

## Hans Christian Andersen Award 2012



**Peter Sís**

 Czech Republic

*I found out that one doesn't have to discover new continents, that people can explore in their mind even when locked in a prison cell and that books can be my home, my language, my country. Books are bridges taking you places.....*

Peter Sís was born in Brno in communist Czecho-Slovakia and grew up in Prague. His parents, both artists, encouraged his artistic aspirations from an early age, and the tales of his father's travels on China and Tibet had a profound influence on his work. Sís was educated at the High School of Applied Arts, the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague and the Royal College of Art in London, where he studied with Quentin Blake. He won a Golden Bear Award for an animated short, *Hlavý*, at the 1980 West Berlin Film Festival. In 1984, he defected to the United States where he became a citizen in 1988.

Peter Sís has won The New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year award seven times; the American Library Association's Caldecott Honor four times; the ALA's 2008 Robert Silbert Medal for the most distinguished informational book for young readers; a Boston Globe-Horn Book Award four times; and the *Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis* in 1999 and 2015. He was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship Award in 2003. Artistic freedom for Sís is inseparable from political and intellectual freedom, and his works celebrate these intertwined values.