

Kate Hansen
February 2020

I've always lived close to the ocean, a source of endless joy and inspiration. There's always something new to see... along the water's edge, buried in the sand, tucked among the rocks in tide pools, or swimming just offshore. I've spent hours poking along, picking things up and wondering how in the world these creatures became the way they are. How did this thing get like THIS?

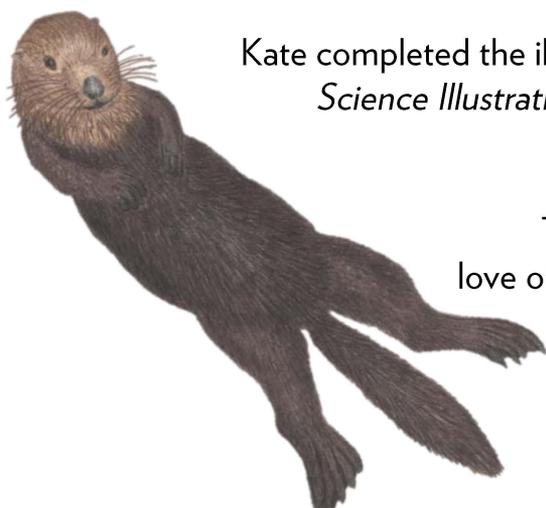
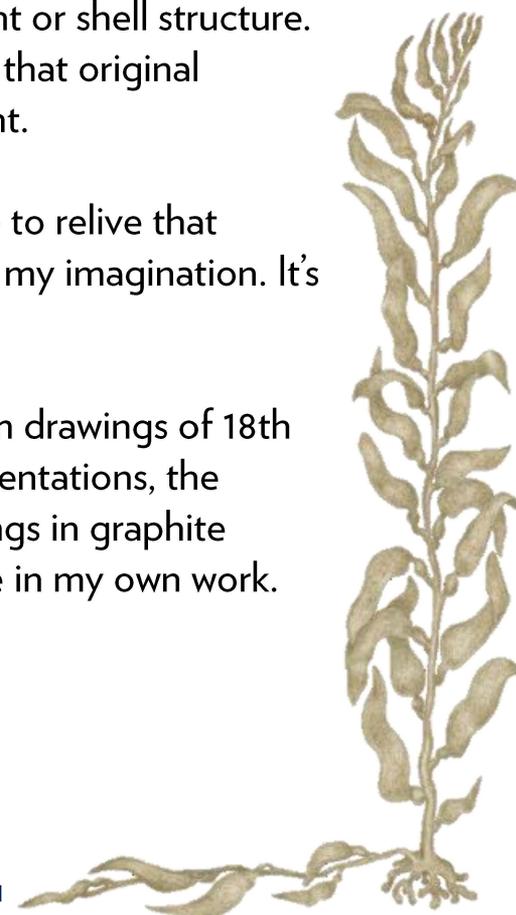
Washed up kelp, a broken crab carcass, jellyfish and sand dollars left behind from the last tide... my biologist curiosity is never satisfied, and I continue to wonder how, what, and why.

I take copious pictures and make quick sketches and notes to document these objects in hopes of both preserving a memory and establishing a basic record to serve as a springboard. Back in my studio I pull down textbooks and field guides to learn more about the object and to clarify structural details, like fin-attachment or shell structure. I want to know them better, but more selfishly, I want to recapture that original whimsical thrill of discovery and that "how in the world...?" moment.

The physical act of drawing is a form of meditation that allows me to relive that original experience along the shore. Random lines and folds tickle my imagination. It's a time when I wonder if fish talk to each other and if crabs mutter.

I'm inspired by the sketchbooks of early explorers and the museum drawings of 18th and 19th century naturalists. The deceptive simplicity of their presentations, the warmth of aged papers, the muted pigments and the soft renderings in graphite present our natural history with an elegance that I hope to achieve in my own work.

It is so beautiful I must show you how it looks.
~ Vincent Van Gogh



Kate completed the illustrations for *Ocean Commotion* as part of her final internship for the *Science Illustration Distance Program (SIDP)*, under the direction of Gretchen Halpert <https://www.gretchenhalpert-distanceprogram.com/>

The SIDP provides an opportunity for those who wish to combine their love of art and science with an opportunity to develop strong rendering skills. Kate has now completed the program and has earned the Certificate of Completion as a Science Illustrator.