



## Media Release



# NSW State Library celebrates changing world of picture books

5/7/2022

*"The best stories never end ... They keep going on inside you."*

*Ursula Dubosarsky, March of the Ants*

Some of the very best books published today are for children, says State Librarian John Vallance, ahead of the opening of the State Library's major children's book exhibition.

The exhibition, *Imagine ... the Wonder of Picture Books*, opening this Saturday 9 July, celebrates the powerful and changing world of picture books through rarely seen original illustrations, rich audiovisual content and hands-on activities.

"We're bringing out some of the most beautiful picture books and artworks in the Library's collection and beyond," says Dr Vallance. "You'll find old favourites and discover new ones."

Australian picture books have come a long way since May Gibbs' Gumnut Babies and Ted Prior's *Grug*, which are still in print 106 and 43 years, respectively, after they were first published.

*Imagine* exhibition curator Sarah Morley says the most significant recent changes in picture books have been around content and diversity.

"Now more than ever today's Australian authors and illustrators use picture books to connect young readers with important issues, such as caring for the environment, mental health, the treatment of refugees and racism, in a gentle and accessible way."

Exhibition visitors will be able to hear Maxine Beneba Clarke (*When we Say Black Lives Matter*), Ursula Dubosarsky (*March of the Ants*), Phil Lesnie (*A Boy and a Ball*), Pamela Allen (*Grandpa and Thomas*) and more, talking about their work and inspiration.

There's also a film featuring illustrators Bruce Whatley, Jeannie Baker, Stephen Michael King, Christina Huynh and the Library's Rosie Handley talking about their creative processes. Plus, Matt Cosgrove will teach you how to draw Macca the Alpaca.





the WONDER of PICTURE BOOKS  
**IMAGINE...**

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### Other exhibition highlights include:

- original illustrations by 44 illustrators including Junko Morimoto (*The White Crane*), Bronwyn Bancroft (*Coming Home to Country*) and Jeannie Baker (*Circle*);
- newly acquired illustrations by Liz Anelli (*Dry to Dry*), Christina Huynh (*Grandma's Treasured Shoes*) & Phil Lesnie (*A Boy and a Ball*) — on public display for the first time;
- preliminary studies for *Rules of Summer* by Shaun Tan and unpublished character study of Leigh Hobbs' popular *Mr Chicken*;
- Matt Cosgrove's original pitch he sent to publishers for *Macca the Alpaca*
- fun activity area where young people can:
  - learn how make a zine and draw much-loved book characters;
  - interact with the giant, textured tree from *Waiting for Later*;
  - read books from the exhibition, including 10 reproduced with braille, and more.

*Imagine ... the Wonder of Picture Books* is a free exhibition at the State Library of NSW from 9 July 2022 to 9 July 2023. Monday to Thursday, 9 am–8pm | Friday, 9am–5pm | Weekends, 10am–5pm Learn more: [www.sl.nsw.gov.au/imagine](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/imagine)

### \*\*\* SPECIAL EVENT: FAMILY SUNDAY, 24 JULY, 10am–3pm \*\*\*

Join us for a full day of family fun to celebrate the opening of *Imagine ... the Wonder of Picture Books*. There'll be author/illustrator workshops, exhibition tours, art-making activities, roaming book characters and more!

Family pass: \$25. Bookings: [www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/family-day](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/family-day)

**Curator Sarah Morley and select authors/illustrators are available for interviews.**

### Media inquiries:

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