

# LITTLE GESTALTEN

SPRING 2020

## The World of Whales

Background Q&A with illustrator Becky Thorns **to use for press**

**Question by Little Gestalten:**

Hello Becky,

**you are publishing your first picture book ever with Little Gestalten next year on the 28th of January, 2020, in Europe (which includes the United Kingdom) and on the 14th of April, 2020, internationally (which includes the United States).**

**We would like to provide the press with some background material about *The World of Whales* and would therefore like to ask you if you could to tell us a little bit more about the history of the book and how you came up with the idea for the illustrations for it?**

Answer by Becky Thorns, illustrator of *The World of Whales*:

*The World of Whales* has been a labour of love for me over the last year. I've always loved sea-life but whales have always held a special place in my heart, for their intelligence, grace and playfulness. Not only has the opportunity to spend time illustrating them been a dream, but having the opportunity to learn so much about them and explore how to best illustrate and communicate their character has been great. Whales are such diverse animals, in appearance, character and habitats. I really wanted the illustrations to evoke a sense of this variety, so that you could really feel where the whales live while also being given a glimpse of their unique characters, from the playful dolphin to the right whale, who I'm certain would suit a monocle! Each spread is its own story, and from the beginning I wanted to include a lot of small details for the readers to discover, from other fish and crabs hiding in the seaweed, to the texture and details of the whales themselves. This also meant learning about the environments that these whales come from; Darcy helped me discover what other animals live in these places, meaning the illustrations are not only accurate but also give a real sense of place.

Working digitally has meant that I have had the ability to explore the use of colours and experiment with textures throughout the illustrations. The oceans aren't just a mix of blues and greens, but every colour imaginable. A deep sea doesn't have to just be a navy blue, but have shafts of green and purple running through them from above. Another benefit of working digitally on the illustrations has been that I have been able to travel the world while working on the book, having the opportunity to see some whales myself! Travelling while working has meant I have had a wealth of inspiration I would not have otherwise had, and that I have been challenged to step outside of my comfort zone and explore different ways of working.

I really wanted this book to not just be an educational tool but we all wanted it to have a real sense of story throughout. I wanted to create spreads that are exciting and inspiring, not only within the context of the book but as stand alone images, full of colour and variety throughout, from a busy scene of dolphins leaping and exploring, to a huge blue whale filling the entire page. I love David Attenborough documentaries, especially the way in which they seem to be able to tell you a story about the animals while also educating you on them by inviting you in to a small moment the animals' lives. I wanted to capture some of that in the illustrations by making it feel as though you were getting a snapshot of a larger story. Through the book I hope that those reading it can feel involved in the life of whales, that they are a part of it.

Looking after our oceans is such an important thing, especially in today's society, and it's brilliant to see the changes that have already been made in the way we treat our blue planet. One of the ways we are motivated to make change is to get excited again about the animals that we share our world with. I really hope this book is something which does that, especially for children. I hope that through reading and learning and seeing these beautiful creatures, they are motivated to help us conserve and protect our oceans, so that we can enjoy these beautiful creatures for generations to come.

**Little Gestalten: Thank you very much for responding to our question Becky and we wish you a lot of success with your first book!**

### **Short Biography of Becky Thorns**

British illustrator Becky Thorns has an inquisitive design style inspired by her travels. *The World of Whales* is her first picture book.

This interview may be used by press in conjunction with book reviews or features about Becky Thorns and the author of the book, Darcy Dobell.