

Ezra Jack KEATS

2023 Bookmaking Award Catalog



Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Awards

Exhibition May 2-31, 2023

Brooklyn Public Library

Central Library, Youth Wing
10 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, New York 11238
718-230-1001

Catalog

Front cover: Hailey Li, *Hana Matsuri*,
I.S. 098K, The Bay Academy for the Arts & Sciences

Page 37 inset: Coco Lee and Demi Lee, *It's Okay to Bee Unique*,
P.S. 362K, Hellenic Classical Charter School

Pages 38 and 39: Kyra Wong, *In the Stars*, H.S. 299Q, Bard High School
Early College Queens

Back cover: Kyler McKnight, *The Princess Vs. The Dragon*,
P.S. / I.S. 184K, The Newport School

Production: Ezra Jack Keats Foundation, in collaboration with
the Brooklyn Public Library

Designer: Jay Boucher

Photographer: Lizzy Sullivan

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New York City Public Schools gratefully acknowledges and thanks the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation for its generous sponsorship and support.

New York City Public Schools

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For information, contact ArtsAndSpecialProjects@schools.nyc.gov

Ezra Jack KEATS

37th Annual Bookmaking Award Catalog

2023

About the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation

The EJK Bookmaking Competition, EJK Award and Mini-Grant Program together further the two central goals of the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation, to support public education, and to promote the creation of outstanding diverse literature for children.

The Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition was designed to give teachers an effective teaching tool and demonstrate to students that learning can be fun. The program has proven to be successful in improving the reading and writing skills of students at all levels.

The Ezra Jack Keats Award recognizes children's authors and illustrators early in their careers, encouraging them to continue creating exceptional books that reflect our diverse culture. Many past winners are now celebrated leaders in the field.

Ezra Jack Keats Mini-Grants support public school teachers and librarians for their own special programs that enhance the learning experience. Since 1986 thousands of grants have been awarded to educators in all 50 states.

The Ezra Jack Keats Foundation was established by children's book author and illustrator, Ezra Jack Keats, whose 1962 book *The Snowy Day*, broke the color barrier in children's publishing. *The Snowy Day* was adapted by Amazon as a holiday special (which won two Emmy Awards); a set of *The Snowy Day* stamps were issued by the U.S. Postal Service; and the New York Public Library announced that *The Snowy Day* was the most checked out book in their 125 year history. For more about all of the Foundation's activities, visit www.ezra-jack-keats.org.

Ezra Jack Keats (1916-1983)

Ezra Jack Keats was born in Brooklyn. His parents were Polish immigrants and the family was very poor. Even when he was very young, he loved to draw. In junior high he won a medal for drawing, which he treasured his whole life because it encouraged him to persevere and become an artist.

The first book Ezra illustrated and authored was *The Snowy Day*. It won the Caldecott Medal in 1963, the highest honor a children's book could win at that time, and it remains a beloved classic.

Ezra went on to write and illustrate over 20 children's books, including *Goggles!*, *A Letter to Amy* and *Peter's Chair*. He is considered a pioneer in the field for his realistic, urban, multicultural portrayal of childhood. He believed no child should be an outsider and wanted to cultivate a love of reading and learning that would last a lifetime.

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Dear Student Authors and Illustrators, Families, and School Staff,

It is my honor to congratulate the student recipients of the Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition, whose exemplary picture books are represented in this catalog. Through words and images, each one of you has created a meaningful picture book to share with friends and families. My compliments to the teachers and librarians who worked with these young authors and illustrators, and to the families who are always there to support their children. I also want to congratulate the honorable mentions, and all the school wide winners.

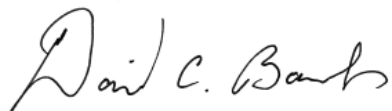
A successful picture book can relate enchanting fantasies, offer solutions to everyday problems, and reference figures and events in history. These students' books are testaments to their perseverance and demonstrate what can be created when students receive solid instruction within a rich learning environment provided by school principals and assistant principals.

On display in this catalog are the talents and creativity of elementary, middle, and high school students from traditional, alternative, and special education learning environments. Before they embarked on creating their own picture books, students studied the work of published authors and illustrators, and came to appreciate their craft. To create their own picture books, students carefully wrote, made decisions incorporating the elements of art and the principles of design, and gained a clear understanding of the link between text and image. Their work is outstanding, and I could not be prouder of them.

On behalf of New York City Public Schools, I wish to acknowledge the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation for its generosity. Its funding provides for student medals and awards, the production of this catalog, and the enrichment of Sora, the city's digital library.

I believe that the arts—whether writing, visual arts, theater, music, or dance—feed the souls of our children and put them on pathways to the bright futures they deserve. As Chancellor, I will continue to find new ways for our students to take advantage of the rich cultural environments in our city and schools.

Soaring high,



Dear Students, Families and Educators,

As participants in the 2023 Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition, you are part of a long and illustrious tradition. Since 1986 this program has touched the lives of thousands of NYC school children who have gone on to careers in the arts, sciences, and other professions.

We often hear from former students that, even after decades, this experience remains special to them. And so when your books are returned to you, store them in a safe place! You'll be surprised at how important this accomplishment will always be. With or without an award, your book demonstrates the excellence of your skill at using the information you gained in school.

If you are a teacher, librarian or administrator responsible for bringing this program to your students, thank you. The Bookmaking program advances the required classroom curriculum but participating takes energy, determination and vision. Without you, these incredible books would not exist, and what a great loss that would be!

Friends and families, you know how critically vital you are. And so do we. We thank you for sharing your children with us. They make us all proud.

As always, I thank the people who make the Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition possible. Karen Rosner, Director of Visual Arts, Art Office, and Melissa Jacobs, Director of Library Services, Department of Library Services, both at NYC Public Schools, have for many years, been steadfast in their determination to nurture and protect this program.

Equally important has been the visionary support of Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library. From the BPL staff, Judy Zuckerman, Kevin Kelley, Brandon Graham, Paquita Campoverde, Gregg Richards and Sally Chen, have each demonstrated an extraordinary level of dedication to maintaining excellence in every aspect of the program's operation. A very special thank you to each of these outstanding professionals.

Congratulations to all!

Sincerely,



Coco Lee Demi Lee

It's Okay to Bee Unique

Grade: 5
Teacher: Julia Molloy
School: P.S. 362K, Hellenic Classical Charter School
Principal: Natasha Caban

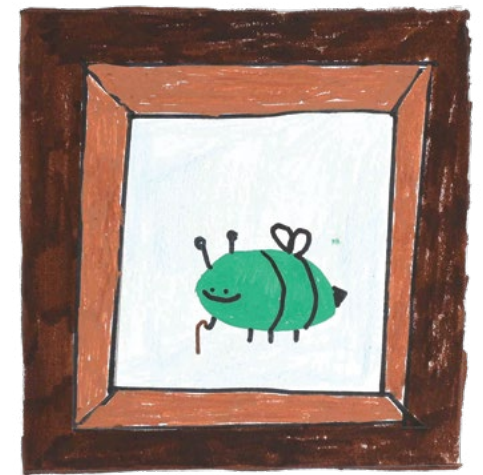


Coco: Demi read a book about different colored bees and it gave us the idea for our book. It was great to work with my sister because we could work side by side and give each other feedback. It was a little bit difficult to write but I wanted my readers to feel like they fit in. It doesn't matter if you're different or not, you are special in your own way. **I want people who are different to feel they are still unique, but in a special way, not a bad way.**



Demi: When our family went to a different country, everyone was blonde, and there were only white people. We stood out a lot because our hair was different and our skin was different. **But I didn't care. Not everyone is the same.**

And so, we thought since everyone sees yellow bees, if we used different colored bees, people would see them as unique bees. If readers feel they are different from others I hope this book will make them feel unique. I'm proud of drawing all of the different bees. I liked working with my sister because it created a better bond between us.



Hailey Li

Hana Matsuri

Grade: 8
 Teacher: Mandi Bracho
 Librarian: Karen Goldberg
 School: I.S. 098K, The Bay Academy for the Arts & Sciences
 Principal: Maria Timo



I wanted my book to be symbolic and address an important topic that affects many individuals in their daily lives, including me. I was not afraid to write my story in a personal manner. Sugar coating the true story was the last thing I wanted to do. **I wanted the next generation to know how it could change the way children see one another despite their cultural differences.** I know children love colorful artwork and so I focused on the pictures. I had problems with the length of the text, simplifying the descriptions, and drafting important events in the story. The due date was coming closer, and the next big hurdle was how to bind the book. Using the last of my willpower, late into the night, I bound the book with glue, a hairdryer, and double-sided tape. I delivered my book the next morning and from the reaction of my teachers, I knew my work was well worth it.



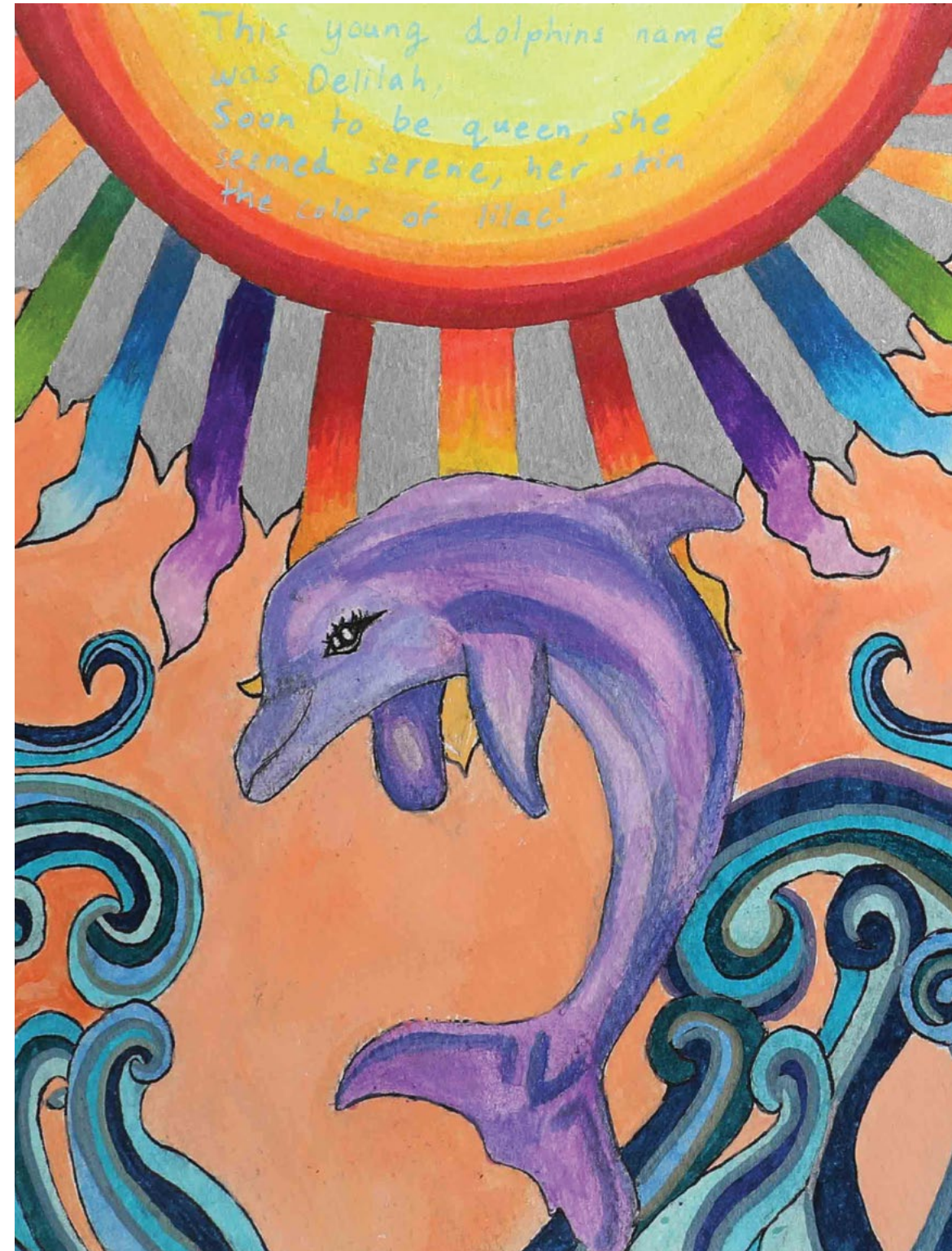
Arna Asad

Delilah Loves Her

Grade: 11
Teacher: Gloria Adams
School: H.S. 293M, City College Academy of the Arts
Principal: Burnedette Drysdale



This experience was eye opening! And I'm now considering becoming a children's book writer and illustrator. It's something I never would have considered before getting this amazing opportunity. It is my lovely art teacher, Ms. Adams, to whom I owe all the credit. Being bisexual, and figuring it out quite recently, made me realize my shame had stopped me from facing the issues much earlier. **I wanted to create this book as a reflection of my own journey, and to put more hopeful LGBTQ content into the lives of young kids, who may feel confused or scared to be who they are.** Writing this book, I was excited to create something about an issue I am now passionate to advocate for, and filling in all the colors, just added to the magic.



Carter Dawson

Carter and the Colorful Crystal

Grade: 3

Teacher: Veronica Doherty

School: P.S. 160X, The Walt Disney Magnet STEAM School

Principal: Lori Baker



I wanted to make my story about all the colors I knew, so I did my research. Colors are important in my life. Color makes me feel emotions: happy, sad, excited, even angry. But then I calm down because I feel nothing bad will happen.

My favorite colors are green and blue. I outlined my writing, drew my pictures and colored each page. It took a long time, and the coloring was the most challenging part of the book. I needed a beginning, a middle and an end with a problem and a solution for my story. Ms. Doherty, my art teacher, helped me figure out how to plan my book and gave me ideas to edit my story. I am the main character, Carter, who saves the village from the evil witch. **The townspeople are nice and sometimes people make mistakes, and so in the end, they give the witch another chance.**

Carter was the
Town's hero.



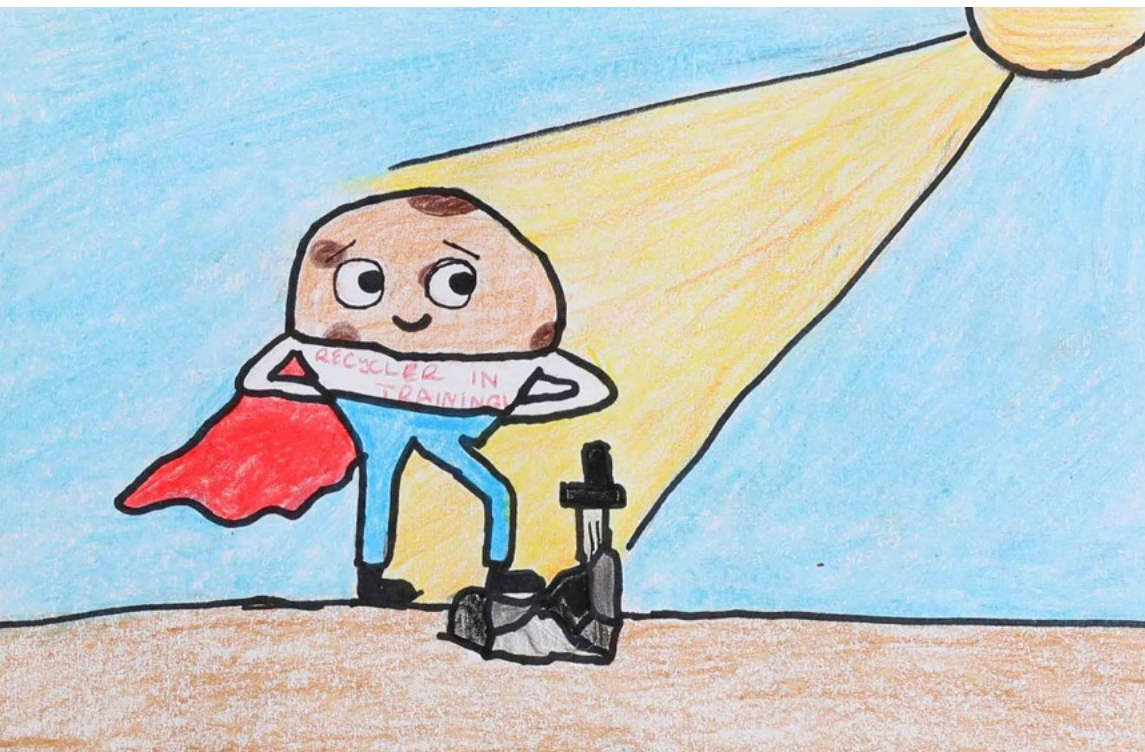
Julia Balatsko

The Undercover Cookie

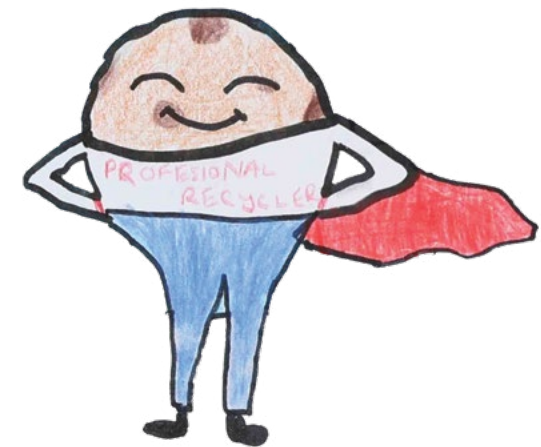
Grade: 5
Teacher: Michelle Quinn
School: P.S. 019X, The Judith K. Weiss Woodlawn School
Principal: Ellen O'Brien



It all started back in 2022. My art teacher asked if I would like to attend an afterschool art club, and I said yes. Before I started creating my book, I thought it would be easy. I was clearly wrong. At first, I didn't know what to write about. So I read some picture books to gain inspiration. I read a book in which the main character took an old kaleidoscope and turned it into a spyglass. I instantly thought the theme of my story had to be recycling. I wrote my book, had my parents read it and they enjoyed it.



I realized I could add another theme to my story. I could create characters in the book who recycle and inspire others to do the same. It was easy to draw but coloring was probably the hardest part. Still, I liked how it turned out, even though I knew that if I had more time, the coloring might have been better. But apart from that, I thought my book was the best.



Kyler McKnight

The Princess Vs. The Dragon

Grade: 3

Librarian: Noemi Alers

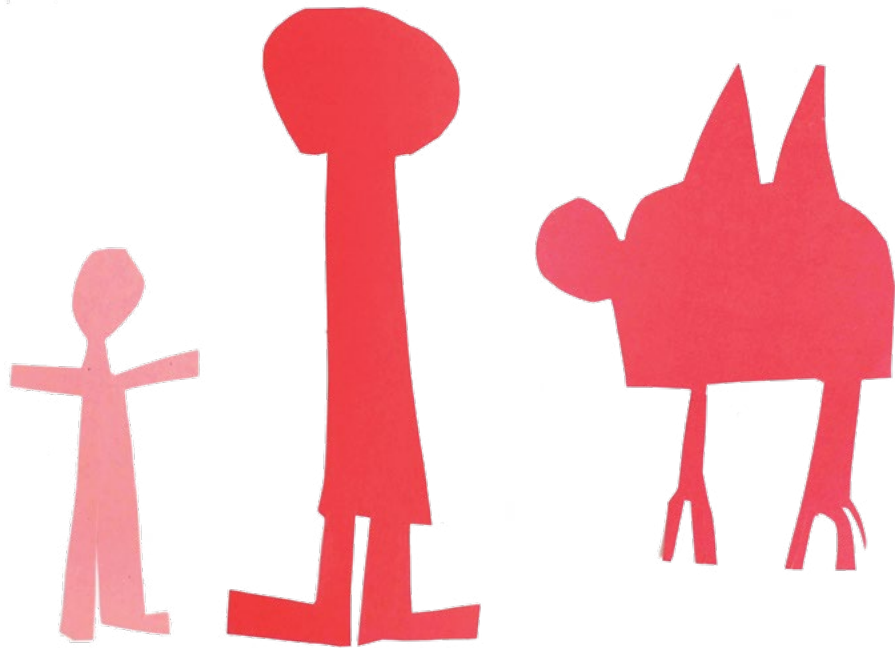
School: P.S. / I.S. 184K, The Newport School

Principal: Andy John-Duncan



I found a book named The Princess Versus the Dragon and it was my inspiration for creating my own book. I noticed that in fairytales, princesses and dragons are very important, so it felt great to create my own. It was not easy to write but I enjoyed creating the characters and worked hard to improve my drawing skills. I searched 50 pictures of castles, and I drew them over and over until I got them right. At Bookmaking Club, it was difficult to cut out the paper, but I learned how to use oak tag, to fold it and turn it into a book.

I felt nervous because it was my first time making a book and thinking of what words to use, but I'm great at drawing and my dad said I'm going to be a great artist just like him! **Some kids, especially boys, don't like fairytales and I wrote this book to prove them wrong!**



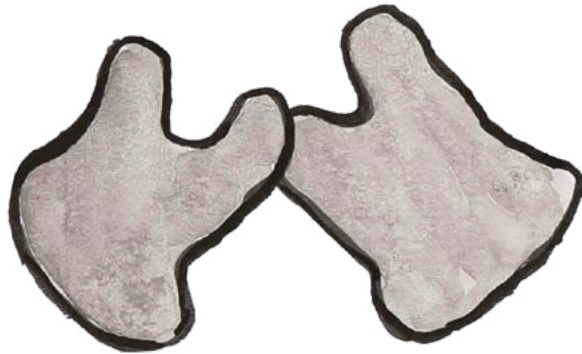
Alice Numeroff Scarlett Done

Baggy the Bag

Grade: 6
 Teacher: Louise Butler
 Librarian: Amy Rathgeb
 School: I.S. 497K, The Boerum Hill School for International Studies
 Principal: Samantha Schmoeger



Alice: Scarlett wanted to make a book about New York. **The main character in the story is Baggy who is a deli bag trying to accomplish his dream. The problem is that he doesn't know how, so he finds a friend, Bob, to help him.** We created a first draft of the book on plain white paper. Then we wrote and drew the pictures in pencil on watercolor paper. We outlined everything in black and colored it in with watercolors. Finally, we made the cover and put the book together with a hot glue gun.



Scarlett: I had the idea to make a book about New York when Ms. Butler showed us a book of New York City architecture made of Legos. It inspired me. Then the idea of Baggy crossed my mind. I said, "That's it! There are so many delis in New York City, let alone deli bags, let's make a book about one of them." I started having ideas of what a day in the life of a deli bag would be, on the ground, floating around the city, tangled in the trees, and then maybe ending up in the water. That's how our book, Baggy and Bob, ends. Baggy sinks to the bottom of the ocean.



Elise Kosacolsky

Finding a Story

Grade: 8
Teacher: Michele Wallach
School: I.S. 239K, Mark Twain for the Gifted and Talented
Principal: Karen Ditolla



The inspiration for *Finding A Story* came from the writer's block I battled when presented with the opportunity to write a children's book. I know that writer's block is also a problem in many other people's lives. It was a very personal book in many respects because

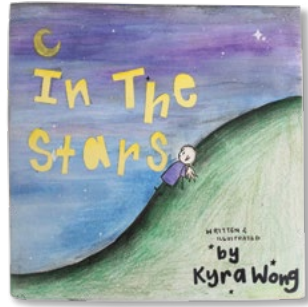
I find when I am faced with a lack of inspiration, I become incredibly focused on the things and people around me. I find that almost anything in my life has the potential to become a story. As I began to write the first draft of the book, I decided that the perfect art medium to present the story was watercolor. The first two pages were painted in a monochromatic style to symbolize Corra's struggle to write, but as the book progressed and she went outside, the pages became more vibrant. **Regardless of the long and sometimes stressful process, the book became something that I am incredibly proud of.**



Kyra Wong

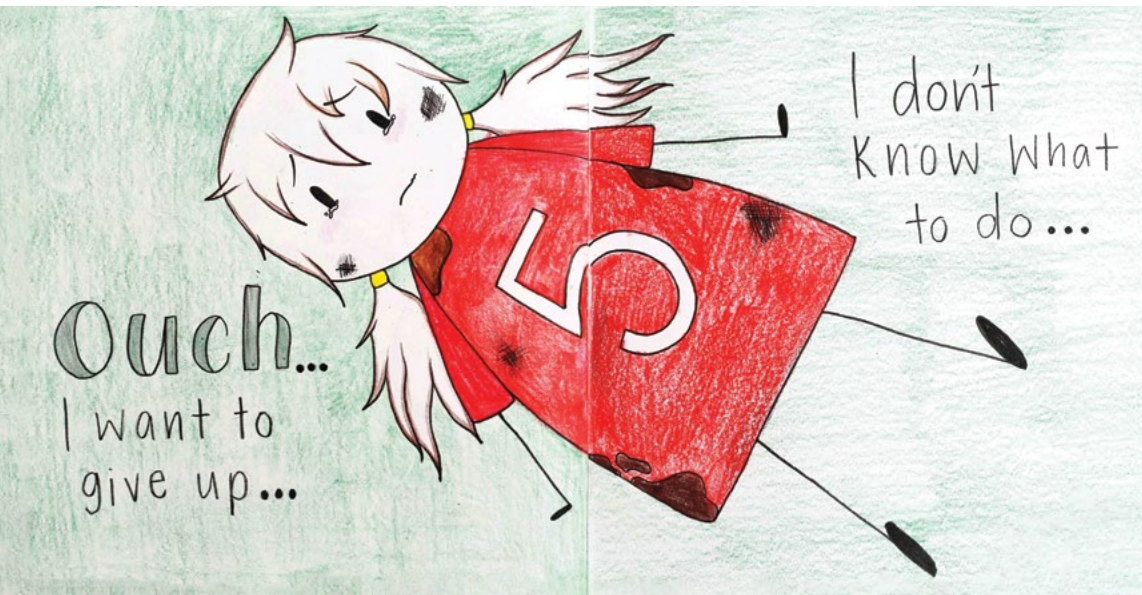
In the Stars

Grade: 10
Teacher: Mary Jo Lombardo
School: H.S. 299Q, Bard High School Early College Queens
Principal: Laura Hymson



My book was inspired by my experiences trying to find my life passion.

The main character's name is Kira, which is an alternative spelling of my name. For my book I created a version of myself. My story is about indecisiveness when it comes to finding a career. Many times I've been asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And so, I decided Kira would have to deal with that question. Kira goes through the trial and error journey of trying many hobbies that might spark her interest. This is similar to my own experiences dabbling in various hobbies as a kid. Most of the hobbies Kira tries are ones that I tried while growing up.



Although I still haven't found my life passion, I wanted to give my character and my story an ending. I've always been quite drawn to stars, so I decided to use that interest to provide Kira with a career. It turned out to be astrology.

Kelly Ojeda-Quizhpi

Milky in the Wyre Forest

Grade: 12

Teacher: Janet Carleton

School: H.S. 585Q, Maspeth High School

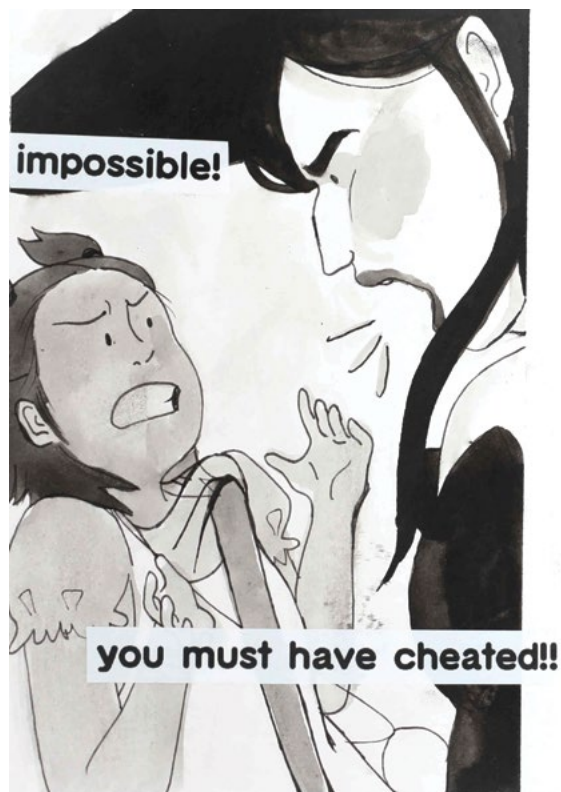
Principal: Selin Alicanoglu



Milky in the Wyre Forest was written during a time in my life when I was struggling with my mental health. After thinking about a plot for my book I decided to stray from a serious topic. I wanted a fun, pretty and lighthearted book with silly unserious characters. It was quite a challenge for me at the time. The book had to go through a lot of revisions, but it helped me focus on topics I loved like art and character creation, with cats involved...

and a pretty witch! I put a lot of work and care into each page. I created thumbnails and painted carefully to ensure each illustration was clear and fun to look at.

I hope my readers understand that letting go of the need to have your work taken seriously can produce a project that opens many doors to freedom, in the art industry and within yourself.



Uki Tripathy

Monsters

Grade: 12

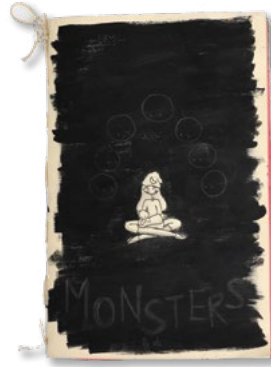
Teachers: Elizabeth Filippelli

Rafi Mukhuradze

Librarian: Joanna Drusin

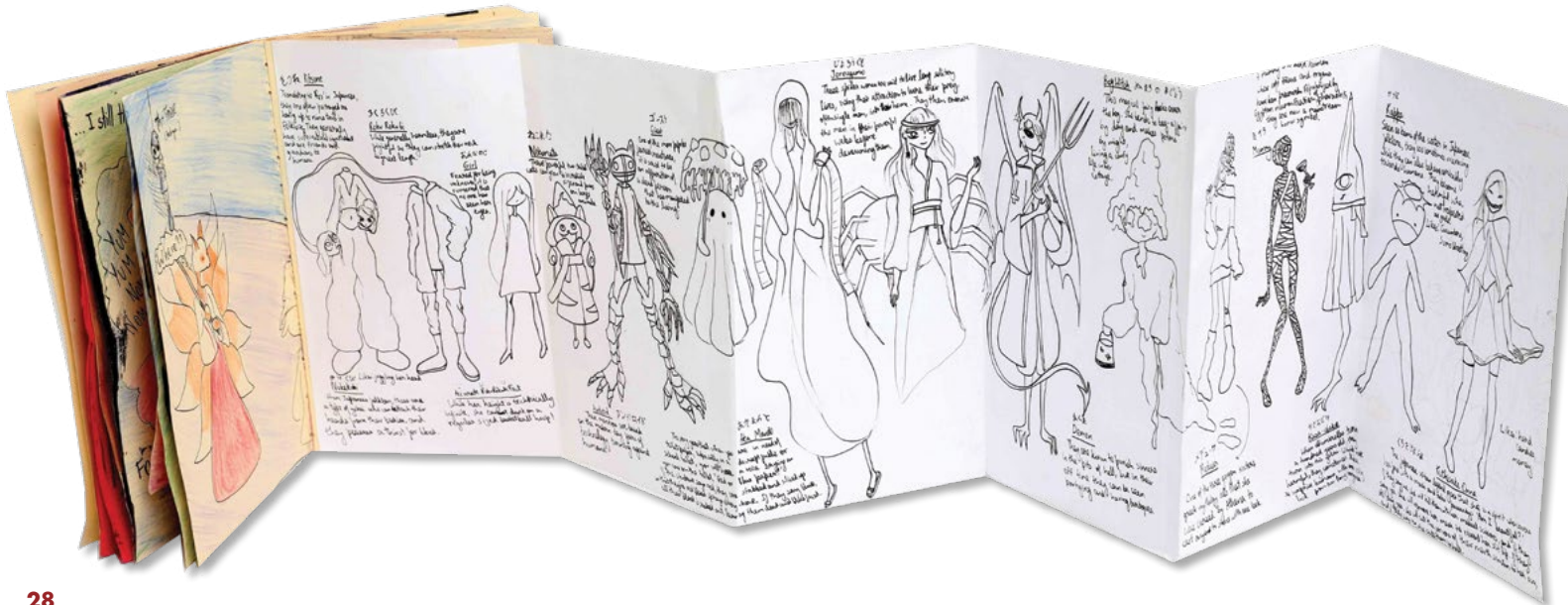
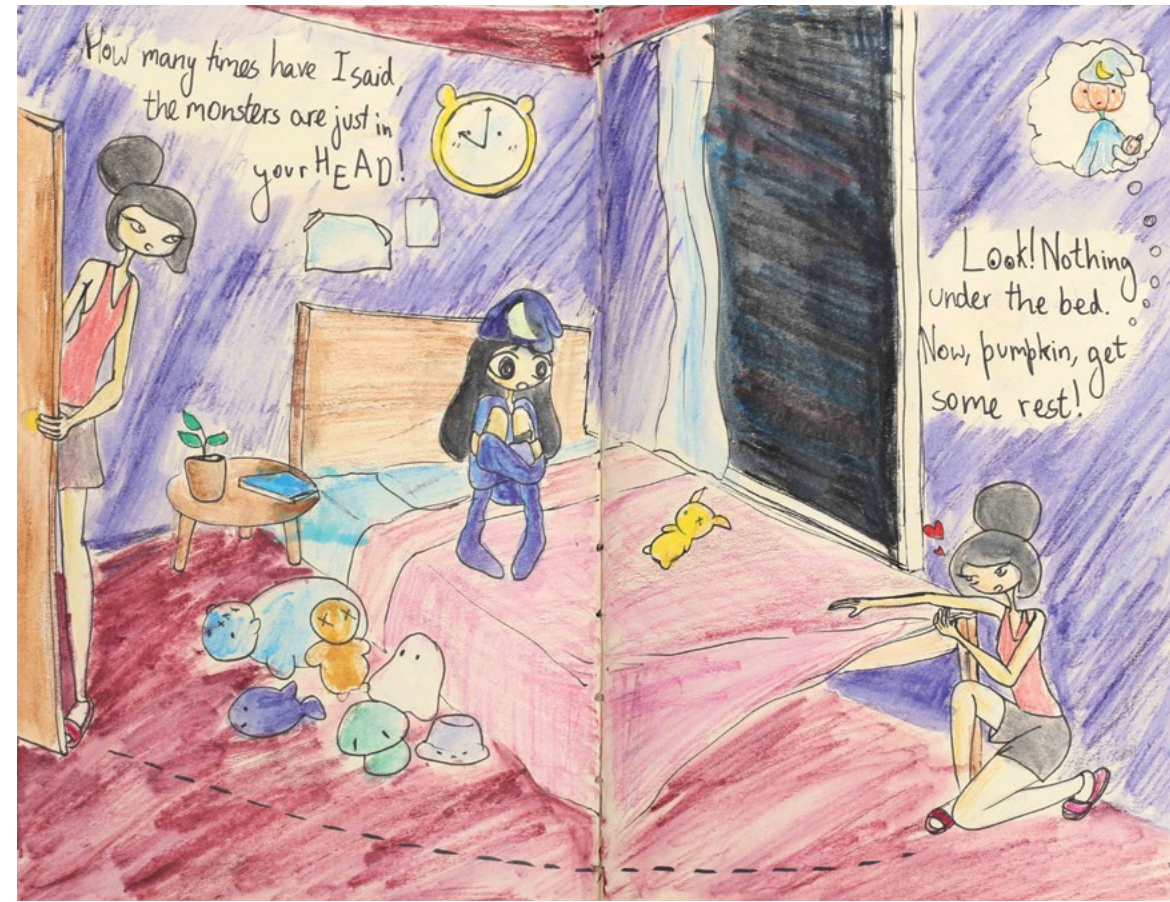
School: H.S. 430K, Brooklyn Technical High School

Principal: David Newman



I learned a lot through this process. I feared darkness and shadows as a child but grew up to have a fascination with horror folklore. I wanted my book to follow Xola, a child afraid of the monsters under the bed. The story follows her through a night where she looks under her bed to finally discover those monsters, and is terrified. In the end, with some help from a kitty, she befriends the monsters instead. **I wanted to portray how fears can be unfounded, and that we shouldn't be afraid of the unknown.**

My favorite parts were the storyboarding and character design, and I enjoyed working in traditional mediums, adding pop-ups and a long accordion page to the book. Even though it took a tremendous amount of work, holding the completed book in my hands was rewarding.



Kylie Chiang

The Little Things

Grade: 12

Teacher: Melissa Nakos

School: H.S. 525Q, Townsend Harris High School

Principal: Brian Condon



“*The Little Things*” is a poem that expresses the importance of one’s perspective on life. By using color as a metaphor for the beauty in life, my goal was to create scenes that elicit feelings of serenity, liveliness, and warmth. The separation of each spread into a distinct color allowed me the freedom to paint a variety of moments and explore a wide spectrum of emotions. **My inspiration for writing this book was from my experiences with sadness and hardship and the lessons I have taken away from those moments.**

It is often hard to recognize how the difficulties a person encounters can be made less daunting with positivity. The purpose of my story is to inspire positive attitudes in others. My process included working with alcohol marker paper and binding each page together with wire in order to ensure that my book had stability and structure.



orange like the butterflies
in fall,
or the ginger tabby cat's
name I don't recall



or Grandma's homemade
blanket I use as a shawl,
as the wind
blows fiercely

Justin Ceballos

Welcome to Jonason Island Summer Camp

Grade: 12
Teacher: Amie Robinson
School: P.S. 077K, District 75
Principal: Ebony Russell



It was fun writing the book and creating a new world. For this book I created a special summer camp on Jonason Island. I've always liked weird things and so I wanted Jonason Island to be an accepting place for everyone. The characters are strange monster creatures and are way more fun, cool and interesting than everyday people. I get a lot of my inspiration from some of the cartoons I used to watch as a kid, especially Disney movies. They had really complicated characters with a lot of emotions. I really like to draw and fill about ten to twenty sketchbooks a year. I have so many ideas for books and plays it was sometimes challenging to decide what to include. It was exciting to finish a book because I have always dreamt of becoming a writer one day. **I hope this story brings joy to its readers and inspires them to be more creative in their own life.**



Honorable Mentions

Title	Author/ Illustrator	School	Teacher/ Librarian	Principal
Grades 3-5				
<i>Diary Of A 12 Year Old: Who Happens To Be An Immigrant: The First 14 Days</i>	Ava Nicholson and Hans Shervey	P.S. 156K, The Waverly School of the Arts	Leanne Anderson and Ryan Nicholson	Naiyma Moore
<i>My Dad's Birthday</i>	Melissa Morales	P.S. 199K, Frederick Wachtel	Meredith Cusumano and Stacey Hymowitz	Rosalia Bacarella
<i>Summer Break</i>	Aria Vassell	P.S. 015Q, Jackie Robinson School	Serrena Hospedales-Brown	Anthony Pignataro
<i>Why The Ocean Is So Deep</i>	Jailene Marie Felix	P.S. 555X, Mount Eden Children's Academy	Kathryn Linden and Fatima Darlington	Jaqueline Radoslovich
<i>The 3 Best Buds</i>	Evelyn Zhang	P.S. 058R, Space Shuttle Columbia School	Staci Balice	Michael LaMorte
<i>Our Friendship Story</i>	Saywa Chuma and Nadia Islam	P.S. 195X	Mary O'Sullivan and Elizabeth Vargas-Mendez	Richard Webster
<i>The Starfish and the Squid</i>	Kayla Tan	P.S. 098Q, The Douglaston School	Aizhen Li, Kristin Roma, and Amy Kuchynsky	Kristy Chan
<i>Scrumptious Scent</i>	Aryana Singh	P.S. / I.S. 268Q	Kaylonda Marin	Wilburn Smith
<i>The Computer "Switch"</i>	Avery Woo	P.S. 023R, The Richmondtown School	Laurie Berlinger	Paul Proscia
<i>Pink Energy</i>	Leora Slott	P.S. / I.S. 099K, Isaac Asimov School	Ann Preis	Hrysoula Niarhos
<i>Konstantina's Journal / Growing Up with Video Games and Social Media</i>	Konstantina Kouros	P.S. 070Q, Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino School	Mary Karalekas	Izette Thomas
<i>Different but the Same</i>	Isla Heasley	P.S. 008K, The Emily Warren Roebling School	Melissa Browning	Patricia Peterson
<i>The Savior</i>	Garry Tauzhnyanskiy and Alec Fridman	P.S. 195K, Manhattan Beach	Cara Bianchi	Bernadette Toomey
<i>The Gnome's Forest</i>	Joan Potts	P.S. 075M, Emily Dickinson School	Alexis Gordon and Kelly Martin	George Georgilakis
<i>My Big Bright Bulb</i>	William Zhang and Ryan Lu	P.S. 105K, The Blythebourne School	Joy Li and Catherine Debes	Shirley Chen

Honorable Mentions *continued*

Title	Author/ Illustrator	School	Teacher/ Librarian	Principal
Grades 6-8				
<i>The Red Goose</i>	Michael Osei-Tutu	P.S. 002K, Parkside Preparatory Academy	Katherine Dinerman	Arlene Burnett
<i>Swine Search</i>	Bella Zhang	I.S. 201K, Madeleine Brennan School	Dina Pizzarello	Robert Ciulla
<i>UNLOCK THE STAR</i>	Tho Nguyen	P.S. / I.S. 206K, Joseph F. Lamb	Laura Bronzini and Catherine Inniss	Ellen Quigley
<i>Kiwi's Hidden Talent</i>	Beila Hu and Akshayan Kuruparanantha	I.S. 072R, The Police Officer Rocco Laurie School	Eileen McLoughlin	Jessica Jackson
<i>Magical World</i>	Elena Davletshina	J.H.S. 014K, Shell Bank	Michelle Wiener	Teri Ahearn
<i>The Eyes of Our City</i>	Mariam Nila	I.S. 187K, The Christa McAuliffe School	Melina Badia	Mina Sadiki
<i>In My Own World</i>	Iffat Tisha	P.S. / I.S. 268Q	Kaylonda Marin	Wilburn Smith
<i>The Two Hungry Caterpillars</i>	Nabeeha Ahmad and Shabnam Karshieva	P.S. / I.S. 099K, Isaac Asimov School	Kathryn Azhar	Hrysoula Niarhos
<i>The Foundation</i>	Emmanuel Opoku and Daniela Avila	P.S. 141X, Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy	Julia Loving and Isa Almonte	Lori O'Mara
Grades 9-12				
<i>The Story of Harriet</i>	Savier Calo	H.S. 460R, Susan E. Wagner High School	Jessica Fenster-Sparber	Ronald Carter
<i>We Are Not Expensible</i>	Hailey Rodriguez	H.S. 690Q, High School for Law Enforcement and Public Safety	Stefanie Abbey and Eve Davis	Laura Van Deren
<i>Gotham</i>	Jean Carlos Grullon	H.S. 544X, High School for Contemporary Arts	Elizabeth Fidoten	Melissa Peters
<i>Is It Okay?</i>	Ariel Torres	H.S. 419M, Landmark High School	Amanda During	Susanna Tenny
<i>Metal N Flesh</i>	Romy Bae Kocher	H.S. 501Q, Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School	Laura Blau	Gideon Frankel

Bookmaking Competition Selection Panel

Lex Abenshon, *Director; Children's Programs and Services, New York Public Library*
Morgan Boyle, *Associate Manager, After School, New York Public Library*
Wynter Carnevale, *Visual Arts Teacher, NYC Public Schools*
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Jocelyn McCarthy, *Director of Media Strategy*

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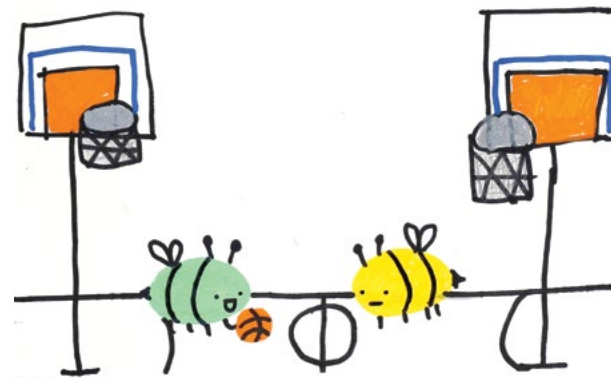
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Gracey Zhang, Author/Illustrator Guest Judge and Speaker

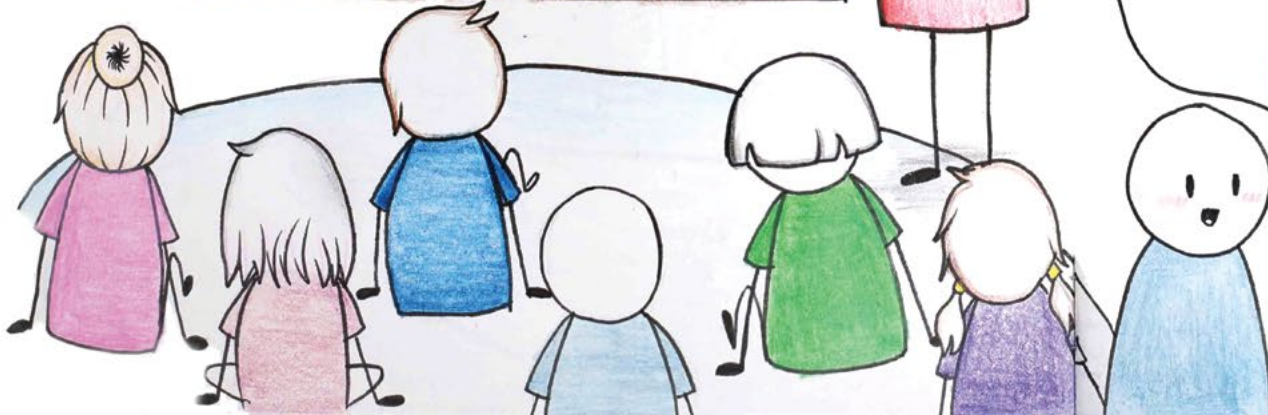
Gracey Zhang is an award-winning illustrator and author and a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design. She received the 2022 Ezra Jack Keats Illustrator Award for her debut picture book, *Lala's Words*. Gracey also illustrated *The Big Bath House*, *Nigel and The Moon*, and *The Upside Down Hat*, which was a New York Times Library Best Illustrated Book of 2022. Her illustrations have appeared in The New York Times, VICE, and on NBC, among others. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. You can explore more of Gracey Zhang's work on her website, at graceyzhang.com or on her Instagram page, [@graceyzyz](https://www.instagram.com/graceyzyz).



ABC

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WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP??



I WANT TO BE A
Scientist!

I WANT TO BE AN ...
ARTIST!

I WANT TO BE A ...
Chef!



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