

Cut Paper Illustrated Picture Books

An Annotated Bibliography

To accompany slide lecture on history, survey of illustrators, technique and samples

(Books listed in order of presentation)

I put this slide lecture together because I wanted to know more about the techniques my colleagues use to create their illustrations. The scope of the work surprised me, and has enriched my own ideas. I hope they will enrich yours, too. I highly recommend collecting picture books with a wide array of approaches to cut paper illustrations. These pictures are inspiring to young people and provide an invitation to begin their own experiments.

The talk begins with a survey of my own books and varied techniques:

ON THE DAY YOU WERE BORN, written and illustrated by Debra Frasier, 1991, ISBN 0-15-257995
Simple cut-outs welcome a child to the wonders of the Earth on the day they are born. (all ages)

THE ANIMAL THAT DRANK UP SOUND, written by William Stafford, illustrated by Debra Frasier, 1992, ISBN 0-15-203563-X

In this poem an animal comes down out of the clouds to drink up the sound and herald winter's quiet. One brave tiny animal signals the return of spring. Illustrated with heavily striped paste papers. (all ages)

WE GOT HERE TOGETHER, written by Kim Stafford, illustrated by Debra Frasier, 1994, Harcourt Inc, ISBN 0-15-294891-0

A bubble and a raindrop are headed to the surface of the ocean at the exact same moment in time – then – what are they? Japanese “gampi tissue” was dyed in indigo blue using the Japanese “shibori” technique of tying and resisting to create pattern. (all ages)

OUT OF THE OCEAN, written and illustrated by Debra Frasier, 1998, Harcourt Inc, ISBN 0-15-258849-3
Unusually illustrated in a combination of cut paper, photographs, sand and beach finds, this book chronicles forty years of walking the beach in front of the author's childhood home. An informative glossary follows. (all ages)

MISS ALAINEUS, A VOCABULARY DISASTER, written and illustrated by Debra Frasier, 2000, Harcourt Inc, ISBN 0-15-202163-9

Sage mistakes the word “miscellaneous” for the “woman on green spaghetti boxes” and devastating embarrassment follows. A creative leap saves the day. Illustrated with the art supplies found in a fifth graders desk, these collages are drawn on notebook paper, cut out, and then reassembled. (upper elementary)

IN THE SPACE OF THE SKY, written by Richard Lewis, illustrated by Debra Frasier, 2002, Harcourt Inc, ISBN 0-15-253150-1

Lewis' tribute the child's imagination to see both intimately and universally. Collaged Canson papers in brilliant graphics illustrate this short poem. (primary)

THE INCREDIBLE WATER SHOW, written and illustrated by Debra Frasier, 2004, Harcourt, Inc, ISBN 0-15-216287-9

The students from Miss Alaineus return to stage their science fair project as a play in the park. Water facts are “ingeniously” enacted by puppets, costumes and circus acts. A dog and cat upset the show but there is a rainbow at the grand finale. Collaged “bubble papers” are used throughout.

Historical References to Cut Paper Illustration:

CUT ART, AN INTRODUCTION TO CHUNG-HUA AND KIRI-E, by J.A. Christensen, 1989, Watson-Guptyl, ISBN 0-8230-1144-5

An overview of paper cutting techniques with instructions on how to replicate the cutting from China. The short history is helpful.

CARVED PAPER, THE ART OF THE JAPANESE STENCIL, Edited by Susan Shin-Tsu Tai, Susanna Campbell Kuo, 1998, Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Weatherhill, Inc, ISBN 0-8348-0409-3

An exquisite book that comprehensively follows the Japanese technique of making and cutting paper with blades to make the stencil used in printing cloth, primarily dyed in indigo. One of the finest books of its kind.

SCHERENSCHNITTE, DESIGNS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TRADITIONAL PAPER CUTTING, by Susanne Schlapfer-Geiser, (original in German) English Translation, Lark Books, 1996, ISBN 1-887374-18-3

This is an excellent overview of cutting paper in silhouette. The book is primarily an explanation of various approaches to the craft, with a final chapter on the history of the art. The examples are excellent.

THE BOOK OF PAPER CUTTING, A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ALL THE TECHNIQUES – WITH MORE THAN 100 PROJECT IDEAS, Chris Rich, 1993, A Sterling/Lark Book, ISBN 0-8069-0285-X, Trade, 0-8069-0286-8 Paper

A more project based book, but includes a good introductory chapter on the history of the craft. Teachers may find the project ideas helpful, even if the pictures are not as inspiring as the Schlapfer-Geiser book.

CHRISTINE'S PICTURE BOOK, Hans Christian Andersen and Grandfather Drewsen, 1984, 1985 edition published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, ISBN 0-03-005729-9

Originally a birthday present for Christine Stampe from Andersen and her grandfather, this reproduction of the cut paper collaged scrapbook that they collaboratively made her is filled with wacky pages that are whimsical and a record of the magazine images of the time.

HENRI MATISSE, PAPER CUT-OUTS, 1977, The St. Louis Art Museum and The Detroit Institute of Arts, ISBN 0-89558-001-2 (paperbound)

This catalog for the exhibition that toured in 1977-78 and brings all of the paper cut-out documentation together in one place. The opening chapter provides several pictures of Matisse at work in his later years. If paper cut-outs interest you, this is one book worth searching for.

PAPER SPIRITS, COLLAGE PORTRAITS BY VLADIMIR SULYAGIN, introduced by Hilary Spurling, Chatto & Windus, London, ISBN 0-7011 4000 3

Astonishing portrait collages of Russian "invisibles" – people who did not exist in the eyes of the Soviet state. Made of bits of foil, scraps of wrapping paper, and crumpled paper bags, these portraits not only show the physical characteristics of the censored artists, poets, and writers, they also manage to convey a bit of the fate of each. Powerful in their sparseness, they remain a beacon to all of us who work with paper.

Simple Paper Cut-Outs:

THE SNOWY DAY, written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats, 1962, Viking, ISBN 0-670-86733-0 (board book edition),

Young Peter wakes to a snowy day and rushes out to play in the snow. He enjoys the day so much he tucks a snowball into his pocket for the next day...This classic early cut paper illustrated book won the Caldecott Medal and its gentle story continues to welcome children to snowy days. (primary)

DOT & JABBER AND THE BIG BUG MYSTERY, written and illustrated by Ellen Stoll Walsh, 2003, Harcourt Inc, ISBN 0-15-216518-5

Two mice declare themselves detectives and set off to find where all the bugs have gone. Hand torn paper mice appear with handmade, textured papers for a simple story, gently illustrated. Part of a series: (primary)

DOT & JABBER AND THE GREAT ACORN MYSTERY, written and illustrated by Ellen Stoll Walsh, 2001, Harcourt Inc., ISBN 0-15-202602-9 (primary) Two mice detectives and set off to find out how the oak tree came to be growing near them. Walsh's trademark torn-paper mice and muted colors make for a gentle story. Note the endpapers and handmade paper pieces throughout. (primary)

MOUSE PAINT, written and illustrated by Ellen Stoll Walsh, 1989, Harcourt, Inc, ISBN 0-15-256025-4 Three white mice dip themselves into three jars of paint: red, blue, and yellow, and by jumping and dancing the concepts of color mixing are introduced. The torn and cut paper mice are simple and delightful in this now classic book. (primary)

INCH BY INCH, written and illustrated by Leo Lionni, 1960, Astor Book, Astor-Honor, Inc, ISBN 60-14899 An inchworm measures all the birds until asked to measure the song of the nightingale – who threatens to eat the worm for breakfast if he cannot measure her singing! He cleverly inches away...Dutch born Leo Lionni is a cut paper classic artist, and a four time winner of the Caldecott Honor for Inch by Inch, Frederick, Swimmy and Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse (primary)

IT'S MINE! written and illustrated by Leo Lionni, 1985, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, ISBN 0-394-87000-X Leo Lionni's trademark graphic illustrations bound through this book about quarrelsome frogs who learn through a near disaster to share the earth, the water and the air.

SEVEN BLIND MICE, written and illustrated by Ed Young, 1992, Philomel Books, Putnam, ISBN 0-399-22261-8

Six colored blind mice try to guess what is in front of them by exploring only a piece of the whole. The last mouse puts all the pieces together to guess that it is an elephant! This book is an exercise in the simple-is-best approach to illustration. Black backgrounds set off clear shapes of slightly painted papers in a wise tale. (all ages)

RECYCLE EVERY DAY!, written and illustrated by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace, 2003, Marshall Cavendish, ISBN 0-7614-5149-8

Ms. Wallace tells a story of recycling projects and a poster contest. The clear paper cut out style is made of simple, easily delineated shapes, well suited for explaining how small shapes accumulate to make a larger figure or picture. (primary)

LEAVES! LEAVES! LEAVES!, written and illustrated by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace, 2003, Marshall Cavendish, ISBN 0-7614-5140-4

Leaves are used as the signposts of the seasons. A glossary and project section follow the story. Paper cut-outs are mixed with some bits of cloth and end paper cut outs of leaves are named for identification. (primary)

THE APPLE PIE TREE, written by Zoe Hall, illustrated by Shari Halpern, 1996, Blue Sky Press, Scholastic, ISBN 0-590-62382-6

Follow an apple tree through the seasons until the tree grows an apple pie. Simple paper cut-outs tell the story but the endpapers steal the show: front papers show blossoms, back papers show full apples. (primary)

YOKO'S PAPER CRANES, Rosemary Wells, 2001, Hyperion, ISBN 0-7868-0737-7 (hc)

Rosemary Wells uses cut paper sparingly within her usual painted style, but I must include this book because her cut paper endpapers are some of my favorites! Within the story, note the borders of Japanese papers with gold trim, the kimono papers, and the backgrounds of full sheets. This beautiful small format book tells a story of making paper cranes to send back across the ocean to relatives left behind in Japan. (primary)

TO EVERYTHING, illustrated by Bob Barner (words from Ecclesiastes), 1998, Chronicle Books, ISBN 0-8118-2086-6

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens..." Cut and torn papers take the Old Testament's lines and interpret them in bold collages. Note the use of the torn edge to lend a dimension to the flat paper. A study guide ends the book. (all ages)

THE JUNGLE ABC, Michael Roberts, foreword by IMAN, Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1998, ISBN 0-500-01844-8 (all ages)

Vigorous collages take each letter of the alphabet and interprets it as a jungle scene or object pertaining to Africa. Roberts is a past cover illustrator of The New Yorker where he is the Visual Fashion Director and these collages are bold, ingenious, and gorgeous. Oversized, the book is a fine tool for describing pattern and repetition to young students. (all ages)

Three Dimensional Constructions:

THE WARRIOR AND THE WISEMAN, 1989, written and illustrated by David Wisniewski, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, ISBN 0-688-07890-7

Two sons vie for the throne of their father. One solves the challenges by force, the other by wisdom. Wisdom wins the day in a story told easefully and illustrated in silhouettes and a sense of action sure to appeal to boys. An illuminating author note describes the author's thinking behind the tale and the pictures. (all ages)

RAIN PLAYER, 1991, written and illustrated by David Wisniewski, Clarion Books, ISBN 0-395-55112-9

Using ancient Mayan characters and beliefs, Wisniewski creates a new tale that pits the rain god against a young pok-a-tok ball player in a contest of skill with drought- ending rain as the prize for the boy, or a lifetime as a frog if he loses! Mayan art influences the cut paper layouts, once again photographed in high shadowed relief. Includes an author note about Mayan influences. (all ages)

MASTER MAN, 2001, written by Alan Shepard, illustrated by David Wisniewski, Harper Collins, ISBN 0-688-13783-0

A Nigerian tale of the Hausa tribe, where tales of fighting he-men are popular. A superman like character fights for supremacy of title with another such he-man, and their fighting finally resides in the sky and we hear their battles as thunder. Told in a comic book style, this is a book about brawn! Includes an author note. (all ages)

GOLEM, Written and Illustrated by David Wisniewski, 1996, ISBN 0-395-72618-2

The Jewish legend of the creation of the golem – a giant man shaped of clay – and his mission to vanquish those who persecuted the Jews of Prague. He performs his job nearly too well, and powers are unleashed that are beyond human control. David Wisniewski creates three dimensional scenes that use space and shadow to create paper stage settings of great drama. Winner of the 1997 Caldecott Medal. (all ages) Also see: THE SECOND FILE.

RAGGED SHADOWS, Poems of Halloween Night, selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins, illustrated by Giles Laroche, 1993, Little, Brown and Company, ISBN 0-316-37276-5 This compilation of Halloween poems include Jane Yolen and Nancy Willard's efforts. The cut paper illustrations are used as props for theatrical settings. Collages are photographed with shadows for a three dimensional effect. (elementary)

BOO TO A GOOSE, written and illustrated by Mem Fox, illustrated by David Miller, Puffin Books, Penguin, 1996, ISBN 0-8037-2274-5

A boy lists all the things he would NOT do before he would say boo to a goose. The illustrations are built of paper and photographed with attention to lighting. Text runs on top of images. (primary)

Increasing Abstraction:

BUTTON, written and illustrated by Sara Fanelli, 1994, Little, Brown and Company, ISBN 0-316-27393-7
A red button goes missing and makes itself useful in many ways along the way to being found once again. Fanelli uses a bit of abstraction to build her illustrations, pasting bits of images and words found in print to create pictures both whimsical and unusual in color. Pencil scribbles perform as the wolf. (all ages)

THE THREE ASTRONAUTS, written by Umberto Eco, illustrated by Eugenio Carmi, translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989, ISBN 0-15-2863383-4

An American, a Russian, and a Chinese set off in separate rockets and arrive on Mars. Issues of differences, kindness, and resolution that is predictable and a bit didactic, BUT! the illustrations are ingenious. The astronauts are simply bits of paper torn from the culture they represent and are a very good lesson in the notion of symbol. Long out of print, but worth the search. (all ages)

Painted papers:

THE ART OF ERIC CARLE, 1996, introduction by Leonard S. Marcus, autobiography by Eric Carle, Philomel Books, ISBN 0-399-22937-X

This overview of Carle's work includes essays by others, also a step-by-step picture series on how the collage papers are painted and pieced together. Illustration gallery of picture book illustrations spanning more than 25 years of publications. (adult text, images all ages)

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR, written and illustrated by Eric Carle, Philomel Books, Putnam, ISBN 0-399-20853

A hungry caterpillar eats his way through A LOT of food, boring a hole in each page of collaged papers. Clipped pages turn until the caterpillar falls asleep and wakes a butterfly. A children's classic. (primary)

FISH EYES, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990, ISBN 0-15-228050-2
"If I could put on a suit of scales..." begins a counting book of colored fish whose pages sport cut outs for each eye. Illustrated in flat, brilliant colored papers.

PLANTING A RAINBOW, 1998, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, Harcourt Children's Books, ISBN 0-15-262609-3

A somber palette starts this story in the soil of fall when bulbs are planted. Color intensity increases as spring arrives and seeds are selected, finally blooming in an exuberant rainbow. Flat colored papers are collaged to show color and flower names. (primary)

FEATHERS FOR LUNCH, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, 1990, Harcourt Children's Books, ISBN 0-15-230550-5

A prowling cat hunts for lunch in a rhyming story that ends in only "feathers for lunch!" Birds are beautifully collaged (and surprisingly accurately colored) in water colored painted papers, all identified within the text and also in a short glossary. (primary)

WAITING FOR WINGS, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, 2001, Harcourt Children's Books, ISBN 0-15-202608-8

A Lois Ehlert tour de force – pages graduate in size to tell the story of a caterpillar that grows to a butterfly. A glorious glossary identifies butterflies and introduces the butterfly garden. (primary)

RED LEAF, YELLOW LEAF, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, 1991, Harcourt Children's Books, ISBN 0-15-266197-2

In this story of planting a sugar maple tree, Lois Ehlert uses water colored papers and bits of cloth, string, seeds, sticks and found objects to follow the tree from seed to fall leaf. A four page glossary discusses all the steps in the story and the back flap recounts the recipe for making a bird treat. (primary)

MOLE'S HILL, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, 1994, Harcourt Children's Books, ISBN 0-15-255116-6
Lois Ehlert collects textiles from all over the world and these illustrations were inspired by sewn beadwork and ribbon appliqué on artifacts from the Woodland Indians of North America. Very simple and very bold designs tell the story of Mole and the saving of her house. (primary)

NUTS TO YOU! written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, 1993, Harcourt Children's Books, ISBN 0-15-257647-9

A frisky squirrel sneaks inside the house! The narrator lures him outside with nuts in story that actually happened. Again, water colored paper is collaged to create squirrel, flowers, walls, and birds. (primary)

PIE IN THE SKY, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert, 2004, Harcourt Children's Books, ISBN 0-15-216584-3

Cherries make pies, and pies come from cherries – Ehlert tells the story of a cherry tree with mixed media collages of cardboards, metals, papers, wood, and cherry tree branches. A recipe for a cherry pie is included in the story. (primary)

BIGGEST, STRONGEST, FASTEST, written and illustrated by Steve Jenkins, 1995, Houghton Mifflin (Ticknor & Field Books), ISBN 0-395-69701-8

Jenkins uses a direct, simple style of paper cut out, bold and exceptionally evocative of the animals he depicts. Papers are often slightly molted in this book of record holding animals with picture and facts about each creature.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A TAIL LIKE THIS? by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page, 2003, Houghton Mifflin Company, ISBN 0-618-25628-8

In this book that sets up "guesses" of claws, feet, ears, tails and more, illustrating details on one page, the full animal with describing facts on the page turn. Animals are beautifully shown in simple shaded pictures. Caldecott Honor Award, 2004 (all ages)

Collaging "found papers" ...Magazine and newspapers:

CHATTANOOGA SLUDGE, Written and illustrated by Molly Bang, 1996, Harcourt Brace & Company, ISBN 0-15-216345-X

The Chattanooga Creek, in Appalachian Mountains, was so toxic that it was called "the most polluted waterway in the southeastern United States." John Todd, a New England water cleaning inventor, was

called in to see if the impossible problem could be solved. This book follows his experiments, both the successes and failures. The ending is unresolved, because despite progress, the problem remains – The illustrations use cut paper, printed papers, painted papers, photographs, and drawing to ingeniously illustrate a longer non-fiction story. This is perfect book for science fair season! (upper elementary to 100 years old)

EARTHSHAKE, POEMS FROM THE GROUND UP, by Lisa Westberg Peters, illustrated by Cathie Felstead, Greenwillow Books, 2003, ISBN 0-06-029266-0

These geology poems are fresh and often funny, and the illustration style adds spunk to the page. Cathie Felstead uses fragments of maps, painted papers, and magazine cut outs throughout. Note the frames to the fine glossary notes.

THIS IS THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT, written and illustrated by Simms Taback, 2002, G.P. Putnam's Sons, ISBN 0-399-23488-8

A painted book based on the repetitive song about Jack and his house. It is included in this bibliography of collaged books only for its endpapers which use paper cut-outs from the newspaper classifieds of "Houses for Sale." Ingenious use of everyday paper! A gorgeous book – I recommend collecting ALL his books for their sheer contagious love of color and rambunctious surfaces. Also see THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY for simple torn paper endpapers. (all ages)

JOSEPH HAD A LITTLE OVERCOAT, written and illustrated by Simms Taback, 1999, Viking, ISBN 0-670-87855-3 (all ages)

How a slowly shrinking overcoat becomes a jacket, a vest, a scarf, a necktie...until there is nothing but the story to tell! The illustrations use both painting and limited amounts of cut paper, and fabrics photocopied to paper. Note the fine endpapers of fabric scraps! (all ages) Winner of the 2000 Caldecott Gold Medal.

HARLEM, Written by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers, Scholastic Press, 1997, ISBN 0-590-54340-7

In collages using found photographs from magazines and painted papers both torn and cut, Christopher Myers lends an aggressive urban pace to Walter Dean Myers poem of traveling through Harlem. The illustrations of the African American face are beautifully rendered. A very good book to use in conjunction with a study of the African American collage artist, Romare Bearden. (see: ROMARE BEARDEN, COLLAGE OF MEMORIES, by Jan Greenberg, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2003)

SMOKY NIGHT, by Eve Bunting, illustrated by David Diaz
Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995, ISBN 0-15-269954-6 (all ages)

Eve Bunting wrote this story in response to the Los Angeles riots. "SMOKY NIGHT is a story about cats – and people – who couldn't get along until a night of rioting brings them together." David Diaz created the illustrations out of papers and scraps that could have been found on the street, as well as paintings. He won the 1995 Caldecott Medal for this unusual combination of media.

Dessert: Finest Examples:

YOSHI'S FEAST, by Kimiko Kajikawa, illustrated by Yumi Heo
Dorling Kindersley Publishing, Inc. 2000, ISBN 0-7894-2607-2 (all ages)

In this adapted Japanese tale an eel salesman tries to sell his "smells" to his neighbor, and the neighbor retaliates by selling the "sound" of his money! How they settle their differences is both satisfying and amusing. Illustrated by Yumi Heo with paper cut outs that use handmade Japanese papers in collage with pencil and oils. Lyric images draw on Japanese kimono designs for their inspiration.

HUSH! A THAI LULLABY, by Minfong Ho, illustrated by Holly Meade, Orchard Books, 1996, ISBN 0-531-09500-2

The author grew up in Thailand and this rhyming lullaby introduces the animals of the land, each making their sounds in the night. The equally lyric paper collages use a versatile outline technique, giving the human form graceful definition that paper cut out figures often lack. The paper used in the collages is sometimes painted, sometimes folded, and these techniques, too, soften and enrich the flat paper. A Caldecott Honor, 1996.

BEAUTIFUL BLACKBIRD, written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan, 2003, Atheneum Books, ISBN 0-689-84731-9 (all ages)

Blackbird is the most beautiful of birds and all the other birds beg for a bit of his black coloring. Blackbird consents and in the ring of birds he paints each with "blackening brew" – dots, stripes, rings and dashes, exactly as we see birds today marked with bits of black. Bryan adapts this tale from the Ila-speaking people of Zambia. Note the endpapers with photocopied scissors added to the flock of birds. (all ages)
