



Ted Harrison,

who passed away in early 2015, was one of Canada's most celebrated artists; his distinctive and colourful paintings of the Arctic and the West Coast are recognized around the world. Ted's many honours include the Order of British Columbia and the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honour. Several generations of schoolchildren have grown up familiar with his work through picture books like *A Northern Alphabet*, *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*, and *The Cremation of Sam McGee*. Until now, however, no book for young readers has been written about the life of this fascinating artist.

A Brush Full of Colour is a stunning gift book for children and adults that fills a void in our national literature. Filled with colour reproductions of Ted Harrison's work and introduced with a foreword by the artist himself, it tells the story of a boy whose passion for learning would save him from a life of hardship in England's coalmines. Inspired by the books of the American writer Jack London and Canadian poet Robert Service, Harrison travelled the world first as a soldier in the British Intelligence Service and later as an art teacher. At last he settled in Canada's north where he taught school, raised a family, and developed the unique style of art that makes him so well-known today.

Awards and Honours

Shortlisted for the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award

Shortlisted for the Rocky Mountain Book Award

Shortlisted for the Ruth & Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award

Shortlisted for the Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Information Book Award

Shortlisted for the Hackmatack Children's Choice Award

Best Books for Kids & Teens ★ Starred Selection

OLA Best Bet

Margriet Ruurs is the award-winning author of twenty-six books for children. Passionate about literacy, she writes children's and educational materials, edits the web magazine *KidsWWWrite*, and conducts author visits and writing workshops at international schools around the world. When she isn't travelling, Margriet runs a booklover's bed and breakfast on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia. Learn more at www.margietruurs.com

Katherine Gibson is the best-selling author of four non-fiction books. Her work has been published internationally in several languages. Katherine's extensive research for the illustrated biography *Ted Harrison: Painting Paradise* was instrumental in the writing of *A Brush Full of Colour*. Katherine lives on Vancouver Island. Learn more at www.katherinegibson.com

Picture Book for All Ages | ISBN: 978-1-927485-63-7 | List Price: \$22.95 CAD / \$19.95 USD

Hardcover with dust jacket | Trim Size: 27.94 x 24.13 cm / 11 x 9.5 inches / 40 Pages

Downloadable Teaching Resources: pajamapress.ca/resource/a_brush_full_of_colour_teaching_guide

Reviews

School Library Journal

“An outstanding, well-organized biography about the life of Ted Harrison, one of Canada’s most recognized and popular painters. The book chronicles the man’s life, from his birth in the coal mining town of Wingate, County Durham, England, where his father gave him pencil and paper and told him to draw; to art school and military service post–World War II, which gave him the opportunity to see the world; to teaching art in Malaysia; and finally immigrating to Canada and combining all the designs and techniques he had seen around the world and finding his own style. Harrison vowed that his paintings would only depict positive images. He developed a colorful, vibrant technique that reflected the joys of life. While many love his work, others are more critical. However, Harrison remains upbeat: “We must be who we are in everything we do, no matter what others say.” This book is filled with quotes from Harrison and examples of his work, all demonstrating his love for vivid colors and flowing lines. **VERDICT** A joy to look at and an inspiration to read.”

Booklist

“Best known for his colorful paintings of the Yukon, Ted Harrison grew up in England’s drab, gray coal country. His military duties during World War II took him to India, Egypt, and Kenya. After the war, he taught art in Malaysia and New Zealand before he and his wife moved to Canada, where they fell in love with the Yukon. Inspired by the landscape, he moved away from his traditional, formal art training and developed his own distinctive style, notable for its simplified forms, unusual colors, and underlying sense of joy. Harrison has illustrated several books, including *O Canada* (1993) and Robert Service’s *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* (1988). Ruurs and Gibson’s beautifully designed volume combines a clearly written account of Harrison’s life and work with photos of his early years and, later, many of his paintings. Seldom does an artist’s biography for children offer so many beautiful reproductions of the subject’s work. Pair this inviting book with Ashley Bryan’s *Words to My Life’s Song* (2009), another wonderfully visual celebration of an artist following his own path.”

Kirkus Reviews

“‘Painting is the last great freedom. You can paint what you like.’

Born in northern England in 1926, Harrison began his career as a classically trained painter who eagerly embraced the freedom of post–World War II military service in India, Africa, Malaysia and New Zealand. Propelled by his youthful love of Jack London, he accepted a teaching position in northern Alberta, moving his family there in the late 1960s. In the clear, Canadian light, he soon adopted a vivid palette to portray a new, northern vision of vast skies, low horizons, luminous aurora borealis, vivid sunrises and sunsets. His work featured First Nations totemic imagery and large bands of color. His forms became organic, and strikingly simple figures and buildings were now strongly outlined in black. After a slow start, his work became increasingly popular, and he began illustrating children’s books in the 1980s, including two by another childhood favorite, Robert Service (*The Cremation of Sam McGee*, 1986, and *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*, 1988). Abundantly illustrated, the generally lively text is accessible and well-paced, and (thankfully) the didactic asides and discussion prompts are relegated to the paintings’ captions. Backmatter includes a helpful index and related books, websites and films.

A child-friendly introduction to an iconic, wonderfully accessible and quintessentially Canadian artist.”

CM Magazine

“This outstanding biography does more than just inform the reader of Ted Harrison’s life in a well organized way. *A Brush Full of Colour* is indicative of the spirit and passion of its subject and richly illuminates a national treasure! It does justice to Harrison’s artwork by including many reproductions from his early efforts to more recent drawings that are named, dated and commented upon as to the content of the drawing and its meaning. Many include a question posed to the reader. One of the highlights of this lovely book is a preface by Harrison where he refers to his art as ‘my simplistic artistic style’. He also includes a lovely tribute to meeting, over the years, students and lovers of art that have influenced him. Harrison urges readers to ‘keep on reading, writing and painting’.

An index and bibliographical references are included.

Highly Recommended.”

Resource Links

“If you have a Ted Harrison book, this is a must have. *A Brush Full of Colour* tells the story of Ted Harrison from his birth in 1926 England and follows his development as an artist to the present day, living in Victoria. The book is full of Harrison’s paintings, including his earlier work before he developed his recognizable style. The text is easy to read, comprehensive, and interesting.

The text is divided into chapters: Childhood, Travelling the World, Life in the North, and A Full Time Artist. Each page is filled with colourful reproductions of his paintings, photographs, memorabilia, and artist sketches. Readers will be amazed to discover the influences in his work and the growth in his style. Harrison wrote the preface and several of his quotes are interspersed throughout the text. As a result, the reader gets a good understanding of who Ted Harrison is. The authors include questions below most of the reproductions to further guide the conversation. (“What do the ravens tell us about the weather that day?”)

A foreword by Ted Harrison, Table of Contents, and Index are included in this beautifully presented book. [It also includes] Acknowledgements, Sources and Resources.

Highly recommended for all Canadian libraries.”

Canadian Children’s Book News

“Ted Harrison, one of Canada’s most recognized and celebrated artists, died in January, 2015. Using a distinctive style that particularly resonates with children, he portrayed the Canadian west coast and Yukon landscapes in vibrant, non-traditional colours. *A Brush Full of Colour* follows the life and career of Harrison, from his youth in a coal-mining town in northeast England.

...This inspirational and informative biography includes many stunning examples of Harrison’s luminous artwork as well as resources, sources and a foreword written by the artist himself: ‘I urge you to keep on reading, writing, and painting. Develop your own style and keep it honest and true to who you are. Find inspiration in the world around you, and you will make the world a happier and more creative place.’”