



A conversation with author
Roxie Munro



Photo credit: Bo Zaunders

Roxie Munro talks about her new book,
Masterpiece Mix,
an innovative picture book about an artist
inspired by 37 masterpieces.

“A versatile introduction to fine art for
elementary schoolers.”

—*School Library Journal*

“Brilliant . . .

a puzzle that the child and adult reader will return to
again and again.”—*The Huffington Post*

Roxie, please tell us about the story of *Masterpiece Mix*.

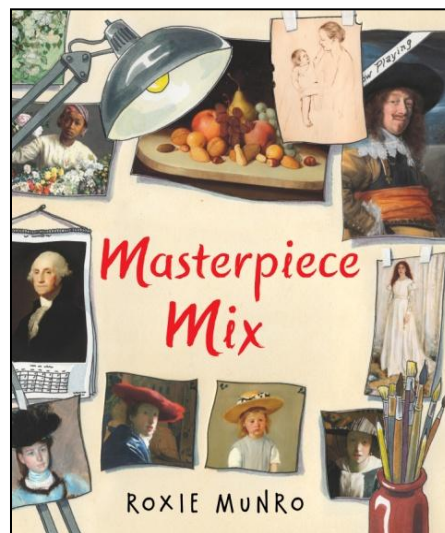
Masterpiece Mix is a book about art—about how and where artists get their ideas. It also focuses on different genres, and the stories of the artists who created the paintings. There’s an unexpected finale. Thirty-seven works are featured, all from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

Where did you get your inspiration for this book?

I had the idea of doing a book about a painter’s process (mine!) fifteen years ago. At that time, the book focused on techniques in famous paintings—like how to work with perspective, colors (hues, tones, shades, value), use of pattern, creating volume, and so forth. I set it aside . . . it wasn’t quite working until I showed it to Holiday House twelve or so years later and Grace Maccarone suggested that the paintings be grouped as genres. My great editor, Mary Cash, and I decided to use famous paintings from the National Gallery of Art under their Open Access policy.

What makes this book special to you?

It is a book about obsession (with art) and inspiration. “To thine own self be true” . . . the artist finds that her love of certain pieces of art can be incorporated into her own work. And, regarding her father’s quote (“do what you love”), it works on several levels: she loves the famous paintings scattered around her studio, she loves to paint, she loves her neighborhood and town, and in the finale she brings them all together.



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What inspired you to become an artist and author?

I have always been an artist. I won first prize in a county-wide contest at age six (a pastel of a bowl of fruit). I was Art Editor of the yearbook; designed everything for the senior prom; was voted “Most Talented” in my high school class. I have always been an artist. Writing came later, when my first editor encouraged me (qualified for Honors English in college, so writing has also been a part of my creativity).

If you could have a magical talent (i.e., becoming invisible, or the ability to fly), what would it be?

I’d like to go back into the past—maybe spend a day hiding from, but observing, dinosaurs. But I’d also love to go into the future...to check out Mars.

What was your favorite book growing up?

Lots—in particular, I love the illustrations in Arthur Szyk’s *Andersen’s Fairy Tales*.

If there is one thing you could tell your young readers about life, what would you say?

Follow your dream. Do not give up. And work hard.

About the Author

Roxie Munro is the author and illustrator of more than 40 books for children, including *Market Maze*, which received a starred review from *Kirkus*. Her books have been named *Smithsonian’s* Best Science Books for Children, Outstanding NSTA Science Trade Books, and winners of the Society of International Librarians Honor Award. Her studio is in New York City, where she also lives.