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# Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed A Neighborhood



## Synopsis

What good can a splash of color do in a community of gray? As Mira and her neighbors discover, more than you might ever imagine! Based on the true story of the Urban Art Trail in San Diego, California, *Maybe Something Beautiful* reveals how art can inspire transformation—and how even the smallest artists can accomplish something big. Pick up a paintbrush and join the celebration!

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #31,059 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > City Life #128 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art #779 in Books > Children's Books > Activities, Crafts & Games > Activity Books

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

**Behind the Scenes with Rafael López** An inside look at the artistic process behind *Maybe Something Beautiful*, the vibrant picture book based on the true story of the Urban Art Trail in San Diego, California. Below are some early sketches from the book, and some background information from the award-winning illustrator.

I wanted to capture the essence of the East Village where we started painting our first mural in Downtown San Diego. I took my camera and walked around photographing and capturing the actual buildings from the neighborhood. I wanted somehow to incorporate them into the book. As you can see on the right I had to correct the perspective to straighten them to fit what I had in mind. Once

the buildings were straightened I added my own textures I created with different techniques, using acrylic and watercolor. I created a collection of new 'fictitious' buildings for the story but based on the actual buildings. I cut pieces of construction paper and then incorporated the textures into them.

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I then proceeded to create a pencil sketch to see where thing will fit. This is an important stage where you can play with size, proportion and editing. One last stage is to paint your characters in this case Mira which I did traditionally with acrylic on wood board. The it's all about putting all the elements together digitally and fine tuning the final composition. I had a great time experimenting with a new technique. It was very important to keep having fun! Enjoy!

Summary: Mira is an artist. She loves to draw what she sees around her, and give her pictures to family, friends, and neighbors. One day, a man comes to her neighborhood who loves art as much as she does. He starts to paint murals around the community, and he invites Mira and her neighbors to join him. The bright colors are like magic, and when the murals are done, the painters don't stop. They paint sidewalks, utility boxes, and benches. The man who started it all unites everyone with a wave of his paintbrush. Pages at the end tell about Rafael Lopez, who is both the man in the story and the illustrator of this book, and how he transformed San Diego's East Village, and has since moved on to other communities around the world. 40 pages; ages 4-8. Pros: An inspiring true story about one man who made a difference. Not only did he beautify his own community, but his work has raised money to help talented artists get more education, and his movement has spread around the world. His illustrations convey the magical transformations of his art. Cons: I would have loved to have seen more photos of the real murals and other artwork.

If it was possible to give a book 10 stars, I'd do it. A book like this doesn't come along all that often. Exquisite in thought and design, it carries a powerful, layered message for all readers—children at all ages and adults. Isabel Campoy hits compelling and potent notes in her writing, while Rafael Lopez dazzles with images that bring the ideas to life. It's going to be a focus in my mentor text workshops, no question. Ruth Culham

Based on the true story of the colorful transformation of the East Village neighborhood in San Diego,

California, this picture book shows how art can impact quality of life. Mira is a little girl who loves to create art. She lives in a gray city where she tries to share her art and change things, but her art is too little to make big changes. Then she meets a man who is creating huge murals and who allows Mira to help him. Soon other neighbors are helping and colors begin to fill the streets, creating a close-knit neighborhood. There is a sense of joy and hope throughout this picture book, led by little Mira, a girl with the heart of an artist from the very start of the book. Just sharing her art with her neighbors is an act of artistic courage that sets the tone for the rest of the story. The text is accented by "Bams!" and "Pows!" that add to the dynamic tone. Everything here is filled with creative energy and a cheery tone. López's art shows the gray concrete city and then imposes Mira and her own colorful attitude against it. The paint splashes on the page and also creates vibrant rainbows of swirling colors that dance on the page. The diverse neighborhood is captured with a richness that is captivating. As color fills the page, it fills the neighborhood too. A brilliant testament to the power of art and the way it can transform a life and a neighborhood. Appropriate for ages 4-7.

A semi-fictionalized look at the creation of San Diego's Urban Art Trail, illustrated by the creator of the first murals on the Art Trail. Told through the eyes of a young girl who is surrounded, at first, by an unfriendly and somewhat run-down neighborhood, we watch as color and life is added, and as a community comes together to create something beautiful. A good class opener for a unit on decorating your world with art. Though, perhaps make sure that parents are aware that their little ones might have a sudden desire to color on walls and fences and such, just to be safe. Or to encourage them, and provide them a space for decoration! You definitely want to pair this book with a lot of crayons and walls covered in construction paper, rather than just a few pieces of printer paper. Give your kids a chance to transform their classroom! Good for a classroom, though a little limited in a standard household. However, if you've got local murals to show your child, by all means, borrow it from the library and have a little adventure!

This delightful book, filled with hope is based on a true story about murals and art transforming a gray city. The text is captivating, mixing quiet moments with bursts of energy. The illustrator is also the muralist this story was based on and he delivers inspiration with each turn of the page. The compelling images move from somber grays and urban textures to lively scenes bursting with color and emotion. An empowering story about changing a community for children and adults.

This is a beautiful and inspiring book about how creativity can change communities. The story is authentic and the illustrations are absolutely gorgeous. The spirit of the book is fantastic and you will so enjoy how it galvanizes you to want to create change in your own community. Wonderful!

Maybe Something Beautiful, by F. Isabel Campoy & Theresa Howell. Illustration by Rafael LÃpez. A book that can be read by readers of all ages, because its message is empowering, transformative, and indeed beautiful. Probably a universe of stars would be a fitting evaluation. Now we need it in Spanish! Martha ValdÃ©s.

What a wonderful book. Full of joy and color!! My granddaughter loved it. We read it over and over again!

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