

Perpich Arts Library



Picture Books for Arts Instruction

Bronzeville Boys and Girls

Gwendolyn Brooks, illustrated by Faith Ringgold

A collection of poems that celebrate the joy, beauty, imagination, and freedom of childhood. Each one presents a different child involved in a pastime that is still relevant in the lives of contemporary children. Ringgold's trademark, vibrantly colored, stylized art features children of color.

Coming on Home Soon

Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

The setting here is the home front during World War II, and Ada Ruth's mama leaves to find work in the city. The race, class, and gender struggle is part of the setting, but for Ada Ruth, it's the waiting, quietly expressed in her simple, poetic first-person narrative. Lewis' beautiful watercolors establish the setting.

Ellington Was Not a Street

Ntozake Shange, illustrated by Kadir Nelson

In a reflective tribute to the African-American community of old, Shange recalls her childhood home and the close-knit group of innovators that often gathered there. Done in oils, the skillfully rendered portraits emphasize facial expressions, clothing, and physical positioning on the page, and provide unmistakable insight into the persona of each individual. A biographical sketch of each innovator appears at the end.

Family Pictures/Cuadros de Familia

Carmen Lomas Garza

The author describes, in bilingual text, her experiences growing up in a Texas Latino community. Day-to-day experiences are told through fourteen descriptive narrative vignettes, each focusing on an aspect of traditional Mexican American culture. Brilliantly colored images teem with life and glow with nostalgia.

Gift Horse: A Lakota Story

S.D. Nelson

Relates the story of a Lakota youth whose father gives him a horse in preparation for his making the transition from boyhood into manhood and becoming a Lakota Warrior. Bold, colorful illustrations are inspired by the style of the early Plains Indians.

Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez

Kathleen Krull, illustrated by Yuyi Morales

A biography of Cesar Chavez, from age ten when he and his family lived happily on their Arizona ranch, to age thirty-eight when he led a peaceful protest against California migrant workers' miserable working conditions. Morales' gorgeous paintings feature their rounded, organic forms and lush, gemstone hues.

I Live in Music

Ntozake Shange, illustrated by Romare Bearden

Shange's lyrical poem is a tribute to the language of music and the magical, often mystical, rhythms that connect people. Written in a syncopated style that has its own melody, the poem is perfectly married to

twenty-one extraordinary and diverse works from Bearden who once said, "I paint in the tradition of the blues."

I See the Rhythm

Toyomi Igus, illustrated by Michele Wood

Chronicles and captures poetically the history, mood, and movement of African American music. Each stunning spread—including art, poetic text, a description of the music style, and a time line of selected historical events—encompasses the spirit of the times and the strength of the communities where the music was born. Wood's vibrant paintings are based in historical detail, and resonate with emotion.

The Lion's Share/Qayb Libaax: A Somali Folktale

Said Salah Ahmed, illustrated by Kelly Dupre

This handsome, bilingual Somali-English picture book tells a stark animal fable about the misuse of power. "The lion's share is not fair," is the message, and there's no reversal that shows the weak tricking the powerful. Dramatic linoleum block prints, painted with acrylic and gouache in shades of brown and red, illustrate the story.

Magic Windows/Ventanas Mágicas

Carmen Lomas Garza

Through the magic windows of her cut-paper art, Garza shows us her family, her life as an artist, and the legends of her Aztec past. A collection of full-page reproductions of Lomas Garza's papel picado (cut-paper art) accompanied by short explanatory narratives in Spanish and English. Companion book follows.

Making Magic Windows: Creating Papel Picado/Cut-Paper Art

Carmen Lomas Garza

Provides instructions for making paper banners and more intricate cut-outs. Includes diagrams for creating specific images and eight traditional designs, including The Four Cardinal Points; Tiles echoing the colorful hand-painted tiles that decorate many Mexican buildings; and others of leaves, hummingbirds, and flowers.

A Man Called Raven

Richard Van Camp, illustrated by George Littlechild

This contemporary story draws from the animal legends and folklore told to Van Camp by his Dogrib (Native American/First Nations) elders. Littlechild's bold use of color and perspective perfectly captures the sense of mystery and magic surrounding the strange raven man who teaches the meaning of respect for nature.

Napí

Antonio Ramírez, illustrated by Domi

A Mazateca girl who lives beside a river in Oaxaca, Mexico describes her home and village at different times of the day. In a dream, the girl becomes a heron, observing her village from above. Glowing with intense colors sometimes used in fanciful ways, the acrylic paintings show the river, trees, and village teeming with life.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Langston Hughes, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

Through Hughes' famous Harlem Renaissance poem, rivers all over the world become the stage for portraying the experiences of black people throughout history. Lewis' radiant watercolors convey great depth through the interplay of water, light and color.

The Pot that Juan Built

Nancy Andrews-Goebel, illustrated by David Diaz

A cumulative rhyme summarizes the life's work of renowned Mexican potter, Juan Quezada. Additional information describes the process he uses to create his pots after the style of the Casas Grandes people. Diaz's arresting digital illustrations, use yellows, oranges, and reds in a layered effect that seems to glow with an inward light.

Sacagawea

Lise Erdrich, illustrations by Julie Buffalohead

A biography of the Shoshone girl, Sacagawea, from age eleven when she was kidnapped by the Hitdatsa to the end of her journey with Lewis and Clark, plus speculation about her later life. The richly hued, impressionistic paintings also create a good sense of time and place. A time line, a map, and a brief bibliography follow the story.

Tar Beach

Faith Ringgold

Recounts the dream adventure of eight-year-old Cassie Louise Lightfoot, who flies above her apartment-building rooftop, the 'tar beach' of the title, looking down on 1939 Harlem. Based on the author's quilt painting of the same name. The illustrations painted for the book version are done in the same colorful style as the quilt.

Visiting Langston

Willie Perdomo, illustrated by Bryan Collier

A rhythmic poem in praise of Langston Hughes and his craft. The poem is presented by a young girl who is off to visit Hughes's Harlem home with her father. Collier's heady blend of watercolor and mixed media collage evokes the history of the writer's life and times.

When Marian Sang

Pam Muñoz Ryan, illustrated by Brian Selznick

An introduction to the life of Marian Anderson, extraordinary singer and civil rights activist, who was the first African American to perform at the Metropolitan Opera, and whose life and career encouraged social change. Working with a sepia-toned palette, Selznick's paintings shimmer with emotion, his range of shading as versatile as Anderson's three-octave voice.

Words with Wings: A Treasury of African-American Poetry and Art

Belinda Rochelle

Pairs twenty works of art by African-American artists with poems by African-American poets. Each poem and piece of art evokes the history, identity, and pride of African American people, whether it addresses slavery, family, childhood joy and woes, or racism. Includes work by: Maya Angelou, Romare Bearden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nikki Giovanni, Langston Hughes, Jacob Lawrence, Horace Pippin.

The Perpich Library collection includes the books listed in this bibliography. Please contact the library to become a FREE member and to reserve materials, receive reference assistance, or to arrange group and individual visits.

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