

## Why Grow Up? A good question, without a real good answer. ~ Etienne Delessert

Etienne Delessert was born in 1941 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

For more than thirty years, this amazing self-taught artist has been translating his ideas, passions, fantasies and nightmares into the vibrant and visual language of books, magazine illustrations, posters, animated films, paintings and sculptures. Delessert reaches both children and adults with his imaginary and often whimsical creatures and landscapes.



So is Etienne Delessert's studio filled with notebooks, full of sketches?

Absolutely not. And sometimes that bothers me. I feel like I work without stopping, with only three days off a year, but I do not draw the entire time. I don't feel the need. I could easily not touch a brush for a whole month. I think about that a lot: am I really an artist? Did I simply chose it as a career rather than as a true "vocation?" Even if I were blind, I would go on telling stories.



*Humpty Dumpty*

In 1975, Etienne Delessert's one-man retrospective hung at the **Musee des Arts Decoratifs**, in the Louvre. In 1991, a second retrospective, organized by the **Palazzo delle Esposizioni** in Rome, toured Switzerland, France, Canada, and America, including the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Another retrospective was organized in 1997 by the **Olympic Museum** in Lausanne, Switzerland, which traveled to France, and then to New York to the School of Visual Arts Museum.

Etienne Delessert is the recipient of thirteen gold and twelve silver medals from the **American Society of Illustrators**. In 1996, Delessert was awarded the **Hamilton King Award**. Twice, he was honored by the **Premio Grafico of the Bologna World Children's Book Fair**. In 2010, Delessert was a finalist for the very prestigious **Hans Christian Andersen Award**.



*Eugène Ionesco Conte 4*

What is Etienne Delessert's technical language?

Simple, simple. Principally watercolors and colored pencils. Acrylic on wood or metal. I've done animated films and love the idea of giving life to characters that move, what power! But all I really need is a small black pencil and a piece of paper. Delessert: Just the basics.

How do you define Etienne Delessert's palette?

I pretty much stick to nature: those colors are the most beautiful. I hate arbitrary colors. From time to time I use a special tint to express a certain emotion. The sky might turn red, but it is a red that we have all seen in the sky.



*A was an Alphabet*

This exhibition was initiated in 2009 at **Centre de l'illustration** in Moulins, France and curated by Emmanuelle Martinat-Dupré.

Etienne Delessert lives in Lakeville, Connecticut with his wife Rita, and their son, Adrien.

WHY GROW UP?  
ETIENNE DELESSERT