

## Eisteddfod yr Urdd Sir Ddinbych 2022

### 305 - Beirniadaeth Darlunio llyfr stori a llun ar gyfer plant 7 oed

It is a delight to evaluate the entries and select a winner of the Books Council of Wales & The Urdd Eisteddfod Competition to Illustrate a Picture Book. It is the ideal industry brief for illustration undergraduates, whilst championing visual literacy and the Welsh language. The narrative by Casia William is quite extraordinary. It is a beautiful piece of standalone writing that conjures up pictures in mind even without illustration. Arguably, the words already work as a story without imagery and so this creates an unusual and extra challenge for any illustrator, let alone an undergraduate student. How can a picture book be created so the images and words work together interdependently - that they need each other for the story to work as a whole? In considering this, the two important questions for the illustrator are, how visually in-tune can the illustrations be with the words, and what meaningful relationship can the illustrations create together with Casia's already wonderful writing?

Once again, this year's styles vary widely, and the more successful submissions work beautifully with the text. It is clear the entrants understand the crucial and layered role illustration plays in picture books. The entries also demonstrate a strong grasp of the design and typography skills needed in ensuring the words and images work successfully and variedly across a 32-page book.

#### **Winner Naomi Bennet**

Naomi's illustrative style and approach is sensitive to the style of Casia William's writing. The use of colour and brushstrokes follow the energy, honesty, and hopeful undertones of the story. The illustrations open up the text to make the story inclusive, which is a beautiful touch.

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The illustrative approach is suggestive and dreamy. It is surreal yet figurative, and almost tangible. The drawings are open in such a way they invite the viewer into the narrative, with enough space to bring to the story their own impressions and memories of the beach and the sea. The main character has been sensitively and enigmatically realised, again with a wistful touch, allowing space for the reader.

Naomi has cleverly avoided visually reproducing the written metaphors. This would have deadened the narrative by causing duplication. Instead, there is space and suggestion that keeps the story alive and refreshing.

Cover – the city merges into the sea, title page – the vignette of the cottages almost looks like a shell.

Very clever opening spread – the words read somewhat bleakly, but the perspective of the illustration is more hopeful and shows that there are trees and birds in the park on the other side of the fence.

### **Grace Ghroum**

Confident feel to overall composition and layout. Great opening spread. Nice to see the text hand-rendered and integrated with the illustration. The illustrations overall could benefit from more content and detail not necessarily found in the text, so they play more part. The main character is interesting as he/she appears somewhat androgenous – and could be either a boy or a girl. The figure work overall is a little stiff and needs more development through observation and research. Professional, clean presentation.



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### **Caroline Cartmill**

Although this entry has misunderstood the competition it was really entertaining to read and made me smile. The concept is a good one, and it has been written nicely. It is both entertaining and educational. The approach to the imagery needs a complete overhaul and needs developing illustratively. The dragon is duplicated/repeated in each spread, which immediately stands out. It has a feel of clip art rather than illustration in its current form.

1af - Naomi Bennet

2il - Grace Ghroum

3ydd - Caroline Cartmill