

**Interview with Victoria Tentler-Krylov**

**ILLUSTRATOR VICTORIA TENTLER-KRYLOV: PICTORIAL, FRESH, FULL OF  
DETAILS**

Pointed angles, flowing spaces and façades that seem to float in the air – Zaha Hadid mastered this type of architecture. But before she became the most famous star architect of all time, Zaha had to overcome great challenges and break many rules. “BUILDING ZAHA – The Life of Architect Zaha Hadid” was illustrated and written by Victoria Tentler-Krylov. To learn more about Victoria’s lively and dynamic drawings, we asked her a few questions.

**Can you briefly introduce yourself?**

I am an architect and picture books illustrator and author, as well as an editorial illustrator. My passion is for introducing kids to architecture and cities via inspiring, memorable picture books.

**How would you describe your illustration style (in three words)?**

Pictorial, fresh, full of details.

**Do you specialise in any topic?**

I love painting architecture, cities, and urban environments. But I also really love to depict people in various situations – especially diverse crowds that inhabit our cities.

**You are an architect just like Zaha Hadid. Which of her buildings fascinates you the most?**

This is funny but it changes all the time. Currently, my favorite building of Zaha’s is the one in NYC on the High Line – 520 West 28th Street. Maybe it’s because I recently published a book for kids about the High Line (the famous public park that runs high above the streets of New York on a former freight train track), so it represents a link between these two themes. I love how

**E. A. SEEMANN HENSCHEL  
VERLAGSGRUPPE**

Zaha's building fits into its surroundings and underscores the beauty of the High Line, while playing off its lines and angles.

**Did you stumble across any new information about Zaha Hadid during your research?**

Of course. I watched and read so many of Zaha's interviews that I could recite her life story almost year by year! The most interesting thing I learned is about her childhood. She talked so fondly about her parents and how they encouraged the children to embrace both sides of the brain: they sketched and drew together as a family, but they also often did math problems together for fun. I think this made Zaha and her two older brothers approach math, engineering, architecture, and art the same way – as creative disciplines.

**You wrote the story and illustrated it at the same time. Often these work processes are done by two people. How was it for you to do both?**

Writing comes to me much, much harder than art. But telling a non-fiction story made it easier in the sense that all I needed to do was find a compelling, accessible way to tell the story to kids. Doing both also allowed me to think about pagination, spreads, and art opportunities while I was writing, which was eye-opening.

**Why do think is it important for children to know and read about Zaha Hadid and her life?**

Zaha made a name for herself in a time when it was arguably harder for women, especially women from her background, to compete with men in the construction field. I hope the book conveys how many obstacles she faced, and how long it took her to prove herself. Even when she was already a superstar in the field of architecture, her designs were questioned and often called unbuildable by critics.

I hope the main point the readers take away from the book is to trust their own ideas, not be discouraged by criticism, and set goals for themselves. Zaha achieved her fame while I was in architecture school, and while I was learning about the profession, I watched her achievements. She modeled for

E. A. SEEMANN HENSCHEL  
VERLAGSGRUPPE

me how to always be creative, persistent, and ambitious. For this, I am very grateful to her.

<https://www.instagram.com/victoria.krylov.illustration/?hl=de>

<https://www.seemann-henschel.de/produkt/zaha-baut/>