



The Village School's Children's Book of the Month



'Art and Max'
By David Wiesner



**Book reviewed by
Sonya Wirtanen,
office manager**

"Art and Max" is a beautifully illustrated children's picture book by the three-time Caldecott award-winning author, David Wiesner. Wiesner is well known for his wordless books and detail-oriented illustrations, and "Art and Max" is no exception. With the sparse, dialogue-based text, the pictures tell the story of the artistic explorations of two lizards, Arthur and Max.

The story takes place in the desert with an arrogant artist named Arthur who is annoyed by a young lizard who wants to prove he is an artist too, but manages to irritate Arthur and make a big mess. The story unfolds as Max explores a variety of media at Arthur's expense. Max asks, "What should I paint?" Arthur responds "Well... you could paint me." So Max takes his paint brush and covers Arthur in paint! Arthur is furious and shouts so loudly that he causes an explosion of colors that engulfs a double spread page bursting through paint, which reveals a pastel version of Arthur.

The story continues through the artistic process with Arthur being the unenthusiastic canvas. Pastels are washed away with water which makes a muddy watercolor version followed by a colorless line drawing of Arthur. As Arthur tries to run away from the havoc Max has caused, his simple line drawing comes undone with a gentle tug of his tail. Max tries to put him back together with the leftover pencil lines and finally succeeds at the comic relief of the reader. Lastly, Max sprays Arthur with a rainbow of paint, filling him back in to reveal a pointillism-inspired Arthur who is now highly impressed with his pixilated appearance and exclaims, "Fascinating. Let's paint some more!"

Readers will be laughing as they follow the back-and-forth banter of a playful lizard exploring art with a cranky artist who can't help but be impressed with the creative journey they both endure. Wiesner replicates each media as the story is told, revealing a beautiful collection of artistic exploration. This book of few words is best for children ages 3 to 6, but is sure to amuse young readers and impress artists of all ages.