



macmillan
children's publishing group

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MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING GROUP ANNOUNCES NEON SQUID

New imprint to focus on innovative gift and reference books

New York, NY (April 1, 2021) – Macmillan Children's Publishing Group announced today the launch of Neon Squid, a new imprint dedicated to publishing gift nonfiction books that make complex topics – from medicine to archaeology – accessible and exciting for children. Neon Squid will be led by Joanne Clark, Fiona Macdonald, and Sam Priddy, who will serve as Co-Publishers. All three joined MCPG in mid-2020 from DK Publishing where they worked together for almost a decade.

The first Neon Squid list will launch in Winter 2022 with titles including *Tales of Ancient Worlds*, featuring rip-roaring adventures from the world of archeology, *The Book of Sisters*, a collection of biographies of notable sisters throughout history, and *Animal Sidekicks*, a richly illustrated introduction to the concept of symbiosis, featuring adorable (and often hilarious) pairs of animal friends.

“Jo, Fi, and Sam create fun, innovative, and informative books that are perfectly positioned to capitalize on the continuing growth of nonfiction books in the marketplace,” said Jen Besser, President & Publisher Macmillan Children's Publishing Group. “I am so happy that they are part of the Macmillan team.”

Neon Squid is based in London and all three report to Sally Poulson, Global Operations Director at Priddy Books.

“I could not be more thrilled to be working with such an innovative and dynamic team,” Poulson said. “They bring a fresh and creative approach to publishing and I look forward to sharing their vision with the world.”

Joanne Clark was most recently Senior Commissioning Designer at DK, where she quickly built a reputation for her ability finding incredible illustrators that could bring well-worn subjects to life, as well as her keen eye for enticing jacket design. Clark's repertoire of exciting and highly successful titles includes *The Bacteria Book*, *Explorers*, and *Greek Myths*. On Neon Squid's initial list she has commissioned artist Ginnie Hsu to bring to life Dr. Christle Nwora's STEM-rich nonfiction story *The Hospital*, and a team of illustrators from around the world to profile the incredible women featured in *The Book of Sisters*.

“Kids are fiercely discerning, and we know how tough it is to capture their attention in a world of digital distractions,” Clark said. “Each child is different, so we create books that appeal to all sorts of kids, from fact fans and visual learners to those who like to curl up with a good story. It doesn’t matter how you hook kids in – whether it’s intriguing topics, humor, or amazing illustrations – what matters is that their curiosity is piqued.”

Fiona Macdonald was most recently Senior Commissioning Designer at DK. Macdonald played a pivotal role in establishing DK as the market leader in programming books for children with Computer Coding for Kids and oversaw photoshoots around the world for the groundbreaking book *Children Just Like Me*. She was thrilled to secure artist Chaaya Prabhat to illustrate *Bugs* and *Big Cats* in Neon Squid’s *A Day in the Life* animal series, as well as Dragan Kordić, whose retro picture book style is perfect for the humorous *Animal Sidekicks*.

“We’re really excited to have teamed up with Macmillan to create a list of gift reference books that reflects our belief that no topic is too tricky for kids,” Macdonald said. “We want to spark an interest in things they don’t yet know they’re interested in – from groundbreaking scientific discoveries to new historical perspectives – and be the source of fascinations that last a lifetime.”

Sam Priddy was most recently Acquisitions Editor at DK. Priddy first got the publishing bug while working from the age of 14 in the children's bookshop *Tales on Moon Lane*. His book *How to be a Scientist* was a number one bestseller, and his titles have featured on *The Late Late Show* with James Corden. At Neon Squid he has brought in an exciting first roster of authors, including archeology YouTuber Stefan Milosavljević, podcasting sisters Olivia Meikle and Katie Nelson, and insect expert Dr. Jessica L. Ware.

“We are thrilled about this new chapter together,” Priddy said. “We spent most of the last decade working together on our shared passion for making nonfiction accessible to kids and we’re really enjoying working with Macmillan to further these shared goals in even more new and exciting ways.”

Macmillan Publishers is a global trade book publishing company with prominent imprints around the world. Macmillan publishes a broad range of award-winning books for children and adults in all categories and formats. U.S. publishers include Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Flatiron Books, Henry Holt & Company, Macmillan Audio, Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group, Picador, St. Martin’s Publishing Group, and Tor Books. In the UK, Australia, India, and South Africa, Macmillan publishes under the Pan Macmillan name. The German company, Holtzbrinck Deutsche Buchverlage, includes among its imprints S. Fischer, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Rowohlt, and Droemer Knauer. Macmillan Publishers is a division of the Holtzbrinck Publishing Group, a large, family-owned media company headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany.