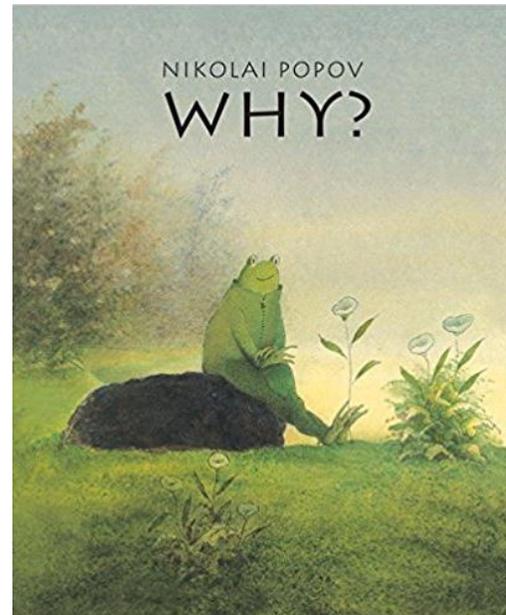


“Children learn early that there are stories in pictures, and images of great power in words,” explains Michael Neugebauer, Founder of minedition. “Good books always enrich the language of a child’s thought and speech and imagination.”

“*Beautifully crafted books that open the door to the world*” is the tagline of award-winning children’s book publisher minedition. This creator of high-quality designed children’s board and picture books includes work from four Hans Christian Anderson Award winners. We sat down with Michael Neugebauer, the company’s founder, to learn about how and why he and his international talent roster do what they do.

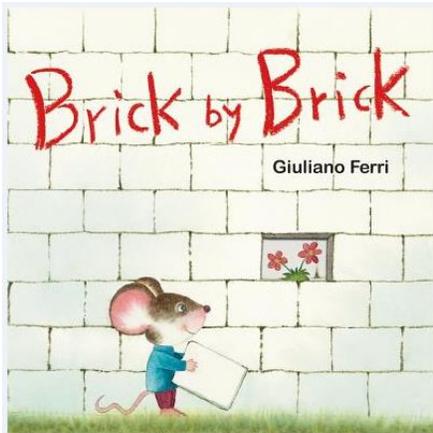


Q: Your books for babies and toddlers have received starred reviews, awards, and praise that talks of how they “add new twists to the standard shapes concept books... adding an element of concreteness — and stretching children’s brains”* and are “expertly designed and executed.” We’re interested in hearing about how you came to publish the now internationally adored Yusuke Yonezu and his line of unique die-cut concept board books and also the “transformative” (PW) novelty board books of Agnese Baruzzi.**

A: Maybe it has something to do with my training/background because I’m a graphic designer myself. Together with minedition artists, we discuss ideas and projects and develop and create our books for the youngest readers. It’s a lot of fun and I am frequently visiting our artists at their studios all around the world. Plus many of our board book illustrators -- Yuzuke Yonezu, Agnese Baruzzi, Giuliano Ferri and Jonas Lauströer -- have small children themselves and know what they like and need to educate them. Living and working in Hong Kong gives me a great opportunity to technically develop these productions. Board books with die cuts and flaps or pop-ups are more complex to produce (also because of the required safety tests) than traditional board books. This makes them expensive: in most cases the production of a board book costs more than a regular book but still sells for much less. Only large print runs of international co-productions can help offset the costs. The rest is idealism and the satisfaction of creating a good book for the youngest. I only just hope they enjoy them as much as we enjoy creating them.



Q: In addition to the concept boards, minedition's also recently published work that's "so vitally important, especially in these captious times — you can practically feel the shards of hope lodging in your heart as you read it with a child." (New York Times Book Review on BRICK BY BRICK). And WHY? by Nikolai Popov was recently named a National Council of Social Studies Notable Trade Book. How does it feel to be publishing work that's so instantly recognized as must-haves for every elementary classroom (The Reading Chair)?



A: I am lucky that I can decide myself which books I publish or don't. For me, the message in a book is more important than sales projections. I think this is what publishing should be all about: to publish important works which may positively influence the young reader. Good books do for children the same things they do for adults: they inform, they stimulate, delight, amuse and transport us all into other worlds of thoughts and experiences. They make us think and feel and respond, and they can put us in intimate touch with the best that has been known and thought. Good books make us more aware of others and lead us forward into a surer knowledge of ourselves. Perhaps even makes us better people?

Q: But wait, you also publish books for elementary and older readers, like award-winning fairy tale collections illustrated by Lisbeth Zwerger or the new books with Jane Goodall. Tell us about those please!

A: The picture book has a special role in leading young children safely from images to language, and building a permanent and valued bridge between sounds, words, and visualization. Children learn early that there are stories in pictures, and images of great power in words. Good books always enrich the language of child's thought and speech and imagination. It's an honor to work with such smart and revered creators. Liesbeth Zwerger is one of the world's most celebrated illustrators and we work closely with her to produce the most beautiful book possible that reflects the glory of her art. We take our work with our authors and illustrators very seriously; in Jane Goodall's A PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE, for instance, Jane and I both believed we needed to quite honestly address the difficult issues the world's facing and do it in a way that fosters discussion between children and adults and we spent a lot of time getting it right, including selecting an Iranian illustrator, Feeroozeh Golmohammadi. In addition, we use native speakers for editing and renown translators (Anthea Bell, for example) to translate our stories from authors all over the world so that they're as authentic as possible.

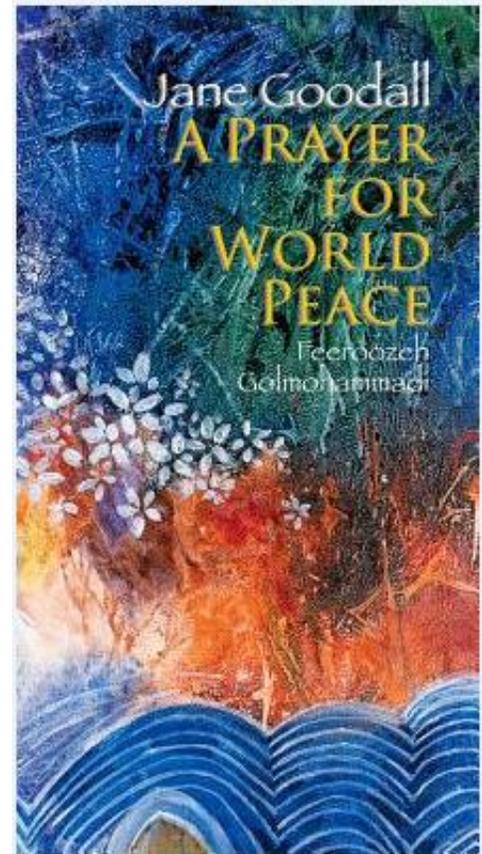


Q: And, we just have to ask: will there be more from Sybille Schenker. We recall Elizabeth Bird writing ""Without a doubt, it is the most beautiful fairy tale I've seen this year." (A Fuse #8 Production, School Library Journal on HANSEL AND GRETEL). Yes?

A: Indeed there will be a third one. *The Frog Prince*. In fact, we had announced its publication, but the very special production (with single page silk screen printing and gold foil stamping on transparent film sheets) would have taken until early December. Therefore we decided to reschedule the publication until Fall 2018. Keep your eyes open, it will be stunning.

Q: Anything else you'd like us to know about your and your talented crew of authors and artists?

A: We always try to present the artwork and articulate the story in our picture books. We do this from the design perspective, with clean typography and the best possible printing and production. Why do we go through such trouble? Children! Their minds are clear and clean and true. They deserve the very best design, the very best writing and the very best art instruction. I am certain that good taste can be taught, the sooner our children see and enjoy good art, good writing, the more they will benefit now and later from the satisfaction of knowing what and how to appreciate.



* (*The Horn Book* on Yusuke Yonezu's *SQUARES and CIRCLES*)
**(PW STARRED review of *WE LOVE EACH OTHER*)

