

Press release

International competition of picture books for children with little or no sight



Could you create a picture book for a child who can't see pictures?

Enjoying books is, for most young children, an essential part of childhood. But what if you can't see? Tactile image books are the solution for blind or partially sighted children, as every picture is designed to be explored by touch. Imagine putting out your hand to a page and actually feeling the rough bricks of a wall, the hairy nose of a camel, the slimy squish of a slug! These incredible books aren't commercially produced, but made by creative people from every walk of life.

Just as conventional picture books have their prestigious competitions, such as the UK's Kate Greenaway award, tactile illustration has the Typhlo and Tactus International Tactile Book Competition to encourage tactile book creation across the globe. This year is its 20th anniversary. Judging will take place in Brussels in October 2019, with a prize of 1000 Euros for the winning entry.

The fantastic news is that the competition is open to anyone. Previous entrants have included teachers, artists, crafters, grandparents and students. The judges will be looking for books which are interesting, robust and entertaining for children up to age 12 who have little or no sight.

Each participating country can submit up to five books to the international contest. The UK shortlisting round will take place in September 2019 and is being organised by the ClearVision Project, a children's braille library. The UK judges will include children and adults who have a visual impairment, tactile image experts and illustrator Rod Campbell, author of immensely popular children's picture books including everyone's favourite *Dear Zoo*.

A series of workshops will be held across the United Kingdom in conjunction with the CILIP (the Library and Information Association) Youth Libraries Group. Workshops will offer advice on the creation and use of tactile books. Details of these and a series of videos offering similar guidance and advice, created with support from the University of Central Lancashire, will be added to the Clearvision Project website.

The deadline for UK entries is **16th August 2019**. For more information, guidance and an entry form, see ClearVision's website.

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Accompanying images (attached):

Figure 1. ClearVision logo

Figure 2. Selection of tactile image books, previous Tactus competition entries

Figure 3. Child enjoying a tactile image book

Figure 4. Typhlo and Tactus 2019 Competition Logo

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Additional information

More about tactile books

Tactile books are used across the UK by families and schools. In the classroom, they have an invaluable role in motivating young readers and are a great way to introduce new concepts and vocabulary, build confidence and encourage struggling braille readers.

With so much to offer, design is critical. Simply raising the lines of a print illustration produces something too complicated to be understood by touch. Pictures need to illustrate the text with simple shapes, space between objects and no clutter. A variety of textures is important to make the pictures interesting to touch. For beginner readers, both shapes and textures must be realistic. Tactile book designers walk the line between making a book inspiring, and making it simple enough to be rewarding reading. Some books even include sounds and smells. As a child becomes more experienced, the illustrations can be more complicated. The skills they build up by exploring these images are the bedrock for advanced work such as the graphs and maps they will need to decipher for GCSE level and beyond.

The competition

The Typhlo and Tactus International Tactile Book Competition takes place every two years. It is organised by Typhlo and Tactus, an international association with the aim of increasing the quantity, quality and availability of books with tactile illustrations for children with little or no sight. In 2019 Typhlo and Tactus will be celebrating twenty years of international collaboration. Over the years the group has organised many international competitions and the aim is for the 2019 competition to be especially large and well-promoted.

Each participating country is permitted a maximum of five entries in the Typhlo and Tactus competition and the winning books from the UK competition will become the UK entries. Judging by international experts in the field of tactile images will take place in Brussels in October. One winner and two runners-up will be selected from entries from all over the world. For more information visit www.tactus.org

The ClearVision Library

The ClearVision Project is a charity which runs a postal lending library of children's books which have been adapted to include the text in braille on clear plastic pages, so that print, braille and pictures are all together on the page. This makes them perfect for braille readers and print readers to share. Children who are learning braille can get crucial support from sighted parents and teachers; braille reading parents and grandparents can read with their sighted children. Everyone can enjoy a bedtime story together- one of the great pleasures of childhood. The scheme is also great for paired reading or projects in the classroom. They also hold the UK's only collection of fully textured tactile books, loaned to schools and vision support services to help children develop their touch skills and enjoy images.

The library is free for families to join, and books are sent using the Articles for the Blind freepost. The collection runs from board books for babies up to short chapter books for readers who are nearly reading independently and includes everything from favourite friends like the Gruffalo and Horrid Henry to best-selling authors like Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Morpurgo and Roald Dahl. ClearVision supports around 1000 families, schools, Sensory Support Services and public libraries across the UK and Ireland. For more information, or to sponsor a book, see www.clearvisionproject.org

Competition timetable

November 2018 –April 2019: Promotion of the competition.

January - June 2019: Exhibitions of examples of tactile books and workshops with groups of interested parties across the UK

August 16th: Closing date for UK competition

August 16th - September 5th: UK judging process

September 6th: UK winners announced

September 15th: Deadline for all Typhlo &Tactus competition entries to arrive in Brussels

October 17-19th: Typhlo and Tactus competition hosted by ONA (Belgian National Association For The Blind) Brussels.