



## Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

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### Wolf Erlbruch is the 2017 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award laureate

**Wolf Erlbruch, born in 1948, is a German illustrator and picturebook author. He is best known for his illustrations of *The Story of the Little Mole Who Knew It Was None of His Business* (1994), which became a great success around the world. Wolf Erlbruch has written some ten books of his own and illustrated nearly fifty titles by other authors. The citation of the jury reads:**

*Wolf Erlbruch makes existential questions accessible and manageable for readers of all ages. With humour and warmth deeply rooted in humanist ideals, his work presents the universe on our scale. He is a master of the illustrator's art who honours tradition whilst opening new creative doors. Wolf Erlbruch is a careful and caring visionary.*

After studying graphic design, Wolf Erlbruch worked primarily as an illustrator for magazines such as *Stern* and *Esquire* before beginning to teach. Until 2009, he was a professor of illustration and drawing at institutions such as the University of Wuppertal, where he also lives.

Erlbruch made his debut in 1985 with the illustrations for James Aggrey's *The Eagle That Would Not Fly*. His first major success came five years later with *The Story of the Little Mole Who Knew It Was None of His Business*, with text by Werner Holzwarth – a book about an angry little mole who gets poop on his head and sets out to track down the guilty party.

Wolf Erlbruch often embarks on existential journeys, posing important questions about the meaning of life and death with both humour and clarity. *Duck, Death and the Tulip* (2008), a tender story in which little Duck gets a visit from Death, has been hailed as a modern classic and often described as the most beautiful book ever published about death. A simple and refined meditation on the nature of life and the omnipresence of death, it speaks to children and adults alike. One of the most controversial titles that Erlbruch has illustrated is *L'ogresse en pleurs* (1996), with text by Valérie Dayre. On its face a dark fairy tale about a woman who wants to devour a child, the book takes a deep look at difficult and important issues in the parent-child relationship, such as symbiosis and freedom, love and the fear of loss.

Wolf Erlbruch is an innovative illustrator. His visual style grows out of a long tradition and is characterized by strong lines and graphic precision. He often combines different

THE ASTRID LINDGREN MEMORIAL AWARD

Swedish Arts Council | PO Box 27215 | SE-102 53 Stockholm | Visit Borgvägen 1-5, Stockholm  
Phone +46 (0)8-519 264 00 | E-mail literatureaward@alma.se | www.alma.se/en

techniques: collage, pencil and chalk drawing, graphic experimentation and watercolour. Animals, especially bears, make frequent turns as characters and protagonists in his stories, as in *The Miracle of the Bears* (2006) and *The Bear Who Wasn't There and the Fabulous Forest* (2016).

Wolf Erlbruch has received numerous awards, including the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis and the Hans Christian Andersen Award for his complete works.

The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award will be presented by H.R.H. Crown Princess Victoria in a ceremony at the Stockholm Concert Hall on 29 May 2017.

### **More information**

Mariella Kucer, Communications Officer

Phone: +46 (0)76 540 10 17

E-mail: [mariella.kucer@alma.se](mailto:mariella.kucer@alma.se)

The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) is the world's largest award for children's and young adult literature. The award amounts to SEK 5 million and is given annually to a single laureate or to several. Authors, illustrators, oral storytellers and reading promoters are eligible for the award, which is designed to promote interest in children's and young adult literature. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the foundation of our work. An expert jury selects the laureate(s) from candidates nominated by institutions and organisations all over the world. The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award was founded by the Swedish government in 2002 and is administrated by the Swedish Arts Council.