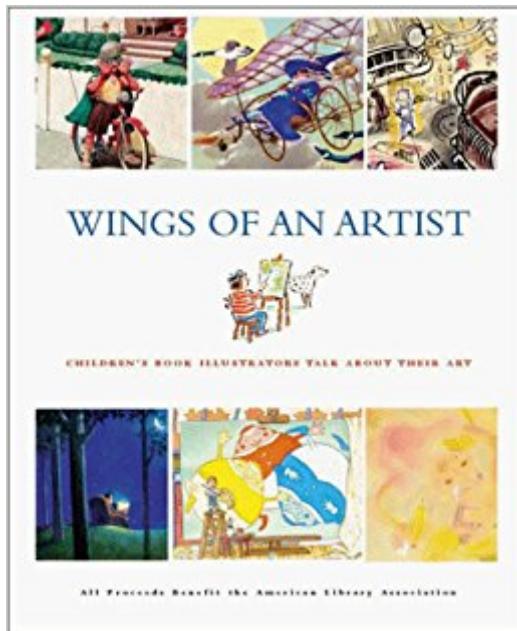


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# Wings Of An Artist



## **Synopsis**

More than twenty illustrators of children's books, including James Ransome, Robert Sabuda, Maira Kalman, and Maurice Sendak, talk about their work.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 740L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams; First Edition edition (September 1, 1999)

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Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,631,870 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #47 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Children's Literature #1136 in Books > Arts & Photography > Graphic Design > Commercial > Book Design #2021 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Children's Literature

Grade Level: 8 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

"Art literacy is as simple as opening the pages of a children's book." In her introduction to *Wings of an Artist*, Julie Cummins discusses the importance of exposing young people to art during their formative years, especially through picture books. Twenty-three illustrators, including Maurice Sendak and Graeme Base, are allotted one big page each to describe in pictures and words how they became artists, in spite of or thanks to reactions from others. Under her glorious picture of a flying dragon with myriad colorful critters on its back, Woodleigh Marx Hubbard tells readers what all her art teachers told her: "You have no talent. Give it up!" She couldn't. She didn't. Michael McCurdy's father was a commercial artist who gave his son scratchboard to scribble on--and the inspiration to bring "dark surfaces into the light." The variety of artistic styles, media, and methods represented in this book beautifully reflects the diversity of the artistic world. An activity guide offers an array of fun, useful exercises to open any creative mind. Young artists--and readers who have never even picked up a paintbrush--will be filled with the desire to start interpreting their world through pen and ink, watercolor, crayon, collage--whatever it takes. All proceeds from this book go

to the American Library Association's Association for Library Service to Children, as part of a nationwide effort to promote art literacy. (Ages 7 and older) --Emilie Coulter

Grade 4 Up-Aspiring artists, young and old, will be drawn to this collection of text and illustrations by 20 well-known picture-book illustrators. A single oversized page is given to each artist (e.g., Susan Jeffers, Maira Kalman, James Ransome, David Small), or in a few cases, an artistic duo (e.g., Leo & Diane Dillon, Steve Johnson & Lou Fancher, Jean & Mou-Sien Tseng), in which to express his/her feelings about art, inspiration, books, and life through a combination of pictures and words. One of the most compelling aspects of the book is how these creators approached the same task with very different results. Some chose a selection from their published body of work while others appear to have created illustrations specifically for this publication. The stylistic differences will serve as a launching pad for discussion, and readers may be prompted to seek out titles by illustrators with whom they are less familiar. While this title may not have mass appeal, it will serve as a useful art-education tool and as a stepping stone to discussions of fine art. An introduction and an idea-rich activity guide are also included. Broader and less detailed in scope than Leonard Marcus's *A Caldecott Celebration: Six Artists Share Their Paths to the Caldecott Medal* (Walker, 1998), this volume is a charming addition to the body of literature about the world of picture books. Rosalyn Pierini, San Luis Obispo City-County Library, CA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Always indirectly discouraged to pursue art, I've spent over 40 years collecting children's books and secretly wishing to be a children's book illustrator. This book is criticized for limited artwork and snippets of advice from each illustrator, but it speaks volumes of encouragement to one interested in art. Sadly underrated, this book has turned my life around, and for this alone it is priceless. There are now many books on technique and the industry itself, so perhaps when this book was published, it appeared lacking. I encourage you to borrow this book from the library and form your own assessment, whether for yourself or a child.

This book covers twenty-one illustrators. Each Illustrator is given a brief bit of information, a few paragraphs of information, sometimes just a snippet and one is given three sentences! Generally a single illustration example is given to each illustrator. One of the illustrators has a picture of himself (probably self-portrait?) and no book illustration. This book has 32 pages. A sampling. This book needs to be padded with more information about each illustrator and more examples of illustrations by each artist. Great topic, Excellent book title, pity it lacks content.

How many times, when reading a good book, have you wished for the opportunity to meet with the author, ask them questions about their work, their influences and inspirations? And when reading or being read to is an important part of a child's life, it's natural to assume the desire is just as intense. "Who made this book? Its pictures? What led them to create this story and these pictures for me?" For parents and children alike, some of these questions are answered in the book "Wings of an Artist: Children's Book Illustrators Talk About Their Art". Picture books are, for children, the introduction to the worlds of both literacy and art appreciation. "Wings of an Artist" can be seen as a primer for both adults and children into the realm of picture books; it includes images and short statements by some of the leading children's book illustrators working today about their beginnings in the field, their early interests in art and writing and their approaches to the task at hand -- creating compelling, original and entertaining children's books. An array of artist/authors are featured, including Henrik Drescher, William Joyce, Maurice Sendak, Robert Sabuda and James Ransome -- in all, more than twenty of the most prolific and influential creators of current picture books for children. On each page, an illustrator presents an image (most were created especially for this project) and a very brief statement about their work and their introduction to the world of children's book illustration. Some recount the encouragements of parents or teachers, others speak of their early imaginations or love of drawing that led them into the career. It's a rare chance to view the styles of so many top picture book illustrators in one place. But like a sampler platter at a restaurant, you may find something you like, but the portions are too small to be really satisfying. Each artist's statement is only a paragraph or two -- some even less than that -- so it's hard to get the sense of a deep presentation of information. Think of it more as a polite introduction. Although the text of the book is sparse and surfacey, "Wings of an Artist" (italic) is (end italic) an excellent display of picture book artwork. Where the artists' statements seem cursory, their art is expressive and imaginative, showing each illustrator's particular style, technique and visual interpretation: Leo and Diane Dillon give a fanciful new look to Mother Goose, Robert Sabuda's cut-paper collage dances across the page, Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher offer a beautiful and evocative illustration of nighttime storytelling, and Maurice Sendak's 16 panel illustration is an inventive, stream-of-consciousness adventure of a small girl, her doll and an evil television. At the end of the book, "Wings of an Artist" includes an activity guide for adults and children to do together to lead children back into the book's pages and think about the words and images they've come across. It's structured to spark discussion on issues of technique, art history, artistic terminology, personal responses to art and to increase an awareness of visual communication. While the study questions relate to the specific

images within the book, they can easily be extrapolated to other picture books for children as well as museum or gallery visits. All proceeds benefit the Association for Library Service to Children division of the American Library Association to promote art literacy in children.

Imagine for a moment that you bring together twenty or so children's book illustrators and ask them to explain in words and pictures: "What gives flight to an artist's imagination?" This is exactly what *Wings of an Artist* does. The result is a rich mosaic of exquisite illustrations and writing that are both inspired and inspiring. In the oversized pages, Leo and Diane Dillon discuss how they created a new version of Mother Goose. (They gave her a flying machine so she could "soar amongst the clouds with her beloved geese to faraway lands with new tales to tell.") Maurice Sendak talks about doodling. It is, he writes, "an excellent exercise for stirring up the unconscious, just as you would stir up some mysterious soup all the while hoping it tastes good." In prose and pictures David Catrow relates to the reader his confrontation with his first editor-his first-grade art teacher. And Graeme Base "shows off" a shimmering illustration of Finny, Pearl, and Bert, three undersea characters from *The Sign of the Seahorse*. The book concludes with "Invitations to Fly," eleven well-thought-out and enriching activities. The classroom uses for this book are countless. In one third grade classroom we read aloud from the book then discussed how the various artists used line, shape, and even color to create certain feelings in the reader. In a second grade classroom we compared and contrasted two different artists. We then did an in-depth "author/illustrator study" of Maurice Sendak. Reviewed by the Education Oasis staff.

Although this book was probably aimed at children and teachers --and it would be very good for this market..I found it far too shallow for the serious investigator of children's art. The pictures were lovely, and the brief quotes were inspirational but not informative. I would have liked to know more about the artist..how they structure their life..where they work...how they work (in depth description of their techniques.).what generates their drive to succeed and how they overcome obstacles and defeats.

I really enjoyed reading this book and admiring the incredible artwork. This is a must for anyone interested in children's book illustration.

This book was created for children so I was pretty disappointed. If you are an artist wanting some tips I wouldn't recommend this book.

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