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Media Contact:

Corey Feltovic
Marketing Manager
(413) 658-1105 / coreyf@picturebookart.org



**DOROTHY KUNHARDT'S PAT THE BUNNY
TO BE FEATURED AT THE CARLE**
Exhibition will open at in Amherst, Massachusetts on May 16, 2008

Amherst, Mass. (April 3, 2008) – **The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art** will welcome to its Central Gallery the original art from Dorothy Kunhardt's *Pat the Bunny*. The exhibition will include the handmade prototype of *Pat the Bunny*, fashioned by Mrs. Kunhardt in 1939, on view for the first time as well as other original art and process materials; personal photographs and correspondence during the time period; and early reviews and advertisements for *Pat the Bunny*, on loan from the archives of the Meserve-Kunhardt Foundation. The exhibition will run from May 16 through December 7, 2008.

Pat the Bunny has sold over 7 million copies since it was first published in 1940 and is the 6th all-time best-selling children's book in America. Dorothy Kunhardt was already a widely successful children's book writer and illustrator, and mother of four, when she cut and pasted together her idea for an interactive book for babies and young children, inspired by her 3-year-old daughter.

"It's like seeing the Rosetta Stone," Museum Director Nick Clark states upon seeing the modest, original version of the book, "we are honored to have the opportunity and privilege to exhibit a book so transformative in opening a child's eyes to reading through touch." The exhibition also includes unpublished ink and watercolor illustrations Kunhardt considered for her 18-page classic. One is a whimsical picture of Judy galloping as she plays horse, with a colorful, braided cotton bridle for the "reader" to hold. The exhibit also features the first, second, and third editions of *Pat the Bunny*, which have early illustrations that were later replaced. The original dummy copy of *The Telephone Book*, the equally charming, interactive sequel to *Pat the Bunny*, will also be on view.

Dorothy Kunhardt transformed words and pictures into familiar activities, like playing peek-a-boo, touching "Daddy's scratchy beard," and patting the soft fur of a toy bunny. Kunhardt gave the pleasure of books to the very youngest of pre-readers, and in the process, created the ground-breaking genre of "Touch and Feel" books. Today, *Pat the Bunny* is promoted by the US Department of Education on "How to Help Your Child Become a Reader" and has served as a selection for the

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“I am Your Child” program, a National Public Awareness campaign devoted to making childhood development a top priority in the United States.

ABOUT THE MESERVE-KUNHARDT FOUNDATION

The Meserve-Kunhardt Foundation is a New York State 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to the preservation of visual and oral history and the use of it to inform, educate, and inspire. Founded in 2002, the Foundation works with photographers, filmmakers, scholars, museums, archives, non-partisan research organizations, publishers, educational companies, and Web site designers to create high-quality multi-media materials that bring the past to life. Sandra K. Basile is the Director of the Dorothy Kunhardt Collection of Children's Books. For further information, visit the Foundation's Web site at www.mkfound.org.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

Founded in part by Eric Carle, the renowned author and illustrator of more than 70 books, including the 1969 classic *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and his wife Barbara, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art is 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 we know first. 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 popular Café, and a Museum Shop—is located at 125 West Bay Road, Amherst, MA. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday 12 noon to 5 p.m. 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.picturebookart.org.

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For additional press information and/or images,
please contact Corey Feltovic, Marketing Manager
(413) 658-1105 coreyf@picturebookart.org