

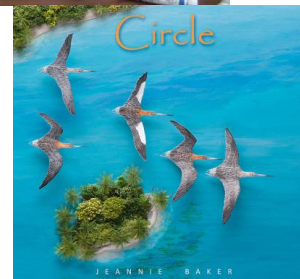
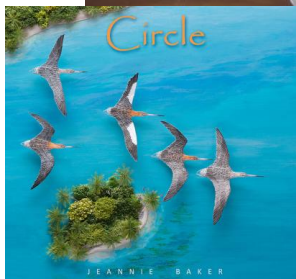


INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

iBBY
AUSTRALIA

**NOMINATION
IBBY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARDS
2018
COUNTRY OF NOMINATION: AUSTRALIA
ILLUSTRATOR CANDIDATE: JEANNIE BAKER**

DOSSIER



Acknowledgements

Dossier compiled by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright on behalf of IBBY Australia December 2016

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Information contained in the dossier has also been supplied by Jeannie Baker, and was drawn from:

‘Jeannie Baker b.1950’ *AustLit*

<<http://www.austlit.edu.au.rp.nla.gov.au/austlit/search/page?query=jeannie+baker&token=xnmDBwl&facetSampleSize=0&facetValuesSize=0&blendMax=y&count=50>>

and from Jeannie Baker’s website: <<http://www.jeanniebaker.com/>>

Contents of the dossier may be viewed by interested researchers and IBBY members, and is posted (in part) on the IBBY website. However, due to copyright restrictions on the **reviews and articles** by individual contributors, these are not included in the online document and cannot be copied or transmitted electronically.

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1. Biographical Information on the Candidate

Jeannie Baker (2 November 1950-) is the author and illustrator of thirteen critically acclaimed picture books including *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* and the dual language wordless picture book *Mirror*. Her characteristic use of mixed media to create detailed and elaborate ‘relief collages’ is stunningly original. Born in Croydon, London, England she studied at the Croydon College of Art (1967–9) and attended Brighton College of Art (1969–72) in Sussex where she gained an Honours Degree in Art and Design. ‘I have always liked textures and used to collect odd things such as bits of old plaster from walls and work them into abstract designs. Then I started to work more realistically and did my first book of relief collages in my last year at College. There’s hardly any depth in my collages. It’s an illusion. Various parts are usually flat at the back, but slightly rounded at the front to give a feeling of solidity and depth I want. Shadows also help me achieve this.’ (Baker in McVitty, 1989, p. 20) She commenced her professional career as a commissioned artist with clients such as *The Times*, *The Observer* and Thames Television, before creating her first book *Polar* (1975) by Elaine Moss, and then published *Grandfather* (1977) which she’d created at art college.

She emigrated to Australia in 1975 and lived first in Tasmania where she created a sequel to *Grandfather* in *Grandmother* (1978). She then moved to Sydney where she now lives. *Millicent* (1980) celebrated Sydney’s Hyde Park and was assisted by the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council for the Arts. *One Hungry Spider* (1982) was her next publication. She then spent part of 1980 and 1983 in the Visual Arts Board’s NY studio researching and then exhibiting *Home in the Sky* (1984). ‘Soon after I first arrived in Australia, I became conscious that this strange new land, its strong clear light, unfamiliar smells and sounds was deeply affecting my senses, my outlook, my use of and feeling for colour ... the greys, browns and subdued tones of my English work changed to more vivid hues, echoing the luxuriant colours in the landscape here.’ (Baker 2000, p. 10.)

Her unique style of collage involves intensive immersion in places she visits as background to each book. She collects materials and treats them to a process which colours and preserves them for incorporation in her intricately detailed works. *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* (1988) was set in the Daintree Rainforest of Far North Queensland; *The Story of Rosy Dock* (1995) in the Central Australian desert; *Mirror* (2010) in Morocco where she lived with Berber people in villages; *Circle* (2016) in remote S.W. Alaska, the Yellow Sea in China, and South Korea. Each takes her several years to complete and the seeds of each idea are often already planted as she works on the previous title.

She is a nominee for the 2017 Kate Greenaway Medal for *Circle*, and was shortlisted in 1985 for *Home in the Sky*, and in 1992 for *Window*. She was included on the 1990 IBBY Honour List for *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* and won a 2011 IYL White Ravens Award for *Mirror*. Australian accolades include being twice the winner of the CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award in 2011 for *Mirror* (Joint Winner) and in 1992 for *Window*; she has also received CBCA Honour Book Awards. She has been three times the winner of The Wilderness Society Environmental Award for Children’s Literature: 2005 *Belonging*; 2001 *The Hidden Forest*; 1996 *The Story of Rosy Dock*.

Jeannie Baker is one of Australia’s most internationally recognised and influential picture book artists. Visit her website: <<http://www.jeanniebaker.com/>>

[See also **4. Awards and Other Distinctions** p. 8.]

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration 2018: Jeannie Baker

2. Portrait Photograph of the Candidate

[See copy in **Appendix C. CD-Rom** contained in dossier.]



3. Statement of Candidate's Contribution

‘Our planet is changing before our eyes. However, by understanding and changing the way we personally affect the environment, we can make a difference.’ (*Window* 1991)

Jeannie Baker's work as a picture book writer and artist is unique. Her creation of intricate collages utilising found objects and employing a complex process for preparing, colouring, mounting and preserving them in her artworks is one aspect of her inventiveness: ‘Her tactile artworks are intricate, painstakingly exact in depicting the landscape by using natural materials [often] extracted from that landscape, and legendary in their ability to represent the layers of history and the exponential changes we wreak upon the landscape with each successive generation.’ (Sheahan 1995, p. 8) She is ‘in the forefront of demonstrating the possibilities of this art form with her emphasis on ‘total design’, on a book's constructedness as an ‘item of manufacture’. (Morrow 2014)

Her intense focus on the environment which she visits, photographs and researches is another. If you read her addresses, you gain a picture belied by her delicate exterior. She has travelled to some of the most challenging of landscapes, alone, and then proceeded to document the life of that terrain: For *Circle*, ‘I travelled to the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta in S.W. Alaska, longing to see the wild, remote landscapes where godwits start their life. I was permitted to join a group of bird scientists camping out there.’ (Sheahan-Bright, 2016, p. 4) ‘My project ‘Where the Forest Meets the Sea’ was an important turning point for me. The experience of being alone, camping out and exploring the strange, rich environment of North Queensland's Daintree Rainforest, had a huge impact on me ... it opened up something in me. Before venturing into the rainforest, I'd spoken to various people living close by who'd warned me of various dangers. I was told I should go with company but if I really wanted to go alone, I should take a gun. So as you can imagine, I set off into the Daintree very cautiously but found these warnings to be based on myth rather than reality. It was my first experience of realising how out- of-touch most of us are with the natural world. So I wanted to share how special the forest is and that it is not a frightening, threatening place ... I've tried to show the boy at one with the forest. He explores it barefoot, dressed only in a pair of shorts. Everywhere I explored I saw something new.’ (Baker 2016)

Her ardent conservation message is another aspect of her work: ‘Baker subverts the impersonal tone of text and visuals with the deeply-felt emotional burden which her words carry and imply for the reader. She has been described as a gentle activist, but she is nothing but uncompromising and steely in the integrity of her environmental statements ... the teaching they impart is like the best of education, capable of creating in the reader the will to learn more, and to share the lesson with others.’ (Sheahan 1995, p. 8) **Her themes include urban sprawl, land degradation, introduced pests and destruction of natural habitats via development:** ‘Even in 1985 it wasn't possible to be in the Daintree and not be aware of large bulldozers preparing lots for subdivision and totally clearing sites of trees. That struck me as a great absurdity when the one thing that makes this area so special is the rainforest itself ... I pose the end of the book as a question, ... hoping to provoke the reader to ponder and decide for themselves the future they would prefer for such special places.’ (Baker 2000, p. 11)

Her books also promote global cooperation and understanding: ‘*Mirror* is really two books in one: the first, reading from right to left, illustrates the life of a boy and his family in Morocco; the second, reading from left to right, shows the life of a family in Sydney,

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration 2018: Jeannie Baker

Australia. The book is designed so that both stories are read simultaneously. With no text, there is much to discuss drawn from inference and deduction from the beautiful and detailed collages. *Mirror* was conceived at a time of increasing distrust of foreigners. Baker, through an inspirational use of the picture book format, makes it possible for the reader to compare and contrast the lives of these two families and see that although there are differences they have a great deal in common. It is important that children not only see their own families reflected in the books they read but also that they find books that take them outside their own experience to witness the families and lives of others. The brilliance of this book is that it does exactly that in just 48 pages.' (Morris and Woolley 2012) Baker recalls that: 'The idea for 'Mirror' came from doing a lot of travelling in countries very different to Australia, from travelling to places like India, China and Africa, where I met people very different to me ... different in the way they dress and how they live, the colour of their skin, their language. They were sometimes very poor ... As a traveller, I was the 'stranger', I was the one who looked different, but what I found, everywhere I travelled, was people were usually fantastically friendly and generous, even if they had nothing ... It made me think about the ways we are different but I also thought about the ways we are the same and that's where I got the idea for this work.' (Baker 2016)

In several books she has used 'wordless' visual texts to tell her story. *Window* (1991) and *Belonging* (2004) are companion books in which changes to the environment are viewed through a window as time passes: 'One of the joys of working in the medium of picture books and wordless books even more so is the wide scope for discovery and a spectrum of interpretations.' (Baker 2010) **She has also consistently exhibited, filmed and toured her work and is truly a multimedia artist.**

Her most recent work is *Circle* which traces the threatened godwit's incredible cyclical journey around the world. In some ways, all her books describe a circle. *Window* and *Belonging* show patterns of repeated development; *The Story of Rosy Dock* traces a cycle of decline and renewal in the desert; *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* ends with yet another cycle of development. Of *Circle*, she has written that: 'The annual movements across the world of millions of birds, sea creatures and other animals, remind us that everything in nature is interdependent and connected. Changes we make on one side of the world can cause consequences in another ... The challenge we face now is how to live our lives without destroying the places crucial to the shorebird's ancient, wondrous Circle of Life ... Artists and writers can take scientific information and turn it into a story that people will feel and take into their hearts ... There's a difference between knowing something and feeling something... If people's feelings are affected, they might then be motivated to try and change things.' (Baker 2016) She 'reminds the reader that ... we should strive to protect our global ecosystem, in which there is a delicate balance.' (Sheahan-Bright 2016, p. 1) **Above all, her work exudes empathy with the landscape, with the flora and fauna it nourishes, and with the people who inhabit it.** But this empathy is never sentimental. It is founded on the belief that living entails responsibility and that we are all partners in the local and global communities in which we live: 'I hope readers will now notice godwits (and other shorebirds) which they likely didn't give a second glance before. And I hope readers will feel some responsibility in helping to keep these birds safe as their numbers are currently sharply declining.' (Sheahan-Bright 2016, p. 4)

Jeannie Baker is an international star in illustration. Her work is unquestionably deserving of the further recognition that the Hans Christian Andersen Award affords an artist. [For full bibliographical references see **9. List of Essays, Interviews or Articles.**]

4. Awards and other Distinctions

International Awards Arranged per Award Category:

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

American Library Association:

- 2005 *Belonging* Notable Book
- 1996 *The Story of Rosy Dock* Notable Book
- 1984 *Home in the Sky* Notable Book

Austrian Children's Book Council:

- 1996 *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* Honour Book Award

Boston Globe Horn Book Magazine:

- 1988 *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* Honour Book Award

British Book Design and Production Awards:

- 2011 *Mirror* Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education Category Winner

CJ Picture Book Awards, CJ Culture Foundation, Korea:

- 2011 *Mirror* Finalist – New Publications Category

Earthworm Book Award Friends of the Earth UK:

- 1988 *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*

Giverny Award for Children's Science Picture Books, 15 Degree Laboratory, Louisiana State University, USA:

- 2003 *The Hidden Forest* Winner

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration 2018: Jeannie Baker

International Youth Library (IYL) White Ravens Awards:

- 2011 *Mirror* (Included in catalogue)

International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) IBBY Australia:

- 1990 *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* Honour Book

International School Libraries Network (ISLN) Singapore Red Dot Book Awards

- 2010–11 *Mirror* Picture Book Shortlisted

Kate Greenaway Medal

- 2017 *Circle* Nominee
- 1992 *Window* Shortlisted
- 1985 *Home in the Sky* Shortlisted

Notable Book in the Field of Social Sciences USA:

- 1992 *Window*

AUSTRALIA

AWARDS FOR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

- Artist in Residence (AiR) with the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, 2016
- Australia Council for the Arts, Literature Board, Grant, 2004 and 2016
- Australia Council for the Arts, Crafts Board, Grant, 1982/3
- Australia Council for the Arts, Visual Arts Board, New York Studio, 1980 and 1983
- Australia Council for the Arts, Visual Arts Board, Grant, 1978/9

AUSTRALIA
CHILDREN'S & YA BOOK AWARDS

Australian Awards Arranged per Award Category:

Australian Book Industry Awards (ABIA):

- 2011 *Mirror* Younger Children's Category Shortlisted

Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature:

- 2011 *Mirror* Books Useful for Therapists List

Australian Wilderness Society Fiction Award for Children's Books:

- 2005 *Belonging* Winner
- 1996 *The Story of Rosy Dock* Winner

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award:

- 2011 *Mirror* Joint Winner
- 2005 *Belonging* Honour Book
- 1996 *The Story of Rosy Dock* Honour Book
- 1992 *Window* Winner
- 1985 *Home in the Sky* Commended

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Junior Judges Award – Picture Book of the Year Award:

- 2011 *Mirror* Honour Book

Indies (Independent Booksellers Association Awards) Children's Book of the Year:

- 2011 *Mirror* Winner

Kids Own Australian Literature Award (KOALA):

- 1990 *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* Winner

NSW Premier's Literary Awards, Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature:

- 2011 *Mirror* Shortlisted

Western Australian Premier's Book Awards:

- 2011 *Mirror* Children's Category Shortlisted

The Wilderness Society Environmental Award for Children's Literature:

- 2005 *Belonging* Winner
- 2001 *The Hidden Forest* Winner
- 1996 *The Story of Rosy Dock* Winner

Young Australian's Best Book Award (YABBA):

- 1992 *Window* Picture Books Winner
- 1988 *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* Picture Books Winner
- 1986 *Home in the Sky* Picture Books Shortlisted

International and Australian Awards Arranged per Book Title:

Circle

Nominee Kate Greenaway Medal 2017

Mirror

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award Joint Winner 2011

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Junior Judges Award – Picture Book of the Year Award Honour Book 2011

Indies (Independent Booksellers Association Awards) Children's Book of the Year Winner 2011

NSW Premier's Literary Awards, Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature Shortlisted 2011

IYL White Ravens Awards (included in catalogue) 2011

Western Australian Premier's Book Awards Children's Book Category Shortlist 2011

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration 2018: Jeannie Baker

Australian Book Industry Awards (ABIA) Younger Children's Category Shortlisted 2011

Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature Books Useful for Therapists List 2011

British Book Design and Production Awards Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education Category Winner 2011

CJ Picture Book Awards, CJ Culture Foundation, Korea New Publication Category Finalist 2011

International School Libraries Network (ISLN) Singapore Red Dot Book Awards 2010 –11 – Picture Book Shortlisted

The Story of Rosy Dock

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Honour Book Award 1996

The Wilderness Society Fiction Award for Children's Books 1996

The American Library Association Notable Book 1996

Belonging

The Wilderness Society Fiction Award for Children's Books 2005

ALA Notable Book USA 2005

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Honour Book 2005

Window

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award 1992

Young Australian's Best Book Award Picture Books 1992

Kate Greenaway Medal UK Shortlisted 1992

Notable Book in the Field of Social Sciences USA 1992

Where the Forest Meets the Sea

Australian Children's Book Council Picture Book of the Year Honour Book 1988

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration 2018: Jeannie Baker

Young Australian's Best Book Award Picture Books 1988

Earthworm Book Award Friends of the Earth UK 1988

Boston Globe Horn Book Magazine Honour Book Award 1988

Kids Own Australian Literature Award (KOALA) 1990

International Board of Books for Young People Honour Book Award 1990

Austrian Children's Book Council Honour Book Award 1996

Home in the Sky

The American Library Association Notable Book 1984

Kate Greenaway Medal UK Shortlisted 1985

Children's Book Council of Australia Picture Book of the Year Award Commended 1985

Young Australian's Best Book Award (YABBA) Shortlisted 1986

The Hidden Forest

Wilderness Society Fiction Award for Children's Books 2001

Giverny Award for Children's Science Picture Books, Louisiana State University, USA
Winner 2003



Detail of an image from *Belonging* (2004)

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5. Complete Bibliography

PICTURE BOOKS (SELF-AUTHORED):

Circle London, Walker Books, 2016; Somerville, Mass., Candlewick Press, 2016; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2016.

Mirror London, Walker Books, 2010; Somerville, Mass., Candlewick Press, 2010; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2010.

Belonging NY, Greenwillow Books, 2004 (US Title: *Home*); London, Walker Books, 2004; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2004.

The Hidden Forest NY, Greenwillow Books, 2000; London, Walker Books, 2000; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2000.

The Story of Rosy Dock Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2002; NY, Greenwillow Books, 1995; London, Walker Books, 1995; Milsons Point, NSW, Mark Macleod Books, Random House Australia, 1995.

Window NY, Greenwillow Books, 1991; London, Julia MacRae Books, 1991; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 1991.

Where the Forest Meets the Sea NY, Greenwillow Books, 1988; London and Sydney, Julia MacRae Books, 1988.

Home in the Sky Newtown, NSW; Walker Books Australia, 2016; NY, Greenwillow Books, 1984; London, Julia MacRae Books, 1984; Artamon, NSW, Franklin Watts Australia, 1984.

One Hungry Spider Lindfield, NSW, Scholastic Press, 2006, 1988; London, Deutsch, 1982.

Millicent Newtown, NSW, Walker Books, 2008; Sydney, Ashton Scholastic, 1989; London, Deutsch, 1980.

Grandmother Sydney, Ashton Scholastic, 1994; London, Deutsch, 1978.

Grandfather Sydney, Ashton Scholastic, 1994; London, Deutsch, 1977.

PICTURE BOOKS (WITH COLLABORATOR):

Moss, Elaine *Polar* Sydney, Ashton Scholastic, 1989; London, Deutsch, 1975.

6. Translated Editions

Foreign Language Editions

Circle

Totobook, Korea, 2016

Duku Cultural Exchange Ltd, Beijing, China, 2016

Mirror

Interim Oxfam, Spain, 2011

and Intermon, Oxfam, 2011 (two editions, one in Catalan)

Syros, France, 2011

Duku Cultural Exchange Ltd, Beijing, China, 2016

Belonging

Herein, China, 2007

The Hidden Forest

Mitsumera Educational Co Japan, 2006

The Story of Rosy Dock

Gabriel Verlag, Austria, 1998

Where the Forest Meets the Sea

Gabriel Verlag, Austria, 1995

Circonflexe, France, 1995

Yugaku-sha, Japan, 1988

Kinderland, Korea, 2004

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Commonwealth Magazine Co Ltd, China, 2007

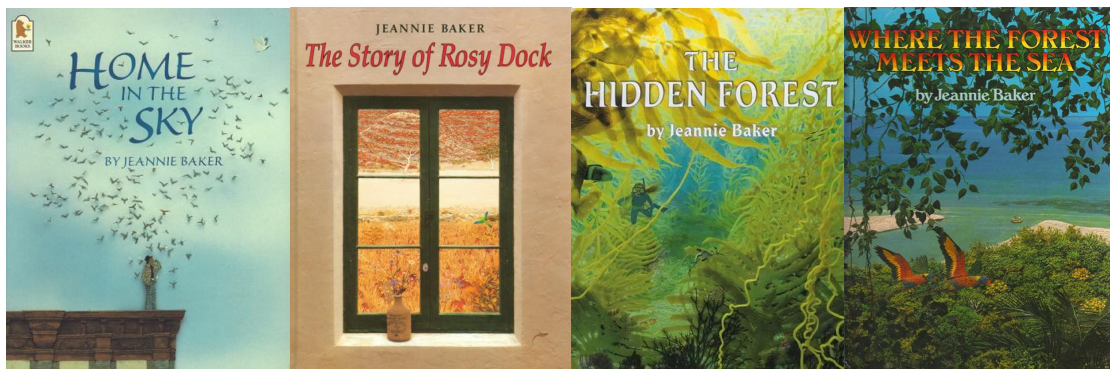
Home in the Sky

Scholastic USA (Spanish), 1993

Kinderland, Korea, 2005

Grandfather

Am Oved, Israel, 1977



Foreign Editions:

Jeannie Baker's books have each been published in the UK and the US. (*Home* is the US title of *Belonging*.)

7. Five Most Important Books by the Candidate

Circle London, Walker Books, 2016; Somerville, Mass., Candlewick Press, 2016; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2016.

Mirror London, Walker Books, 2010; Somerville, Mass., Candlewick Press, 2010; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2010.

The Story of Rosy Dock Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 2002; NY, Greenwillow Books, 1995; London, Walker Books, 1995; Milsons Point, NSW, Mark Macleod Books, Random House Australia, 1995.

Window NY, Greenwillow Books, 1991; London, Julia Macrae, 1991; Newtown, NSW, Walker Books Australia, 1991.

Where the Forest Meets the Sea NY, Greenwillow Books, 1988; London and Sydney, Julia MacRae Books, 1988.

8. List of Books Sent to Jurors

As above.



9. Essays, Interviews or Articles:

This dossier **contains copies** of the following **two articles** in **Appendix A**:

Danielson, Julie 'Reaching New Heights with Jeannie Baker: Interview' *Kirkus Review* July 7, 2016

<<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/features/reaching-new-heights-jeannie-baker/>>

Saxby, Maurice 'Know the Author/Illustrator Jeannie Baker' *Magpies* Vol. 3, No. 1, March 1988, pp. 20–21.

Other Biographical and Critical Sources Include:

Aarons, Anita 'View from a window' *Craft Arts International* November '91/January 1992, pp. 79–81.

Atkinson, Frances 'Under Age: Review *Mirror* and Tim Pegler's *Five Parts Dead*' *The Sunday Age* 12 March 2000, p. 21.

Baker, Jeannie (1950-) in Lees, Stella and Macintyre, Pam *The Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press in association with ALIA Press, 1993, pp. 38–9.

'Baker, Jeannie (1950-)' in Watson, Victor *Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English* Cambridge, CUP, 2001, p. 59.

'Baker, Jeannie' in *The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (Lu Rees Archives)*, University of Canberra, ACT.

<<https://www.canberra.edu.au/national-centre-for-australian-childrens-literature/research-files>>

Baker, Jeannie 'Mirror: Extracts from my Journey' 2010.

<<http://www.jeanniebaker.com/focus/mirror-extracts-from-my-journey/>>

Baker, Jeannie 'Picture Book Expeditions: Keynote Address' in *The Third Millennium: Read On!* Children's Book Council of Australia Proceedings of the 5th National Conference, May 2000, Hughes, ACT, CBCA, pp. 10–16.

Baker, Jeannie 'Keynote Address' in *Read: Myriad Possibilities CBCA 12th National Conference*, 19–21 May 2016 [Unpublished] Sydney, CBCA, 2016.

Ballinger, Carmel 'Cover Book Review: *Circle*' *Magpies* Vol. 31, No. 2, May 2016, p. 16.

Baum, Caroline 'Up Close, and Personal' *Good Weekend* 24 August 2002, pp. 36–38.

'Best of Children's 2010: Picture Books' [Calabria, Karen 'Review: *Mirror*'] *Kirkus Review* Star Review November 15, 2010 <<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/features/2010-childrens-best-jeannie-baker-mirror/>>

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Brabander, Jennifer M. '[Review: *Mirror*]' *Horn Book Magazine* Vol. 87, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2011, p. 76.

Cohen, John 'Interview with Jeannie Baker' *Reading Time* Vol. 35, No. 2, 1991, pp. 9–10.

E. F. '[Review: *Window*]' *Horn Book Magazine* Vol. 67, Issue 3, May/June 91, p. 312.

Hamilton, Margaret 'Flying High' *Junior Books and Publishing* (April to June) 2016, p. 14.

Harari, Fiona 'Features' *The Weekend Australian Review* May 27 1995, p. 5.

Jameyson, Karen 'Mirror, Mirror [Review: *Mirror*]' *Horn Book Magazine* Vol. 89, No. 3, May/June 2013, pp. 16–24.

'Jeannie Baker' in McVitty, Walter, *Authors & Illustrators of Australian Children's Books* Rydalmere, NSW, Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, pp. 19–20.

'Jeannie Baker' in *The Inside Story: Creating Children's Books* edited by Belle Alderman and Stephanie Owen Reeder. CBCA (ACT), 1987, pp. 163–172.

Jeannie Baker in Hyde Park Slide kit, Crafts Resource Productions of the Crafts Council of Australia (Primary and High School Children), 1981.

'Jeannie Baker b.1950' *AustLit*

<<http://www.austlit.edu.au.rp.nla.gov.au/austlit/search/page?query=jeannie+baker&token=xnmDBwl&facetSampleSize=0&facetValuesSize=0&blendMax=y&count=50>>

Jones, Barbara 'How Do You See? Anthony Browne and Jeannie Baker' *Books for Keeps* No. 19, March 1983 <<http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/19/childrens-books/articles/other-articles/how-do-you-see>>

Jones, Richard 'Cover Feature' *Simply Living* Vol. 3, No. 4, 1988, pp. 54–59.

Julian, Merylyn 'Window on the world – a conversation with Jeannie Baker' *Habitat Australia* Vol. 19, No. 4, August 1991, pp. 38–40.

Kellaway, Kate 'Picture Books for Young Children: Reviews' *The Observer* Sunday 5 December 2010.

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Lewis, Berwyn 'Under the Spell of a Magic Forest' *The Australian* March 25 1988, p. 10.

<<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52faae30e4b00e967e1f9866/t/52fdbd56e4b01d4da24c929f/1392360790403/Book+Jeannie+Baker+Daintree+book+130115652.pdf>>

Lewis, Berwyn 'Exponential losses, collective guilt: the work of Jeannie Baker' *Artlink* Vol. 11, No. 4, Summer 91/92, pp. 75–77.

Machado, Karina 'Window on the world' *Who* December 20, 2004, pp. 56–57.

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Macintyre, Pam 'Fired up about place' *Viewpoint* Summer Vol. 3, No. 4, 1995, pp. 9–11.

McIntyre, Arthur 'Cover Feature' *Craft Australia* No. 3, 1980, pp. 10–13.

Morris, Linda 'Interview: Children's author Jeannie Baker follows an endangered bird's path' *Sydney Morning Herald* June 3, 2016

<<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/interview-childrens-author-jeannie-baker-follows-an-endangered-birds-path-20160510-goqqzy.html>>

Morrow, Robin '[Review: *Mirror*]' *Magpies* Vol. 25, No. 3, July 2010, p. 28.

'Review: *Circle*' *Kirkus Review*

<<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/jeannie-baker/circle-baker/>>

Owen Reeder, Stephanie 'From Little Things Big Things Grow [Review: *Belonging*]' *Australian Book Review* No. 268, February 2005, p. 44.

Sheahan-Bright, Robyn "Changing Their Minds: Profile of Jeannie Baker", *Australian Bookseller and Publisher*, April 2000, p. 47.

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10. Published Reviews of Works:

The following is a list of **ten reviews**, two of each of five books, copies of which are contained in this dossier in **Appendix B**:

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Morrow, Robin '*Mirror: Essay*' *Reading Australia* 2014
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11. Reproductions of Book Covers and Illustrations



Morrow, Robin 'Mirror: Essay' Reading Australia 2014
<<http://readingaustralia.com.au/essays/mirror/>>

Essay by Robin Morrow

When a full account of the rise and fall of the printed book is written, the year 2010 will be seen as a turning point. It had become clear to even a mildly interested observer that the book as physical object was under siege. To read long-text books and journal or news articles, many people were turning to tablets and e-books; even I had begun to read Dickens novels on an iPad. But the picture book was mounting a powerful defensive skirmish. Lane Smith's *It's a Book!* appeared in the US, with cartoon animals asking 'Do you scroll down? Does it need a password? No, it's a book!', a reminder that, as Adam Gopnik wrote about it, 'what books do depends on the totality of what they are'. In Australia, where picture books have for decades been both innovative and respected, books without words were among leaders of the charge. The Picture Book of the Year award in 2010 went to Gregory Rogers' wordless *The Hero of Little Street*; three years earlier the winner had been Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*, an album of 128 pages, with nary a word except for some signs in an invented language.

Picture books were not to be easily gobbled up by new technologies. As far back as the seventies, Barbara Bader had forged a definition of this unique art form, which was to become my favourite:

A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and foremost an experience for a child. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page. (p. 1)

Australian artist Jeannie Baker had been in the forefront of demonstrating the possibilities of this art form with her emphasis on 'total design', on a book's constructedness as an 'item of manufacture'. Bader's definition fitted her books admirably, and seemed slightly out-of-date only as Baker came to omit words entirely. And her 2010 book, *Mirror*, was to throw a special spotlight on 'the simultaneous display of two facing pages'.

Most children in Australian schools, and many adults, recognise Baker's books because of her trademark collage constructions. A popular early book, *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, depicts a pristine beach and the hollow trees and lush vines of the Daintree area in Queensland; the artist had collected sand, twigs and leaves from the region, then in her studio built miniature landscapes which, when photographed, provide scenes of intricate detail and 3D realism. A brief text tells of a father and son enjoying the peaceful forest, while ghostly figures call to mind their predecessors, the Aboriginal inhabitants; and then a shadowy future is depicted, of what may lie in store if developers are allowed to do their work. An endnote sets out facts about the Daintree and the need for conservation.

By the time she produced *Window* in 1991, Baker had done away with words altogether. The three hallmarks of a Baker book had now become the 3D collage art, a serious engagement with a major theme of environmental concern, and wordlessness. *Window* tells the story of a young man's growth from babyhood to becoming a parent himself, and the simultaneous changes in the environment around his home, as bushland changes to built-up cityscape. Baker had devised skilful ways to tell a story without words; her readers, too, had developed

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the ability to read pictures. *Belonging*, sequel to *Window*, published a surprising 13 years later, is a more optimistic book, showing the renewal of urban space both by greening and by community-building. The author's note states: 'People are discovering the need to nurture and be nurtured by the unique character of the place where they live'.

Baker's *oeuvre* developed in parallel with the growth of graphic novels and manga, as teenagers especially became used to reading wordless texts. It is rare these days to hear the querulous remarks I would overhear in my bookshop about earlier wordless books, such as 'What are we supposed to do with this book?' I now teach postgraduate courses in Australian youth literature, and include Jeannie Baker works on the booklist; one student commented that she really loved reading these books, as it is like *people-watching*: the book does not tell you what the people are thinking, you as reader must infer it from their actions. Books such as these have trained us all, as readers, to undertake what UK picture book critic Jane Doonan calls *close looking in context* – poring over the illustrations to spot tiny details of colour and texture, inferring, as the US student said, whole life-stories from pictures on the page: these are the challenges and rewards of spending time with a Jeannie Baker book.

Secrecy surrounded the release of *Mirror* in 2010. Nobody was supposed to know where it was set, nor anything about its format. When it did appear, the book was first perceived as unusual – even eccentric – in shape: the reader was straightaway conscious of it as an 'item of manufacture', and needed to work out how to approach it. To pick up a copy of *Mirror* was to experience something quite at odds with the whole tendency of books to enter the e-world, the virtual and slippery place where textbooks and novels cluster, waiting for the click of a button to whisk them into existence. Those experienced in handling picture books instinctively opened the cover to full width, to reveal two equivalent scenes, each one showing a boy looking out at the night sky from an upstairs window. One scene is of a building with lacy decoration, against a pink and green landscape of cultivated farmland; the other shows an urban skyline, with tall buildings many Australian readers would recognise as those of Sydney. The title, *Mirror*, appearing in both English and Arabic, on two 'front' covers is the first of a number of unsettling experiences, certainly to those who assume there is a *correct*, left-to-right way to start the reading process. The right-to-left text of Arabic script versus the left-to-right of English serves as a literal marker of two different regions, as well as a metaphor for *reading the world* in Paulo Freire's term. Readers not accustomed to right-to-left tracking of images may be forced to recognise that Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen were right, when they pointed out that marking of progress by movement towards the right-hand edge of the page is cultural, not universal.

Then, when the book was opened, it was found to be shaped like some kind of very large butterfly, with as wings two sets of pages that open wide and require an ample desk or floor space to display the whole spread. Soon readers discovered, by trial and error or by following the instructions at the start ('The Western and Moroccan stories in this book are designed to be read side by side'), that *Mirror* should be read in symmetry. Reading it this way allows the pairs of spreads to disclose the parallel stories of a day in the life of each of the two boys shown on the cover – one boy who lives in the Valley of the Roses in Morocco, and another in urban Australia. The first young reader with whom I shared the book, spent a few minutes turning pages and peering at the early spreads, then, as though solving a puzzle said 'Oh, I get it', and methodically set to read his way through the pairs of facing pages. And *reading* it is: this book has all the elements dear to an English teacher's heart, such as setting, characters and plot; it just happens that they are delivered without a verbal text . . .

And I must confess it made my old bookseller's heart sing, knowing that to introduce *Mirror* to a class would require the handling of physical books (multiple copies!), and opening them up on desks and lecterns, letting the readers' individual senses get to work on the business of reading.

Picture books have a special relationship with *the passing of time*, a vital element in any story but challenging, of course, for the creator of a wordless book. In *Window*, Baker had planted clues, such as birthday cards on the windowsill, to help the observant reader to follow the growth of the main character. In *Mirror* the reader tracks the time of day through the two boys' stories, which begin with waking up and having breakfast, and continue with a father-and-son journey to the market or shopping centre, their return with something traded in the marketplace, and on to evening meal-time and engagement with the newly acquired possessions. The Moroccan family enjoys their first home computer, and the Australian family has bought a colourful handwoven carpet (maybe a *magic* carpet) about which the reader has built up special knowledge.

The *hinge* to this story – and a hinged mirror seems to me a perfectly suitable image, recalling the mirrors on my grandmother's dressing table – is an item of craft, the beautiful handmade carpet of colourful patterns, that glows against any background. Examining the carpet as a woven object sends the reader back to close looking at the collage constructions of the whole book. Baker has depicted the two contrasting landscapes within which the boys and their families live and move, by combining natural and artificial materials from which she built her collages – as she states in her endnote to the book, from 'sand, earth, clay, paints, vegetation, paper, wool, tin and plastic'. Like the Moroccan mother in her story, she has lovingly constructed an artifact for others to examine and enjoy.

Within the pages of *Mirror* are many rich themes to ponder. To what extent can people from opposite ends of the earth be connected? Are there core human values that each of the two families reveals? Is their daily life mostly a matter of trading (as my more cynical students would claim)? *Mirror* has much to offer as a text to study, and issues to debate.

But turning from these larger questions, I decided to go back to the book and practise *close looking*, trying to look with fresh eyes at the familiar scenes, to see which elements of *Mirror* would claim attention this time round. I was struck anew by the depth of blue in the Moroccan night sky. And what time and care the Moroccan family needed in order to prepare even a simple meal, one shared by the extended family, unlike the Australian family with their takeaways for just four people. I found myself drawn again to a favourite image, that of the spice-seller's stall in the market, with its colours so rich that the reader seems able to inhale the diversity of spices. I noticed again the mother in Morocco starting the day on her prayer mat, and the secular character of the Australian family's daily life. And marvelled that, even among the modern amenities of Australian life, the urban family seemed to spend just as much energy in lugging and heaving awkward-shaped parcels through traffic. And just as the central boy characters were different in many ways, their red clothes were a marker of similarity; and the ending of the book highlighted each boy's eagerness to learn new things and share this knowledge with his family. All these assorted impressions served to confirm the book's role as 'a social, cultural, historical document', in Bader's phrase.

And then I found myself being forced to admit that, even in a wordless book, the creator has gently nudged the reader in certain directions. Baker provides forewords and endnotes that give factual information about where the two families live, and about the materials and

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processes used for the collages; but she also guides the reader towards the underlying ideology of her work – in this case stating that ‘outward appearances may be very different but the inner person of a “stranger” may not be a stranger at all’. It would be hard to resist this message of community and goodwill.

Returning to Bader’s definition, I note that there is one phrase which really does need updating: the statement that a picture book is ‘foremost an experience for a child’. *Mirror* is a fine example of the picture book as an experience for *a reader of any age*, child or adult, to learn from, ponder and discuss, savour and enjoy.

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Butler, Mark 'Window on a Changing World' *Classroom Magazine* 2008
<<http://www.jeanniebaker.com/focus/window-on-a-changing-world/>>

***Window* is a groundbreaking work which points to one possible direction for books in the future – the wordless picture book. It also has a serious purpose, to give children an understanding of how growth affects the world we live in. Mark Butler tracked Jeannie down in her sun-drenched house in Sydney and discussed *Window* with her.**

Window is a simple book with deep resonances. (While it has no text, it does not lack words; what words there are, are incorporated into the visual images; some of the scenes are 'immersed' in print.) The central image is a window. Each of the thirteen double-page spreads shows the window frame and the view outside the window – the reader is always standing inside, looking out.

In the first panel a woman stands at the window, holding a baby, looking out at bush teeming with bird life and plants, with wooded hills beyond. The double-page spreads follow the view from the window as the baby grows up. And as he grows, the landscape seen through his window changes, reflecting the impact of the expanding community.

The trees and birds gradually disappear, to be replaced by houses, roads and supermarkets. The last panel, showing the grown-up baby holding his newborn child as he looks through a different window at a pristine piece of bush set aside for a housing estate, brings the 'story' back to the beginning.

For the double-page spreads Jeannie constructed thirteen small windows, shallow-relief collages backlit to simulate sunlight, which were then photographed. The result is a cumulative sequence of images of great depth and fantastic detail.

The lack of a narrative text does not hinder understanding, because there are many visual and literal clues embedded in the images which help to propel the narrative: a birthday card on the windowsill tells how old the boy is, his name, and so on. But its lack of text is bound to make the book something of a talking point.

A child's view of growth

While the initial reactions to *Window* from US and UK critics have been very favourable, Jeannie knows that its lack of a narrative text, combined with its unashamedly committed environmental perspective, is likely to stimulate some negative responses among critics. But she expects that children will accept the book, in much the same way they accept most new things.



‘A very young child will probably be interested in it because of the changes it can see from page to page, and hopefully be interested because it can see that the child in the book is growing, and identify with that, and maybe even see themselves in the child in some way. But a slightly older child would hopefully begin to see the things in the book which are my reasons for doing it.’ She told Classroom.

Which are?

‘To sum it up in two words, it’s about exponential change, accelerating change. The book is really a metaphor for the changes that are happening in the world, including Australia. In my head, it’s set in the suburbs of Sydney, somewhere like Campbelltown, at the foot of the Blue Mountains. All the birds and vegetation shown in the book can be found at Campbelltown.’

‘I try to show in the book that we’re all part of the changes that are happening in Australia and in the world as a whole. Each of us might make very small changes like, perhaps, digging up the native plants in our backyard. But if enough people make changes like that, those small changes together in fact make one big change. So it’s trying to get that concept across, how we all do play a part in it.’

‘The child in the story is making changes in his own backyard, and you can see, in the end, the small changes together making quite big changes in his backyard.’

Patterns of change

It may not be stretching things too far to suggest that Jeannie Baker believes she can change the world through her work. Perhaps that’s what motivates most great artists.

‘When I began this book, by a conservative estimate we were losing one species every hour. Two years later, by the time I’d finished the book, we were losing two species every hour. The projected rate, if we continue exponentially changing the world, is by the year 2000 we’ll be losing ten species an hour!’

So, Window is your poetic statement about that process?

‘In a sense, listening to information like that is something that everyone, I think, feels disturbed by, but it’s easy to think, ‘I don’t play a part in this.’ I’m trying to show exponential change, which is a concept many adults find difficult to understand, in a simplified way so that it can be understood. All the changes in the book have a pattern – all the natural things like birds, animals, trees, decrease exponentially alongside the manmade changes.’

Windows took nearly three years to complete. Did she expect such a simple concept to take that long?



‘Yes, it’s a very simple concept, but once I really started thinking about it, it wasn’t so simple at all! Every tiny change that happened made me think about things. Even things that stay the same still change with age, and the population might increase, but the time is different at the beginning of the book to the end, so there are social changes – in people’s clothing, hairstyle, the sort of cars that people drive’

A ‘picture poem’

I suggested that rather than describing *Window* as a narrative, a better description for the book would be as a picture poem.

‘That’s a really nice way of expressing it. In a sense, it is a narrative, but the viewer finds their own narrative. One person said to me it was about how the average male is conditioned to dominate and control the world! It had never occurred to me, but that was the narrative she saw in it.’

Do you expect children to read it many times, to extract all the resonances?

‘I hope so. What I’m hoping is that readers will feel a responsibility, that the way each one of us lives our lives, counts. But I also hope they’ll have an understanding of the way everything is related, how once you destroy the native vegetation of a place, the native birds aren’t going to come there anymore, the native animals aren’t going to come there anymore, even the insects.’

‘I’m not saying that all changes are bad, and we have to live, but I think we should be more careful about the way we live.’

Given that Jeannie is projecting one very strong idea, which by implication urges sustainable growth, it is likely she will be accused of producing propaganda. Is *Window* propaganda?

‘I’m sure some people will call it that. It’s not intended as propaganda. What I’m hoping is that it’ll raise a lot of discussion, and a lot of questions.’

Are there other wordless picture books on her drawing board?

‘I see each project as different. For what I was trying to express in this, a wordless picture book seemed right. There was never any point at which I thought that I’m going to need words to say what I want to say here. In fact, I feel the opposite – if I’d used words, it would have come across as a very moralising book, and I would have had a lot of problems with it, whereas I can imply things using pictures. The viewers supply their own words.’

Classroom Magazine

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'BFK News' Books for Keeps No. 52 September 1988

<<http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/52/childrens-books/articles/bfk-briefing/bfk-news-september-1988>>

'**The Earthworm Award** was set up in 1987 by Friends of the Earth to encourage the writing of children's books which reflect concern about environmental issues, books to celebrate the wealth, variety and beauty of our earth while highlighting the many threats to our natural world. **Fiona Waters**, one of the judges, reports on this year's winners.

The winner of the 1988 Earthworm Award is Jeannie Baker for her powerfully imaginative picture book **Where the Forest Meets the Sea**, published by Julia MacRae. The panel of judges was unanimous in its praise for this unique book which conveys its message so subtly, and simply. It also admirably fulfils the criteria that the prizewinner should reflect 'green' thinking in the broadest sense, rather than be a didactic study of conservation.

A small boy sails with his father, in a boat tantalizingly called *Time Machine*, to a deserted island where only birds and animals rove in the lush tropical rain forest. The father tells the boy there has been a forest on the island for over a hundred million years and, as the child explores, shadowy images appear among the trees - dinosaurs, crocodiles, lizards and strange flying creatures. He realises how magical the forest is, but also sadly that Mankind will ruin it all with development and this time the shadowy images are of ghastly high-rise hotels, pleasure boats and sunbathers. **Where the Forest Meets the Sea** succeeds at all levels - it is an appealing and accessible picture book with a strong child central character, the production is excellent and the message stark in its simplicity.'

APPENDIX C. CD-ROM

[Contains photo of author, electronic copies of books, and an electronic copy of the dossier.]