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The Bird King: An Artist's Notebook

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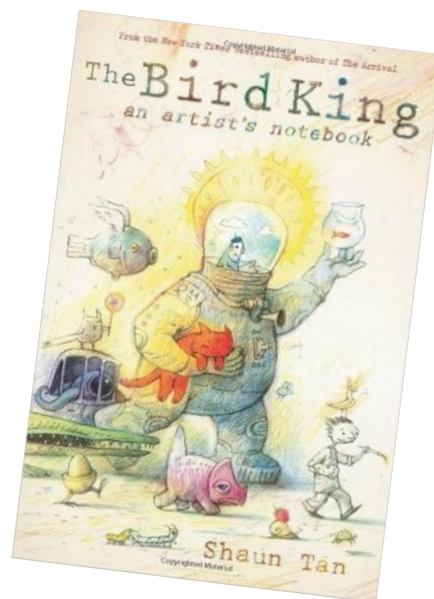
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Book Review

Title: The Bird King: An Artist's Notebook
Author: Shaun Tan
Reviewer: Julia Mulligan
Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books
Publication Year: 2013
ISBN: 9780545465137
Number of Pages: 123
Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Sneak a peek into the creative process of accomplished and prolific illustrator, Shaun Tan, through this thoughtfully curated collection of sketches, both finished and unfinished. *The Bird King: an artist's notebook* not only showcases Tan's quirky, imaginative style with its abundance of mechanical creatures and surrealistic scenarios, but also demonstrates his high degree of technical skill with a variety of studies from life. Alongside the sketches are some of Tan's handwritten notes, as well as longer explanatory pages, which help the reader to pull it all together.

This multi-faceted exhibition of work takes the reader's appreciation of Tan's inventive visions to a whole new level. Unfinished images and perplexing captions offer a rare chance to be in the artist's shoes and really experience his unique perspective. Its sturdy binding and heavyweight pages invite the reader to savor each illustration slowly; this is not a book to flip through hastily or just once. Potential uses for this book are many: young readers might enjoy coming up with their own stories and explanations for the images while older readers will enjoy Tan's thought process and appreciate his stylistic achievements. Art teachers could even use this book to inspire Shaun Tan-esque experimentation in their own classrooms. *The Bird King: an artist's notebook* is an enjoyable and thought-provoking experience that should appeal to anyone interested in contemporary illustration.