


10-10-2018

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Recommended Citation

Weinstein, Mark D., "Book About Animals That Are Definitely Not Octopuses" (2018). *News Releases*. 777.
https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/news_releases/777

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10, 2018

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Book About Animals That Are Definitely Not Octopuses

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- First, it was a pastime that looked like a side gig. On closer inspection, the side gig began to look like a marketing campaign. Then the marketing campaign started looking like a publishing deal. Like the subject matter of his latest creative endeavor, Gabe Pyle's T-shirt/merchandise/book project keeps morphing into something no one could see before.

Pyle, a 2012 industrial design graduate from Cedarville University and professor at the International Center for Creativity (ICC) from Dayton, Ohio, recently published his first book, "Fourteen Animals (That Are Definitely Not an Octopus)." The children's book was officially released September 17.

As an artist, Pyle followed in his brother's footsteps and started designing T-shirts in his free time. When Threadless, an online T-shirt and accessory design and sales platform, hosted a competition with the prompt, "disguise," Pyle began to research ideas. He had recently viewed a Pixar special on the creation of Hank the octopus from "Finding Dory," and this prompted experimenting with the ideas of octopuses. An hour before the deadline for the contest, Pyle submitted his design: "Twelve Animals (That Are Definitely Not an Octopus)."

Pyle won the Threadless contest and his design became part of the official catalogue for the company. Soon, the website was selling notebooks, mugs, bags and other accessories with the "Twelve Animals" on them. The design took off and showed up on several blogs, websites and octopus fan pages. A publisher representative from Familius Publishing noticed the design and approached Gabe about a book idea.

A few months and two more animals (that are definitely not octopuses) later, the book was complete. It is now sold at numerous bookstores and online retailers.

"This book is a direct reflection and showcase of Gabe's personality and talents," said Jim Stevenson, president of the ICC. "He sees funny, creative and simple things that other people simply overlook, and then presents them in such a personal and approachable way. His talents have impacted so many students at the ICC over the years, and now, with this book, a much larger audience gets to enjoy what we do every day."

After enrolling at Cedarville University as an art major with an interest in engineering classes, Pyle was asked to be a member of the first class of industrial design majors. After graduation, Pyle became a teaching assistant at the ICC while studying online for his master's degree from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. In 2015, he became a full-time instructor at his alma mater, the ICC.

“The ICC inspires creativity in their employees,” said Pyle. “I see my future as an author fitting right in with my career as a professor. I hope to stay with the ICC for a long time.”

Pyle already has plans for new characters and book ideas. He’s currently playing with characters in a series called, “Down Undies” which will feature Australian animals in underwear.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.