

2024

HELGA BANSCH

The Hans Christian Andersen Award 2024
Austrian Section of IBBY

Illustrator



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Biographical Information

Helga Bansch

Helga Bansch was born in Leoben, Styria, Austria in 1957.

After passing her school-leaving examination she attended the Pedagogical College in Graz, where she completed training as an elementary school teacher. Beginning in 1978 Helga Bansch practiced her profession in Weixelbaum in Southern Styria. While training to become a counselor she had the opportunity to work with children displaying behavioral problems when she discovered painting as a form of expression. Since this time, she has been painting pictures with acrylics on cardboard and canvas, illustrated children's books, designed dolls, marionettes and objects made of sandstone, clay, and papier mâché.

Rosie the Raven – Helga Bansch performing for children, 2018



Helga Bansch lives and works in Vienna.

»Artistic work and children have played a leading role in my life. Both can be wonderfully combined when illustrating children's books.« »A life without humour is unimaginable for me.«

<https://www.helga-bansch.com>

»Picture Book Making«
– Workshop for
students in Indonesia,
2009



More than painting – Helga Bansch playing guitar during a workshop session in Tehran, 2004



Helga Bansch – Member of the Jury, Bookfair in Sharjah, UAE, 2018

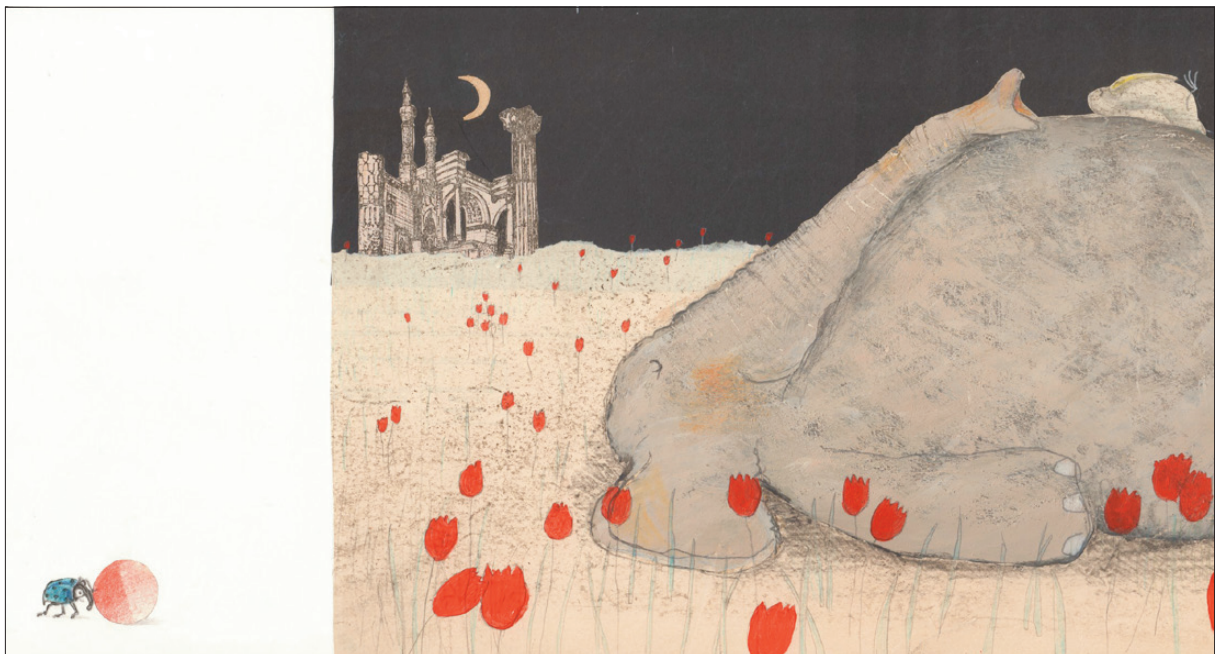
Reasons for Nominating the Illustrator Helga Bansch for the Andersen Award

This artist who is a recipient of multiple awards, illustrates her own stories as well as those by other authors, and is one of the formally most interesting and productive Austrian artists in children's books. Five reasons for her nomination are as follows:

1. Highly developed technical ability and an enormous range of drawing and painting resources.

2. Unique Visual Language

The distinctness of her imagery is based above all on her brilliant approach to colours: the warm and lush red, brown, green tones characterize many of her pictures, creating a special ambience, providing her illustrations with her individuality and memorability.



3. Innovative Force

Helga Bansch was one of the first Austrian picture book artists, who used the image space in its entire depth and gave the genre significant impulses. Her approach to changing and oftentimes slant perspectives – like a cameraman zooming close in and then away – are impressive. In doing so she shows a preference for pictorial excitement, resulting from contrasts such as those between large and small.

4. Humor and Ease

All her works are playfully unstrained and have a singularly high amusement value. Her pictures are primed with wit and irony, in doing so she, by definition, pays respect to comprehensibility, engaging with children at their own level.

5. Humanism and Tolerance

In her art Helga Bansch answers, last but not least, to the basic principles of the IBBY in a particular way: a positive and characteristic humanistic worldview underlies her illustrations, frequently manifesting an especially caring position toward all outsiders and peripheral social groups.



Awards and Other Distinctions

2000

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Illustration for Zack bumm! (Ker-boom!) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2001

Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Zack bumm! (Ker-boom!) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Es gibt so Tage ... (Some Days are like this...) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2002

LeserStimmen, Award of the Association of Austrian Libraries for Es gibt so Tage ... (Some Days are like this ...) (Text: Heinz Janisch)
Honour List of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Es gibt so Tage ... (Some Days Are like this ...) (Text: Heinz Janisch)
First Prize of the Jury of Critics from DesignAustria

2004

IBBY Honour List for Es gibt so Tage ... (Some Days Are like this ...) (Text: Heinz Janisch)
Children's and Juvenile Literature Award of the State of Styria for the Manuscript of Rudi Schräg (Rudi Weird)
The Most Beautiful Books of Austria for Frau Bund und Hund (Ms. Cog and Dog)

2005

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Frau Bund und Hund (Ms. Cog and Dog)
Honour List of the Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Schlappi, Auf wessen Bauch soll ich mich legen? (A Belly to Lie on) (Text: Karl Ferdinand Kratzl)

2006

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Illustration for Ein Haus am Meer (A House by the Sea) (Text: Heinz Janisch)
LesePeter (August) for Ein Haus am Meer (A House by the Sea) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2007

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Krone sucht König (Crown Seeking King) (Text: Heinz Janisch)
The Most Beautiful Books of Austria for Wenn ich nachts nicht schlafen kann (Good Night Giants) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2008

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Ein schräger Vogel (Odd Bird out)
Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Frau Friedrich (Ms. Friedrich) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2009

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Frau Friedrich (Ms. Friedrich) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2010

Outstanding Artist Award

Honour List of the Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Und du darfst rein (Please, Come in!) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2011

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Das Geheimnis ist blau (The Secret Is Blue) (Text: Elisabeth Schawerda)

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Die Brücke (The Bridge) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Die Brücke (The Bridge) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

List of Recommendations issued by the German Protestant Book Award for Die Brücke (The Bridge) (Text Heinz Janisch)

2012

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Die schöne Meerjungfrau (The Beautiful Mermaid)

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Das Geheimnis ist blau (The Secret Is Blue) (Text: Elisabeth Schawerda)

2013

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for In der Nacht ... (At Night ...)

2014

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for In der Nacht (At Night ...)

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Die Hüte der Frau Strubinski (Ms. Strubinski's Hats) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

2015

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for Illustration for Die Rabenrosa (Rosie the Raven)

2016

German Protestant Book Award for Die Rabenrosa (Rosie the Raven)

The White Ravens for Kommt das Nashorn (Here Comes Rhinoceros) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Die Rabenrosa (Rosie the Raven)

2017

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for Kommt das Nashorn (Here Comes Rhinoceros) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

Nomination for the German Award for Juvenile Literature for Kommt das Nashorn (Here Comes Rhinoceros) (Text: Heinz Janisch)

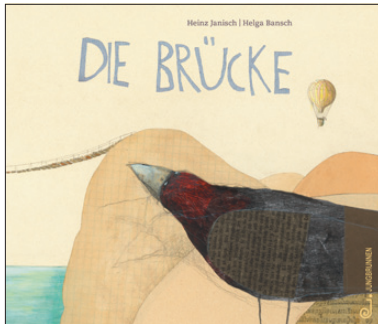
2018

Collection on the occasion of the Austrian Children's and Juvenile Book Award for *Wir sind alle nett von A bis Z* (We Are All Nice – from A to Z)
(Text: Heinz Janisch)

2020

Children's and Juvenile Book Award of the City of Vienna for *Leni, Schwein und der Andere* (Leni, Pig and the Other One)

Books Submitted to the Jury

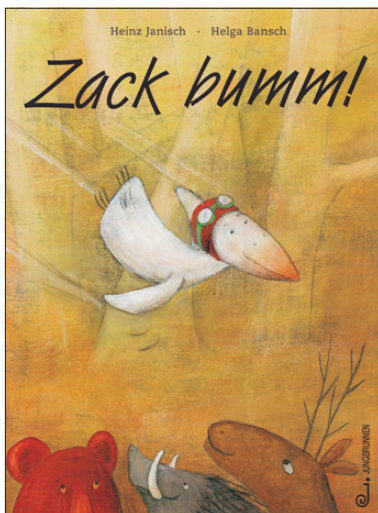


Die Brücke. In 3 Sprachen: Arabisch, Deutsch, Farsi

The Bridge. In 3 Languages: Arabic, German, Persian
Text by Heinz Janisch. Translated into Persian by Ahad Pirahmadian Translated into Arabic by Haifa Swarka
Wien: Jungbrunnen Verlag, 2019

Zack bumm!

Ker-boom!
Text by Heinz Janisch
Wien: Jungbrunnen Verlag, 2000



Die schöne Meerjungfrau

The Beautiful Mermaid
Wien: G&G, Kinder- und Jugendbuch Verlag, 2012

Drei Herren

Three Gentlemen
Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 2020

Greta und die magischen Steine

Greta and the Magic Stones
Text by Paul Maar
Berlin: Betz im Ueberreuter Verlag, 2016



Ten Most Important Titles

Die Brücke.

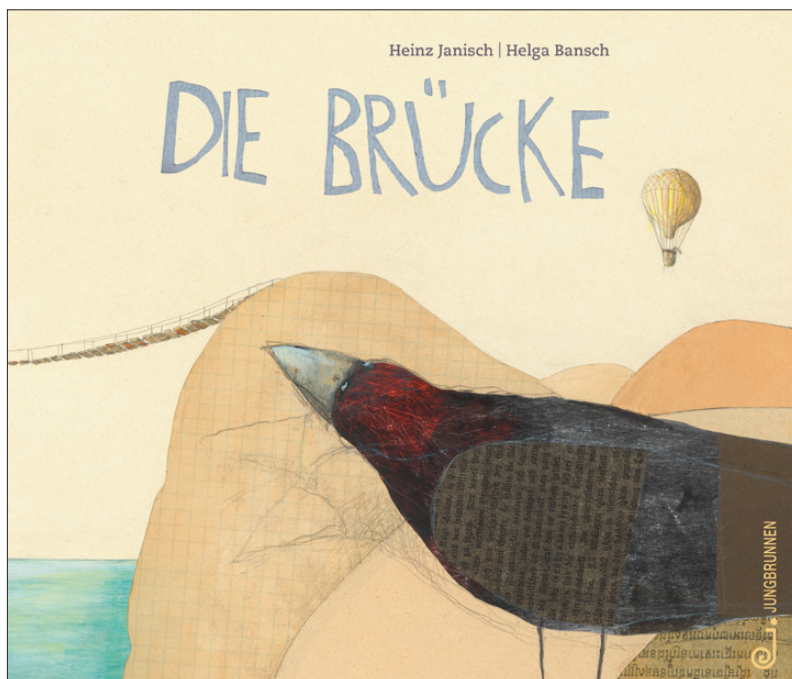
In 3 Sprachen: Arabisch, Deutsch, Farsi

The Bridge. In 3 Languages: Arabic, German, Persian

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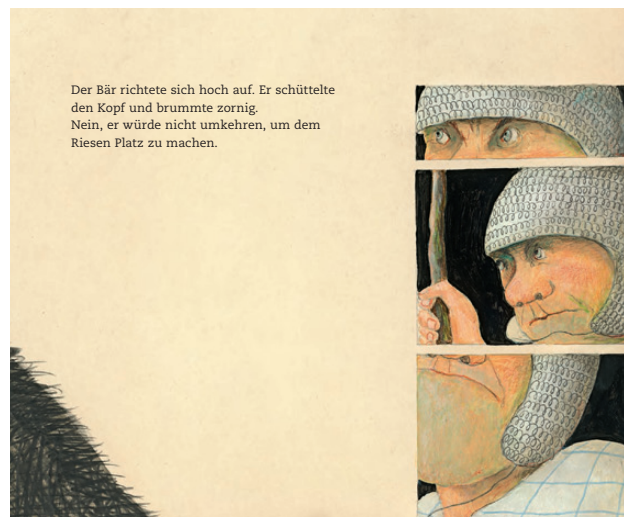


The secret of successful teams: rivalry blocks, cooperation is it!

A narrow, swinging bridge leads across the river. So narrow that two persons can't pass one another. One day the bear and the giant meet – in the middle of the bridge. None of them wants to turn around, none of them gives way. What shall they do?

The first approaches to the problem don't help, one of them would always get the short end of the stick. But then the giant has a brilliant idea: if they worked together and not against each other they could succeed. Tightly embraced, very slowly and in small steps one moves around the other.

Initially, this parable deals with egoism and hard-headedness: the bear and the giant want to cross the bridge at the same time, but it is far too narrow. Neither wants to give way to the other, in fact each wants the other to jump into the river to make room. But then they come to admit that they ought not act against one another, but instead with each other: »I'll hold you and you'll hold me. That way, no one can fall into the depths. And then we'll turn around.«



Helga Bansch makes this rapprochement seem like a light-footed dance by creating an illustration that is divided into multiple single scenes. This picture book does not stand out only because of the clear style of the story, but also because of the brilliance of the pictorial interpretation.
White Raven 2011

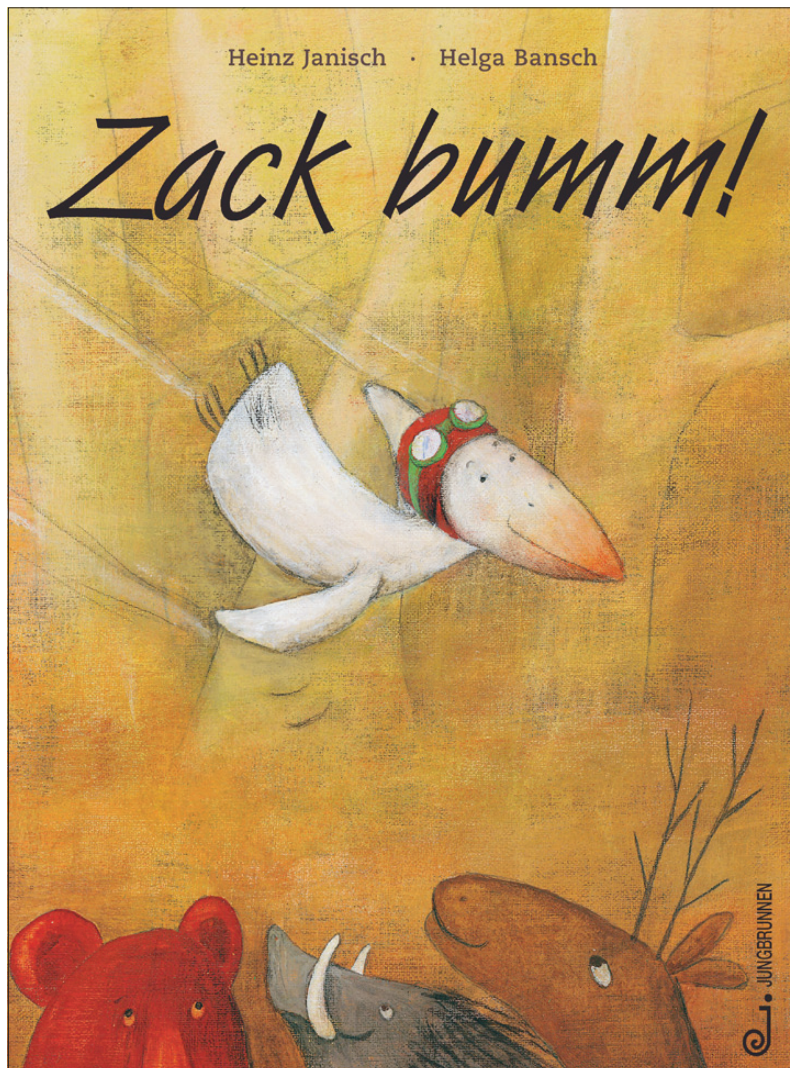
Zack bumm!

Ker-boom!

Text by Heinz Janisch

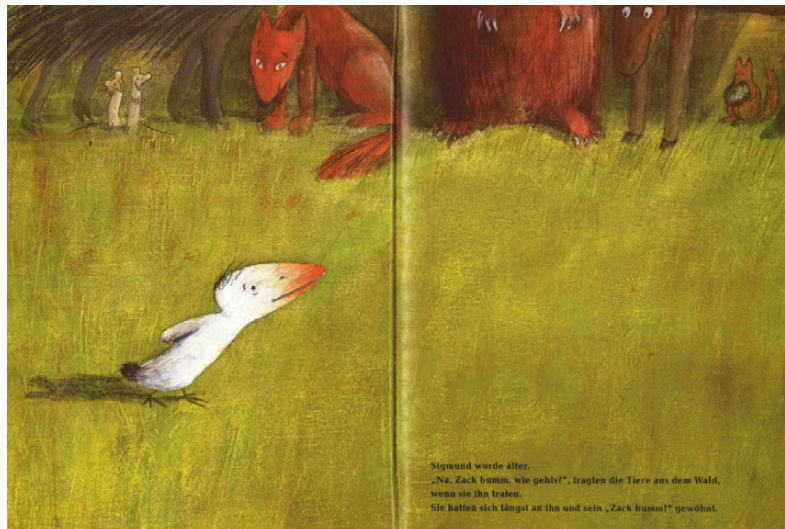
Wien: Jungbrunnen Verlag, 2000

When he tries to learn how to fly, the little bird Sigmund tumbles out of the nest, landing on his head. From that day on, Sigmund can't sing like other birds but only say »ker-boom« very sadly. One day Carl Gustav, an old rabbit, happens to listen to Sigmund's dejected croaking. He decides that something has to be done to cheer Sigmund up. When he asks the bird to show him why he can't sing any more, he realises that Sigmund lacks self-confidence, despite the fact that in the meantime he has not only learned to fly, but is an expert in this art. So Carl Gustav organises an air show for Sigmund, where he can show all his skills. The audience is delighted, and Sigmund can be cheerful again.





Sigmunds Eltern waren ralloo.
Sie gaben ihm zu essen. Sie kümmerten sich Tag und Nacht um ihn.
Sie ließen ihn nicht mehr allein. Sie brachten ihm das Fliegen bei.
Nur zwitschern, pfeifen und singen wie andere Vögel
konnte Sigmund nicht mehr.
Er versuchte es immer wieder. Aber sobald er den Schnabel öffnete,
war nur ein trauriges „Zack bummi!“ zu hören.



Sigmund wurde älter.
„Na, Zack bummi, wie gehts?“, fragten die Tiere aus dem Wald,
wenn sie ihn trafen.
Sie hatten sich längst an ihn und sein „Zack bummi!“ gewöhnt.



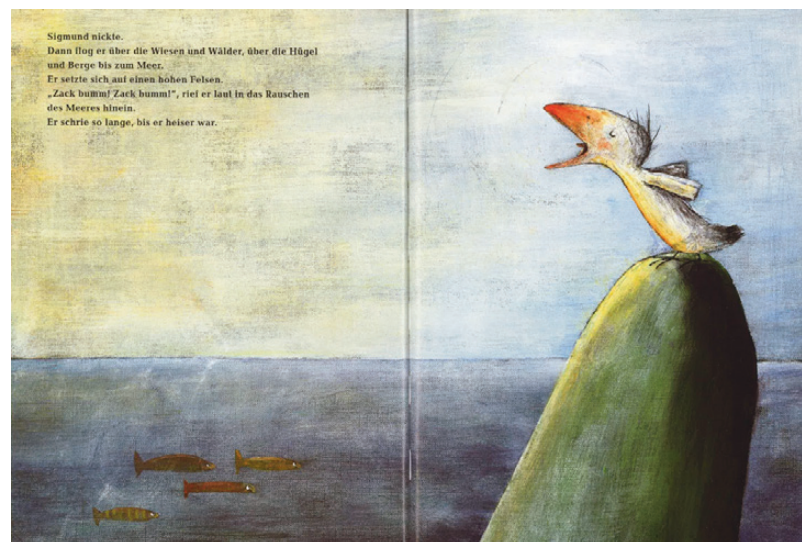
Nach einer Weile blickte der Hase – er hieß Carl Gustav – zu ihm hoch.
„Du klingst irgendwie traurig“, sagte er. „Kannst du nicht zwitschern,
so wie andere Vögel?“
Sigmund schüttelte den Kopf.
„Zack bummi!“, krächzte er leise.
Carl Gustav sah ihn nachdenklich an.
„Wir müssen etwas unternehmen, damit du wieder fröhlich wirst!“,
sagte er. „Komm morgen Mittag zu mir. Ich werde mir überlegen,
wie ich dir helfen kann.“

»Ker-boom,« the little bird Sigmund has been piping since he fell out of his nest and landed on his head. Though he has learned how to fly and acquired other bird skills, it seems as if deep down inside a door has shut.

Applying a subtle sense of humor and great sensitivity and accompanied by generous illustrations in dull shades of brown, green and red, on which fine scratchy lines and thin canvas structures give shape to the story, Heinz Janisch tells the reader of little Sigmund's psychosis – who is aptly healed by a wise old hare named Carl Gustav in the end, by the way. To get healed, the bird with the damaged psyche has to lie down on a room-sized grass green »think couch« (!) in order to find the trail back to himself and to be able to open the inner door again.

By using her enormous sense of composition, colouring, mimics and motion, Helga Bansch, the illustrator, renders a delightful interpretation of the text that convinces due to its simplicity, precise language pictures and subtle sense of Humor. Merely the final healing act seems a bit plump in the otherwise extremely refined picture book: At a flight show Sigmund demonstrates that he can fly better than all other birds combined, thus regaining his self-esteem.

Silke Rabus | 1001 Buch



Die schöne Meerjungfrau

The Beautiful Mermaid

Wien: G&G Verlag, Kinder- und Jugendbuch Verlag, 2012

The Austrian illustrator Helga Bansch has created a brilliant picture book cosmos once again, which invites its readers to take a pleasurable plunge into a colourful sea world. Helga Bansch relates the story of a lovely mermaid, whose beauty is known throughout the vastness of the ocean. The graceful being is, however, as haughty as she is beautiful and incapable of deciding who her suitable mate might be. She wants the best, the strongest and the cleverest of them all.

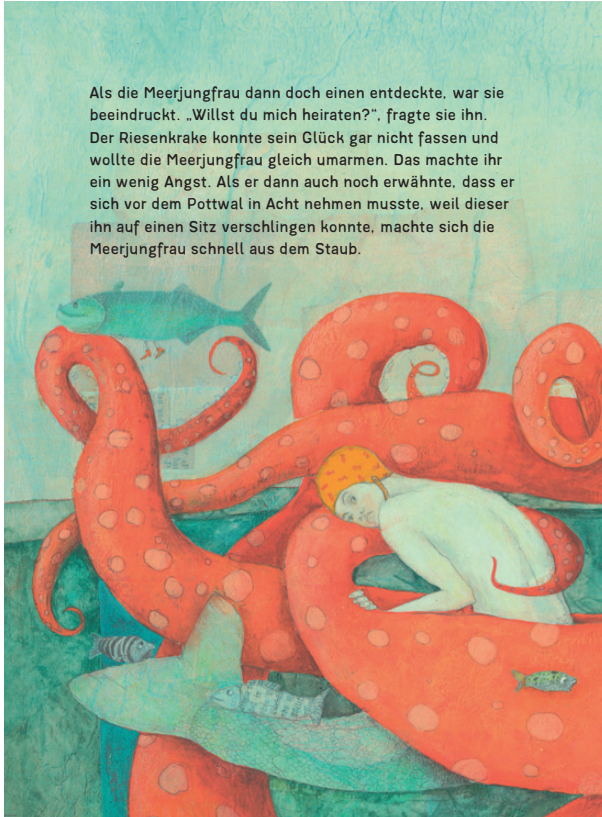


Helga Bansch orchestrates the tale of the vain beauty, with a bright orange-red bathing cap, searching for the perfect spouse by using short sentences and wonderfully beautiful double-sided, collaged illustrations with loving, serene details. In doing so, terrifying perspectives open to the pointy teeth of a shark or apricot-coloured jellyfish glide into the picture as light as a feather. When making the acquaintance of the beautiful merman, fish hover with delicate pink balloons across the sky and bear witness to the wonderful feeling of her first infatuation. But the narcissistically inclined beau rejects the mermaid. The change from pastel blue, turquoise and red tones to dark black night insinuates the disaster into which the scorned mermaid spirals. Finally, the brave little fish, which can be traced back to each of the double-sided illustrations, has its great appearance. Fish expressions are delightfully funny, while the endpaper shows the fish world in an incredible wealth of variations. Even here one is invited to behold carefully. Some especially rare creatures such as rabbit or chicken fish have diddled their way into the colourful bevy. This is a refreshing sea cosmos for courageous deep-sea divers.

Cornelia Gstöttinger | Bibliotheksnews



Als die Meerjungfrau dann doch einen entdeckte, war sie beeindruckt. „Willst du mich heiraten?“, fragte sie ihn. Der Riesenkrake konnte sein Glück gar nicht fassen und wollte die Meerjungfrau gleich umarmen. Das machte ihr ein wenig Angst. Als er dann auch noch erwähnte, dass er sich vor dem Pottwal in Acht nehmen musste, weil dieser ihn auf einen Sitz verschlingen konnte, machte sich die Meerjungfrau schnell aus dem Staub.



Die Meerjungfrau fiel aus allen Wassern. Damit hatte sie nicht gerechnet! Sie war so enttäuscht, empört und gekränkt, dass ihr dicke Tränen in die Augen stiegen. Deshalb übersah sie ein großes Fischernetz und verhedderte sich augenblicklich darin. Verzweifelt versuchte sie, sich zu befreien, aber sie verwickelte sich nur noch mehr in den Maschen. Da weinte sie bitterlich.



Drei Herren

Three Gentlemen

Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 2020

Three wealthy gentlemen meet in the park and tell each other episodes from their luxurious lives: the first reports about his rose garden, for which his beautiful wife is looking for a gardener. The second relates of an exciting balloon ride in Africa. The third tells anxiously of the broken alarm system in his villa.

Three men in precarious situations stroll through the same park: one homeless man tells his friends how after a night of sleeping rough he greets his cheeky left toes every morning peeking out from his sock full of holes. The second gentleman reports of a rich woman in front of the shopping center who handed him a crunchy pretzel. And the third gentleman, who has no work, hopes to find a job so he can afford a visit to the zoo with his little daughter. When a sudden downpour of rain falls over the park, the six gentlemen meet each other. The storm swirls their hats – status symbols – away.

For this serious text, Helga Bansch created an illustration, stern in its structure and expression. The colouring, achieved by a collage of transparent paper printed with oil paint, is subdued. This is supplemented with hand drawings in graphite and pencil. With almost natural exactness and detailed precision, this carefully created picture book recommended for children from the age of 4 inspires one to carefully listen and look.

Maria Schmuckermair | Bibliotheksnachrichten





Greta und die magischen Steine

Greta and the Magic Stones

Text by Paul Maar

Berlin: Betz im Ueberreuter Verlag, 2016

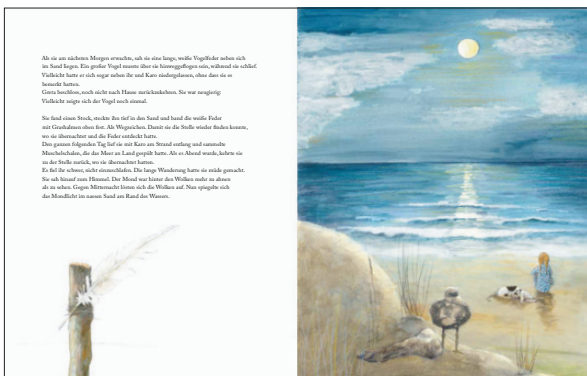
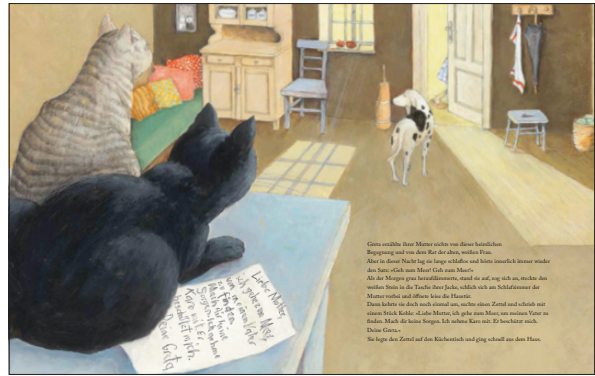
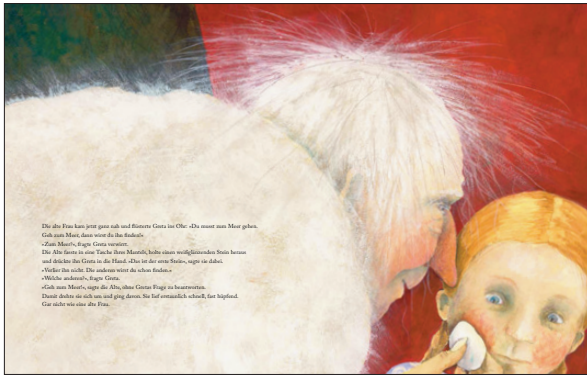
What to do when your father has gone away, far away, to a strange land in search of gold for his family? You guessed it: you ask magic stones to conjure him back. At least this solution seems obvious to the children's book author Paul Maar (One of the most important modern German writers for children and young people and creator of the »Sams«). Greta and her mother live in an impoverished little home close to the sea. One day an old woman appears, who tells Greta a secret: there are special stones predestined to conjure her father back! She immediately gives Greta a white one with the advice to search for the two others at the seaside. Greta sets out in secret, followed by her dog Karo, who accompanies her on her heroic journey. Her search is at first unsuccessful until a bird appears with a helpful tip: one of the two missing stones is brightly coloured, the other one is black. The remaining magic is soon completed: Greta finds the two other stones. With all the longing of her heart, she throws them out into the sea, and indeed soon a ship appears, from which her father disembarks. The fact that he has not brought any gold with him is of no concern to Greta. Papa has found his way back to her, that's all that matters.



»Greta and the Magic Stones« is told in a poetic and magical tone. The author plays with archetypal images: the sea stands for the big wide world; the old woman reminds us of a witch, the symbolism of the three stones could be read as a metaphor for three stages of life. Helga Bansch captures the story tenderly and delicately into bright, seemingly transparent colours. Together the text and pictures tell a fairy tale for everyone who is longing and who has not yet forgotten how to dream.

Sophie Reyer | 1001Buch



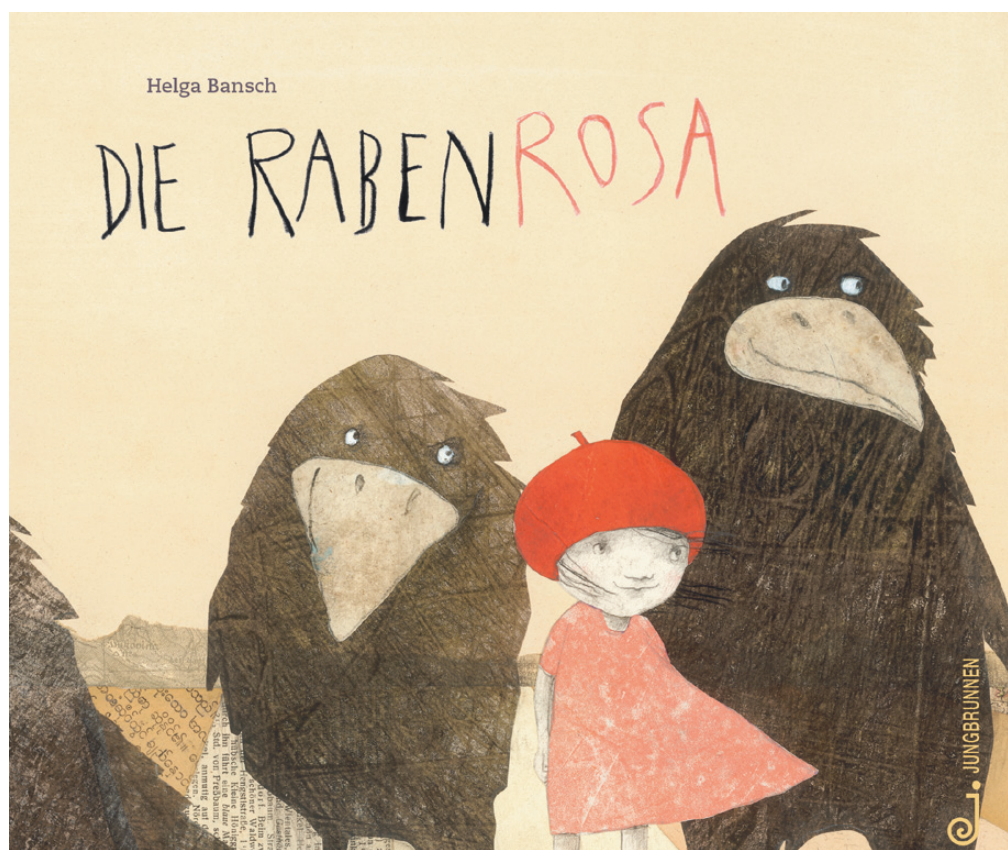


Helga Bansch: Die Rabenrosa

Rosie the Raven

Wien: Jungbrunnen Verlag, 2015

Rosie, a most unusual raven, narrates her own story. When she hatches from a bright pink (not green) egg, her round, beakless face and thin arms mark her as different from her siblings. The differences become more apparent as the other nestlings grow feathers and stretch their wings. Birds come to stare and gossip. Rosie's parents remain unperturbed and call her „our little Rosie.« They find a hat and dress to keep her warm and practice flying with her on their backs so she can migrate south with them. Human readers will quickly recognize that Rosie resembles a tiny girl and empathize with her attempts to fit in by flapping her skinny arms and cawing until she grows hoarse. Eventually she accepts that she's different. „And if the others talk about me, what do I care!« Bansch's illustrations seamlessly integrate Rosie into raven life. She opens her mouth as wide as her siblings, ready to eat worms provided by her parents. Unlike the flashy-dressing Robert, who is driven from the community by the ravens in Bansch's *Odd Bird Out*, Rosie finds acceptance. Her parents' expressions of unconditional love and happiness as they flank her in the cover illustration say it all.



This offbeat, low-key tale of self-acceptance presents an understated but effective example of tolerance and appreciation of difference.

Kathy Piehl, Minnesota State University Library, Mankato | School Library Journal

<https://www.slj.com/review/rosie-the-raven>

Helga Bansch's exquisite artwork of collages and colored images, including comic-style panels, bring humor, mood, and emotion to Rosie's story. The reader is drawn to Rosie from the instant she pushes herself from the egg, smiling and happy to greet her family, oblivious to her differences.

goodreads.com

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/26240882-rosie-the-raven>



Kitzeln kann man sich nicht allein

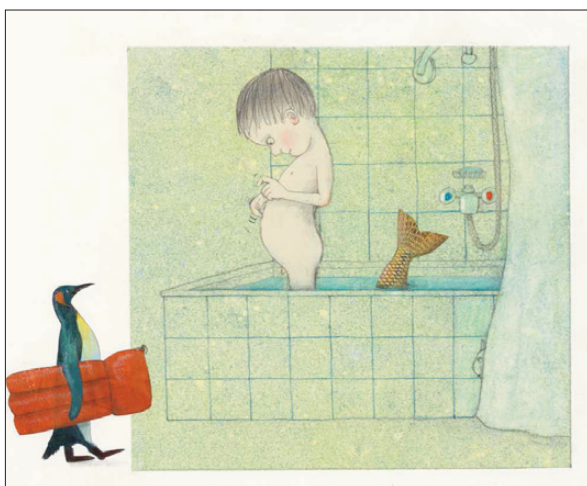
You Can't Tickle Yourself

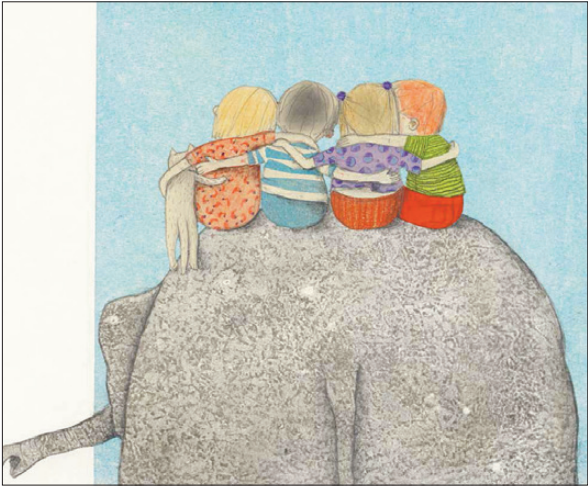
Text by Heinz Janisch

Wien: Jungbrunnen Verlag, 2021

It's often good to be alone, and there are quite a few things you can do alone: sit in a tree and look around, read, make noise or stand on one leg. But no matter how many times you try, you can't tickle yourself. It just doesn't work! And there is something much more beautiful that you can't do alone either. And for that the children even forget about tickling ...

<https://www.jungbrunnen.co.at/gesamtverzeichnis/bilderbuch/kitzeln-kann-man-sich-nicht-allein/>





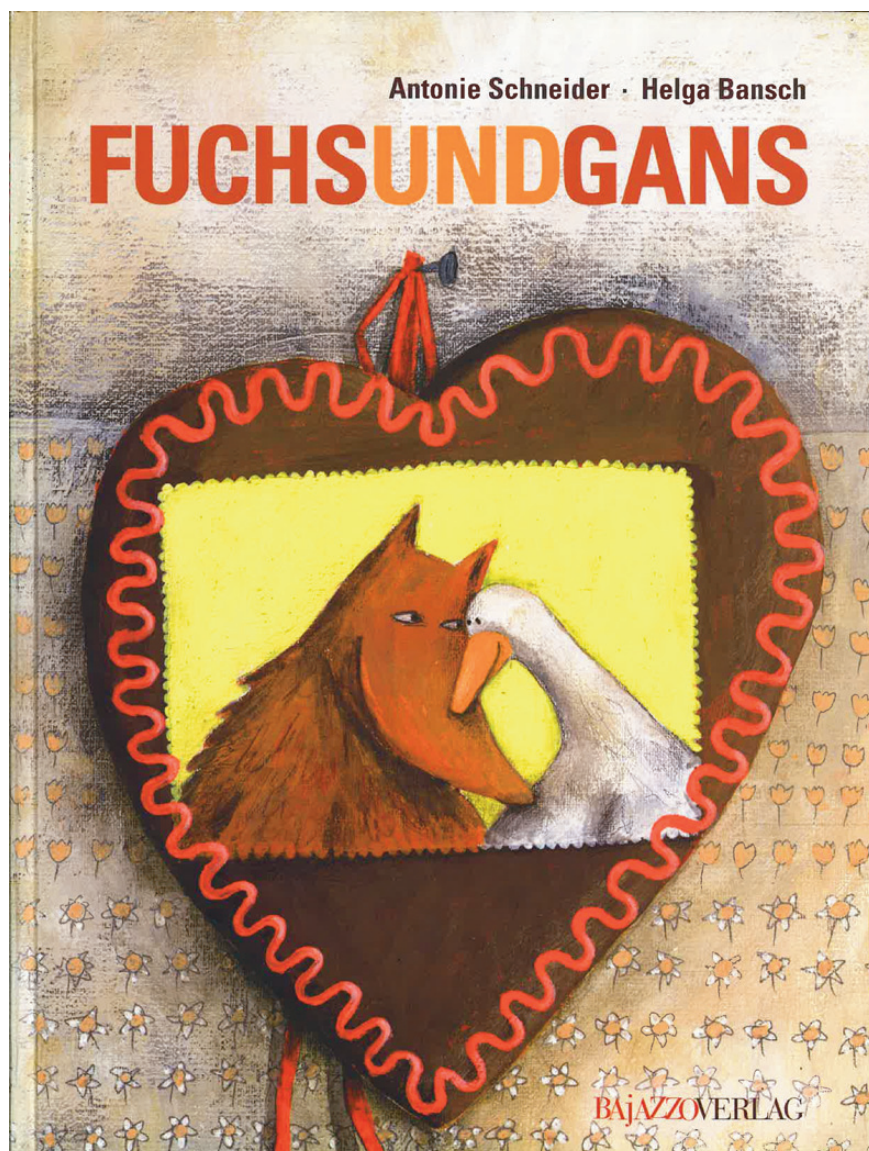
Fuchs und Gans

Fox and Goose

Text by Antonie Schneider

Zürich: Bajazzo Verlag, 2006

A traditional German children's song begins with the lyrics, »Fox, you stole the goose!« This children's book retells the old tale in a new variation. This time the fox has stolen the goose's heart and has no plans to return it. The two apparently live together happily and peacefully, at any rate, until the King appears with his golden stretch limousine and in search of marriage with the fairest in all the land. The goose listens to the suggestions from the wind, jumps quickly into the King's golden automobile and leaves behind the sorrowful, heartbroken fox. Thank goodness, the goose quickly realizes who her true love really is.



Despite the well-known characters, with its light and poetic narration, and above all the grandiose pictures by Helga Bansch, the picture book is cheeky and cheerful. Helga Bansch takes pleasure in the text with many additional facets, planting surprising perspectives and segments, an intensive colourfulness, letting her creative associations run free. It is one of her great strengths, to bestow animals with strong emotional expression, without resorting to tricks of trivialization.

Elfie Kainz-Kazda | Unsere Kinder



Ein schräger Vogel

Odd Bird out

Weinheim: Beltz Verlag, 2007

Robert isn't your average, somber, all-in-black, know-it-all raven. He's a chirpy, joking, singing, outrageously dressed bird. Despite repeated criticism, he just continues being himself, much to the dismay of his flock. Finally, the other ravens can take it no more, and they tell him to „Scram! Skedaddle!» Sadly he does just that and flies to a distant tree where he commences to sing himself a lonely song. His song draws birds from all around. Soon a star is born, and Robert takes his act on the road, entertaining birds far and wide. Meanwhile, back at the raven's tree, a bit of regret has set in as things are sober, staid, and boring without Robert. Luckily, concert night brings a new performer, Bobby Raver, who shakes things up and inspires the ravens to be outlandish and have fun. Now if only they could figure out why he looks so familiar. The conversational text is paired with paintings that perfectly capture the raven's nature. Who knew birds could have so many facial expressions and disapproving postures? In his wildly colored outfits and high-heeled shoes, Robert shines amid the status quo, whether he is dancing with a squirrel



or telling juvenile jokes in a swimsuit, flippers, goggles, and snorkel.
 Catherine Callegari, Gay-Kimball Library, Troy, NH

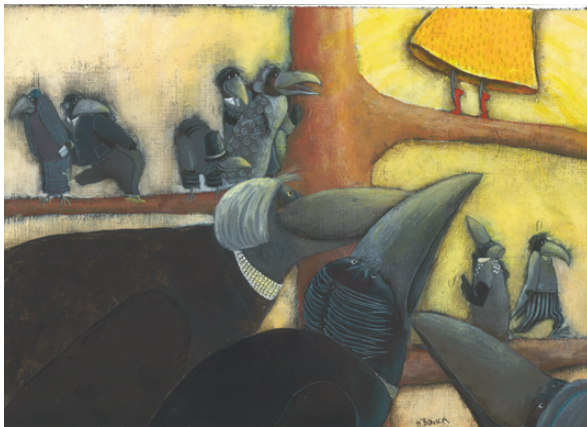
School Library Journal

<https://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/review/odd-bird-out>

From the start, Bobby the Raven is different than his parents and the rest of his community. When his non-conformist ways become too much, he flies far away. But success among strangers gives him the confidence to return. He is finally enjoyed for the individual he has always been. Helga Bansch's illustrative use of ravens, who all look alike, provides the ideal contrast for this unique character.

ART OF THE PICTURE BOOK

<https://www.artofthepicturebook.com/odd-bird-out>



Kommt das Nashorn

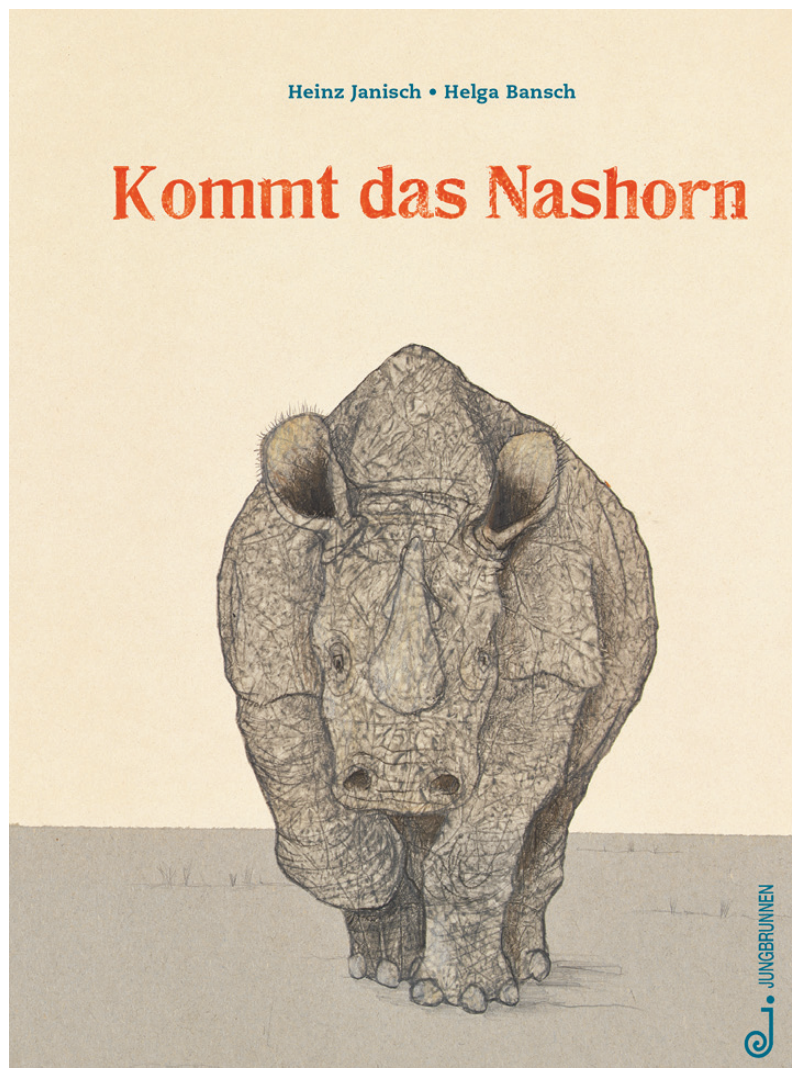
Here Comes Rhinoceros

Text: Heinz Janisch

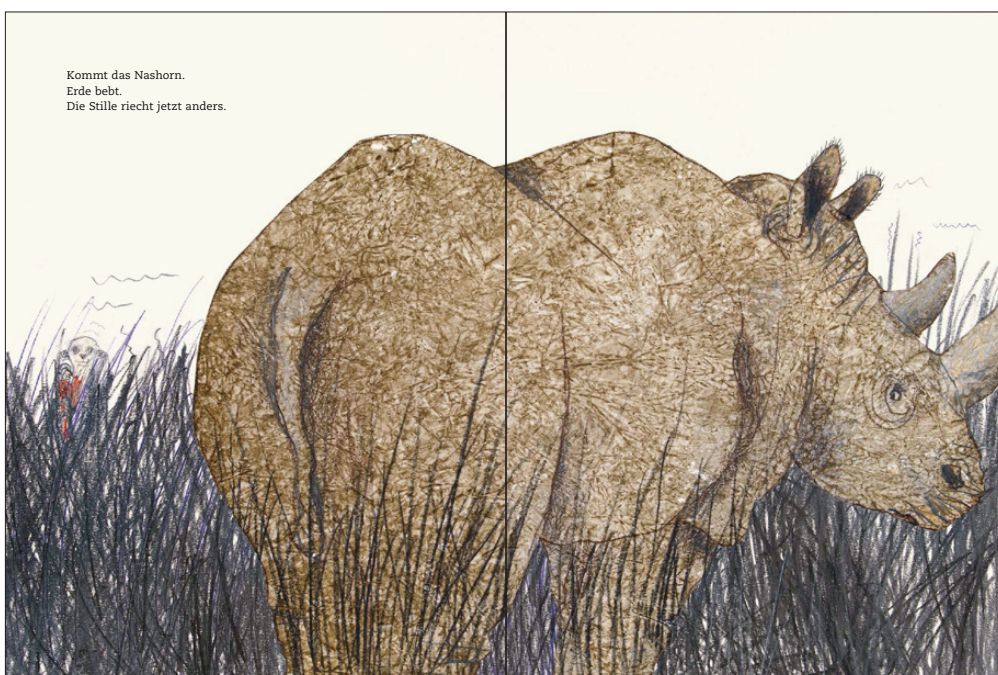
Wien: Jungbrunnen Verlag, 2016

»Here comes Rhinoceros. / Beautiful as a mountain. / A tiny bird settles on his back, / gentle as a snowflake.« Rhinoceros is sad because his horn is crooked and wishes he were »free like that snowflake,« in his imagination flying around with different sets of wings and even balloons. His fellow animals tell him they need him to protect them, and when the storm comes, he shelters the tiny bird with his mighty body, leaving him feeling better. The animals, which are lightly anthropomorphized (the meerkat carries a red umbrella), are drawn with great attention to texture on largely blank pages and in earthy colors accentuated in red, giving the illustrations a collagelike and contemporary art feel. [...] An elegant artistic statement.

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/heinz-janisch/here-comes-rhinoceros/>



The drawings in this colourful picture book enhance and clarify the story as it describes the rhinoceros' feelings. When it states, »I wish I was like that snowflake« with regard to a bird, two pages are dedicated to drawings of rhinoceros in various forms of flight, with wings and balloons. [...] A multi-faceted book, *Here Comes Rhinoceros* is, in my opinion, a »must-have« for the integrated arts program of any primary or early junior classroom.
Kent Miller, Canadian Teacher Magazine's Spring 2019 issue



Interview with Helga Bansch

by Linda Koliopoulos and Joan Wright

for »Art of the Picture Book«

March 6, 2019

<https://www.artofthepicturebook.com/helga-bansch>

Art of the Picturebook: You have illustrated your own texts, as well as manuscripts written by other authors. Do you have a preference?

Helga Bansch: It's great when a text makes immediately clear pictures in my head. In this case the illustration is easy and much fun, no matter if it is my text or the text of another author. The advantage of having my own story is, I have already dealt with and worked with the topic, the main character and the mood when writing. I'm already invested when I start illustrating. But even with my own texts, it happens that I reject my illustration ideas several times and start over and over again, change the technique or the look of the characters until I find the style that satisfies me.



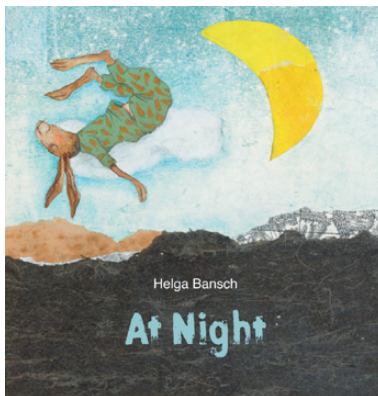
Art of the Picturebook: Are there special challenges you face when illustrating someone else's text?

Helga Bansch: Every author has his special view of things, his particular humor or his poetic idiom. The challenge is to interpret the text of the author but also to complement it with my own stories or side characters and to show my own personal points of view. The text brings me into a certain kind of mood, which influences my illustrations. This mood is crucial for the technique and what colour I am going to choose.

Art of the Picturebook: Your latest book »Here Comes Rhinoceros« was written by Heinz Janisch. Can you describe how your longtime collaboration with this author began?

Helga Bansch: A friend showed Heinz Janisch my portfolio. He liked the pictures and sent me his text, »Zack Bumm!«, with the question: „Do you feel like drawing something?“ Of course I wanted to, the text was great! We presented our project to the Jungbrunnen Verlag. It was accepted and became one of our most successful books.

In the meantime we have published 17 books together with Jungbrunnen. I am currently illustrating another book with Heinz Janisch. I like his texts. They are concise, poetic and give me a lot of space for my illustrations.



Art of the Picturebook: As your picture book career develops, do you plan to write and illustrate more of your own work?

Helga Bansch: It is quite possible that there will emerge a few more books, because it is still fun – and if I have ideas with my own texts.

Art of the Picturebook: In what way do you use your silk and architectural papers? Are they used as part of your collages?

Helga Bansch: When I decide to illustrate with collage technique, I start making monotypes on architectural paper with oil colour. I hang up the sheets like laundry in my studio. The paper needs about two weeks to dry. I love this delicate, transparent paper. Sometimes I use it as background but also for colouring the figures.

Art of the Picturebook: When making the choice to illustrate a character as a human or an animal, what factors do you consider? Are there clues within the text that lead you to a decision?

Helga Bansch: Whenever possible, I prefer animals as protagonists. They just leave me more options to express myself.

Once an author gave me a text and told me: »It's the story of a boy that feels at home wherever his father is.« This was not clear in the text. I decided to present a fat hen that feels at home wherever an ugly rat is. At first the author was quite surprised and irritated. But in the end he was convinced. I don't like to choose the obvious. It's good to think about other options and possibilities of presentation. To find another unusual point of view is important to me.

Art of the Picturebook: We have read that you prefer short texts that don't directly spell out what is to be illustrated, leaving you room for your own artistic interpretation. Can you describe a specific example of this within one of the books you've illustrated?

Helga Bansch: I want to give you two examples: On page 2 of the book »Here Comes Rhinoceros«, the text reads:

Rhinoceros walks on.
The ground trembles,
but the breeze is calm.

And in »At Night«, a turn-around book, you can find only one short sentence on each page.

Example: »At night, the elephant lies in the tall grass.«
And then »The polar bear snores in the doghouse.«

These short sentences give me many possibilities to illustrate. I am feeling free to think about how I am going to do the illustrations and what kind of story I want to tell with them. That's a pleasure.

Art of the Picturebook: You approach each double-page spread in a unique way, often changing the perspective. We appreciate the graphic nature of this approach with your use of white space and varying perspectives (seen from above, for example). What drives your sense for designing the pages in this manner?

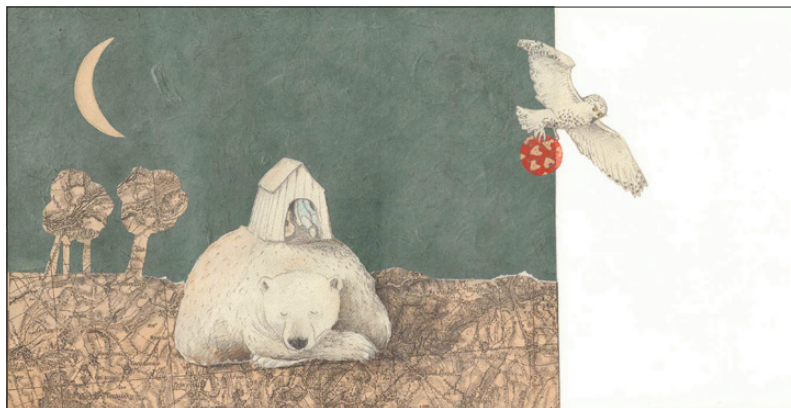
Helga Bansch: It is important to me to never be boring. The viewer should be surprised, delighted, irritated, amused or puzzled on every page. At least I want to design the pages in a way they want to risk a second or third look.

Their eyes should be eager to explore and understand everything. Each page should invite them to stay and make them curious about the text. I like to show persons, things or animals not in the whole, but only parts of them, so they have to complete them in their mind. Nevertheless, I must not lose the oversight and the mood of the story. That's a challenge. Therefore I'm always doing a storyboard.

Art of the Picturebook: You have a background in puppet-making. Do you still put on puppet shows for children as part of your school visits? What does this background bring to your illustration work?

Helga Bansch: Making picture books means also reading for children in libraries, school classes or kindergarten. Working with children is a challenge. They are a demanding audience.

After making the book »Rosie the Raven«, I produced the ravens out of socks, the little girl out of an old dress and the nest, where the little ones were born, out of branches. I asked my daughter, a musician, to compose songs to the story. Reading the book and showing it with puppets accompanied by music is a kind of theater sideshow. The children love it. I enjoy that a lot.



Art of the Picturebook: Honoring your audience's age level is a special aspect of how you approach your work. How do you add in the other layers that are understood only by the adult readers? Is there an example in your recent work that you can describe?

Helga Bansch: My book »Attention Weasel!« is a story about a group of animals, living by a lake and singing in a choir every evening. When a weasel appears, (they never saw one before), the animals are scared and don't want him. But finally they realize, that the new one can whistle, a big thing and enrichment for a choir. The political message in this book for adults is clear. Everybody is asking himself: What is my attitude towards immigrants and refugees?

Art of the Picturebook: Feelings portrayed in the facial expressions of your characters are important to you. How do you achieve that level of feeling within your work?

Helga Bansch: I often notice, how long and intensively children look at faces of main characters, when I read a book to them. Children want to identify with the protagonists. Faces are significant to them. The eyes and the mouth tell everything! Another important thing in making books for children is to create feelings. When you are emotionally involved in a story, you are interested and impressed. The possibilities for me to express feelings are to show them in the faces and to select the right colour.

Art of the Picturebook: You have said that you like to »hide something« within your work. Can you explain that and give an example?

Helga Bansch: In »Everything Is Good Again at the North Pole« a sick boy makes, in fever dreams, a fantasy trip with his father.

When you read this book only once, you will miss many details: If you look more closely, you find out that the mother accompanies them during the whole trip (the pattern of her dress can be seen on every page). At the end, when the boy is well again, you can discover in his room all the things that he saw during his journey. The boy was inspired by his toys, books, pictures, stuffed animals and posters.

Art of the Picturebook: What was a favorite illustrator and/or a book when you were growing up?

Helga Bansch: My favorite author as child was Astrid Lindgren. I loved her stories. Many years later, when I was a mother, I read them to my daughter. I loved the illustrations of Wilhelm Busch, although they are not specially made for children. Maybe that's the reason why I don't want the strict distinction between children's books and adult books. I like it when reading a picture book to a child, I also have fun, when I find a philosophical idea in the story and a gorgeous artful illustration.

Art of the Picturebook: Many thanks to you, Helga, for sharing your work and your process with us.

<https://www.artofthepicturebook.com/helga-bansch>



Als Leppo am Morgen aufwacht, liegt er in seinem Bett.
Das Fieber ist gesunken, und es geht ihm wieder gut.
Er will Mama die Eisblume schenken, aber sie ist geschmolzen.
„Macht nichts!“, lacht er und erzählt von der heißen Wüste und dem
feuchten Dschungel, vom fantastischen Ozean und der kalten Arktis.
Stunend hört Mama zu.

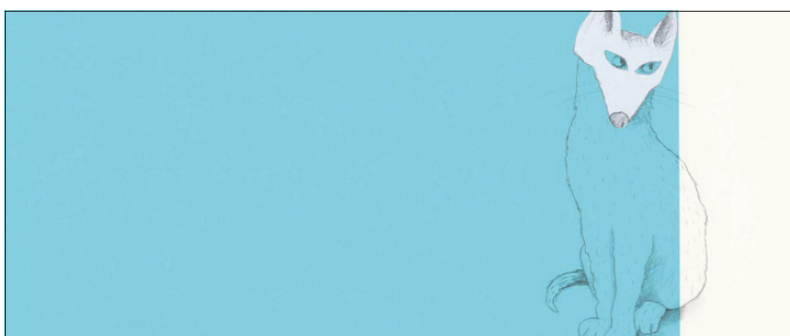
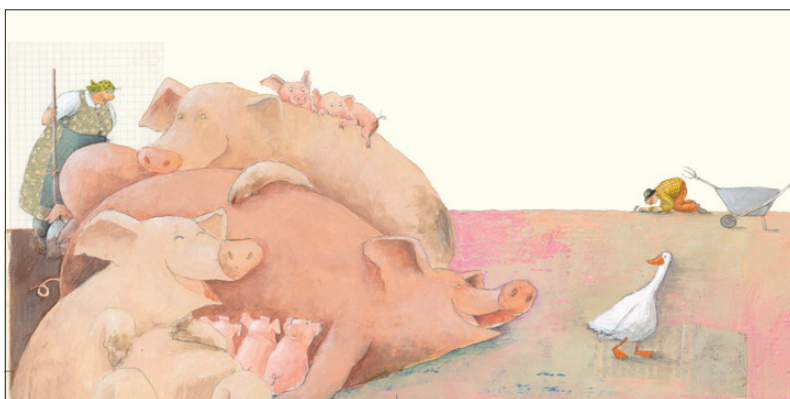
Essay on the Illustrative Work of Helga Bansch

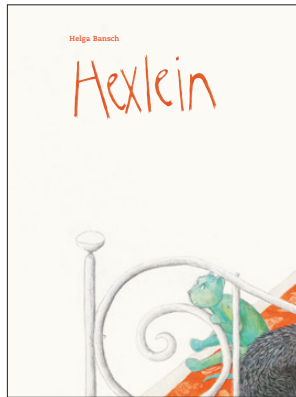
From Red to Blue – Helga Bansch and Her World of Colours

by Heike Byn | Eselsohr

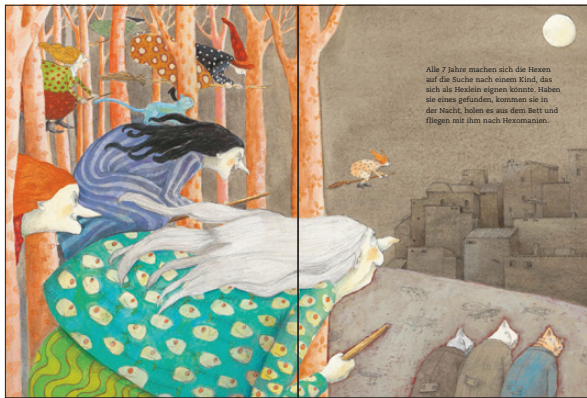
She acquired her knowledge of colours and techniques autodidactically in the course of time. She has always been an artist: Helga Bansch is one of the most interesting illustrators in Austria. So far, she has illustrated 45 books, many of these were successful abroad.

At the turn of the millennium, Helga Bansch hit the stage of the children's book market like a bombshell: Ker-boom! (Jungbrunnen Publisher 2000, for children from the age of 4) is the title of her picture book debut, for which she illustrated a text by Heinz Janisch, and reaped the Austrian Children's and Youth's Book Prize for the city of Vienna. The story is about a bird named Sigmund (!), who can only say »Ker-boom!« since the day he fell from his nest. Only the conversations with the hare, Carl Gustav (!) on the »thinking sofa« (!) heal him from this trauma. Helga Bansch created a world of colours made of earthy tones with a large amount of red. In the pictures one recognizes a sense for the absurd as well as a loving regard toward all weird creatures. »I am a positive person, who finds humorous aspects in many situations,« says





Helga Bansch. She knows how to gain children's interest in stories from her professional experience: after all she studied pedagogy, upon her mother's urging, and became a teacher. She always wanted to be an artist but worked as an elementary school teacher for 25 years. »In my free time I attended further education, worked on my technique, and showed pictures in exhibits. I wanted to convey my art to children by illustrating children's books,« says Helga Bansch. A first introductory journey to a picture book fair in Bolgna was not very successful, but then came a decisive coincidence: a musician, who was friends with Helga Bansch as well as the children's book author Heinz Janisch, brought her pictures to his attention. Heinz Janisch enthusiastically sent her a text to illustrate, and the picture book, Ker-boom! arose as a result.



Black canvas for more luminosity

The cooperation with Heinz Janisch as well as numerous prizes and awards accompany her career from this point onward, which has brought forth 45 books. Most of these show her preference for a world of colours in red, which has become unmistakable at the latest since the book, *Some Days Are like this ...* (Text: Heinz Janisch, Jungbrunnen Publisher 2001, from the age of three). The typical Bansch-red even shines on the book cover and accompanies Merike's daydreams. Where does this luminosity come from? »For a very long time I would first paint the canvases black and then brush on colours such as red or beige. But then several years ago I changed my technique and choice of colours. Since then, I enjoyed working with transparent papers using a collage technique and blue tones,« Helga Bansch explains. This can be marveled at in the books *The Beautiful Mermaid* (Nilpferd Publisher 2012, from the age of 3) and *Fly, Mitzi, Fly!* (Tulipan Publisher 2012, from the age of 4).

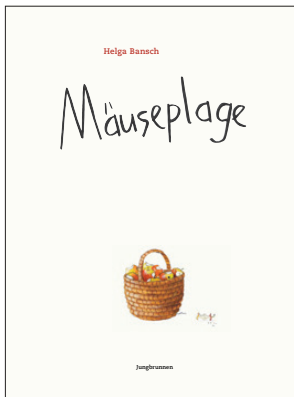
Pictures with an ironic independent existence

Helga Bansch has the ability to implement her own ideas in cooperation with publishers and in doing so artistically stays true to herself, thanks to her popularity, her success and, above all, her unique imagery, which wanders within the realm of drawing, painting, and comic. In addition, her artwork is never limited to a pure illustration of texts, rather they always lead an independent existence. For instance, in the book, *Fox and Goose* (Text: Antonie Schneider, Bajazzo Publisher 2007, from the age of 5 onward), where the fairy tale characteristics of the story are spiced with irony and humor and the king wearing sunglasses looks like a gangster. The animals in her pictures are humorous personalities, the people look friendly. Looking at the »raven parents« in *Rosie the Raven* (Jungbrunnen Publisher 2012, from the age of 3 onward), one must grin when they – visibly proud – take their human daughter into their midst.

In search of new worlds

Helga Bansch has cooperated with only a few other authors besides Heinz Janisch. With Mirjam Pressler arose the magically playful Good Morning, Good Night (Beltz & Gelberg Publisher 2012, from the age of 3). In the meantime, Helga Bansch also likes to write texts for her books herself. In recent years she has published 15 of her own productions. Many of her books have been published by Jungbrunnen Publisher, others with Tulipan, NordSüd, or Nilpferd. In addition, Helga Bansch is successful abroad: the 20 Jungbrunnen books alone have 88 foreign licenses. »It is great luck that I can work in a self-determined way and develop further as an artist.« Helga Bansch says happily. Her perpetual search for new colour tones, images and techniques continues to be gripping—and not only in the picture book.

Heike Byn | Eselsohr
 Translated from the German by Hillary Keel



Translated Editions

3 Katzen

San zhi dao dan mao | Chinese | Jiaru | Wuhan: Chang Jiang shao nian er tong chu ban she, 2015

Achtung Ziesel!

Det mærkelige dyr | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2017

Dikkat Yersincabo Çıkabilir! | Turkish | Dürrin Tunç | Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 2020

Hu bian de he chang tuan | Chinese | Ketao Zhang Shu | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Amelie und der Fisch

Amalie og fisken | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2014

Amelie en haar vis | Dutch | Joukje Akveld | Rijswijk: De Vier Windstreken, 2013

Amélie et le poisson | French | Vincennes: Talents hauts, 2015

Amelia e o Peixe | Portuguese Brazilian | Jose Feres Sabino | Rio de Janeiro: Brinque-Book, 2015

Aimili he xiao yu | Chinese | Mengying Liu | Xinbei: Wei bai wen hua guo ji chu ban, 2016

Sanem ile Balık | Turkish | Dürrin Tunç | Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 2020

Angsthase

Korean | Seoul | 2021

Las aventuras de Osito

As aventuras de Osíño | Galician | Pontevedra: OQO, 2011

As aventuras do Ursinho | Portuguese | Maria Ângela da Costa Barroqueiro | Pontevedra: OQO, 2012

Les aventures de Petit Ours | French | Laurence Guillas | Pontevedra: OQO, 2012

Bärenhunger

Una gana d'os | Catalan | Elena Martín i Valls | Barcelona: Baula, 2003

Harapeko kuma | Japanese | Itō Miyuki | Hamamatsu: Hikumano Shuppan, 2005

Alkanas kaip meška | Lithuanian | Rūta Jonynaitė | Vilnius: Niekio rimto, 2005

Feng mi shan | Chinese | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2007

Fome de Urso | Portuguese Brazilian | José Feres Sabino | Brinque-Book, 2008

Un hambre de oso | Spanish | Cristina Rodríguez Aguilar | Zaragoza: Edelvives, 2010

Feng mi shan | Chinese | Xing Wang | Guilin: Guangxi shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2015

Bärensache

En bjørnetjeneste | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2008

Chocolata

Chocolate | English | Mark W. Heslop | Pontevedra: OQO, 2007

Chocolata | Portuguese | Dora Isabel Batalim | Pontevedra: OQO, 2007

Ciocolata | Italian | Fabio Regattin | Modena: Logos, 2007

Chocolata | French | Francisco Ortega | Pontevedra: OQO, 2007

Çikolata | Turkish | Istanbul: SEV-Yay ; Kidz R, 2007

Czekolada | Polish | Sylwia Kopeć | Toruń: Tako, 2011

Chocolade | Dutch | Pieter van Oudheusden | Antwerpen: Tectum Publishers, 2011

Chocolata | Galician | Pontevedra: OQO, 2014

Txokolata | Basque | Arkaitz Goikoetxea | Tafalla: Txalaparta, 2017

Cocorico

Quiquiriqui | Portuguese | Pontevedra: OQO, 2006
 Çilli | Turkish | Esin Güngör | Istanbul: Sev, 2006
 Cocorico | French | Marion Duc | Pontevedra: OQO, 2007
 Cocoricò | Italian | Modena: Logos, 2007
 Cocorico | Galician | Pontevedra: OQO, 2009
 Kokoriko | Basque | Arkaitz Goikoetxeak | Tafalla: Nafarroa Txalaparta 2009
 Kukuryk | Polish | Beata Haniec | Toruń: Tako, 2011
 Kukeleku | Dutch | Pieter van Oudheusden | Antwerpen: Tectum Junior, 2011
 Cocoriquèc | Catalan | Ariadna Martin | Pontevedra: OQO, 2021

Die Brücke

Broen | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Århus: Turbine, 2011
 Ha-Gesher | Hebrew | Shimon Riklin-Bennet | Moshav Ben-Shemen: Modan, 2011
 Dari | Korean | Sö-jöng Kim | Seoul: Juniö Raendöm, 2011
 Yi ding yao shei rang shei ma? | Chinese | Shuling Hou | Taiwan: Da ying wen hua shi ye gu fen you xian gong si, 2012
 Köprüyü geçerken – Dev ile Ayının Öyküsü | Turkish | Serhat Yalçın | Istanbul: İlgi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2015
 A Ponte | Portuguese Brazilian | José Feres Sabino | Rio de Janeiro: Brinque-Book, 2017
 Die Brücke = al- ʿisr = Pul | Arabic and Persian | Haifa Swarka and Ahad Pirahmadian | Wien: Jungbrunnen Verlag, 2019
 Jiang gu shi de qiao | Chinese | Mingqiang Yang | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Es gibt so Tage ...

Los mejores días | Spanish | Frank Schleper | Zaragoza: Edelvives, 2002
 Els millors dies | Catalan | Elena Martin i Valls | Barcelona: Baula, 2002
 Il y a des jours comme ça | French | Isabelle Péhourticq | Arles: Actes Sud Junior, 2003
 Mais um daqueles dias... | Portuguese Brazilian | São Paulo: Editora Biruta, 2009
 Há dias em que ... | Portuguese | Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2012
 Bazı günler ... | Turkish | Dürrin Tunç | İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2017
 You na me yi tian | Chinese | Xuan Zeng | Shanghai: Shanghai Culture Press, 2018

Flieg, Mitzi, flieg!

Fei ba, Mizi | Chinese | Jianmei Gao | Beijing: Wai wen chu ban she, 2015
 Voe, Mitzi, voe! | Portuguese Brazilian | José Feres Sabino | São Paulo: Brinque-Book, 2016

Frau Bund und Hund

Madame Tientoibien et son chien | French | Isabelle Péhourticq | Arles: Actes Sud junior, 2005
 Vera og hunden Benno | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2011
 Dona Conceição e seu Cao | Portuguese Brazilian | Ines Lohbauer | Jandira/SP: Ciranda Cultural, 2011
 Bayan Börek ile köpeği çörek | Turkish | Canan Sofuoğlu | İstanbul: Aylak Adam Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2016
 You ai xiao jie xun gou ji | Chinese | Ketao Zhangshu | Chengdou: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Frau Friedrich

Madame Hortense | French | Sylvia Gehlert | Paris: Belin, DL 2009
 Fru Hansen | Danish | Marie Brocks Larsen | Århus: Turbine, 2010

Furīdorihi bāsan | Japanese | Hiroaki Sekiguchi | Tōkyō: Mitsumurakyōikutosho, 2010

A senhora Frederica | Portuguese | Manuela Ramos | Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2012

Komşu teyze | Turkish | Dürrin Tunç | Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2016

Dona Dolores | Portuguese Brazilian | Rio de Janeiro: Brinque-Book, 2017

Liao bu qi de lao nai nai | Chinese | Mingqiang Yang | Chengdou: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Fuchs und Gans

Korean | Seoul | 2010

Das Geheimnis ist blau

Mi mi shi lan se de | Chinese | Ketao Zhangshu | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Greta und die magischen Steine

Greta si pietrele magice | Romanian | Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 2020

Ein Haus am Meer

Korean | Seoul | 2008

Une maison au bord de la mer | French | Sylvia Gehlert | Paris: Belin, DL, 2010

A Casa na Praia | Portuguese Brazilian | São Paulo: Editoro Escala Educacional, 2010

Da hai bian de xiao fang zi | Chinese | Ying Pei | Shanghai: Shanghai Culture Press, 2018

Hexlein

Lille heks | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2012

Majo ni nattara | Japanese | Yoshiko Satō | Tōkyō: Wārudoraiburārī, 2015

Die Hüte der Frau Strubinski

Fru Strubinskis hatte | Danish | Natasja Erbillor | Aarhus: Turbine, 2014

Ta kapéla tēs kyrías Strumpínski | Greek | María Angelídu | Athína: Ekdóseis Ágra, 2015

Nai nai de mao zi | Chinese | Xing Wang | Guilin: Guang xi shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2015

Sümbül Hanım'ın şapkaları | Turkish | Genç Osman Yavaş | İstanbul: Final Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2018

Nai nai de mao zi dian | Chinese | Ketao Zhang Shu | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2021

In der Nacht ...

At Night | English | Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2016

Zai ye li ... | Chinese | Jianmei Gao | Beijing: Zhonghua gong shang lian he chu ban she, 2016

À Noite ... | Portuguese Brazilian | Hedi Gnadinger | Curitiba: Positivo, 2017

Ich kann alles!

Jeg kan alt! | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2012

Korean | Seoul | 2016

Ne İstersem Yaparım Ben! | Turkish | Gaye Yeşim Sezer | İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2018

Wo yi ding ke yi de | Chinese | Ketao Zhang Shu | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Katzensprung

Juste à deux pas | French | Isabelle Péhourticq | Arles: Actes Sud Junior, 2005

Pulinho de gato | Portuguese Brazilian | Yara Arnaud Heidermann | São Paulo: Brinque-Book, 2006

Tiao yi xia you duo yuan | Chinese | Ketao Zhang Shu | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Das kleine Farben-Einmaleins

Rang ni hui shu shu de yan se | Chinese | Ketao Zhangshu | Chengdu: Sichuan children's Publishing House, 2020

Kommt das Nashorn

Næsehornet kommer | Danish | Gry Kappel Jensen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2016

Xi niu lai le | Chinese | Xinbei Shi: Wei bo wen hua guo ji chu ban you xian gong si, 2017

Here Comes Rhinoceros | English | Evan Jones | Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2018

Nosorog prihaja | Slovenian | Lina Virnik-Kovač | Kranj: Narava, 2018

Xi niu lai le | Chinese | Xing Wang | Guilin: Guang xi shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2019

Geliyor Gergedan | Turkish | Fahri Güllüoğlu | İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020

Krone sucht König

Uma Coroa à Procura de Um Rei | Portuguese Brazilian | Rio de Janeiro: Brinque-Book, 2010

Xun zhao guo wang de huang guan | Chinese | Zeng Xuan | Wuhan: Hu bei mei zhu chu ban she, 2010

Korean | Seoul: Hansol Education, 2009

Lisa will einen Hund

I Want a Dog! | English | New York: North-South Books, 2009

Je veuz un chien! | French | Paris: Nord Sud, 2009

Lisa vil have en hund | Danish | Mette Jørgensen | Risskov: Klematis, 2010

Lisa will einen Hund = Lisa Wants a Dog | German and English | Kristy Clark Koth | Zürich: NordSüd, 2010

Lisa will einen Hund = Lisa veut un chien | German and French | Dominique Kirmer | Zürich: NordSüd, 2010

Lisa will einen Hund = Lisa vuole un cane | German and Italian | Raffaella Merlini Zanghi | Zürich: NordSüd, 2010

Lisa will einen Hund = Lisa quiere un perro | German and Spanish | Olga Balboa | Zürich: NordSüd, 2010

Lisa will einen Hund = Liza bir köpek istiyor | German and Turkish | Gül Dilek Schlieker | Zürich: NordSüd, 2010

Lisa will einen Hund = Ę Liza thelei skylo | German and Greek | Vasiliki Skandali | Zürich: NordSüd, 2010

Lisa will einen Hund = Liza cho et sobaku | German and Russian | Evgeni Vishnevski | Zürich: NordSüd, 2010

Korean | Seoul: Hansol Education, 2011

Lisa will einen Hund = Lisha xiang yao yi zhi gou | German and Chinese | Yajing Lai | Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiao yu chu ban she, 2011

Mäuseplage

Topini per vicini | Italian | Roberta Scarabelli | Firenze: Motta Junior, 2008

Charivari chez les souris | French | Sylvia Gehlert | Paris: Belin, 2010

Museplage | Danish | Marie Brocks Larsen | Aarhus: Turbine, 2010

Plaga de ratones | Spanish | Frank Schleper | Zaragoza: Edelvives, 2010

Korean | Seoul | 2011

Myšinaja voina | Russian | Moskow: Enas-kniga, 2012
Yaramaz fareler | Turkish | Dürrin Tunç | Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 2013
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Mein lieber Papa

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