

Teacher Packet
Tall Grass Arts Association presents

WORLDS IMAGINED:
THE ART OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

March 7 through May 31, 2008

SUMMARY VERSION

(No biographies or book lists)

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Gallery Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, the Rotary Club of Park Forest, South Suburban Links, School District 162, Marge Smart and the Village of Park Forest.

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***This teacher packet is a compilation of material from a number of sources. Already published materials, such as the interview contained in the Muth bio, may be used for educational purposes only. Tall Grass has credited sources when information is cited.

Introduction

This packet is intended to help teachers prepare students for a gallery visit. Experience has shown that students who have been presented with information about an exhibit and have seen some of the artworks prior to a visit have a more meaningful experience during their visit.

Different circumstances and different curricula will prompt different uses of material. Some of it may be used after the visit as well as before.

In this packet Tall Grass presents information about *Worlds Imagined: The Art of Children's Books*. It includes biographies of all of the illustrators and lists of their books as well as suggested lesson plans.

The goals for the packet include:

- to provide tools for teachers to prepare students for a visit.
- to provide material to use as references.
- to inspire teachers and students to come to the exhibit with some prior knowledge of the works presented.
- to help students become informed viewers and to gain a better appreciation for the illustrator's art.

Tall Grass Arts Association Mission Statement

To promote public education and appreciation of the arts; to encourage artists; and to support high quality art through exhibitions, sales, classes and special programs available to the public of all ages.

Origin of the Exhibit

Jan Spivey Gilchrist believes that children's books are a marriage between pictures and words. "The pictures come alive because of the words and vice versa." Jan was the inspiration for a show that will demonstrate the illustrator's art.

Tall Grass greatly appreciates the help of Jan Spivey Gilchrist and the Park Forest Public Library in making this exhibition possible. Tall Grass also expresses its deep appreciation to the eleven illustrators who loaned their original works of art to make this exhibit possible.

Introduction to the Exhibit

There are eighty works of art on display. All are original drawings that have appeared in published books. In order to demonstrate the relationship between words and pictures in a children's book, the words that accompany each specific work of art are presented on the walls of the gallery next to each of the works of art.

The gallery exhibition features original works of art by **Ashley Bryan and Jan Spivey Gilchrist** (ten drawings from *My America* and fifteen drawings from Gilchrist's book *Honey, I Love*), **Jules Feiffer** (three drawings from *The House Across the Street*), **Wendy Halperin** (seventeen drawings from *Thank You, World*), **Elisa Kleven** (ten drawings from *Apple Doll*), **Barbara Lavalley** (one drawing from *Mama, Do You Love Me?* one from *Papa, Do You Love Me?* and one from *Grandma Calls Me Beautiful*), **Kevin Luthardt** (12 drawings from *The Vowel Family*), **Jon J Muth** (three from *Zen Shorts*), **Don Nedobeck** (three from *The Twelve Days of Christmas*), **Claire Nivola** (three from *The Friday Nights of Nana*) and **Susan Sturgill** (three from *I'm Just a Cat Mattress*). In addition to the featured artworks, books by these illustrators are on display in the gallery for students and parents to read.

The majority of the illustrators presented in the exhibit have illustrated books for a large number of authors. Ashley Bryan, for example, has illustrated approximately 45 books. Jan Spivey Gilchrist has illustrated approximately 67 books. Jon J Muth has illustrated more than 14, including two for Carolyn Kennedy (*A Family of Poems* and *A Family Christmas*). Several have written and illustrated their own books. Biographies and book lists of all of the illustrators are included in this teacher packet.

History of Illustration

The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia defines illustration as "any type of picture or decoration used in conjunction with a text to embellish its appearance or to clarify its meaning." It notes that, "illustration is as old as writing." (Illustrator Claire Nivola points out that "is possible, for example, to think of most religious paintings as illustrations.") With the advent of printing, the art of hand-painted illumination declined as a means of book illustration.*

Modern book illustration originated in the 15th-century block books, in which the text and the illustration were cut on the same block. Book illustration has followed closely the development of the printing processes. Copperplate engraving and etching tended to replace the woodcut during the 16th and 17th century but it was not until the close of the 18th century that the art was revolutionized by the

invention of lithography. This process greatly stimulated the production of illustrated books and magazines and was utilized by artists such as Daumier. *

In the late 19th century, wood engraving and lithography were superseded by the photomechanical processes that made possible the reproduction of a wide variety of painting and drawing techniques. The exploitation of these processes for cheap and rapid but sloppy mass production obscured their artistic potential. Thus, early hand

processes were revived in book illustration by such artists as Matisse, Rouault, Picasso, Chagall and many others. However, such major illustrators as Aubrey Beardsley and Howard Pyle understood and exploited the photomechanical processes to great effect in the reproduction of their art works. *

The art of illustration in children's books flowered during the late nineteenth century with the illustrations of *Alice in Wonderland*, the *Wind in the Willows*, *Rip Van Winkle* and *Winnie the Pooh*. Sir John Tenniel's illustrations for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are almost as well known as the text itself. Today much of the finest illustration is done in the field of children's literature. From Beatrix Potter to Maurice Sendak, a number of gifted writers of children's stories have illustrated their own books. Among the great illustrators of children's books are N. C. Wyeth, Kate Greenaway, Randolph Caldecott, Edward Lear and the illustrators represented in *Worlds Imagined: The Art of Children's Books*. *

* Information adapted from website: The History of Book Illustration (at infoplease), The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia

What is the difference between fine art and illustration?

Illustrator Elisa Kleven defines illustration as "something that tells or enriches some kind of story or narrative while art 'for its own sake' doesn't necessarily tell a story. While a piece of art can contain or suggest a story, its purpose is not necessarily to tell one." She adds, "Of course not all illustrations tell stories -- pictures for medical texts, for instance -- but they still serve to illuminate information."

Jan Spivey Gilchrist says, "I began my career as a fine artist. I am still a fine artist. As a fine artist, I go into the studio and create and it's just about my ideas and creations. They come to me for no one else but me. As an illustrator, I take the words of an author and bring them to life through my pictures. The author has created the characters and scenes. The author created them through words. My job is to give the characters a face that you can see. You can see the characters as I see them. So, the author and the illustrator come together to give you one picture."

The artist works from his/her imagination. Inspiration can be drawn from anything in the real world, a photograph, a story, his memory or his imagination. The illustrator begins with the written word. Sometimes the words are his own. Often, they are not. In fact, the illustrator may not even know the author.

When an artist sets out to illustrate a book, he or she must interpret the writer's story. Many choices must be made in planning how to take a book and turn it into an integrated visual experience: what medium to use, which scenes to illustrate and how to conceptualize the characters.

The illustrator begins by making a "dummy" which is a small layout of the book, with each page boxed out. After the art director and editor at the publishing house approve the dummy, the illustrator begins sketches of each page spread. After the sketches are approved, the illustrator can work on the final art.

What are the tools of the illustrator?

The illustrator uses four visual elements to create pictures that will explain the writer's story. These four are line, color, shape and texture.

Color is the element that often makes the strongest visual impression. The artist must decide what kind of colors should be used? Should they be brilliant or muted? Should they be heavily or sparsely used? Should they obscure or complement the text? (*My America* by Ashley Bryan and Jan Spivey Gilchrist, for example, uses a full palette of colors. The colors in *The Vowel Family* by Kevin Luthardt are exceptionally bold.)

Many decisions also have to be made about line. Should it be bold or delicate? Should it be spare or elaborate? Thick or thin? (*The House Across the Street* by Feiffer, for example, relies on thick, ink outlines while *Zen Shorts* by Jon J Muth uses soft, diffuse edges.)

How shall shape be used? Should the shapes be distinct or vague? Should they be free flowing or rigid? (Shape is very important in the work of Barbara Lavalley – *Mama, Do You Love Me?* and *Papa, Do You Love Me?* and *Grandma Calls Me Beautiful*. Note, for example, her characters' faces that are divided into halves.)

Should the texture appear as a flat, smooth surface or one with three-dimensional qualities? (*Apple Doll* by Elisa Kleven utilizes the art of collage, which gives many of her illustrations a three-dimensional appearance.)

All of these elements must be artistically combined with the text and arranged on the page so that the pictures reflect the mood of the story and extend the story text without distracting from it.

It is also important that the artists select the media and the technique most appropriate for establishing the mood of the book. Five types of commonly used media are: (1) lines and washes, (2) watercolors, acrylics, pastels and oils, (3) woodcuts, (4) collage and (5) computer graphics. The majority of the illustrations in "Worlds Imagined: The Art of Children's Books" utilize watercolors. *Apple Doll* by Elisa Kleven utilizes watercolor, ink and colored pencils, rice paper and collage. Wendy Halperin utilizes crayons over Xeroxed pencil drawings. Barbara Lavalley, Jon Muth and Don Nedobeck utilize watercolor while Kevin Luthardt utilizes acrylics. Claire Nivola utilizes watercolor and gouache. Susan Sturgill utilizes pen and ink drawings with colored pencils.

In evaluating illustrations, the following should be considered:

- Does the design of the illustrations reinforce the text and give a sense of unity?
- Does the artistic style enhance the literary style?
- Do the illustrations help the reader anticipate the action?
- Do the illustrations convincingly portray and develop the characters?
- Are the illustrations accurate in historical, cultural and geographic detail?

What is the relationship between an author and an illustrator? The process of creating a children's book begins with the author. The author writes a book and submits it to a publisher. The publisher's art director selects an illustrator for the book. The author does not have review or rejection rights. In fact, the author may not know what illustrator has been selected and how his book will appear until it has been published. If an illustrator has several books published and has earned a reputation in the field and if that illustrator can write as well as he/she can draw, a publishing house will accept both the words and pictures of the same artist. However, according to some of the authors, art directors are sometimes "annoyed" if authors submit their own drawings for a book and have, on occasion, rejected well-written books because they did not care for the illustrations.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES FOR CLASSES *(For before, during or after visits to the exhibit)*

Younger Grades Discussion Questions

1. How many of you have ever written a story and made a picture to go with it? How did your picture make the story better?
2. What is an illustrator?
3. If you were an illustrator, what colors would you use to make a picture of:
 - A sunny day
 - A rainy day
 - The way you are feeling right now
 - How you feel when you are sad
4. Looking at a specific illustration, how does it make you feel? (Happy, angry, confused, wanting to read more, etc.)
5. (After the visit to the gallery) Which pictures in the exhibition did you like best? Why?

Upper Grades Discussion Questions

1. What is an illustrator? How does the art of illustration differ from any other form of fine art?
2. What makes an illustrator successful? (Imagination, artistic talent, ability to convey the meaning of the story, ability to inspire the reader to read the story, etc.)
3. Who do you think were the first illustrators?
4. Why are illustrations used more in children's books than adult books?
5. How can a successful illustrator make a book with a dull story line more interesting?
6. Can you cite an example of a book that you found uninteresting because it had no illustrations and tell how you would improve it with illustrations?

7. Can a book have too few or too many illustrations? Give examples.
8. Discuss how an illustrator can enhance or diminish the value of a book.
9. Find examples of books where the illustrator definitely diminished or enhanced the value of a book.
10. Recall the four visual elements of an illustration. (See glossary). How are these elements used in this illustration?
11. What kinds of media are used in the drawing? (See glossary.)

All Grades Activities

1. Have students draw their own illustrations for a favorite book.
2. Working in small groups, or as a whole class, write a children's story and illustrate it.
3. Have students research authors or illustrators from this show via the internet. Ask them to write a report or discuss some of the authors' and illustrators' other works.
4. Make an all-class collage illustrating one of the books in the exhibit.
5. After the teacher reads a passage from a children's book, have students draw how they imagine a character would look.
6. Have the class brainstorm the characteristics of a bear. (Or other animal.) Ask small groups to design their own bear and write a brief story about it. The class can vote on which group's story and drawing best represent the bear.
7. Read one of the books in the exhibit. Ask students to imagine what happens 5 (or 10) years into the future. Draw a picture and write text for the sequel to the original book.
8. *Mama, Do you Love Me?* contains illustrations and examples of Inuit Masks. Ask students to make an Inuit Mask. *Papa, Do You Love Me?* contains illustrations and examples of Massai Shields. Ask students to make a Massai Shield.

GLOSSORY OF TERMS

<u>Author</u>	A person who writes a book.
<u>Publisher</u>	A company that pays for the development and printing of a book and then sells it to the public.
<u>Illustrations</u>	Art work that accompanies stories in a book.
<u>Illustrator</u>	A person who creates the art work in a book to accompany the text.
<u>Media</u>	The materials used to create the art work. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lines and washes• Watercolors, acrylics, pastels and oils• Woodcuts• Collage• Computer graphics

Visual elements

- **Color**: can be brilliant, neutral, dark, or light. Few or many colors can be used.
- **Line**: bold or delicate, sparse or elaborate.
- **Shape**: distinct or vague, free flowing or formal.
- **Texture**: a flat, smooth surface, or one with three dimensions.

Please note: Three of the books, *Mama, Do you Love Me?*, *Papa, Do You Love Me?* and *Grandma Calls Me Beautiful*, all illustrated by Barbara Lavalée, contain their own glossaries.

Worlds Imagined: The Art of Children's Books

Information for ordering books

**Ashley Bryan and
Jan Spivey Gilchrist**

My America

HarperCollins Publishers
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
ISBN-10: 0-06-079104-7, ISBN-13: 978-0-06-079104-9,
ISBN-10: 0-06-079105-5, ISBN-13: 978-0-06-079105-6

**Eloise Greenfield (author)
Jan Spivey Gilchrist**

Honey, I Love

HarperCollins Publishers
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
ISBN 0-06-009123-1
ISBN 0-06-009124-X (lib. Bldg.)

Jules Feiffer

The House Across the Street

Michael Di Capua Books
Hyperion Books for Children
114 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
Library of Congress control number: 2001099821

**Alice B. McGinty (author)
Wendy Anderson Halperin**

Thank You, World

The Penguin Group
375 Hudson Street
New York, New York 10014
ISBN 978-0-8037-2705-2

Elisa Kleven (author and illustrator)

The Apple Doll

Farrar Straus Giroux
19 Union Square West

New York, NY 10003
ISBN-13: 978-0-374-30380-8
ISBN-10: 0-374-30380-0

Barbara M. Josse (author)
Barbara Lavalée (illustrator)

Mama, Do You Love Me?

Chronicle Books
275 Fifth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
ISBN 0-87701-759-X

Papa, Do You Love Me?

Also Chronicle Books but a different address is provided:
680 Second Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
ISBN-10: 0-8118-4265-7
ISBN-13: 978-0-8118-4265-5

Grandma Calls Me Beautiful

Chronicle Books
680 Second Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
ISBN 978-0-8118-5815-1

Sally M. Walker (author)
Kevin Luthardt (illustrator)

The Vowel Family

Carolrhoda Books
A Division of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc.
241 First Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55401
ISBN 978—0-8225-7982-3

Jon J Muth (author and illustrator)

Zen Shorts

Scholastic Press
557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012
ISBN 0-439-33911-1

Don Nedobeck

Don Nedobeck's Twelve Days of Christmas
New Wrinkle Press

P. O. Box 20737
Milwaukee, WI 53220
ISBN 0-944314-02-3

Amy Hest (author)
Claire A. Nivola (illustrator)

The Friday Nights of Nana
Walker Books, Ltd.
87 Vauxhall Walk
London SE11 5HJ
England
ISBN 0-7445-9426-X

Susan Sturgill (author and illustrator)

I'm Just a Cat Mattress
Crescent Hill Books
2410 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, KY 40206
ISBN 10: 1-889937-10-X
ISBN 13: 978-1-889937-10-6