

Local illustrator wins Governor General's Award

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Colborne artist Jirina Marton has won a Governor General's Award for Illustrated Children's Literature, for the book *Bella's Tree*.

The awards were announced on Nov. 17 in Montreal, and will be presented by Governor General Michaëlle Jean at Rideau Hall on Nov. 26. Each award includes a prize of \$25,000.

In *Bella's Tree*, "Jirina Marton's illustrations invite the reader to a winter landscape full of textures and subtle, earthy colour palettes," says a Canada Council news release. "The Van Gogh-like interior and its warm tones create a holiday season mood that evokes an emotional response."

Marton has a distinguished career as an illustrator, and was a finalist for a Governor General's award in 2007. She is also a member of the Colborne Art Gallery, where original oil pastel illustrations for *Bella's Tree* are now available.

Born in Czechoslovakia, she began drawing at the age of three, but she recalls that her first artistic expression - on a freshly painted kitchen wall - earned her a spanking. She soon became wiser in her choice of drawing media.

After attending art school in Prague, she emigrated to France, worked in Paris, and eventually settled in Canada.

Her illustrations now grace dozens of books, including *Marja's Skis*, a finalist for the Governor General's Award in 2007, and *The Bear Says North: Tales from Northern Lands*, a Silver Birch Award selection in 2005.