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Illustration in contemporary society: Educating young artists on how to impact the emerging markets by empowering Thai children through critical visual education.

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# UAEU

## The University of The Future



## Illustration in contemporary society:



Educating young artists on how to impact the emerging markets by empowering Thai children through critical visual education.

Ms. Sarah Nesti-Willard Dr. Fawzia Gilani-Williams

Totally Art Summit - Bangkok 2018

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Purpose and impact through art in contemporary human society

This presentation provides an overview of how artists can make a positive difference by creating text and visual *visibility* for Asian and Middle Eastern children and thereby transform areas of the art industry specifically in the field of art education.

It is based on real-life experiences and research of an established artist and creative writer.

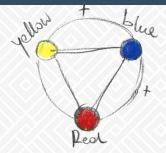


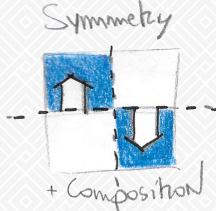
### **Graduating illustrators**



The process of becoming an illustrator is a very challenging task in comparison to other fields of specialization, not only for the nature of free-lancing, but also for the deep visual message pictures carry into our society.

According to a broad research across illustration-based general courses and undergraduate university courses it has been noticed that Visual Studies are mostly based on teaching different artistic techniques, combining colours together, being aware of compositional rules and, most importantly, being innovative and developing your own style.











This student-centred approach methodology, used in most western universities and nowadays in most of the world, helps develop an **individual style** in students.

However, this student-centred approach sometimes fails in covering positive visibility aspects in relation to different cultures.





Role of the Illustrator: to interpret a phrase or a story taking into account local and cultural traditions, and representing the concept in the most effective way possible.





Many illustrators find it hard to successfully deliver the desired product to the publisher because they do not fully relate to the market or simply because they don't research the topic in depth.





Book

#### As a consequence:

Many books in the market give an imbalance of visibility.





## 1. Ambiguous books



### 2. Window books



### 3. Mirror books

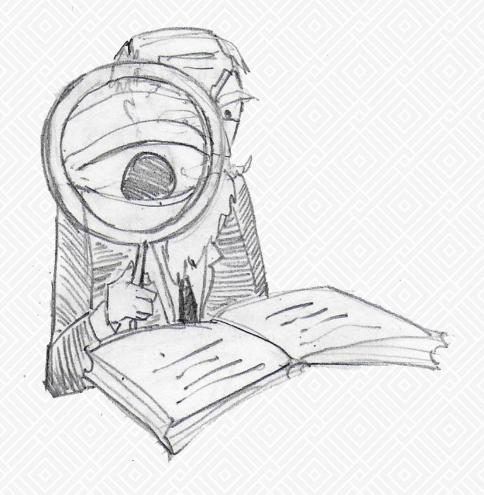




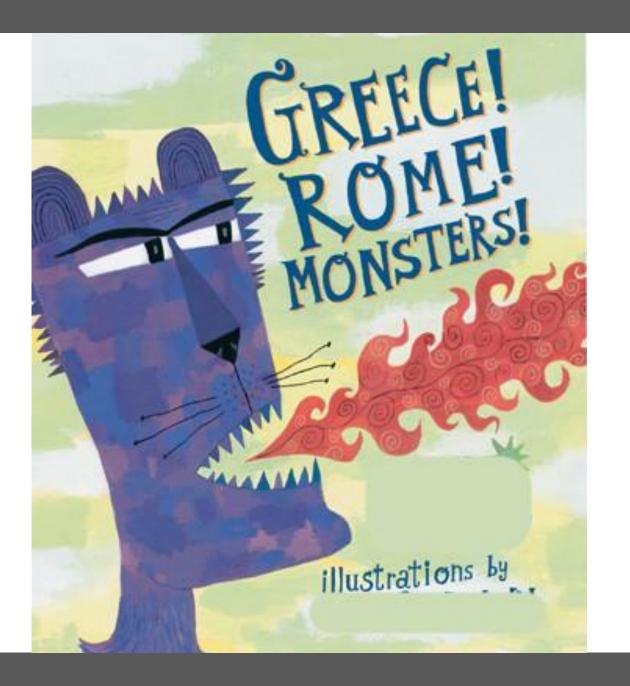
## 1 – Ambiguous books

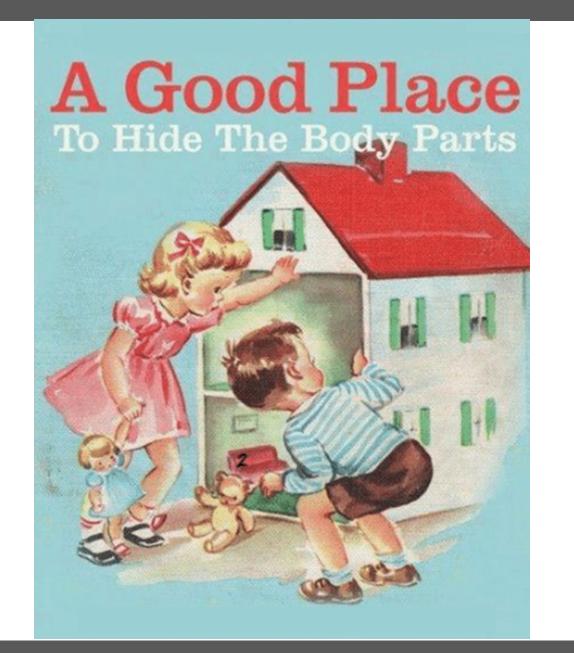


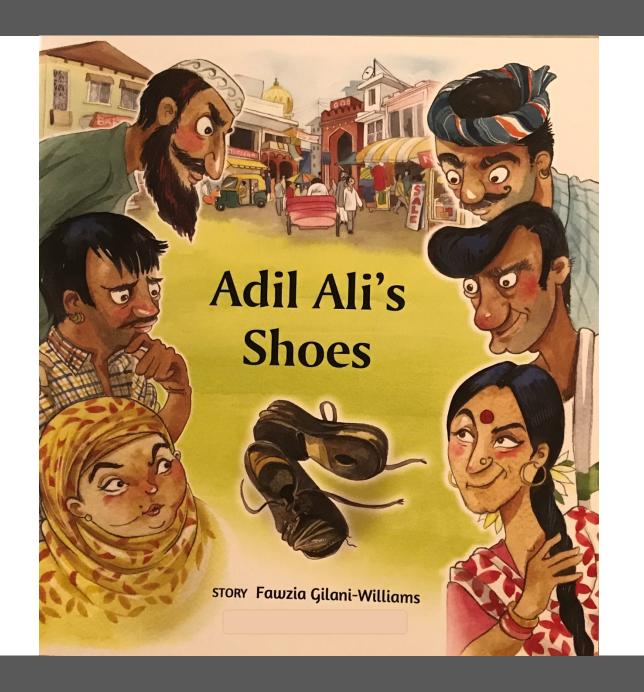
These are books which may present confusing or ambiguous messages to the audience.











#### 2. Window books





Window books develop respect and understanding for other cultures. They make the unfamiliar 'familiar'.





The following books are in Thai Language, but do not contain Thai characters.





More of them are coming! Marie's dad. Tobi's grandpa. And Nala's mum.

โน่น มากันอีกหลายคนเลย พ่อของแมรื่ ปู่ของโทบี้ และแม่ของนาล่า

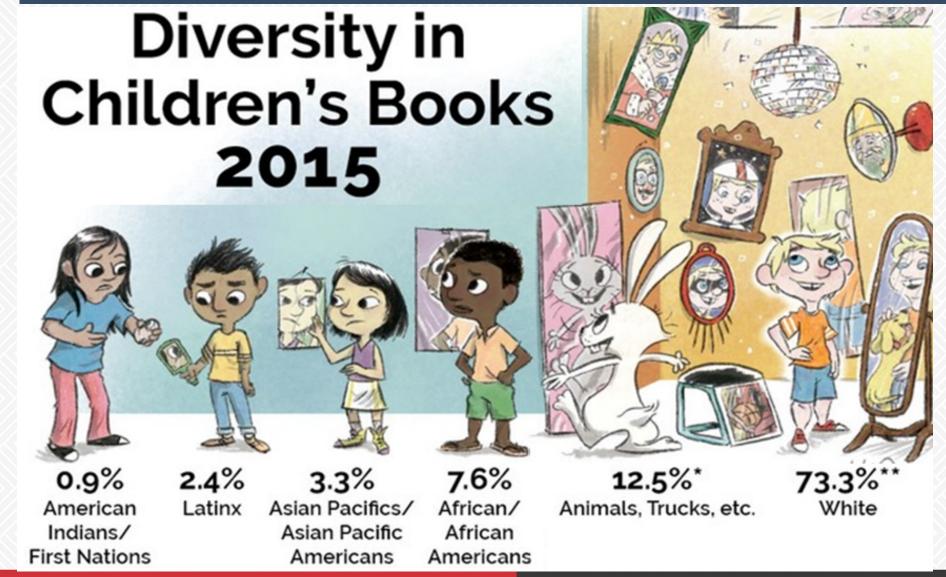


What is Tim doing?

อ้าว ทิมทำอะไรล่ะนั่น

As we know children, learn about their culture and other cultures **UAEU** 

through books.



## 3. Mirror Books



*Mirror books*, like a mirror, are books that make every aspect of the child visible – family, clothes, food, buildings, beliefs, nationality, culture.

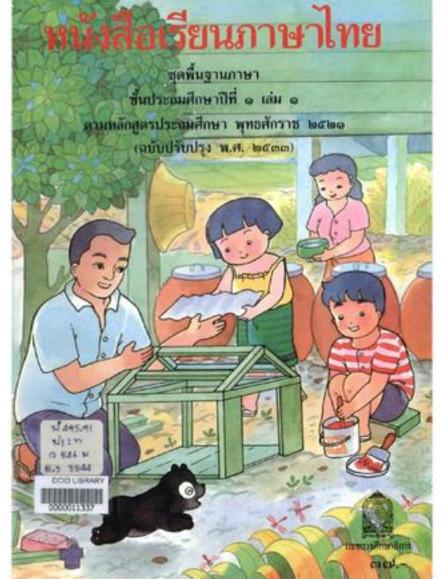
Mirror books empower children to develop a positive self-identity, a sense of place, and a sense of belonging.































#### **Loy Krathong Festival**



#### 3. Mirror books



...But what happens when the child is not visible in the text?







## Teaching in a Desert Region







### **UAEU**





## Further investigation













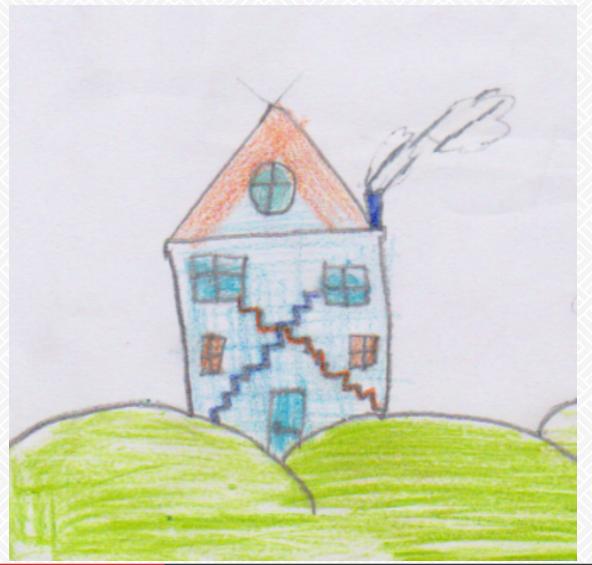


### Two questions:



- 1. Why did you draw houses with a roof?
- 2. What kind of houses did you draw?







## "We're copying what we see in books."

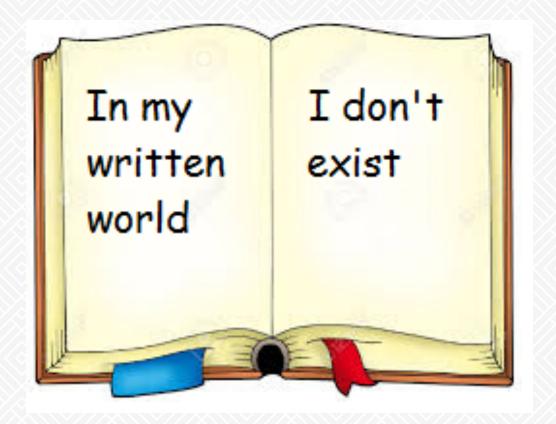








When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read ... they learn a powerful message about who is important in the world and who is not.





## Poignant Transferable Message

Canada has invested heavily in children's books. (Ontario - about \$ 80 million for elementary school libraries).

The Canadians are convinced about the "the **importance** of providing children access to **Canadian books** that tell **Canadian stories** with **Canadian settings**, and celebrate **Canadian values**"

(Howson & Edwards 2009:2).







Are Asian and Middle Eastern children getting an adequate number of books that (like the Canadian children) promote positive self identity?

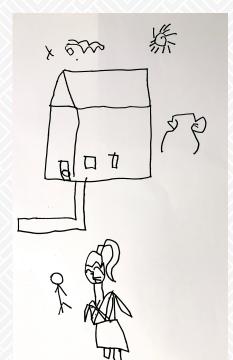




How well are British and American cultures known at an international level?

And how well are Asian and Middle Eastern cultures known at an international level?





## Investigation with Thai children



















## Young people must see themselves reflected in what they read and view so as to develop a sense of positive identity.

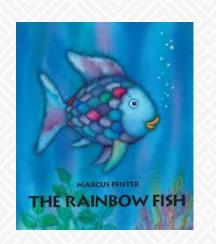
Black & Jobe, 2005



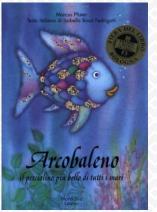


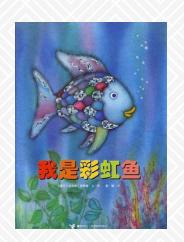
To underscore this phenomenon which is also evident in international markets, we want to draw attention to the one fundamental fact:

Commercialism is about selling a book and making a profit, but developing a positive self image is about empowering a child.

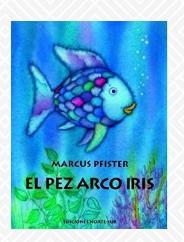


















## Very few mirror books



















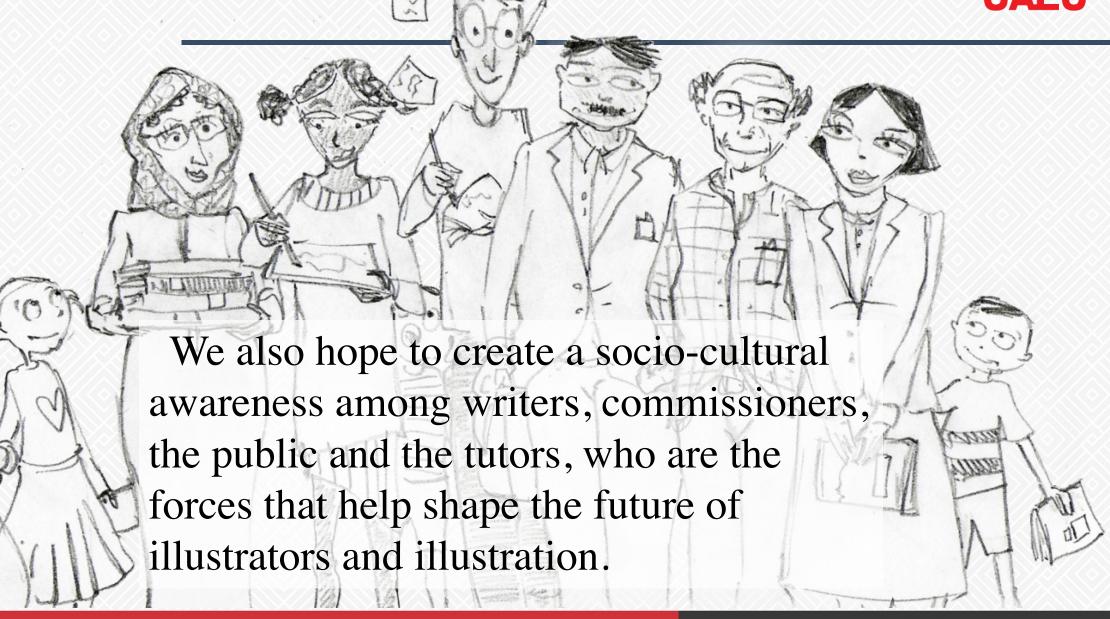


By delivering this awareness we hope to have enlightened illustrators, so that they can have a deeper understanding of how their work impacts children.

As a consequence, they will be able to contribute to giving positive visibility to all groups so that they can become knowledgeable, empowering and successful professionals.







# Thank you

