

## School Visit Description

I'm happy to speak to all grades. I offer a keynote presentation utilizing images from my books, photographs of my personal history and drawing demonstrations. I also include art history to show how art-making skills are used in general.

For K-2, I generally present for a shorter time period (25-45 min). A younger audience usually has a stronger interest in the stories themselves. While storytelling, I introduce students to some of the basic tools an illustrator uses to help tell the story visually (e.g. color, shape, dark vs. light, etc., as well as the secret pictures within pictures). I talk about the level of importance placed on planning and execution- that a successful book comes together not by accident, but by thoughtful preparation and an open creative spirit. Of course, they like to see me draw, too!

As the age of the audience increases I add more (35-60 min). In addition to demonstrating the tools an artist uses to create a picture (perspective and composition as other examples), I enjoy sharing how an illustrator not only creates images that are in harmony with the story but engages the viewer to see more and feel more than what lies solely in a manuscript. I offer the details in my pictures that may seem incidental, but are actually taken from my personal life experiences. Characters inspired by family and environments reflective of childhood are integral in telling a story in pictures, bringing one's own view of life to the forefront.

Certainly, one of my goals is to infuse an assuredness in young people that their voices are singular and true, yet amazingly universal in appeal. A young person should feel whatever his or her circumstance, resplendent or modest, one's story is worth sharing- there should be no hesitancy in doing so, the challenge lies in the art and poetry of it.

For the most part, I'm as comfortable telling a story and talking about picture-making as I am talking about the craft of illustration academically. The more sophisticated the audience (I enjoy presenting to middle schools and high schools), the greater the potential for further discussions about the challenges and opportunities for artful personal expression.

I'm happy to answer specific questions and address any concerns openly.

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