



Chris Raschka

TeachingBooks Movie Transcript

Chris Raschka was interviewed in his studio in New York, New York on July 25, 2001.

This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.

Because this is a transcript of an edited movie, it should not be used as an assessment of Mr. Raschka's writing. Many of the sentences found here were edited, and all editing decisions are the sole responsibility of TeachingBooks.net.

One way to express something in the world on a piece of paper or in art is to allow the paintbrush to express itself. So, rather than trying to copy the expressions of people, I just try to let the paint and the ink and the paper do the expressing.

A Poke in the I

A Poke in the I is a collection of concrete poetry. Concrete poetry is also called "shape poetry." With concrete poetry, you always try to embody the ideas of the poem in how the poem looks. Concrete poetry is the yoga of words. It's what words and sentences actually feel and look like.

I created the art in *A Poke in the I* using quick and loose brushstrokes and torn paper. The book was all about poetry, so I thought I would use paper to illustrate it.

A Concrete Poem

Green faces or black faces. The art for this poem changed because it is on two pages rather than one. "Tennis Anyone?" by Monica Kulling. "Tennis...is a...game I...could watch...for hours...but my...neck won't...let me."

Illustrating Rhythm

Charlie Parker Played Be Bop is an attempt to put Charlie Parker's wonderful music and life into a little picture book. I'll read the first two lines. It's based on the rhythm of a tune called, "A Night in Tunisia" that goes "bop-ba-da-bop-bop-a-du-bop, za-ba-da-bop-bop-a-du-bop" — "Charlie Parker played be bop. Charlie Parker played saxophone."

Mysterious Thelonious is my attempt at going from a harmonic, melodic scale into a color and shape scale. You can go note-by-note and represent each of those notes in a piece of music as a spot and shape of color on a book's page.

John Coltrane's Giant Steps.... His music was described by a critic as “sheets of sound.” So, I have layered color the way the music and the different instruments are layered in a piece of John Coltrane’s music.

Something Fun to Read

Moosey Moose and *Doggy Dog* and *Lamby Lamb* and *Cow Cow* are my “Thingy Thing” books. They are meant for children who are just starting to read, and I hope that these books can be books that a four-year-old might want to read.

I think of books as ideas someone has had that get shaped by designers and editors and printers, and then go into the hands of other people — teachers and students and children and parents. These books then have little lives of their own, and it's lovely to hear where they've been, what they're up to and whom they've seen. I just try to be my part in the sequence. It's fun to watch it from here.

Books by Chris Raschka

- HELLO, GOODBYE WINDOW, THE, Hyperion Books for Children, 2005
- CHILD’S CHRISTMAS IN WALES, A (written by Dylan Thomas), Candlewick Press, 2004
- GIRL MEETS BOY / BOY MEETS GIRL (co-written and illustrated by Vladimir Radunsky), Editions Du Seuil, 2004
- ARMSTRONG (written by by Claude Nougaro and Maurice Vander), Didier Jeunesse, 2003
- GRANNY TORRELLI MAKES SOUP (written by Sharon Creech, cover art and internal drawings by Chris Raschka), HarperCollins Publishers, 2003
- TALK TO ME ABOUT THE ALPHABET, Henry Holt and Company, 2003
- BE BOY BUZZ (written by Bell Hooks), Hyperion Books for Children, 2002
- I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE: THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (commentary by Bill Martin Jr. and Michael Sampson), Candlewick Press, 2002
- JOHN COLTRANE’S GIANT STEPS, Atheneum Books / Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2002
- LAMBY LAMB, Hyperion Books for Children, 2002
- LITTLE TREE (poem by e. e. cummings; story and pictures by Chris Raschka), Hyperion Books for Children, 2001
- POKE IN THE I, A (compiled by Paul B. Janeczko), Candlewick Press, 2001
- RING! YO?, DK Ink, 2001
- TABLE MANNERS: THE EDIFYING STORY OF TWO FRIENDS WHOSE DISCOVERY OF GOOD MANNERS PROMISES THEM A GLORIOUS FUTURE (co-written and illustrated by Vladimir Radunsky), Candlewick Press, 2001
- WAFFLE, Simon & Schuster, 2001
- WHALEY WHALE, Hyperion Books for Children, 2001
- DOGGY DOG, Hyperion Books for Children, 2000
- FISHING IN THE AIR (written by Sharon Creech), HarperCollins Publishers, 2000
- FOUR CORNERS OF THE SKY: CREATION STORIES AND COSMOLOGIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD (written by Steve Zeitlin), Henry Holt and Company, 2000
- GOOSEY GOOSE, Hyperion Books for Children, 2000
- MOOSEY MOOSE, Hyperion Books for Children, 2000
- MOVIN’ (edited by Dave Johnson), Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 2000
- MYSTERIOUS THELONIOUS, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 2000

- SLUGGY SLUG, Hyperion Books for Children, 2000
- SNAILY SNAIL, Hyperion Books for Children, 2000
- WORMY WORM, Hyperion Books for Children, 2000
- ANOTHER IMPORTANT BOOK (written by Margaret Wise Brown), HarperCollins Publishers, 1999
- HAPPY TO BE NAPPY (written by Bell Hooks), Hyperion Books for Children, 1999
- LIKE LIKES LIKE, DK Ink, 1999
- ARLENE SARDINE, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 1998
- GENIE IN THE JAR (written by Nikki Giovanni), Henry Holt and Company, 1998
- SIMPLE GIFTS, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 1998
- BLUSHFUL HIPPOPOTAMUS, THE, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 1996
- CAN'T SLEEP, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 1995
- ELIZABETH IMAGINED AN ICEBERG, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 1994
- YO! YES?, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 1993
- CHARLIE PARKER PLAYED BE BOP, Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 1992

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