



Book Design Australia Pty Ltd

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: LENNY PELLING

Lenny Pelling has worked as an illustrator and designer alongside and within my business, Book Design Australia Pty Ltd, since 2002. I'd like to tell you about that very positive experience, as I feel sure that you'll want to work with Lenny too.

I hope that you've been excited by Lenny Pelling's portfolio of work, just as I have been. Of course, the response you and I have shared is a subjective thing—and it's hard to put into words. But there's another side to choosing to work with an illustrator: you and I both want to work with someone dependable, energetic and resourceful. Luckily, those qualities are more objective—and they're easier to put into words.

There's an enduring misconception about hiring people who are highly creative. You may worry that in unleashing a truly lateral thinker you'll struggle to channel their creativity. You may dread a result that's highly original, yes, but fails to fulfil your brief. But when working with Lenny, those anxieties evaporate. She approaches each project with both sides of her brain. She's creative and organised, while her artistic sensibility is matched with common (and business) sense.

It has been a particular pleasure for me to see Lenny grow as an illustrator. She has experimented with diverse new media and styles with great success: while, paradoxically she's crystallised her own personal style. It's a style best seen in her portfolio, but it's vigorous, colourful, and has a unique bubblyness—*curviness*—that enchants young readers.

Perhaps to know Lenny is to recognise why her work is so appealing to her readership. Her work is leavened by a child-like (not *childish*) sense of humour and fun, which makes the characters she's developed immediately appeal to young people. But the work is never saccharine and always genuine, and I think that's why adults are also drawn to Lenny's view of the world.

When we worked together on the global *X-Zone* series for co-publication by Scholastic and McGrawHill, Lenny created The Critter. He's a guide to the books who is both wily and innocent. Designed to be a peer and friend to young readers, the little yellow character adds a light and cheeky touch to the series. Lenny managed significant pressures of time and budget to develop over 250 illustrations of the critter in different guises. Each painting was both consistent and fresh, and gave her readers (and colleagues) many genuine belly laughs.

But Lenny approaches her work seriously, too. In preparing non-fiction illustrations for educational publishers, Lenny has happily completed considerable independent research.

When that's combined with her own general knowledge and wide range of interests, she has saved many hours of her clients' time.

In publishing, it's all-too-common for illustrators to miss deadlines and cause delays. Lenny, by comparison, has always met or exceeded the most punishing schedules. She's agile and happily adapts her style to her client's needs. I've seen her respond to the most complex or lacklustre brief (often my own!) with a clear-eyed and evocative solution. It's little wonder that Lenny is soon at home on most publishing teams.

With such a good problem-solving reputation, Lenny has been called upon to help publishers on difficult jobs at short notice, and has always worked diligently to present high-quality illustrations on time and on budget. But I urge you not to pigeonhole Lenny simply as a 'crisis-averter'. Instead, give her a thoughtful brief, genuine respect and a sensible timeframe, and you'll see her work really shine.

Lenny most enjoys working in traditional media, which give her paintings a genuine texture and depth. However, she's able to back that up with a good working knowledge of the industry-standard computer software. This means she's able to handle the complex steps of scanning and colour-correcting her own illustrations, right through to final placement on the page. Working with a range of illustrators across Australia, I find that a godsend, and another reason why clients nationally and internationally have been keen to work with Lenny.

While she's an illustrator at heart, Lenny has helped me in the design of a number of books. In that process, Lenny demonstrated her particular affinity for, and sensitivity to, the unique demands of successful books. She's able to work with a raw manuscript through the steps of pagination, flat planning and layout, paying particular attention to the rhythm and progression of the book.

Lenny and I have worked side-by-side in a number of situations: we've both been contracted to the same publishing clients, she's worked on contract for me, and we've developed our own projects together. At all times, Lenny has demonstrated her professionalism, warmth and tenacity to her colleagues and clients.

I am about to move my home and business to England, but I feel sure that despite the hurdle of distance, I'll have a strong professional link with Lenny for years to come. I commend her to you without reserve.

If I may provide you with any further information or help, please contact me via email: stuart@bookdesign.com.au.

Warm regards, and best wishes for your publishing project,



Stuart Gibson
DIRECTOR

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