



Windows into Illustration: Harriet Muncaster

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[Harriet Muncaster](#) [1]

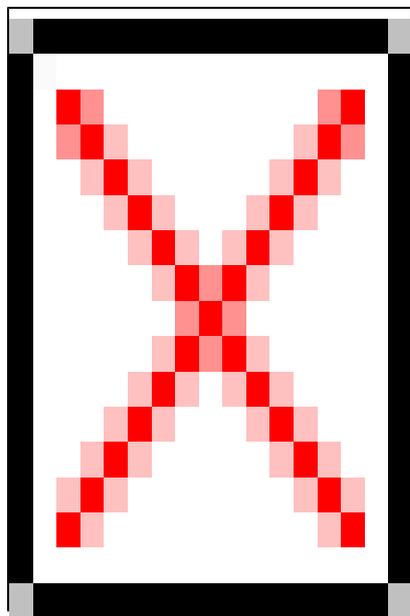
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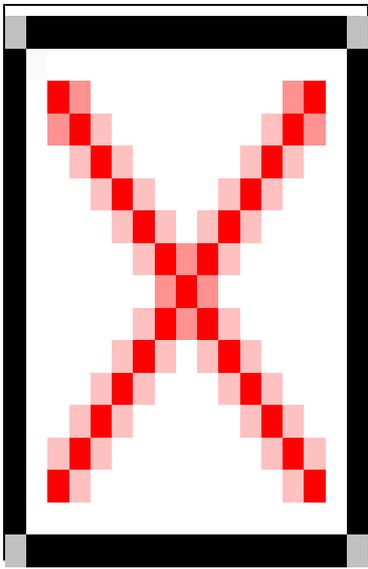
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Windows into Illustration: Victoria Stitch creator **Harriet Muncaster**

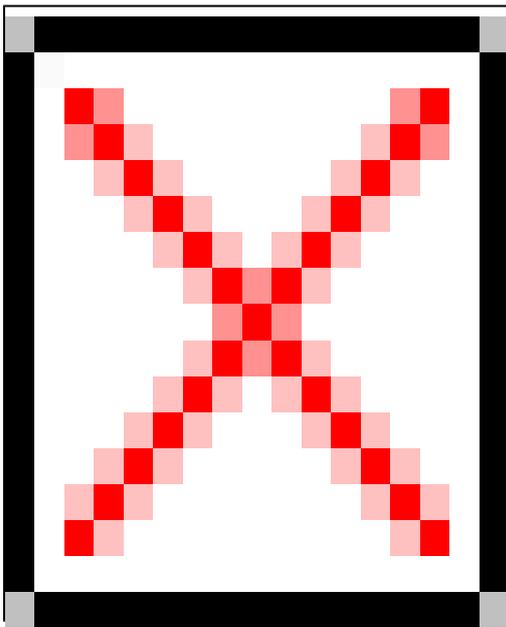


Harriet Muncaster's fairy characters are loved by young readers everywhere: her **Isadora Moon** series has sold over one million copies worldwide and has been translated into over 30 languages. In this special **Windows into Illustration** feature, she describes creating **Victoria Stitch** in miniature for the cover of her new series and the mix of techniques she used.

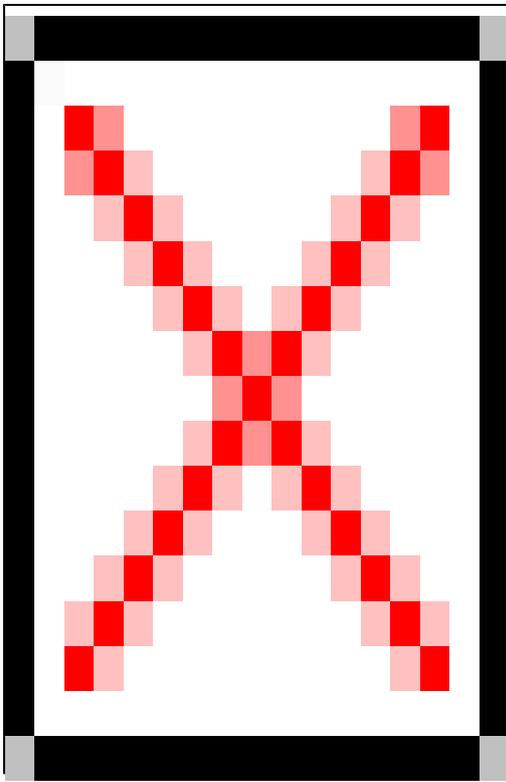
Victoria Stitch is a book very close to my heart. It features a magical, glittering world where miniature, fairy-like characters (called Wisklings) live in a beautiful, idyllic wood. The protagonist of the story, **Victoria Stitch**, is unhappy. Born from a diamond, she should be next in line for the throne but due to an impurity in her birth crystal she has been denied her royal birth right. In stark contrast to the rest of Wiskling Wood, **Victoria Stitch** cuts a dark, gothic, brooding figure. She is stars and darkness, frost and glitter. Mischief in a teacup. I wanted to be able to convey all these things on the cover of my book, **Victoria Stitch: Bad and Glittering**. I wanted it to look magical, pretty and whimsical but with a streak of darkness running through it, just like the world and characters in the story.



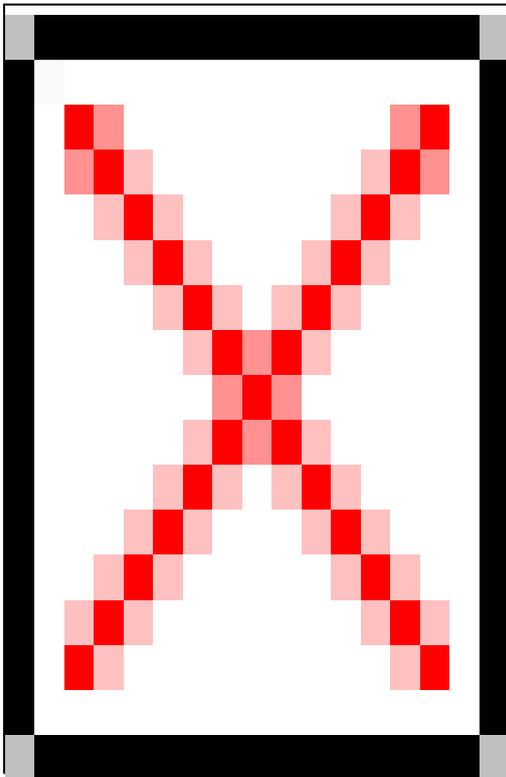
After MANY sketches, experimentation and back and forth with my publisher we finally settled on a rough design for the cover of the book. I was excited that my publisher was enthusiastic to include a photographed 3D element on the cover as one of my passions is miniatures. I used to create a lot of my illustrations in 3D out of paper, card and fabric and then photograph them. I love the tactile look of images that have been created using real objects. I also spend a lot of time just creating tiny characters, clothes and accessories anyway ? it's a hobby of mine. So it was nice to be able to include a hint of that on the cover of Victoria Stitch.



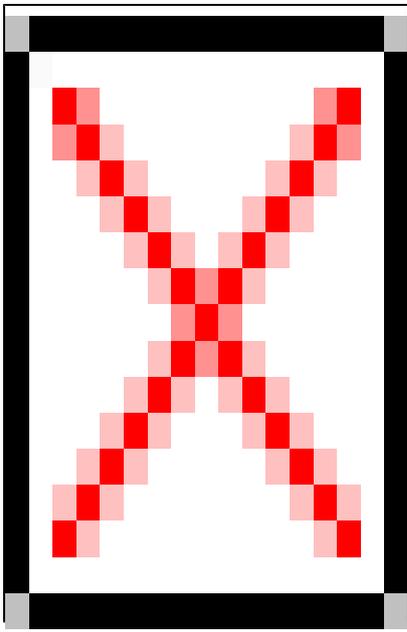
I started by drawing my character and then cutting her out very carefully, just like a paper doll! Then I set about making her a big puffy glamorous skirt out of netting and some iridescent fabric and covered it in glitter and sequins. I got a large piece of paper and used chalk pastels to colour a gradated background in purple and green (witchy colours I always think) and then set up my paper doll (Victoria Stitch!) on the large piece of paper with it curving up behind her. Then I took a photo. The 3D image of Victoria Stitch went down well with my publisher and the rest of the cover was actually designed around that.



The next thing to do was put in all the things around the edges of Victoria Stitch ? the log she is standing on, the tree to the left of her and the tree stump palace to the right of her. I drew these using a combination of watercolour and colouring pencils, scanned them in and placed them into the image, obviously fiddling around a lot with hues, saturation, lightness and darkness, to get them to visually fit into the image. I was especially pleased with the green glittery moss on the log that Victoria Stitch is standing on as it is purely just glitter stuck onto my drawing and scanned in. I think it looks really effective and hope that it gives a sense of magic and enchantment to the wood.



Creating the rest of the image is less interesting as I just fine-tuned things on Photoshop, added Victoria Stitch?s little pet draglet, Stardust, and various other bits and bobs including lots of sparkle. I actually ended up changing Victoria Stitch?s hairstyle on photoshop as we decided that she would look more mysterious (and less like my other character Isadora Moon) with a hooded cape on. Originally she was wearing a 3D metal crown which began as a crown charm on my necklace, but the publisher and I both agreed it was too overpowering.



Overall, the cover image for **Victoria Stitch Bad and Glittering** is a real mixture of techniques. It has photographed 3D elements, hand drawn elements and some photoshop to pull it all together. I am really pleased with the result (especially the 3D skirt!) and I hope it conveys a mixture of magic, whimsy, glamour and darkness. I hope I managed to carry this vibe through the book with the internal illustrations too.

Victoria Stitch: Bad and Glittering [3] is published by Oxford Children's Books, 978-0192773579, £6.99pbk.

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