

Sarah O'Connell

Illustration & Design

Artist Statement

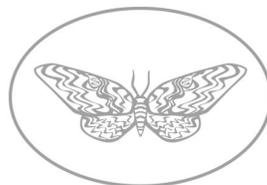
Understanding is at the core of all of my illustrations. My artwork comes from a desire to comprehend the natural world and represent it accurately, and I believe the best way to understand something is to draw it. Scientific Illustration is the perfect solution to combine my love of nature with my desire to understand it, and leaves me with a product that I can use to pass this understanding along to others.

Since understanding and communication are my primary concerns, I often use whatever tools are necessary to create my final illustration. The easiest way to communicate what I have learned is through the use of materials that allow for extreme attention to detail. Graphite is often my first choice when initially drawing a specimen due to its ability to create a variety of textures and its ability to capture minute details. When working in color I will choose watercolor paints, colored pencils, Adobe Photoshop, or a combination of all three based on my specimen. Because of this, many of my final illustrations are mixed media.

Composition is an integral part of the design process for me. I often spend the most time on a project creating a composition which is accurate, didactic, and pleasing to look at. I construct my illustrations with a system of design called Dynamic Symmetry, which offers a visual harmony that echoes what I see in nature. Composition also aids with communication, and an image that is easy to understand is crucial when trying to communicate.

In a similar way to my illustrations teaching science through art, I also hope to teach other artists fundamental drawing skills and pass along the methods of visual communication I have learned through both school and my love of drawing. Since understanding is such an important part of life for me, I hope to try to teach other artists in every way I can, whether that be through research, lectures, illustration, or in the classroom.

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