



Windows into Illustration: Laura Hughes

Article Author:

[Laura Hughes](#) [1]

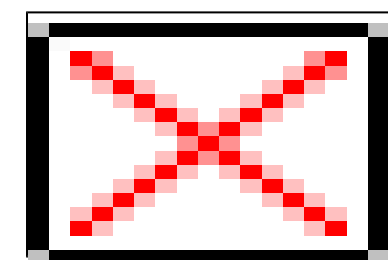
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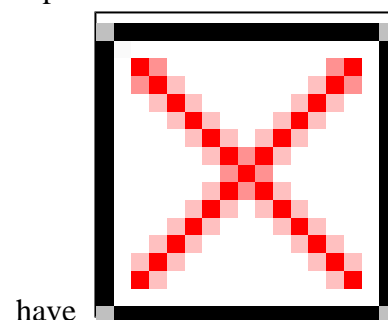
Laura Hughes



Laura Hughes is the illustrator of **There's a Pig Up My Nose**, winner of the **Oscar's Book Prize 2018**, as well as **We're Going on Elf Chase** and the **Ruby Roo** stories. Her loose, energetic illustrations are instantly recognizable. Here she describes the process involved in creating the illustrations for **Mummy's Suitcase**.

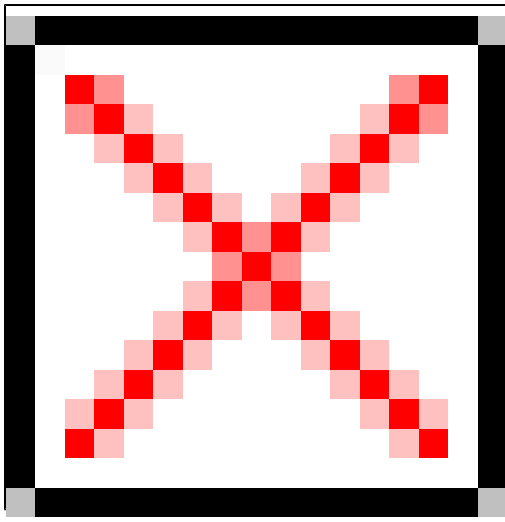
Mummy's Suitcase, by Pip Jones is the fourth title in the **Ruby Roo** picture book series, following on from **Daddy's Sandwich**, **The Chocolate Monster**, and **Quick Barney RUN!** The books feature the main protagonist, Ruby Roo, and sometimes her mum, dad and baby brother Barney.

Pip is such a brilliant and funny writer, and I love all the 'Mum jokes' she has included in the story. I feel very lucky to



have been able to work with her on the **Ruby Roo** books.

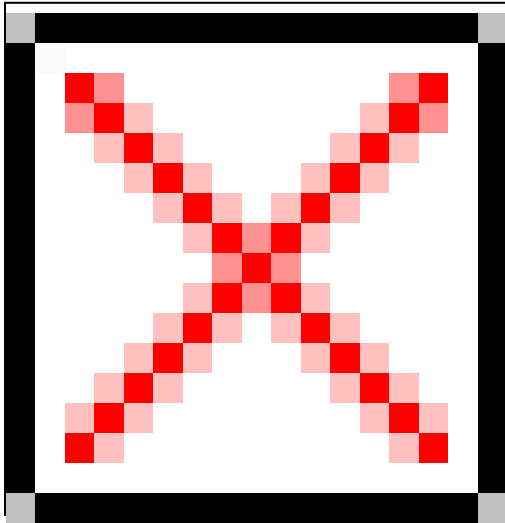
The image I've chosen to talk about features later on in the book. Mum is going away and Ruby decides to pack her Mum's prized roses for her, because she knows her mum loves them, but she's obviously been warned not to touch them, so she decides to dig them up instead! Ruby isn't being intentionally naughty though; she is just trying to be helpful in the best way she knows how to.



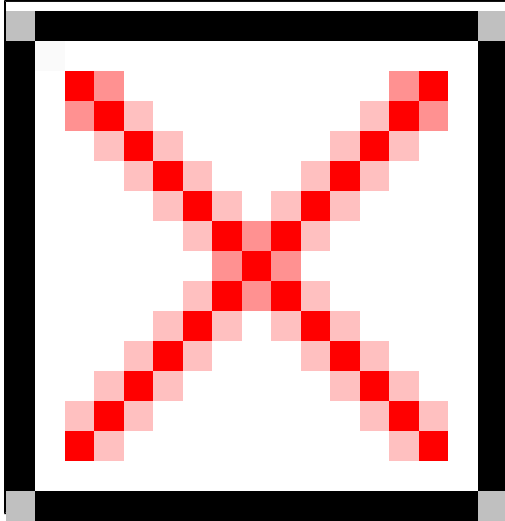
?Mummy loves the roses, but I?m not allowed to pick them, so?

I mostly work ?traditionally?, using gouache paints and inks to create my artwork. The backgrounds are painted as one piece, and then I add the characters towards the end. I do use Photoshop, but I keep it to an absolute minimum, usually to quickly alter a colour, or to correct a mistake.

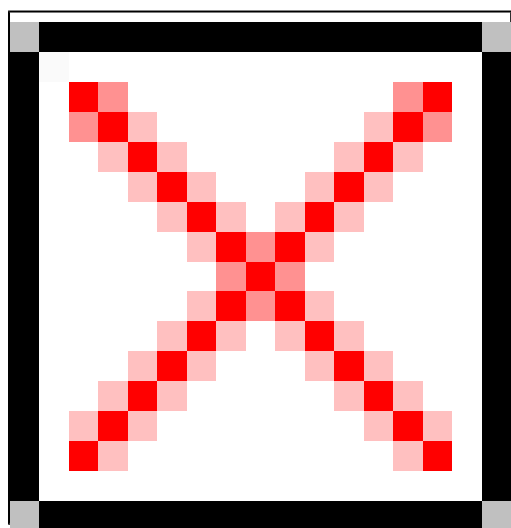
I start my colour illustrations by tracing over my rough ink drawing using a light box. Then, when I?m happy with the layout, I add washes of colour in ink. I do this part quite quickly and dunk the ink onto the paper in a very rough way. I usually make a terrible mess, but sometimes the mistakes make the painting more interesting!



When the first wash of colour is dry, I add outlines and a few of the bigger details, such as leaves, using a dip pen.



Lastly, I paint the flowers and other small details, such as the bees and the butterflies, and add more texture and depth by building up layers of ink. The watering can and the decking are drawn separately on scraps of found paper and collaged into the piece before scanning. I add skin tone digitally as the flat colour acts as a contrast to the texture in the hair and clothes of my characters.



My absolute favourite part of making a picture book is creating lots of things for children to spot. If you're familiar with **Daddy's Sandwich** you might recall that Ruby creates a really silly sandwich made of all the things that her Daddy REALLY loves. For added fun, I have hidden all the ingredients from his sandwich throughout the pages of **Mummy's Suitcase**. Can you spot them all?

Mummy's Suitcase is published by Faber & Faber, 978 0 571 327539, £6.99 pbk

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