

**Exhibit: Play By Design: The Physical World of Children’s Books – Panel Drafts
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Abstract:

This exhibit considers the importance of physical aspects of the children’s book, including size, materials, illustration, layout and typography to the experience of the reader. Featuring rare children’s books from the Bentley Rare Book Gallery, the exhibit invites visitors to explore illustration styles and techniques, intriguing formats from pop-ups to hornbooks, and the interplay of text and images on the printed page. The result is a special form of the book that offers a medium of artistic expression for authors and illustrators as well as serving the needs of children and delighting adults. The interplay of physical elements highlighted in children’s books makes this medium especially relevant to today’s world in which electronic interactivity informs our daily lives.

Panel 1. Introduction

Books have many purposes: they teach, entertain, broaden our horizons, and introduce us to new ideas. In no genre is the interplay of these elements more evident than in children’s literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With the Enlightenment, books began to be used as didactic tools meant to impart moral and instructive lessons to children, viewed as blank slates needing to be filled with adult knowledge. Over time, the confluence of the growing appreciation of the inner life of children and the work of authors, illustrators and publishers refashioning their products to appeal to new markets facilitated the rise of a new genre of children’s leisure books. These works were specially designed to appeal to younger audiences for whom play and learning are deeply connected. More than just words on a page, children’s literature manipulates text, image, and format to create unique worlds for its readers.

In this exhibit, we see authors, illustrators, and publishers continually innovating to enhance the reader’s interaction with books. From simple techniques such as the use of larger text and sturdy materials suitable for children’s hands, to the inclusion of fantastic and beautiful illustrations and intricate cut-outs, the significance of the physical object to the reader’s experience becomes apparent. The interplay of design and physical makes

children's literature especially important for today's world in which print and electronic texts exist side by side.

(230 words)

Image caption: Mother Goose, by Eulalie Osgood Grover. M. A. Donohue & Co., Chicago, 1915. KF1472, Bentley Rare Book Collection, Kennesaw State University.

Panel 2: Picturing Meaning: Illustrations

Simultaneous developments in the printing industry and changing societal perceptions of children in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to the growing use of illustrations in books for amusement over education. Publishers, authors, and artists incorporated elements of fantasy and play, creating visually rich pieces in which illustrations were as significant as the story's text. Although prominent authors such as Charles Dickens and Robert Louis Stevens transitioned between adult and children's literature, using illustrations to appeal to even the youngest audiences, many focused solely on creating works for children. These books allowed illustrators great creative freedom; nonetheless, their works often reflected broader artistic movements of the period in which they worked.

Lavish color illustrations, the mainstay of the nineteenth century Victorian picture book, became widespread during the second half of the nineteenth century in part due to the development of new technologies such as chromolithography. The vibrant images in these books appealed to children and created a market for elaborate and expensive books sold to those with the means to afford them. The early twentieth century saw a growing and increasingly diverse market for children's books, in which illustrators vied to appeal to children accustomed to reading as a visual experience.

Today, there are numerous examples of children's literature in which illustrations and text are inextricably linked. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) or A. A. Milne's *Winnie-The-Pooh* (1926) are seemingly incomplete without John Tenniel's visual rendering of Alice and E.H. Shepherd's playful drawings of Pooh and his animal friends.

(253 words)

Image caption: Cover of Aunt Louisa's Good Old Stories, by L. Valentine. McLoughlin Bros., New York, 1876. Bentley Rare Book Collection, Kennesaw State University. *Colorful, full-page illustrations like this one took months to produce, raising the costs of printing.*

Image caption: (L) Image from *A Book of Nonsense*, by Edward Lear. Willis P. Hazard, Philadelphia, [1880s?]. K1190, Bentley Rare Book Collection, Kennesaw State University. (R) Image from *An Essay on the Genius of George Cruickshank*, by W.M. Thackeray. C.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, [1870?] *The prototypes of whimsical or outrageous characters used by illustrators such as George Cruickshank (1792-1878) and*

Edward Lear (1812-1888) can be seen in the works of eighteenth century English caricaturists including William Hogarth.

Panel 3: “And the walls became the world all around”—Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963): A World of Illustrators

- [image of Alice (carroll-015.tif)]
John Tenniel (1820-1914, English illustrator, political cartoonist). John Tenniel was already a successful political cartoonist accustomed to creating images for an adult audience when Lewis Carroll tasked him with illustrating *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Instead of merely decorating the text, Tenniel’s drawings, and especially his characterization of Alice, serve as the definitive visual interpretation of Carroll’s stories that has stood the test of time.

[Image Caption] *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll. Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1869. PR4611.A7 1869. Bentley Rare Book Collection, Kennesaw State University. Here, Tenniel formatted his illustration to align with the phrase, “Oh my poor little feet...” at the bottom of the page.

- **Ernest H. Shepherd** (1879-1976, English artist and book illustrator) (milne-wtp-126) E. H. Shepherd brought A. A. Milne’s characters to life through simple line drawings that complemented the style and tone of the Winnie-the-Pooh stories. Although Shepherd and Milne were not personal friends, Shepherd’s illustrations adeptly communicated the human qualities and emotions that have allowed Milne’s inhabitants of the 100 Acre Wood to resonate with readers for nearly a century.

[Image Caption] *The House at Pooh Corner*, by A. A. Milne. Methuen and Co., London, 1928. PZ7.M64 Ho 1928b. Bentley Rare Book Collection, Kennesaw State University.

- **Maurice Sendak** (1928-2012, American illustrator and writer) (sendak-001.tif) Best known for *Where The Wild Things Are* (1963), Maurice Sendak’s dual role as author-illustrator allowed him to use both text and image to tell complex and layered stories amplified by his drawings. Sendak once said, “You cannot write for children. They’re much too complicated. You can only write books that are of interest to them.” Sendak’s difficult relatives were the inspiration for his monsters, as seen through childish eyes.

[Image Caption] *Where The Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row, New York, 1988.

- **Kate Greenaway** (1846-1901, English illustrator and writer)
Kate Greenaway is admired as one of the three great illustrators of children’s literature during the Victorian Period. Along with Randolph Caldecott and Walter Crane, Greenaway produced a number of immensely popular works known as

“toy books.” These small paperbacks were predominantly picture-based, with images telling a majority of the story. Greenaway is known for her distinctive, idealized illustrations of children, pictured in clothing styles popular in the previous century.

[Image Caption] *A Day In a Child's Life*, by Kate Greenaway. Frederick Warne and Co., London, 1931. M1997.F76 1931. Bentley Rare Book Collection, Kennesaw State University.

Illustrations “Children’s Eye” Panel [Dog and Flute]

Illustrations help us understand what is going on in a book and provides extra information not captured by words. Use one of these short descriptions to draw your own story and add details to make it your own! FIND THE [DIAMOND] AT THE PLAY STATION.

- “One summer morning the gardener arrived early. He found the shrubs and vegetables quarreling and making a great to-do. The excitement had spread to the bees and butterflies; the bees were humming loud, the butterflies did not rest a moment, as if they wished to settle the dispute.”
- “Jack stole softly into the room where the giant was snoring, fast asleep, and began to pull away at the boots very quietly indeed. Whenever the giant roused himself a little, Jack dodged under the sole; and as he was so small, the giant could not see him.”

Illustrations Case

Potter label –
Stevenson label –
Wyeth label –
Denslow label –
Aunt Louisa label -

Panel 4: Designing Words: Text and Typography

Typography, or the art of selecting type fonts and arranging type on a page, is an essential design element of all print material. By its very nature, typography conveys much more than just the printed word it represents, and often in very subtle ways. Particular combinations of elements, including font and typeface, size and case (upper, lower), spacing (dense, sparse) and layout (the ratio of print to space or illustrations)

convey layers of meaning, often reminding us of particular times, places, cultures and functions.

As children's literature developed and diversified in the Western world in the late nineteenth century, tradition-bound typography typical of printed material for adults began to give way to innovative, playful and artistic uses of typography. The dynamic interaction between text and illustrations is a common feature of children's books, challenging the tyranny of the text and highlighting the text as an object in its own right. Contemporary authors of children's books continue to expand the role of typography as an expressive device: in the series of books featuring Chester the cat by Mélanie Watt, the author and her feline protagonist communicate with each other via "handwritten" notes in magic marker, creating a fanciful story with typography as an essential element.

(201 words)

[Image Citation] *The New McGuffey First Reader*. American Book Company, NY, 1901. Bentley Rare Book Collection, Kennesaw State University. William Holmes McGuffey (1800-1873) was a school teacher and a Presbyterian minister who created a graded series of didactic books. There are two typefaces in use: one suggesting fonts used in adult printed materials, and the other a cursive resembling handwriting. Primers such as the McGuffey Readers were an indispensable part of educating rural Americans with few means.

**Panel 5: "There was always something more - behind and beyond everything"-
Kate Greenaway: Words and Images on the Page**

- [REMOVE MCGUFFEY EXAMPLE AND REPLACE WITH MILNE EXAMPLE]
- Pooh – blot & smudge
- In an early twentieth-century example of a children's school book published in the United States [The New McGuffey First Reader, 1901, American Book Company], the young reader encounters a typography that speaks as much to the moral principles and didactic function of these books, as much as the informational content of the stories and illustrations. The font is that used in adult printed materials – but the large size and the sparse layout is clearly intended for children.
- B) An early example of whimsical typography is "A Mouse's Tale", a poem published in the form of a dangling mouse tale, in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).
- C) At the Seaside....
- D) In *The Story of Babar the Little Elephant*, by Jean de Brunhoff [London: Methuen, 1934] the typography suggests a childish cursive hand. The print is large, with lots of space inviting the young reader to engage with the story by associating with the narrator.

Text and Typography “Children’s Eye” Panel

Reading is easy once you understand how letters make words. But reading can be lost of fun when the words LOOK like what they MEAN.

For example, the word “LOUD” looks loud because it is in all capital letters!

This example looks like it came from a newspaper,

And this one looks like it was written by hand.

Try inventing your own alphabet and write your name! Here are some examples to get you started:

[FIND THE DIAMOND AT THE PLAY STATION]

Panel 6 *Playing With Form: The Physicality of Children’s Books*

The physical form of the book influences how we experience the text. Despite the admonition that one should not judge a book by its cover, the way a book looks and feels is an important part of how we learn, read and retain information. Children’s book publishers through the centuries have utilized a variety of physical techniques beyond text, illustration and typography to engage young readers and enhance the story. The examples in this exhibit capture some of that variety, including pop-up books, cloth books, block books, “dissolving” pictures, and boxed sets imitating miniature libraries. The physical features of these books reinforce the experience of learning by connecting the printed text with recognizable tactile and visual components.

The hornbook is an early example of a physical teaching tool used since the fifteenth century. Children learned letters, numbers and prayers from a sheet of information affixed to a hard surface like wood, bone, or horn, with a handle easily held by child or teacher. By the eighteenth century, printer-publishers appealed to both children and adults by producing children’s books with a variety of attractive features including sets of miniature books, cut-outs, and books with brightly colored endpapers. The use of soft cloth bindings beginning in the 1820s provided publishers an inexpensive way to market books using colorful fabric. Movable books, including pop-ups, rotating picture discs and other paper technologies were popular with nineteenth century children. Printer-publishers continue to innovate with the addition of sound elements (books issued with sound recordings or an embedded computer chip) and texture components, first popularized by Dorothy Kunhardt’s *Pat the Bunny* (1940).
(266 words)

Image caption—people: The Mammoth Story Book. McLoughlin Brothers, NY, 1894
Image caption—elephants: De Brunhoff, Jean. Le Roi Babar. Hachette, Paris, 1939

Panel 7: Reading Form: Children's Books and their Audiences

While the physical format works together with the stories, illustrations, and typography in children's books to provide a meaningful and engaging experience for young readers, it also provides insight about its intended audience and use. The material used in the construction of the book determines cost and durability. An expensive book with a fine binding and delicate pages would most likely be intended for older readers interested in keeping the book in a home library as a prized family possession. Alternately, hornbooks or cloth books are inexpensive to produce, sturdy, and resistant to damage, making them appropriate for very young children and easy to transport.

The size of book and its typography also provides clues about its intended use and audience. A storybook with dense, small print and typography typical of adult publications would be marketed to older children comfortable with reading and capable of longer, more complex stories. Large picture books with colorful illustrations and an engaging typography are intended for younger children to read by themselves or in a group at story-time.

(174 words)

Image caption: Deedy, Carmen Agra. The Library Dragon. Peachtree Publishers, Atlanta 1994

Format "Children's Eye" Panel Child's eye panels

Books come in many sizes, shapes and colors. Books can be VERY BIG or very small. Some are interesting to touch and hold, and some even have pages that move! FIND THE STAR AT THE PLAYSTATION TO TRY SOME OF THESE BOOKS. WHICH ONE IS YOUR FAVORITE?

Panel 8. Interplay: Print and Digital Books Today and Tomorrow

Today's digital world is providing even more opportunities for readers to engage in traditional elements of children's books (typography, story and illustration), while introducing new realms of interactivity. Print books may be converted to electronic books to be read on a computer screen, and authors and publishers are producing new books written specifically for the digital format, including games, music, and other features.

As interactivity with electronic books flourishes, printed books are encouraging interactivity in new ways as well. In Melanie Watts' *Chester* series, the author and the protagonist (Chester the Cat) address each other and appeal directly to the reader, creating a collaboratively authored work that encourages the child to take an active role in the story. In some cases, print and digital media are merged, and children have the

opportunity to explore different aspects of a story by accessing additional content. The mobile application for *Green Eggs and Ham* includes features such as pop up vocabulary words related to images, hidden surprises, and audio components, bringing a new understanding to the tangible experience of holding and reading a beloved classic.

Although many children today spend a considerable amount of time online, studies suggest they may actually prefer reading physical books for leisure. For many adults, children's books are treasured throughout a lifetime. We form attachments to not just the stories, but the tangible elements of the works that remind us of the wonder and simple joy reading can impart. In the future, it seems certain that the interplay of technology, art, and form will continue to bring children's literature alive.

Image caption: Watt, Melanie. Chester's Masterpiece. Kids Can Press, Ltd., Toronto, 2010