

A conversation with award winner
R. Gregory Christie



With an exquisite palette and stunning compositions, award-winning illustrator R. Gregory Christie reimagines one of Aesop's most popular fables in MOUSETROPOLIS, his first picture book as both author and illustrator.

Gregory, please tell us about your new book, MOUSETROPOLIS.

MOUSETROPOLIS is a playful retake on one of Aesop's fables, complete with electronic devices, vast cityscapes and plenty of cheese.

MOUSETROPOLIS is based on the classic Aesop fable "The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse." During the process of writing and illustrating this book, you moved from New York City to Georgia. Did your move have any influence on this book?

Most certainly. I've lived in Brooklyn and Stockholm, Sweden, and now I live in a small little town west of Atlanta named Mableton. When illustrating, I just looked out the door for country inspiration and into my mind (or heart) for accurate city paintings.

The artwork in MOUSETROPOLIS is very striking and includes vast landscapes and cityscapes. What experiences or images did you draw from for the artwork?

If you've ever been on the subway to Park Slope, Brooklyn, then you'll know the city scenes in the book, and if you've been on any train that had trees flashing past you on a sunny day, you'll recognize the colors and technique in the scene where the mice hop a freight train.

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Though you've illustrated children's books for many years, **MOUSETROPOLIS** is your debut as both writer and illustrator. How was your process with creating this book different from or the same as with your past work?

It was difficult and not the same. I'm a painter in my heart, which causes the moving of those brushes and pigments to be a passion and not just a pastime. I'm not certain that I see writing the same way, but I found a way to enjoy the process.

What do you hope young readers will learn from MOUSETROPOLIS?

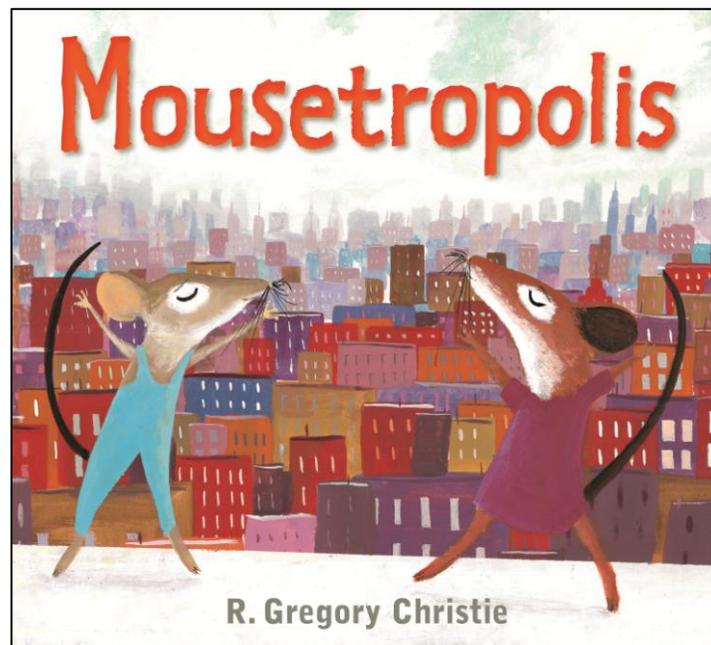
I hope they learn that there are messages in the art and words that are revealed in between the lines. After you get your copy, look carefully in order to get the full experience.

When did you know you wanted to be an author and illustrator?

I'm still a bit apprehensive about taking on the title of author, so this book is quite a career benchmark. I knew that I wanted to be an illustrator when I was a teenager.

If you could give any advice to young authors and illustrators, what would it be?

Don't forget the library as a resource. That human-to-human contact with your local media specialist can do wonders for the creative process. Also, run out to buy this book, and if you come by my shop, I will sign it for you!



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