



Hans Christian Andersen Award 1986



Robert Ingpen

 Australia

Illustrative pictures are like our lives: they have backgrounds and foregrounds and imaginative space. The big difference is that in a picture the background and foreground are seen together, but in our lives, the background ceases right now and the foreground is our future.

Robert Ingpen was born in Melbourne and grew up in Geelong to the south of the city. After graduation from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (now RMIT University) he worked as a graphic artist and illustrator for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, and then later for the UN in Mexico and Peru. Back in Australia, he painted murals for public buildings, designed postage stamps and even the coat-of-arms and the flag for Australia's Northern Territory.

Ingpen's style is distinctive. His sense of perspective and composition often emphasises the effects of light and shadow. His illustrations are authentic in both setting and historical detail but avoid all traces of sentimentality. He expresses his deep feeling for the Australian environment, in particular its beaches, rivers and countryside, and brings a realistic appreciation of his homeland to his books for children. In 2018, Ingpen completed a mural painted on seven panels of marine plywood that depicts a bookcase. Its shelves are filled with characters from classical stories instead of the more usual books from which they come. Ingpen donated *The Magic Bookcase* to the National Library of Australia.

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