



Editor's Note

By Sharon Verbeten

"In and out of weeks" I had waited to visit the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia; it had long been a dream of mine to visit the repository of the archives of Maurice Sendak's manuscripts and artwork.

I've modestly considered myself somewhat of a Sendak scholar ever since high school, when I performed an oral reading of *Outside Over There* for a class. Then, in college, I penned an English thesis examining the meanings behind Sendak's glorious and diverse illustrations. I started collecting his works, even obscure ones, as well as the scholarly tomes by Selma Lanes.

Fast forward to becoming a librarian and my obsession seems to all fall in place. That's why visiting the Sendak gallery and archives was truly a dream made possible when the ALA Midwinter Meeting came to Philadelphia this January. I swiftly arranged my tour and was lucky to be joined by members of ALSC's Special Collections and Bechtel Fellowship Committee (thanks for letting me tag along!).

First, we visited the Where the Wild Things Are gallery, where we saw original artwork (some that never made it into the final version of the Caldecott winner), text notes (one in which Max was called "Johnny"), and a tiny dummy book, when the book was still originally called *Where the Wild Horses Are*.

Next, we were treated to a special appointment-only viewing of a handful of the more than 10,000 Sendak items in the museum's collection. Tiny dummies from books we had never heard of (apparently Sendak liked to work in miniature), early advertising drawings and, my personal favorite, original art from my favorite *Outside Over There*.

Touring the gallery and seeing even a glimpse of the massive archival collection was a rare treat for me, as well as for the librarians who joined me—among them children's literature fans and archiving experts. We all had our own reasons for wanting to see Sendak's works—if only to transport us back to, perhaps, our childhood; our college days; or the day we first read *In the Night Kitchen* to our child (as I did just a few months ago).

For me, it was a place to forget all the talk about Sendak being a recluse or a curmudgeon and see him for the genius he was. It was more than Mickey in the batter, Chicken Soup with Rice, or Ida backwards in the rain; it was a moment in literary history I'll never forget. &

(Right) Sharon Verbeten poses in front of the Wild Things mural at the Rosenbach Museum; it is the only location in which photos are allowed in the building. Photo courtesy of Sharon Verbeten.



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