



# Children's Picturebooks: The art of visual storytelling

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

**Children's Picturebooks: The art of visual storytelling**, as its authors wrote recently on the **Books for Keeps** home page, is an ambitious and much needed undertaking. Its focus is the picture book - that distinct, increasingly cutting edge art form that rarely receives the attention it deserves outside (or sometimes inside) the children's book world. It offers readers a more rounded look at the picture book, its evolution, and its artistic creation by marrying the often separated english/education critique and approach with that of art and design and the picture book maker. It is 'not a scholarly treatise? or a 'how-to' book but a tour through the 'richly diverse worlds' built around the intricate dance of word and image that blend together to create the aesthetic object that is today's picture book.

'Tour' is an apt word to describe this book. Tantalizingly and sometimes provocatively, it hones in on issues and aspects of the picture book and its history that are key to fully appreciating it as a work of art, but leaves the reader wanting more (...perhaps the point). A fascinating section, for instance, looks at the picture book as an aesthetic object and at the role of training in the 'making' of a picture book artist, illustrated with four case histories of projects and process by students and established artists. Elsewhere, underpinned by theory and animated by case studies, the child as picture book reader, the play between word and image that is particular to the picture book, and the issue of 'suitability' for children' are introduced. The outlook is global, placing English works in an international context.

Wonderfully illuminated by some 200 colour double spreads, storyboards, sketchbooks or examples of different printing processes (with the exception of one unforgivable editorial gaffe - the inclusion of the wrong double spread from Anthony Browne's **Zoo**), **Children's Picturebooks** opens readers' eyes to the challenges of seeing and thinking that creating and reading the contemporary picture book inspire.

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