

ILLUSTRATIVE MAKER

MATISSE

ABOUT ME

With a background in modelmaking, illustration, character design, graphic design and more, I proudly call myself an illustrative maker: someone who cannot only come up with concepts and stories but also bring them to life with physical craft!

At the heart of my work is a desire to help people and connect with audiences emotionally. I often explore real world topics through lighthearted, character-driven design, using humour and charm to engage and inform audiences of all ages. My recently obtained degree in modelmaking and my prop maker role at Aardman help me materialise practical solutions that are also imaginative, fun loving and bring a smile to people's faces!

EDUCATION

2022 - 2025

Arts University Bournemouth

BA (Hons) Modelmaking - First Class Honours

2025

Aardman Academy

Storyboarding Foundations Course

2020 - 2022

Harrogate Grammar School [A Levels]

Graphic Design (A*), Psychology (A),
Functional Maths (A), Product Design (B)

MY SKILLSET

CAD and CAM: High level experience working with Adobe Suite e.g. Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign. and 3D modelling softwares: Rhino, Fusion360 and Solidworks

Visual Storytelling: An eagerness for engaging audiences, especially children, using imagination and colourful, creative design. Ability to show emotion and depth through illustration.

Time Management: completing multiples tasks simultaneously to a high standard, going the extra mile to help peers reach their deadlines.

Teamwork: I thrive in collaborative environments to deliver exceptional results. I'm personable, adaptable, and always eager to learn from others.

Workshop Machinery: Breadth of experience with tablesaws, bandsaws, mills, metal and wood lathes, vacuum formers, pillar drills, and sanders and more. Extensive metal work experience.

Detailed Miniature Work: Experience creating very intricate small scale props for stop motion.

AWARDS & HONOURS

1st Prize for Under 20s 3D Animation Short Film [2016]

1st & 3rd Prize for Pottery [2017]

Academic Scholarships [2017 - 2020]

Creative All Rounder Award [2017 & 2019]

Design Exhibition at Harewood House [2022]

A Level Graphics Subject Award [2022]

Exhibition at New Blades [2025]

Published Wavemaker Story [2025]

Final Year University Work Published by Clients [2025]

WORK EXPERIENCE

Aardman Animations

PROP MAKER/SET DRESSER TRAINEE [NOV 2025 - CURRENT]

One of three prop makers responsible for producing both hero and background props and overseeing set dressing across multiple units. Contribute creatively to concept development and narrative interpretation. Work closely with animators and directors to deliver high-quality work to schedule, consistently recognised for professionalism and craftsmanship. Can apply strong understanding of character, emotion, and storytelling when dressing sets and interpreting storyboards. Collaborate with lighting and cinematography to ensure visually engaging on-screen results. This role has significantly strengthened my knowledge of the stop-motion animation production workflow.

PROP MAKER/SET DRESSER INTERN [SEPT 2025]

Completed a two-week internship in the art department on an upcoming feature film, assisting with prop creation and set dressing under senior team members. Gained exposure to multiple departments including animation, puppets and storyboarding. As my first experience on set, I learned how collaborative film productions operate while delivering creative work to tight deadlines.

Visa Cash App Red Bull F1 Team (Vcarb)

MODELMAKER [MAR 2024]

Internship collaborating with F1 modelmakers in the bustling model shop department creating replica racecar parts for testing. My refining skills such as sanding, spray painting were enhanced and new skills including electronics and aerodynamics were developed and will be invaluable in future character and set designs.

Freelance

MODELMAKER/STYLIST [JUL - OCT 2025]

Helping to produce high quality models in short time frames for clients from varying backgrounds. Work ranges from moulding and casting; spraying and finishing; wood and metal machining. Job role also involves assisting photographers by styling props and laying out scenes for advert shoots.

Buglife

MODELMAKER [OCT 2024 - FEB 2025]

External client opportunity sponsored by my university. My brief was to highlight the negative impact artificial light at night has on invertebrates. Recognising the complexity and often misunderstood nature of this issue, I developed an interactive pop-up book to address the topic in a lighthearted and humorous way. My model showcases my talent for merging education with creativity, and will be used during workshops and events. My work is featured on the company's

The Bank of Dreams and Nightmares + The Story Works

ILLUSTRATOR [2024 - CURRENT]

Illustrating children's ideas as they develop short stories during live, creative workshops has enhanced my ability to engage and interact with younger audiences. The children's stories alongside my illustrative work are printed and produced into physical books. My work is featured on the company's website.

Freelance

ILLUSTRATOR [2022 - 2023]

Turning verbal prompts into trendy greetings cards for a comedian. First freelance experience creating contracts, negotiating suitable prices and time scales, and interpreting a client's intentions and goals. Advanced my illustrative skills and my knowledge of Adobe Suite tremendously - learning to deliver high quality products efficiently.

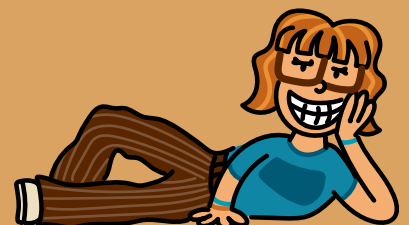
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Professional Reference for Matisse Howells

To Whom It May Concern,

I am very pleased to provide this reference for Matisse Howells, who worked with us as a Trainee Set Dresser & Prop Maker at Aardman Animations from 3rd Nov 2025 – 11th Feb 2026. Before being selected for this Trainee Role, she also completed a 2 week internship with us at Aardman Features in September 2025 on the upcoming Shaun the Sheep Feature.

During her time with us, Matisse demonstrated strong creative talent, initiative and a clear commitment to developing her creative practice. As a trainee, she approached tasks with curiosity and much enthusiasm, quickly building confidence in both her technical and creative skills, not to mention gelling really well with the wider set dressing & prop making teams from whom she wasted no time getting advice and guidance.

Matisse contributed meaningfully on our collaboration with Lego project as the only Trainee/Junior on the Team, building props, sets and dressing the units for camera. She showed particular strength in creative design of her props, time management, communication and being a real team player. Matisse was receptive to feedback from the Creative Director and applied it to improve the quality of her work – all while sticking to a tight schedule.

What has stood out most to me about Matisse, from meeting her at her Grad Show New Blades right through to her time on the Lego Project, was her initiative and drive to gain as many experiences and opportunities as she could in our niche industry. Her attitude to seeking work and then delivering on the project as a reliable member of the team is especially important for freelance practice within the Stopmotion industry, I believe she has all the qualities that position her well for a transition into freelance work.

I believe the Freelance Creator Fund would provide Matisse with valuable support at this stage of her career, enabling her to gain more experience and establish herself as a professional creative freelancer. I have every confidence in Matisse's ability to use this opportunity productively and responsibly.

I am due to go onto Maternity Leave starting Mon 9th of Feb, if you need to contact me specifically about this past that point, please do use this email: deborahjanepriest11@gmail.com.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah".

Deborah Jane Harrison
Art & Puppets Talent Manager – Aardman Animations
Deborah.Harrison@aardman.com
27/01/2026

Professional Reference for Matisse Howells

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm very happy to recommend Matisse Howells, who worked as a trainee set dresser and props maker on a (very secret!) short film at Aardman over the past few months as part of the art department team.

Throughout the production, Matisse was consistently reliable, proactive, and enthusiastic. She approached her work with care and attention to detail, and showed a strong willingness to learn and take on new challenges.

Working within a small team meant she was often required to step into the deep end, which she handled very well. She dressed her own sets, contributed fun and creative prop ideas, and remained adaptable throughout.

Matisse communicated clearly, took direction well, and was equally comfortable working independently when needed. She demonstrated good problem-solving skills which came through in the quality of her work.

I would have no hesitation in recommending Matisse for future roles, and I'm confident she will continue to develop into a strong and dependable member of any art department team.

If you require any further information, please feel free to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Danny Gallagher
Producer - Aardman Animations
danny.gallagher@aardman.com