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ILLUSTRATOR MARY JANE BEGIN'S *MY LITTLE PONY: UNDER THE SPARKLING SEA* AT NMAI

NEWPORT, RI- On June 29, 2013, the National Museum of American Illustration will host a book signing by acclaimed illustrator, educator, and children's book author Mary Jane Begin at the inaugural debut of her exhibition *My Little Pony: Under the Sparkling Sea*, featuring original illustrations from the recently released book of the same title.

Ms. Begin, with two and a half decades of professional experience as an illustrator and also as a faculty member at the Rhode Island School of Design, was the first living illustrator to have an exhibition of her work at the NMAI, in 2008. The exhibition featured her work as the illustrator chosen for the 100th anniversary edition of the beloved children's classic by Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*, as well as illustrations for books written by Ms. Begin herself, such as *R is for Rhode Island Red*, a retelling of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *A Mouse Told His Mother*, a prequel series for *Wind in The Willows* titled *Willow Buds*, and others.

Doubtlessly based upon the impeccable story telling ability and skill demonstrated in Ms. Begin's previous works, she was selected by Hasbro to illustrate for their popular *My Little Pony* series. *Under the Sparkling Sea*, as the title would suggest, is a story with an aquatic theme, and Ms. Begin does an inimitable job of portraying characters from the well known children's franchise in a setting not commonly associated with ponies. Her bold and intense colors in the undersea environment and nuanced depictions of the facial expressions conveying the characters' wonderment at the strange and new world they experience beneath the waves are superlative.

The NMAI's Summer hours commence Friday, May 24 and last until September 1. During this time, the Museum is open Memorial Day, and every Friday through Sunday, 11am to 5pm, with a guided tour Fridays at 3pm.

For admissions rates, directions, and other information about the NMAI, please visit Americanillustration.org, email art@americanillustration.org, or call 401.851.8949, ext. 18. Books by Mary Jane Begin are available in the NMAI Museum Shop, but visitors are welcome to bring their own copies of Ms. Begin's work to have signed as well. For more information on Mary Jane Begin's artwork, please visit MaryJaneBegin.com.

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The National Museum of American Illustration (NMAI) was founded in 1998 by Judy Goffman Cutler and Laurence S. Cutler to house their art collection from the 'Golden Age of American Illustration.' The NMAI, a private, nonprofit organization, is an independent, educational, and aesthetic organization with the goal to present the best venue for the public to appreciate the greatest collection of illustration art.