

Gundega Muzikante

1. Biographical information on the candidate

GUNDEGA MUZIKANTE

Born in Riga, on 15 November 1964.

Address: Stūrīšu iela 27 – 7, Riga, LV 1006,

Phone: +371 29150171

E-mail: gundegamuzikante@gmail.com

Education:

2009 Master's Degree in Art

1984–1990 Latvian Academy of Art, Department of Graphic Art

1979–1983 Riga School of Applied Arts, Department of Ceramics

1971–1979 Riga Secondary School No. 50

Work Experience:

2010 – to date Botanical garden of the University of Latvia, artist

2000–2006 The Dārza Pasaule Magazine, art editor

1994–2005 The Riga Latvian Society Playschool, art teacher

1996–2000 Baldone School of Art, teacher

1994–1995 ELFS Publishing House, art director

1983–1984 Latvian Daile Theatre, decorator

Works in book art and graphic art since 1990. Has created illustrations and graphic design for approximately 30 children's books, several school textbooks, brochures, posters, calendars, company logos, etc.

Has worked as an illustrator for Zīlīte, Ezis, Dārza Pasaule, Mūsmājas and other magazines.

Author of the silver collector coin 'Fairy Tale Coin. Hedgehog's Coat' issued by Latvijas Banka (2016)

Art director of the 'Cuckoo and Her 12 Husbands' animation (Dauka Studio, 2009)

An exhibiting artist since 1987

Solo Exhibitions:

2015 Valmiera City Museum

2014 Centre for Children's Literature, Tallinn

2012 Alūksne City Museum

2011 Riga, the Sunny Days Library

2010 Madona Museum of Local History and Art

2010 Bauska Museum of Local History and Art

2008 Rēzekne City Museum

Group Exhibitions:

2015 It's Always Tea-Time, international exhibition of book illustrations

2015, 2013, 2005, 1997 Bratislava Biennial of Illustration

2011 Sea Fairy Tales, travelling Baltic Sea Region illustration exhibition

2010 Exhibition by Latvian book illustrators in Tallinn

2003 Tallinn Illustrations Triennial

2001 Golden Pen of Belgrade

2001 Biennale of European illustrations in Japan

1997 6th Triennial of Book Illustrations in Vilnius

Has shown her works at group exhibitions in Latvia, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Poland, etc.

2. A high-resolution portrait photograph of the candidate



3. A statement on the candidate's contribution to literature for children and young people

GUNDEGA MUZIKANTE

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

We have grown accustomed to live according to the biblical postulate that 'in the beginning there was Word - but perhaps in the beginning there was music or pictures, or smell?' (Gundega Muzikante)

Gundega Muzikante (1964) is a Latvian artist, a much-loved book illustrator and an active member of IBBY Latvia. She has been contributing to graphic art exhibitions and illustrating children's books for 30 years. Muzikante graduated from the Department of Ceramics of the Riga School of Applied Arts and the Department of Graphic Art of the Latvian Academy of Art, obtaining her Master's Degree in 2009. She made her debut as an exhibiting artist while still a student at the Latvian Academy of Art, showing at group exhibitions in Latvia, Germany, Finland and Sweden; it was in 1990 that she won her first award – the Indriķis Zeberīņš Prize – as a children's book illustrator. Since then, Muzikante has been illustrating or designing at least one unique book every year; she has worked for the Zīlīte and Ezis children's periodicals, created the design of school textbooks and made a successful debut in animation ('Cuckoo and Her 12 Husbands'). Gundega Muzikante has participated in a number of editions of the Bratislava Biennial of Illustration and Tallinn Illustrations Triennial, in the Golden Pen illustration contest in Belgrade (2001) and the Biennial of European Illustration in Japan (2001).

Diversity of intentions and expression styles has created a special atmosphere of freedom in the world of characters born from and visually materialized by the imagination of Gundega Muzikante. There is a strong trend in the Latvian children's publishing tradition where the illustrator serves almost as a second author of the storyline, guiding the reader's imagination with the help of a visual narrative, sometimes even surpassing the writer's text with their wealth of creative power. Gundega Muzikante has always emphasised that, while the text is an important conceptual impulse behind the visual narrative, nevertheless it is not interesting to depict things that have already been written. Muzikante has created illustrations to very diverse texts, from light and rhythmic poems to philosophical edification, to serious educating narratives. There are texts that give a lot of freedom and encourage the flight of imagination, and then there are some that restrict the illustrator, not allowing them to spread their wings. Muzikante tries to understand each of them, immersing herself in the literary narrative; nevertheless, she admits that sometimes it is easier if you do not know the author of the text personally and are not aware of their actual intentions. The artist says that it is easier to work if the author has not provided specific visual descriptions, focusing on the events and relationships instead. 'When dealing

with the opposite, you start to feel a somewhat spiteful inclination to create a parody of the description – to make it more intense, to show the character from a different angle. I am even slightly scared of the writers' reaction: after all, everybody takes their own work very seriously. And yet I do not feel inclined to follow the descriptions to the letter in my pictures; really, those times have passed – the image does not follow the text as closely as in a children's reading primer,' the artist admits. She feels a text as a personality, and her mission and task is understanding it. You have to delve deep into each of them, you have to make friends with each of them – and then carefully dress into the kind of clothes that will fit this 'being' best. Sometimes this dressing of a text develops into an exciting carnival where anything goes.

Each new text is like a challenge, and when the artist gets to know it, she is consumed by an almost uncontrollable desire to treat it creatively and very distinctively. Muzikante loves to play with scales, eras, styles, to intertwine the real and the unreal, the supernatural with the extremely mundane, to use collage, flowing brush-strokes or a very exact style of drawing. However, 'recreating' the text or changing its essence has never been her intention. In each of Gundega Muzikante's works there is this sense of deep respect for the being created by the author – for the personality that now lives a sort of parallel life in the visual image created by the artist. There is always a sense of respect and tolerance: both co-exist happily in one book, even on the same page. There is a sensitivity, depth of thought, simplicity, creative imagination and a witty sense of humour to Gundega's characters, and an ability to get along with the reader and the viewer alike. Even a dragon, no matter how angry traditionally, becomes quite endearing – a creature with almost human weaknesses. The artist is always consumed by passion and a sense of challenge when she has to work with a text dealing with things that are difficult to depict. For instance, portraying love, longing, nobility of character or an unreal being vanishing in the sky is a real challenge. Muzikante finds special joy in working with texts that pose difficult tasks, simultaneously giving complete freedom to use all the resources of imagination.

Gundega Muzikante has been regularly nominated and has frequently won awards at the national book art competitions (1995, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015). In 2014, the Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art went to her for illustrations to 'The Dragon's Journey' ('Pūķa ceļojums' by Inese Zandere), 'When Is a Kitten Called Mousy' ('Kad kaķēnu sauc par pelīti?' by Ieva Samauska) and 'The Little House' ('Mājiņa' by Aivars Neibarts). 'A Book for Gundega' by Pēters Brūveris, featuring her illustrations, was included in the IBBY Honour List 2016.

Austra Avotiņa, art historian

4. List of awards and other distinctions

2016 IBBY Honour List 2016

The nomination for Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art 2016

2015 The nomination for the Book Design Competition "The Golden Apple-Tree" for illustrations

2014 Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art 2014

The nomination for the Book Design Competition "The Golden Apple-Tree" for illustrations

2012 The jury recognition in Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art 2012

The nomination for the Book Design Competition "The Golden Apple-Tree" for illustrations

2011 Pastarins award for book illustrations

The nomination for Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art 2011

The nomination for the Book Design Competition "The Golden Apple-Tree" for illustrations

2010 The nomination for Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art 2010

The nomination for the Book Design Competition "The Golden Apple-Tree" for illustrations

2009 The nomination for the Book Design Competition "The Golden Apple-Tree" for illustrations

2002 The Prize of the Year in Book Design Competition "The Best Illustrator"

2000 The prize in Book Design competition "The Most Beautiful Book" for illustrations

1998 The prize in Book Design competition "The Most Beautiful Book" for illustrations

1997 The prize in Book Design competition "The Most Beautiful Book" for illustrations

1995 The prize in Book Design competition "The Most Beautiful Book" for illustrations

1990 Indrikis Zeberins award

5. Complete bibliography of the books for children and young people by the candidate

Children's book illustrations

Andersens, Hanss Kristians, Princese uz zirņa : [pasaka ar uzdevumiem] (The Princess and the Pea : [a fairy tale with exercises]) / Hanss Kristians Andersens ; illustrations by ; exercises compiled by Gita Andersone. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2004]. [23] p. : ill.

Andersone, Gita, Ābece (Reading Primer) / Gita Andersone ; illustrations by Gundega Muzikante and Juta Tīrona. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2004]. 39 p. : ill.

Andersone, Gita, Gaiļa ābece (The Rooster's Reading Primer) / Gita Andersone ; illustrations by Gundega Muzikante and Juta Tīrona. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2007]. 39 p. : ill.

Andersone, Gita, Gaiļa ābece (The Rooster's Reading Primer) / Gita Andersone ; illustrations by Gundega Muzikante and Juta Tīrona; [editor Kristīne Skrīvele]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2013]. 39 p. : ill.

Bārenīte un mātesmeita : latviešu tautas pasaka (The Orphan Girl and the Rich Girl : a Latvian folk tale. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 1999. 16 p. : ill. A bed-time fairy tale.

Brūveris, Pēters, Grāmata Gundegai : dzejoļi ne tikai bērniem (A Book for Gundega : Poems Not just for Children) / Pēters Brūveris ; [editor Māra Rune]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2015. 79 p. : ill.

Cibuļs, Juris, Ābece 1. klasei : eksperimentāla mācību grāmata (A Reading Primer for Grade 1 : An experimental textbook / Juris Cibuļs. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [1996]. 95 p. : ill.

Cielēna, Māra, Lidojums (Flying Adventure) / Māra Cielēna [text]. Rīga : Lietusdārzs, 2011. 23, [1] p. : ill.

Eža kažociņš : latviešu tautas pasaka (Hedgehog's Coat : A Latvian folk tale) . Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 1997. [16] p. : ill. A bed-time fairy tale.

Grāvīte, Lolīta, Matīss iepazīst teātri : ceļojums teātra aizkulisēs (Matīss Gets to Know the Theatre : Behind the Scenes at the Theatre) / Lolīta Grāvīte, Linda Ģībiete. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2010]. 39 p. : ill.

Kaziņa par līgavu : latviešu tautas pasaka (A She-Goat for a Bride : A Latvian folk tale). Rīga : Aka Print Poligrāfija, 2000. 16 p. : ill.

Klišāns, Valdis, Matīss meklē Latviju : aizraujošs zēna ceļojums Latvijas vēsturē (Matīss Is Looking for Latvia : A Boy's Exciting Trip through the Latvian History) / Valdis Klišāns. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2010]. 38, [1] p. : ill., maps.

Latviešu tautas joku pasakas : mācību līdzeklis (Latvian Humorous Folk Tales : A Teaching Aid / compiled by Gunta Lejniece. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 1997. 62, [2] p. : ill. School Library. Step by Step.

Lieldienas : tautasdziesmas, ticējumi, rotaļas, mīklas, receptes un vēl... (Easter : Folk Songs, Beliefs, Games, Riddles, Recipes and More...)/ compiled by Daina Randare. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 1998. 23, [1] p. : ill.

Mana Rīga : dibināšana, pils un baznīcas, ģerbonis, priekšpilsētas un vēl... (My Riga : The Founding, the Castle and the Churches, the Coat of Arms, the Suburbs and More... / [editor Kristīne Skrīvele ; compiled by Gundega Sēja]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2001]. 47, [1] p. : ill.

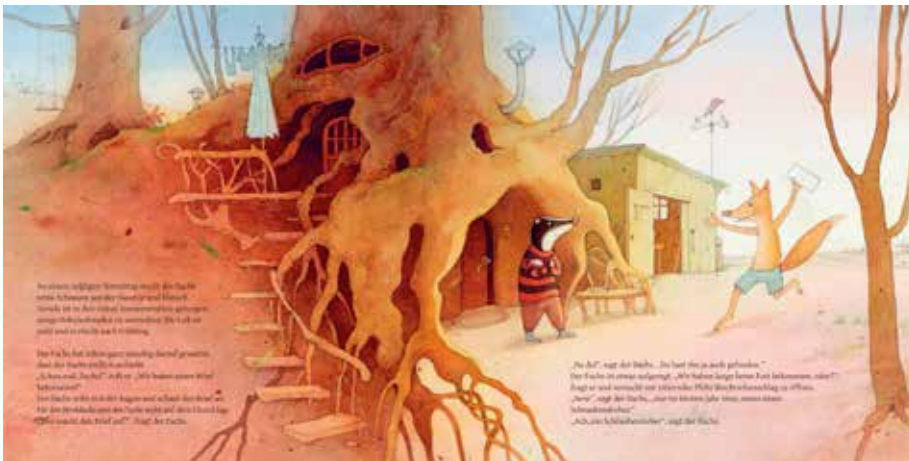
- Māja : Izkrāsojamā grāmata (Home: A Colouring Book. Rīga : Preses nams, [1994]. [16] p. ill.
- Mārtiņi : tautasdziesmas, ticējumi, rotaļas, maskas un vēl... (Martinmas : Folk Songs, Beliefs, Games, Masks and More...) / compiled by Baiba Dzedule. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [1998]. [24] p. : ill.
- Mencis, Jānis, Matemātika 1. klasei : mācību grāmata (Mathematics Textbook for First Grade) / Jānis Mencis, Valentīna Sūniņa. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2007. 119, [1] p. : ill.
- Neibarts, Aivars, Mājiņa (The Little House) / Aivars Neibarts. Rīga : Liels un mazs, 2013. [23] p. : ill. ; Bicki-Buck Books : a series of selected 100 poems for children since 1990 ; 017.
- Ozoliņa, Daina, Ziemā vajag sniegu! (We Need Snow in the Winter!) / Daina Ozoliņa. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2007]. [45] p. : ill.
- Pasts : meistarojamā grāmata (Post : The Skills Book). [B.v.] (Latvija) : [b.i.], [1998]. [12] p. : ill. + 1 ats. lp.
- Pie ziemassvētku eglītes : dzejoļi (In Front of the Christmas Tree : Poems) / compiled by Kristīne Skrīvele ; illustrations by Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 1996. 79 lpp. il.
- Rainis, Jānis, Satikšanās sabiedrībā (A Social Encounter) / Jānis Rainis ; [cover by Tīna Meļņika]. [Latvija] : biedrība «Sēļu pūrs», [2014]. 71 p. : ill.
- Rinkule-Zemzare, Dzidra, Kā Ruksītis ciemos gāja (How Piggy Went Visiting) / Dzidra Rinkule-Zemzare. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2007]. 23, [1] p. : ill. A poem and play for children.
- Rinkule-Zemzare, Dzidra, Kā Ruksītis ciemos gāja (How Piggy Went Visiting) / Dzidra Rinkule-Zemzare. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2004]. 23, [1] p. : ill.
- Rinkule-Zemzare, Dzidra, Kā Ruksītis ciemos gāja : [pirmsskolas vecuma bērniem] (How Piggy Went Visiting : [for preschoolers]) / Dzidra Rinkule-Zemzare. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [1995]. 23, [1] p. : ill. A poem and play for children.
- Rūķis šķiro : izglītojoša grāmata bērniem par atkritumu šķirošanu un pārstrādi (The Gnome Sorts : an informative book for children about waste sorting and recycling / Latvijas Zaļais punkts . Rīga : Jumava, 2007. [24] p. : ill.
- Rūmnieks, Valdis, Kā raķete kaklu izārstēja (How the Rocket Cured its Sore Throat) / Valdis Rūmnieks. Rīga : Garā pupa, 2002. [13] p. : ill.
- Rūmnieks, Valdis, Murjāņu kurmītis un viņa draugi (The Mole from Murjāņi and his Friends) / Valdis Rūmnieks. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2011]. 94, [1] p. : ill.
- Rūmnieks, Valdis, Murjāņu pasakas (The Murjāņi Fairy Tales) / Valdis Rūmnieks. Rīga : Garā Pupa, 2007. 45, [2] p. : ill.
- Samauska, Ieva, Kad kaķēnu sauc par pelīti? (When Is a Kitten Called Mousy?) / Ieva Samauska ; , [illustrations]. Rīga : Lietusdārzs, [2014]. 20 p. : ill.
- Samauska, Ieva, Pilsēta no A līdz Z : dzejoļi bērniem (The City from A to Z : Poems for Children) / Ieva Samauska ; [illustrations by] . Rīga : Annele, [2009]. 114, [5] p. : ill.
- Skujiņa, Rūta, Mārīte : [Dzejoļi pirmssk. un jaun. sk. vecumam] (Mārīte : [Poems for preschoolers and the youngest school age]) / Rūta Skujiņa. Rīga : Preses nams, 1994. 46, [1] lpp. krās. il.
- Skujiņa, Rūta, Strupastīša talcinieki : [dzejoļi pirmsskolas vecuma bērniem] (Scut-Tail's Helpers : [poems for preschoolers]) / Rūta Skujiņa. Rīga : Artava, 1990. 28, [2] p. : ill.
- Snīpis : rotaļu grāmata bērniem (Snout : A Play Book for Children) / editor-in-chief Regīna Olševska. Rīga : Elfs : Rīgas Balss Newspaper, 1996. [12] lpp. il. + Piel. ([12] lpp.)
- Svētku enciklopēdija bērniem (Children's Encyclopaedia of Festivals) / illustrations by Gundega Muzikante etc. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2004]. 1 volume : illustrated.

- Šmite, Linda, Aušas un Tiepšas (Sillies and Stubborns) / Linda Šmite. Rīga : Annele, 2014. 141, [2] p. : ill.
- Timrots, Pauls, Dzelzceļš un vilciens (Railway and Trains) / Pauls Timrots. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2016. 39 p.
- Uz skolu! : dzejoļi (To School! : Poems) / compiled by Anna Ļisicina, Laura Grīnvalde ; illustrations by Gundega Muzikante and Juta Tirona. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2009]. 24 p.
- Uz skolu! : dzejoļi (To School! : Poems) / compiled by Anna Ļisicina ; illustrations by Gundega Muzikante and Juta Tirona. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2000]. 24 p. : ill.
- Vailds, Oskars, Laimīgais princis ; Zvaigznes bērns : pasakas (Oscar Wilde, The Happy Prince. The Star-Child) / Oskars Vailds ; [Latvian translation by Anna Bauga]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2000]. 55, [1] p. : ill. ; School Library. Step by Step.
- Virza, Edvarts, Karalis Nameitis : poēma (King Nameisis : A Poem) / Edvarts Virza. Rīga : Artava, 1998. 117 p. : ill.
- Virza, Edvarts, Karalis Nameitis : poēma (King Nameisis : A Poem) / Edvarts Virza. Rīga : Artava, 1995. 117 p. : ill.
- Zandere, Inese, Pūķa ceļojums (The Dragon's Journey) / Inese Zandere. Rīga : Rīgas Doma pārvalde, 2013. 44, [3] p. : ill.
- Ziemassvētku brīnumi : stāsti un dzejoļi ģimenei (Christmas Miracles: Stories and Poems for the Whole Family) / [illustrations by Zane Raičenoka-Raišonoka, Agija Staka; compiled by Inese Auziņa ; designed by Inguna Kļava Švanka; cover by Ilze Isaka]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2016. 67 lpp. : illustrated.
- Zvirgzdiņš, Juris, Eņģeļa ceļojums (Angel's Journey) / Juris Zvirgzdiņš. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2015. 28, [3] p. : ill.
- Zvirgzdiņš, Juris, Ko nolaupīja gaisa balons jeb Tobiass, Paulīne un kaķis ceļo uz Spāniju (What Did the Air Balloon Kidnap or Tobias, Pauline and the Cat Travel to Spain) / Juris Zvirgzdiņš [design by Rūta Briede, Artis Briedis]. Rīga : Liels un mazs, 2016. 86, [1] lpp. : illustrated.
- Cielēna, Māra, Flying Adventure / Māra Cielēna [text] ; translated from Latvian by Edmunds V. Bunkše. Rīga : Lietusdārzs, 2011. 23, [1] p.
- Matisāne, Velta, Start the Challenge : Form 4 : student's book : Second Year of English : mācību grāmata (a textbook) / Velta Matisāne ; [illustrations by Gundega Muzikante etc.]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2006. 99, [1] p. : ill., tab.
- Matisāne, Velta, Start the Challenge : Form 4 : Student's Book : Second Year of English : eksperimentāla mācību grāmata (an experimental textbook) / Velta Matisāne ; [illustrations by Gundega Muzikante etc.]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2002. 99, [1] p.
- Matisāne, Velta, Start the Challenge : Form 3 : Student's Book : First year of English : eksper. māc. grām. (an experimental textbook) / Velta Matisāne ; [illustrations by Gundega Muzikante etc.]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2001. 103, [1] p. : ill.
- Andersons, Gita, Азбука (Reading Primer) / Г. Андерсоне, О. Буркевица, В. Пужуле ; художники: Юта Тирона, Гундега Музиканте ; [editor Margita Krasnā]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2015. 43 p. : ill.



In German

Pelle Krautwald, Ulja Krautwald "Der Werkdachs und seine Freunde" ("The Working Badger and His Friends"), Hamburg : Krautwaldverlag, 2015.

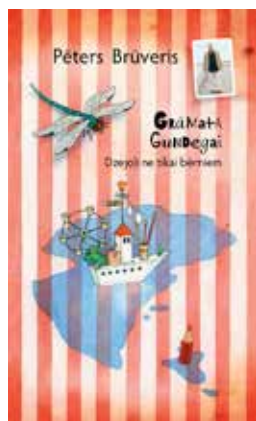


7. Five of the most important titles by the candidate



Ko nolaupīja gaisa balons, jeb Tobiass, Paulīne un Kaķis ceļo uz Spāniju. 2016.

Author – Juris Zvirgzdiņš. Rīga: Liels un mazs. (What did the air balloon kidnap or Tobiass, Paulīne and the Cat travel to Spain)



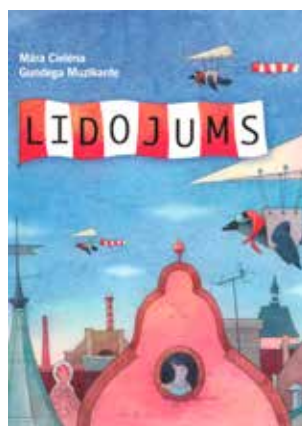
Grāmata Gundegai. 2015.

Author – Pēters Brūveris. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC. (A book for Gundega. Poems not just for children)



Kad kaķēnu sauc par pelīti?

2014. Author – Ieva Samauska. Rīga: Lietusdārzs. (When kitten is called mousy?)



Lidojums. 2011.

Author – Māra Cielēna. Rīga: Lietusdārzs. (Flying adventure)



Pilsēta no A līdz Z. Dzejoļi bērniem.

2009. Author – Ieva Samauska. Rīga: Annele. (The city from A to Z. Poems for children)

8. List of the books sent to the jurors



Zvirgzdiņš, Juris, Ko nolauņāja gaisa balons jeb Tobias, Pauline un kaķis ceļo uz Spāniju / Juris Zvirgzdiņš ; ilustrator **Gundega Muzikante** ; [design: Rūta Briede, Artis Briedis]. Rīga : Liels un mazs, 2016. 86, [1] p.



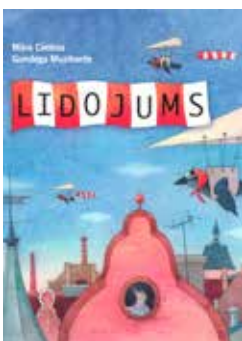
Brūveris, Pēters, Grāmata Gundegai : dzejoļi ne tikai bērniem / Pēters Brūveris ; ilustrator **Gundega Muzikante**. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2015. 79 p.



Zvirgzdiņš, Juris, Eņģeļiša ceļojums / Juris Zvirgzdiņš ; ilustrator **Gundega Muzikante**. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, 2015. 28, [3] p.



Samauska, Ieva, Kad kaķēnu sauc par pelīti? / Ieva Samauska ; ilustrator **Gundega Muzikante**. Rīga : Lietusdārzs, [2014]. 20 lpp. : il.



Cielēna, Māra, Flying adventure ; ilustrator **Gundega Muzikante** ; translated from Latvian by Edmunds V. Bunkše. Rīga : Lietusdārzs, 2011. 23, [1] p.



Two conversations with artist and children's book illustrator Gundega Muzikante took place during the conference , at Spīķeri Concert Hall on 10 May 2013.

Gundega Muzikante: A Child is a Human Being [1]

Austra Avotiņa, art historian, Dr. paed.: How does an artist read the text she is about to illustrate, and what is the first thing to attract an artist's attention?

Gundega Muzikante, artist: I read the text very carefully, that's the first thing I do. And I try to delve deeper into it, to understand its essence, its message. Be it about a dragon, or a family of seagulls, of course it will essentially be a story about ourselves, not an ornithological field manual or treatise on mythological creatures. What does the writer wish to convey through the story – that is what is most important to me.

Avotiņa: Here, in Inese Zandere's fairy tale [Pūķa ceļojums (The Dragon's Journey)] which you've illustrated, it says: 'He coughed angrily, spat some fire, cleaned his teeth and took a look at himself in the bathroom mirror. The dragon rolled his angry eyes, as big as two footballs, pulled his sharp-toothed mouth into a nasty snarl, inspected himself from the front, the sides and the back, and concluded: "Yes, an Angry Dragon indeed!"' How does one arrive at the image of an Angry Dragon, where did you find him – perhaps somewhere in everyday life?

Muzikante: For a character to be born, and in order to understand its personality, I have to become like that character in a way. I guess that is how an actor would read a role and learn to embody it. I, too, must develop a feel for the situation, I have to become angry – but I am not at all an angry person by nature... I really did stand in front of a mirror and pull angry faces to understand what an angry person looks like. I experimented on myself to find a source of inspiration, I tried to achieve these emotional changes.

Avotiņa: They say Rembrandt also used to pull faces in front of a mirror to draw self-portraits, but also maybe to look for characters.

Muzikante: Speaking of gnomes, dragons and other beasties that don't have any true counterparts among biological species, the creation of the character

is largely influenced by stereotypes, preconceptions that are attached to them. Historically, there are several different categories of dragons – Oriental, medieval etc. All of them have a body, paws, wings, neck, a tiny head, that kind of thing – but the rest has to come from the artist, and will be characteristic of that one dragon in particular. Body shape, posture, movement, facial expressions, everything that makes it an individual. There are no ‘general’ characters. Each of us has some vague idea of what a dragon looks like, but a drawing demands precision, and each of us would end up with a different version.

Avotiņa: In my own imagined ‘Feeling Awards’ you received the main prize for Ieva Samauska’s ‘The City from A to Z’ in 2011, and again for Māra Cielēna’s ‘Flying Adventure’ in 2012. In ‘Flying Adventure’ you depicted the ‘ordinary family of seagulls’ so beautifully one would think you’d managed to find their family photo somewhere.

Avotiņa: The Internet, which is our ‘Great Sustainer and Nurturer’, is home to many different seagull pictures. I put together an entire folder of gull photos showing various characteristic poses, gulls in flight, gulls soaring, settling, before and after take-off. Whenever I have to draw a character that is somehow rooted in the animal world, as in the case of the gulls, I meticulously look for what is typical and characteristic. To this I can then add the individual traits. I tried to merge the seagull poses with those of people, I dressed the birds and humanized them. The wings and bills are a deference to gulls, but any fairy tale character embodies an array of human emotions. As I said, in effect all of these stories are about us. Therefore the species I must study the most diligently is the human.

Avotiņa: So, it is the artist who, by visualizing it, turns a literary character into a person, a unique being?

Muzikante: Writers differ greatly in the manner of visual descriptions they provide in the text. There might be some details in the story – in this case I read that the dragon is red and has golden scales. But that alone is not enough to draw the dragon as befits the situation and the meaning of the text; that would take much more detail. A literary character’s personality is mostly revealed through what he or she does, says, thinks; yet an artist composes its image from visual details. Bigger or smaller head, shorter or longer legs, droopy or alert wings – none of this might be mentioned in the text, the artist must seek this combination of details for themselves. As you immerse yourself in the story you decide what a character who does all these things could look like. As for ‘Flying Adventure’, I loved inventing the flying machines – loved to imagine not only what the character looks like but also what he or she has achieved, and to bend the technical solutions of the aeroplanes to suit materials that might be available to seagulls...

Gundega Muzikante: A Child is a Human Being [2]

Inese Zandere, poet and editor: The time restraints of the conference were so tight that you and [art critic] Austra [Avotiņa] could only just start your conversation – and listening to it suggested many questions I would like to discuss with you. Even, for instance, regarding our very own dragon: ‘The Dragon’s Journey’ is based in the tradition of Christian allegory with its entire spectrum of classic vices and equally classic liberation from their grip. What was it like to seek a way to translate this tradition into a picture book?

Muzikante: It is easy as long as there are vices to show. Anger, envy, pride, greed, fear – this array of negative emotions is full of character, inspiring and easy to draw. Things become more difficult when the hero loses these powerful negative traits. Virtues are not as easily depicted.

Zandere: That is where fairy tales always come to an end, as the dramatic impact is lost.

Muzikante: You have to arrive at some sort of essence, the core of ‘all that is pure and good’ – but this essence is so pure it has no image. Seeking the essential meaning, discarding all that is individual, characteristic, leads to a pictogram.

Zandere: And in this case, it would probably mean an approbated iconography that is capable of indicating, signalling the meaning of the story and its ending. From tradition you were taken, and to tradition you shall return...

Muzikante: It touches on that. Not with that sort of unequivocal didactics of how things were bad, and how they will now be so good...

Zandere: After all, nothing has really come to an end.

Muzikante: The dragon is no more. He has turned into a child, a pure, innocent being without vice.

Zandere: No, he has cast off the dragon, shed the skin that was alien to him, and arrived at what he truly is – a human being. A child is a human being. And a human is both good and evil, the manifestations depend on what situations he finds himself in, and what he does with himself.

Muzikante: And it is difficult to find a visual expression for this: yes, the child is human, but we don’t know what will happen to him in the future, we don’t know what to expect from him.

Zandere: So the main problem of the visualisation was grafting together all that has already manifested and possesses certain traits, with all that has the potential of becoming something.

Muzikante: Someone of whose particular expressions we know nothing yet. A human being, a person is such a broad notion. We know what he is not, what he has dealt with, from what he has broken free. But we have no idea of what forms his essence and what it looks like. There’s only a hint, a predicted direction; in fact, the fairy tale ends with the question: what *is* a human being?

Zandere: What do you think of children's books as something that influences, moulds children?

Muzikante: I wouldn't pontificate about the artist's responsibility, but of course we want the child to identify with what we consider to be worthy, with our moral values. What children's literature can and should fearlessly cultivate is good judgement and creativity. Let the book not provide readymade clichés, but instead leave room for creativity and the possibility of becoming interested in something. Let there be judgement, including moral judgement, the ability to tell right from wrong – but any blatant acclamations would be misplaced. Children have a certain tendency to identify with a character, and an illustration has to create a situation in which they are able to do so. If this point of contact is not provided, the book will leave the child indifferent. There's no need to sort black from white, but a developed judgement ability will help the child make sense of the scale and evaluate the boundaries of what is acceptable.

Zandere: I would say children's literature has less of a problem with books that err by aestheticizing evil, making it attractive – maybe this is more the case in commercial literature intended for teenagers; rather, there are too many books, especially those meant for the very littlest, that trivialize good.

Muzikante: Indeed. Such vapidly 'nice', in effect vacant books, bring nothing creative. But this 'dragon issue', the idea of depicting 'good', is truly complicated. It demands vivid, full-blooded expression. An individualized character lives within the wide boundaries between 'distilled essence' – a symbol, sign, pictogram – and caricature, which results from grotesquely heightening traits.

Zandere: Have your illustrations ever reached this caricature boundary? You do seem to have a certain tendency towards grotesque.

Muzikante: I do. But I have to know the moment when a trait is being overexaggerated to the point of caricature. It still has to remain within those brackets of the impersonal and the caricatured.

Zandere: 'The Dragon's Journey' is not out yet, the illustrations were on show for Children's Day at the Riga Dome last year. But you have completed another work that is yet to be published, even though the illustrations were already exhibited for Poetry Days at the Rainis Museum in Tadenava. It is a tome of Pēters Brūveris' poetry, the last one compiled during his lifetime – 'A Book for Gundega'. Is that a personal dedication to you?

Muzikante: I met Pēters Brūveris in person maybe five times in my life... we first met while working on the animation film 'The Cuckoo and Her 12 Husbands'. He had just recuperated from illness, and was in such a mood... he was still deciding whether to write at all. He found it difficult to gather his thoughts, difficult to do anything. He sent me a few poems and I egged him on to keep writing and writing, he sent me some more, and the pile of poems kept growing until there were enough for an entire tome. Initially he had no concept for the compilation, it took shape gradually. He also sent me excerpts from the libretto for 'The Little Devils' – everything he was working on at the time. We exchanged correspondence.

Zandere: Like an imprint of a part of his life – the poet lives on, and the poems follow one another. Did you ever react to what he sent you, did you offer any comments?

Muzikante: Yes. I also sent a few little pictures, photos with my comments. I think we were joking around a little.

Zandere: Did you save this exchange?

Muzikante: The entire exchange has been deleted. Or... we assume it has. But this exchange was not an intimate one, and if someone maybe thinks the title of the book indicates some sort of romantic affair, they will be disappointed, because that is not the case. In all honesty, I don't even know Brūveris, I am free from any human impressions beyond his poems and these letters. But this meeting appeals to me.

Zandere: Brūveris' poems are at once very tender, at times even borderline sentimental, and full of mischief. But he is no longer able to defend himself against rigid, misconceived interpretations. Maybe this public berating – for the hacker poem, and the child that is left home alone – is the reason why the Gundega poems have for so long remained in the publisher's briefcase.

Muzikante: Mischief, yes, they possess a playfulness that I love. But poets live forever – their work is published again and again, and children often do not know if the poet is living or not. The poem itself will show no sign of its author's demise...

Zandere: Speaking of creative legacy – how many children's books have you illustrated? The Baltvilks Award artist nominee lists have so far featured [Ieva] Samauska's 'The City from A to Z', the cultural history reference books about Matīss, and [Valdis] Rūmnieks' 'The Murjāņi Mole and His Friends', and your and Māra Cielēna's 'Flying Adventure' received a special commendation from the jury last year – for the outstanding harmony of language and visual expression, as the verdict put it.

Muzikante: I'm up to thirty books now. But I don't feel I am particularly good at drawing... When I thumb through my past work, I see so many things... Although – if I can see those mistakes now, perhaps it means there has been some sort of progress.

Zandere: We're talking of the meeting of two imaginations, of harmony, but maybe the writer and the artist can have a clash of two imaginations?

Muzikante: Most often the writer has a mental image, but the artist will see the picture completely differently. I am always slightly worried about this: is this what the poet meant?

Zandere: And how do you deal with your doubts?

Muzikante: Well, if the poet is dead, no worries! [Laughs] If he or she is alive, it is possible to gauge the reaction, to see if my vision is accepted. I guess I've been lucky to work with very polite authors.

Zandere: Do you think the quality of the book depends on whether, for instance, you and I get along well? Is it only then that we can produce a good book? Or maybe, like they sometimes say of theatre, you can take the text of a telephone directory and turn it into a good picture book?

Muzikante: Yes, I think that is not the most important criterion. You can get on like a house on fire, but you can also argue. The main thing is not to be on one another's leash. Both the text and the picture must be self-contained.

Zandere: Unfortunately, writers and other critics can often be petty and become upset if a cat has a white tip to its tail in the text, but not in the illustration. Oh boy, what can you say about stage shows then; just go see an opera, where the soloist can gaze at, say, a brunette in a red swimsuit and sing: 'Oh how I adore your blue eyes and golden hair!'

Muzikante: I remember something akin to that from my childhood. I'd sometimes be perplexed by discrepancies between text and picture – why it's one thing here and another there.

Zandere: Would you want a child to keep this attitude? And for the grown-up to be like this, too? I think we as writers and artists are trying to liberate ourselves and the children from this kind of thinking. To allow kids to understand that both the text and the illustrations of the book are a world that is open to fantasy and play. A child who is playing can dream up a fifth or even seventh leg for that cat; they can create new combinations in their imagination and imbue them with new motivation that builds new stories. This very freedom of interpretation is one of the things a children's book could try to surreptitiously whisper into the child's ear.

Muzikante: Of course, this is exactly the kind of creativity of perception that a book should provide, instead of ready-made concepts or a to-the-letter match between word and image. That's what it said, so that's what I drew... No, I would like the child to understand what is text and what is picture, and how together they create something else again.

Zandere: And that there is also a fourth element.

Muzikante: The person who is reading, looking, observing, can go further – they can see what has not been drawn, what has been left out of the picture; and they can dive into this to the extent where nothing will hold them back – neither what is written nor what is drawn.

Zandere: I think a children's book is like a battlefield of imaginations in which the artist has something of the upper hand – or the final say, to be more precise. The artist can influence the way the text is perceived. And artists often – too often, I would say! – mask weaker texts by conjuring up a world that covers up the poor quality of the text. Although there are, of course, also texts that are left all on their lonesome because the illustrations that have been pinned to them are so feeble that it is better to pretend not to see them...

Muzikante: Yes, if we presume that visual perception is primary – that a picture comes first and is followed by the text; that the images, the book's entire visual aspect is prevalent. This is a hidden yet always present contradiction between two different languages. Where poor texts are concerned, this is definitely not a

clash, because a clash can only take place between equal opponents, in which case this can become a most engaging battle, because immediate agreement certainly isn't prerequisite for creating something new and interesting.

Zandere: What do you do if you're asked to illustrate a text that is not particularly good?

Muzikante: If there is such a commission, such a project... I do want to draw. So, I try to pick my own narrative out of the text – something that I would want to draw, something that is worth drawing. You can't exactly draw four giraffes if the story calls for five cats, but you can find your own path, look for the story within the story.

Zandere: And no-one can really forbid those four giraffes from also making an appearance. This is what we hoped for as we launched our 'BICKI-BUCK' series – that artists would create parallel stories for the poems. And that is how Reinis Pētersons started us off when he illustrated Baltvilks' counting rhyme, 'Bicki-buck'. Even though overall this task turned out not to be so easy, we still strive towards this goal. For your own 'bicki-buck' you chose Aivars Neibarts' poem 'Little House'. And then?

Muzikante: I think it must be any artist's dream to be able to choose for themselves. To select a poem that is exactly right and gives you a feeling that you could do so much. That you could do all that is needed – because the poetry will not impose constraints, the boundaries of its imagination are vast and vague, it lets you expound the story in time, space, characters...

Zandere: And you, of course, chose to expound it through something you love – construction.

Muzikante: Yes, right now I am excited by inventing. Each book has its own leitmotif for me – an artistic task I feel compelled to master at that particular time. Sometimes I might feel a need to work with silhouettes – I feel so happy looking at the silhouettes of the Riga rooftops, or skyline panoramas as such. These patterns of the city also make an appearance in 'Little House'. The urban patterns that come about so serendipitously yet are so beautiful.

Zandere: Because the cityscape is a mirror image, the embodiment of the human society – as [architect] Pēteris Blūms once wrote, as in society, on the street you also find the big and the small, the tall and the short, the fat and the thin, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, all intermingled; relationships are formed, and there is a propensity for harmony. A row of similar, homogeneous things is unnatural, disharmonious.

Muzikante: Those who depict nature create compositions of forests, rocks, groups of shrubs. I do the same with roofscapes. And I am also truly enthusiastic about engineering inventions.

Zandere: One of the page spreads of 'Little House' made me think: 'The Latvian Shaun Tan!'

Muzikante: Quite correct, it is my tribute to Shaun Tan. I watched his 'Lost Thing' and other works very carefully, and what I love most about his wonderful 'picture storytelling' is his subtle, sensitive view of objects. The delicate way he

approaches the unusual, his ability to tell its story in such a realistic and lively manner. A lost thing – who, upon hearing the words, would imagine an enormous mechanical object, ten times larger than the person who finds it! When the thing is brought home, no-one pays it any attention, no-one is interested. The object is now among other things, in an object-filled little world.

Zandere: And that is its place. Because it is possible. Everything is possible – not just the things that already exist, but also those that could exist, even the seemingly impossible ones.

Muzikante: And should we suddenly observe from our window a strange object, equipped with a few little cans, walk teeteringly along the tram rails past the Opera House, the only thing we should think is – well yes, there it goes!

<http://www.satori.lv/raksts/izdruka/5712>

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Līga Ločmele. A Review of 'When Is a Kitten Called Mousey?'

When was the last time when you, grownups, were addressed by a pet name? One that is coming from lots of love and from the bottom of the heart, one that has been uttered almost unwittingly and has taken aback with its naivety? As you read the story in verse 'When Is a Kitten Called Mousey?' by Ieva Samauska, you get this warm feeling of someone addressing you in a gentle childhood voice, bringing back all the lovely pet names that you heard from your parents and grandparents. The atmosphere of the book, thanks to the wonderful illustrations by Gundega Muzikante, is very warm – and what else could it be if the story is about pet names?

The protagonist of the book is a kitten who eats with a spoon, does gymnastics at school, brushes his teeth at night and is very much like a human toddler in any other way as well. And the kitten has a mum who comments on his adventures, using countless pet names addressed to her little baby. The kitten's mum is not lacking in the imagination department; she does not limit herself to the usual boring diminutives, looking at different facets of her son's character and finding an apt description for each of them. We could all find inspiration in her vocabulary: aren't our little ones like sweetpeas or bunnykins from time to time? But sometimes they remind so much of crankypants. Yes, that is exactly how amusing and apt the names Ieva Samauska uses to describe the kitten are.



This book can be used like a little dictionary at times when you are left with your mouth open, not sure how to describe the thing that the tiny tot has come up with again. That is a very familiar feeling for me, because it is almost two years

since little Miss Feisty arrived in my life. It did not take full two days for me to realize that this young lady is never going to be a Little Princess or a Sweetiekins – and even less of a Twinkles or a Chickadee. She has no problem identifying with the kitten and finds certain similarities in their daily regime. What Miss Feisty finds most amusing is kitten's fear of the daily bath – although the young lady herself turns into a fusspot the minute she is told to go and brush her teeth – just like the protagonist of the book.



Miss Feisty is particularly fond of the book thanks to the wonderful illustrations. Gundega Muzikante has conjured up an incredibly aptly depicted and detailed world, and it reveals something new every time you read the book. The illustrations are so packed with detail that one could examine it for hours on end – if only the young reader had so much patience. The artist has given each of the town's residents with some individual features and a unique character, and it is very easy to find similarities everywhere you go. For instance, Miss Feisty finds that the two lady crows with their headscarves remind her very much of the next-door aunties, who never hold back with their expressions of admiration whenever they see her. She also thinks that the pigs sitting behind the wheel look like the daddies of her kindergarten mates, who pull up in front of the little building every morning and every evening to deliver or pick up their little darlings. The stag-beetle and the lizard who watch the kitten wake up every morning are, of course, mum and dad. The distribution of roles is not a given, however: sometimes the mum wears the antlers and the dad gets the tail – but everything can change the following night. Parents will also find the illustrations interesting: the artist has included quite a few witty details. I was particularly delighted by the commercial posters in the street, featuring the old early 20th-century print, as well as by the cat ABC which should be a must for every household pet.



Speaking as a mum, the book is ideally suited for the youngest of readers. First, because it describes the daily routine of the little kitten, starting with waking up, having breakfast, going to school and ending with bathing and going to sleep. For this reason, 'The Kitten' has become the official bed-time book in our household, because one of the elements of our nightly ritual is discussing the events of the day and all of the next day's jobs. And that is when Miss Feisty, amidst following the Kitten's adventure, has enough time to tell us about hers. At this time in her life when every day brings her new discoveries, it is important to discuss everything that bothers her little heart, so that she would find the world comprehensible and friendly. She is often excited by things that passing glance of a grownup may have deemed quite trivial, like eating this spring's first pretzel on a bench in the park, the passionate football game played by the boys in the yard or bringing treats for the dog in the country. The kitten's daily experiences are a good point of departure for a conversation that calms down and helps fall asleep.

Secondly, all parents must have noticed how important is repeating things for a child. They beg us to repeat the same nursery rhyme again and again; the same book is invariably chosen for the bed-time reading for the third week running. And the best sleepy-song is the one they listened to when they were still in their mummy's belly. The book is based on repetition, asking the question again and again: so when is the Kitten called Mousy? This way, a special narrative rhythm is created, allowing even the youngest of readers/listeners to control the flow of events and predict the developments. Although the story lacks an exciting storyline or unexpected turns of events, it nevertheless leads the reader to a happy ending which is an essential element of every good fairy tale – and we finally get to know when is it that a kitten is called a mousey.



The book 'When Is a Kitten Called a Mousey' invites us not to be scared of playing games with language, to react to situations and improvise by creating new words which may become part of the family everyday vocabulary and come to denote things that the children have achieved or done wrong. The book is also a testimony to the enormous love parents feel for their offspring: even at moments when their behaviour defies any description, the words that pass our lips are still loving pet names. And then we can take a leaf out of the kitten's mother's book and call our little rascals 'trickmeisters', 'bossypants' or perhaps 'cheeky little monkeys'? And it also reminds us to never be ashamed to sow our love. There is nothing more important for a child than feeling loved, and these special names help them realize how precious they are to us.

<http://www.satori.lv/raksts/izdruka/7027>

**Elīna Kokareviča. When There Is No End. Or Quite the reverse.
Pēters Brūveris, 'A Book for Gundega'**

As noted by Zvaigzne ABC publishing house, Pēters Brūveris' volume of poems for children, 'A Book for Gundega', is the last book compiled by the author himself. Now it has also been published: a visually attractive book with a mysterious title, an example of Brūveris' characteristic style that includes not just original poetry but also translated poems.

The first noteworthy aspect is the peculiarity of the title. On one hand, apart from the first poem, the name 'Gundega' is not mentioned in the book. Neither is there a lyrical first person narrator who could be thought to be Gundega. The first association is with Princess Gundega from Anna Brigadere's play ('Princess Gundega and King Ruggedbeard') – but the artist of the book is Gundega Muzikante, and the artist Gundega is the person to whom the author refers in the first poem. She is the one who imagines and creates different things which, for various reasons, do not make her happy in the bustle of everyday life. As the artist waits, the joy arrives. And so, with the very first poem Brūveris shows the kind of thoughtfulness and philosophical approach that is not a mainstay in children's poetry; it is no surprise then that the subtitle of the compilation is 'Poems Not Just For Children'. However, the characteristic profundity of the author's style is not always easily understood; at times the poems become tangled, their meaning is not immediately clear. Perhaps it is the author's artistic choice, one rarely observed in children's poems – announcing a subject without offering any kind of (re)solution, thus avoiding the imposition of didactics and any homogeneous opinion. Maybe the entire book functions this way – as a training field for thought. And 'A Book for Gundega' is also a book for artist Gundega Muzikante, one that allows her develop her vision of Pēters Brūveris' unusual poems.

The artist puts the platform given her to a most creative and likewise unusual use. The first impression, however, may be somewhat erroneous, since the artistic little ship on the book's cover is sailing on a puddle shaped like a map of Latvia, thus seeming to indicate the poems might have a patriotic vibe. This, of course, is not the case – that is, it is not that obvious. But the draughtsmanship itself is exciting, it has the feel of a 'real' drawing and is truly revealed through the fine details, the softness of lines, colours and hues, the artist's inventiveness. She has no interest – in this book at least – in 'traditional' images. For example, one may catch oneself musing that the artist has not paid much attention to the dog and the cat who are the main subjects of the poem, instead choosing to indulge in 'secondary' thinking, where the primary task is not to illustrate the poem, but to inhabit the space of its incompleteness. In this setting the artist allows herself to accentuate some more unusual characters – as soon as you start to feel the illustrations are slipping into the background, you find a wonderful drawing of Little Lichen, or an enormous Vacuum Cleaner. The illustrations emphasize the author's habit of borrowing recognizable lines, storylines or characters from existing poems, fairy tales (for example, the tale of the crow and the cheese), well-known stories, and using them as a starting point to build a world inhabited by characters from his own poetry. [...]

It is worth noting that in some illustrations Gundega Muzikante also uses the

technique of collage, involving various interesting objects – a classified ad from a newspaper, a piece of receipt, a fragment of a document or some sort of technical drawing. At times the illustrations are replaced by an interesting background colour or texture, which likewise serve as a platform for the reader's personal experiences and thoughts, without dictating what or how should be felt or thought. But undeniably the most charming illustration accompanies the poem 'Little Long-Legged Spider', in which the Little Spider befriends a Silkworm; the silkworm of the illustration has Oriental features – and, if you think about how tiny a canvas a silkworm's face really is...

[...]

Since the poems are based on the interplay of sounds and words, they are both rhythmical and musical – many of them are positioned as songs. Besides poems/songs, the compilation also includes several riddles and a fairy tale. It is very interactive, multifaceted, but also typical in the sense that a mix of genres is often used in children's books in the hope of holding the child's interest. However, this also makes the book seem a little fragmented, and it is not uniform in its textual qualities. Is this justified by the fact that the book is meant for both children and adults? It probably is, as the author and the artist have made the book into a generous space for discussions and conversations between children and their parents or other adults as they read the book together.

In his poetry compilation 'A Book for Gundega' Pēters Brūveris has managed to combine traditional forms of poem-writing with contemporary elements, and make the volume's poetry space feel lively and real by connecting its ordinary everyday events to things that can be brought to life by imagination. Poems intended for both children and grownups offer vast opportunities for dialogue – but there also simpler parts, should there be no time for a conversation. Added value is afforded by Gundega Muzikante's creative illustrations, which not only accompany the book but also show the little readers ways of thinking about the poems – not directly, but by noticing details, giving in to the flight of imagination and to their own world view. But most importantly, the book is a wonderful amalgamation of the real world and the world of art, and this is perhaps essential at a time when literature is being dragged into the fray of social policy absurdities.

<http://www.ubisunt.lu.lv/zinas/t/36253/>

Agita Salmiņa. News Report: Jānis Baltvilks Prize for Children's Literature Awarded

Last night, on the 70th anniversary of birth of the poet Jānis Baltvilks (1944–2003), the Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature – the little ceramic wolf sitting in a boat of dreams and fantasy, created by Inese Brante – was presented to Māris Rungulis for his detective story for children 'The Puzzles of the Fox Hill' (the liels un mazs publishing house). In the category of Children's Book Art, the trophy was awarded to **Gundega Muzikante** for her illustrations to three books: 'The Dragon's Journey' by Inese Zandere (published by Rīgas Doma pārvalde), 'When Is a Kitten called Mousey?' by Ieva Samauska (the Lietusdārzs Publishing House) and 'Little House' by Aivars Neibarts (liels un mazs).



The artist subtly, wittily and emotionally depicts the adventures of real and imaginary characters in different eras and in different and very specific environments, and with her masterful use of watercolours, pencil and crayons, conjures up magnificent and finely detailed worlds.

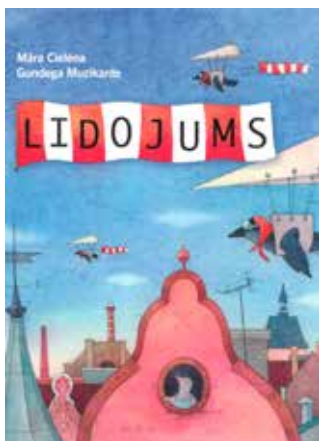
Member of the Jury, the artist Juris Petraškevičs, who teaches composition and typography at the Latvian Academy of Art, told Arterritory.com that Gundega Muzikante had earned the award step by step; it was this year, he said, that the artist had excelled with some particularly to-the-point illustrations: 'Gundega approaches book illustration like a research scientist, and that helps develop her imagination. She is technically perfect both in drawing and in watercolours, and she uses the techniques in a very feminine way, creating subtle illustrations.' – 'We chose Gundega as the best artist this year because it is this year that we really feel that she has blossomed: she has exceeded herself,' says another member of the Jury, Aiga Dzalbe, who teaches communication theory and practice at the Latvian Academy of Art. 'What makes her a successful illustrator is her ability to open a parallel world for the viewer, without illustrating the story directly but by opening up space for further imagination.'



Speaking about the road that led to choosing this year's most beautiful and successful book, Juris Petraškevičs says that it has been an exciting experience involving judging over 60 books. 'Initially the literary and visual parts were judged separately; the second round, text and illustrations were judged together, because the two elements do interact, defining a book that is really successful. It is exactly the same way at the theatre: every production is created by a number of people, and the end result depends on the contribution by each of them. If the text is very good but the illustrations do not suit it and are misleading, the book is not a success.'

http://arterritory.com/lv/dzivesstils/gramatas_zurnali/3825-reportaza_pasniegta_jana_baltvilka_balva_bernu_literatura/

11. Reproductions of book covers and illustrations



Lidojums // The Flying Adventure 2011

By Māra Cielēna.

Illustrations by Gundega Muzikante

Rīga: Lietusdārzs.

A captivating tale about a family of city gulls who decide to get into a small airplane and travel to visit the homeland of their forebears by the sea. The story combines a serious message of getting to know the wide world with humorous portrayals of urbanites, both humans and birds. The artwork by Gundega Muzikante magically brings together the two worlds: that of people and of birds.

The book is available in Latvian and in English.



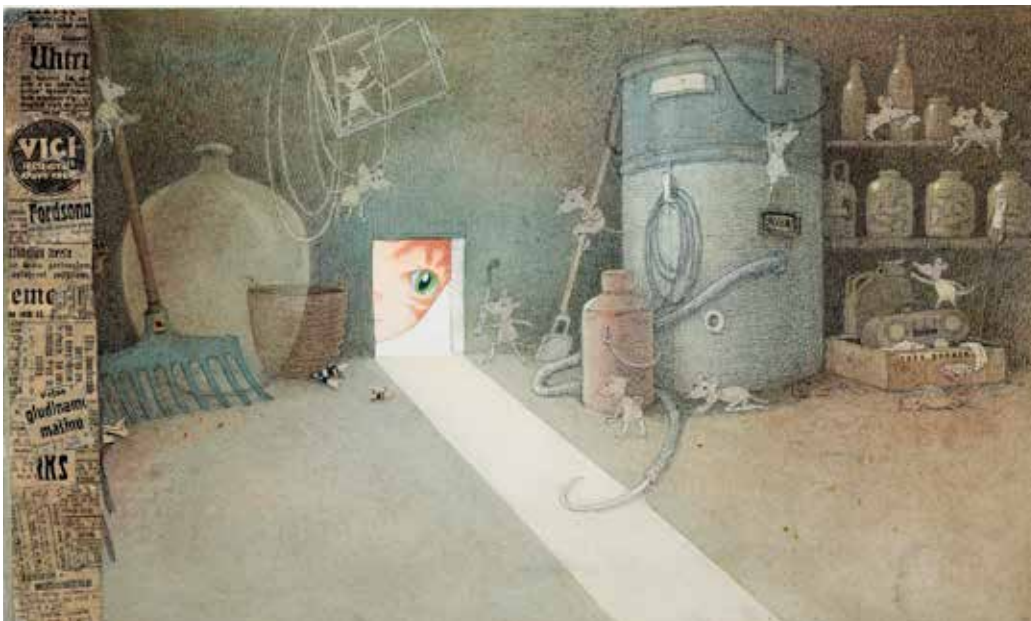




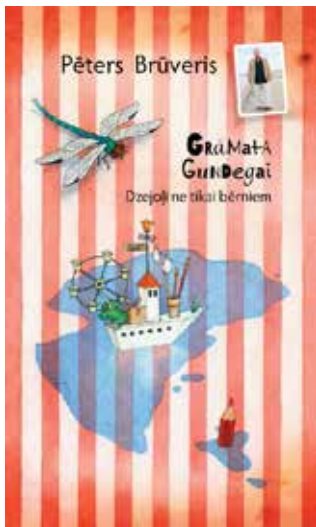
Kad kaķēnu sauc par pelīti? // When Is a Kitten Called Mousy? 2014

By Ieva Samauska. Illustrations by Gundega Muzikante
Rīga: Lietusdārzs.

The book of poems by Ieva Samauska is an account of the everyday events in a kitten's life; at the same time, it is quite easy to recognise a child in the character of the kitten. The poems describe in a witty and playful way how the kitten jumps out of the bed in the morning, plays, learns things, potters about and then crawls back into the bed in the evening and falls asleep. Written in the form of questions and answers, the poems show actions and emotions that are quite familiar to the child in a mischievous and very loving way. The witty play on various 'pet names' reveal the richness of the Latvian language and encourage the reader and the listener to explore language as a source of endless creativity. The originally comical imagination-inducing illustrations by Gundega Muzikante expand the world of poetry. The subtlety and expressiveness of the details invite to delve deeper and follow the flight of imagination created by the artist.



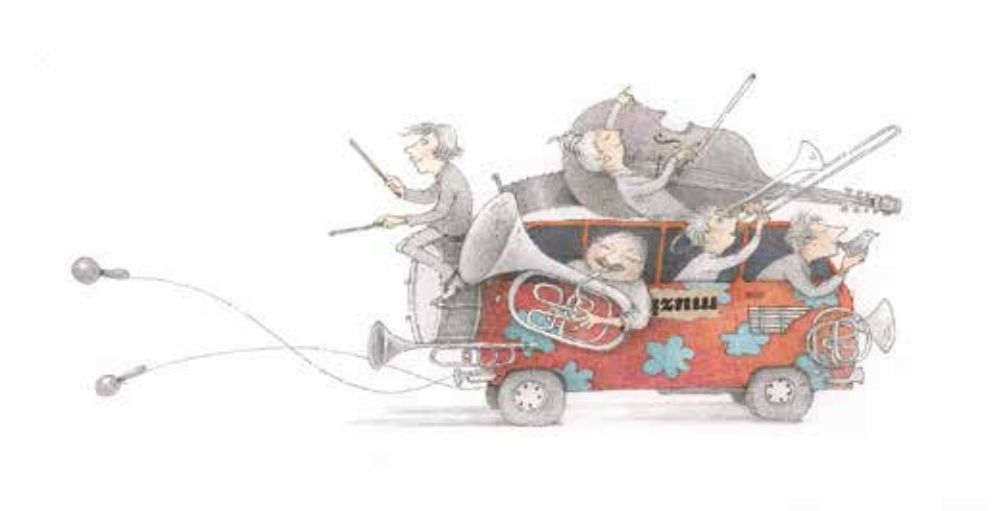




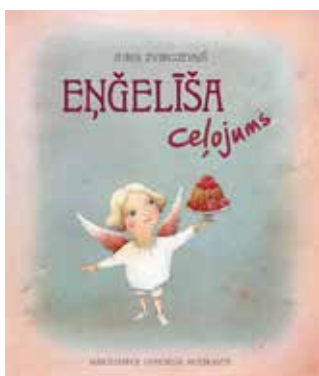
Grāmata Gundegai // A Book for Gundega. Poems Not Just for Children 2015.

By Pēteris Brūveris. Illustrations by Gundega Muzikante
Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.

This is the last collection of poems for children written by the famous Latvian poet Pēteris Brūveris before he passed away in 2011. The subtitle states that these poems are 'not just for children', and this is not the only paradox of the book. The poems combine jokes with seriousness, imagination with reality, poetry with prose, the national with the global. The poems are witty, sparkling with good humour and deeply moving. The playful, imaginative illustrations combine a variety of techniques: elements of painting, graphics, caricature and collage. Children will be excited about the bright colours and plastic figures of the illustrations, whereas grown-ups will be involved in the subtle riddle game of deciphering cleverly hidden allusions to well-known people as well as facts of culture and history.







Enģeliša ceļojums // Angel's Journey 2015.

By Juris Zvirgzdiņš. Illustrations by Gundega Muzikante
Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.

The story of the literary fairy tale is centred on a little angel named Michael, commonly known as Mikey, and his everyday life in the world of heavens - which, just like the one that humans live here on earth, is filled with all sorts of happy and sad events. Mikey is tone-deaf; he constantly teased by the older angels, and often he feels quite alone: he has no-one to play with. However, the little angel does not waste time moping. He finds a new friend – Ariadne the Spideress – and heads for the earth to do some good deeds. After rescuing Toto, the little dog of a pastry shop owner,

the two friends have now found a proper family. And now it is time to bake cookies and unwrap presents – because it's Christmas.







Ko nolaupīja gaisa balons, jeb Tobiass, Paulīne un Kaķis ceļo uz Spāniju // What Did the Air Balloon Kidnap or Tobias, Pauline and the Cat Travel to Spain 2016.

By Juris Zvirgzdiņš. Illustrations by Gundega Muzikante
Rīga: liels un mazs.

Combining elements of reality and imagination, this fantastic and cheerful road story helps learn more about the world. This time it's Pauline the Toy Mouse, who has wandered away from home and has to cross the whole Europe to find her way back - not on her own, of course: she is accompanied by Tobias the Teddy Bear. It is not the mischievous air balloon alone that takes to the sky in this book, carrying away Pauline the Mouse, Tobias the Bear and their friend Cat. Rainbow fairies; a motorcycle; a witch's broom and a homing pigeon - they all fly. The friends, who have the opportunity to meet German gnomes, the musical Spanish gypsies and even the King Himself, also travel in a multi-coloured bus and a car with one wheel gnawed out of cheese. Gundega Muzikante's perfect illustrations, where, just like in the story, reality is mixed with imagination, makes all these events incredibly believable. The wonder vehicles take the travellers to a fabulous place, where all who have lost each other meet again - the ancient Galician city of Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain. Pauline does not really find her home there ☐ but she does find her people: the artist Lina, her daughter Ula, Michalina the Toy Bear and Dotty the Dog. And isn't finding your loved ones the same thing as finding your home ☐ or perhaps it is even more important.



