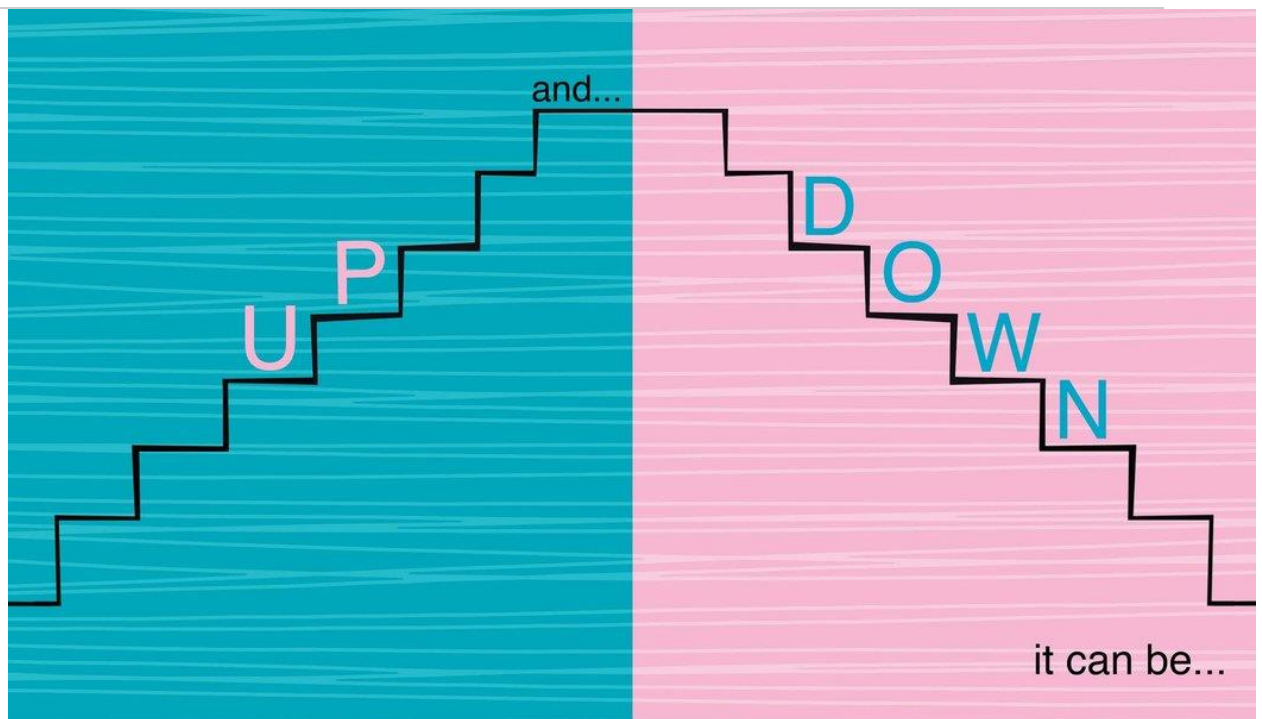


The Eyes Have It

By MARIA RUSSO MARCH 25, 2015

These new board books and picture books challenge, explore and celebrate the visual.

1. Photo



CreditFrom "A Line Can Be"

A Line Can Be

Written and illustrated by Laura Ljungkvist

Ljungkvist, the author of the Follow the Line interactive picture-book series, has taken her eye for line to the board book format, with great results. This pleasing book introduces the youngest children to the power of lines to create artistic impressions, and it will appeal equally to parents who crave bright, sophisticated, minimalist graphic design — the design of any of these pages would look right at home on a throw pillow in a style-conscious living room. The cover introduces the concept — “A line can be” — and each two-page spread offers a pair of options for a simple black line, each with a different

colored background. There's "hard or ... soft" — a spiky line like an EKG on a harsh yellow page and, opposite, a gentle pair of hill-like lines on muted purple. We can compare lines that are "thick" and "thin," "simple" and "complicated," and "straight" and "curvy." The final pairing moves toward the conceptual, with "happy" — an upward swoop against a cheerful orange background — and "sad" — the same swoop trending down, against a blue background.

20 pp. POW! \$9.95. (Board book; ages 1 to 4)

2. Photo



CreditFrom "The Game of Lines"

The Game of Lines

By Hervé Tullet

The impossibly nimble-minded Tullet (“Press Here,” “Mix It Up!”) continues to attack the boundary between “toy” and “book” in this wordless offering from his Let’s Play Games! board-book series. It’s a simple, intense shot of visual trippiness, consisting of page after page of thick neon yellow and pink lines. The pages are cut diagonally, allowing you to turn the top or bottom of each to view them in several combinations. In each combination, all the lines connect, but each is a unique, cheerful pattern. Toddlers will enjoy controlling the changes all by themselves; grown-ups might spend some Rubik’s Cube-like time puzzling out how Tullet made it work.

14 pp. Phaidon. \$12.95. (Board book; ages 1 to 5)

4. Photo

3.



CreditFrom "Snail, Where Are You?"

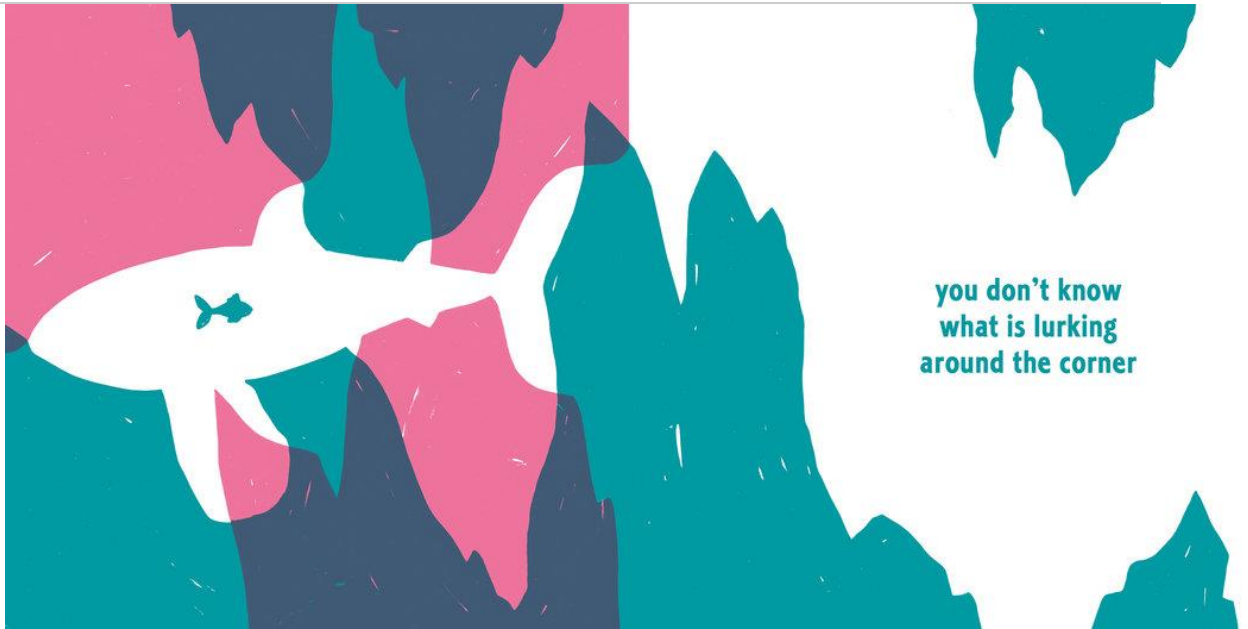
Snail, Where Are You?

Written and illustrated by Tomi Ungerer

This exquisite new edition of a small Tomi Ungerer treasure from the early 1960s is — like the also recently reissued “One, Two, Where’s My Shoe?” — a visual finding game delivered with a blast of psychedelic color and Ungerer’s inimitable style. The snail in question appears in its natural form only on the title page. After that, its spiral shape is hidden on each spread in simple illustrations against a white background, including a marching band member playing a tuba; a rower in a boat aloft on curling waves; an aqua-eyed bighorn sheep in the mountains; a pair of harp-playing dogs wearing curly-peaked felt hats; and two plump, punch-drunk children at a birthday party, one with twisting locks, the other with a roll-up party blower. It’s a fantastic chance to appreciate the unity and range of Ungerer’s sophisticated lines: He gives the same sly, playful attitude to animals in the wild, dressed-up grown-ups doing grown-up things, and children being children.

32 pp. Phaidon. \$14.95. (Picture book; ages 3 to 7)

5. Photo



Wild About Shapes

Written and illustrated by Jérémie Fischer

Alternating pages of paper and acetate form a cavalcade of metamorphosing creatures in this lovely spiral-bound lesson in shape and color. What appear

to be Rorschach-like abstractions become easily identifiable animals through Fischer's clever overlapping technique. Beginners can see a demonstration of color-mixing, and there are some cleverly presented facts about wildlife, as well: "Some animals are afraid of nothing" — turn an acetate page and an elephant appears amid a flock of birds — while "others are afraid of everything" — one more turn, and a mouse materializes.

32 pp. Flying Eye Books. \$16.99. (Picture book; ages 3 to 7)

6.

7. Photo



CreditFrom "The Queen's Shadow"

The Queen's Shadow

Written and illustrated by Cybèle Young

Young brings amusing storytelling, highly stylized pen-and-ink illustrations and a generous dash of whimsy to a scientific topic that's fascinating in and of itself: the ways that vision works in different animals. A bony, white-faced queen in a fancy purple gown stands in a ballroom surrounded by "society's most important nobility" — a motley assortment of creatures including a shrimp, a chameleon and a pigeon. There's a crash and a plunge into darkness, and when the lights come back on the queen announces that someone has stolen her shadow. It's up to the Royal Detective, a mantis shrimp, to solve the crime. As each suspect defends itself, we learn about its way of seeing, with more detail offered in a factual sidebar. There's Colossal

Squid, who possesses the “largest eyes in the animal kingdom”; Goat, with wide-apart eyes and a giant blind spot directly in front of him; and Dragonfly, who can see “in almost all directions at once.” This is a picture book that will grab the interest of visually and scientifically inclined older children, and adults may learn some new stuff, as well. I, for one, am glad and even strangely unsettled to know about the awesome eyesight of pigeons, who can see “many more colors than humans will ever know.”

40 pp. Kids Can Press. \$16.95. (Picture book; ages 6 to 12)