



**The Letterpress Project**

**Author and Illustrator E-Interviews**

# **An Interview With Richard O'Neill**

**Q1. What are your earliest memories of books and reading? For example, did you have a favourite or inspirational book?**

My earliest memory of books are having them read to me at bedtime by my Grandma Jarvis. When my mum bought me a ladybird learning to read book called 'The Farm', (which I loved), my grandma read it with so many times I learned by heart. Then when my relatives came to see us I recited it to them, they were incredibly impressed because they thought I could actually read. However it was great training, and a great confidence booster for actually reading, and soon after I could read books properly.

**Q2. What inspired you to become an author / illustrator?**

Children and young people. They just gave me such amazing reactions to my stories that I was motivated to write them down, and they continue to motivate me to do so.

**Q3. For you, what makes a successful book or illustration?**

A successful book is one that takes me on a storytelling journey, one that stirs up emotions, it has great characters who I can identify with and care about, it has settings/locations that are familiar and make me feel part of it, or ones that are very unfamiliar so it takes me to new places. It makes my imagination go into overdrive, it encourages me to think about things differently. Books like this inspire me to read another book, and another book....

**Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books / plan your illustrations?**

I'm thinking first of the story, do I like it, is it good, is it original, and only then do I think of the audience, which is children and adults in general, I want people of all ages to enjoy my

books. One girl told me one of my books was her cat's favourite book, so perhaps now I should think of animals as an audience too!

**Q5. What future do you think the physical book has? For example, do you think the electronic book will replace the physical book?**

I think the physical book will always be around, it's an invention like the wheel, that has never been bettered, and I doubt ever will. I don't think the electronic book will replace the physical book because people will increasingly want to cut down on screen time, and the best place to escape the screen is in a physical book!

**Q6. Are you a book collector? Is there a special book you'd love to own?**

No I'm not a book collector, but I do have a few special books which have been given to me over the years, including a book I was given as a school prize when I was 8 years old. Apart from those I have always seen books as pretty free spirited things, when I buy them and read them I like to pass them on so they can travel around. That's why I love libraries!

Thank you very much for taking time to do this for us. We will advise you when we publish it on the website - [www.letterpressproject.co.uk](http://www.letterpressproject.co.uk). Please return the completed interview to:

**Karen Argent**

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