



Hans Christian Andersen Award 1990



Lisbeth Zwerger

 Austria

Without proper details, a picture cannot be lifelike - but without skilful use of free space, a picture cannot come alive.

Lisbeth Zwerger was born in Vienna where she studied at the College of Applied Art. She began her artistic career as a painter and had many successful exhibitions around Austria. By 1977 she began illustrating children's books and found her home in classical fantasy, fairy tales and legends, sagas and fables. Her debut picture book was *The Strange Child* by E.T.A. Hoffman, and the following year she illustrated *The Nutcracker*, also by Hoffmann, which received worldwide success. Zwerger went on to illustrate works by Dickens, Wilde, Nesbit, Grimm, Andersen, Carroll, Baum and Morgenstern, among others.

Her illustrations are beautiful, fantastic, and at the same time grotesque. She combines elements of humour with melancholy, cheerfulness, movement and dance. Zwerger works in ink and water colour and their style and expressiveness reflect her poetic interpretation of the stories she selects. Her style is similar to that of English illustrators of the 19th century and she acknowledges being influenced by the work of Arthur Rackham. She creates a closed world of her own where each illustration is a piece of art in itself and is yet able to meet the flow of the story.