

HANS CHRISTIAN

ANDERSEN

AWARD



Dubravka Kolanović

Croatia

Publisher:



Zagreb City Libraries
Croatian Centre for Children's Book
Croatian Section of IBBY
Starčevićev trg 4, 10000 Zagreb
Croatia

Editor: Isabella Mauro
*Head of Croatian Centre
for Children's Books*

Translation of the statement:
Nikolina Jovanović
Design: Marina Gabelica

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1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON THE CANDIDATE

Dubravka Kolanović was born in Zagreb in 1973. She studied illustration at the **Savannah College of Art and Design** in the USA as the recipient of the International Scholarship for Students Artists, and at the **Academy of Fine Art in Zagreb** where she graduated fine art in 1998, in the class of Professor Vasilij Jordan.

She published her first book *A Special Day* at the age of 18 as the recipient of the Gold prize of the competition *Written and Illustrated by...* under the auspice of the publishing house Landmark Editions in the USA.

After completing her studies she spent three months further specialising in the USA as a guest artists and recipient of the Arts Link Scholarship at the American Columbus College of Art and Design (Columbus, Ohio). In 2002 she attended further training in Sarmede, in Italy attending the master's workshop of the renowned Polish illustrator Jozef Willkon.

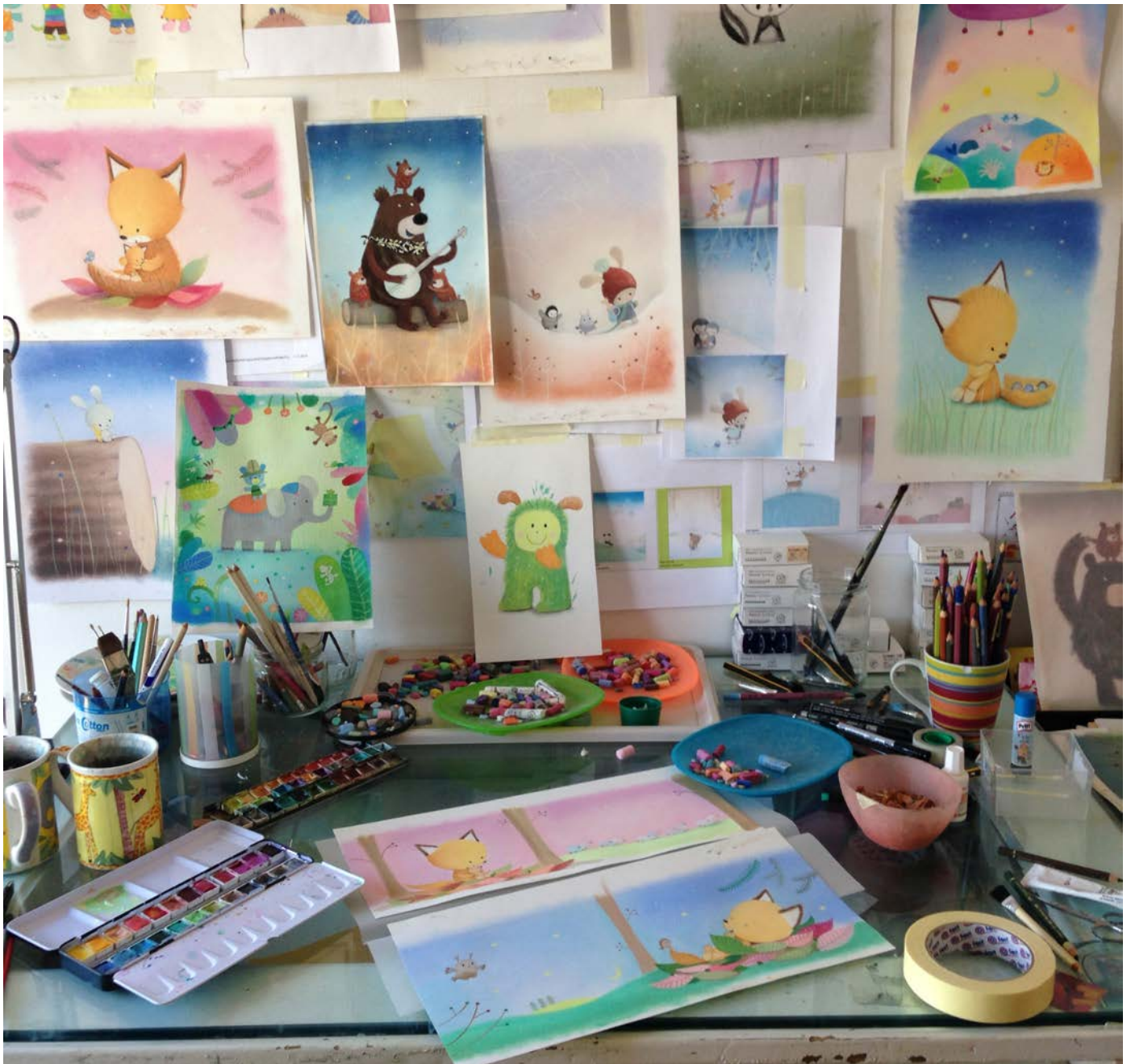
She has illustrated over **200 picture books**, books and school text books. Her picture

books have been **translated into more than 15 world languages** and have been published all over the world. Random House (USA), Hodder (UK), Macmillan (UK), Hachette (France), Kodansha (Japan), Scholastic (USA), Booksource (USA), Toys'r US (USA), Meadowside (UK), Usborne (UK), Little Tiger Press (UK) – are only a few of the publishers she has worked with.

She has authored many picture books that have been published by foreign publishers: *Joe's Big Adventure* and *Albert the Artist* (Tony Potter Publishing, Great Britain), *Njogu* (Grandir, France), *Red Balloon* and *Light* (Kodansha, Japan), *Anna und das Rotkehlchen* (Bohem Press, Switzerland), *Everyone Needs a Friend* (Random House, USA), *Star* (Friendly Tales, Thailand), *Čarolija zagrljaja* (*The Magic of a Hug*) (Sipar, Croatia), *There's No Place Like Home*, *Kindness is Magic* and *True Friends* (QED, Great Britain).

She is a finalist of the international competition for young illustrators *Round Red and Mysterious East* in Venice and the BBC





Wildlife Christmas card competition in Great Britain. Furthermore, Dubravka Kolanović is the author of **more than sixty UNICEF cards** and **two posters for UNICEF** in France and Denmark. Her UNICEF Christmas card collection from 2005 is also the most sold collection of Christmas cards in UNICEF's history.

Aside from UNICEF, she is the author of many greeting cards in cooperation with clients such as American Greetings, Carltons cards, UK Greetings, Paper Rose, Peter Pauper Press, Papyrus, Peacable Kingdom and others.

She has also used her illustration skills in designing collections for children's rooms in cooperation with Mouse and Magpie (USA) and in designing puzzles for well-known manufacturers like Ravensburger. The toy manufacturer Jelly Cat (UK) has designed toys according to her designs.

In 2008, Dubravka Kolanović's illustrations were included in the magazine of contemporary illustrations 3x3, New York, while in 2011 the same magazine included her illustration in the selection of Best children's illustrations and was the recipient of the silver prize.

In 2010, the magazine for contemporary art and design *Creative Quarterly*, New York awarded her the silver prize in the category of new talents in illustration.

In 2008 and 2009 her picture books were awarded at the international competition of the **Museum of Children's Picture Books** in Oshima, in Japan. On this occasion, her picture books were also exhibited in the same museum.

Dubravka exhibited at the **Biennale of illustrations**, in Bratislava, in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

Bookbag pronounced the picture book *Shine Moon Shine*, which she illustrated, one of the ten most beautiful picture books of 2010.

Dubravka's picture books have been read and presented on the popular program Story Time BBC for children, Cbeebies, a number of times.

She is the recipient of the **IBBY Honour List** for illustrations in the book *Halugica* by Croatian author Vladimir Nazor, in 2004.

In 2009, she received the prestigious Croatian "Grigor Vitez" award commendation, for the best Croatian picture book, for illustrations in the book *Božićna frula (The*

Christmas Flute) by Stjepan Lice, while in 2018 she was the recipient of the Grigor Vitez award for the best illustrated Croatian picture book for her picture book *Čarolija zagrljaja (The Magic of a Hug)*.

In 2017 she received the award for the best Croatian story book "Ovca u Kutiji" (Sheep in a box) for the story *Baobab and Mala Kibibi* by Ana Đokić, while in 2018 she received the same award for her story book *Čarolija zagrljaja (The Magic of a Hug)*.

She participated in the **Croatian Biennale of illustrations** at the Klovićevi dvori Gallery in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018. In 2014 she was also awarded a special recognition at the Fifth Croatian Biennale of illustrations.

In 2015, she exhibited her work at the **Children's Book Fair** in Bologna together with an imposing selection of 14 artists with whom Croatian presented itself as the country partner of this important international fair.

In her free time, Dubravka is an activist of the volunteer organisation for protection of nature, Earthwatch Institute with headquarters in Boston.



To date, she has participated in 12 projects throughout the world: in the African savannah, desert, faraway coral reefs in Australia, the rainforests of Borneo, the Amazon, Uganda, Galapagos, Artic and Antarctic, and has contributed more than 1,000 hours of volunteer work.



Dubravka's children, her most loyal readers and critics

Dubravka is also the mother of three children – Marko, Ivana and Dorcas, a little girl who she and her husband adopted in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Since the year 2000, Dubravka has been a member of the Croatian Freelance Artists Association. Her work is currently represented by the British agency Advocate Art with office in London and New York.



Children from a remote village in Thailand cocreating an illustration as part of a project for the protection of endangered elephants.



Dubravka often finds inspiration for her picturebooks in her travels around the world.



2 A PORTRAIT OF DUBRAVKA KOLANOVIĆ



3 A STATEMENT ON THE CANDIDATE'S CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Dubravka Kolanović - illustration as a true fight for a better world

Barbara Vujanović, Senior Curator
The Ivan Meštrović Museums –
Ivan Meštrović Atelier, Zagreb, Croatia

Dubravka Kolanović is a recognised illustrator, both in Croatia and internationally, not only because of her specific artistic expression and stylisation primarily based on delicate colours and harmonious coordination of soft, subtle forms, but also because of her untiring cultivation of a subject that has, especially in recent years, become recognised as the key problem of today's world. This is, naturally, concentration on ecological issues, such as protecting endangered animal species as well as their environment.

Although her approach to these important issues, which she addresses with a high degree of aesthetic and ethical responsibility, would in itself be enough, Dubravka takes a step further and actively

participates in various environmental actions worldwide, for example in the Amazonian rainforest, Kalahari Desert, Bornean rainforest, African savannah, the ice of the Antarctic, the Galapagos Islands, or on a remote coral reef.

For several years she has been volunteering in scientific nature and animal conservation projects organised by the international environmental charity Earthwatch.

This organisation, founded in 1971, today brings together thousands of volunteers from all over the world as participants in more than 140 projects, and Dubravka is the only volunteer from Croatia.

Just like fairy tales and stories for children are at the same time universal, because of their message, and permeated with local

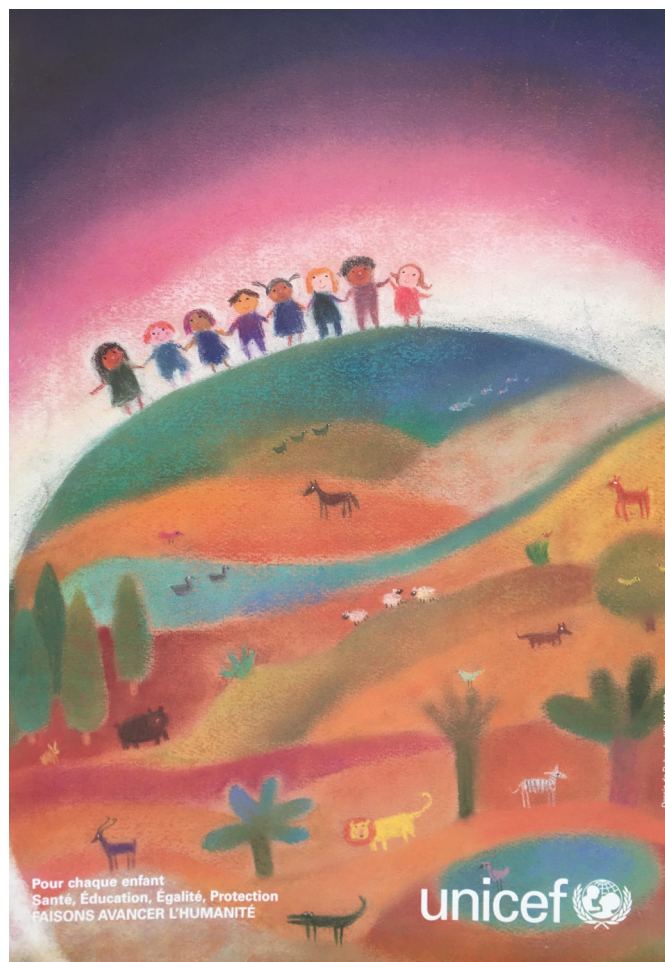


character and spirit, so the above themes are at the same time linked with particular countries and peoples but also with the whole of mankind because of the common destiny we share on this blue-green planet. Work/art in nature, work/art about nature, work/art for nature - for Dubravka Kolanović all this is logically and synergically perfectly connected and conditioned.

Illustration, which is at its highest level a universal language, as we have already said, allows Dubravka to directly communicate with children who belong to different cultures, who live in different environments and under different circumstances; for example, she once drew an elephant for children in a remote Thai village to encourage them to promise that they would share their habitat with endangered animals.

Dubravka's picture books have been translated into many languages: from Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Icelandic, Catalan and Polish, through English, Spanish, French, Italian and so on. For many years she has successfully collaborated with numerous Croatian and foreign publishing houses in Europe, Australia, Asia, South and North America.

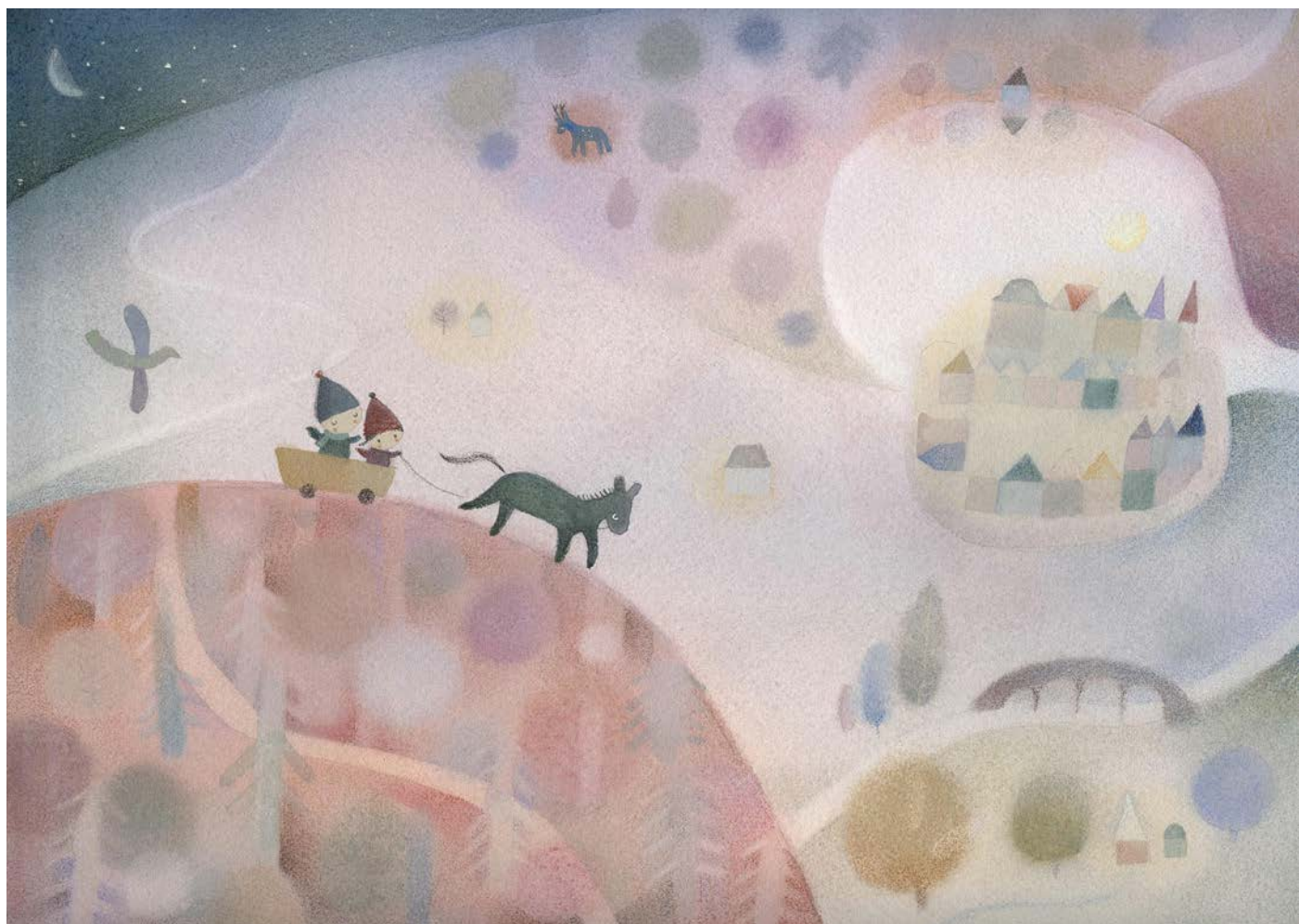
The illustrator herself has found the time spent in all these amazing parts of the world an inexhaustible source of creative ideas and memories on which she can constantly draw in her creative work, and she has great joy in returning, through her work, her debt to the nature which inspired her. For example, she donated her proceeds from a Christmas card featuring the polar bear to the Museum of Eskimos. Her favourite picture book *Njogu* (2003) about an unusual, red, African baby elephant, which she both wrote and illustrated and which was published by the French publisher Grandir, is the fruit of an



unforgettable trip and meetings with the red elephants of the Tsavo National Park in Kenya.

In addition to ecological engagement, care for children is one of the artist's greatest concerns and her Christmas Magic collection is the best-selling collection of greeting cards in UNICEF history. Dubravka has worked closely with this humanitarian organisation for more than a decade and has contributed more than 60 greeting cards, many postcards, posters, and materials throwing light on the grave plight of children.

Dubravka embraces this destiny as a mother, as well. In addition to their own two biological sons, she and her husband, touched by the hard life of many children in less privileged parts of our planet, adopted Dorcas, a little girl from Africa. The illustrator is waging a true fight for a better world with brush and pen, but also, more importantly,



through personal example and devotion to all children who inspire her in the creation of picture books, illustrations and stories.

We started with Dubravka's close links to nature because it is this, along with some other factors, that formed her as an author and an individual, but it is important to remember her art education, too, which is also specific. She studied in her homeland and in the United States and this paved the way for her openness to different cultures and approaches to artistic creativity. She studied at the Savannah College of Art and Design in the USA, and in 1998 she graduated in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in the class of Professor Vasilije Jordan. She recognises both institutions as very important cornerstones in the maturing of her visual identity. Whereas the Zagreb Academy provided

traditional art education and links with the Croatian heritage, carried down through the experiences of her then professors, the wealthy, private college in the United States offered a high-level teaching standard, top technology, the possibility of using the most diverse models, and guest visits by renowned international artists. In addition, in 2002 she spent three weeks as a trainee at the master workshop of the renowned Polish illustrator Jozef Willkon.

Her passion for illustration, but also for telling her own stories, appeared very early. At only eighteen she published her first book, *A Special Day*, as Golden Award winner of the *Written and Illustrated by...* competition sponsored by the US publisher Landmark Editions. This first project as a professional illustrator clearly shows her inclination towards linear stylisation that was typical

of one of the currents dominating the well-known Zagreb School of Animated Film.¹

This school has since the 1950s been indivisibly linked with the development of illustration in Croatia, as many artists expressed themselves in both media. Let us mention, for example, Pavao Štalter, Zlatko Bourek, Borivoj Dovniković and Boris Kolar.

We see the same stylistic correlation in some of Dubravka's other early illustrations, such as for the book *Kaktus bajke (Cactus Fairytales)* by Croatian writer Sunčana Škrinjarić from 1994 or *Hrvatska domovina (Croatian Homeland)* by Croatian writer Pajo Kanižaj from the same year, where we recognise in her work a continuation of the above tradition; however, as she matured her creativity developed into an authentic and original expression that began to emerge from the mid-1990s within a new generation of illustrators, with artists such as Pika Vončina, Svjetlan Junaković and others.

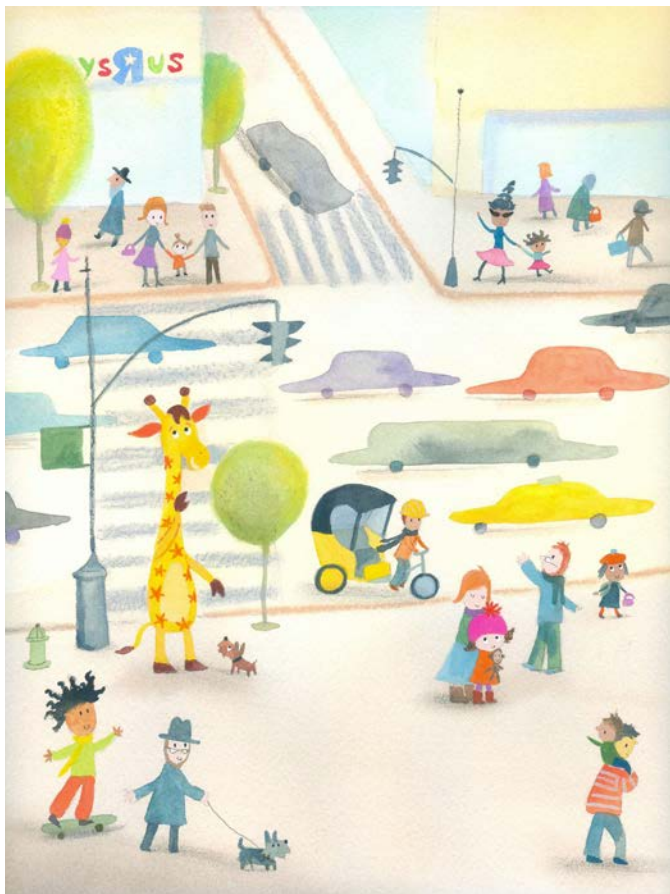
But let us return to the first picture book, which already shows some of the main features of Dubravka's artistic language. The stylisation mentioned above is accompanied with a vibrant colour scheme built on contrasts between warm and cold hues. It was colour, the recognisable use of subtle tones and of a predominantly light-coloured palette in the crumbling technique of dry pastel and in translucent watercolour that best fit her personality, combined with the construction of stylised and soft shapes often situated in atmospheric landscapes, which became the recognisable features of the illustration style she used to build stories. On the level of the story, which she invented and wrote herself, we also recognise the

ideas and messages that she was later to spread and develop in all the picture books whose author she was.

Primarily she emphasises the importance of family, starting from its nucleus, the relationship between parents and their children, links between siblings as well as with grandparents. The author says that it is alright for us to try to find our own way as individuals, but at the end we always return to the shelter of family, either the one to which we are linked by blood ties or to that which we create ourselves, nurturing subtle relationships of friendship. She later clarified these views in the picture books she wrote and illustrated herself: *Everyone Needs a Friend* (2010), *Kindness is Magic* (2017), *There's No Place Like Home* (2017) and *True Friends* (2018).



¹ The Zagreb School of Animated Film is an aesthetic term for the school of animation that in the mid-1950s inaugurated an avant-garde breakthrough by a new generation of animation lovers.



Scientists have long since proved the healing power of hugging, and this message, crucial for a happy life, is the theme of the author's recent picture book *Čarolija zagrljaja (The Magic of a Hug)*, which won the Sheep in a Box Award for best Croatian picture book in 2017 and the Grigor Vitez Award for 2017. Here Dubravka also touched on the issue of accepting and understanding diversity.

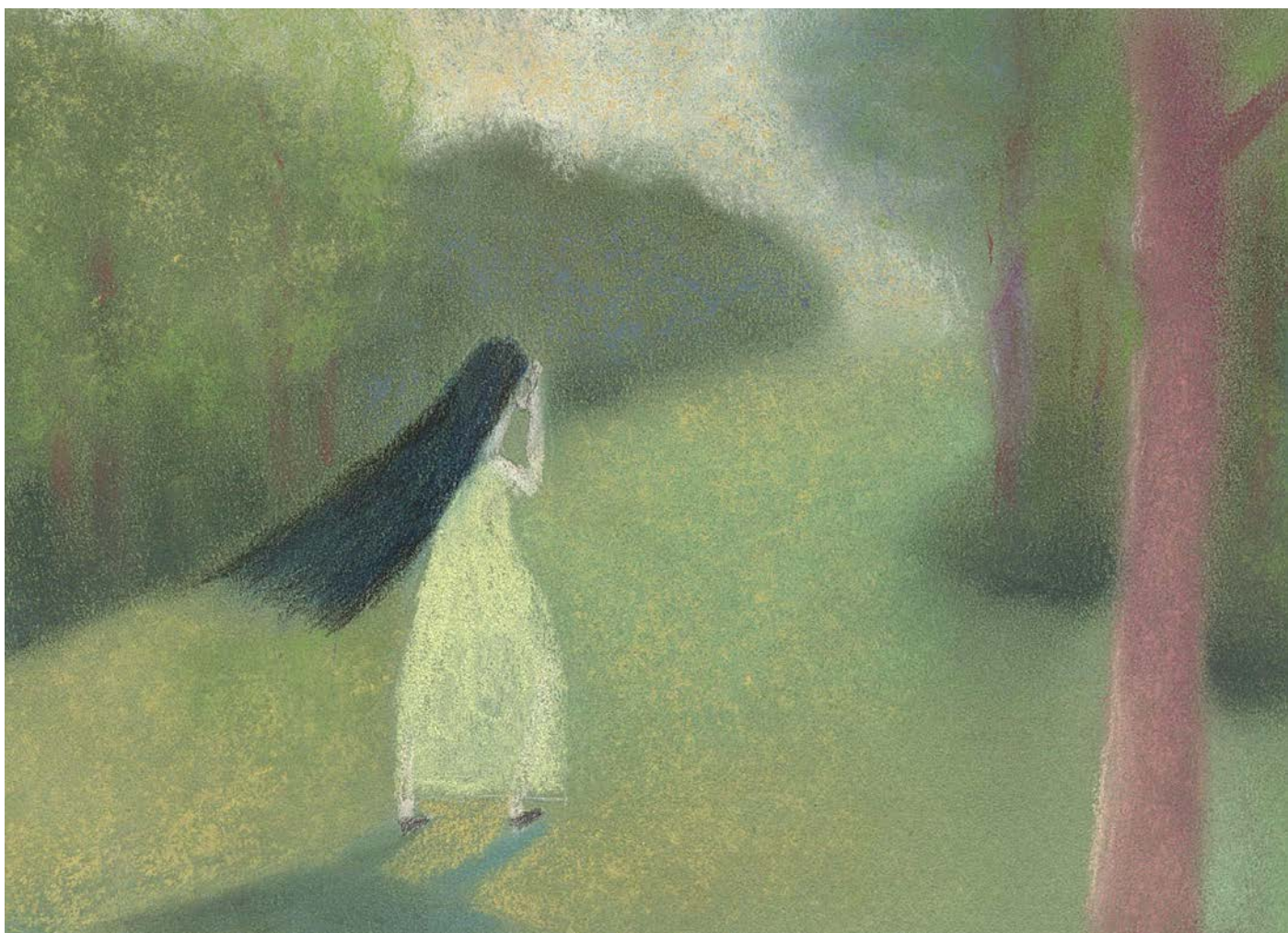
The moral of the book, imparted through synergy of text and image, is never burdened with dry didacticism or simplified lenience. The author always finds the right measure between verbally and symbolically conveying the experiences and wisdom of life. The main characters in the picture books she both wrote and illustrated are usually children and animals, that is, animals that embody children and their parents, with all the usual humanised characteristics. Dubravka Kolanović says that her main challenge

is to use her art to communicate positive ideas in illustration, as opposed to the predominantly aggressive content to which children are today exposed in animated films, computer games, online content, and generally in everyday life that is often filled with violence, vulgarity, insisting on material values and shallow superficiality. Dubravka's messages are those of love, nobleness, tolerance, friendship, and the respect for the environment already mentioned.

Dubravka Kolanović's illustrations are slowly moving from paper to other media and dimensions - for example, the picture books *Baby Badger's Wonderful Night* (2010) and *Little Penguin Learns to Swim* (2011) were several times read and presented on the popular BBC programme CBeebies Story Time for Kids.

Dubravka's gentle characters have recently been materialised, transferred to the third dimension, because she accepted the offer to design plush toys for Jellycat in the UK. She is further linked with toys production through illustrations that promote the well-known company TOYS r US. The toys industry, which often bows before demands imposed by kitsch and forcing aggressive content, as we have already mentioned, has in Dubravka undoubtedly obtained a "guardian angel" who will in this area, too, just as in illustration, carefully cultivate the ideals of humanity and ecological awareness.

In relation to her primary medium, all the fullness of her artistic maturity came to expression in the range of illustrations that she made for texts of the classic and contemporary writers of Croatian and world literature. For example, in 2005 she illustrated the iconic *The Little Mermaid* by the Danish classic Hans Christian Andersen,

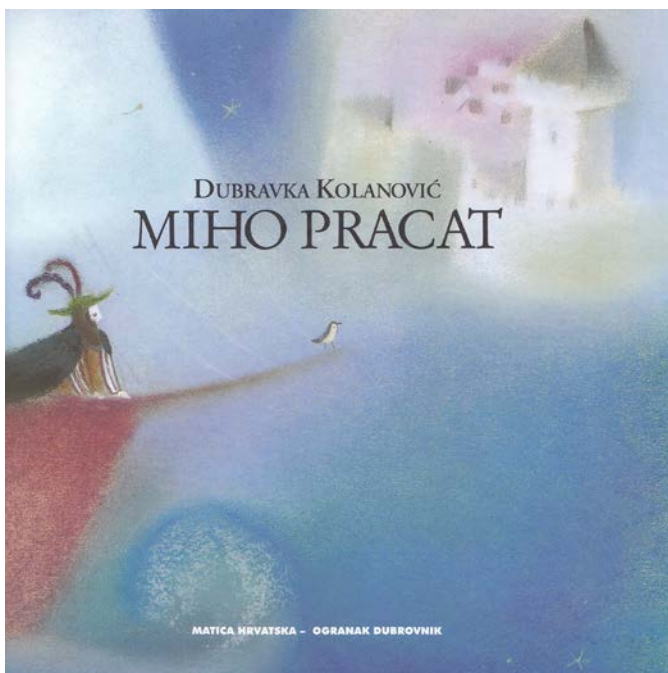


Nazor, V. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2001). *Halugica*. Zagreb: Profil.

to which, thanks to the use of pastels, she gave a fascinating dimension of ethereal melancholy. By carefully constructing the storyline using motifs that differ from those used by earlier illustrators of this story, and creating filmy blues for the submarine and earthly world, she paid equal attention to the tragic heroine and to marine plant and animal life. She shed all details from her art language so as to create powerful atmospheres adapted to viewing by young readers, but also extremely convincing for demanding art connoisseurs.

She used a similar approach in the classic of Croatian literature for children *Halugica* by Vladimir Nazor, the story of which also takes place on the coast. Thanks to these illustrations, in 2004 Dubravka was the Croatian candidate on the IBBY Honour List

(International Board on Books for Young People). Her work is widely acknowledged in her homeland and abroad. In addition to the awards already mentioned, in 2009 she received a commendation of the Grigor Vitez Award for illustrations in *Božićna frula (The Christmas Flute)* by Stjepan Lice, and in 2010 The Bookbag proclaimed the picture book *Shine Moon Shine* by British writer David Conway one of the top ten picture books. For two consecutive years, 2008 and 2009, Dubravka's author/illustrator picture books won awards at the international competition of the Oshima Museum of Picture Books in Japan. In 2014 she also got a special commendation at the Fifth Croatian Biennale of Illustration held at the Klovićevi Dvori Gallery in Zagreb.



Dubravka's proficiency as an illustrator and her own literary skills are honed through a continuous dialogue with the top classics of Croatian and world literature for children, as well as with modern authors. Of note in her co-operation with home writers are illustrations for the book *Miho Pracat* (2011) by the Croatian writer Academician Luko Paljetak, that show all the richness and maturity of delicately woven, misty compositions whose elegance corresponds perfectly to the exciting story of the sixteenth-century Dubrovnik sefarer, banker and benefactor.

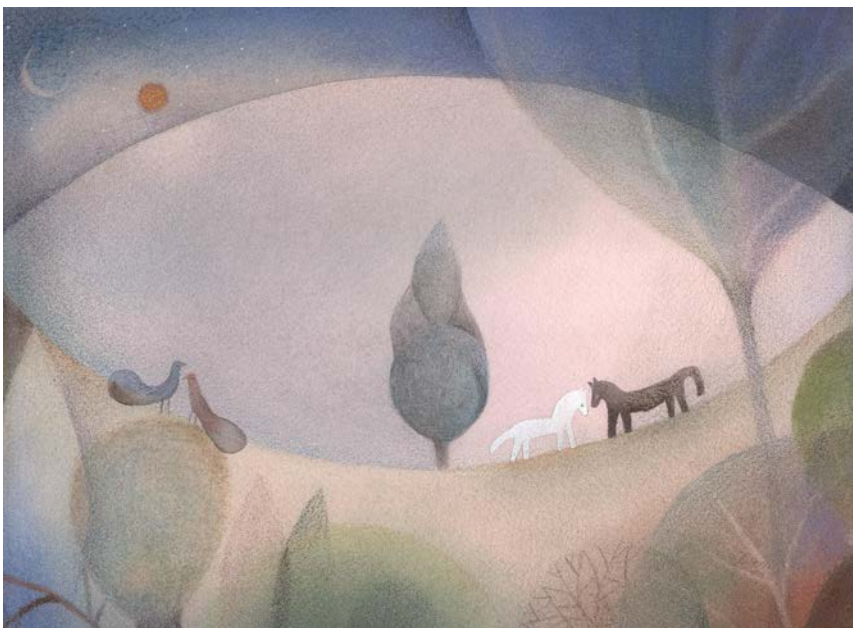
Regardless of which period she is exploring, the illustrator has achieved a fine balance in the harmony and upgrading of her own art style and vocabulary to which she, as necessary, adds elements belonging to a particular time, climate, culture, plant and animal life. All her work so far shows a remarkable thirst for knowledge and curiosity as well as a self-aware anchor in her own identity and creative beginnings. Increasingly she is focusing on author/illustrator projects that have in recent years been realised in collaboration with publishers from

Croatia, Japan, Thailand, United Kingdom, Switzerland and the United States.

Parallel to consciousness about her responsibility to the youngest readers, Dubravka has also realised that the picture book has today become an oasis for beautiful art. In Japan, the most devoted picture-book readers are middle-aged women and men. Her achievements to date, such as those for which she won silver awards from renowned illustration magazines (*Creative Quarterly* and *3x3 Magazine* from New York) and the silver award in the new talents in illustration category from the *Creative Quarterly: The Journal of Art and Design*, and in particular her latest work that is still awaiting materialisation, confirm her ability to overcome generational reception and understanding.

In these most recent, as yet unpublished illustrations, Dubravka's visions have crystallized into completely harmonious, almost arabesque-like compositions reduced to the essence of the visual vocabulary. Her attention is completely focused on merging all the elements that generate the story and inspire imagination - animals, landscapes, sky. Here the animals are no longer humanised, which empowers and confirms their primordial nature.

The quality of Dubravka Kolanović's work rests on the fact that as an illustrator and writer she does not bow to predictable and trite effects, which often weigh down many authors. Just like nature, which is her wisest teacher, Dubravka's illustrations do not repeat themselves. They are constantly regenerating, upgrading and rearranging into new worlds of imagination, solidarity and friendship based on that eternal relationship and harmony between word and image.



Illustrations awarded by **Creative Quarterly**,
magazine for contemporary art and design, New York, USA.

4 ESSAYS, INTERVIEWS AND ARTICLES

Launching the Warmth of Dubravka Kolanović

Interview posted on 05/02/2014
by Vijuga on
<http://www.transmeet.tv/lansiranje-topline-dubravke-kolanovic-interview/>

The gentle and subtle illustrations of Dubravka Kolanović attracted me with their beautiful and mindful artistic style, and an abundance of positive emotions and messages filled with the positive values they reflect.

The unobtrusive beauty of harmonious scenes of the world shared by man and nature, portray an ideal world that teaches us and reminds us of universal values worth living for, which unfortunately are often out of our reach. In this interview we will find out more about this artist who through her work affirms the importance of children's illustrations in both an artistic and educational sense.

Could you describe briefly the difference in studying here and abroad; what are the most valuable things you learned at the Savannah College of Art and Design and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb?

Studying at both institutions was a very valuable experience. SCAD is a rich, private college in the USA and offers an enviable standard of study, state of the art technology, the opportunity to use the most diverse models and to have acclaimed artists as guests. As opposed to SCAD, whose students were mostly those who could afford

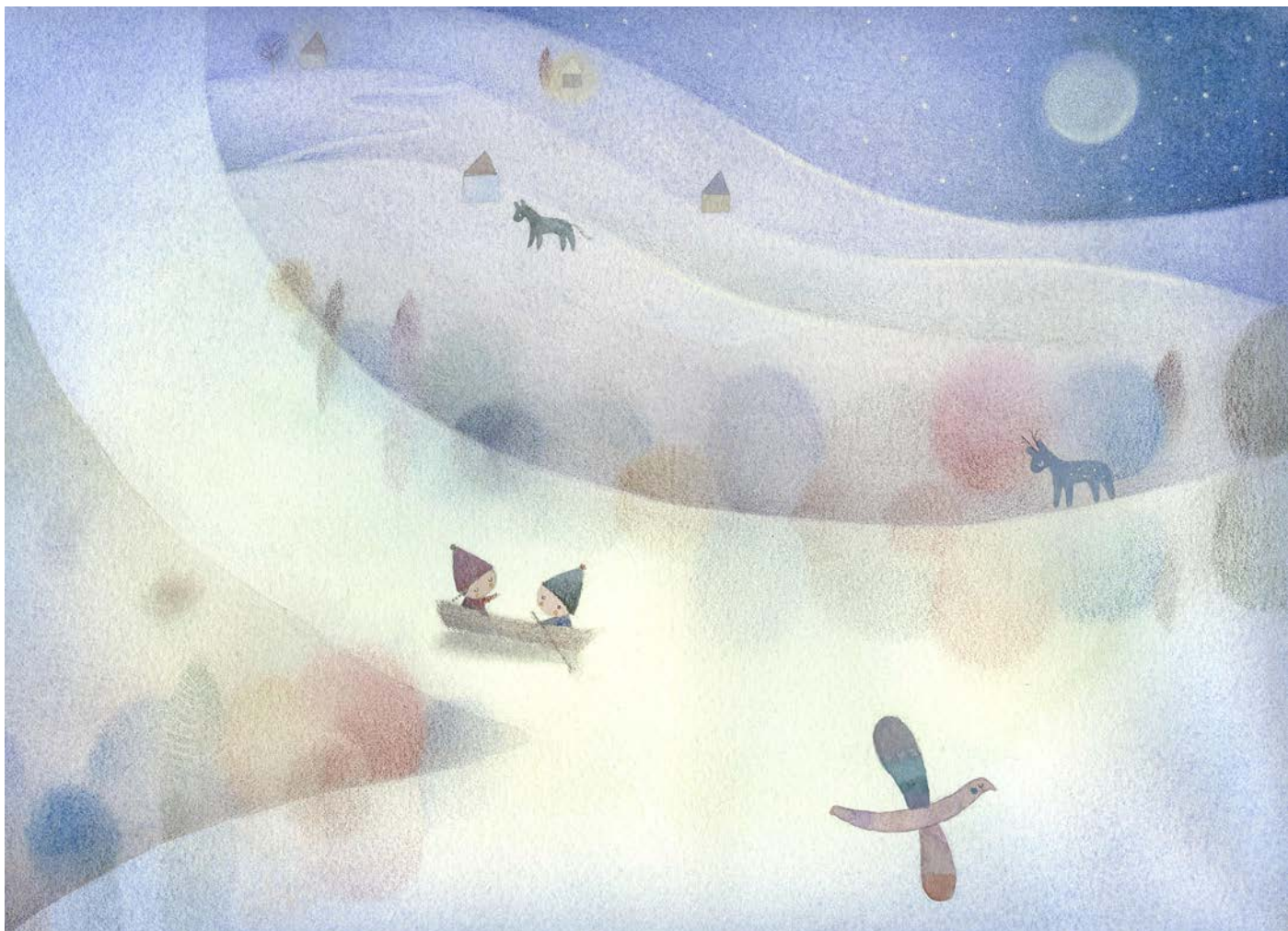
such high tuition, only a few of those truly talented could study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. Such selection guaranteed a certain quality in the work environment. I, myself, was only able to attend SCAD owing to scholarships granted in the USA.

How is it that you decided to begin illustrating picture books and how did love for this kind of artistic work and expression develop?

I was granted one of the scholarships as the winner of the national competition in the USA "Written and illustrated by". The prize also included the publishing of a picture book. Thanks to this achievement, at the age of eighteen I had the opportunity to work for a year with the experienced editor of the publishing company Landmark Editions, David Melton. David Melton is probably most deserving for my life's calling as a children's illustrator.

Your illustrations are overflowing with soft, airy, gentle shapes, misty, blurred contours, light contrasts, and emanate emotions of warmth, peace, love and joy. The compositions, colours, shapes and lines, even the motifs themselves that you paint – they are all infused with a great dose of harmony. What was decisive factor in the development of your artistic style?

I believe that every artist must nurture his/her inner world, which through creativity



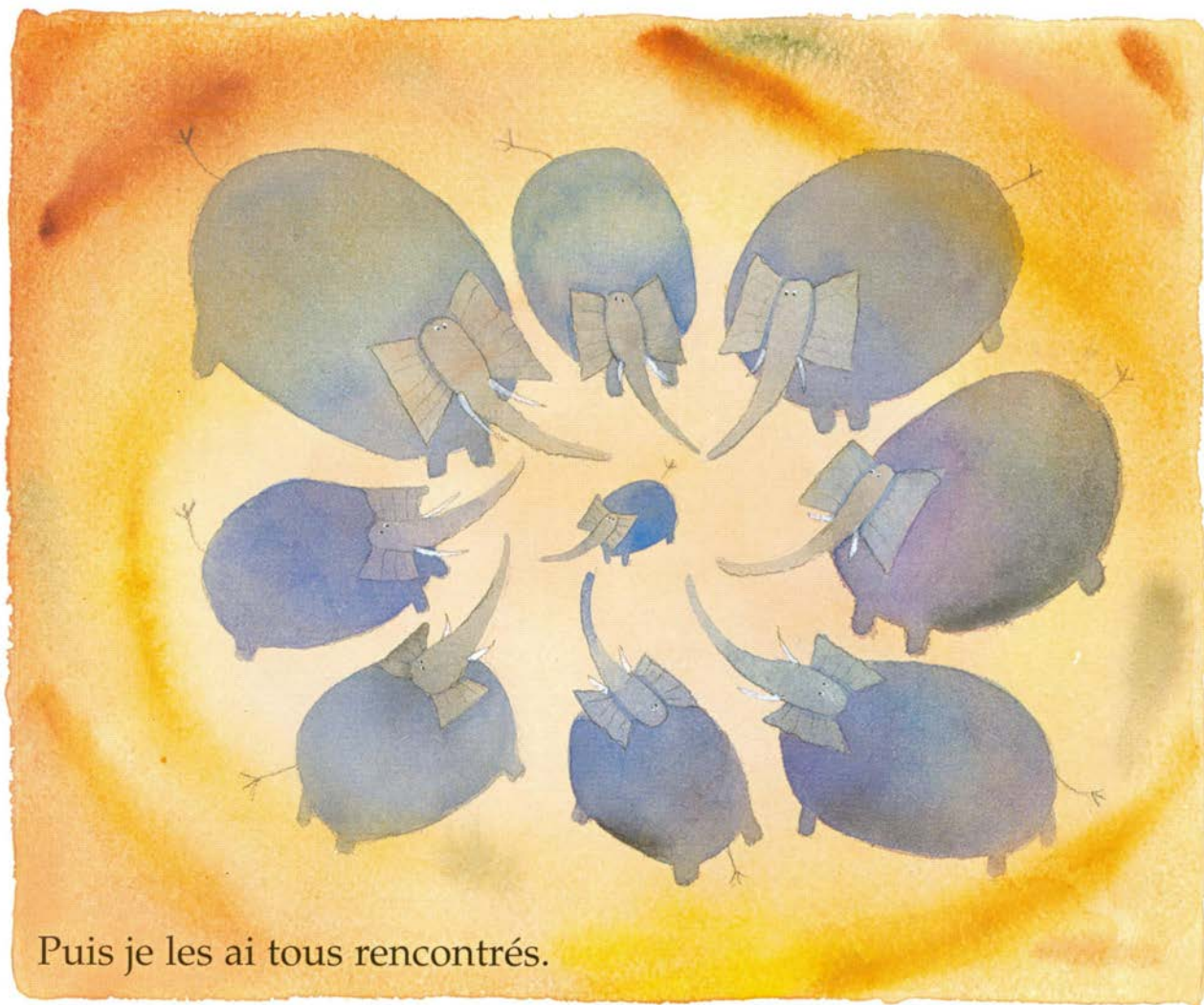
he/she shares with the public. Techniques are something that can be learned at art academies. Today's children are exposed to various media content that is often superficial, and many of them even contain elements of violence. It is a true challenge for the authors of children's books to portray a positive idea through their artistic expression and story. These are messages that call for love, generosity, tolerance, friendship, respect for others and respect for the environment. At the same time, picture books are one of the first ways that children are introduced to art, which makes it very important in shaping his/her relationship with art and recognition of quality artistic expression.

Which artistic techniques do you prefer in your work?

I mostly prefer to use dry pastel and watercolour techniques. These are subtle, gentle techniques that best suit my creative sensibilities.

Animal motifs are very important in your work, given that the world of animals and nature have always been a preoccupation of yours. In relation to depending exclusively on your imagination when drawing, how much have your travels and direct contact with nature been important as inspiration?

For many years now, I have volunteered in various animal and environmental protection projects. My travels and stays in impressive parts of the world – such as the Amazon rainforest, Borneo, the African savannah, desert, distant coral reefs or Antarctic ice –



are an eternal well of inspiration for me. All these regions, people, animals tell endless stories. My favourite picture book *Njogu*, published by the French company Grandir, is the result of an unforgettable trip and meeting with red elephants in the Kenyan National Park Tsavo.

I really love elephants so I recently volunteered in a centre for research of elephant intelligence in Thailand. It is truly fascinating how these huge, almost archaic animals have a rich emotional and social life, and how intelligent they are. Elephants are one of the rare animals that recognise their own image in a mirror. It is so sad that today their very existence is endangered. As a volunteer in Thailand, I used my skills as an illustrator when raising awareness in

children in remote schools about the need to protect elephants. Altogether we drew pictures of elephants, then later with their fingerprints in various colours, the children signed promises that they would share their environment with these iconic animals. It was a wonderful experience, and we all had a great time. Children are our future and investing in children is the best possible investment of energy.

How many languages have your picture books been translated into?

My picture books have been translated into many languages from Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Icelandic, Catalan, Polish, through to English, Spanish, French, Italian and others.

Are picture books that you read long ago different from today's ones?

Trends change so today picture books are somewhat different than they were before. I believe that those really good picture books are timeless.

Some important moments in your career are your cooperation with Unicef and numerous renowned publishing companies. Could you tell us about some of your achievements that are personally significant to you?

Throughout my entire career, I am most proud of my successful and many year cooperation with Unicef. This year too, we have prepared a collection of Christmas cards for the next season. I am very proud that my collection "Christmas Magic" too, from a few years ago, is the most sold collection of cards in Unicef's history.

How difficult is it to conquer part of the picture book market at home and in the world and to be a profitable illustrator, who can live off his/her work?

Being an illustrator is definitely not one of the most profitable occupations, however it does provide many privileges. I consider myself lucky because I can live off my work as a children's illustrator. This is a creative job that provides me with a lot of freedom and the possibility of escaping to a different ideal work every day.

What are you currently working on?

Currently I'm working on some personal projects and on a picture book for a British publisher about a lost panda. Recently I also signed a contract for the design of stuffed

toys in Great Britain. I am looking forward to this new challenge.

It seems to me that picture books in Croatia deserve a more important role in culture and education compared to the position they currently occupy. I think there is a certain reading/looking/ experience of picture books culture lacking in adults, and that in a way this is a consequence of the dominant belief that picture books pertain only to children. What do you think about this?

I think that every good children's picture book is not only reading material for children. An agent in Japan recently told me about an interesting phenomenon in his country where the most devoted picture book public are middle aged women and even men. In today's time, picture books have become oasis of beautiful art.

Do you have any unfulfilled wishes or ambitions related to your work?

Actually, no. I love my work and I work a lot, and I guess that my work will bring with it new challenges, new ideas and new opportunities.



Q&A with Dubravka Kolanović

Interview posted by Sunshine Smile
Publications on
<https://sites.google.com/site/sunshinesmilepublications/showcase/showcase-dubravka-kolanovic>

Sunshine Smile Publications is delighted to showcase the very talented Dubravka Kolanovic!

Dubravka Kolanovic is a children's book illustrator and author with many beautiful books to her name. She studied at the Savannah College of Art and Design, USA and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Croatia where she obtained an art degree. Since then she has devoted herself to children's book illustration.

Dubravka lives on coast of Croatia with her family, where they often walk along the sea and enjoy the natural beauty of their surroundings. Dubravka volunteers with Earthwatch, and has helped scientific researchers in the Amazon rainforest, the Australian Great Barrier Reef, the African Savannah and the Galapagos islands. It's a precious experience that has taught her the importance of protecting the environment for future generations.

Dubravka says, "I feel very privileged by being able to make my living as a children's book illustrator. It is a wonderful, creative job that gives me the opportunity to escape to a new, happy and colourful world every day."

Her clients include Bloomsbury Children's Books, Random House, Ladybird Books and Gullane Children's books among others. It is a privilege to showcase her fabulous work!

What are you working on at the moment?

While working on commissioned projects, I simultaneously try to develop some of my own ideas. At the moment I am working on a project with Lion Children's Books. We have a very nice and long-term relationship and it has always been a real joy to work on their beautiful texts. I am also working on a lovely baby book project for Blue Rabbit Publishing in Korea.

Recently I have finished a picture book titled Polar Bear Boy for Gullane Children's Books, written with Gillian Shields' poetic and inspiring text. It has been great honour for me to work with UNICEF for years and I worked on their new Christmas card collection this year. Every project is challenge on its own which offers me a new direction.

Is there anything you're busy promoting?

I have a few books published that I have written my own text for. All of my ideas come from real life inspirations. As a big nature lover, one of my favourites is about a small elephant, Njogu (Grandir, France) who teaches his big, old family new things.

In *Everyone Needs a Friend* (Price Stern Sloan, USA), Jack the wolf teaches everyone to have more understanding and patience in friendships and relationships, and to accept all the good and bad that comes with each of us. It became popular with my friends when it comes to tolerating their spouses!

Light (Kodansha, Japan) is a praise to the importance of friendship and people we meet throughout life that really light up our existence.



Albert the Artist (Tony Potter Publishing) is about a little dog, kind of like the one who hangs out around the Academy of Fine Art where I have studied. Albert desperately wanted to become a painter, and thanks to his hard work and persistence, he overcomes all the prejudices and obstacles to become the first dog ever to get a Fine Art degree.

Are there illustrators whose work you particularly enjoy?

There are many wonderful illustrators and artists whose work I adore. I love Yuri Norstein, Angela Muss, Laura Cornell, Shomei Yoh, Taro Gomi, Stefan Zavrel, Josef Wilkon, John Birmingham, Ian Falconer, Marc Boutavant, Selina Young, Tony Ross, Ludwig Bemelmans, Georg Hallensleben... the list is endless.

Do you have a piece of advice for beginning authors or illustrators?

I was very lucky to get the chance to publish

my first picture book at the age of 18 after I won a writing and illustration competition sponsored by Landmark Editions in the USA. Thanks to David Melton, who was an editor at Landmark Editions back then, because of everything he did for me I have made illustration my career. He was the one who taught me how to be patient, persistent, to believe in what I do and to be hard working.

I believe that to become a good artist you need to have something you want to share with other people, ideas and feelings that you need to know how to express. The technique is something that you could learn and obtain with hard work, the rest speaks about your inner world. Nowadays, children are burdened with so many different forms of information and it is a challenge to try to pass onto them messages about the importance of love, respect for other people, respect for nature, and sharing - the simple things that actually make life beautiful. Maybe that is the task that we children's book illustrators could help with a little bit



5 AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS

1991 Winner of **International Scholarship** for Student Artists at Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, USA.

1992 Gold Award Winner at **Written and Illustrated by...** competition sponsored by Landmark Editions Publishing, Kansas City, Missouri, USA.

2002 Winner at **Eight Competition of Illustration Round Red**, Associazione Culturale Teatrio, Venezia, Italy.

2003 Winner at **Ninth Competition of Illustration Mysterious East**, Associazione Culturale Teatrio, Venezia, Italy.

2003 Winner at **Book Project Competition**, Associazione Culturale Teatrio, Venezia, Italy.

2003 Runner up at **BBC Wildlife Competition** for Christmas Cards.

2004 **IBBY Honour List**, Basel, Switzerland for illustrations in the book *Halugica* by Vladimir Nazor.

2008 Awarded at **Oshima Picture Book Competition**, Oshima, Japan.

2008 Winner in **Picture Book Category at 3x3**, Magazine for Contemporary Illustration, New York, USA.

2009 Awarded at **Oshima Picture Book Competition**, Oshima, Japan.

2010 Silver Award Winner in **New Talent in Illustration** at **Creative Quarterly**, magazine for contemporary art and design, New York, USA.

2011 Silver Award Winner in **Picture Book Category at 3x3**, magazine for contemporary illustration, New York, USA.

2014 Special Recognition at **Fifth Bienalle of Croatian Illustration**, Zagreb, Croatia.

2016 Winner of **Ovca u kutiji** (Sheep in a Box, literary-art award for best Croatian picture book) for the picture book *Bao baobab i mala Kibibi* (*Bao the Baobab and Little Kibibi*), Zagreb, Croatia.

2017 Winner of **Ovca u kutiji** (Sheep in a Box, literary-art award for best Croatian picture book) for the picture book *Čarolija zagrljaja* (*The Magic of a Hug*), Zagreb, Croatia.

2017 Winner of **Grigor Vitez Award** for Best Illustrated Croatian picture book for the picture book *Čarolija zagrljaja* (*The Magic of a Hug*), Zagreb, Croatia.

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- Iveljić, N. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (1996). *Balonijada. Super jež (The Balloon Festival. Super Hedgehog)*. Zagreb: ABC Naklada.

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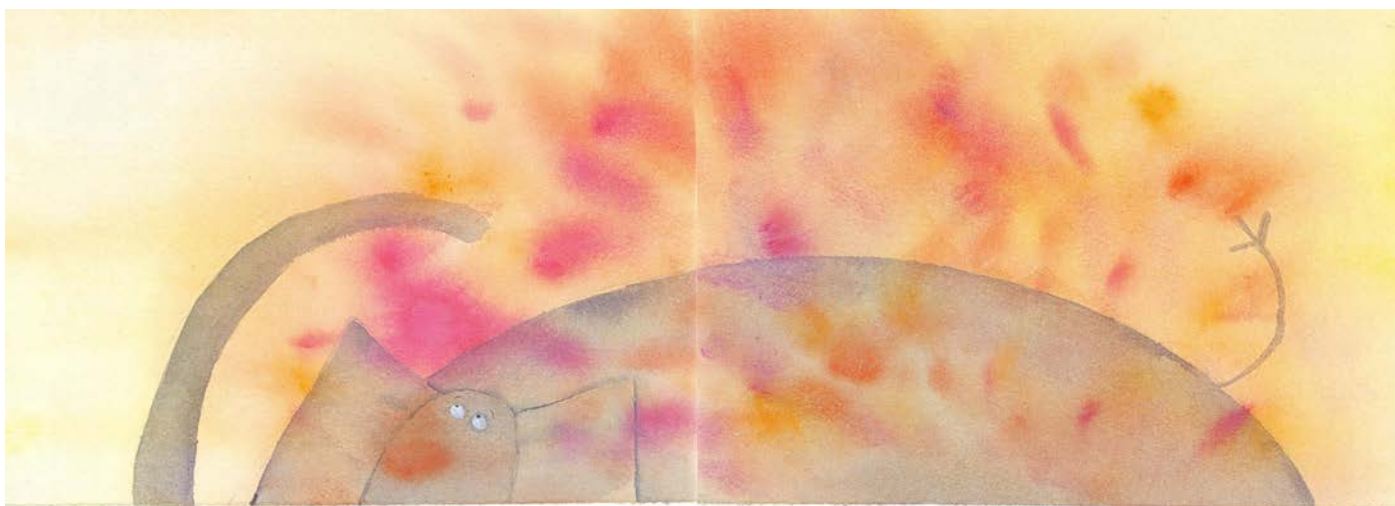
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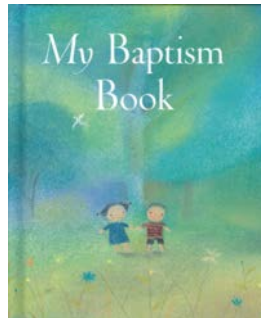
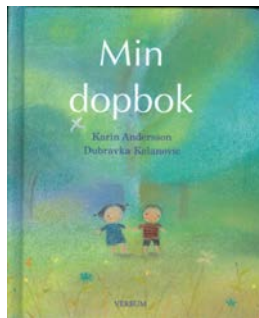
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J'ai toujours rêvé d'être beau comme le soleil qui se couche.

C'est pourquoi, un jour, je me suis recouvert de poussière rouge.

7 LIST OF TRANSLATED EDITIONS

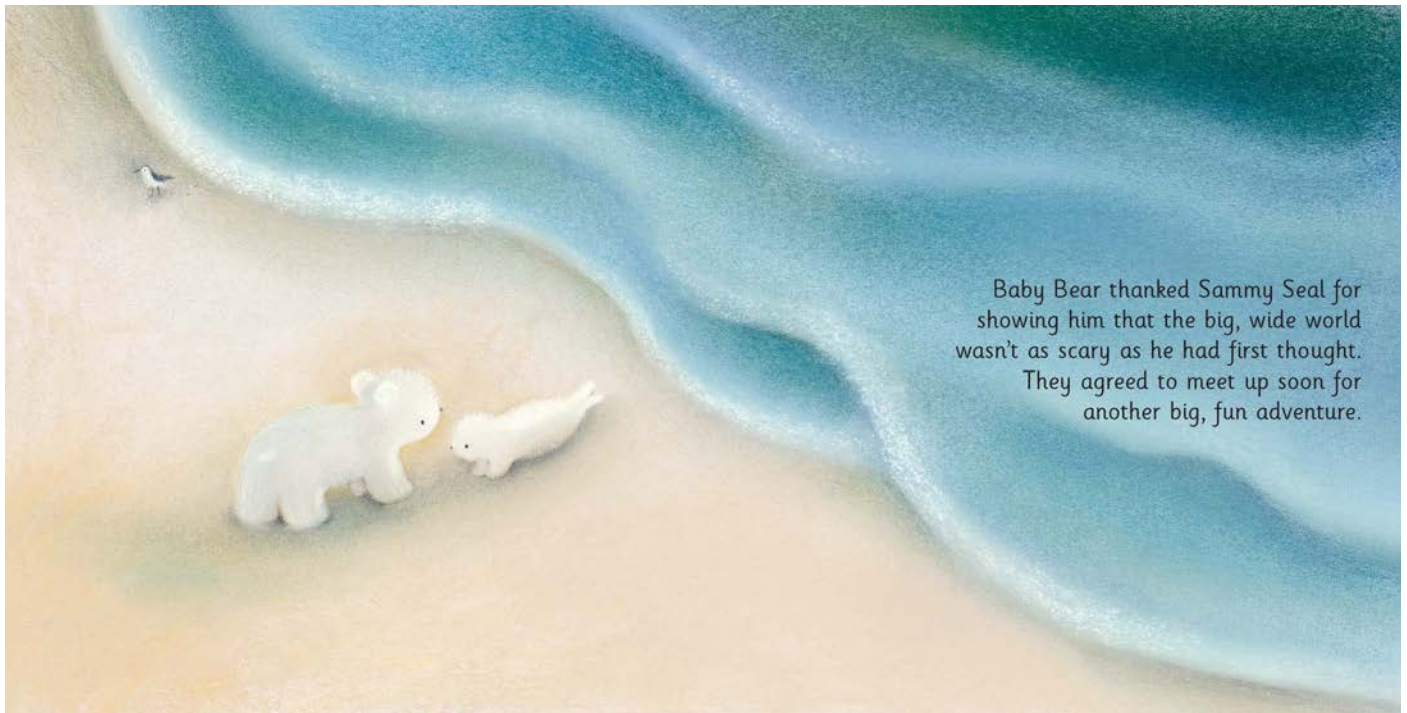


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- Ann Tobias & Dubravka Kolanovic (2005). *Splish, Splash, Flappy Ducks*. Los Angeles: SmartInk Books.
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- Dubravka Kolanovic (2008). *La Clase de las Abejitas – Oscar y Olivia*. Barcelona: Beascoa.
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- Dubravka Kolanovic (2008). *Honning Toppen Lucy*. Oslo: Cappelen.
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- Dubravka Kolanovic (2008). *Light*. Tokyo: Kodansha.

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- ³ Kolanović, D. (2003). ***Njogu***. Nimes: Grandir.
- ⁴ Piper, S. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2005). ***My Baptism Book***. Oxford: Lion Hudson plc.
- ⁵ Kolanović, D. (2017). ***Čarolija zagrljaja*** (*The Magic of a Hug*). Zagreb: Sipar.
- ⁶ Shields, G. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2012). ***Polar Bear Boy***. Bath: Parragon.
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- ⁸ Conway, D. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2007). ***Shine Moon Shine***. Wilton: Tiger Tales.
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- ¹⁰ Đokić, A. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2016). ***Bao Baobab i Mala Kibibi*** (*Bao the Baobab and Little Kibibi*). Zagreb: Knjiga u centru.



9 LIST OF FIVE BOOKS SENT TO THE JURY

- ¹ Saunders, K. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2011). ***Baby Badger's Wonderful Night***. London: Gullane Children's Books. – Great Britain
- ² Kolanović, D. (2004). ***Anna und das Rotkehlchen : eine Geschichte durch die vier Jahreszeiten*** (*Anna and the Robin: a Story Through the Four Seasons*). Zürich: Bohem Press. – Switzerland
- ³ Kolanović, D. (2003). ***Njogu***. Nimes: Grandir. – France
- ⁴ Piper, S. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2005). ***My Baptism Book***. Oxford: Lion Hudson plc. – USA
- ⁵ Kolanović, D. (2017). ***Čarolija zagrljaja*** (*The Magic of a Hug*). Zagreb: Sipar. – Croatia



Čarolija zagrljaja (The Magic of a Hug)

Explanation of the “Grigor Vitez” Prize
for illustrations for young children

With a unanimous decision of the Judging committee, the “Grigor Vitez” Prize 2017 for illustrations for young children is awarded to Dubravka Kolanović as the author of the picture book “The Magic of a Hug”

In Dubravka's creative work we observe the universal quality of her creative expression: it is characterised by gentle, colouristically defined outlines of characters and landscapes, without accentuated contours, which she achieves in the free-flowing dry pastel or wet watercolour techniques, regardless of whether she is painting parts of a faraway tropical jungle or even polar

landscapes. In these harmonious, balanced compositions, Dubravka does not leave out even the tiniest detail that so readily attracts the attention of children's eyes.

In Dubravka's picture books, the gentle and playful various animal characters are often the main actors in events. In the awarded picture book “The Magic of a Hug”, Medo (bear) and Vučić (wolf), who are best friends, are enjoying staring up at the night sky together.

One evening they are surprised by a creature that falls right in front of them from the stars.

The little alien appears strange to them. It is so strange to them that they try to send it back into space where it came from. After many failed attempts, the sad look in the eyes of the little alien arouses feelings of compassion in them. Medo and Vučić try to console it with a hug. In doing so, they discover that a hug is the magic fuel that gives the alien energy and power to fly



back to its home, among the stars. Through personalised animal characters, through a gentle harmony of pictures and words, Dubravka teaches her little readers and viewers that we are all similar, even though we appear different! This kind of message will also be a good reminder to adults because those who develop friendly and close relationships with others are happier!

Baby Badger's Wonderful Night

Publishers Weekly posted on:
<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-60684-172-3>

The night doesn't seem so wonderful to Baby Badger when this bedtime story opens. "It's too black and scary", he says, clinging to his father, too afraid to go to sleep. But as Papa Badger takes his son through the

woods and into the meadow, he points out all the lovely nuances and reassurances offered by the nocturnal world (the stars "light up the night sky... and keep us from feeling alone").

Baby Badger comes to realize that Papa is on to something: "The night is magical... it's full of stars and colors and wishes." First-time author Saunders's text is literal to a fault, but there's not much of it, and its murmuring tones will probably make an effective soporific.

Croatian illustrator Kolanovic, meanwhile, does marvelous things with soft, intricate textures: her air and sky sparkle and shimmer with colors, almost making the hush of night palpable. And she gives readers two adorable protagonists: the highly stylized badgers have endearingly outsize snouts and tiny dots for eyes; their fur, created with long strokes of warm gray, brown, and white, looks downy and cuddle-worthy.



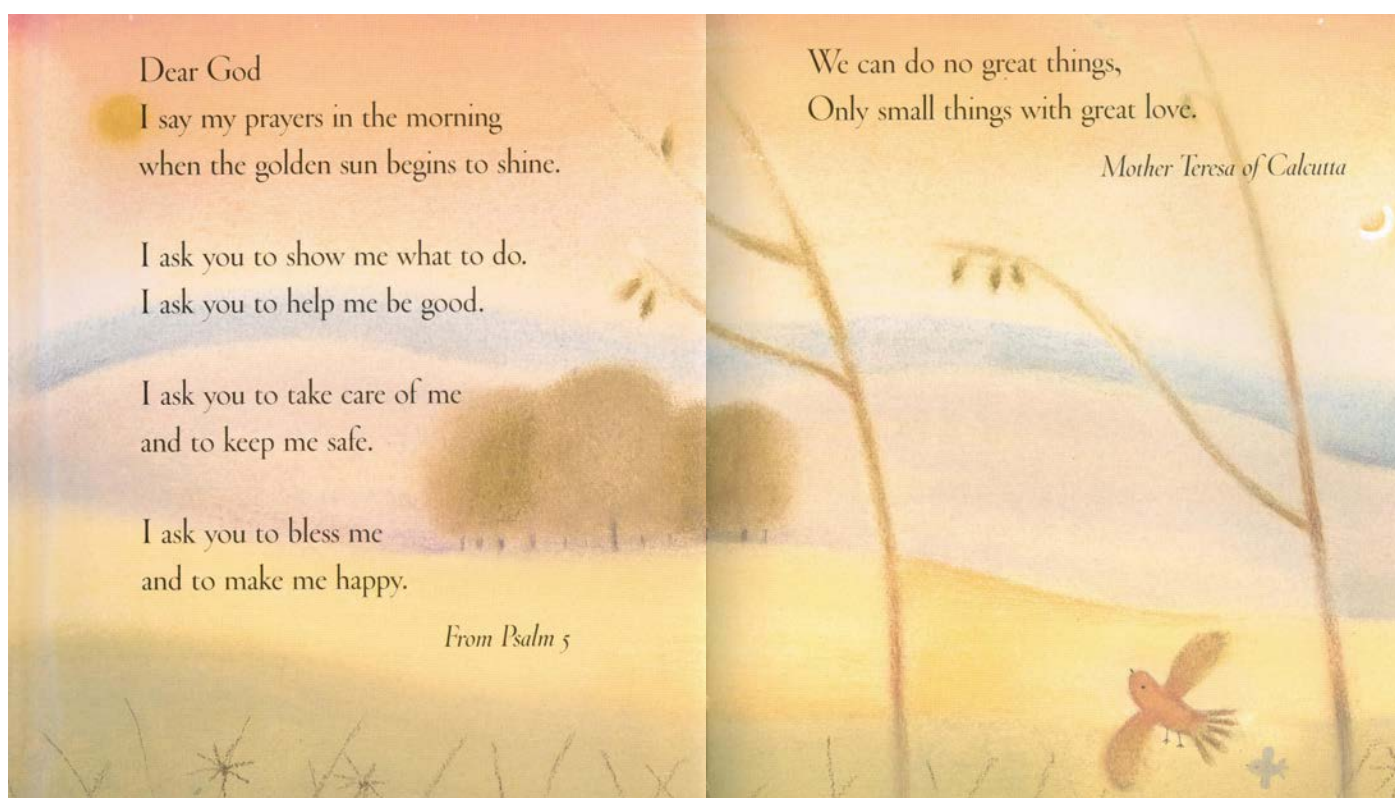
My Baptism Book

Branka Hlevnjak, Master of Sciences,
art historian, art critic and journalist

Gentleness and warmth radiate from each of Dubravka Kolanović's illustrations. Understated, airy colours permeate the landscape with imaginary rays of morning sun. Children: girls and boys with small round heads, curious little eyes, rosy cheeks and a smile on their face stroll through an earthly paradise; flowers, birds, meadows, trees and animals are part of the natural harmony. Each illustration is humble and innocent, just like little protagonists moving through the book. The pastel traces of colour create an additional vibrancy that suggests to the viewer/reader, the beating of children's hearts, which in sincere prayers seek peace, safety, protection, love even when playing in the fields of flowers, in the snow or captivated by the starry heavens. With

ease, the almost invisible artist's hand turns her little characters, simple as though they have emerged from the ancient teachings about symbolic images of people (*Točka, točka točkica, gotova je glavica, meke uši mali vrat, trbuh debel kao sat, male ručice i male nožice evo našeg Jožice*¹) and refined by the skilful artists gesture, into angels, the Holy Family, baby Jesus and shepherds. The illustrations of Dubravka Kolanović are fine art adapted to the warmth of words offering faith and hope to children, for whom this book is intended.

Although here children are baptised as little babies, this book of memories will very soon (because children grow up quickly) be touched by little hands and looked at with curious eyes, and then be read one day by themselves, her or him, a little girl or boy, and they will easily and quickly identify with the characters in the book, regardless of the role the artist assigned them (angel, shepherd, Holy Family) because in their little minds there is no awareness of their own



1 Translator's note: children's nursery rhyme.

time limitations, rather they are to themselves little people to whom the world has opened up with its beauty and wonder. For each thought/note about God and his greatness, in gratitude for the world He created and for the endless love He gives to man, for each prayer, Dubravka Kolanović has created an image of the little baby being baptised/pupil without any pathos, which in the pages of the book appear sincere, spontaneous and devoted. She has illustrated some texts with birds happily “chirping”, spreading the news / wisdom of God. When she directly assigns “roles” to children to illustrate individual motifs, or when she uses birds with more complex texts, Dubravka Kolanović is building a world of small believers through the softness of colour and warmth of ambiance, and through artistic language has portrayed the notions of love, innocence and gratitude.

In the end, if we took the picture book and flipped through it, by looking at Dubravka Kolanović’s pictures/illustrations, the experience of heavenly mysteries and the mystery of God would be felt on every page. Without great strokes and without glaring colours, or festive embellishments, on the contrary – in the modest means and formative elementality of the universal language of direct communication in symbols, Dubravka Kolanović has raised illustration to a higher qualitative level, and with it expressed the deepest human emotions of loneliness, insecurity and fear. In line with Jesus’ words: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”, Dubravka Kolanović draws the joy of little ones in carefreeness and play, and blesses them with an image of goodness.

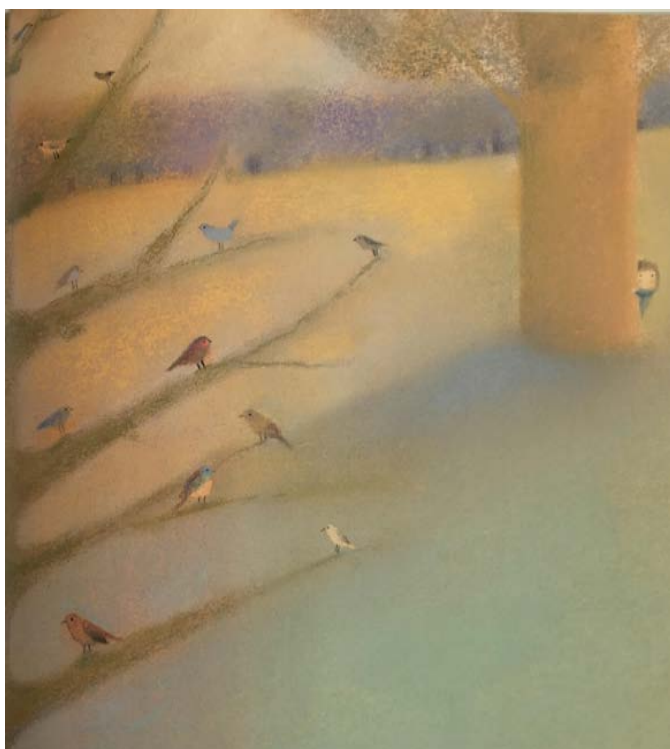
Anna und das Rotkehlchen (Anna and the Robin)

Iva Körbler, art historian, independent curator and editor, comparative literature graduate



In “Ana and the Robin”, unlike some of her other picture books, the academy trained painter and illustrator Dubravka Kolanović maximally emphasises the artistic dimensions of the book, in a series of coloured pastel drawings where through the refined tone transitions facilitated by the pastel technique, a particularly romantic-pastoral atmosphere is achieved in the overall piece.

The title of the picture book conceals within itself the main topic with which kindergarten children and those of the lower grades of primary school age are acquainted, and this is the topic of the changes and differences between four seasons that are presented through vegetation and the animal world in the forest. The little girl Ana notices that the robin doesn’t leave to go to a warmer southern climate in the winter, rather stays in the continental climate, while



the forest animals withdraw into their warm underground dwellings and tunnels to survive the winter. Information about how animals come to feed in the winter and how people leave food out for them is introduced into the story, which is important so that children of this age group develop empathy towards all living beings. However, along with the robin, also present in the rest of the tale are Ana's grandmother and grandfather, who live at the edge of the forest and are an important education factor in the little girl's life, and who explain the secrets of the seasons and the changes they bring about in nature.

In this picture book, the atmosphere that accompanies the individual seasons is exceptionally important, which is why the artist gave a special significance to the concept of page distribution and the drawings in the picture book. Namely, the text is positioned in three – exceptionally four – rows on the pages on the left side with smaller illustrations, while on all the right sides there are independent drawings over the entire format of the page, without white margins. This ensures longer visual

engagement of children on the content they have just read, because in our culture we naturally look and turn the pages from left to the right side, and it is visually “more difficult” in the compositional-graphical context. Thus, after taking in the information provided in the text, each child may surrender him/herself to unlimited imagination and thinking about the lives of the forest inhabitants, little Ana and the robin, and discover more about the various characteristics of each season. It must be pointed out that the picture book is not at all pretentious in the educational-artistic sense, while for children of this age group the ratio of offered text and illustrations – which is of an exceptionally quality artistic image – is entirely ideal.

Njogu

Iva Körbler, art historian, independent curator and editor, comparative literature graduate

In one of her first published picture books, a story of a little elephant growing up in a region of the savannah, academy trained painter and illustrator Dubravka Kolanović creates an exceptionally rounded tale, with vivid educational messages for children of primary school age. What we have before us is not only one of a series of beautiful picture books. The author's integrally devised visual and textual approach to the children's book consists of a balanced artistic and compositional relationship between image / illustration and text, but also the development of emotional range and empathy in children for animals and their animal families, in the example of the

little elephant Njogu, which in the language of the Kenyan tribe Kikuyu actually means - the elephant. In the flood of different picture books and children's books, we often encounter an inappropriate and unequal quality of images and texts, infantile-tacky illustrations, excessive narrative or overemphasised gestures and selected colours of accompanying drawings. With Dubravka Kolanović there are very controlled and suppressed gestures, the drawings are ideally stylised in order to adapt the visual perception to a particular children's age group, while the colours burst into the counterpoint of gentle pastel warm and cold tones that conjure up the concepts and atmosphere of the morning, day and night. Looking at the artist's drawings and their reverberations of colour, it becomes clear that a sensitivity to colour nuances and their fine transition were obviously inherited from her professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in

Zagreb, Vasilije Jordan.

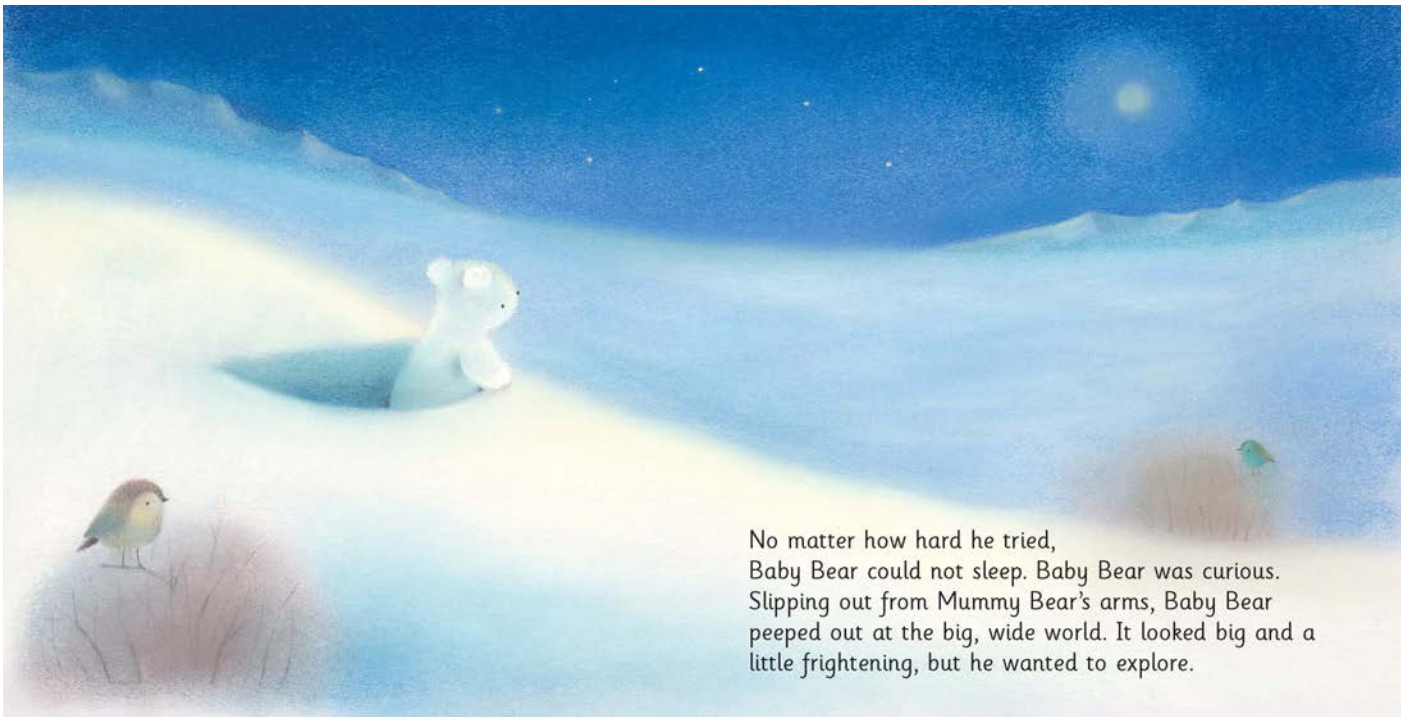
In a tale that follows little Njogu and his life with his family in the savannah, the topic of pregnancy is very naturally and subtly introduced – both visually and textually – the joy and gentleness that Njogu shows to his unborn little sister, whereby the author touches on the important topic of accepting the second child by the first born. Little Njogu is portrayed as a good and gentle child, but also exhibits his adventurous spirit that helps him become better acquainted with the family territory. Namely, practice has shown that little children and those in lower grades of primary school faster and more easily accept more or less delicate topics if they're presented to them through animal characters and actors, whereby this picture book supersedes a general position of sensitization for coexistence with animals on the planet or the problems of ecology.



11 REPRODUCTIONS OF BOOK COVERS
AND ILLUSTRATIONS







No matter how hard he tried,
Baby Bear could not sleep. Baby Bear was curious.
Slipping out from Mummy Bear's arms, Baby Bear
peeped out at the big, wide world. It looked big and a
little frightening, but he wanted to explore.



Soon, the big sun began to rise over the big, blue ocean.
Baby Bear sighed ... it was time to go home.

So, Baby Bear and Sammy Seal
swam back to the shore.

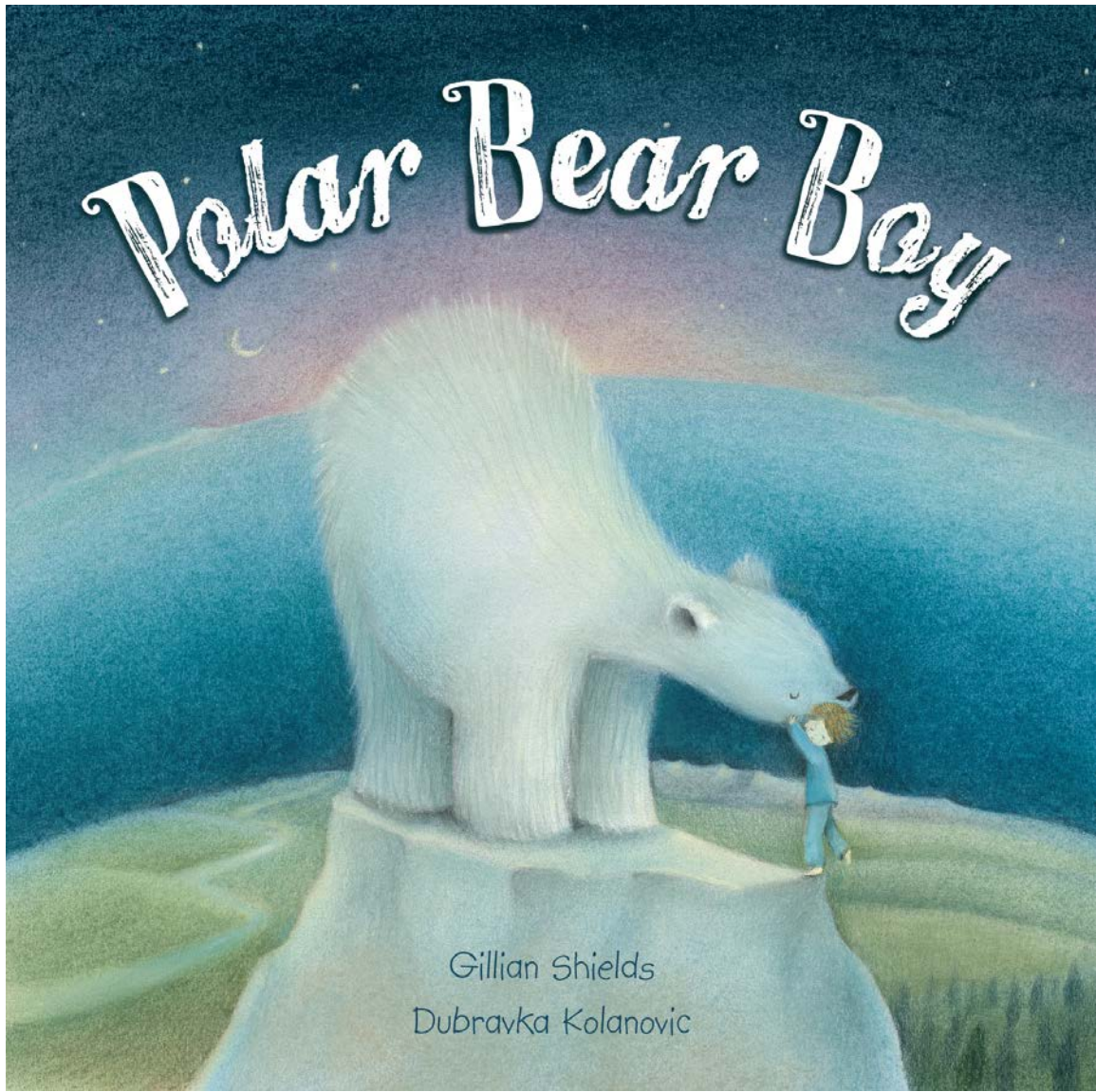
Patterson, E. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2010). *Baby Bear and the Big Wide World*.
Suffolk: Top That Publishing.



Kolanović, D. (2008). *Light*. Tokyo: Kodansha.



Saunders, K. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2011). *Baby Badger's Wonderful Night*. London: Gullane Children's Books.



Shields, G. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2012). *Polar Bear Boy*. Bath: Parragon.





Shields, G. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2012). *Polar Bear Boy*. Bath: Parragon.



Čarolija zagrljaja

napisala i ilustrirala Dubravka Kolanović



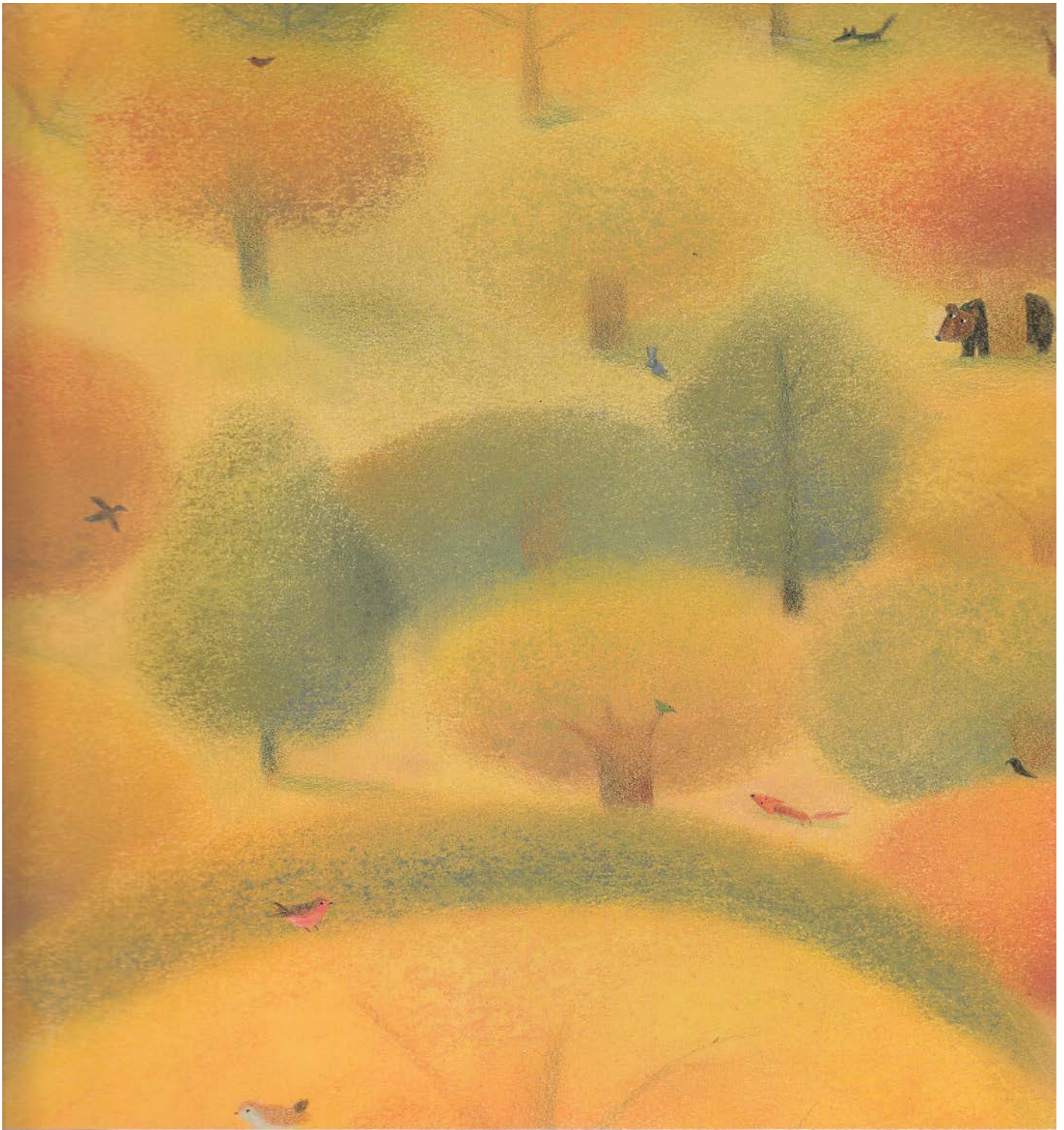
Kolanović, D. (2017). **Čarolija zagrljaja** (*The Magic of a Hug*). Zagreb: Sipar.



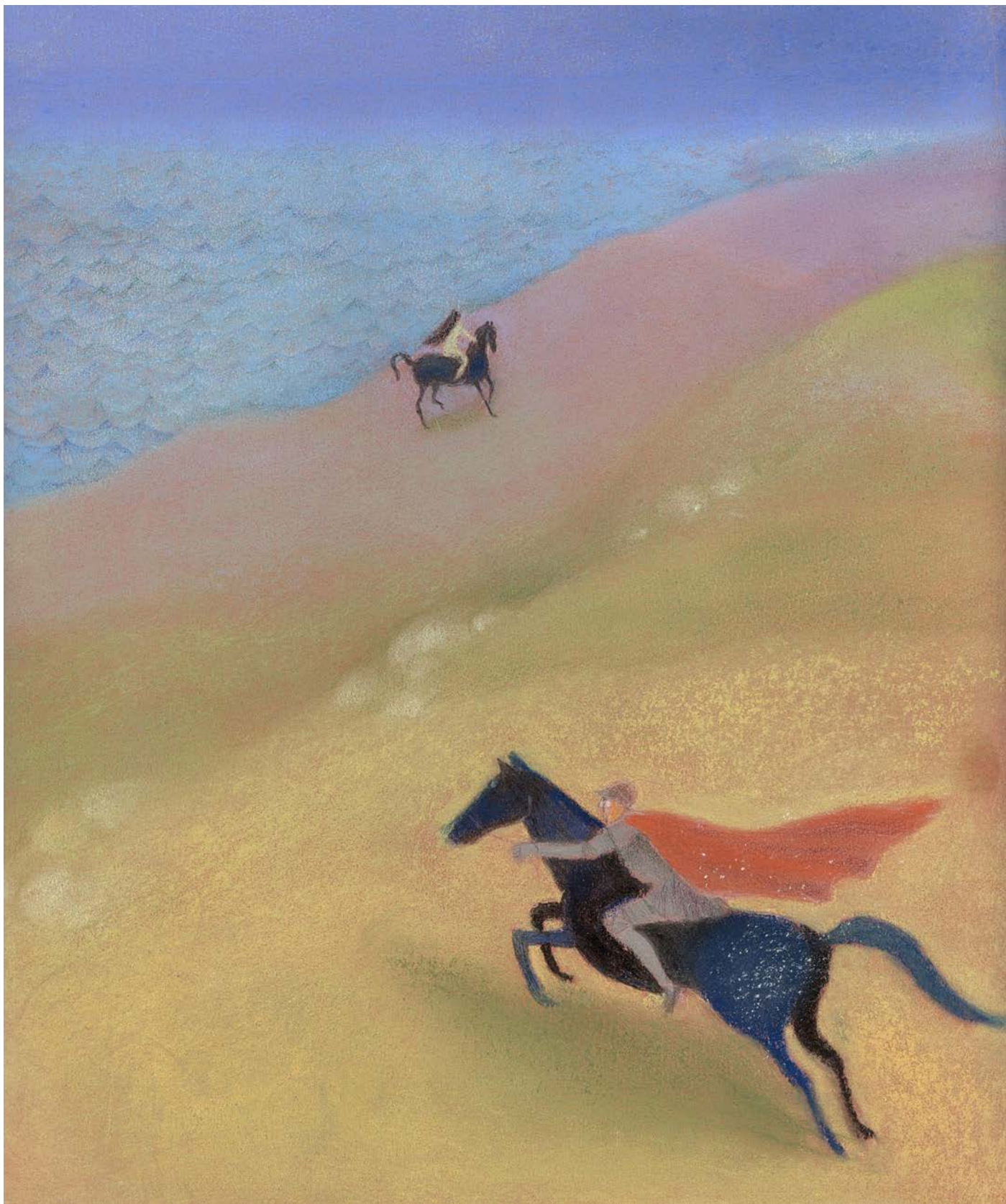
みっかめに、アタは はしごを
みつけて、いちばん たかい ビルに
はこんでいきました。



David Conway & Dubravka Kolanovic (2007). *Shine Moon Shine*.
Tokyo: Hyoronsha.



Kolanović, D. (2004). ***Anna und das Rotkehlchen : eine Geschichte durch die vier Jahreszeiten*** (*Anna and the Robin: a Story Through the Four Seasons*). Zürich: Bohem Press.



Nazor, V. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2001). *Halugica*. Zagreb: Profil.



Ne govoreći nikome ništa otplovi Miho negdje daleko, u Afriku.



Paljetak, L. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2007). *Miho Pracet*.
Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska – Ogranak Dubrovnik.



Đokić, A. & Kolanović, D. (Illustrator). (2016). **Bao Baobab i Mala Kibibi.**
(*Bao the Baobab and Little Kibibi*). Zagreb: Knjiga u centru.



Little Owl ruffled her feathers and shook her head, but luckily she did not seem to be hurt.

"Let me help you get back in the air," said Wolf. He picked Little Owl up and gently tossed her as high as he could.



But she fell down again.

"I don't know how to fly," Little Owl admitted.



Dubravka Kolanovic (2018). *Kindness is Magic*. London: QED Publishing.



Kolanović, D. (2018). *True friends*. London: QEB Publishing.



Every child has the right to good health, nutrition, water and sanitation, quality education, and protection from violence and exploitation. UNICEF works with partners to save and improve the lives of children around the world. You too can give children a better future.

Jedes Kind hat das Recht auf Gesundheit, Ernährung, sauberes Wasser und Bildung sowie auf Schutz vor Gewalt und Ausbeutung. UNICEF arbeitet eng mit Partnern zusammen, um weltweit das Überleben von Kindern zu sichern und ihre Lebensbedingungen zu verbessern. Auch Sie können Kindern eine bessere Zukunft ermöglichen.

Chaque enfant a le droit aux soins dont il a besoin, à une bonne alimentation, à de l'eau potable, à une parfaite hygiène, à une éducation de qualité et à être protégé de toutes formes de violences et d'exploitation. L'UNICEF travaille avec ses partenaires pour sauver des vies d'enfant et améliorer leur qualité de vie dans le monde entier. Vous aussi, donnez aux enfants un meilleur avenir.

Todos los niños tienen derecho a una buena salud, nutrición, agua e higiene, educación de calidad y a estar protegidos contra la violencia y la explotación. UNICEF trabaja junto a sus aliados para salvar y mejorar las vidas de los niños alrededor del mundo. Tú también puedes ofrecer un mejor futuro a los niños.

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Joyeux Noël Vesel božič クリスマス Buon Natale
Feliz Natal Καλή Χριστούγεννα Mutlu Noeller

UNICEF Christmas postcards

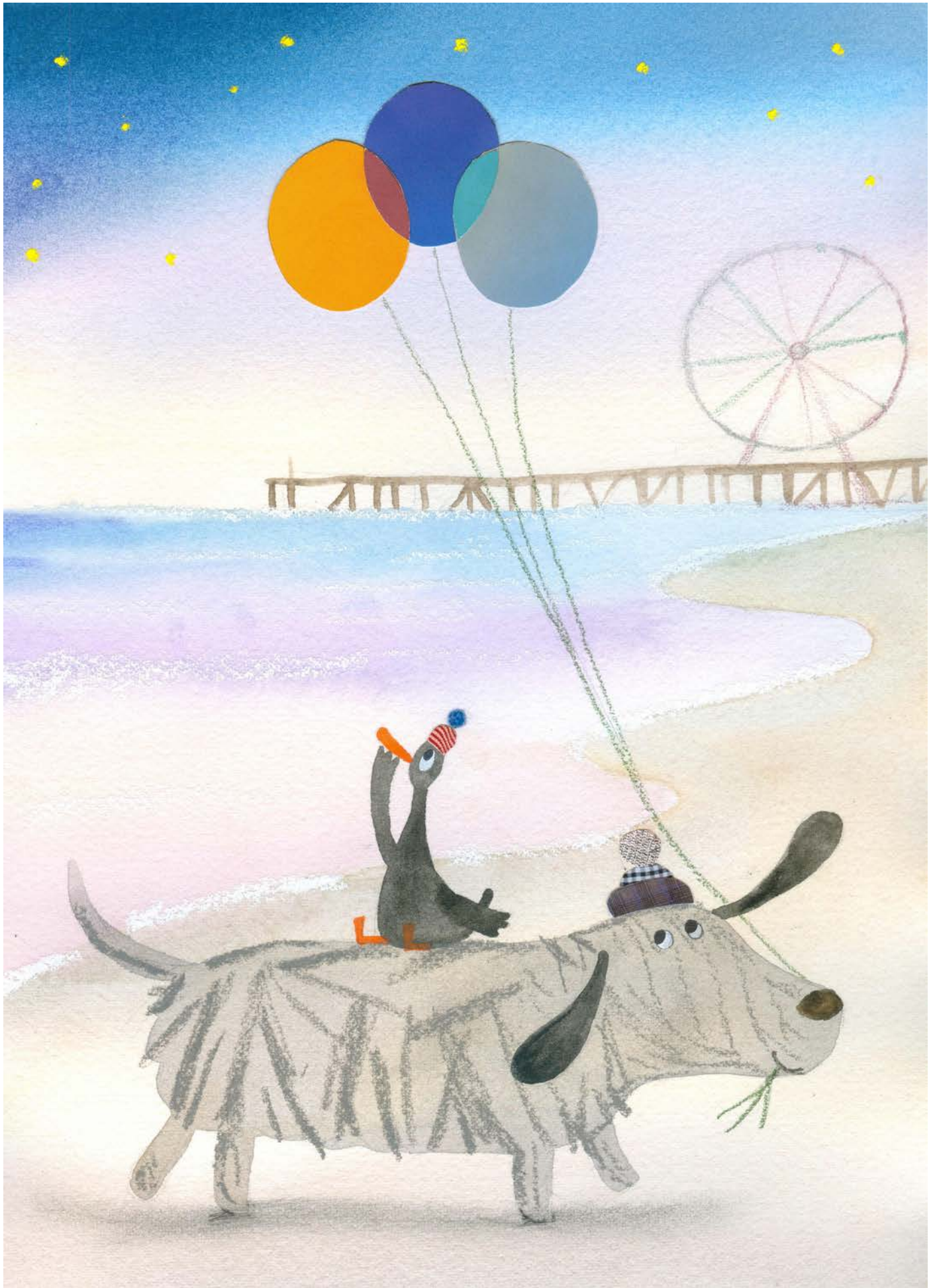


Piro & Dubravka Kolanovic (2016). **The Legend of Geoffrey**.
New York: Downtown Bookworks.

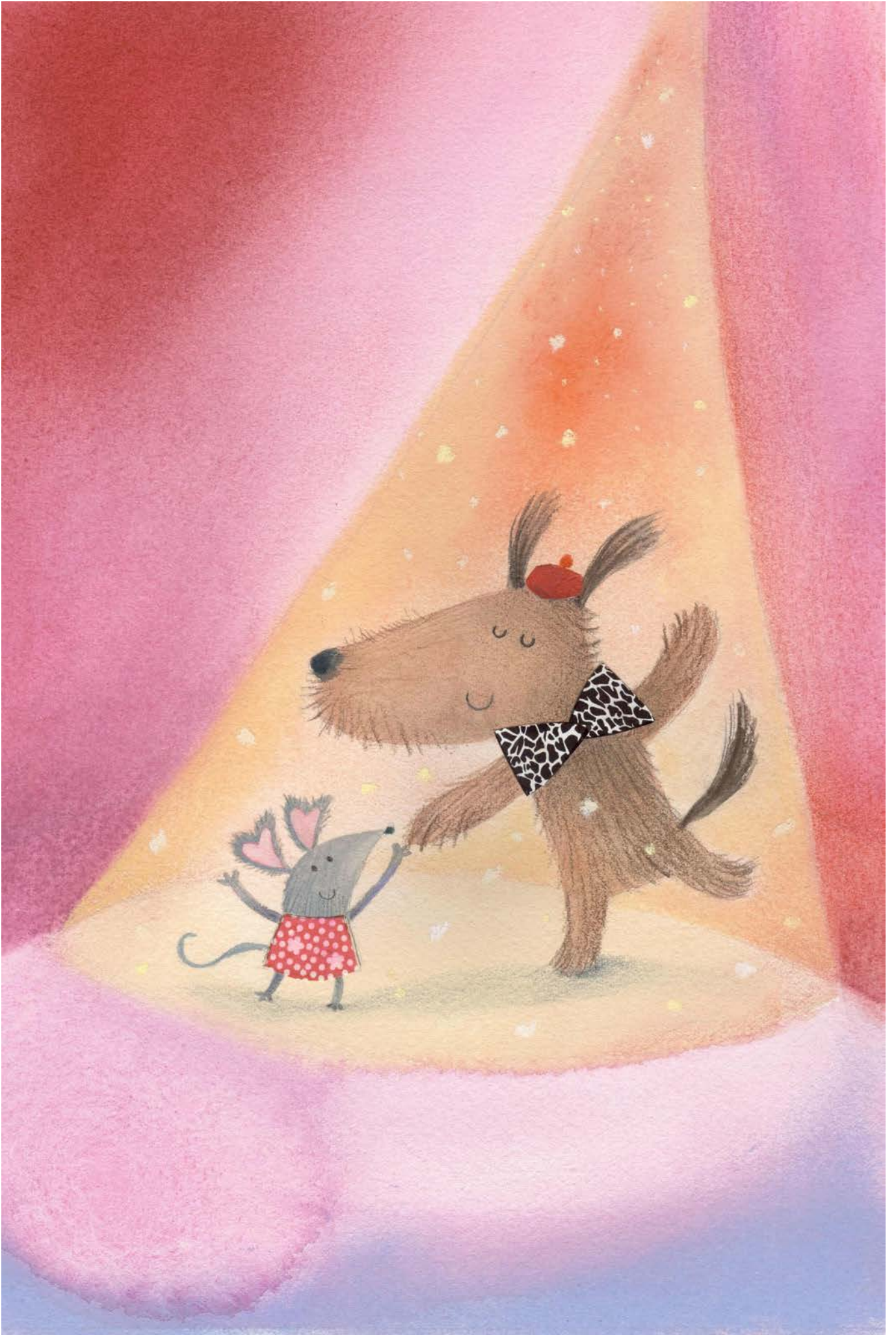




Development of characters for new books









Dubravka Kolanović

dubravkakolanovic@gmail.com