Books Books Books

by Mick Manning & Brita Granström £14.99
(Otter-Barry Books, 9781910959985)

We were all super excited to get our hands on a copy of Mick Manning and Brita Granström’s newest title after hearing all about it at the Showcase last year. Explore inside the greatest Library on Earth, discover ancient hand-made books, and the First Folios of William Shakespeare …

This truly is a book of wonder and certainly a necessity for anyone at all who likes books!

Can you tell us a little more about BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS! and its themes?

We were inspired by a meeting at the British Library together with our publisher Janetta Otter-Barry. The British Library wanted a book that could give children a taste of what was stored away in the bomb-proof vaults - so many treasures that are not always on view to the public. We were given an unforgettable tour behind the scenes - we were even allowed inside one of the vaults to actually handle such books such as Shakespeare’s First Folios - how could we refuse after that?!

We went away and thought about the task chronology; choosing examples that both young and older children (and adults) will find fascinating; such as the tiny hand-made gospel that was found hidden inside St Cuthbert’s Coffin, the Anglo Saxon epic of Beowulf, A recipe from Mrs Gaskell, The Bronte sisters and the brothers Grimm.

Of course it also a celebration of libraries - and librarians... and generally asks for recognition and support for local branch libraries.

How did you illustrate it?

We decided to make the illustrations using as much of the archive material as possible. So each spread uses both painted images and collage we have made from archival fragments and examples from the British Library collection; Some is digital but a lot is old school scissors and glue... for example Brita’s artwork of Beowulf is wrestling a Grendal made of the Beowulf manuscript. We love the feeling that it’s almost as if the books have come to life!

You have been making books together for over 20 years now... favourites?

We are very excited by Books! Books! Books! (Otter-Barry Books) as it was so much fun, and heralds a rebirth of our earlier, more experimental collage style. Also, The Brontes; Children of the Moors (Watts) because we love them, and I grew up in Haworth. Other favourites include my Mum and Dad’s war service in the RAF: Tail-End Charlie and Taff in the WAAF, as well as Stonehenge (all Frances Lincoln) a book made with English Heritage that tells children all they need to know about the Bronze Age.

For a chance to win a copy of this one of a kind book, just email hazelh@askewsandholts.com

Closing date 29th March 2017