

Henri and the Machine

AUTHOR

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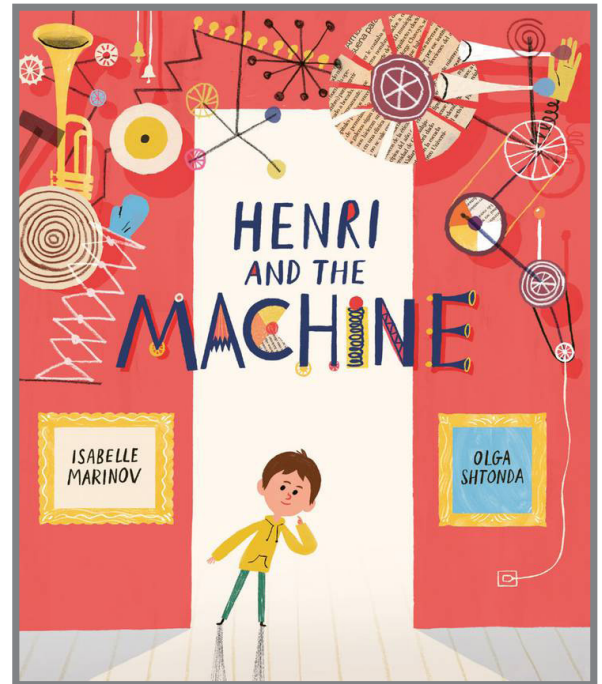
ILLUSTRATOR

OLGA SHTONDA

SCIS: 5455116

ISBN: 9781800786462

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

What's the point of art? This is the question Henri asks himself when his class is taken on a school trip to the local art gallery. Who wants pictures of old soup cans or melting watches? But when he encounters a painting with the most perfect blue, it creates a beautiful feeling. It's blueberries, oceans, summer skies and butterflies all rolled into one. And then he wanders into a room with a chair and a sign that reads 'Is this really a chair?' Henri decides to test it out, unleashing an explosion of creativity! Finally Henri understands what art is all about . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Isabelle Marinov was nine years old when her parents gave her a red typewriter for her birthday. She started crafting stories in German and Luxembourgish, her native language, straight away, but it wasn't until her first son was born that she returned to writing full-time. Isabelle writes across several genres, writing picture books such as the acclaimed *Leo and the Octopus*, as well as middle grade and screenplays. She speaks four languages fluently, but English is her favourite for prose. She is a member of the SCBWI and a 2017/18 Children's Literature Fellow at Stony Brook University in Southampton, NY.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Olga Shtonda is an award-winning illustrator from Kharkiv, Ukraine, who loves to combine different graphic techniques with printmaking, ink, pencils, collages and digital. Right now, she's in Mexico visiting a friend. She went there two weeks before Russia invaded her country. She's wondering if she'll ever be able to go home.

STUDY NOTES

- How does art make you feel? Do different artworks make you feel different emotions?
- Do you think it's possible for a piece of art to make you feel both happy and sad at the same time?
- In the story, Henri learned to see art in a new way. How did his thoughts about art change? What did he discover that made him see art differently at the end of the story?
- What did Henri find out about art from the museum guide? How did they help him to understand art in a new way? Do you think Henri would have been able to learn these things on his own?
- Do you think that everyone will feel the same way when they look at a piece of art? Why or why not?
- Have you ever had the chance to touch or sit on a piece of art? If so, how did it feel? Was it soft, hard, bumpy or smooth? What materials was it made of?
- Why do you think we need art in our world? How does it make our world a better place?

- If art could talk, what do you think it would say? Would it tell us about the artist who created it or would it tell us a story or share its emotions?

ACTIVITIES

- Take students to an art gallery or museum to explore and appreciate art. After the trip, get them to share their favourite piece of art and create a fun activity that's age-appropriate, like drawing or painting inspired by their favourite artwork.
- Take students on a virtual tour of famous art museums around the world. With technology, you can transport them to those they may not have the opportunity to visit otherwise. As you explore different exhibits, encourage them to share their favourite pieces and discuss the emotions they evoke.
- Engage students' imaginations and stimulate their creativity by encouraging them to think outside the box and create their own 'Is this really a chair?' moments. Challenge them to find ordinary objects around the classroom and imagine them as something completely different. By allowing them to explore their artistic and imaginative sides, they will learn to see everyday objects in new and exciting ways.
- Turn your classroom into an immersive and inspiring art gallery! Allow students to curate their own masterpieces and showcase their personal perspective on art. Display their artwork in a gallery-style setting, which will transform your classroom into a truly special place.
- Bring the magic of art to your classroom by inviting a local artist to share their work, expertise and experiences with your students. This is an incredible opportunity for children to be inspired by a professional artist and learn new techniques in a fun and interactive way. Children can ask questions, share their own ideas and participate in an exciting art-making activity under the guidance of the artist.
- Transform your classroom into a collaborative art space by assigning students to work together and create a mural or a large-scale sculpture with a theme, such as 'Community' or 'Nature'. Encourage them to brainstorm ideas and allocate each student a specific section of the artwork to work on, ensuring that all pieces fit together cohesively. Watch as students grow their teamwork skills while creating a beautiful masterpiece that will be a testament to their collective effort and creativity.
- Challenge students' imaginations and creativity by asking them to create artwork using only one colour—blue! Take inspiration from Henri's experience in the art gallery and see how each child brings their unique perspective to their creation.

AUTHOR OF NOTES
CAROLYN WALSH