



Children's Book Illustration and Design

Edited by Julie Cummins

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Acknowledgments

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There were phone calls, faxes and more phone calls; relatives who searched attics for original art; efforts from foundations and estates to provide materials; hand deliveries of valuable original illustrations; tracking the trail of ownership of rights across the country and the continent. All in all, many hands have helped to shape this book.

Finally, this publication would not have been possible without a cadre of people involved in the children's book world who have a commitment to quality picture books. They recognized the opportunity to share an enthusiasm for spotlighting wonderful and exciting illustrations and illustrators in the world of contemporary children's books which enabled the designing and production of this book. Thanks to each of you and special thanks to Kevin, Susan and Blair.

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Introduction

The phrase “It’s all in the way you look at it” is applicable to any art form that employs elements of design. For example, two artists painting the same still life will produce two different pictures and representations. The phrase has particular meaning when applied to the art of children’s book illustration where the source for the artwork is the story. Whether it is a folk or fairy tale from centuries past or a contemporary tale created by a writer, the imagery of the illustrator is what brings the story to life and breathes character, mood, and feeling into the book. It is the illustrator’s “eye” that produces visual creativity: a child’s picture book.

This book is a showcase of outstanding contemporary children’s book illustration. Over 80 illustrators are included with illustrations from various books demonstrating an incredible range of styles, techniques and innovation.

The preparation of the book was a multi-step process beginning with the selection of illustrators who were invited to participate. Next came the selection of each individual’s books from which illustrations would be replicated. If the artist’s work contains more than one medium or style, the choice of books is intended to demonstrate a spectrum. The final decision was made by the individual illustrator who selected the specific illustration to be reproduced from each book. The end result is a combination of selections from the editor’s choice and the illustrator’s personal judgment, the best of two perspectives.

The illustrators presented are an amalgam of well-known picture book artists and new talent to the field. Many of the artists are award-winning illustrators

and represent an international scope. At the time of publication all of the people are actively contributing to children’s book publishing with the exceptions of Paul Galdone, Ezra Jack Keats, Arnold Lobel, Martin Provensen, John Steptoe and Margot Zemach. Their work is included because each made significant contributions to the field of contemporary children’s books.

The number of children’s books that are published annually, approximately 5,000, has increased significantly over the past two decades. New trends bloom and become part of the mainstream or else fade away. The existence of the picture book, defined as a unified blend of pictures and words that together create a whole, has continued to thrive and expand so that it is now an established art form.

The creation of a picture book is the most exciting and challenging area of illustrating children’s books. Taking a story that is short in length, conceiving it visually, and applying the aesthetics of line, color and expression is an illustrator’s “dream.”

The design of a picture book becomes an interplay between the illustrator’s interpretation and artistic execution. Composition, color, line, texture and perspective are the design elements the illustrator employs to determine the rhythm, the mood, the flavor, the enactment of what takes place in the book. The illustrator takes the written narrative and translates it into a visual narrative. The achievement of that presentation will utilize the visual effects of balance, variety, emphasis, unity and spatial order—all from the illustrator’s explication of the sense of the story. The invisible “inner eye” shapes and molds

the story kernel through imagination and creativity into the quintessence of a picture book.

Recognition of children's book illustration is evident in the numerous awards given for the art form. The two most prestigious ones are the Caldecott Award and Greenaway Award. Bestowed annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, the Caldecott Medal is presented to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children. The British counterpart is the Kate Greenaway Medal which is awarded annually by the (British) Library Association to an artist who has produced the most distinguished work in illustration of a children's book. Both medals are named after 19th-century British artists who helped revolutionize children's book illustration: Randolph Caldecott and Kate Greenaway.

Other awards for excellence in illustration include *The New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year, Hans Christian Andersen Awards, International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Awards, Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Awards and Coretta Scott King Awards.

Many of the illustrators in the showcase are recipients of these awards and their entries cite the honors each has received.

As with all forms of art, appreciation is a matter of personal taste and individual appeal. Child appeal and involvement are significant factors in the designing of picture books. Most of the awards cited above contain child appeal and relationship to child perception in their criteria. There are no hard and fast rules about

what constitutes interest by children. Gone are the days when the perception was that everything for young children must be portrayed realistically. As you will see in the following pages, some of the artwork is sophisticated, abstract, or highly stylized. The response from children to these books is enjoyment and fascination with pictures that expand the text and challenge their imagination.

From aardvarks to zebras, from the fantasy of Little Red Riding Hood to the realism of New York City children, the contemporary world of children's book illustration is as exciting and animating as the eye can see or the imagination can soar. Enjoy this panorama of visual narratives. It runs from A to Z, from Allen to Zemach, illustrating the exhilarating, captivating, and creative field of children's book illustration and design.

Julie Cummins

Coordinator, Children's Services
The New York Public Library

Thomas B. Allen

BOOK TITLE

In Coal Country

AUTHOR

Judith Hendershot

ILLUSTRATOR

Thomas B. Allen

PUBLISHER

Alfred A. Knopf

PUBLICATION DATE

1987

ILLUSTRATION MEDIUM

Charcoal and pastel



Thomas B. Allen grew up in Tennessee during the Great Depression. He took his first art course at age nine, attended Vanderbilt University and the School of the Chicago Art Institute where he earned a B.F.A. in painting in 1952. His illustrations have appeared in *Esquire*, *The New Yorker*, *Life* and a host of other publications, as well as in numerous distinguished children's books including *In Coal Country* which won both the *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Honor Award and *The New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Books Award in 1987. Thomas B. Allen is currently the Hallmark Distinguished Professor of Design at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, where he lives with his wife and daughter.



"A member of Judith Hendershot's family, after finishing the book, said, 'I feel like I have to wash the coal dust off my hands.'"

"I think that says it all."



BOOK TITLE
On Granddaddy's Farm
 AUTHOR
Thomas B. Allen
 ILLUSTRATOR
Thomas B. Allen
 PUBLISHER
Alfred A. Knopf
 PUBLICATION DATE
1989
 ILLUSTRATION MEDIUM
Charcoal and pastel

"The major challenge was writing the story for a picture book with a logical beginning, middle and ending. I wanted to evoke a sense of another time—a simpler time when children had fewer things yet had a lot of fun and did their part, too."

