

Drawing on Childhood

22 January - 1 May 2016



Alternative childhoods are explored in this exhibition of illustrations from European folklore and fiction

Drawing on Childhood brings together the work of major illustrators from the eighteenth century to the present day, who have created powerful visual representations of fictional child protagonists who are orphaned, adopted, fostered or found. In mythology, fairy stories, children's and adult literature, we see many examples of characters who experience an alternative childhood. Beginning with Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, the exhibition explores the characters created by authors as diverse as Charles Dickens, Emily Brontë, Roald Dahl, Jacqueline Wilson and JK Rowling.

The exhibition has been inspired by Lemn Sissay's 2014 commission for the Foundling Museum, *Superman was a Foundling*, which explores the tradition and importance of looked-after children in popular culture. *Drawing on Childhood* considers how illustrators of different generations have chosen key moments in the stories of these child heroes and brought them to life through their art. A potent narrative device, authors have created looked-after characters to enable children to have freedom and adventures outside the structures of typical family life, or to allow dramatic plot resolutions when a character's background is revealed. Despite the diversity of stories and characters, the works on display are linked by themes where illustrators, working alongside or independently of the

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author, chose to bring attention to similar moments in the story – these include isolation, the moment of escape and the ‘replacement’ family.

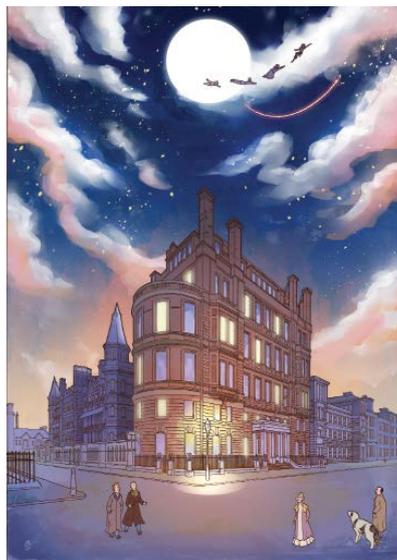
Drawing on Childhood includes original drawings, first editions and special illustrated editions, featuring characters as diverse as James Trotter (from *James and the Giant Peach*) who was orphaned when a young boy, Hetty Feather, who lived at the Foundling Hospital and Rapunzel, whose parents gave her up as a child. On display will be two original illustrations by Nancy Ekholm Burkert for the 1961 edition of Roald Dahl’s *James and the Giant Peach*, alongside Arthur Rackham’s original drawing of Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother from 1919. Major illustrators and artists whose work will be on display include Phiz (Hablot K. Browne), Arthur Rackham, Quentin Blake, George Cruikshank, Stref, Thomas Rowlandson, Nick Sharratt and David Hockney.

To accompany the loaned works, three contemporary artists have been invited to produce a new illustration for Henry Fielding’s novel *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, first published in 1749. These artists are Chris Haughton, Pablo Bronstein and Posy Simmonds.

Stephanie Chapman, exhibition curator, said: “Illustrators over the past 250 years have been inspired by a rich variety of characters in fiction and folklore who have experienced an alternative childhood. A good illustrator enhances our understanding and enjoyment of the story, and the selected works in this exhibition show how talented artists across the centuries have brought to life the childhood experiences – as well as their later repercussions – of some of our best-loved fictional characters.”

Left: Stref, from *JM Barrie’s Peter Pan: The Graphic Novel*, 2015, published by BC Books

Right: Arthur Rackham, *Peter screamed out, ‘Do it again!’ and with great good-nature they did it several times*, from *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* by J M Barrie, 1906, courtesy Great Ormond Street Hospital Children’s Charity



Press Enquiries

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Notes to Editors

The Foundling Museum explores the history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity and first public art gallery, and through a regular programme of events and exhibitions celebrates the ways in which artists of all disciplines have helped improve children's lives for over 275 years.

The Foundling Hospital, which continues today as the children's charity Coram, was established in 1739 by the philanthropist Captain Thomas Coram, as 'a hospital for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children'. Instrumental in helping Coram realise his vision were the artist William Hogarth, who encouraged all the leading artists of the day to donate work, and the composer George Frideric Handel, who gave annual benefit concerts of the Messiah. In doing so, they created London's first public art gallery and set the template for the way that the arts could support philanthropy.

Coram has been creating better chances for children since 1739. They help children and young people today through their pioneering work in adoption, parenting support, housing support, alcohol and drug education, creative therapies and championing legal rights in the UK and overseas.
www.coram.org.uk

Visitor Information

The Foundling Museum
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foundlingmuseum.org.uk

Open: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 - 17:00 and Sunday, 11:00 - 17:00, closed on Mondays

Admission: £8.25 (including Gift Aid), concessions £5.50 (including Gift Aid), National Trust members half price, free for children, Foundling Friends and Art Fund members

Tube and train: Russell Square, King's Cross St Pancras and Euston
