

### Teaching Ideas for the Klaus Flugge Prize Shortlist 2023

Set up to honour Klaus Flugge, founder of Andersen Press, this award is for the most promising & exciting newcomer to children's picture book illustration.

**Title:** *Mildred the Gallery Cat*

**Author/illustrator:** Jono Ganz

**Publisher:** Tate

*These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools and settings with ideas to develop comprehension and extended provision around Klaus Flugge Prize-shortlisted texts for children of all ages. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. We hope you find them useful.*

*This book is particularly suitable for children aged 5–8.*

#### Reading the book and close reading of illustration:

- Begin by looking at the front cover illustration. *What do you think you know about Mildred and the kind of cat she might be? From her facial expression, what do you think they might be thinking or feeling? What do you think might be the significance of her being **the gallery cat**, does the publisher's name **Tate** mean anything to you?*
- *Look at the endpapers of a mouse painting numerous portraits of a cat, then the title page with another cat: what do you notice about its clothing, facial expression and body language? What do these images make you think about, or feel? What do you think might happen in this story?*
- Now read the first two spreads up to **Everyone, that is, except...** *What do you think is happening in these opening spreads, what do you find out about the setting - the time and place of the story that is unfolding? Encourage the children to look closely at all parts of the illustrations: what details of gallery closing time in the words or illustrations stand out for you, and why? We are told that **Everyone had had a busy day**; as the day draws to a close, what do you predict the next page might show when you turn it: what does **everyone, that is except...** set you up to expect?*
- Continue reading the next three spreads, pausing after **all to herself!** to discuss Mildred. *What do you learn about Mildred from these pages, what do people say and observe about her? Why do you think she might sleep all day? Support the children in comparing the three poses of Mildred as she wakes up for the evening. How do the illustrations convey her personality? How do you think night-time Mildred might relate to day-time Mildred?*
- Now read on, up to **hungry!** *What do we learn about nocturnal Mildred from the way she interacts with the gallery artworks? How does the illustrator convey her emotions with facial expressions and body language, to show that she is by turns **happy, introspective and hungry**? Children may also notice the mouse popping up in each spread: why do you think the mouse is shown?*
- Read on from **Mildred wondered...** to **SPLAT!** *What do you think has happened in these pages? How has the illustrator shifted from Mildred's musing on creativity to her pursuit of the mouse? Support the children to consider the layout of the pages, from the four panels of Mildred musing on cats as artists, the mouse spotted then framed by Mildred's tail, the chase through the artworks, the scale of the mural, and finally her attempt — **SPLAT!** — to follow the mouse into its hole.*

- Now read on to the end of the book. *Is this the aftermath you expected, Mildred's creative **chaos** met by **a hushed silence**? Are you surprised by the crowd's reactions? How do you think Mildred (and the mouse) feel when the **gallery was abuzz with excitement**? How do you understand the final line **it was art!** above the illustration of Mildred and the mouse — both still showing traces of paint from the night before — sharing her basket? What does it make you think about the story you have read?*
- After reading, encourage the children to tell you what they liked about the book. *Was there anything they disliked? What did it make them think about? Do they have any questions about the book? How did it make them feel?* They may also like to look for the mouse that can be seen on almost every page, sometimes only as a curly tail, and use the opportunity to reread the whole book!

### Engaging in illustration:

- Jono Ganz is both author and illustrator, so look at how he tells the story partly through words and partly through pictures. Look back through the book, focussing on particular spreads, such as:
  - the pursuit from **Mildred chased...** to **... statue of a ballerina!** considering how he shows movement and uses humour to capture the hunt, and how the text is also placed to lead your reading;
  - the **SPLAT!** spread where collage and text combine to show the impact of Mildred colliding with the mousehole;
  - the front and rear views of the same scene on the next pages capturing Mildred's dilemma;
  - the crowd's **hushed silence** and Mildred's "artwork" with the crowd's reactions.
- Jono Ganz worked at Tate Modern, his story inspired by a real-life Mildred who lived and "worked" there. The book is full of playful references to artworks from the Tate and other collections — by Matisse, Dalí, Calder, Degas, Moore, Miró, Munch, Pollock... The children could research the collection at <https://www.tate.org.uk/> and reproduce a chosen artwork — perhaps an animal as these are Mildred's favourite — in their own style and in different materials as the illustrator has done.
- The illustrator also uses collage: revisit the spread of the **breathtaking sculpture** Mildred and the mouse have created, unpicking how this has been made and modelling how to cut and place different materials (paper, card, cardboard, found materials) to create a new piece. This could be placed in a whole-class "gallery" alongside the artwork they create inspired by the collection.
- Allow the children to draw Mildred and the mouse for themselves, deciding where to place them in the gallery. Draw alongside the children as they work. When their drawings are complete, allow the children to use oil pastels or crayons to add colour and bring their drawings to life, concentrating on the shades and tones seen in the setting.
- Give space for the children to pin up and share their drawings, allowing them to look at the similarities and differences in their work and to talk about what is effective in their own work and that of others.
- Allow access to art materials to draw and make up their own scenarios or stories featuring Mildred, the mouse, and artworks from the gallery or to create characters, scenarios and stories of their own.

**This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a UK based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at: [www.clpe.org.uk](http://www.clpe.org.uk)**