



**The Israel Museum  
Ben-Yitzhak  
Award for the  
Illustration of a  
Children's Book  
2010**



The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

# The Israel Museum Ben-Yitzhak

# Award for the Illustration of a Children's Book, 2010

## About the Award

Book illustrations are the first works of art we encounter as children. The experience of examining a fine illustration encompasses all the elements involved in viewing an outstanding artwork: pleasure, excitement, decoding the message, and identifying the setting. The Israel Museum's Award for the Illustration of a Children's Book seeks to raise awareness of this art form and promote outstanding illustrators.

In its 32 years of existence, the award has been presented every other year to 11 illustrators (several of whom were selected more than once). 50 artists have received honorable mentions and 3 were awarded special honors, singling out a total of 85 books to date.

In 2005, the Israel Museum published *The Big Book of Illustrators*, a comprehensive book featuring all the illustrators who had received the award up to that year.

The Ben-Yitzhak Award is presented in memory of Rivi (Soifer) and Michael Ben-Yitzhak, who were killed in a terrorist attack in Jerusalem's Zion Square in the summer of 1975, leaving two children behind.

Curator: Nurit Shilo-Cohen  
Translation from the Hebrew: Merav Fima  
Format design: Zivit Nevo-Nissilevitch  
Design and production: Stephanie & Ruti Design  
Photographs of illustrators: Tzur Kotzer  
Printed by Kal Press, Ltd., Tel Aviv

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## Award Selection Procedure

The Israel Museum appoints four expert jurors who grant the award (gold medal) to the artist who has produced the most outstanding illustrations. The jury may also award up to five honorable mentions (silver medals). In case no suitable candidate is identified in a given year, the judges may decide not to award the prize or honorable mentions at all.

The award is granted primarily on the basis of the illustrations' artistic quality, but other aspects of the book are also considered: the quality of the text, the relationship between the illustrations and the text, suitability to the target age group, and the book's overall craftsmanship, such as design, layout, printing, and binding.

Only books first published in Israel between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009 were eligible for this year's award (the date of publication must appear in the book).

This year's winners were selected from among 185 books, illustrated by 111 artists and published by 47 publishing houses, which were entered into the competition.

## The Jury

Chairperson: **Nurit Shilo-Cohen**, Senior Curator at Large for Museum Education and Curator of Illustration, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

**Itzik Rennert**, Illustrator; Head of the Visual Communications Department, Shenkar College of Engineering and Design

**Yehuda Atlas**, Author and Children's Literature Scholar

**Dorit Zeltner**, Publisher, Zeltner's Children's Books

On January 5, 2010, the jury of the Israel Museum Ben-Yitzhak Award for the Illustration of a Children's Book convened and decided to grant the award (gold medal) to **Ofra Amit** for her illustration of the book *Wings*. The jury also decided to award four honorable mentions (silver medals) to the following illustrators:

**Orit Bergman** for the book *The Locomotive*

**Lena Guberman** for the book *Yirmiyahu Street*

**Natalie Pudalov** for the book *Gaya and Banjo Save the World*

**Yirmi Pinkus** for the book *The Fisherman and the Goldfish*



**Ofra Amit**



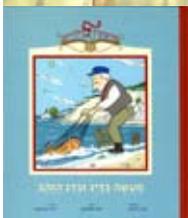
**Orit Bergman**



**Lena Guberman**



**Natalie Pudalov**



**Yirmi Pinkus**



**Ofra Amit**



**Orit Bergman**



**Lena Guberman**



**Natalie Pudalov**



**Yirmi Pinkus**

Award Winner

## Ofra Amit **Wings**

Written by Maya Hanoch  
Kinnet, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2009



Ofra Amit creates a surrealistic, ethereal, poetic, dreamlike world, at once realistic and imaginary. Her illustrations establish a constant dialogue, in color and form, between the story's child protagonist and her figure drawn by her illustrator mother – the former in color and the latter in pencil. Though the girl's figure is nearly abstract and stylized in a minimalist manner, she is humane and invites the reader's identification.

The multiplicity of planes, like scenery in a theatrical production, is already apparent in the first page of the book, with falling leaves in the foreground, a tree behind them, then the shadow of the leaves and tree against the wall, then the window shutters, and finally, inside the house, a silhouette of the mother and her daughter. The interplay between inner and outer, appearing and peaking, adds mystery

to the book's lyrical, autumnal atmosphere. The illustrator's great attention to detail, such as the photograph of Alice, Lewis Carroll's heroine, hanging in the mother's study or illustrations from the book on which she is working scattered across her desk, also reflect the infinite layers of picture in a picture, as are the explicit and implicit references to the history of art.

The warm palette, points-of-view, and cropping are rich and varied, and certain motifs, such as the bird and foliage, fly through the book from beginning to end. Its vivid coloration grows dramatic in the circus scene and in the double spreads featuring the dream sequence, painted with a dark mixture replicating what is seen behind closed eyelids, leaving room for the imagination. The book's ending is also open to the reader's visual interpretation.



Honorable Mention

## Lena Guberman *Yirmiyahu Street*

Written by Libi Daon  
Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2008

Lena Guberman employs an unconventional illustration technique: the planes of color are made of fabrics in a variety of colors and the lines are embroidered by thread and needle. This common folk art technique is handled in this book with exceptional virtuosity and meticulous attention to detail, including the types of material, their shades, and the precise placement of each piece. The illustrator acts as a sort of curator of raw materials. Despite the arduous, nearly Sisyphean task, the result is light and casual-looking. Though the images are printed on paper, the reader's eye can feel the materiality of the fabrics; despite the fact that the words are embroidered into the illustrations, the ear can hear the commotion of noise and sound.



Like Guberman's previous book, for which she also received an honorable mention, this book evokes a bustling local urban neighborhood. The characters, based in part on real people, are not stereotypical. Their comedy and charm reflect the illustrator's joy of creation, which in turn infects the reader-viewer. Though the narrative is limited to a specific venue, a single street in Tel Aviv, the illustrations are not repetitive. Recurring motifs, such as the cat and the formal family portrait on the inside cover, and the cat seen from its back, together with the photograph of the laughing family members that "dances" on the wall at the end of the book, tell the whole story.



Honorable Mention

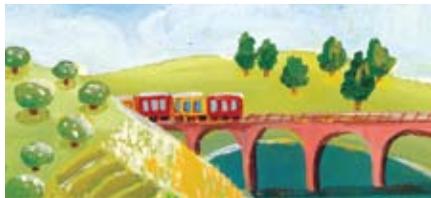
## Orit Bergman *The Locomotive*

Written by Julian Tuwim

Translated from the Polish by Ephraim Sidon  
Modan, 2009

This book, a celebration of color, is illustrated with wonderful freedom using abundant, saturated, vivacious brushstrokes. The basic yellow, blue, red, and green colors, enriched by the variety of adjacent tones, create a colorfulness that is almost Fauvist, joyful but not childlike, and full of optimism. A board book of such artistic quality is rare.

Orit Bergman's illustrations create the sensation of a cross-country journey. She cleverly employs double spreads, at times doubling them by unfolding the pages, for several purposes: depicting cinematographic panoramas, like the image of the distant train crossing the bridge, passing through the station, and reappearing between the hills, until it grows and rapidly approaches the reader, as well as depicting the load of each



wagon, which come together to form one long train.

*The Locomotive's* illustrations tell an expansive story from various angles – close-up, wide shot, or bird's-eye view – without going into minute details. The loose, prominent, textured red or white contour lines contribute to the work's picturesque atmosphere. Though it is in essence a European tale – the boy in the sailor suit who observes the passing train hints at the setting – it transcends the boundaries of time and place through the paintings' fantastic ambiance. The wagon transporting a rocky tower of pianos and the thousand muscular heroes pulling the train are mere examples of the fantastic, circus-like air enfolded in the illustrations throughout the book; a hymn to the power of the steam engine.



Honorable Mention

Natalie Pudalov

## Gaya and Banjo Save the World

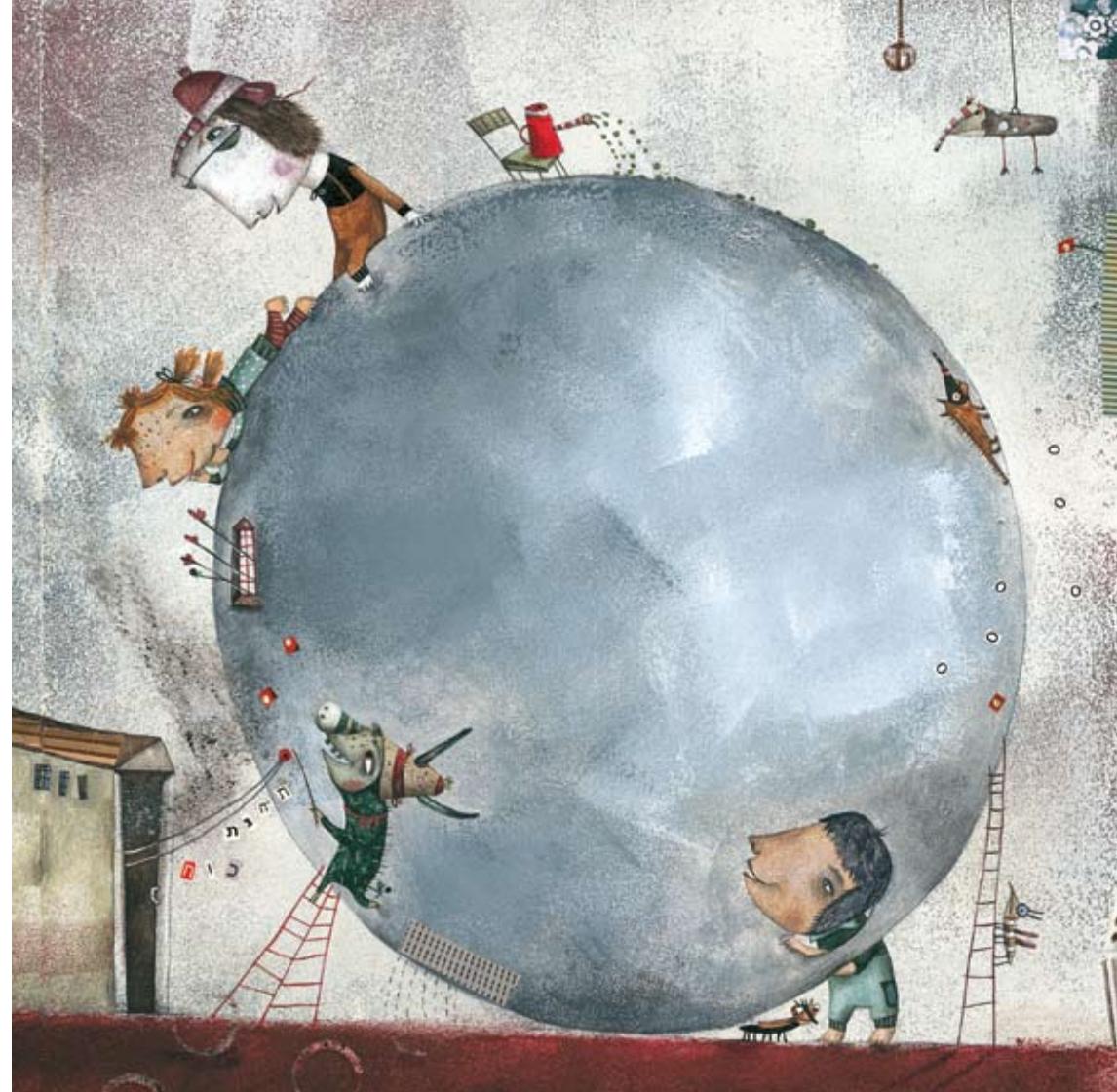
Written by Sivan and Or Sadan  
Or, 2008

Natalie Pudalov constructs a gloomy, dim, mysterious, haunted universe, reminiscent of futuristic films or of the Theater of the Absurd; a world of extremes, at once attractive and repulsive, startling and enchanting, in the spirit of the Dark Ages. This world is populated by little creatures seemingly taken from beneath the microscope or appropriated from Pieter Bruegel and Hieronymus Bosch; they seem to be fantastic characters surfacing from the menacing unconscious and imparting an apocalyptic sense of doom.

The backgrounds evoke a murky, polluted, post-industrial milieu, replete with monochromatic tones. Occasionally, there are small areas of color or minute squares of letters, arranged as word collages within the composition, which introduce some humor,

break the work's overall gray tonality, and sow light into the melancholy color scheme. The stylization of the figures is extremely distorted, both in terms of proportion and pictorial detail. The distance between the reader and the page remains the same throughout, and the two central figures do not overshadow the other strange creatures. Different items peaking from the margins suggest that the images overflow to external worlds existing beyond the page.

The illustrations' exceptional quality elevates the book above the level of its didactic, environmentally-conscious narrative, offering the reader a true artistic experience. It clearly demonstrates the power of illustration to enrich the text and provide a fascinating visual interpretation that extends beyond it.



Honorable Mention

Yirmi Pinkus

## The Fisherman and the Goldfish

Written by A. S. Pushkin

Translated from the Russian by Rina Litvin  
Achuzat Bayit, 2008



*The Fisherman and the Goldfish* gives the impression of a European children's book. Its spectacular illustrations evoke classic fairytales and do honor to the tradition of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century illustration. Yet, the illustrator's individual voice is recognizable, as his personal touch is imprinted in the work. The frames enclosing the images and the genre's rigid conventions do not overshadow Pinkus's virtuosic ability and his mastery of the contour line, on the one hand, and of the painterliness of the waves and sky, on the other. His illustrations, simple but not simplistic, contribute to the fairytale atmosphere.

The illustrations are reminiscent of folkloric Russian woodcuts (*lubok*) and of Ivan Bilibin's

vivid coloration – appropriate choices for Pushkin's stories. Pinkus does not impose himself on the story and certainly does not seek to imbue it with a local Israeli flavor; but is faithful to the place from whence it originates. Though he endows the figures with defining traits and adds a subtle comic undertone, he avoids caricaturizing them.

Worthy of mention are the book's meticulous design, the close attention to detail, such as the wavelike vocalization of the title, the illustrations' dimensions which grow in accordance with the greedy fisherman's wife's wishes, the supreme print quality, and the biographic text about Pushkin at the end of the book, alongside his portrait. A classic at its best!

