

Media Contact:

Nora Maroulis
Director of Development & Marketing
(413) 658-1111 / nora@picturebookart.org

**NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORES LIFE AND ART
OF 20th CENTURY PICTURE BOOK MASTER**

***Leo Lionni: A Passion for Creativity* on view at The Eric Carle Museum of
Picture Book Art from July 12 – October 19, 2003**

Amherst, Mass. (July 3, 2003) – The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art has announced the opening on July 12 of *Leo Lionni: A Passion for Creativity*. The fourth major guest exhibition of the Museum's inaugural year, *Lionni* honors one of the twentieth century's greatest practitioners of picture book art, famous for such beloved books as *Frederick* (1967) and *Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse* (1969). The exhibition, comprised of 62 works of Lionni's picture book and fine art, is accompanied by an illustrated catalog with appreciations by Eric Carle and Lionni's longtime editor, Frances Foster.

Surveying Lionni's career through a selection of his major works, the exhibition includes examples from *Inch by Inch* (1960), the story of an inchworm who survives through diplomacy, and Lionni's surrealistic drawings from *Fish is Fish* (1970). Works from *Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse* (1969) and *Frederick* (1967) highlight the artist's rich use of marbelized and patterned papers for collage. In addition, examples of Lionni's independent drawing, printmaking, and sculpture help round out our view of this master, who saw the picture book as theater, its pages the stage on which his protagonists could act out social dramas.

Surrounded by art and nature during his childhood and fluent in five languages by the age of twenty, Lionni began his career as a graphic designer in Milan. He went on to achieve considerable success in his profession, rising to the esteemed position of art director for *Fortune Magazine* in New York following World War II. It was in this capacity that he helped Eric Carle get his first job in America, as a graphic designer with *The New York Times*, in 1952.

(continued)

In addition to his graphic work, Lionni created fine art, exhibited with Surrealists such as Joan Mirò and Andre Masson, and included Alexander Calder among his close artist-friends. His journey into the world of creating books for children began with the need to entertain two young grandchildren on a train ride in 1959. Those first whimsical creations led over subsequent decades to thirty picture books, each infused with Lionni's consistent aesthetic of elegant design, magical draftsmanship, and universal message.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art is a new museum dedicated to exploring the role of visual art in children's literature from around the world. Founded in part by Eric Carle, the renowned author and illustrator of more than 70 books printed in 30 languages, including the 1969 classic *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, the Museum strives to offer exhibitions and programming that encourage inquiry, foster an appreciation for the visual arts and engage, delight and inspire visitors of all ages. The Museum houses three galleries dedicated to rotating exhibitions of picture book art, a hands-on Art Studio, a Reading Library, an Auditorium, and a popular Café and Museum Shop.

Leo Lionni: A Passion for Creativity will be on view from July 12, 2003 through October 19, 2003 at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, 125 West Bay Road, Amherst, MA. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon to 4 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$2 for children under 18, and \$10 for a family. For further information and directions, call 413-658-1100 or visit the Museum's website at www.picturebookart.org.

#

For additional press information or images,
please contact Nora Maroulis, Director of Development & Marketing
(413) 658-1111 nora@picturebookart.org