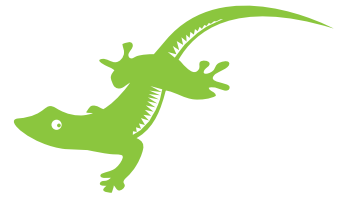


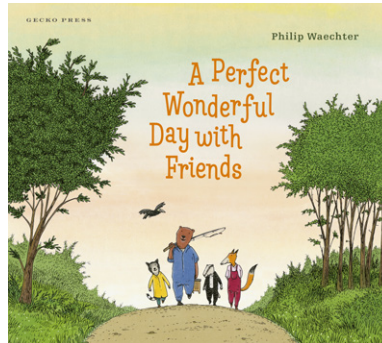
Q&A

A Perfect Wonderful Day With Friends

Philip Waechter



G E C K O
P R E S S



Philip Waechter was born in 1968 in Germany. He now lives as a freelance graphic designer and illustrator in Frankfurt am Main. In 1999 Philip and Moni Port co-founded the community studio LABOR.

What made a perfect wonderful day with friends when you were a child?

When I was a child, my best friend lived with about 15 people in a shared house, a big old villa. It had absolutely everything! There was a big garden with fruit trees, and a cosy treehouse. We made fires, found treasures and played “gangster on the run” in an old car wreck, which for some reason was also in this garden.

We used the cellar as a practice room for bands with different musical instruments: drums, electric guitars, keyboards and amps. We made “music” there, although none of us could play an instrument. And we spent entire afternoons on a real pinball machine. Spending days there with my friends was wonderful and quite perfect.

What is your picture book process? Story first or picture first?

First comes the main idea in my head. And then, as a rule, lots of sketching. The illustrations help me get an overview of the sequence, the page layout and set the scene. The text follows the illustrations ... and so everything follows on, pictures build on pictures, text on text and scene on scene.

The book slowly takes shape, the contents tighten up, again and again it is changed, knocked over and reworked. And eventually I have (hopefully) the happy feeling that the characters are starting to come alive and the story really works.



Can you tell us about your art technique (brushes, colours, digital vs hand, paint)?

I draw with black ink fine line pens then make black and white photocopies of each illustration. I colour these with felt pens and work with crayons to bring out the details. I use ink with little sponges on the paper for the background. I work at actual size and make my picture books without a computer.

What are some of your favourite collaborative projects with fellow illustrators?

I work in a collective in Frankfurt am Main. We are graphic designers and artists, who all make our own books and work on our own projects.

But we also regularly make books together. We sit and talk about what themes interest us and sometimes start to draw. After a few days we hang up all the drawings and look at them together, then we discuss some more and draw some more ... and so on until the book is finally finished. This collaborative work is demanding but always rewarding. As a group we combine ideas and styles to develop diverse and colourful books that we could never have created as individuals.

Which other illustrator's work do you admire, and why?

Since early childhood I have loved the drawings of Jean-Jacques Sempé. Everyone starts with the Nicholas books. I like his warm-hearted looks at people with all of their strengths and weaknesses, their gifts and shortcomings. His figures are surrounded by the most beautiful landscapes and the most fascinating cityscapes (mostly Paris). Sometimes I wish I could draw like him—so loose, so light, and yet so clear and precise.



A Perfect Wonderful Day with Friends | Available June 2022 from all good bookstores

This big-hearted picture book captures the warmth and fun of a spontaneous summer's day with friends, where one lovely activity leads to another until they all go back home to bake a cake (two cakes!) to finish.



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