Beatrice

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Beatrice

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Early Childhood General and Special Education

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Abstract

*Beatrice* is an original picture book biography about the life, ideas, and work of the American artist Beatrice Wood. It was written to be read to children from kindergarten to first grade, and for independent reading with support as necessary for second and third graders. It is the story of a woman who disregarded familial and social convention to go on to live a long life of independence and creativity. Through simple text and repetition, it shows children how through determination and continual learning and growth, an individual can create a life of purpose and happiness. Information about Beatrice Wood was gathered through research consisting of reading books and articles, watching videos, visiting her Ojai, California home and studio, observing and participating in a ceramics class for young children given at her studio, and conducting interviews with those who knew her and admired her life and work. The book describes her life from birth, to her final days at one hundred and five years old.
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Introduction

I first became aware of Beatrice Wood on a Sunday afternoon trip to a bookstore in Santa Cruz, California. I had once lived in this quiet seaside town, and found myself visiting, after having moved back to New York several years earlier. As I scanned the shelves, I came across a title that grabbed my attention: *I Shock Myself*, by Beatrice Wood. Who was this woman who stood outside her own self, looked in, and felt a shock, I wondered. The photographs on the cover drew me in. There, I saw images of a woman captured in three stages of her life, staring at me with the openness of youth, the excitement of middle years, and the knowing of old age. I flipped through the book, read snippets, and decided that this was a book I had to read, upon my return to New York. I would not buy it that day, because my luggage was already heavy with shells, driftwood, and beach rocks. I returned to the East Coast fully intending to get a copy of the book to read, but then the business of life intervened, and the idea was put aside. Still, the name Beatrice Wood lingered with me. I remembered her name, her noteworthy and interesting friends, and her exotic attire.

Several years later, the name Beatrice Wood was in the news, and I remembered the intriguing book I had not read. Beatrice was celebrating her one hundredth birthday, and the art world was celebrating it with her. She was being admired and feted, and her work was gaining a new audience. While I had become slightly familiar with her life story from quickly perusing her autobiography, I was not at all familiar with her work, although I knew that she was a ceramist. Sometime during the year of her centennial celebrations in 1997, I found myself in what was then called The American Craft Museum, on 53rd Street, in New York City. I frequently went there on my lunch hour, to peruse the gift shop. There at the back of the shop in the book section, was a spectacular book titled *Beatrice Wood: A Centennial Tribute*. I looked through the book, and this time, I purchased it, remembering the book I had passed by years ago. Reading this book and looking at the photographs of the art of Beatrice Wood, began to open her life and her creative
world for me. I was so intrigued by this centenarian artist, and her spectacular body of work.

Her ceramic vessels were formed in the shape of plates, bowls, cups, and chalices. The figured works were adorned with extraordinary detail. Her characteristic ceramic finish was a vari-colored metallic luster glaze. Flowing over every curve and valley on her wheel-thrown and hand formed pieces, the glazes brought a fiery lustrous glow to her work. There was some figurative work in the shape of people and animals, many photographs of Beatrice in various stages of her life, writings about her and her work by various authors, and finally, reproductions of some of her highly stylized and dramatic drawings, prints, and watercolors.

Over time, through reading this comprehensive book, and doing some further casual research, I learned more about this fascinating artist. I learned that she was raised in a wealthy bourgeois environment, and that she rejected its values and strict codes of behavior for girls and women, while she was still in her teens. I learned that she broke from her family and convinced her very traditional mother to let her go to art school in France, at the age of nineteen, with a chaperone, who Beatrice described as “an elderly spinster of thirty whom I detested (Wood, 1985 p.4).” She ran away from her detested chaperone, and wound up painting in a French garret, soon to be dragged by her mother to Paris, who then did her best to take control of her life. Fortunately for us, her mother failed in this attempt. In 1913, Wood attended the premiere of the Ballet Russe, Le sacre de printemps, featuring the music of Stravinsky, and performed by Nijinsky. She developed an interest in the theatre, and decided to become an actress. Wood then returned to the United States, and joined the French Repertory Company, playing over sixty roles during the next two years. This was not her mother’s idea of a proper vocation for a young woman. Beatrice continued to rebel at every opportunity. She was a woman way before her time. She truly danced to the beat of her own heart, at a time when women were still bound to the hearth by laws, mores, customs, and sometimes, fear of the unknown. Beatrice might have felt this fear, but she ventured forth anyway, to find her own independent way in the world, and to make her life her own.
As is the way with life, surprises happened along the way. Beatrice never fully found herself, or her life’s work, until she was forty years old. And when she did, it was quite by accident. During a European trip in 1930, Beatrice found herself in Holland, in an antique store. There, she found six luster glazed plates. She purchased them. After several years of searching for a matching tea pot to go with the plates, she became frustrated at being unable to find one, and decided to make one herself. Back in the United States, Beatrice enrolled in a ceramics class in 1933, given by the Adult Education Department at Hollywood High School. Beatrice had found her artistic métier. Her real adventure had begun.

From that time forward, Beatrice lived a creative life governed by her artistic passions, wide ranging interests in art and people, and her need to make a decent living for herself as an independent woman who refused to be tethered by rules, mores, or men. As she lived and created her way through this life, she attracted many admirers along the way. Gregarious and colorful, she was sought out by other artists, dealers, and eventually, journalists and serious collectors, who valued her creative output, life story, and way with words. How could I resist such a story, and the colorful character who wove her own life together out of imagination, character, and perseverance? And, in a small way, I felt a connection to this woman, who, at forty years of age, finally found her artistic place in the world, as I had, at thirty five, when I took up my tools for the first time, and became a jeweler.

As life held many surprises for Beatrice, so also, it did for me. Unceremoniously squeezed out of the jewelry business by a sharply declining economy, I decided to become a teacher. This was a road previously not taken, because in my youth, I had mistakenly believed that we can only travel one road in life. Little did I know then, that the web of my life, with its many turns, turn backs, and loops, would eventually resemble a gossamer lace shawl. Because Beatrice and I both found our artistic passions late in life, and because our lives have both had many unanticipated and surprising turns, I feel a kinship with her. Because she turned away from material wealth and security while finding her own way in youth, while I did not, she is a role model for me.
I have decided to write a biography about Beatrice Wood for young children, because I think that hers is an exemplary life, and as such, may be of value to them, and a lot of fun to read about as well. What better way to learn about one version of life, than to visit one which was colorful, dynamic, independent, and ultimately, satisfying and successful. Beatrice Wood wrote the story of her own adventure, lived the perils, climbed out of the valleys, and ended up on top of the mountain, artistically, spiritually, and actually. She spent the latter part of her life doing exactly as she pleased, making beautiful things, entertaining wonderful friends, and taking good care of herself and some of her friends, while living happily on an open mountaintop, watching the pink mountain sunsets of Ojai, California.

And so, one beautiful early summer day, I found myself driving down the California coast towards Ojai, California, to make a pilgrimage and visit, to the studio and home of Beatrice Wood. Although Beatrice had passed away several years before, I felt her presence as I looked through a book of photographs of her work, as my friend Julie and I made our way South from Santa Cruz. Poufy cotton-ball clouds flew fast on bright sun and high winds, as we drove down Freeway 101 to the Ventura Highway, on our way to the mountain town of Ojai, California. My adventure in studying the life of an extraordinary individual, who I admire greatly, had begun.

I have found the road to biography to be long, circuitous, and eventful. I have travelled far, and have met some wonderful and generous people along the way. I hope that upon reading my biography of this unique individual, my little students can begin to envision a life of personal choice, uniqueness, and adventure, for themselves.
Rationale

A walk through the children’s section of any bookstore may include the shelf titled ‘Biographies.’ There, we could find so many books about noteworthy, interesting, and exciting people. There are books about politicians, academics, actors, sports figures, stars of every kind, and even artists, but among these titles, the name of Beatrice Wood is not mentioned. I wonder why, and I do not know why, this famous, colorful, exemplary individual has been neglected by writers of the children’s biography genre. But, I do not wonder much, as I prefer to take action.

Of course, before I took action, I wanted to do a thorough examination of existing biographical literature, to make sure that I was correct in my assumption that I would be alone in the field as a writer for children, about Beatrice Wood. So, I searched. I searched bookstores, libraries, and the internet. I found nothing written specifically for children about my subject. Finally, in a search which literally took me far and wide, I went to the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, in Ojai, California. There, I consulted with the center’s director, Kevin Wallace, Beatrice’s friend and studio assistant, Richard Flores, and her long time friend, Steven Huyler. During my interviews and discussions with them, I found, again, that there were no children’s biographies about Wood - there had been nothing written about the life of Beatrice Wood for children. What an oversight! This final information about the absence of material, cemented my intention to write a children’s biography, to fill this need.

I began to do research by accumulating material written for adults about Beatrice, her life, her work, and her many accomplishments. I read Gilded Vessel: The Lustrous Art and Life of Beatrice Wood by Garth Clark. This book gave me insight into Beatrice’s art, life, loves, travels, business, and friends. Written by someone who knew her well and admired her deeply, it is a spectacular introduction to her life. Beatrice Wood: Career Woman – Drawings, Paintings, Vessels, and Objects, by Longhauser and Melandri, is a scholarly summation of the artist’s life and work, including biographical information, excerpts from her diaries, and photographs of both finished work, and of Beatrice working in her studio. Dr. Francis Naumann wrote Intimate Appeal: The Figurative art of Beatrice Wood. As
her friend and professional associate, he shows us Wood as an artist who also created works on paper, and humorous ceramic figures engaged in various activities. In addition, Naumann also wrote *Beatrice Wood: A Centennial Tribute*, which presents a compilation of articles about Wood by various authors, detailing her life and work. This book also includes an essay by Wood herself, which gives significant insight into how she experienced her work. It is enlightening and fascinating reading. Further along in my search for books about this colorful artist, I came along *Playing Chess with the Heart: Beatrice Wood at 100/Photographs by Marlene Wallace*. Wallace, another long time friend of Wood, gives us photographic insight into the wonderful, colorful, and humorous artist, as she poses, flirts with, and romances the camera at one hundred years of age. Here, quotes by Wood accompanying each photograph, give us insight into her ideas about, and philosophies of, life, love, and art.

In addition to these books about Wood, I also located several audiovisual media sources of information about her. In the DVD *Beatrice Wood: Mama of Dada*, producers Douglas, Neff, and Knox present insights into how Wood grew up, rejected the conventionality of her upbringing, and entered a life of liberating social and artistic adventure, as one of the characters of the Dada art scene. In the DVD *Special People: Beatrice Wood*, producer Parks engages several of Wood’s longtime friends and associates to give viewers a vivid picture of her long and productive life. Through their recollections, we are able to see a woman who moved relentlessly and unconventionally towards her goals throughout life, while charming and amazing everyone she met with her wit, vivacity, and work ethic. The final audiovisual source of information I found about the artist was produced by Peters, and presented in the artist’s own words. The DVD *Beato...In Her Own Words*, shows us Beatrice Wood herself, speaking to us directly, in her own words. In this moving film, she delineates the philosophies which were the moving forces in her life, tells us about the people she knew, and the beautiful valley she called home. From Beatrice, we learn that her work nourished her life, and that she intended to keep working until she was no longer able. This video portrays a woman and artist, who created a life as individual and lustrous as her work.
The final category of information I unearthed in my search for knowledge about Beatrice Wood, was books by the artist herself. Beatrice wrote two books. One is called *Pinching Spaniards*. It is a compilation of letters and drawings for a dear friend, depicting her activities on an extended European vacation. It represents her personal style of expression, in her relationship to an intimate and long-time friend. The other, her autobiography, is called *I Shock Myself: The Autobiography of Beatrice Wood*. Here, she recounts her own colorful story, leaving little to the imagination. Beginning with her proper Victorian childhood, and taking us through her rebellious youth, searching middle age, and fulfilling old age, she paints a picture which is unconventional, exciting, and engrossing. Illustrated throughout, this book paints a compelling portrait of this unusual woman, who was far ahead of her time.

So many works about Beatrice Wood, but none written for children, at their developmental level, with appropriate illustrations and text! I truly was surprised to have turned up nothing. Because of this lack of children’s material about this fascinating woman, I have written my book to fill this void. Since I am currently studying early childhood general and special education, I have decided to write my book for this very young audience.

My text is written for children from kindergarten to third grade. It is suitable for reading to kindergarteners and first graders, and for supported reading by second and third graders. The proposed illustrations will support the text, lending richness to the information.

My sample illustrations are done on paper, using watercolor. The style is detailed, but also loose and spontaneous. I have designed my illustrations to mimic the bright, informal, intuitive visual communicative style of children, because I have noticed that this is the style they most readily respond to when I read to them.

I believe that the life story of Wood is developmentally appropriate for children in several ways.

First, a life story represents a progression, from beginning, through middle, to end. Young children in kindergarten and first grade are learning about temporality, and how events progress through time. I think that reading about a
long, full life, which progresses in stages through time, and through a person’s ages, is an appropriate way to reinforce this kind of learning for young children.

Next, many of the activities in Wood’s life were unconventional, as she went against the contemporary grain of her society, to do the unexpected and unusual, despite social and cultural pressures to do otherwise. Young children face many pressures today to choose and fit in with a crowd, to meld into its ideologies and activities, and to brush off their individuality to fit in. I think that teachers reading this book with children can use it to teach about how people can learn to be their own selves, can have friends who accept them for who they are while doing so, and how individuality can be rewarded, and can then become its own rich reward.

Then, for second and third graders, who are usually beginning to learn about their communities, and the work people do in communities, this book could serve as an introduction to a discussion about different ways to make a life and a living.

Finally, I believe that biography in general, and especially the reading of biographies of exemplary and admirable people, is appropriate for children as an examination of character. Today’s media reeks and oozes with vacuous stories about people who are notorious for being pretty and rich, surgically adapted, loud and proud, but with no significant accomplishments, and nothing of worth to say. I believe that for us to have a more substantial and creative culture, one which serves the needs of real people, we need to present images to children of people who are substantial, creative, and real. I believe that my children’s biography about Beatrice Wood fills this need, at an appropriate developmental level, for young children.

Born in 1959, growing up in the borough of Brooklyn in New York City, going to independent schools with strong art programs, I was steeped in the tenor of the times, ready and eager to let it all hang out, do my own thing, and question authority. This is the sociocultural context of the times I grew up in, and which informs my own perspective. I surmise that if Beatrice Wood had grown up in such a time of radical upheaval, she would have been in good company. Instead, brought up several generations before me, Wood was on the vanguard of women who, at the beginning and middle of the twentieth century, began to struggle for, claim, and then bask in their own hard-won freedom. They were the independent and strong
grandmothers and mothers of the women of my generation. They raised us during the sixties, prepared for freedom, independence, and the careers which would make those freedoms possible.

Today, we have internet access, media saturation, and Face Book. The world of ideas, and so much information, can be immediately available to us. And yet, counterproductive and destructive groupthink is often a prominent feature of growing up in today’s world. In rich and poor neighborhoods and schools throughout the country, in rural, suburban, and urban areas, students learn to depend on others for their ideas, self-esteem, and social affirmation. Groups form, with members who taunt, ostracize, and bully those who might be a bit different from the norm, making social pariahs of neighbors and classmates. When behavior becomes extreme and violence erupts, the media takes notice, and adults attempt to take action to counteract these destructive trends. This is a large and salient part of the sociocultural context of the children who are the target audience for my book. Although all of these children have greater social rights, gender freedoms, and career opportunities than did children of Wood’s generation, in some ways, they live in times which are more likely to shoehorn them into groupthink, than those of earlier generations. Because of this, I write not only about Beatrice Wood as an artist, but most importantly, as a woman who thought her own thoughts and acted on them, who lived her own life by her own ideas, during a time when this was extremely difficult for a woman. My book highlights this aspect of her life. While I believe that the proposed colorful illustrations and lighthearted text will draw my little readers in, I think that the ideas of independence, freedom, and affirmation about thinking for oneself, and the satisfaction and success it can bring, will remain in the minds of my little readers, influencing them as they grow and develop.
The Book

Front Cover

Beatrice

Michele Helene Marglis
Beatrice Wood was a woman born before her time. She fought for and gained her freedom early in life, ran from her proper bourgeois Victorian upbringing, and lived a life of bohemian excess and extremes.

Always her own woman, Wood found her true métier at forty, when she discovered a lusterware plate in an antique store. She learned the techniques of lusterware ceramics, and worked hard and joyfully at her art until her one hundred and fifth year.

She left us a legacy of beautiful art, a life well lived, a unique home and studio, and a center for the arts, in beautiful Ojai, California. Her spirit lives on.
One page glued:
To inside of front cover, so its back is glued down, and its illustration is on its other side. The illustration depicts the urban San Francisco landscape of the time when Beatrice was born.
One page loose:
So its front is illustrated with the continuation of the urban San Francisco landscape, and the back with a small illustration of a luster ware vessel.
Front Matter

Page 1 (Opposite of the back of the second end page, This is a right hand page)

Half-Title

Beatrice
Beatrice
Acknowledgments

Many people contributed to this book. I would like to thank all of the wonderful people I met at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts. **Kevin Wallace**, *Director of the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts*, opened the doors of the center for me, and introduced me to its wealth of resources. **Richard Flores**, *Beatrice Wood’s Studio Assistant, and currently Ceramics Instructor at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts*, gave me a studio tour and many insights into Beatrice's working methods and ideas. **Seda Sevada**, *Children’s Workshop Instructor at the Beatrice Woods Center for the Arts*, generously allowed me to participate in a children's drawing and ceramics workshop she gave at the Center. **Stephen P. Huyler**, *Beatrice Wood’s Studio Assistant, personal friend, and traveling companion*, gave me insight into Beatrice as an artist, companion, and friend. All of these people patiently answered my questions, added their own insights, and enriched my knowledge and experience of the life, art, and ideas of Beatrice Wood. I would like to thank my dear friend **Julie Knight**. Julie housed, fed, and chauffeured me all over California so I could do the research for this book. **Susan Stires**, *Professor of Language, Literature, and Emergent Literacy*, provided suggestions and a proposed title. As I complete this long and winding project, I would like to thank my wonderful, kind, helpful, resourceful IMP mentor, **Minna Immerman**. At every turn of this endeavor, from inception to end, Minna provided insight, guidance, and assistance. Her counsel was both calming and inspiring. I simply could not have done it without her.

Author’s Note

The language of this book has been developed for children from kindergarten to third grade. The text of the book is suitable for reading to kindergarteners and first graders, and for supported reading by second and third graders. This book is a simplified version of Beatrice Wood’s life, written with the young child's level of cognitive and social development in mind. I hope that it sparks their imaginations.

Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my mother, **Alice Marglis**, who delighted in my every creation.
Beatrice's mother and father, in formal Victorian dress, admiring their new baby in a bassinet.

Beatrice Wood was born in San Francisco, California, in 1893. Her parents were very happy.
Illustration

Interior of Victorian house with little Beatrice, all dressed up in a little lacy dress, amongst the art collection, looking at the art.

Text

The family lived in a big beautiful house, with many paintings, and sculptures all around.
Illustration
Family in front of luggage, with New York Cityscape behind them. Several museums and art galleries in image.

Text
When Beatrice was 5 years old, they moved to New York City. New York was full of art everywhere! Beatrice loved art.
Page 8 (This is a left hand page)

**Illustration**
Beatrice as a young adolescent in front of her easel, messy and dirty from making colorful vibrant art, animatedly fighting with her horrified mother.

**Text**
She decided to make art. Her mother was horrified! She wanted Beatrice to be a clean and quiet little girl. But, Beatrice had made up her mind, and she knew just what she wanted to do. She was going to be an artist.
Illustration
A teenaged Beatrice, standing beside her easel in a studio classroom, with other students and an imperious looking art teacher.

Text
When Beatrice was 19 years old, she talked her parents into letting her go to art school in Paris, France! She learned to paint. She liked being a painter.
Illustration
Beatrice onstage acting, in a colorful costume.

Text
In France, Beatrice painted for a while. Then, she decided to become an actress. Her parents were horrified! But, Beatrice had made up her mind, and she knew just what she wanted to do. She liked being an actress.
Illustration
Beatrice and friends conversing on a living room couch, in front of DADA art. Large colorful paintings and sculptures all around the room.

Text
When she was 23 years old, she moved back to New York. Beatrice met many people. She had many friends. Some of her friends were artists. They made a new kind of art. It was called ‘DADA.’ It was strange and different.
Illustration
Beatrice sitting at her easel, looking out towards the window rather blankly, with her brush drooping from her hand, and paint dripping onto the floor from her brush.

Text
In New York, Beatrice painted. She still liked painting, but she did not feel happy. Beatrice thought she needed a change.
Illustration
Beatrice walking alone in the California hills, in a dry summer LA area landscape of hills, dry grasses, bushes, and some scattered trees.

Text
When she was 35 years old, she moved to Los Angeles, California. She took long walks in the California hills. She did a lot of thinking. She liked painting. She liked acting. But, she did not love them. She did not know what to do.
Illustration
Krishnamurti and Beatrice, with other people in Dutch type landscape. He is speaking. Flat land, trees, grass, tulips.

Text
One day, Beatrice heard of a teacher called Krishnamurti. He taught about life and happiness. She went all the way to Holland to learn about his ideas.
Illustration
Beatrice in the back of an old store, discovering the golden-toned lusterware plates. The atmosphere of the store is dark, gray toned, with gray things, including teapots, all around.

Text
While she was in Holland, Beatrice went shopping. In an old store, she found six beautiful plates. They had a golden luster. She bought them. She wanted a teapot to match her new plates. She could not find one anywhere.
Illustration
Beatrice in ceramics studio class at the potters wheel, with a teacher watching her work, speaking to her.
(Just a tiny bit of gray starts to appear in her hair)

Text
Beatrice decided to make a teapot. When she was 40 years old, Beatrice took a class to learn how to make a teapot. It was hard. But, Beatrice had made up her mind, and she knew just what she wanted to do. She made that teapot!
Illustration
Smiling Beatrice and Steve in store with customers, surrounded by and selling lusterware.

Text
With the help of her friend Steve, Beatrice built a house, studio, and store in North Hollywood, California. Beatrice decided to become a potter. She sold pots, bowls, plates and figurines. People loved her work. She had finally found something she loved to do!
Illustration
Beatrice and Steve in window of store with rain coming down and flood waters in the street. They have sad faces.

Text
One day, there was a storm. It rained and it rained. The rain washed away Beatrice's studio, store, and home. She was very sad. But, Beatrice had made up her mind, and she knew just what she wanted to do. She would go on!
Beatrice and Steve, in front of a beautiful new store, with the Topa Topa Mountain in the background.

Text
Beatrice and Steve built a new studio, store, and home. It was in Ojai, California, by the beautiful Topa Topa Mountain. Now, the things she made sparkled like the stars at night. Her work became her art. Beatrice felt happy.
Illustration
Beatrice with students, teaching at the Happy Valley School. Pots all around.

Text
Beatrice decided to become a teacher. She taught children at the Happy Valley School. She taught her students about art, and how to follow their dreams. She taught them to make up their minds, and do just what they wanted to do.
Illustration
A smiling Beatrice in her studio, with a big beautiful lusterware gold and color chalice on the wheel. A smiling Steve in the background, packaging.

Text
Beatrice kept learning, and making her work even better. The things she made looked like bright sparkle and light. They were glowing and shiny, like jewels.
By now, Beatrice was 68 years old. She went on a trip to India. She loved the people, art, and colors of India. She loved the colorful saris worn by the women. She began to wear saris.
By this time, Beatrice was famous. Many people came to visit her, by the beautiful Topa Topa Mountain. She served big meals on her glowing plates. They were just like the ones she had found in Holland, so many years ago.
Beatrice at the potter’s wheel, dogs at her feet.
(Her hair is all gray now)

Text
Beatrice had worked hard all of her life. Now, she could relax and play. But she loved her work. Beatrice had made up her mind, and she knew just what she wanted to do. She kept working! Her work became better and better.
When Beatrice turned 90 years old, her friends gave her a big birthday party. It was in Los Angeles, California. People dressed up in costumes. There was food, music, and dancing. Everyone had a lot of fun!
Illustration
Beatrice at a desk, with some lusterware around, dogs at her feet. She is writing a book.

Text
So much had happened in her life. Beatrice decided to write a book about her life. When Beatrice was 92 years old, she wrote *I Shock Myself*. Her book told the story of her life, work, and ideas. Beatrice kept working.
Illustration
Beatrice appearing smiling at the party.

Text
When Beatrice was 101 years old, her friends gave her another big birthday party! There was food, costumes, dancing and fun! At the party, Beatrice was named California’s Living Treasure. This was a great honor.
People continued to give Beatrice honors. There were two movies made about her. They were called *Special People: Beatrice Wood*, and *Mama of DADA*. Beatrice kept working.
Beatrice in a fun pose, showing her happy and playful spirit.

Beatrice Wood worked and played for the rest of her life. She made her art beside the beautiful Topa Topa Mountain. She lived to be 105 years old. She gave us her sparkling beautiful creations, for all of time.
Glossary

**Artist** – someone who makes art
**Celebrity** – a person known and admired by many people
**Ceramic** – an object made of clay
**Confident** – sure of oneself
**Determination** – deciding to do something and then doing it
**Famous** – a person known by many people
**Figurine** – an object that looks like a person or animal
**Gallery** – a place where art and other beautiful things are shown and sold
**Glaze** – the shiny coating on a clay object
**Honors** – great respect and admiration for things a person has done
**Horrified!** – shocked and displeased
**Luster** – shine and sparkle together
**Painting** – a flat thing covered with paint
**Perseverance** – continuing on with something even though it is hard
**Resourceful** – figuring out how to do something hard
**Sari** – a colorful dress worn by women from India
**Sculpture** – a piece of art that has depth – it is not flat
**Studio** – a place where people create things
Bibliography


Author's Source Note
Information about Beatrice Wood was gathered through research consisting of reading books and articles, watching videos, visiting her Ojai, California home and studio, observing and participating in a ceramics class for young children given at her studio, and conducting interviews with those who knew her and admired her life and work. All of my interview subjects gave generously of their time, and provided me with a rich understanding of Beatrice Wood, her life, ideas, and art.

Historical Note about Beatrice Wood
Beatrice Wood was born in San Francisco, California in 1893 to wealthy, proper, socially connected Victorian parents. At the time of her birth, her mother had a socialite’s life of indulgence, luxury, propriety, marriage and family planned out for her daughter. Little Beatrice would have none of it. Determined to set her own course from an early age, Beatrice fought the constraints of convention, and cut her own path. Beatrice marched to the tune of her own drum. Successful in her attempt, she left a wide swath for other women to follow. In claiming her own personal, social, and professional freedom, she lived a life which left us a rich legacy of independence, art and ideas.

Current Activities at The Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts
The Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts celebrates the life and work of Beatrice Wood, while engaging both children and adults in contemporary art, and creation. It is a welcoming and lively place located high in the Ojai, California hills, by Beatrice’s beloved Topa Topa Mountain. It consists of her home, studio, and the surrounding property of rolling hills, grass, and trees. Her studio has been preserved by being in use by students. People come from all over to learn to produce ceramics using her tools and equipment. The center puts on lectures, exhibitions, and performances to include people in the life of the arts. It serves as a bridge between the world of international art, and the local art community.
One page loose:
Blank front, back illustrated with the bucolic rural landscape of Ojai, California.
One page glued:
So its front continues the rural landscape of Ojai California, and its back is glued to the board.
Text for back flap

About the Author

Michele Helene Marglis is an aspiring early childhood general and special education teacher. She has completed her class work at the Bank Street College of Education, where she developed an enthusiasm for children's picture book literature. She is now also an aspiring children's picture book author. This book is the culmination of a long enthusiasm for the art and work of Beatrice Wood.
Applications

This material was developed with a social studies curriculum for kindergarteners to third graders in mind. The text of the book is suitable for reading to kindergarteners and first graders, and for supported reading by second and third graders. The life story of Beatrice Wood takes place in the context of her times, when most women were still relegated to secondary status by social mores and restrictions. During the early and mid parts of the previous century, only the most daring of women stepped out of the usual domestic roles. Beatrice was such a woman, and as such, she provides an example for both girls and boys that people can break through their expected roles to master life on their own terms. I hope that children will see Beatrice as not only a colorful and interesting woman, but also as an example of someone who insisted on thinking for herself, and persevering through a long, varied, and sometimes difficult life. It is my hope that teachers and parents can use this book to open discussions about independent thinking, creativity, and perseverance.
Conclusion

When I began thinking about writing and illustrating a book for my final Bank Street Project, I envisioned a book in the familiar form, that is, a paper book between board covers. As one of the surprises of life, just as I began work on this book, the requirements changed! The new rules required that all IMP submissions be in electronic form. When I realized the required margins left me with only a six by nine inch space for both illustrations and text, I felt a bit restricted.

I constructed this book using the computer for text, and pencil sketch and watercolor for illustrations. Since I plan to seek a publisher for my picture book biography in the future, I did not want to do all of the illustrations twice – that is, once in a restricted format for electronic submission to Bank Street, and then again in a larger version for print publication. Because of this, I have done just a few of the pages with illustrations, done in a small format for electronic submission. Pages without illustrations include the text, and above the text, a description of the planned illustration. The next version, which I will prepare for publishers, will have much larger illustrations, going to the edges of the pages.

Researching and writing about Beatrice Wood’s life has reminded me of the many gifts left to us by those who went before, and dared to live life on their own terms. In so many instances, they did this under great duress, leaving behind family relationships and financial support. They believed in themselves, and trusted in their own dreams and fierce determination. Beatrice Wood was one of those women, a trailblazer, who opened up paths for others to follow.

As I began my research and writing, I found that despite her great commercial success, few people knew about Wood. Although her work lives on through the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, she is not widely known by the general public. Even among those directly involved in the arts and education, she is not well known. Why is Beatrice Wood a mystery to so many people? Was it because her commercial success arrived late in her life? Despite her years, she always remained a vibrant and involved artist. It is my hope that as the years go on, more people will learn about the life, ideas, and work of this colorful woman.
References

Books About Beatrice Wood and Her Art


Garth Clark is an art historian, critic, and the owner of the Garth Clark Gallery, in New York City. He has been Beatrice Wood’s primary dealer since 1981. With Gilded Vessel, he gives us insight into Beatrice Wood’s art, life, loves, travels, business, and friends. He shows us that Beatrice Wood’s life was one of unconventionality, adventure, realism, truth, and above all, a lifelong involvement with work that nourished her, and kept her going throughout the years. This book is especially important, because it was written by someone who knew her well, and admired her deeply.


Santa Monica Museum of Art’s Executive Director, Elsa Longhauser and Deputy Director of Exhibitions and Programs, Lisa Melandri have written this exhibition catalog as a scholarly summation of Beatrice Wood’s life and work. It includes extensive biographical information in essay form, excerpts from Wood’s diaries, photographs of her figurative watercolors and ceramics, and of Beatrice at home, with friends, and working in her studio. This volume is a treasure trove of information about the artist’s life, loves, and work.


Dr. Francis Naumann, scholar, curator, and New York City art dealer specializing in Dada and Surrealist art, was a professional associate and friend of
Beatrice Wood. When most people think about the creative life of Beatrice Wood, they think of her lusterware ceramics, mostly in the various forms of bowls, plates, and chalices. In this exhibition catalog, Naumann shows us the other creative side of Beatrice Wood, which was devoted to drawings and figurative ceramic sculpture. Wood, he tells us, used these drawings and playful figures as an outlet for her creative energies, when she felt like she needed a break from her more serious work.


Dr. Francis Naumann is a scholar, curator, and New York City art dealer, who specializes in Dada and Surrealist art. He was both a professional associate and friend of Beatrice Wood. This book is a compilation of articles about Beatrice Wood and her art, photographs of Wood at home, at work, with friends, and at play during various stages of her life. It includes photographs of some of her work, and an essay by Wood on why she chose and continued to practice, the art of ceramics. The photographs are large and sharp, and depict Wood’s luster glazes in exquisite detail. The essay by Wood gives significant insight into how she experiences her work.


Marlene Wallace, a long time friend of Beatrice Wood, shows us wonderful photographs of Wood at one hundred years of age, posing, flirting with the camera, lounging, and working with clay in her home and studio environments. These numerous portraits reveal Wood as a colorful, playful and eccentric artist, enjoying the fulfillment of her long and productive life. The quotes by Wood which accompany each photograph, lead the reader through her many insights on life, love, and art.
Audiovisual Media About Beatrice Wood and Her Art


In this unique DVD, we learn about how Beatrice Wood grew up, and rejected the conventionality of her childhood. Going off to study art and acting in Paris at eighteen, she began to find herself in both art and relationships. In 1913, after the New York Armory Show, Beatrice entered the avant garde art scene. She became friends with the artist Marcel Duchamp, and art patrons Louise and Walter Arensberg, all major figures in the Dada art movement. This movement could be variously characterized as being a liberating art movement, against bourgeois notions of what art should be - for freedom, and the license to create, without the restraints of the surrounding society. It was, in essence, art which stood against the vanity and smugness of the traditional art world. With her deep and lasting friendships with the most influential Dada artists and their patrons, Beatrice Wood became known as ‘The Mama of Dada.’ This documentary gives us a glimpse into how this challenging new art movement suffused Beatrice's work and life, giving it color, vigor, and a dose of the irreverent.


In this DVD, several of Beatrice Wood’s longtime friends and associates give us a vivid picture of her long and productive life. We learn that she was a unique individual, driven to find her authentic self, and live out her artistic nature in her own way. They draw a portrait of a woman who relentlessly moved towards her goals throughout her long life, met them, and then charmed and amazed everyone she met with her wit, vivacity, and work ethic.

In this DVD, Beatrice Wood speaks to us directly in her own words. She delineates some of the philosophies which are moving forces in her life, tells us about the people she knew, and about the beautiful valley she calls home. From Beatrice, we learn that her work nourished her life, and that she intended to keep working until she was no longer able. This video portrays a woman and artist, who created a life as individual and lustrous as her work.

**Books By Beatrice Wood**


Beatrice Wood recounts her long and colorful life, leaving little to the imagination. She tells her story, beginning with her proper Victorian childhood, where she felt so out of place, continues through her rebellious youth, and her searching middle age, and concludes with her successful and finally satisfying later years, when she found her artistic métier, and gained artistic mastery. She paints a portrait which is unconventional, exciting and engrossing. Wood shows herself to us as a physical, spiritual, and artistic wanderer, who never feels truly settled in the world, until she finds her artistic home in the ceramic work she loves. The book is illustrated throughout, with black and white photographs of Wood, the people in her life, and some of her work.


This book, written by Beatrice Wood, is an edited compilation of letters she wrote to her dear friend and companion, Steve, while she was away on an extended European vacation. It is composed of her text and drawings, depicting her activities during her trip. While the book is a colorful record of her trip, I am interested in it primarily because of her drawings, as representations of her personal style of expression. They depict an extraordinarily playful personality.
Books About Writing Biographies and Nonfiction Material


Nigel Hamilton, biographer of President Clinton, instructs the reader on how to write a compelling and meaningful biography. He covers getting started, doing research, and shaping a life through its stages, from birth, through childhood, love, work, the concluding chapters of life, and death. More than just a how-to book, this primer provides numerous quotes, which give richness and depth to its lessons.


This book is a series of essays written by noted nonfiction authors about the craft of narrative writing. Subjects include writing about private lives by Gay Talese, interviewing by Isabel Wilkerson, developing character by Stanley Nelson, handling time by Bruce DeSilva, and writing about the emotional core of a story by Tom Wolfe. It is a book best read first as a whole, as preparation for writing, before beginning to develop an idea, before doing interviews, or writing, and then again, during writing, to answer questions as they arise. This a wonderfully instructive book for the beginning author, concerned with getting both the whole, and the details, right.


Hermione Lee is a renowned biographer, literature professor, and college president. In this introductory book about the art of biography, she explains what biography is, what it does, and how it works. She discusses why we are so fascinated by the lives of others, and what we expect, when reading a biography. She covers the ethics, tactics, and challenges of writing biography, and details the many variations of this genre, including the lives of the saintly, the sub-saintly, and the notorious. She gives us an analytical view of this form of writing, asking the
reader to consider whether biography is mainly related to history, fiction, voyeurism, or education. The author both gives many answers, and asks many questions about writing biography. She discusses, but leaves us to decide for ourselves.


Noted biographer, biography critic, and Baruch College professor Carl Rollyson, gives us an encyclopedic treatise on biography. He covers every aspect of this craft, including children’s, academic, fictionalized, movie-star, and unauthorized biographies, and gives us technical and legal information on interviews, public domain, libel, privacy, and fair use, among others. Entertaining throughout, he presents just about everything an aspiring biographer would have questions about, and raises issues which might otherwise be overlooked. This is an enormously informative and useful book for the beginning writer.

**Books About Writing/Illustrating Children’s Books**


Noted children’s book author and illustrator Eric Carle, introduces this anthology of illustrations and letters by a group of the most noteworthy and talented children’s book illustrators of our time. The letters are addressed to children, to introduce them to how each illustrator first began to work in illustration, and then developed a career. There are fold-out pages, which include photos of a variety of each artist’s work and their studio environments, and a picture of each illustrator as a child, is presented along with their letter. Contributors include Leo Lionni, Jerry Pinkney, Maurice Sendak, and Chris Van Allsburg. This book is a wonderful introduction to the art created especially for children, and the artists who make it, for children, adults, and aspiring picture book authors and artists.

David Lewis is a leading specialist on picture books, and was a professor of primary education. In *Reading Contemporary Picture Books*, he takes the reader on a grand tour of the state of the art today. He tells us that although the picture book has been around for a long time, its workings are still not well understood. He explains how words and images interact in picture books to create the author’s meaning, and then gives more weight to his ideas, by introducing us to the concept of the ecology of the reading event. In this event, he tells us, more meanings are introduced by the reader’s understandings and interpretations of the combination of text and pictures presented in the book. This is a dense text, full of ideas explaining the structure and function of contemporary picture books. While it is not intended as a primer for writers, its analysis and explanations provide food for thought for a writer assembling words and images into a picture book.


McCannon, Thornton, and Williams specialize in the writing, illustration, and publishing of children’s books. They explain how children’s illustrated books work, and how writers and artists develop both text and illustrations to communicate meaning, delight, and information to children. The book is rich with visual examples and explanations of the step-by-step methods involved in developing a fully illustrated book, including explanations of the development of the initial idea, storyboarding, techniques in developing full size artwork, making a dummy book to show publishers, and finally, information on becoming a published author. The text is fully up to date, and includes information on both traditional by-hand techniques, and contemporary digital techniques. While most of the content is geared towards fiction, there is a section on the development of nonfiction material.

Alijandra Mogilner, children’s writer, textbook author, and professor, and Tayopa Mogilner, educator and author, have collected and categorized thousands of words into lists, by grade level. They have included these words in a thesaurus, which indicates grade level for easy substitution, have provided guidelines for language use, and information on national reading standards. This book provides valuable information for the children’s book author for using the appropriate vocabulary for a specific grade level, from kindergarten through sixth grade.


Author and English professor Perry Nodelman, provides analysis and explanation of how the words and illustrations of picture books work together, to make up more than the sum of their parts. He discusses format and design, style as meaning, symbols, the depiction of action and time, and the relationships of pictures to words. He discusses books for various ages, from baby’s first books, to alphabet books, to story books and beyond, to books for early independent readers. This text is rich in ideas about how picture books function for the reader. It provides substantial information about how to make a book that conveys the creator’s meanings, through the appropriate choice of text, illustrations, and design.


Martin Salisbury is course director for the Master of Arts Degree in Children’s Book Illustration at Anglia University, Cambridge, England, and is also a prolific book illustrator. With this beautiful book, he takes us from the history of children’s picture books, through the contemporary picture book world, and shows us how to participate in it as illustrators. He covers drawing and painting people, animals, places, and nature in various media, including pencil, ink, watercolor, acrylics, oils, pastels, prints, and finally, computers. He tells and shows us about how character
can be described with illustration, for both people and animals, and analyzes how concepts, words, and images can coalesce into potent communication, which can capture a child’s interest and imagination. This richly illustrated book is a visual treat, and an inspirational window into the possibilities of this genre, for the beginning or experienced children’s book illustrator.


Aaron Shepard is an award-winning and prolific author of children’s picture books, and has been a judge for the Golden Kite Awards of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators. His brief book is packed with useful information for the aspiring children’s picture book writer, who wants to guide a book to successful publication. Technical in nature, this book covers everything from writing a story, through manuscript submission, contract negotiation, the publication process, and building a career as a children’s book author. The author clearly understands the mechanics of the process, presents them in an easily understandable and useful way, and provides a list of resources, including websites. Reading this book feels like sitting down with an experienced author, who is willing to divulge many years of hard-won secrets.


Uri Shulevitz is an experienced and prolific children’s book author and illustrator. He thoroughly explains and illustrates the process of producing a children’s book from beginning to end, including steps involved in planning the physical and story structure of the book, developing the composition of illustrations, selecting a pictorial style, planning for production, and finally, finding a publisher. Although most of the illustrations are in black and white, they succinctly convey the organization and steps required to develop a compelling children’s book. Published in 1997, the book does not include information on digital techniques, but is still a valuable resource, especially for someone putting together a sample book by hand.

Steven Withrow is a writer, editor, and digital animator. Lesley Breen Withrow is an illustrator and designer for children’s publications, greeting cards, and gifts. They have produced an inspirational book, which begins with a detailed picture book timeline, starting from 1658, and ending in 2008. They cover the form of books, cross cultural communication, the art and craft of creating illustrations for text, and developing character and emotion through art and color. This book is unique in that it employs several case studies, expert commentaries, and numerous artist profiles throughout. These serve to give the reader insight into how children's books get developed and published, and how artists develop their work to both meet their own creative needs, and the needs of the market. This resource rich book concludes with an extensive recommended reading list, and numerous web resources for further research; it is an outstanding reference for the children’s book illustrator.

**Articles About Writing Children’s Picture Books and Biographies**


Children’s literature professor Viki Ash, and curator of the Butler Children’s Literature Center Thom Barthelmess, present some ideas about what goes into a good picture book biography. They discuss the pictorial elements and how they relate to the text, the biographical elements, including what to include and exclude when writing for children, techniques for acknowledging the audience, a short list of good picture book biographies, and a bit of inspiration for incipient writers and illustrators. This book is full of good advice for the beginning writer, or anyone choosing books for children.

In this article, children’s librarian Kathleen Baxter discusses three children’s biographies about artists. The books depict the lives of L. Frank Baum, who wrote *The Wizard of Oz*, Wanda Gag, who became a children’s book illustrator and painted the illustrations for *Millions of Cats*, and the two creators of *Superman*, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. In her reviews of these biographies, she discusses how they show the reader that the life of an artist can be hard, but perseverance and determination is worth the struggle, and pays off eventually. I think the message that hard work and perseverance pays off is a good one for children to encounter in their reading about people’s lives. It is certainly true of the lives of many artists. It is of value to me, to understand how other authors present this information to their readers.


In this article, critically acclaimed children’s book author James Cross Giblin presents numerous things to consider, in writing biography for children. He covers what to include and what not to include, making judgments about emphasis, and how to write about complex social issues for different ages. He concludes by providing a list of questions for the aspiring biographer to consider before writing. This is a thoughtful article which gave me some important things to think about, in preparation for composing a biography about a complex subject.


This substantial article is a report on a panel discussion by eminent biographers and illustrators, which was a part of the 2009 Children’s Literature Assembly Workshop. It emphasizes the research and writing process, and gives information about the creative processes involved in producing biographies for children. Authors Claudia Christensen Haag and Lettie K. Albright, relate that three common themes were found throughout the panel member’s discussions: emphasis on learning about a subject through immersive research, finding a distinctive illustrative style, and perseverance in producing an effective final product. The
discussions provide a great deal of information to consider in writing and illustrating biographies for children.


Author Maggie Hommel reviews the Guide to Collective Biographies, and informs us of how it is an excellent resource for tracking down biographical information about historical and contemporary figures, which might otherwise be difficult to find. It is a resource about resources, and, as such, gives the budding biographer better access to the materials available on thousands of subjects.


Hannah Trierweiler Hudson presents us with a bibliography of stellar biographies for kindergarten to second graders. She suggests that they could be used as teaching tools, or just for reading pleasure. This list has given me several more biographies to read, as excellent examples of the craft.


Authors Susan G. Lea, Lawrence R. Sipe, and Tricia O’loughlin outline a new way to teach children about biography, using an integrated and comprehensive approach, which includes visual art and literacy. They discuss placing biographical subjects in their socio-historical context for children by using picture books and their illustrations, teaching children how to interpret, creating visual art related to the subject, and using websites. Their discussion is centered on how teachers can develop an arts/literacy curriculum which teaches the concept of biography through organic inquiry based methods, while satisfying standards requirements. While I am writing a simple picture book biography for my first biography at this time, this article has given me ideas about how to compose a curriculum to teach the concept of biography at a later time.

Hani Morgan writes about children’s picture book biographies from the perspective of teaching children about global connections and cultural diversity. The author points out that through these illustrated texts, educators can communicate multiple perspectives to students, while incorporating interactive read-alouds, group projects, and independent reading. She provides several internet sources for finding appropriate books, and lists several culturally sensitive biographies. While my subject, Beatrice Wood, was certainly not a member of a cultural minority, she lived a life completely outside of the cultural and social norms for women of her day. Because of this, I believe that this article has relevance for my project.


In this article, author Suzanne Moyers tells us that teachers can use biographies as a way to inspire children to reach towards their goals. She focuses on teaching the genre of biography, and explains how teachers can use biography to teach literary elements such as turning points, cause and effect, and figurative language. She covers the vocabulary of biography, using timelines, multimedia resources, and, finally, the reliable and old-fashioned, but eminently useful, poster. Although I am not developing a biography curriculum at this time, the elements of the author’s discussion are useful to me in considering the construction of the biography I am working on now.


In this article, author Kathleen Odean quotes associate curator of education at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum Carole Villucci as saying “Artist’s biographies are a wonderful approach for children to learn about and appreciate art. Effective biographies open up the artist’s lives, their work and the times they lived in, preferably with just the right details to grab the children’s attention.” She reviews several children’s biographies, to describe how they each do just that. I will
be using these ideas in developing my biography, as I would like children to appreciate Beatrice Wood's art, as well as her life.


Children’s biography writer Ruth Turk explains a bit about the craft of biography, while emphasizing how writing for children is different than writing for adults. Turk suggests that when writing for children, we must choose a subject who will be attractive to young readers, make sure that we do not 'talk down' to our audience, and be careful of oversimplification. She suggests that we can include a glossary to explain technical vocabulary, use lively language, maintain a brisk pace, and create glowing visual imagery. She encourages us to “hook” the reader with the opening paragraph, and then follow through with the complete story. I will be keeping her ideas in mind, as I develop my own picture book biography.


Authors Barbara A. Ward and Terrell A. Young are faculty at Washington State University. In this article, they tell us that the quality of children’s literature, and especially biography, has improved over the past few years. They point out that today’s biographies show their subjects as real people, with all of their flaws and complexities, giving readers a realistic picture of exemplary lives. They explain how biography can take a variety of approaches, such as the picture book biography, the simplified biography, the partial biography, which highlights a special day in the subject’s life, and finally, the autobiography and memoir. They provide an annotated bibliography of several books they deem notable, arranged by grade level, from K-2 to 9-12. The entries provide insight into the characteristics of exciting exemplary biographies.

With his interesting title, author Steve Weinberg draws the reader in to learn more about his take on the state of biography as contemporary literature. He informs us that the craft of biography receives little respect in academe, with only few university courses devoted to teaching the genre. He mentions several biographers who have persisted in the writing of biographies, despite the lack of respect paid to this genre, and argues for the renaissance of biographical writing and academic attention, to this maligned and frequently misunderstood form. He presents an annotated reading list on biography. Knowing that this wonderful form of writing is not the most admired, makes me feel even more enthusiastic about writing a picture book biography for children about an exemplary life. Children need to learn about the exemplary and interesting lives of others to understand how lives develop, and how what they do as youngsters, fits into the whole of their present and future development.


Author Paula Wiley, of the Baltimore County Public Library, reviews several series of recently published biographies of famous figures. She tells us that nothing is as compelling as real life, and that the best of biographies make readers feel that they are witnessing the real life of someone they have come to know, happening right before them. This is a wonderful description of how biography can help to allow a reader to experience a life, and one I hope to fulfill with my own biography about Beatrice Wood.
**Art Techniques References**


Award winning children's book author and illustrator Molly Bang, has been writing and illustrating children's books since 1980. In Picture This, she explains how the elements making up a picture can work together to either detract from, or reinforce the visual meanings of stories. She uses visual examples described with text to illustrate her points, and suggests how the reader can use his or her insights to make their own work more compelling to a young audience.


Barbara Delaney is the assistant editor at Cloth Paper Scissors magazine. In this eclectic anthology highlighting the work of various artists, she presents numerous ideas for illustrating bright, glossy, imaginative art, like the works of Beatrice Wood. From watercolor, to fabric transfer, to collage, she presents a plethora of useful inspiration and ideas.


Alisa Golden is an expert maker of prints and handmade books, and is a professor of art at California College of the Arts, San Francisco Art Institute, and the San Francisco Center for the Book. In this richly illustrated book, she presents numerous examples of how to do unique artwork on paper, using acrylic inks, gesso, masking, paint, and paste. This book has given me several ideas about layered paint applications, and new media to experiment with in creating illustrations.


Carmen Torbus is a mixed-media artist and workshop teacher. With this idiosyncratic and unique book, she has gathered the work of many artists working
with varied techniques, and demonstrating an eclectic collection of artistic sensibilities. Some of the ideas and techniques included would be appropriate for creating backgrounds, some for developing form, and some for detail.

**Children's Biography References – Models for Study**


I have chosen this book to study as a model, because it uses whimsical and charming paper collage illustrations to describe how the artist Georgia O'Keeffe saw the world in her own unique way. Although I do not plan to use a collage technique for my book, the whimsical nature of the illustrations have given me some ideas about how to present the life of an unusual artist.


I have chosen this book to study as a model, because my literature teacher, Susan Stires, said that it was a beautifully written and illustrated children’s book biography. The text is spare and simple, and the illustrations undulate and flow, just like Gaudi’s sculptural building designs.


I have chosen this book to study as a model to understand the requirements for writing for an older audience. I believe that this book is written for approximately the sixth to eighth grade reader. There are photographs of O'Keeffe's environments and work throughout, although they are all in black and white, except for the floral painting on the cover. This book includes all of the parts of a book written for adults, including a table of contents, numbered chapters, a chronology, chapter notes, bibliography for further reading, and an index. At 112 pages, it is
definitely geared towards the older grade school student, but it reads nicely as an introduction to the artist for the interested adult as well.


    Boston: Little, Brown.

    I have chosen this book to study as a model, because it is important for me to understand the differences in biographies about the same person, for different reading levels. I believe that this book is written for approximately the forth or fifth grade reading level. It is a marvelous biography, and uses actual photographs of O’Keeffe’s work, and the places she lived and worked. It is a good window into the writing of a biography for slightly older readers.


    Danbury, CT: Children’s Press.

    I have chosen this book to study as a model, because I like the way the illustrations are done. Throughout this book, the author/illustrator has used several different kinds of art techniques and page layouts. He uses his own cartoon type illustrations with text bubbles, reproductions of works by O’Keeffe’s contemporaries, and photographs of O’Keeffe’s work. He uses illustrations of different sizes and shapes, and places text in different positions on the pages. This might sound like visual cacophony, but in reality, it makes for a truly exciting book, which I think would pique a child’s interest.


    I have chosen this book to study as a model, because it is written from a unique perspective. Jeanette Winter has chosen to write this simple and lovely book from the perspective of the subject, as if it were an autobiography. Her illustrations are simple, possibly done in gouache; each one extends slightly beyond its square borders, lending the work a bit of forward movement. Done in this way, the illustrations give me the idea that O’Keeffe was constantly moving forward, and on towards the next thing. Text is placed below images, except on the final pages. This
imaginary autobiography format is different than most children’s picture book biographies. Here, it gives the reader a very personal kind of view into the subject’s life, even though these are not her actual words, but those imagined by her biographer. I wonder what Georgia would think.

*Note: I have chosen to use many books about the artist Georgia O’Keeffe as models, because I am very familiar with her art and life. I wanted to see and evaluate how different authors and illustrators approached this one subject, to help me to figure out how to approach mine.

**Miscellaneous**


Written by Alan Hooker, chef and restaurateur, this cookbook is filled with scrumptious herb-infused recipes, and is illustrated by Beatrice Wood. Her playful drawings augment the recipes, and give more insight into her eclectic creativity.
Appendix

During my visit to the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, I had the opportunity to interview people who knew her, admired her work, and continue to pass on her inspired legacy. I interviewed them all starting with the same questionnaire. The interviews were conducted in either the center library or out on the patio. They were quite informal. I made no effort to adhere rigidly to the format, because what I wanted most out of these sessions was a general feeling about Beatrice from people who knew her and were continuing her legacy. I found that those who knew her best frequently veered from the questions to add their own memories of their times with Beatrice, and thoughts about her ideas, work and life. These additions to my initial questions added richness and depth to my knowledge. The sessions ranged in length from approximately one hour, to two hours. They provided a great deal of insight into how Beatrice moved confidently through life, and how she shared her ideas, philosophy, and creativity with others.
Interview Questions

1 – How did you know Beatrice, and for how long?
2 – What made her special or interesting to you?
3 – What strikes you about her art?
4 – What is most interesting to you about her life?
5 – If there was going to be a children's picture book biography about Beatrice for young children, what aspects of her personal or professional story would you most like to see in the book?
6 – What kind of friend was she, with you, or, the nature of her friendships in general?
7 – Love life?
8 – How, if at all, has your life, personal story, or work been influenced by Beatrice?
9 – How did the physical setting of Ojai, California influence Beatrice's life or work?
10 – What kind of relationships, if any, did Beatrice have with children?
11 – If you can imagine Beatrice explaining her work or her life to children, what do you think she would say?
12 – What aspects concerning Beatrice's life and work do you think she would like to see in a children's picture book biography about her?
13 – Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
Interviews

Interview 1 – June 1, 2012, Ojai, California
Kevin Wallace, Director of Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts

1 – How did you know Beatrice, and for how long?
I met Beatrice on only two occasions, while visiting her studio. This was later in her life. She was a very spiritual person.

2 – What made her special or interesting to you?
She liked to put on a ‘silly girl’ veneer, but in reality, she was very deep. She would change people’s lives by inspiring them. After meeting with her, some people went back to school, or became artists. She was very disciplined, and she inspired that in others.

3 – What strikes you about her art?
Her friendship with Marcel Duchamp influenced her art, and caused her to loosen up. Beatrice was influenced by the best teachers. Her teacher Glen Lukens believed that the best artists sourced and made their own materials. Gertrud and Otto Natzler were expert ceramists. They helped her to develop her forms and glazes. Beatrice made many figurines, and then bowls and vessels. Making things was a lifestyle for her. She embraced naïveté and freedom. Her art was funky and loose. She had one foot in modernism, and one in contemporary craft. From there, she came up with her own timeless style. You can see many world styles in her art. Beatrice saw art as being interconnected with culture. Her art had depth, and it transcends time, space, and culture. She found something timeless in her studies of the art of other times and cultures, and she embraced these things herself, in the creation of herself as an artist and craftsperson.

4 – What is most interesting to you about her life?
Her life was inspired by rebellion. She became who she was because she rejected everything her parents wanted for her. When her parents came to the United States, they rejected their Jewishness. She lost her Jewish spiritual connection. She rejected proper society and embraced bohemianism. She was really a romantic.
Everywhere she went, she met the right people. She was friends with Anias Nin, who married the son of Beatrice's lover Reginald Pole.

5 – If there was going to be a children's picture book biography about Beatrice for young children, what aspects of her personal or professional story would you most like to see in the book?

She was a rebellious child, and embraced her own personality and self. She became her own person, which included discipline and a strong work ethic. Anyone who came to see her or wrote to her, she would see them or write back. She took the time to invest herself in people. She made real connections with people. People felt they were important to her. She was studious, and was always aware of current events. She was a pacifist, was deeply opposed to war, and was outspoken about it. She was a vegetarian and animal lover.

6 – What kind of friend was she, with you, or, the nature of her friendships in general?

Everyone who met her felt they knew her. But very few people really knew her. She was a very loyal friend. She kept on good terms with people throughout even turbulent times. She let people know how much they meant to her, and was a very giving friend. Still, she always reserved a part of herself for herself. She was always laughing and smiling.

7 – Love life?

She married. Later, she enjoyed playing the role of the naughty old woman with young lovers. She played roles in life.

8 – How, if at all, has your life, personal story, or work been influenced by Beatrice?

I was in the gallery business, and I curated, and wrote books on art. I now work as Director of the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, and as a trustee of the Happy Valley Foundation, which Beatrice was deeply involved in.

9 – How did the physical setting of Ojai, California influence Beatrice’s life or work?
Beatrice fell in love with Ojai. She came here to hear Krishnamurti speak. She fell in love with the Topa Topa Mountain. It is considered a spiritual center for the Chumash Indians. She loved Happy Valley.

10 – What kind of relationships, if any, did Beatrice have with children?
People would bring babies and children to the center. She enjoyed children. She delighted in them, but had no children of her own, and did not quite know how to relate to them. She taught seventh to twelfth grade ceramics at the Happy Valley School. She was very invested in teaching them.

11 – If you can imagine Beatrice explaining her work or her life to children, what do you think she would say?
Be playful.

12 – What aspects concerning Beatrice’s life and work do you think she would like to see in a children’s picture book biography about her?
Rebellion and wisdom, kindness and consideration. She felt that her legacy was responsibility to others in the world. She wanted people to stop killing, and to look after nature and animals.

13 – Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
She believed in constructive change, beginning with the individual. She believed in creativity, and in discipline in doing the work. It was not until she was in her eighties and nineties that she started making substantial money. She struggled financially until then. She came from a very wealthy family, but they left her nothing, because she left them, to live her own life on her own terms.
**Interview 2 - June 2, 2012, Ojai, California**

**Richard Flores, Beatrice Wood’s Studio Assistant during her later years, and currently Ceramics Instructor at Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts**

1 - **How did you know Beatrice, and for how long?**
I became her studio assistant after riding up to her place on a motorcycle. I was in my forties at the time. It was an intimate personal relationship. She had lots of friends, and a few people came up to the house – intimates. She fed on the energy of other people’s enthusiasm for her. She was a great actress.

2 - **What made her special or interesting to you?**
She could become upset when she saw a lack of compassion. She felt that without compassion, people became monsters. She was sensitive to others, and very ethical. She believed in keeping the child inside alive. She kept her inner child and spirit very much alive.

3 - **What strikes you about her art?**
How much of her spirit, whimsy, and playfulness is in it. That is why it is so highly valued.

4 - **What is most interesting to you about her life?**
There were three things that were very important in life to Beatrice. These were being really honest, being really curious, and being open to life itself.

5 - **If there was going to be a children’s picture book biography about Beatrice for young children, what aspects of her personal or professional story would you most like to see in the book?**
Her openness. She felt that it was important to not be afraid to listen to what others tell you, but, that it was equally important to be true to yourself, and not to chase someone else’s dream. She thought it was important for each person to live their own dream. She was very much her own person.

6 - **What kind of friend was she, with you, or, the nature of her friendships in general?**
She was a real friend. She was an exceptional friend, very generous, generous in teaching others about the work, and about humanity. She was good to people who worked for her, giving honest pay for honest work.

7 – Love life?

“Hers or mine?” She transcended her package, her age. Even in her later years, she was like a very sharp thirty five or forty five year old woman.

8 – How, if at all, has your life, personal story, or work been influenced by Beatrice?

She influenced me by how she spent her days. There was play, and there was work, and they always went together. She was joyful. She taught me to hang on to the joy every day – that every day mattered.

9 – How did the physical setting of Ojai, California influence Beatrice’s life or work?

She felt blessed by the beauty and friends around her.

10 – What kind of relationships, if any, did Beatrice have with children?

Her relationships were mostly with famous people and adults. Once, a couple brought their child to the studio. The child asked “Mommy, is she a star?” The mother replied “Yes, she is a star.”

11 – If you can imagine Beatrice explaining her work or her life to children, what do you think she would say?

She would say to them “What do you see in my work?” She would encourage them to discover themselves in her work. Beatrice believed that life is an adventure of discovery of the self, and one’s environment. She believed that she swam in a rich pond of opportunity, and that she needed to meet and learn about the people in that pond. She believed in encountering the richness of life’s opportunities academically, artistically, and creatively. She wanted to bring out the richness of life’s opportunities in both herself and others.

12 – What aspects concerning Beatrice’s life and work do you think she would like to see in a children’s picture book biography about her?

Things that would empower children with the belief that their dreams are available to them if they don’t let their own fears get in the way. That their dreams are the
best part of them. That they could do or accomplish their heart’s desire, and that they could be creative about it.

13 – Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Beatrice taught me that art is magic. The artist is a magician. It’s the little things in life that are so important. Listen, and learn from them. They help you to get ahead. Think about what you are doing as you do it, and you will get more information.

When we worked in the studio, we were all alone. It was a very special time. She was very special to me and she awakened the child in me – the magic seed.
Interview 3 - June 2, 2012, Ojai, California

Seda Sevada, Children’s Workshop Instructor at Beatrice Woods Center for the Arts, teaches drawing with pencils, colored pencils, and oil pastels, and Ceramics.

1 - How did you know Beatrice, and for how long?
Unfortunately, I did not get to meet Beatrice.

2 - What made her special or interesting to you?
I was fascinated by her life story – specifically how she was independent of men.

3 - What strikes you about her art?
Her passion for the organic forms in art from many cultures, and the human element in her work. She sought out people from other cultures to learn from them. Her art was childlike. She did her own thing, without trying to impress. Her art was truly her own.

4 - What is most interesting to you about her life?
That she was rebellious early in life, and that she took on art late in life.

5 - If there was going to be a children’s picture book biography about Beatrice for young children, what aspects of her personal or professional story would you most like to see in the book?
That she loved life, and saw life as art, and art as life. That is how she lived her life – to be as creative and imaginative as she could be.

6 - What kind of friend was she, with you, or, the nature of her friendships in general?
Seda had no information about this.

7 - Love life?
Seda had no information about this.

8 - How, if at all, has your life, personal story, or work been influenced by Beatrice?
I found out about her through Kevin, Director of the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts. Even in feminist art classes, there was no mention of her.

9 - How did the physical setting of Ojai, California influence Beatrice’s life or work?
Seda had no information about this.

10 – What kind of relationships, if any, did Beatrice have with children? Seda had no information about this.

11 – If you can imagine Beatrice explaining her work or her life to children, what do you think she would say? I think she would say that work is fun, work is free, work is expressive, and it is personal. There are no boundaries in life or work. She would like children to understand about the unity in her work, and about expressing compassion for others.

12 – What aspects concerning Beatrice’s life and work do you think she would like to see in a children’s picture book biography about her? I think that Beatrice would like children to understand that work is joyous, expressive, and personal. She was not trying to prove a point with her work, but rather, to explore the creative process to see where it might lead.

13 – Is there anything else you would like to tell me? I have a sense of place here at Beatrice’s home. I have a sense of her presence. I have a continuing respect for her place, and her legacy.
Interview 4 - June 3, 2012, Ojai, California

Stephen P. Huyler, Beatrice Wood’s Studio Assistant, personal friend, and traveling companion.

1 – How did you know Beatrice, and for how long?
I first met her when I was a teenager in 1967, when I asked her for a job. I worked for her in her studio and garden. Beatrice was the major mentor in my life. I went to India with her on her last trip there in 1972. I am one of the ‘young men.’
Beatrice believed in total open-mindedness. She enjoyed challenging her conceptions. If she did not like something, she would work on learning why. For example, she did not like the modern art in Duchamp’s apartment, so she studied it and her reactions, to figure out the reasons for her feelings about it. She loved to continually challenge herself, all throughout her life. She was an extremely ethical person. She seemed provocative and frivolous.

2 – What made her special or interesting to you?
To be her friend, you accepted her flamboyant humor. She gave forty percent of her income to the poor, even when she was extremely poor. She gave a lot of money to women in India. She had a dedication to humanity. She realized that she had many gifts, and she wanted to share with others. She is one of the wisest people I have known, garbed in preposterous posturing. She delighted in saying outrageous things. She would never tell even a white lie. She would say “If I am dishonest about anything, it reflects in all I do.” She would never say hurtful things to others. I loved her humor and wit. She considered things carefully, she was thoughtful, and strong. She behaved with deep integrity.

3 – What strikes you about her art?
The jewel-like sparkling glazes, like galaxies. Like the Milky Way at night. Like magical stones. The pieces were fragile and delicate. And on top of these, her work showed her sense of humor and wit.

4 – What is most interesting to you about her life?
Her constant self-challenge. She had a hard life, but she did not allow it to pull her down.
5 - If there was going to be a children’s picture book biography about Beatrice for young children, what aspects of her personal or professional story would you most like to see in the book?
She had an amazing life, met and worked with many extraordinary people of the twentieth century. But to her, they were just her friends. She did not name drop. She was modest, despite her relationships with major figures.

6 - What kind of friend was she, with you, or, the nature of her friendships in general?
She was a friend for life. A wonderful friend. She was always conscious of maintaining her friendships. She was good to be around. In her late eighties and nineties, she was projected into a whole different level of fame. There were agents, and sycophants. She did not always see this. She was always good to people. She was productive into her last years. Her home was always open. She was so charming. She always made a personal connection. Beatrice brought out the best in others.

7 - Love life?
She was phenomenally monogamous. She was true to whomever she was in love with. She was devastated by the fickleness of men, and their affairs on the side. She was not at all promiscuous.

8 - How, if at all, has your life, personal story, or work been influenced by Beatrice?
In every way. My entire career was influenced by Beatrice. She was the maid of honor at my wedding. I traveled with her in the United States and in India. We went to shops, galleries, and people’s homes wherever we travelled. She had a very highly attuned visual perception. Knowing her was deeply educational for me. She enriched my experience of life!

9 - How did the physical setting of Ojai, California influence Beatrice’s life or work?
She was deeply attuned to nature, to the Ojai views, and to the sunsets and sunrises. She was grounded by Ojai. Beatrice was a lover of both cactuses and roses. She liked them all to be overgrown. I worked as her gardener. Her garden was filled
with the broken shards of her work, when it did not turn out well. In the garden soil, you could see the iridescent bits and pieces.

10 – **What kind of relationships, if any, did Beatrice have with children?**
She had strong relationships with her students at the Happy Valley school. These students were from twelve to seventeen years old. She taught art history, ceramics, and applied arts at the Happy Valley School. She challenged her students to respond to art in ways they might not have understood on their own.

11 – **If you can imagine Beatrice explaining her work or her life to children, what do you think she would say?**
Life is creativity.

12 – **What aspects concerning Beatrice’s life and work do you think she would like to see in a children’s picture book biography about her?**
The Happy Valley School, in her lifetime. The library, the studio. She believed in teaching children to be open minded. She wanted them to have a wide exposure to the arts as part of life. She wanted children to be able to use their educations to learn to open their minds. She believed that it was most important to be open to the possibilities of life. For her, everything led up to that. She encouraged others to challenge themselves.

13 – **Is there anything else you would like to tell me?**
Beatrice was an inspiration to me and to many people, encouraging them to follow their own dreams.
Permissions

Sample Permission Letter

Interviewee:

As you know, I am currently a student at the Bank Street College of Education, completing my Master’s degree in early childhood general and special education. As part of my graduate work, I am writing an Independent Study, as a requirement for my degree, and as a culmination of my studies. For my project, I have chosen to write a children’s picture book biography about Beatrice Wood.

In order to do this project, I have read books and watched films about Beatrice Wood, have travelled to see her home and studio, have participated in a children’s ceramics workshop at her studio, and have interviewed people who knew her, and her work.

The materials resulting from this project will be shared as a PDF with the Bank Street community in a password-protected searchable database. They will also be submitted as a PDF to the Bank Street Library, where they will be catalogued as part of the collection, and entered into an international database for wider circulation.

It was a pleasure meeting you at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts. The information you gave me was very helpful to me in formulating my ideas and writing about her life. Now, I am almost finished with my project, and I will graduate soon.

In order for me to include your name, and some of the information you gave me during our interview in my project, I need your formal permission, and a signature on the enclosed form. I have enclosed a stamped self addressed envelope, so you can return the form to me.

Thank you,

Michele Marglis
Consent Form for Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts

I, Kevin Wood, Director of the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, give my permission for Michele Marglis to use the center’s name in her independent study, to be done in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Science in early childhood general and special education at the Bank Street College of Education.

I understand that the information provided by the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts will be used by Michele in developing her final project, which includes a picture book biography of Beatrice Wood.

Print Name: Kevin Wood

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 1/3/14
Consent Form

I [Kevin Wann] give my permission for Michele Marglis to list my name as an interviewee for her independent study, to be done in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Science in early childhood general and special education at the Bank Street College of Education.

I understand that the information I provided will be used by Michele in developing her final project, which includes a picture book biography of Beatrice Wood.

Print Name [Kevin Wann]

Signature [Signature]

Date [28/13]
Consent Form

I, [RICHARD FLORES], give my permission for Michele Marglis to list my name as an interviewee for her independent study, to be done in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Science in early childhood general and special education at the Bank Street College of Education.

I understand that the information I provided will be used by Michele in developing her final project, which includes a picture book biography of Beatrice Wood.

Print Name: [RICHARD FLORES]

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 12/25/13
Consent Form

I [Seda Sevada] give my permission for Michele Marglis to list my name as an interviewee for her independent study, to be done in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Science in early childhood general and special education at the Bank Street College of Education.

I understand that the information I provided will be used by Michele in developing her final project, which includes a picture book biography of Beatrice Wood.

Print Name [Seda Sevada]

Signature [Signature]

Date [1-3-14]
Consent Form

I, Stephen P. Hayler, give my permission for Michele Marglis to list my name as an interviewee for her independent study, to be done in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Science in early childhood general and special education at the Bank Street College of Education.

I understand that the information I provided will be used by Michele in developing her final project, which includes a picture book biography of Beatrice Wood.

Print Name: Stephen P. Hayler

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 12/4/13