

Korky Paul's Top Picks

Korky Paul's exhibition Winnie & Wilbur's Magical Moments celebrates his favourite illustrations from the 22 best-selling picture books. Featuring Windsor chairs taken on the tube and brought into Winnie's home, 2am ink blob turned into black holes, and family trips to the beach joining Sandro Botticelli on the same page, in this podcast we asked Korky to tell us more about his three favourites images of all time.

#1: 1987 Winnie the Witch, pages 08-09



This work is my ABSOLUTE favourite because....

This is from the very first book and it is Winnie sitting on her Windsor chair, with her legs up and Wilbur sitting on her ankles. This gave me what Winnie would look like, it was the development of what she would look like later on. She had the long, skinny legs, the pointy nose and bushy hair.

Years ago in London, I was given the Windsor chair by a carpenter who I did an advertising campaign for him and he paid me with a chair. I had to pick the chair up from his office and carried it onto the tube, and sat on it on the tube! And nobody said a word! That is one of the reasons this is my favourite.

It is also my favourite because I was working out Winnie and what her house looked like, her kitchen, her bookcase, and all her stuff. This picture is what set it off, where all of that came from.

Prior to this I was doing little doodles of how Winnie would look and that is when I did my very first sketch. What does a witch wear? Ah yes - pointy hats! So when I came to draw the finished art, this is when I incorporated the pointy bent over hat. The first house I drew for Winnie was this little cottage with beams and thatched roof. But I thought this was too clichéd, so I thought what is the opposite of a cottage - a stately home! So I thought, she lives in a great, big stately home - she should have a big kitchen!

It is also my favourite because this is the start of how the pages would look. If you look, you can see a border of bricks and then a white area for the text to go in.

#2: 2010 Winnie and Wilbur in Space, pages 14-15



This is my SECOND favourite work because...

This is a picture where she is climbing out of the spaceship and they are surrounded by hundreds of brightly coloured planets. I love this drawing because initially I was going to draw two or three planets, I didn't think planets have colours. Then I started looking at the NASA website - which is an extraordinary website - at the photographs that they had taken in space by various spaceships that NASA had sent up and it is full of colour! It was not black space. So I incorporated that into my planets. I had so much fun making planets from my imagination with different colours and different stripes. I looked at Saturn, which is a kind pinky colour - I used that.

I was sitting in my studio at 2 o'clock in the morning. I am fiddling with the drawing, which is basically finished. I dip my pen into the ink and then I am looking around, when suddenly a blob of ink goes SPLAT onto the drawing, onto one of the planets! A classic

splat blob. This is the hardest thing, knowing when to stop. So I blotted it and got a hairdryer to dry it quickly BZZZZ.

Then I missed some white, opaque paint with some watercolour so I could cover over the black blob, but then I thought hmmm, I think I will extend that black blob, I put a bit of shading around it so it looked like a doughnut hole. I put some little stars in there and you have a black hole in space!

Did you know, if you put a pencil into a blackhole, it would weigh the same as a bus! We can use this as an example to show how strong gravity is and that is what it does, it is bending light.

#3: 2011 Winnie and Wilbur Under the Sea, pages 24-25



This is my THIRD favourite work because...

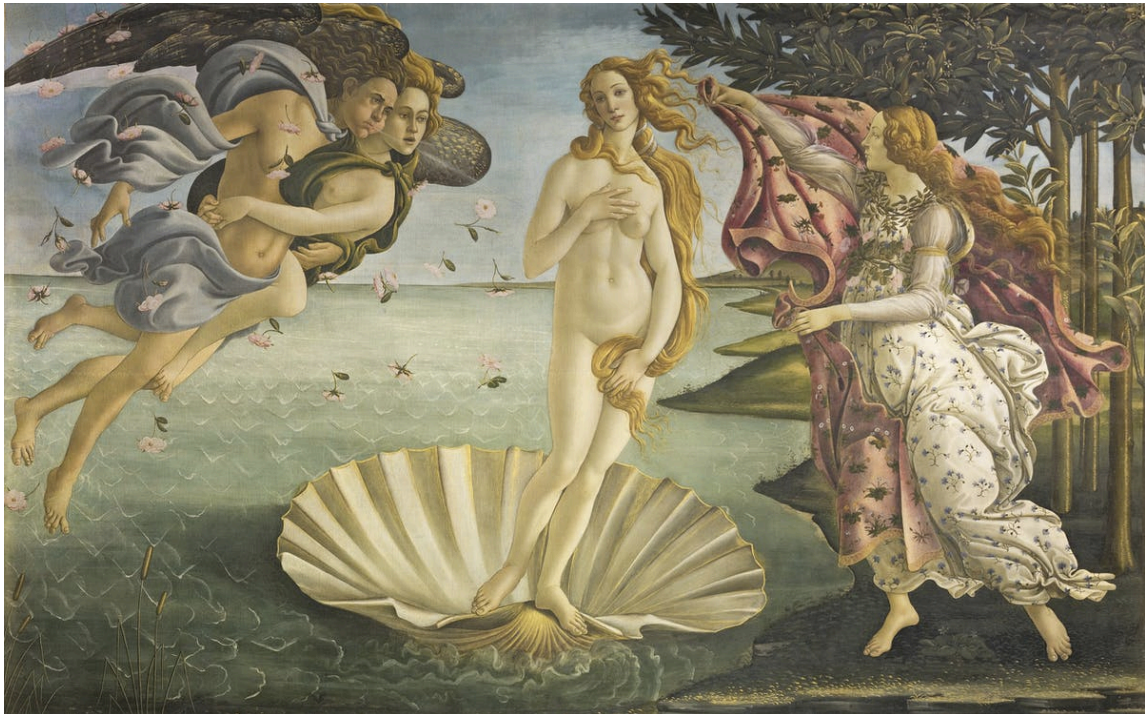
I spend part of the year in Greece and there is this beach on the island that I go where Aphrodite was born, or they claim she was born. She rose out of the foam (Aphro means foam in Greek, dite means god - goddess of foam, goddess of love), saw how rocky and barren this island was and plunged back into the ocean to be born in Cyprus.

It is called Paleopoli beach, and it is instantly recognisable to those who live there. Paleopoli means old city because it used to be an old city in ancient times. In fact, Odysseus came past that beach on his trip back from the Trojan Wars and he got blown off course around Cape Maleas, which is at the bottom of the Pyrenees and got blown to where we think is the land of the lotus eaters. So I like that there is that story there.

I also like that it is an homage to Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* painting, or *Birth of Aphrodite* (Venus being the Roman name for Aphrodite). I wanted to get the shell - this was the key thing. The Botticelli shell is instantly recognisable. So I thought I would copy Botticelli's style so that it looks like it and I put Winnie in there, and Wilbur of course as they come out of the ocean. She looks more demure than Botticelli's Aphrodite with a bathing costume and stuff on.

In the background there is a cliff face, that cliff face has what looks like a face. My children used to call it Posoiden's face, but I changed it to the profile of Winnie's face. You can see it if you look at it carefully. So I really like all of these little references.

Then there is all the stuff on the beach because we used to go to the beach and have a braai or what is known as a barbecue and there is all the diving gear we used to take, our the goggles and stuff. So I like it because it is a remembrance of when I used to take my kids to the beach when they were little.



Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), *Birth of Venus*, ca. 1485, The Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

So those are my three favourite drawings. Where the ideas came from, I have no idea. They seem to just spring into my head!

COMPETITION TIME

What is your favourite Winnie and Wilbur drawing? Pick your favourite, then draw your own version of it. Share your masterpiece by sending us a photo to contact@thenorthwall.com or by tagging @TheNorthWall with the hashtag #KorkyAtHome for a chance to win an original drawing by Korky Paul.

Deadline: 23 January 2021.