

****Strictly embargoed until 00.01GMT Monday 26th July****

Celebrities, authors and illustrators play THE SHAPE GAME for charity with Children's Laureate Anthony Browne

Original artwork and book go on sale today

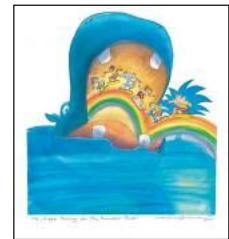
Original artwork from illustrious names including Quentin Blake, Emma Thompson, Harry Hill, Ian McEwan and Sir Peter Blake will go on sale today as part of Anthony Browne's THE SHAPE GAME project, in aid of the charity Rainbow Trust.

A fun drawing game involving a random shape being transformed into something recognisable, The Shape Game has now been taken on by over 45 writers, artists, illustrators and celebrities who have let their imaginations loose on an original shape drawn by Children's Laureate Anthony Browne (see right).



Members of the public will be able to bid for the original artwork from the project at an online auction which starts at 6am today (Monday 26th July). For further information see www.childrenslaureate.org.uk. The transformed shapes will also be published by Walker Books in an accompanying book, *Play the Shape Game*, intended to encourage children to use their imaginations. The book, which will be published in paperback at £5.99, will also feature brand new shapes created by the contributors which readers can then customise for themselves.

Hats proved a common route for many of the contributors involved, with Jo Brand, Axel Scheffler, Jacqueline Wilson, Andrew Motion, Tara Palmer-Tomkinson and Sir Peter Blake (above, left) amongst those transforming the shape into headwear. Animals were also a popular choice: Harry Hill opting to customise the shape into a whale, Quentin Blake adapting it into a bird (below, left) and Emma Thompson using her artwork as a way to declare that she is "obsessed with pigs". Other creations inspired by the animal kingdom include those by Greg Wise (who drew a rhino), Michael Morpurgo (elephant), Michael Foreman (hippo - right) Catherine Rayner (pig), Linford Christie (bird), Emily Gravett (owl), Shirley Hughes (cat) and Ken Livingstone (shark).

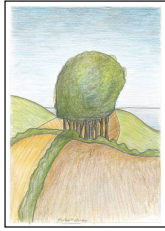


Other creations include a desert island by Booker-Prize winning author Ian McEwan, a person pondering the question: "Why Me?" by philosopher Alain de Botton, and comedian Leigh Francis's take on 1980s high-school hero, Teen Wolf.

Quentin Blake, the first contributor to sign-up to the project, said: "I jumped at the chance to get involved; not only was it huge fun thinking about how I'd like to customise Anthony's shape, but encouraging creativity is something I feel very strongly about. I hope the auction and book go on to raise lots of money for Rainbow Trust, which does such important work to support families at a time of great need."

Anthony Browne (artwork on right) said: "Although on one level it's just a game, I believe that it encapsulates the act of creation... everything comes from something else, inspiration is everywhere. I am thrilled that so many big names have joined in to play The Shape Game and I've had enormous pleasure looking through their artworks - it's fascinating to get a glimpse inside the minds of celebrities! Hopefully they will capture the public's imagination too so that we can raise a good amount for Rainbow Trust."





Bestselling author Philip Pullman said of his contribution (left):

"I was enthusiastic about the idea from the start, because I seize on any excuse to get my pencils out, and this idea was so intriguing. I did have to let my mind go free over Anthony's shape - there's no point in thinking hard about it, because the exercise really involves thinking very loosely. But as I did, the landscape seemed to form itself around the shape. I loved doing it - huge fun".

Both the auction and the book will be launched this morning (Monday 26th) at a special event at Waterstone's Piccadilly (London), Europe's largest bookstore. All funds raised from the auction and all profits from the sales of the book will be donated to Rainbow Trust, a charity which provides vital support to families who have a child with a life threatening or terminal illness.

ENDS

For high-res images of the artworks, or for further information please contact:

On Friday 23rd July: Alice Ingall at Booktrust on 020 8875 4827 / 07870 636099 / alice.ingall@booktrust.org.uk

On Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th July: Anwen Hooson at Riot Communications
on 07899 798885 / anwen@riotcommunications.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Other contributors to *Play the Shape Game* include: Anne Fine, Emily Gravett, Meera Syal, Philip Pullman, Tracy Chevalier, Nick Sharratt, Michael Rosen, Imelda Staunton, Anthony Horowitz, Sir Derek Jacobi, Rob Ryan and Jan Pienkowski.
2. Anthony Browne was announced as the 6th Children's Laureate on 9th June 2009. With almost forty books to his name, including *Gorilla*, *Willy the Chimp* and *Silly Billy*, Anthony has received many awards and distinctions, and in 2000 received the highest international honour for illustration - the Hans Christian Andersen Award - for his services to children's literature. His work has been widely exhibited and his books are published all over the world.
3. The role of Children's Laureate, which has a bursary of £15,000, is awarded once every two years to an eminent writer or illustrator of children's books to celebrate outstanding achievement in their field. The appointment of a Children's Laureate acknowledges the importance of exceptional children's authors in creating the readers of tomorrow.
4. The Children's Laureateship is administered by Booktrust, an independent national reading charity dedicated to encouraging people of all ages to engage with books. Booktrust is responsible for a number of successful national reading promotions, sponsored book prizes and creative reading projects aimed at encouraging readers to discover and enjoy books. These include the Orange Prize for Fiction, Children's Book Week, the Roald Dahl Funny Prize and Bookstart, the national programme that works through locally based organisations to give a free pack of books to young children, with guidance materials for parents and carers. www.booktrust.org.uk
5. The Children's Laureateship is sponsored by Waterstone's, the UK's leading specialist bookseller with over 300 branches in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as branches in Eire, in Amsterdam and Brussels, on the Isle of Man and Jersey. Its transactional website Waterstones.com was launched in 2006, and there are currently over 3 million holders of the Waterstone's Card. Waterstone's was named High Street Retailer of the Year at the Bookseller Retail Awards 2009.
6. Walker is the world's leading independent publisher of children's books. Working with the best authors and illustrators, Walker Books is renowned for its truly original publishing and outstanding quality. Home of books for all ages, from babies to teenagers, Walker publishes the

books that children grow up with and always remember. Walker's licensing division manages licensing activity across several Walker brands including Maisy and all other Lucy Cousins properties; Guess How Much I Love You and new property Tilly and Friends. **Walker Productions** was launched in 2007 to develop Walker content for other media platforms. Walker is part of a vibrant international group that includes **Candlewick Press** in America, and **Walker Australia**. Walker is home to many award-winning authors and illustrators including Anthony Horowitz, Helen Oxenbury, Michael Morpurgo, John Burningham, Allan Ahlberg, Anthony Browne, Patrick Ness, and Michael Rosen. Further information can be found at www.walker.co.uk

7. Rainbow Trust Children's Charity provides emotional and practical support to families when their child has a life threatening or terminal illness; immediate help is available for families 24 hours a day. Individually tailored and high quality support is offered from diagnosis through treatment and, should a family become bereaved, we continue to support them for as long as they need us. We help family members cope with the present and prepare them for the future. Our vision is that one day all terminally ill children and their families will have access to a Rainbow carer. www.rainbowtrust.org.uk

