

TRISH BURGIO, Illustrator

Interview by Carol Peterson

CAROL: Thank you, Trish for this opportunity to chat with you about picture books. And huge congratulations on your new picture book, *Snowpeople!* Could you share with us how you were selected to illustrate this book?

TRISH: I GOT A CALL FROM HARPER COLLINS. THE AUTHORS FOUND A SAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF ART THEY WERE LOOKING FOR ON SCBWI'S WEBSITE (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators). I WAS LUCKY TO GET THIS WORK. BOTTOM LINE IS THAT YOU HAVE TO BE PROUD OF YOURSELF AND YOUR EFFORTS. I HAD TO CREATE ONE PAINTING EVERY TWO DAYS AND WISH I HAD MORE TIME.

CAROL: Could you describe the collaboration involved between you, the publisher, and the author?

TRISH: THERE WAS A CONFERENCE CALL BETWEEN SAKS, MYSELF AND HARPER. I HAD READ THE MANUSCRIPT PRIOR AND MADE NOTES AND LISTED QUESTIONS. I WAS OPEN TO WHAT THEY WANTED AND THEY WERE VERY KIND IN LISTENING TO MY OPINIONS AS WELL. I HAD MET THE WRITERS FOR LUNCH BECAUSE I WAS IN THEIR AREA.

CAROL: Could you describe your process of visualizing and planning to illustrate *Snowpeople*? Did you have something that inspired you – either some special part of the story that piqued your interest or something from your life experiences that inspired you as you were illustrating this book?

TRISH: I KEEP THINGS SIMPLE: WHAT WORKS FOR THE STORY, THE TIME DEADLINE AND WHAT DO I FIND FUN TO DRAW AND PAINT? THEN I START TO SKETCH AND CAREFULLY, SLOWLY, CREATE WHAT FEELS FUN.

CAROL: I think our audience would love to know that you sold your original artwork to Saks Fifth Avenue to hang in their restaurants and that they created special desserts to accompany your artwork. And Saks decorated their NYC department store windows this Christmas, using *Snowpeople* as the theme. That has got to make you feel pretty proud!

TRISH: WHENEVER SOMETHING I HAVE CREATED GETS PUBLIC ATTENTION, MY FEELING IS NOT ONE OF EGO SATISFACTION BUT CLOSER TO WONDERING WHAT CAN I DO NOW? WHAT'S NEXT? THE SATISFACTION YOU SPEAK OF, CAROL, FOR ME COMES AS I AM CREATING A PIECE. AT THAT MOMENT I FEEL GOOD, PROUD OR POSSIBLY NOT.

YOU CAN SEE A WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE EVENT FOR SAKS WITH MARLO THOMAS AND THE OWNER OF SAKS ON THEIR WEBSITE, <http://www.saksfifthavenue.com/Entry.jsp> CLICK ON 'WATCH THE VIDEO.'

WITH RESPECT TO BUYING THE PAINTINGS FOR THEIR ARCHIVES, I FEEL 'ART IS A STORAGE PROBLEM UNTIL IT GETS SOLD.' HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THAT QUOTE? IN THE END, EVERYONE INVOLVED IN 'SNOWPEOPLE' DID THEIR JOB WELL. THE BOOK AND WINDOWS LOOK GREAT, THE BOOK IS SELLING AND THAT IS THE BOTTOM LINE.

CAROL: You've worked for many years in animation, right? What are some of the studios you've worked for?

TRISH: WARNER BROTHERS, HANNA BARBERA, DISNEY, RENEGADE

CAROL: How did your experience in animation affect other areas of your art career?

TRISH: WHEN I WORKED ON BATMAN IN THE EARLY 1990'S AND DRAWING 40 HOURS PER WEEK, MY SKILLS TURNED AROUND 180 DEGREES. I WAS SURROUNDED BY SO MUCH TALENT THERE AND ALWAYS SO IMPRESSED BY OTHER'S ABILITIES.

CAROL: Did you always know you wanted to be an artist?

TRISH: NO. NOT UNTIL I TURNED 18. I HAD TO HAVE A MAJOR IN HIGH SCHOOL AND CRAMMED ALL MY COURSES IN MY SENIOR YEAR. MY MIDDLE SISTER IS THE ROLE MODEL I HAD FOR CONTINUING MY EDUCATION AND ATTENDING COLLEGE.

CAROL: When did you know you wanted to illustrate children's books?

TRISHG: IT WASN'T A SINGLE MOMENT. I LEARNED DIFFERENT AVENUES OF CREATIVITY BY WORKING WITH SO MANY CREATIVE PEOPLE WHO'S TALENT I REALLY RESPECTED. SOMETIMES CHILDREN'S BOOKS FELL INTO PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR ANIMATION AS INSPIRATION.

CAROL: Do you have any other projects – either children's books or other areas of art – that you are working on that you'd like to share with our audience?

TRISH: WHEN THINGS ARE COMPLETED, IS THE TIME TO UNVEIL IT.

CAROL: Do you have a project that is especially close to your heart that you want to pursue in the future?

TRISH: I NEVER DID THINK OF CREATIVITY ON TERMS OF 'CLOSE TO MY HEART' OR BEING A 'DREAM COME TRUE.' IT IS FAR EASIER TO ACKNOWLEDGE CREATIVE AESTHETICS IN THE PRESENT MOMENT.

CAROL: Do you have a favorite children's writer that you would like to work with one day?

TRISH: NOT PARTICULARLY. JUST READING A MANUSCRIPT GIVES ME A FEELING OF WHAT I COULD CONTRIBUTE. I DID LOVE 'CURIOUS GEORGE', 'AMELIA BEDELIA', 'GO DOG GO', AND 'WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE' GROWING UP AND STILL DO.

CAROL: Do you have any advice for aspiring illustrators?

TRISH: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TAKING ARTISTIC LICENSE AND DRAWING ACADEMICALLY CORRECT.

CAROL: Do you have advice for parents or teachers who want to inspire their children in art?

TRISH: FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE AND ALLOW THE PROS TO EXPLAIN THE NEGATIVE.

CAROL: Is there anything I haven't asked you that you would like our audience to know?

TRISH: BEING UNIQUE IS GOOD FOR MY SOUL.

CAROL: Trish, thank you so much for spending time at thewritemarbles. Congratulations again on *Snowpeople* and the very best of luck on its success!

CAROL: Marble readers: You can see Trish's wonderful illustrations and listen to Marlo Thomas read *Snowpeople* by going to:

http://www.saksfifthavenue.com/main/StJude.jsp?PRODUCT%3C%3Eprd_id=845524446164634&ASSORTMENT%3C%3Eeast_id=1408474399545537&bmUID=1197198072096