

# KAITLIN BECKETT



MEET SELF-TAUGHT ARTIST, KAITLIN BECKETT, WHO CREATES CURIOUS BEASTS OF THE SEA, AIR, LAND AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS.

**Where do you find the inspiration for your characters?**

I grew up watching nature documentaries and reading books about strange and imaginary creatures. Films like Star Wars, Labyrinth, the Dark Crystal & The Never Ending Story came out during my impressionable years. I also have a collection of WWII-era flying goggles and gas masks that show up on my beasts from time to time... and few years ago I started scuba diving, hence the fish phase.

**What themes and ideas do you like to explore in your work?**

Often it's other people that tell me they've noticed certain themes in my work... such as masks, things being bound or tied together, things that look like other things. One

thing I love is when people tell me what they think a piece means, or what is happening to a creature and flesh out the character for me... I like it when people form an individual opinion on the meaning of the work, and how different the meanings can be from person to person.

**What mediums do you use to create your paintings?**

Normally I work with inks, watercolours and pastels on canvas. I bought an airbrush about a year ago which I use in the first stages of the piece, that has been awesome and makes it much easier to play with the colour and shading. Sometimes I like to embellish my pieces with metal leaf and iridescent pigments. I've also lately been working with coloured pencils on paper, and plan to play with more of a collage approach... and maybe work with wood and polymer clay.

**What obstacles or challenges have you had to overcome in your career?**

I all but gave up art after doing it at school. Everyone was supposed to paint still lifes with jugs and fruit and do underpainting and big sweeping brushstrokes. I absolutely hated the curriculum, it was so completely opposite to what I wanted to do as an artist, and I wasn't good enough to fake it... so I did badly and became disillusioned. It took me a really long time to trust my own artistic voice again.

**What is the best advice that you have been given?**

I've always liked the saying 'with hard work you can achieve anything'. No one will hand you your career on a silver platter. It amazes me how many people seem to sit around and wait for something to happen to them.



**And what advice would you like to pass on to others?**

Hmm, not sure if I'm really qualified to advise anyone! I guess people should really listen to their own artistic voice, and don't let it be drowned out by others telling you what you should be doing, what's cool right now, what is more likely to sell etc. - you might be steered down a path that leads you away from where you really want to be.

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# RANDOLPH THE ADVENTURE HOG COLLABORATION

**AN INTRIGUING SENTENCE ON THE WEBSITE OF KAITLIN BECKETT SPARKED AN IDEA AND AN EXCITING COLLABORATION PROJECT.**

The sentence simply read *"Things I like: Feathers. Masks. Spikes. Goggles. Beaks. Hearing Trumpets. Rockets. Robots. Fishes. Crowns. Buckles. Viscera. Lobotomy paraphernalia. Do feel free to post these things to me in return for a most favourable response!"*

I have to admit it appealed to my inquisitive nature and I could not resist asking Kaitlin if anyone had ever sent her anything in the post. "Ha ha, no, no one has sent me anything yet! I updated my site a few months back and put that text on there but so far no random posted things have been forthcoming."

Luckily Kaitlin was enthusiastic when I suggested making a new art piece from my found objects.

All that was needed was to find the objects! I set out on my mission armed with a list of objects that might inspire Kaitlin's creativity.

The task was turning out to actually be a lot harder than I thought. It was extremely difficult to find any "Goggles, Beaks, Trumpets and Lobotomy paraphernalia, etc" in my local op shop.

Luckily on my way out the door I spotted a ceramic figurine of a hedgehog. The ceramic hedgehog had a strange look on it's face as though it was saying "I've been waiting for you to come along and take me home". Kaitlin's list didn't say anything about a love of hedgehogs but I decided to take the risk anyway.

I mulled over more ideas for objects over the next few days and on a walk one afternoon I found a feather which had a striking green and purple iridescent glow. I had the second object!

A look around at home secured object three, four and five. The third was an old bottle found in a flea market in Berlin. The fourth was a multi-coloured hand bag picked up on another op shop trip, and the final object was an old Flexaret medium format camera that my husband and I had recently purchased on a trip to Prague.

Once I had all five objects it was just a matter of laying them out and photographing them from every angle so that Kaitlin would be able to accurately draw them. I sent the images off to her and crossed my fingers that she would find my objects inspiring.

Kaitlin responded shortly afterwards "I'm definitely seeing a curious beast in my mind, made from some of those things..."

Kaitlin set to work on creating... Randolph the Adventure Hog!



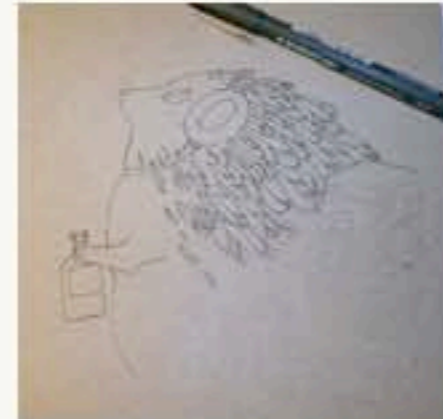
# HOW IT ALL CAME TOGETHER THE CREATIVE PROCESS



1. My tiny thumbnail sketch, a larger version (on tracing paper), a piece of card the right size and a printout of the camera, bottle and feather.



3. Playing around with colours on the feathers and the bottle. Coloured pencil and ink with a dip pen.



5. Drawing with a fine tip marker over the pencil on the card.



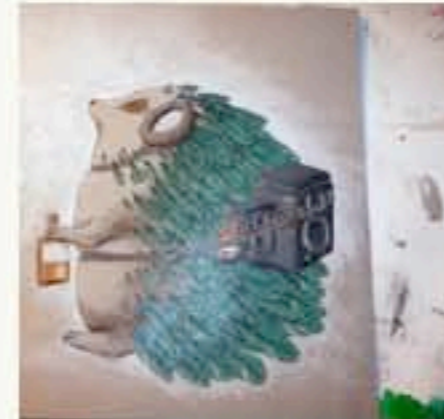
2. Drawing with a fine tip marker over the pencil on the tracing paper. I always work on tracing paper at first as I can layer the sketches and hold them over colours. If I'm working on a drawing and it's not quite right, but I can't figure out why, I flip the tracing paper, looking at it backwards. This seems to make the thing that is bugging me about it more clear.



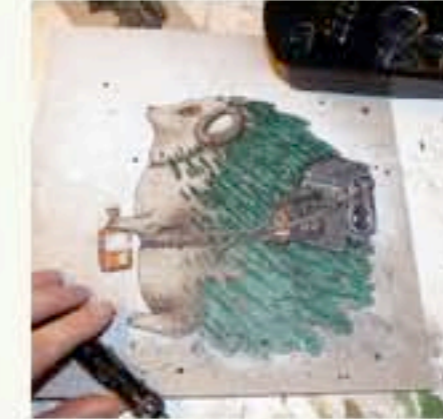
4. I used the tracing paper to transfer the image to the card. The card is recycled and quite thick. I went to a Sydney market that had a kind of 'junk shop' and I got this stack of card for super cheap. I liked the colour and texture of it. I also did a little camera test run too.



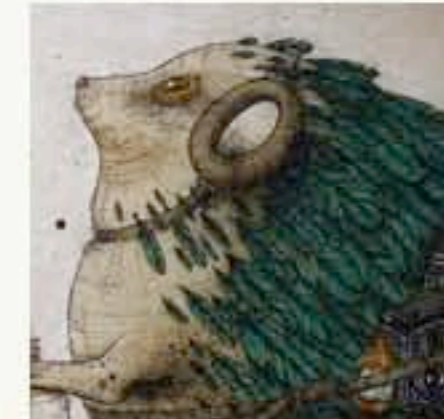
6. White ink - painted on with a brush, squeezed on with a sponge and flicked on with that 'flicky' thing.



7. Filling in the drawing with the coloured pencils.



9. I draw over it again with the black ink and dip pen, adding the lines and dots and feather detail. I also put some white details on the cameras.



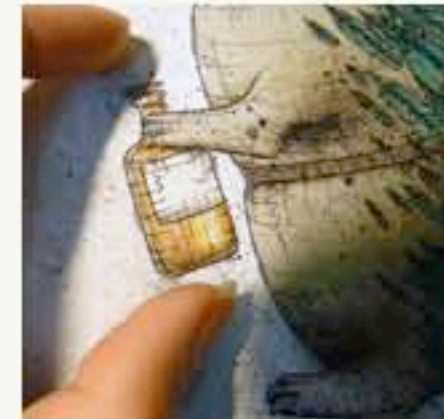
11. A little more shading added with a deer foot brush, and I'm done!



8. Black paint flicked and dripped over the coloured pencil. I like the texture. The splatters of paint don't absorb into the surface as it's all waxy from the coloured pencil.



10. All the ink detail is finished.



12. An image to show the scale of the piece. The final piece measures about 20 x 20cms.

# RANDOLPH THE ADVENTURE HOG

It's hard not to be overawed by the final art work by Kaitlin. The achingly exquisite details, the execution and above all the way she breathed life into this little character.

Kaitlin took inspiration from the different objects in the photo and incorporated these elements into her final piece, "I liked the shapes of the camera and bottle, and the greenish tint to the feather..."

"He is 'Adventure Hog'... my boyfriend named him, and I thought it fitted perfectly. He is a feathered hedgehog which kind of fits in with the feathered rats I've done recently."

The 'Adventure Hog' needed a first name and 'Randolph' seemed to fit well with his roly-poly frame and friendly disposition.

Thus 'Randolph the Adventure Hog' was born! And like all good folk heroes he went on to inspire stories to be written about him...

## KAITLIN'S INTERPRETATION

"I think his story is that he found the cameras and bottles, and thought the cameras might be some kind of rocket or jet pack so he strapped them on. The liquid in the bottle might be some kind of fuel so he poured it into the cameras, but nothing happened, which is why he's looking wistfully up to the sky."

## BEC'S INTERPRETATION

"My version of the story depicted is that Randolph is an explorer. By drinking the potion in the bottle Randolph is able to grow feathers for a short time so he can fly to faraway places and have exciting adventures.

Of course when he returns to tell his hedgehog friends of his adventures they never believe him.

Determined to prove he isn't a liar Randolph is taking the cameras with him on his next adventure to

take photos and prove he's telling the truth.

The cameras are strapped to him so he doesn't lose them during the flight - and because it's obviously hard to hold things with such a small arm span.

The second bottle of course is so he will be able to make the journey home by drinking more of the potion and re-growing his feathers"

## YOURTURN!

If you have been inspired by Randolph and have your own interpretation we would love for you to share it with us!

Please email Bec at:  
editor {at} blanketmagazine.com

