

October 2012

Review: Alphabet Under Construction

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Recommended Citation

DeLong, Janice A. and Schwedt, Rachel, "Review: Alphabet Under Construction" (2012). *All Children's Book Reviews*. Paper 33.
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Fleming, Denise (author and illustrator), *Alphabet Under Construction*. Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2002, ISBN: 0805068481.

Description:

With her unique approach to art, Fleming demonstrates the alphabet using construction as her framework. Powered by the artist's mouse friend, the book takes on a life of its own as Mouse creates each letter. Readers discover the little character's work schedule at the conclusion of the tale adding humor to his race against time to get the job done in a month, while taking most Sundays as rest days. Vocabularies will be broadened as the young ones learn about airbrushing, leveling, tiling, vacuuming, and of course, x-raying.

Critique:

Fleming's technique of pouring colored cotton fiber through hand-cut stencils gives the effect of softened, almost fuzzy collage. Yet, her letters are easily read and offer an opportunity for the adult to review these all important symbols with the child. The urgency and full-fledged action of Mouse as he shapes each letter adds a sense of adventure to the fairly tame subject of learning letters.

Awards: The Best Children's Books of the Year, Bank Street College of Education; Capitol Choices; The Children's Literature Choice List; Booklist; Notable Children's Books; Bill Martin Award Nominee

Related Subjects: Alphabet, Easy Reading, Literacy, Mice, Pre-reading

Character Themes: Determination, Imagination, **Knowledge**