

LITTLE CREATURES

young children
imaginary adventures
thoughtful films

In the Children's Voice

Little Creatures is a Brooklyn-based film production company that collaborates with young children to create films told in the children's voice. The films are set outdoors, shot with loose treatments, and include children's poetic descriptions of their actions. By providing life-like yet dreamy moving images based on authentic spontaneous adventures, Little Creatures validates children's original imaginative play and provides a new vantage point through which children can understand themselves in relation to the world. Little Creatures films are inspired by the startlingly original ideas consistently and universally put forth by young children when deeply involved in imaginary play. The films aim to capture the fleeting, poetic, and at times very introspective moments that happen when children are playing. The films also highlight the beauty and power of the natural world and its mysteries as they inform young children's storytelling and myth-making.

Research Meets Practice

Little Creatures evolved out of research on media education in early childhood, and out of many years of video story collaborations with children. In *Children's Video Stories: Using Current Media to Empower Young Children's Imaginative Play*, (Ed.M., Columbia U. Teachers College, 2004), Kristin B. Eno analyzed the ways in which *Ark* (Kristin + Sean Eno, 2002) could be used as an educational tool for child participants and viewers. Over thirteen years in the classroom, Kristin has seen the deep relationship many young children have with film and video media; this work is her response--an effort to empower children to be the authors of their own media stories. Kristin has led video-story projects for pre-K - 3rd graders in schools throughout NYC, sponsored by the Brooklyn Arts Council, NYSCA, Rotunda Gallery, Border Crossers and Young Audiences. Her largest NYS grant project was a partnership with three classes, Pre-K, Early K and K-1 at PS 27 in Red Hook. She continues to collaborate with her husband Sean Eno. Their latest project was a film commission from the Yale Center for British Art, *Through the Window* (2008-09).

For more information on Little Creatures:
www.littlecreaturesfilms.com. For a list of past video projects made in schools around NYC:
www.digitalstoryworkshop.org.



Spirit Ship (2008-10): Through a series of mysterious events, particularly the discovery of many strange and haunting personal artifacts, three children eventually come to see beyond the living world, into the spirit realm, where three young victims of a shipwreck are also wandering. The story takes place against the backdrop of several untouched historic and natural environments along Red Hook's waterfront.

Mysteries in the Woods (2006-09): Ten groups of young children from around the world find various natural objects that other children from other scenes have also discovered. The thread that connects the children are the objects themselves, and the costumes, which are a different color in each scene. Shot on location in Georgia, New York, Japan, Connecticut, Switzerland and Canada.

Mystery Castle with a Lot of Treasures (2006): Four separate groups of six-year-old children playing outdoors discover a strange box made of seeds and explore its meaning and uses. Prop created by 8-9 year old children, using seeds found in their East New York neighborhood. Camera: Sean Eno. Funding provided by BAC Community Arts Regrant.

Ark (2002-04): A girl is walking in the woods and finds a mysterious box. She places a seed inside the box and hides it. Time passes, and children playing in the woods, by a lake and at the ocean come upon the same box. In each of four scenes, the box holds more and more strange small beings, little people who need the children so that they can gain new life.

Sophie in the Trees (2001): A girl walks in the woods in Vermont. Children in Brooklyn narrate.

Little Creatures' Goals:

For Children:

1. To provide an opportunity to see other children play.
2. To expand the power of their own creative ideas.
3. To encourage greater awareness of and a renewed interest in outdoor play.
4. To support creative problem solving and scientific inquiry.
5. To provide a new genre of children's media, featuring children as co-directors.
6. To provide space for contemplation and poetry.
7. To empower through experiential education about how media is made.

For Parents and Teachers:

1. To be a new voice for families that value children's authentic stories and play, play in natural environments, and fewer commercial references.
2. To provide an engaging collection of films to watch and discuss with children.
3. To help redirect the adult gaze toward children's authentic ideas as made evident through their spontaneous imaginative play.

Little Creatures Films on DVD:

1. **Spirit Ship:** 15 min. HD. Color. With parent/teacher study guide. Available Fall '10.
2. **Ark:** 15 min. Mini-DV. Color. 2004.
3. **Sophie in the Trees:** 2 min. Mini-DV. Black and white. 2001.



Interested in supporting imaginative live-action media for and by children? Join Little Creatures' online community of parents and professionals:

www.littlecreaturesfilms.com/connect.html

Contact Little Creatures:
kristin@littlecreaturesfilms.com

What People are Saying about Little Creatures:

- *Kristin captures the authentic sights and sounds of childhood . . .she uses her camera as a lens into the deepest inner-workings of a child's mind.* - Vivian Gussin Paley, Author of 12 books on the imaginative lives of young children
- *The remarkable videos made by Kristin are unique in their ability to bring us into the very life of childhood play itself. Wonderful as tools for teaching the importance of play, or as a means to validate for children why their playing is always meaningful, these videos should be made available to anyone who cares for what learning and education need to be about – and could become.* - Richard Lewis, Director, Touchstone Center for Children
- *Spirit Ship was an unusual opportunity for the children to explore the inner world of their imaginations, unscripted and organic, within the the space of a highly professional and creative team of adult artists, technicians and educators. The technology, blended with the spontaneous magic of the children's own perspectives will undoubtedly create a finished piece that can be interpreted and reintegrated in a variety of ways within a classroom. This confluence of creativity should create a product that is worth sharing because it is uniquely authentic without being overdone.* - Elisha Georgiou, Mother of Sophia
- *I would gladly support more initiatives such as these that speak to the true essence of childhood and would rather put my dollars into movies and projects like these.* - Kathy Malone, mother of Milo, *Spirit Ship*

