

Director Statement

Eric Carle: Picture Writer, The Art of the Picture Book

In Picture Writer we see the man reflected in his work -- an artist who loves color and the simple collage imagery of animals and insects that appealed to the six-year-old child he once was, and the 82 year old man he is today. Eric is a warm and encouraging artist. He creates to satisfy his own desire to make art but he wants his audience, whether they are 4 or 40 or 80 years old, to be artists too.

Eric's soothing tone flows throughout the 30-minute documentary. As the film's director and editor I was most interested in sharing the person whom I have been so fortunate to document for the past five years. When the cameras are on and when they are off he is the same man. His passion is the craft of creating and he enters a peaceful "alpha state" when he begins his work. The studio is quiet. Eric paints his tissue papers and assembles his collages with the deftness of a master. He can assemble a finished collage of a blue horse in twenty-minutes.

He has retired from the public life of book-touring and visiting schools, but his audience is still growing and is eager to see who Eric is in "real life." This documentary is to help satisfy that curiosity, and Eric is generous in sharing his artistic techniques, showing how he plans a picture book, all while telling deeply personal stories of his life.

One of the things I look forward to each time I have a shoot with Eric is lunch. He's a big sushi lover, and one of the local Northampton sushi restaurants (Moshi Moshi) created a caterpillar role in his honor. Eric designed it: eel, tuna, avocado, and fish roe, with little carrot antennae.

Eric has often shared with me his appreciation of other art forms. He believes in preserving each artist's own unique approach. When he and his wife Barbara built the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art Eric gave the architect, Earl Pope, carte blanche to create the building that Earl wanted to create. Eric has treated my work with the same respect.

What I appreciate most about Eric is that he is a generous artist, he shows how he makes his work, he encourages, and wants to inspire creativity in all of us. "I can do it, you can do it." We are all creative, that is his message, and the ultimate message of this documentary. We are being invited by this master illustrator and icon of the picture book world to be our own artists.