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**THE ARTFUL MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD
FEATURED AT THE CARLE**

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art Goes Over *Rainbows and Down Rabbit Holes* to Explore Children's Book Art

Amherst, Mass. (March 18, 2009) –The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art presents the exhibition, *Over Rainbows and Down Rabbit Holes: The Art of Children's Books*. The private collection on loan from Zora and Les Charles features approximately 70 works of art created specifically for children's books. The exhibition will run from November 11, 2008 through March 8, 2009.

Classic images presented in this exhibition include those from *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter, *The House at Pooh Corner* by A.A. Milne and illustrated by E.H. Shepard, and *The Travels of Babar* by Jean de Brunhoff. Works by Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac, and Kay Nielsen represent the earlier golden age of illustration, while the majority of examples focus on the flowering of the genre by artists and authors working in the post-World War II period. Trina Schart Hyman (*Little Red Riding Hood*), Chris Van Allsburg (*Jumanji*), and husband and wife team Leo and Diane Dillon (*Earth Mother*) are among the contemporary illustrators represented.

“In the beginning, there was the spoken word,” writes Lolly Robinson, guest curator. “Thousands of years before the first printing press, before Gutenberg and movable type, stories were being told around a fire. The storytellers knew their audience: folks who worked hard through the daylight hours, who struggled to get by, and who longed for a break. It's no wonder that tales from every culture and continent, passed down through generations and centuries, hold common themes. There is the outcast...who passes an impossible test and wins the princess's hand in marriage. There is the trickster...who gets the better of his powerful adversary. Folktales were the original subversive literature, wishfully tipping the balance of power. Small wonder, then, that these stories form the broad foundation of today's children's books.”

(Continued)

Seen as independent creations while connecting with their literary context, these original works of art will inspire the imagination and celebrate the creativity of picture books for readers of all ages. The exhibition was organized by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California in collaboration with The Carle. The collection is accompanied by a catalogue co-published by SBMA and The Carle, and is available at the museum shop or online at www.carlemuseum.org/Shop.

ABOUT ZORA CHARLES

Santa Barbara art collector Zora Charles chose many of the works featured in the exhibition because they came from her favorite childhood stories. The assemblage offers a perspective that represents a walk through time, from childhood memories to adult imagination. “I’ve always loved to read,” writes Charles in her essay. “I would always pore over the illustrations as I was reading. Did the pictures coincide with my imagination as I read? Or even better, did the illustrations tell me more about the story than the words did? Did they create a world for the story to live in? That’s where the magic begins. Any competent artist can paint a picture to demonstrate what the words say. But the great illustrators use the words as a key to unlock a magical, visual universe.”

Her passion for collecting began when she started attending antiquarian book fairs with her husband, Les Charles, an eager collector of rare books, more than 20 years ago. While building her own collection Zora was introduced to many of the artists of the works and realized that children’s book illustration is a true art form that can stand on its own, separate from the books that inspire it.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

Together with his wife Barbara, Eric Carle, the renowned author and illustrator of more than 70 books, including the 1969 classic *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, founded The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art as the first full-scale museum in this country devoted to national and international picture book art, conceived and built with the aim of celebrating the art that we are first exposed to as children. Through the exploration of images that are familiar and beloved, it is the Museum’s goal to provide an enriching, dynamic, and supportive context for the development of literacy and to foster in visitors of all ages and backgrounds the confidence to appreciate and enjoy art of every kind.

The Museum—which houses three galleries dedicated to rotating exhibitions of picture book art, a hands-on Art Studio, a Reading Library, an Auditorium, a Café, and a Museum Shop—is located at 125 West Bay Road, Amherst, MA. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 am to 4pm, Saturday 10 am to 5 pm, and Sunday 12 noon to 5 pm. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under 18, and \$20 for a family of four. For further information and directions, call 413-658-1100 or visit the Museum’s website at www.carlemuseum.org.

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