

Picture Books

What Makes a good picture book?

Picture Books are a unique art form

- The function of art is to clarify, intensify, or otherwise enlarge our experience of art.
- There are two codes of meaning operating at the same time. They can work together or play off each other.
- Pictures are not necessarily subordinate to the words.
- Where else do you see a series of artworks put together to tell a story?
- Some of the best art is produced in picture books.

Some functions of the illustrations

1. Establish setting
2. Define and develop characters
3. Reinforce text
4. Provide a different viewpoint
5. Provide Interesting asides
6. Extend or develop the plot
7. Establish Mood

Style

- Realism, Representational art (Rapunzel)
- Surrealism. dreamlike. Strange juxtapositions (The Voice of the Wood)
- Expressionism. Express inner experience. Some exaggeration. (A Chair for My Mother)
- Impressionism. Light, movement, and color over detail (Freedom Summer)
- Naïve. Appears child-like (The Oxcart Man)
- Cartoon Art. Few lines. (That Terrible Halloween Night)

Media: Painterly

paint, pencil, ink, watercolor, pastels, crayons, colored pencil, charcoal, markers, gouache, watercolor, oil paints, tempura, acrylics, etc.

Media: Graphic

wood cuts, Linoleum cut, paper cut, scratch board, collage and all kinds of combinations.

Visual elements.

- **Lines:** horizontal, vertical, diagonal. Movement, tension, guide viewers eyes
- **Shape:** curved shapes=natural, angular shapes=manmade. Also curved shapes are more often “yonic” or feminine, and reassuring and comforting. Angular shapes are more often “phallic” or masculine, and imply aggression.
- **Color:** hue, saturation, monochrome, Creates moods
- **Texture:** Tactile sensation
- **Composition:** Arrangement. Unifies the other elements. Balance, what’s larger and smaller, etc.

Also Important

- Quality picture books art says something of significance.
- In inferior books, all art looks the same. (Disney, sesame street, art taken from TV and movies)
- Quality picture book art is unique
- Stereotypical art implies stereotypical stories.
- Action and Detail bring individuality. (Tuesday and Rosie's Walk)
- Good details are often subtle, like cosmetics. They work best when you don't realize they are there.

My Friend Rabbit

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