustrate *The World's Worst Pirate*? What appealed to you about it?***

When I received the manuscript of *The World's Worst Pirate* I was in love straight away without even knowing the author's name. I loved that it deals with following your heart and passion and not giving up on your dreams. I also very much enjoyed the character of Captain Mama and her girl-power. The entire material just opened a big treasure chest of inspiration for me.

***Which part of the story did you especially enjoy illustrating? Why?***

The background story of Bird and Cat has been lots of fun to create mainly because I could just 'go' and did not have to follow a script. I have to add at this point that both Michelle Worthington and Peter and Kathy Creamer have been most supportive and gave me incredible creative freedom all throughout the illustrating process. There is also one little mouse that I included, and it filled me with a mildly mischievous joy: the mouse is the first to see the lurking danger in the water and so becomes a companion 'in the known' together with the reader while the other characters still don't have a clue what is about to happen. I love that.

***What is your favourite illustration in the book?***

I particularly enjoyed creating the cover illustration. I hoped to bring out the quirky essence of the story and all the elements of piracy, ocean and lurking danger in one. Drawing the waves took hours but it felt very relaxing.

***What were you hoping to achieve with your illustrations?***

My artistic goal in general is to create illustrations that look child-like (not childish) so that children can recognise techniques and media they are familiar with, e.g. oil crayons, watercolours or paper collages. It might hopefully inspire them to get creative themselves. At the same time, I need to achieve a certain level of aesthetics attractive to the grown-up eye.

***How did you feel when you were illustrating this book?***

I felt mostly inspired and very well looked after by my publisher. Towards the end of the illustrating process I felt mostly hot and sweaty as we reached Queensland summer... 😊

***How do you hope readers will feel?***

I'd love them to feel excited about the Kraken and wild pirates, amused about the cat and bird story, sympathetic for Will and generally happy and having a great time.

***How would you like teachers to present the book to children?***

I think it would be great for them to present the book two times. First, with all the fun pirates and cupcakes can offer and lots of "Arrghs!". The second time around with an eye for detail, things I have hidden or put in the background (the mouse, Captain Mama's false teeth etc) and Michelle's underlying message: Be yourself no matter what they say. It is such an important message.

***Do you have any advice for teachers when responding to children's artwork?***

I regularly teach art to children and I think it's important to keep a balance between appreciating and respecting when they have doubts about their work and are not happy with the outcome and at the same time not letting these doubts cripple them. The beauty of art is that it is not a science and there is not really a right or wrong, just your own standards.

***Do you have any advice for children when creating artworks?***

Just go and keep going. Don't stop. Try again.

***What is your favourite picture book?***

Currently that would be Beatrice Alemagna's "The Five Misfits". It encourages us to be imperfect.

***Who is your favourite illustrator? What do you like about his or her work?***

I love Beatrice Alemagna for her quirkiness and beautiful messages, both in picture and text. I am also a big fan of Russell Ayto's work and our German classic Janosch.

