

Exhibition:

The Wonderful World of the Ladybird Book Artists - Illustrating Childhood

Information Pack





Sarah @ws1862 · 1h

First **exhibition** in years where I couldn't help but smile all the way round.

[@leicestermuseum](#) The Wonderful World of the **Ladybird** Book Artists is a total total joy. My childhood on every wall in beautiful wonderful pictures 😊



The idea of having old copies of Ladybird books to pick up and handle is brilliant. I stood at that table for over half an hour, browsing. Every thirty seconds or so someone would make their way to the table and say in tones of utter delight, "I had that one!"

An absolute triumph.
Congratulations.



22/08/2019, 15:54



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Ruthie Grainger
@Ruthiegrainger



Replying to [@Philpage18](#)

Went in July - that book wall will stay with me for a long time! There should have been video capture of the excitement and love of those looking at it and sharing their memories! Can we keep it [@LBFlyawayhome](#) ???!!

17:09 · 13/08/2019 · [Twitter Web App](#)



Keith Thomas
@Myrmecia49



Replying to [@LBFlyawayhome](#)

I read everything, soaking it up like a sponge. Then visited a secondhand bookshop and added to my grandson's collection of Ladybirds. He is so proud to have read 7a this week.

16:03 · 28/08/2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Concept:

Uncover the story of the talented artists who illustrated Ladybird books for more than 30 years.

This beautiful and colourful exhibition puts on display an unparalleled collection of books, original artwork and artefacts and shows how the numerous, talented Ladybird illustrators played such an enormous role in the extraordinary success of the company in the 20th century.

Tracing the interconnected work of these artists, the Ladybird story itself is recounted over its 'golden years' – 1940 to 1975. Visually rich and varied, the exhibition will evoke many memories of childhood. Hundreds of books are made available for visitors to browse through and share.

Vintage Ladybird books encapsulate so much of the history of Britain in the 20th century. There were many different factors behind Ladybird books' phenomenal success in the 1950s – 80s but as Ladybird books were essentially picture books, it was in large measure the illustrations that attracted and engaged users. But who were the artists? Are they known for other work? What was the context in which they were illustrating? Who were the models for the pictures and what were the real locations? These are some of the questions that the exhibition explores – and in the process, it recounts the fascinating story of the little Loughborough print business which became a giant in children's publishing.

It is curated by Ladybird expert and enthusiast Helen Day, who has spent more than 20 years researching the company and collecting.

Visitors

The exhibition is ideal for the adult nostalgia market but also the family market – it is easy to customise the theme to family-based activities related the art and literacy. It is also easy to provide a 'Ladybird trail' around the hosting museum, by 'planting' a relevant Ladybird book within each section of the host venues permanent collections. This entertains children (and not only children!) and draws them around the whole venue. I also provide a couple of hundred 'browsing books' vintage Ladybird books that visitors can actually handle – for adults can reminisce over and for children to discover.

Display

The exhibition is mainly wall mounted but can be seen at its best if up to 4 display cases can be provided (see picture below). All interpretation material is provided. All works are framed with turned mirror plates. Fittings are provided to display The Wall of Books etc. Also provided are hundreds of 'handling books' vintage books made available for visitors to browse through – to revive childhood memories or to share with others.

Cost

Exhibition loan fee is £3,000, whether you wish to host it for one month or up to 5 months.

Transport

Host venues pay the cost of transportation in one direction. So if the exhibition is delivered to you, you will be responsible for transporting it to the subsequent venue (and vice versa). The exhibition can comfortably be transported in one van.

Permissions

The collection is owned and curated by Helen Day and copyright-free imagery can be supplied. If you seek to use the official Ladybird logo or use reproduce any additional Ladybird book images in publicity or support materials, then permission would need to be sought from the imprint holder, Penguin Random House who would charge a fee.

Gallery space

The exhibition is very flexible and adapts easily to different gallery size. Originally the exhibition was designed for 150sqm – 300 sqm of exhibition space but it can be easily trimmed to fit smaller and larger spaces.

Zones and themes:

- The Early Years
- Nature and the Environment
- History
- Fairy Tales

- Jobs and Technology
- Learning to Read
- How to Make a Ladybird Book

Within each section, the story and work of different artists is told. Including or omitting some of these artists is another easy way to adapt to the size of the host venue and to adapt the interests of a particular area.



Recent visitor numbers

The Beaney, Canterbury, June 9th – September 20th 2018

Total visitor numbers: 18,146

New Walk Museum, Leicester, July 13th – September 1st 2019 (7 weeks)

Opening Weekend: 1,275

Total visitor figures: 31,043

Average per day: 609

Social Media

The main 'wow' factor comes from the display of every Ladybird book issued between 1940 and 80 (about 500 books). Although shelving structure is provided, this may need to be adapted and customised by the hosting venue to best suit the space available - but it's the highlight of the exhibition and works well on social media. The whole exhibition is unquestionably a real crowd-pleaser and seems to attract media publicity with ease.



Collection owner and curator

Contact: Helen Day

Website: ladybirdflyawayhome.com

Social Media: @lbflyawayhome

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“For many years now, I’ve been interested in the history of Ladybird books and in the artists who illustrated them. I began as a collector but my interest soon broadened into a desire to understand better the social history that the books contain. Ladybird books illustrated many childhoods and the Ladybird artists gave us an interpretation of the 20th century in bright colour and careful detail”



Helen Day has written about Ladybird books for national newspapers, Royal Mail, the BBC and appeared on numerous radio programmes and on television, discussing the books and her own collection. She shares her fascination with Ladybird artwork and the artists who created it on her website and on social media.