



# Hassan Manasrah

*Jordanian Illustrator candidate for the  
2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award*

## Biography

Hassan Zaid Manasrah is a multi-talented artist who has produced a variety of works in several fields, from designing and directing animated films to writing and illustrating books. He studied applied arts with a specialty in interior design at Al-Balqa Applied University and he also studied art at the Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Jordan. He also received tuition in printmaking from specialists at the Jordan National Museum of Fine Arts.

Hassan did his first exhibition as a solo artist in 2006, which was entitled “Civic Feeling” and consisted of 25 lithograph prints as well as a sculpture made from iron. In addition, he has participated in several exhibitions across Jordan, Palestine, the Emirates, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Germany, France, Switzerland and Spain.

He worked as assistant artistic director on the cartoon series, Pink Panther, among other animations produced in Arab world. He has also illustrated around 20 books for children with several publishing houses, both Arab and foreign.

In 2014, his work on the book *Why Not?* which was published by Al-Salwa, made it on to the shortlist of the prestigious Etisalat Award for the Best Illustration. He also translated the book himself into English and Turkish and it was on the White Raven list of the world’s best children’s books in 2014.

In 2016, he won the Etisalat Award for his illustrations of the book *The Blue Pool of Questions* which was published by the Palestine Writing Workshop. This book also made it on to the short-list for the Muhammad Kahil prize in 2018 and was translated into English.

In 2018 he won the Etisalat Award for the Best Book of the Year for his book *Nostalgia*, which was published by the al-Alam al-Arabi. He is currently working on several personal artistic projects.

## A statement on the candidate's contribution to literature for young people

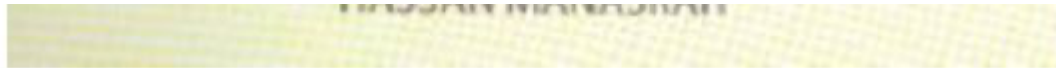
Manasrah was born in 1980 and lives in Amman, Jordan. He studied art and sculpture in Amman, where he worked in an animation studio. The most influential was his work with storytelling and sequentially. He has illustrated several children's books that are successful in the Arab world. He published comics mainly online and is very passionate about them.

### **HASSAN MANASRAH BOOKS**

- Al-Salwa: Karma's Rabbit / Who Hid the Eid Lamb?/ The Ghoul/ Why Not?
- Al-Hadaek: Where are the Girls?/ The Pharaoh and The King of the Jungle/ Saeed and the Milk/ A Slice of Cheese/ The Fox and the Fear/ The Bag of Salt.
- Kalimat Publishing house: Will the Garden Gates be Closed? / The Flight/ Noura/ My Big Family/ My City/ The Secret/ a series of four books to raise awareness about the environment which were translated to English.
- Noun: Arab Dreams
- Palestine Writing Workshop: The Blue Pool of Questions/ The Cup
- Al-Alam al-Arabi: Nostalgia/ The Sheep's
- Driver Dan's Story Train- A Trip: a trip to the beach for the children show to the Beach.
- Jebel Amman: he designed the cover helped to illustrate the book I am Human which raised children's awareness about children's rights.
- He has worked with a number of local children's organization to design illustrations for stories.
- The book The Garbage Monster was part of a program to help develop the Mercy Corps.

## Articles about Hassan:

- Al Rai newspaper- Jordan: **Paintings of Hassan Manasrah in French cultural center reflects the social mood.** <http://alrai.com/article/200100.html>
- The Article:



[Copy the link](#)    -A A +A

Amman, Saudi Arabia - The first personal experience of the artist Hassan is presented in the Linguistic Cultural Center Gallery. The title is a civil mood. It is a graphic experience with a purely human sense. It is about the social mood in general, and the path of human experience has been defeated by the calamities.

The prints of the 26-sided plastic edition, along with the creation of iron for the shape of an adult bed in the length of its head and the bed is also presented in the graphic prints. It is a deliberate coding of the mood that the artist intended to express. Let us know that the mood is now deteriorating.

In the experience of his proverb, a conscious crossing of the form, the blocks, an expression of his insight into something, and a technical touch of his spiritual mobility with the other, and the form is present in all works, as he monitors a situation, to this comes the technical excerpts studied.

The artist's experience can not be examined without contemplating the function of colors. It is an extension of his self, always stepping aside to express emotion and contribute to the structure of the painting, but without getting the subject or canceling it, so that it intertwines in the foreground of the painting, not in its interior or base. Even if it is partially stored with a sense of kinetic energy, and a ready-made energy, even a synthesis of synthesis, with an analogue simulation that is not identical, which is confused with its horizontal, vertical and bending motion to create tension and tension, which is similar to motor abstraction.

The structural structure of the edition is not without its spontaneous touch of the line and a large flow, and with this spontaneous spontaneity trapped by a network of pressure lines and dark spots, which made the work of the expression in the human in the painting, and the artist who has a strong line and balance in the blocks owed to the graphic artist of the National Museum Jordanian Fine Arts and supervisors have access to that level and knowledge of graphic technology.

According to his supporters, he does not intend to express the human condition and the effects of the daily pressures on their external appearance, as much as he wants to indicate the public mood.

The man is beaten, defeated, defeated and left alone within the lines left by the painter. Etc., which were also served by monochromatic monochromatic color selection and its high color expression.

He holds a bachelor's degree in interior design from Al-Balqa Applied University and later joined the art training center to receive a study in the arts as well as in the graphic designer of the Jordanian National Museum of Fine Arts.

<https://www.pennycandybooks.com/blog-1/2017/6/26/meet-hassan-manasrah>

## meet hassan manasrah

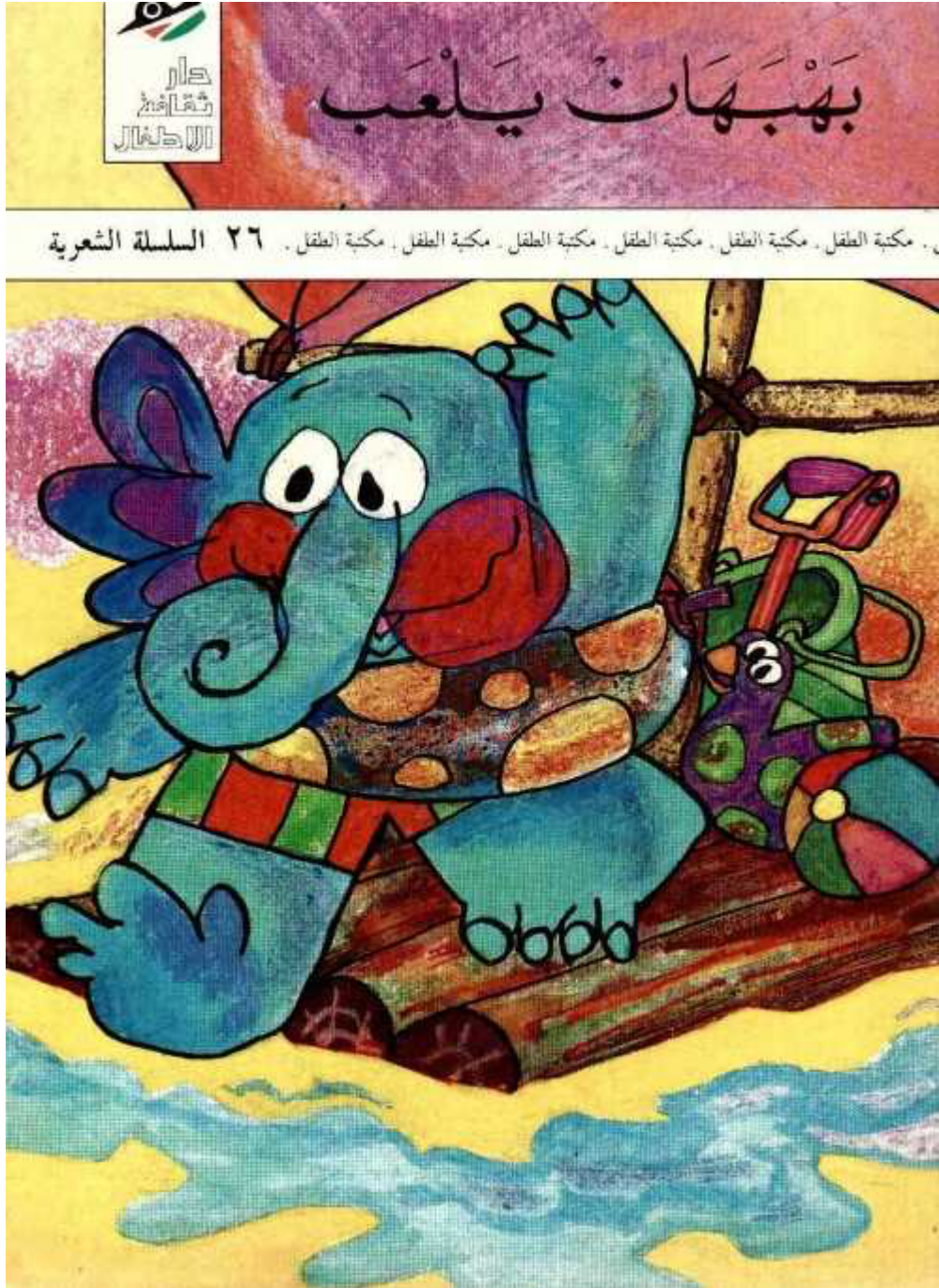
June 29, 2017 in [Favorite Books](#)

As part of our ongoing series introducing readers to Penny Candy authors and illustrators, we're happy to present Hassan Manasrah, award-winning illustrator of *The Blue Pool of Questions* (English-language version to hit the shelves in September!). Meet Hassan, then and now:





Hassan is a visual artist, illustrator, and comic creator. He studied interior design at al Balqa Applied University and painting at The Jordanian Fine Art Center. He also studied printmaking at the Jordanian Fine Art Museum where he concentrated on lithography, etching zinc and copper, and lino- and mono-prints. From 2008 to 2010, he worked as Assistant Art Director for the animated cartoon series *Pink Panther & Pals*. Since 2010, he has illustrated 25 children books. In 2014, the book *Why Not?* was shortlisted for the Etisalat Award for Arabic Children's Literature for best illustration and made the White Ravens list. In 2016, he won an Etisalat Award for best illustration for the Palestinian edition of *The Blue Pool of Questions*.



"Regarding my favorite book," Hassan writes, "it was *Bahbahān Is Playing*. Bahabahan is the name of a chubby blue elephant with a big red cheeks. I think it's my choice for favorite book because it was the only one I owned for a long period of time. As an adult, I did a little research and discovered that it is a book of poetry, published in 1981. But I only remember that blue elephant—and the large size of the book itself."

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-9972219-8-5>

## The Blue Pool of Questions

Maya Abu-Alhayyat, trans. from the Arabic by Hanan Awad, illus. by Hassan Manasrah.  
Penny Candy (Itasca, dist.), \$13.95 paper (40p) ISBN 978-0-9972219-8-5

Originally published by the Palestine Writing Workshop, this 2016 winner (for illustration) of the Etisalat Award for Arabic Children's Literature tells an elliptical, allegorical story of a lonely man whose many questions set him apart from a busy world with no time for them. "He sang strange tunes. Dried flowers fell from his sleeves. Books slept inside his coat like shoes in a closet," writes Abu-Alhayyat of the man, whom Manasrah paints with a streak of bright blue hair and a green scarf that's forever swirling around his neck. The questions in the man's books gather into an enormous pool that disrupts city life; eventually, the man works up the courage to dive in, egged on by an entity within the pool's depths called the Answer. Though the man finds companionship and a kind of contentment in his new home, readers may have lingering questions. Is seeking the answers to big, difficult questions worth it, if it results in near-total isolation? Regardless, Manasrah's richly multilayered illustrations mesh gracefully with Abu-Alhayyat abstract writing in a haunting meditation on one man's search for belonging and meaning. Ages 5–up. (*Sept.*)



## Why Not?

By: Taghreed Najjar

Illustration: Hassan Manasrah



A widowed man and his daughter Samia live in a small village in Palestine in the 1930s. For years now, the man has been responsible for playing his drums to wake the villagers during Ramadan, the month of fasting, so that they get up in time to eat their first meal before sunrise. When he suddenly falls ill and has to stay in bed, Samia proposes to step into the breach until he feels better. It's not an easy decision for the father, but he eventually agrees.

The next night, the girl, accompanied by her dog Barq, sets off with a lantern. She crosses a dark forest and surprises the village people with her drumming.

In »Mā al-māni«, the author questions the traditional female role. The story encourages readers to be open-minded and confident and believe in their own skills. The colourful double spread illustrations present an atmospheric image of the nocturnal setting. (Age: 7+)

# girlsheartbooks

WRITING

## We Need Diverse Books

Posted on [June 3, 2015](#) by [LUCY COATS3](#) [Comments](#)

I live in the UK, a country which has welcomed in people from many cultures over the centuries, so it always shocks me to realise that until all too recently diversity in children's books was not the norm. Publishers are getting better at it, and progress is being made, but there is still a long way to go, particularly with bringing more ethnically diverse writers into the UK industry. **[Last year I interviewed Children's Laureate, Malorie Blackman](#)**, (who has done much to address this situation during her Laureateship) and I will never forget her telling me how she was never able to find any kids like her in the books she read as a child, and how it never even occurred to her that a person of colour could be published until she read Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple*.



So you can imagine that I thought about it very hard before I accepted the job of retelling the wonderful story from Taghreed Najjar and Hassan Manasrah's picture book *Why Not?* for the UK market. Originally published by Al Salwa in Jordan but bought by Orion Children's books for the UK, it tells the story of Samia, who has a very special job to do just before Ramadan starts. This was not my culture, nor my religion. Shouldn't someone from that ethnicity retell the story for a British audience, I asked myself? But Taghreed was positive about me doing it, and so I accepted, determined to get the spirit of the original across for a slightly older-than-picture-book audience, as Orion had decided to publish the book in their Early Reader series. Above all I wanted to be respectful in my treatment of Taghreed's story and her culture, and to work with her and our editor closely on what was now called *The Little Green Drum* to make sure both she and my publisher were happy with the end result.



Once I'd written the first draft, I met with Taghreed at Bologna Book Fair to talk it over. I'd got a few things wrong, and she gently corrected me, and pointed me in the right direction (I'd used Abu for 'Father' and the correct term would be 'Yaba', for instance). There was also the matter of Lifta, the original setting for Samia's story. Lifta, now long deserted, is in what was Palestine, and it was where Taghreed's family had originally come from. She wrote the story as a memorial to happier times there, and it was important to her that some mention and acknowledgement was made of the Israeli conflict with the Palestinians which had made her family homeless. We agreed that there would be a part in the back of the book explaining that, and also explaining what Ramadan was, for those who might not know.



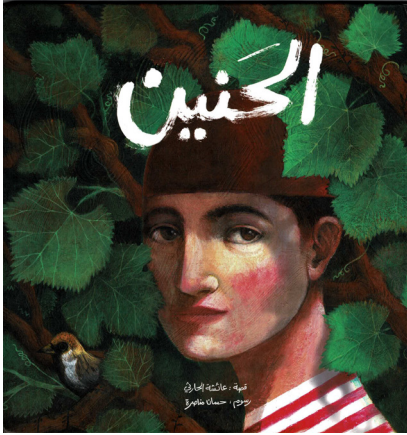
This year, I was delighted to find out that Taghreed and Hassan's story had been chosen from children's books published all over the world for the **prestigious White Ravens 2014 list, run by the Internationale Jugendbibliothek** – a huge honour. And I should say here that Hassan's joyously wonderful pictures are a very important part of making the book what it is – never forget the illustrator! I saw the full list at Bologna Book Fair this year – and it's pretty impressive!

I'm very proud to be associated with this book. It's a story about a girl doing a job traditionally associated with a man, it shines a positive light onto a culture that is all too often in the news for all the wrong reasons, and I hope it's a small but important step on the road to diversity in children's books here in the UK. Maybe it will encourage a child reader from our Muslim community to take up her pen and write a story, and then another, and another, because she sees herself in brave Samia. That would make my heart shout out a loud and joyful song, just like Samia, Ahmad, Ada, Arya, Omar, Fatima, Adnan, Bahira and Samira do in the book.

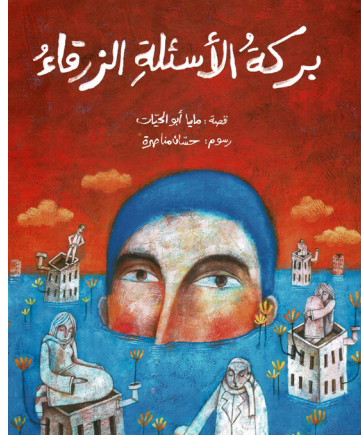
## Hassan Manasrah Bibliography

<b>Publishing House</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Al Salwa Publishers</b>	Karma's Rabbit
<b>Al Salwa Publishers</b>	Who Hid the Eid Lamb?
<b>Al Salwa Publishers</b>	The Ghoul
<b>Al Salwa Publishers</b>	Why Not?
<b>Al-Hadaek Group</b>	Where are the two Girls?
<b>Al-Hadaek Group</b>	The Pharoah and The King of the Jungle
<b>Al-Hadaek Group</b>	Saed and the Milk
<b>Al-Hadaek Group</b>	A Slice of Cheese
<b>Al-Hadaek Group</b>	The Fox and the Fear
<b>Al-Hadaek Group</b>	The Bag of Salt
<b>Kalimat</b>	Will the Garden Gates be Closed?
<b>Kalimat</b>	My Big Family
<b>Kalimat</b>	My City
<b>Kalimat</b>	The Flight
<b>Kalimat</b>	Noura
<b>Kalimat</b>	The Secret
<b>Kalimat</b>	A series of four books that raise awareness about the environment and were translated into English
<b>Noun</b>	Arabic Dreams
<b>Palestine Writing Workshop</b>	The Blue Pool of Questions
<b>Palestine Writing Workshop</b>	The Cup
<b>Al- Alam al-Arabi</b>	Nostalgia
<b>A trip to the beach for the children show</b>	Driver Dan's Story Train - A Trip to the Beach
<b>Jabal Amman-Publishers</b>	"I am Human" which raised children's awareness about children's rights.
<b>Mercy Corps program</b>	The Garbage Monster
<b>local magazines and oraganizations</b>	illustrations and design

# Hassan Manasrah Book Covers



Nostalgia



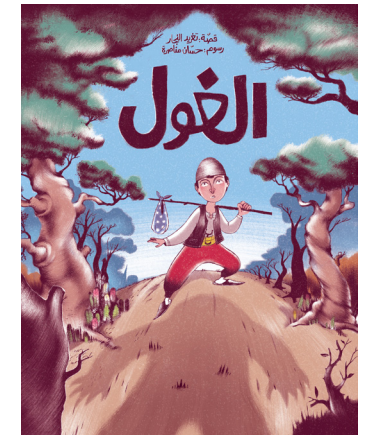
The Blue Pool of Questions



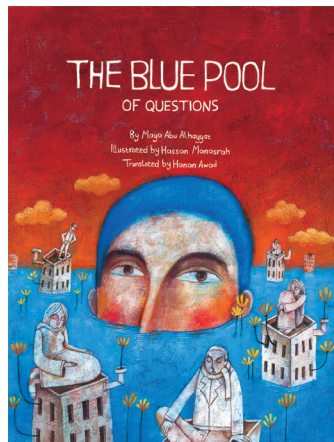
The Cup



Why Not ?



The Ghoul



The Blue Pool of Questions -  
Translated to: English



The Little Green Drum -  
Translated to: English

**Ten of the most important titles by the candidate (even if out of print) and the name of the publishers of all editions:**

- Al-Alam al-Arabi: *The Superhero/Nostalgia*
- The Palestine Writing Workshop: *The Blue Pool of Questions*
- The Palestine Writing Workshop: *The Cup*
- Al-Salwa: *Why Not?*
- Al-Salwa: *The Ghoul*
- Al- Hadaek Group: *Where are the two Girls?*
- Al- Hadaek Group: *The Pharaoh and the King of the Jungle*
- Al- Hadaek Group: *Saeed and the Milk*
- Al- Hadaek Group: *A Piece of Cheese*
- Kalimat Publishers: *Will the Garden Gates be Closed?*

**List of translated editions, and their languages:**

-The Blue Pool of Questions: translated into English.

- Why Not? translated into English.

- A series of four books that raise awareness about the environment and were translated into English.

## List of nominated books

- Why Not?
- The Ghoul
- Nostalgia
- The Blue Pool of Questions
- The Cup

## List of awards and other distinctions:

- In 2014, *Why Not?* (published by al-Salwa) was submitted for the shortlist of the prestigious Etisalat prize for Best Illustrations.
- *Why Not?* made it on to the White Raven list of the world's best children's books in 2014 and was translated into English.
- In 2016, Hassan won the Etisalat prize for Best Illustrations for the *The Blue Pool of Questions* (published by Palestine Writing Workshop) and the book made the shortlist of the Muhammad Kahil prize in 2018 and it was translated into English.
- In 2018, Hassan's book *Nostalgia* (published by al-Alam al-Arabi) won the Etisalat prize for the Book of the Year.