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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Washington show has 29 works from Mazza Museum

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By Tracie Mauriello, Block News Alliance

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WASHINGTON — Security guards are seeing a lot more strollers than usual rolling into the National Academy of Sciences Building.

The Upstairs Gallery normally is home to scientific intrigues such as precision machined sculptures, architecture pieces based on synthetic biology, and portraits of marine invertebrates.

But for the next five months, visitors to the academy's cultural exhibit space will find more familiar images — original illustrations from children's books including Patrick O'Brien's *Gigantic!* and Elizabeth Brandt's *Building a Better Brother*.



An image from Patrick O'Brien's 'Gigantic!' — which is subtitled 'How Big Were The Dinosaurs?' — is featured in the Washington show 'Igniting the Imagination.'

The 29 pieces in the new "Igniting the Imagination" exhibit are on loan from the University of Findlay's Mazza Museum, which opened in 1982 and now houses the most diverse collection of picture books anywhere.

Jay Labov — a senior adviser at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine — came across the Mazza Museum during a speaking engagement at the

University of Findlay, and brought it to the attention of his agency's culture staff, who saw a perfect fit.

"It's the idea of what stimulates a child," said J.D. Talasek, director of cultural programs at the academy whose mission is to highlight the places art and science intersect.

"What's beautiful about children's books is they're not bothered with silos — the divisions of art, science, engineering, and humanities. They don't care about that. They just care about things that are interesting, and they care about being filled with wonder."

But the exhibit isn't just for children.



An image from 'City Beats: A Hip-Hoppy Pigeon Poem' by Jeanette Canyon is in the show in Washington. She is married to Christopher Canyon, whose work is also featured in the exhibition.

"There's another aspect of the show that appeals to adults: seeing how artists work, how illustrators work, and how children's books are made," Mr. Talasek said. "It was conceived to remind adults how imagination is originally ignited."

Alana Quinn, senior associate in the cultural program, is intrigued by the three-dimensional paper sculptures that were photographed to illustrate Robin Brickman's *A Log's Life*.

"That's something really special to see in the gallery. It looks very different in person than it does in the reproduction," Ms. Quinn said.

Mazza Museum director Benjamin Sapp was glad to send that and other pieces to Washington.

"It helps us share information about the museum and it enabled us to put together an exhibit on science that we had not done before. To put an exhibit together that highlights both the arts and sciences is very exciting for us," he said.

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