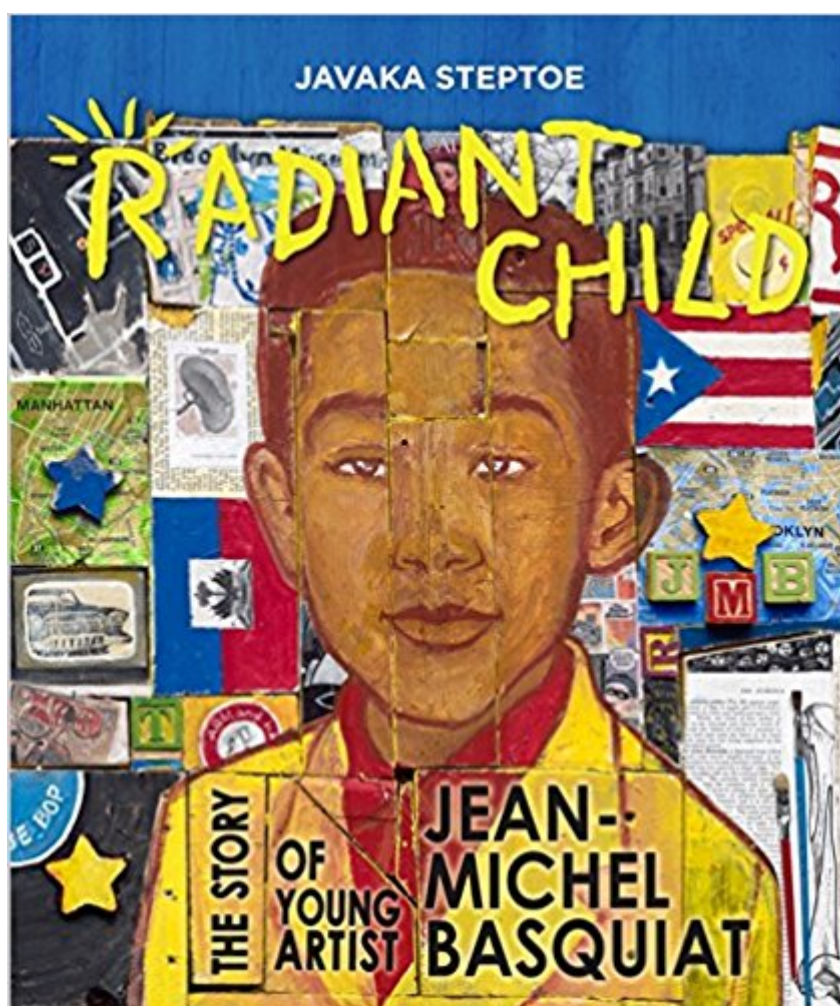


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# Radiant Child: The Story Of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat (Americas Award For Children's And Young Adult Literature. Commended)



## Synopsis

Winner of the Randolph Caldecott Medal and >Jean-Michel Basquiat and his unique, collage-style paintings rocketed to fame in the 1980s as a cultural phenomenon unlike anything the art world had ever seen. But before that, he was a little boy who saw art everywhere: in poetry books and museums, in games and in the words that we speak, and in the pulsing energy of New York City. Now, award-winning illustrator Javaka Steptoe's vivid text and bold artwork echoing Basquiat's own introduce young readers to the powerful message that art doesn't always have to be neat or clean--and definitely not inside the lines--to be beautiful.

## Customer Reviews

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Gr 1-5 • One extraordinary artist illuminates another in this textured, heartfelt picture book biography of the 1980s cultural phenom. Employing signature features of Jean-Michel Basquiat's work—vibrant colors, found objects, repeated motifs—Steptoe allows his own emotionally rich style to shine through the artistic and biographical references dotting the illustrations. Pieces of discarded wood from Basquiat's stomping grounds fit together to form the painted surfaces for Steptoe's scenes of the Afro Puerto Rican artist, each unfolding within a colored frame. Occasional collage elements of newsprint, photographs, and art materials add dimension and immediacy, highlighting both artists' immersion in their work and surroundings. Adhering to a straightforward chronology, Steptoe addresses events in Basquiat's life primarily as they affected his artistic growth from young boyhood in Brooklyn through the triumphant years as a critical and popular success in Manhattan. With minimal detail, the author sensitively touches upon his subject's childhood car crash and his mother's mental illness, though the story avoids his drug use and stops before his early death. Crucial back matter provides context for readers in every respect. Additional biographical information fleshes out the lyrical text of the main narrative, and an introduction to symbolism in Basquiat's work helps readers appreciate the layers at play in Steptoe's illustrations. An author's note articulates feelings that radiate from every page of the book: Steptoe's admiration for and attachment to Basquiat and his personal investment in depicting a complicated, loving relationship between a child and a mentally ill parent. VERDICT Pairing simple text with expressive, encompassing illustrations, this excellent title offers a new generation a fittingly powerful introduction to an artistic luminary. •Robbin E. Friedman, Chappaqua Library, NY

Praise for Radiant Child: Winner of the 2017 Randolph Caldecott Medal An IndieBound Bestseller Winner of the 2017 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Essence Magazine Top Ten Books of the Year NAACP Image Awards Nomination for Outstanding Literary Work in Children Bank Street College of Education 2017 Best Children's Book of the Year NPR Best Books of 2016 Washington Post Best Books of 2016 Kirkus Reviews Best Books of 2016 School Library Journal Best Books of 2016 Publishers Weekly Best Books of 2016 Horn Book Fanfare Best Books of 2016 New York Public Library 2016 Best Books for Kids Chicago Public Library 2016 Best Books for Kids ALA Notable Book for Children A CCBC Best of Year Choice A Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People 2017 Selection Horn Book 2017 Summer Reading Choice Best Book of November 2016 "Vibrant colors and personal symbols channel the 'sloppy, ugly, and sometimes weird, but somehow still BEAUTIFUL' paintings, incorporating meticulously attributed collage elements and capturing the artist's energy and mystery. Stellar bookmarking--a riveting portrait of a young artist." Kirkus Reviews (starred review) "In this visually arresting and vibrantly narrated biography, Steptoe...emulates 1980s street art by layering paint, paper scraps, paint tubes, and photos on found-wood panels.... Steptoe downplays tragic elements, instead celebrating Basquiat's irreverence and brilliance." Publishers Weekly (starred review)

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