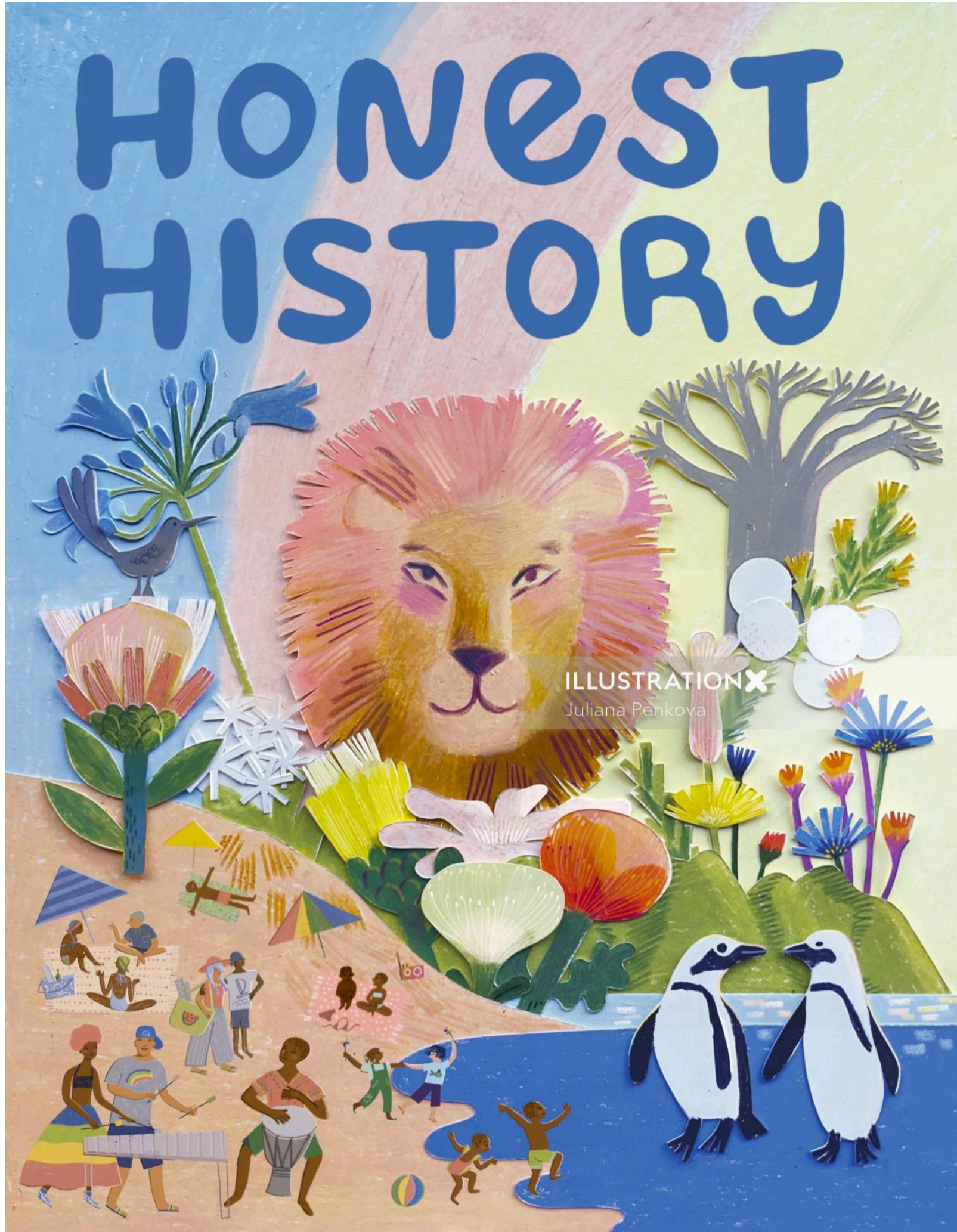


Welcome to my portfolio

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## SOUND MAGIC

### The alchemy of spoken word

**W**hat is a poem actually for? Famous poet, librarian and grump Philip Larkin said that a successful poem should evoke a very specific feeling in the reader. Spoken word poems aren't supposed to be silent, stuck-in-your-head things, though. They are supposed to be spoken aloud, because that feeling comes, at least a bit, from the sounds you create when you perform them.

Ugh... reading aloud? Well it's a bit... cringe? Ed

Cringe is a very specific feeling – perhaps you would like to write a poem about that?

Touché!

Human beings have performed poems for literally thousands of years, since long before the advent of writing. Spoken word is the collective term for all poetry that escapes from the confines of the page, giddy with urgency, in an energetic dance of rhythm and melody. It's never afraid to follow its own rules and find its own flow. It's not just about performance, it's participation too. The audience becomes part of the poem – each gasp, every laugh and those ripples of recognition.

Spoken word is live and therefore never the same twice, like oral culture, shaped by whoever is listening. That's why it matters: because it turns language into an experience, a reminder that some words aren't meant just to sit still – they are meant to be alive.

**There are several subcategories of spoken word:**

**SLAM POETRY** – competitive poetry that is intentionally loud and fast enough to get the crowd moving.

**BEAT POETRY** – inspired by jazz, where a talking-singing style is kept fresh with improvisation.

**HIP-HOP POETRY** – rhythm and poetry (also known as **RAP**) rhymes and flows, as if the words themselves are dancing.

### LET'S MEET SOME OF SPOKEN WORD'S BEST MAGICIANS:

**JOHN HEGLEY**  
Whimsical, warm and welcoming, John Hegley turns glasses, dogs and even vegetables into hilariously funny mini-dramas. With intentionally forced rhymes and memorable observations, he proves that spoken word can be both silly and profound.

**WHERE TO START:** 'Guillemot'

**AM A GUILLEMOT**  
I USE MY BILL A LOT

**NIKKI GIOVANNI**  
Storyteller and movement builder Nikki shows us how difficult and frightening it can be to fight for equality. She could lift a room with electric joy or challenge it into squirming discomfort, exploring who we are in an environment of oppression. The Grammy-nominated poet reminded us that voice is power and that poetry can be a tool for claiming it.

**WHERE TO START:** 'Talk to Me Poem, I Think I Got the Blues'

**CUT A SQUARE AND PUT ME IN A QUILT**  
THAT I MIGHT KEEP SOME CHILD WARM

**GEORGE THE POET**  
A poet with his creative antennae tuned to the city and its murmurings, George blurs the lines between storytelling and infectious rhythms, showing that spoken word can be both social commentary and a banging track.

**WHERE TO START:** 'My City'

**THE CITY LOOMS LARGER THAN LIFE**  
MONEY, POWER, HARDSHIP AND STRIFE

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**KAE TEMPEST**  
The myth-maker of the modern moment, Kae's pieces feel like prophecies delivered in street slang, offering an invitation to enter a world where myth, music and humanity meet and make magic that moves you to tears.

**WHERE TO START:** 'Icarus'

**IN THE TIME, THEY WILL BE THE**  
DODS THEY BRING YOU TRIPLES

**POLARBEAR** (aka Steven Camden)  
Polarbear takes everyday experiences like school corridors, buses and break-ups and turns them into epic adventures. His conversational style is proof that spoken word doesn't always need fireworks; a well-placed pause can be just as explosive.

**WHERE TO START:** Search for Steven Camden at The Children's Poetry Archive

**AWESOME ACTIVITIES AHEAD!**  
Now it's your turn! Follow the QR code to create your own piece of spoken word!

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## Publishing Your First Book

**SIX WRITERS TELL US HOW**

Are you a bit handy with a pen and paper? Do you fancy yourself as a best-selling author? Have you got a book in you? If the answer to these questions is 'yes', stay right here (and also, best wishes that book the careers could snag an agent, lol). Let's find out how six authors got their first book published whilst still at school!

**ALEC GREVEN**  
AGE 9 - USA

Alec could see that boys in his school were terrible at talking to girls. So one day, in a free-writing class, he wrote a pamphlet of helpful hints entitled 'How to Talk to Girls'. His teacher loved it and printed copies to sell at the school fair. A local newspaper ran an article about Alec and his pamphlet. Next, he was interviewed on a TV talk show. A book publisher was watching and contacted him. 'Could you expand that pamphlet into a book?' the publisher asked. Alec's first book, *How to Talk to Girls*, has sold thousands of copies and been printed in 20 languages.

**TIP:** Alec's story is pretty special. Usually, writers need to approach a publishing agent with a finished draft manuscript, and the agent will attempt to get a publisher to purchase the copyright.

**NANCY YI FAN**  
AGE 11 - CHINA

Nancy arrived in America from China when she was seven. She could speak no English, but very quickly learnt. Then, one night, she had a dream about a giant white bird who tried making peace among other warring birds. 'I'd written short stories before, just for fun', Nancy told an interviewer. But when she started writing about her vivid dream, it grew into a novel. Nancy emailed it to every publisher she could find, and one snapped it up. *Swordbird*, Nancy's first novel, was followed by *Sword Quest* and *Sword Mountain*, making a three-book trilogy.

**TIP:** It really helps if you have an idea for a series, rather than a standalone book, because it gives a publisher an idea of your manuscript's potential!

**JAKE MARCIONETTE**  
AGE 12 - USA

It was Jake's mum who started his writing career. 'Every summer holiday she'd force me and my sister to write every day, from breakfast to lunch', Jake remembers. At the end of the holiday we were supposed to have a book! One summer, Jake wrote a diary-type book about trying to fit in at a new school. He thought the story was pretty good, so started telephoning writers' agents. Most agents don't take phone calls, especially not from kids. Jake was lucky. One did. His first book, *Just Jake*, was the beginning of a four-book 'Just Jake' series.

**TIP:** Most agents have windows of time when they'll read submissions. It's a good idea to find out who your favourite writers' agents are. Know their names and find out about other authors they represent.

**GORDON KORMAN**  
AGE 12 - CANADA

'My writing career began by accident when I was in 7th grade', Gordon explains. 'Our P.E. teacher took over English classes, and for creative writing he gave us total freedom! So, every day for four months Gordon worked on a story about two friends always getting into trouble at their boarding school. Gordon's mum typed up the story and he mailed it to a publisher. The book was titled *This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall*. Since then, Gordon has written over 80 books and sold more than 30 million copies worldwide.

**TIP:** Gordon's mum was his first editor. It's a really good idea to ask others to read your work and give helpful feedback.

**ALEXANDRA ADORNETTO**  
AGE 13 - AUSTRALIA

It was the summer holidays. All the kids had gone to the beach, but she wasn't allowed. To pass the time, she started writing a story about two children taken to an old mansion where magical things happen. From a young age, Alexandra was a reader. When she ran out of shelf space for her books, she stacked them in 'wobbly piles' on the floor. Alexandra's parents were English teachers. They thought her story, *The Shadow Thief*, was good enough to send to a publisher. Since then, Alexandra has published seven more novels.

**TIP:** As a writer, boredom is your friend. That's when your imagination has space and time to play!

**BETH REEKLES**  
AGE 15 - UK

Beth grew tired of young adult books about vampires and werewolves. She wanted to read a different kind of story, so she started writing one herself. 'I was so self-conscious about my writing and hadn't shared it with anyone before', Beth recalls. So, she posted it chapter by chapter on a story-sharing website. Before the story was finished, a publisher spotted it and contacted her. Beth's first book, *The Kissing Booth*, was followed by many more, and has since been made into a movie.

**TIP:** Think about alternative ways to build an audience BEFORE you approach a publishing agent. Building a following through zines or story writing groups is an excellent way to start writing to deadline!

**TIPS FOR ASPIRING YOUNG AUTHORS**  
When asked to give advice on writing, all authors say the same:

- Read! If you want to be a writer, read. Read as many books as you can.
- Write every day. Write anything. Just make it a daily practice.
- Show others your writing and consider their comments. It will help you write better and speed up the process.

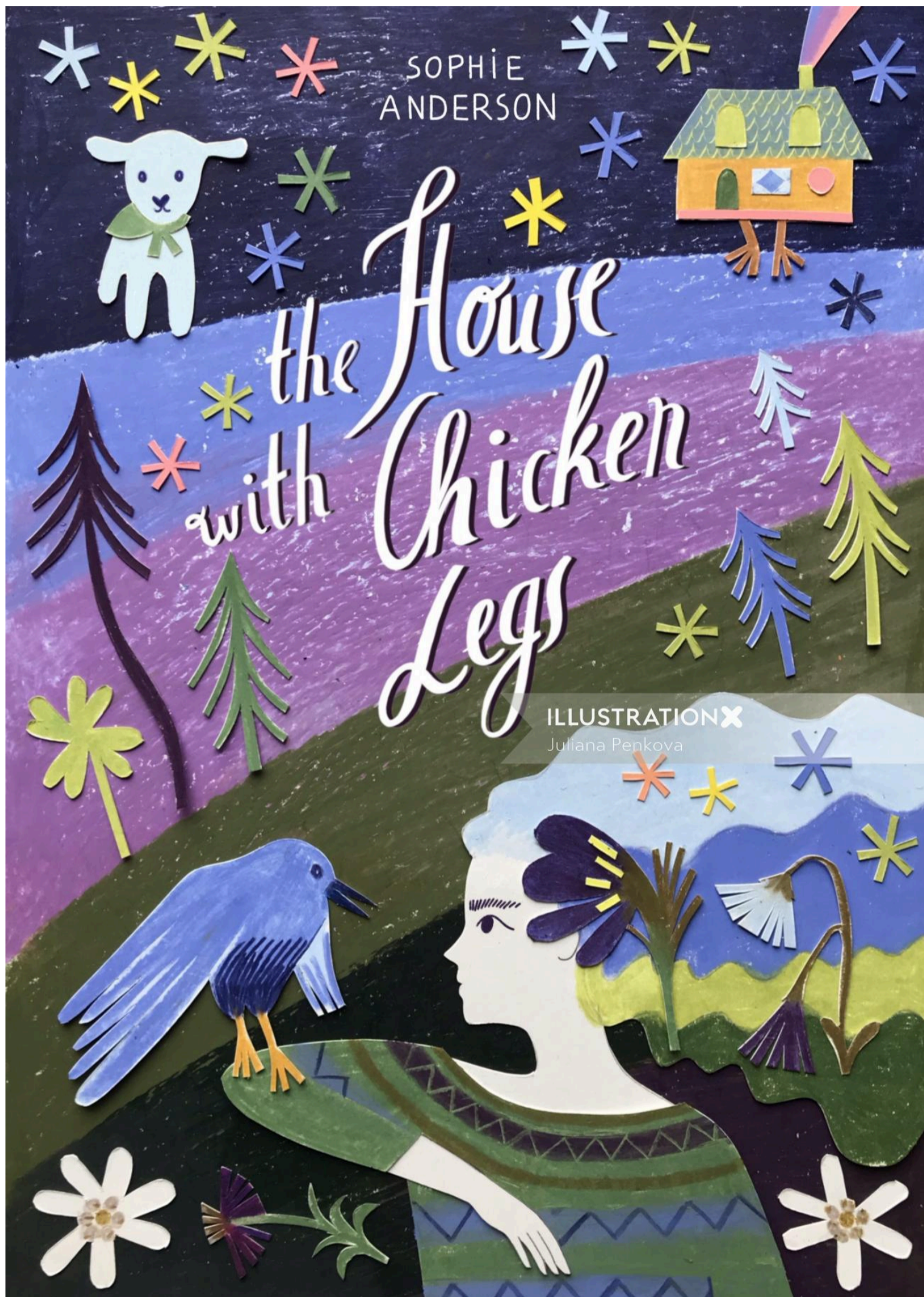
**ILLUSTRATION X**

Juliana Penkova

Words: Kate Walker. Illustration: Juliana Penkova.

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## MAGIC in a BOTTLE



**Back in the 17th century, a lot of people were panicking about witches. As far as they were concerned, a witch could curse you, curse your family or even your cow! And that was a very scary prospect indeed. To protect themselves from witchcraft, people created witch bottles.**

The bottles that people used didn't begin their lives as witch bottles. They were often stoneware bottles from Germany, where they were mass-produced and shipped overseas for any number of uses. Ordinary people would buy these bottles for their contents, much in the same way we buy a bottle of Coke in the shop today! Once whatever was in the bottle had been used, the bottle would be empty. And what does one do with an empty bottle, especially a sturdy one? *If you're anything like me, you keep them because they may come in handy one day. Ed!* That's exactly what people did.

Witch bottles are some of the only physical evidence we have of witch belief in the early modern period (1500–c.1750). In fact, we've found witch bottles from lots of different points in history – some were even made as recently as the 1980s! They have contained anything from twigs and rusty nails to sometimes even URINE!

*Hold up. WHAT? Ed!*

**FUN FACT PUMPKIN**  
Scientists and historians can now look inside witch bottles using computerised tomography (CT) scans.

creating the bottle and the bottle itself was what tied everything together! Instructions on how to create a witch bottle would be provided by the local cunning person – someone who performed magic but was not a witch, and specialised in 'unbewitching' – curing or preventing curses. The afflicted individual would visit the local cunning person and tell them all about their problems, and the cunning person would prescribe the witch bottle, a bit like a doctor prescribing medicine.

**Disclaimer:** AQUILA magazine does not endorse the use of urine or sharp, rusty nails in pretend magical potions.

**COULD IT BE MAGIC?**  
The concept of magic in a bottle still exists in the modern day. A witch bottle was found in the River Thames dating back to 1982. It used a small plastic medicine bottle and contained pieces of metal, coins, spices, and even human teeth! It is thought that the creator of this particular bottle wanted to get rid of a nasty case of toothache *(and it's been the only time I've seen a witch bottle used for anything other than 'unbewitching' – as they added to the mixture were coves, which we know for their toothache-relieving power. If you rub them carefully on your gum, we don't think sticking them in a magic bottle works).*

Nowadays, most witch bottles are usually much nicer, and they don't tend to be called 'witch bottles'. Instead, some

**FUN FACT PUMPKIN**  
Most witch bottles discovered in houses are buried in the chimney, fireplace or in the walls. However, the most common 'magical' object found concealed in the walls of houses is a worn shoe! It is believed that they were used as a magical charm to ward off bad spirits from the home, and sometimes to help the woman who lived there get pregnant.

**PUZZLE ALERT!**  
**BADGER BE GONE!**  
Oh no! You've irritated a local wizard and now you're being followed wherever you go by a curmudgeonly badger who hisses at you night and day, and will not let you sleep. Bad luck! Can you design a witch bottle to get rid of the aggressive beast (and the badger) once and for all?

**IDEAS:** Cotton bud • Elderberries • Guitar pick • Rusty paperclips • Toenail clippings • Ink • Rosemary • Wizard's phone charger

people make 'spell jars', which can be for protection, good luck, great fortune, or even love. Rather than rusty nails and wee they usually contain pretty crystals and flower petals. You can even buy pre-made ones online, and they are often decorated with coloured wax, ribbons, and sometimes have charms attached.

The idea of magic in a bottle has carried on for centuries, and it's unlikely that it will stop any time soon!

Would you like to make your own spell jar? Positive vibes only! Then follow the link to this Awesome Activity!

**AWESOME ACTIVITY ALERT!**  
SCAN ME

**ILLUSTRATION**  
Juliana Penkova

Words: Sarah Wallace-Carew. Illustration: Juliana Penkova

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In our online AQUILAnaut survey we asked you a really important question...

## IF YOU WERE A SANDWICH, WHAT WOULD YOU BE?

We had a range of answers, from the classic (take a bow, ham and cheese), to the gastro. From the sweet (who's up for a marshmallow topping?) to the downright gross! Although there is method behind these particular sandwich alter-egos, we promise!

## QUIZ ALERT!

### WHAT KIND OF SANDWICH ARE YOU?

Missed our sandwich survey, but still desperate to know what sandwich you are? Take our nifty quiz now!

When faced with a sandwich, what's your first instinct?

- Dive straight in with a hearty bite!
- Savour the aroma and appreciate the layers.
- Analyse its texture, taste and presentation with utmost scrutiny.

If you were a sandwich ingredient, which would you be?

- The bold and punchy mustard: adding a kick to every bite!
- The creamy avocado: smooth and versatile.
- The artisanal cheese: aged to perfection and full of character.

What's your approach to condiments?

- The more, the merrier! Bring on the sauces!
- A delicate balance of flavours, applied with precision.
- Condiments? Please, I prefer my sandwich pure and unadulterated.

How do you feel about crusts?

- I'm more rock 'n' roll!
- It's a necessary part of the sandwich experience, isn't it?
- Crust? I need more crunch than that. Just toast me!

Choose your ideal sandwich side:

- A large portion of French fries.
- A crisp, refreshing salad to complement the flavours.
- A crunchy and tangy slaw.

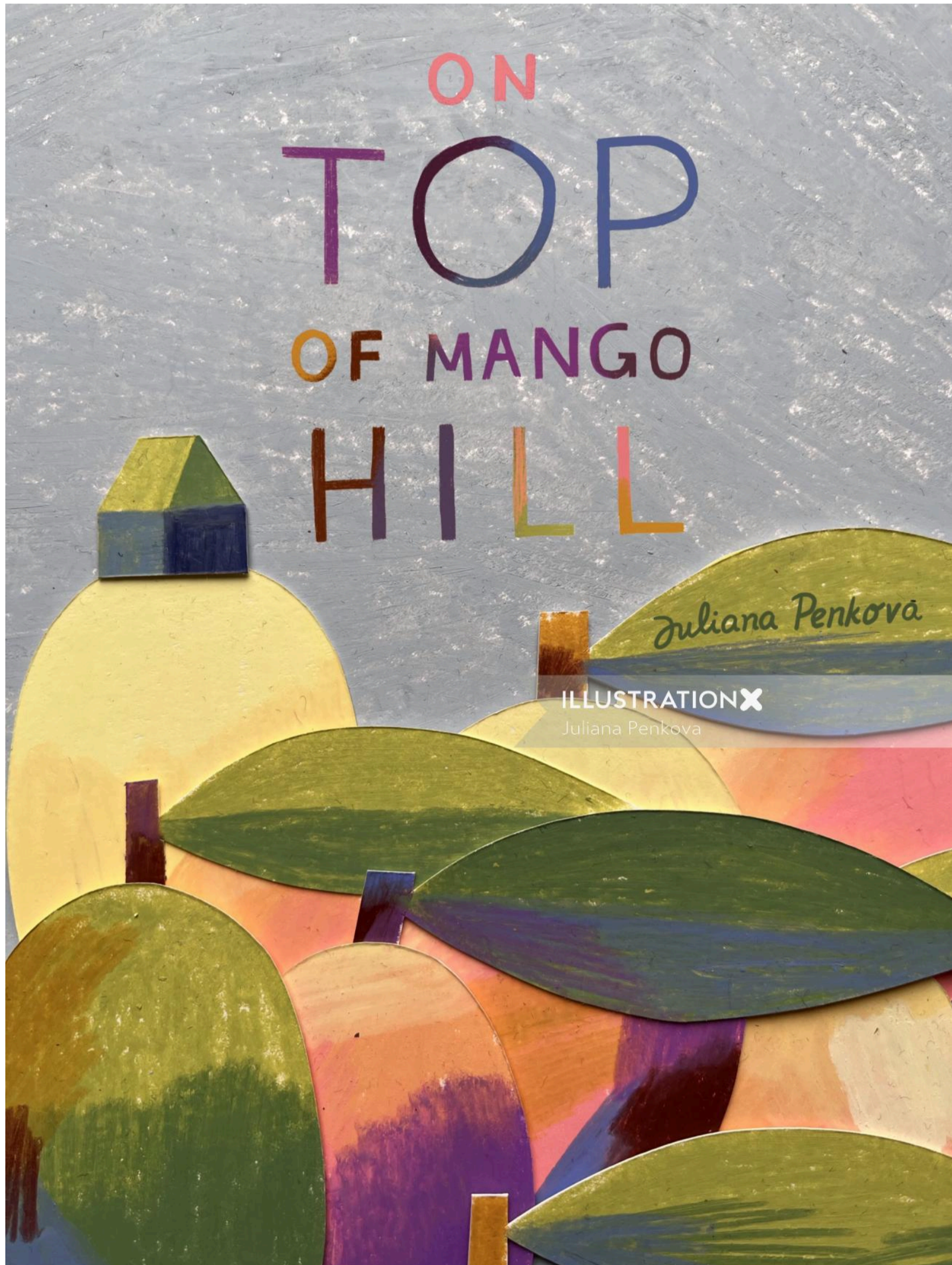
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## THE CURATOR'S DISASTER

Fantastic news! You've been given an opportunity to make an art exhibition all about you!

**YOU'LL NEED TO DO DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS ALL ABOUT YOUR FAVOURITE THINGS – THERE'LL BE PORTRAITS OF YOUR MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE, PAINTINGS OF YOUR BEST-LOVED BUILDINGS, PETS, HOBBIES... BUT HERE'S THE BAD NEWS: THE CURATOR OF THE GALLERY HAS FORGOTTEN TO ALLOCATE THE WHOLE GALLERY FOR YOUR SHOW. YOU'VE ONLY GOT ONE WALL! IN FRUSTRATION, SHE'S STOMPED OFF FOR A CUP OF TEA AND LEFT YOU TO WORK IT OUT.**

Now you need to become the artist AND the curator. Can you put all your artworks on display without any overlapping? Will you go for sublime symmetry or a joyful jumble? Let's CURATE!

Hang on, what's a curator again? Ed

A curator can make an art gallery visit into a beautiful and thrilling experience. Their mission is to consider what gallery visitors might like to see, and what they might need, and then design a space to reflect that. Sometimes they work with the artists and sometimes without.

Curators and exhibition designers use sketches, plans and models. They can be designed by computer or by hand. They consider the size of the exhibition space, the limits of the environment, the audience, colour schemes, access, gallery fittings, purpose and cost.

Haan, sounds like maths.

Yes, a curator uses all kinds of maths – they have to understand budgets as well as sequencing, patterns and proportions!

How do curators work out what to hang where?

The traditional method involves hanging the artwork in **chronological order**, as a kind of visual timeline. The earliest works appear earliest in the exhibition, and the most recent artworks at the end.

In the late 20th century, curators began using a **thematic approach**. This involves choosing a theme and then selecting artworks that explore it. This way, visitors are offered a series of stories and can make their own connections between them.

In the 21st century, a new method emerged, known as **constellation**. Curators take a trigger word – the name of an artist or an adjective, and they create cloud word diagrams to join up their ideas. This technique was introduced in the UK by Tate Liverpool. In these exhibitions, the artists' ideas take centre stage.

**FUN FACT TRUMPET**  
Not only are curators responsible for what you see in an exhibition, they are also responsible for gallery collections. They take care of loaned paintings and add to the collection by building relationships with artists and private collectors.

## LET'S PUT ON A SHOW!

1 Print out the template from the website and cut out your shapes. Alternatively, you can use a ruler and a pencil, a protractor, a cup and a round plate to draw five squares, three rectangles, one circle, three equilateral triangles, six diamonds, four semicircles and two crescent shapes on the A4 paper. Cut them out. These are your frames.

You've decided that your exhibition will become a huge self portrait. Are you ready to FACE your challenge?

**YOU WILL NEED!**

- Template (available for download from the AQUILA website)
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Cup
- Protractor
- Plate
- White A4 paper
- Coloured A3 paper
- Pens
- Scissors
- PVA glue

FOR THE TEMPLATE  
QR CODE

2 Use the paper shapes to make an abstract symmetrical mouth at the bottom of the white plate. Stick the shapes above the lips to make a face. If you have an odd number of shapes remaining, you might like to use a centre line to create symmetry. Or not. It's totally up to you!

3 When you're happy with your arrangement, stick them down with PVA glue. Leave to dry.

4 Draw your artworks onto your geometric shaped frames. Can you find a way to fill your drawings with all of your favourite things and still make it look like a face when they're combined?

We'd love to see your amazing artworks. Send your photos to the usual address on the AQUILAnauts' page of the AQUILA website and your drawings could appear in a future issue of the magazine!

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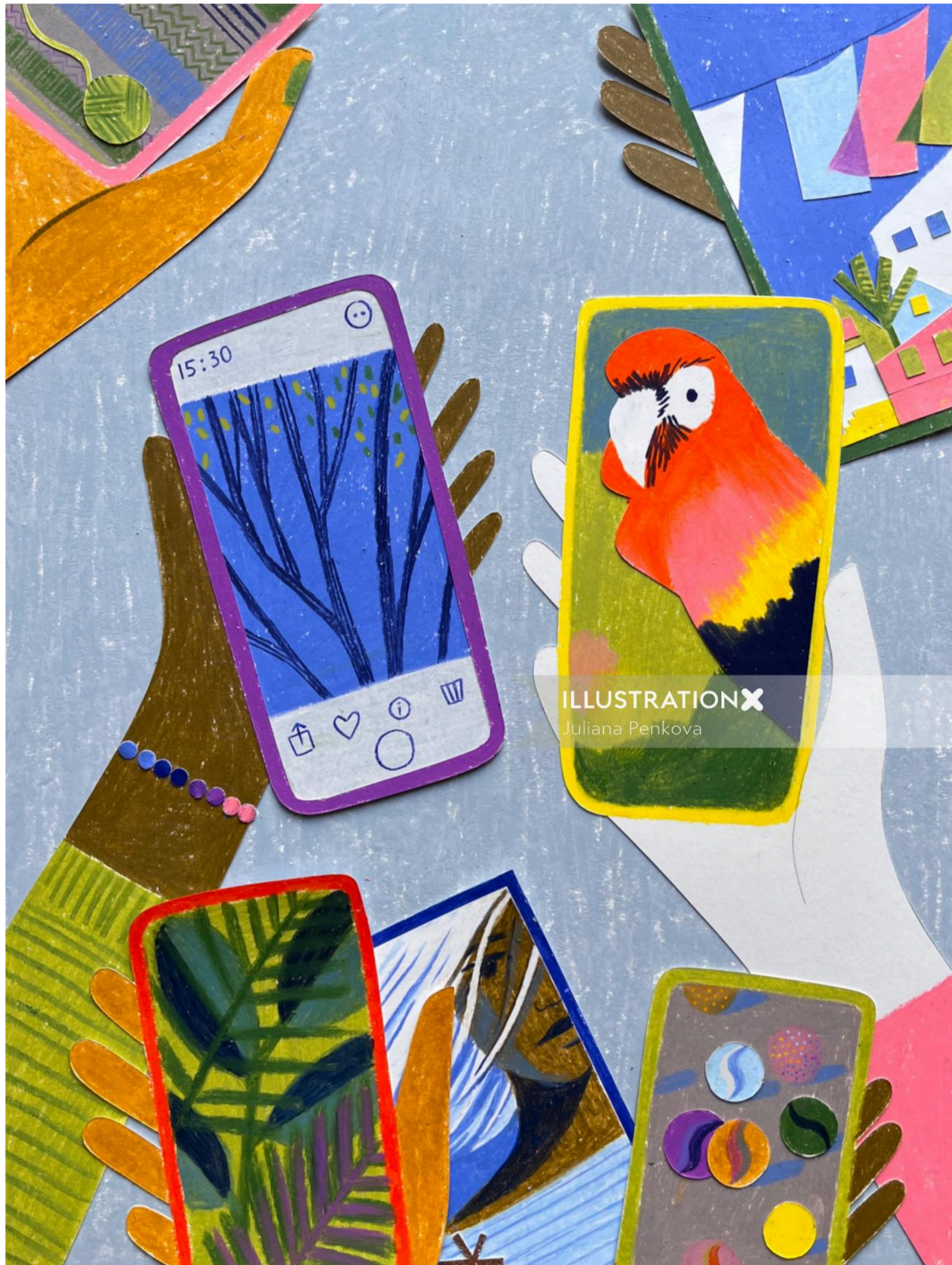
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