

Bologna moves to June slot and hires Jacks Thomas

News - International Wednesday, 18th November 2020

World's leading children's book fair delays April event and hires ex-LBF chief Jacks Thomas to run general publishing conference and exhibition spin-off



The new dates for the Bologna Children's Book Fair are June 14 – 17. The move follows news earlier this month that the London Book Fair will run from 29 June to 1 July 2021, a three month shift from its original dates of 9-11 March.

Commenting on its postponement, Bologna Children's Book Fair director Elena Pasoli said: "We continue to work in exceptional times and the book industry has once again proved itself to be hugely resilient. The children's book market is arguably more important than ever before and we are delighted to be able to offer this date change in 2021, to give us the valuable opportunity to meet again as an industry, prior to moving back to our usual time-frame of April. Bologna is wonderful in April and even better in June – we are looking forward to welcoming everyone to our book fair in which al fresco meetings will be the norm!"

Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF) is also announcing 'a brand extension to its core offering through a new conference and exhibit for general publishing -- BolognaBookPlus -- for which they have appointed Jacks Thomas as Guest Director.' Thomas is appointing a UK based team to 'create this exciting new facet to BCBF.'

Marco Momoli, director Business Unit Culture BolognaFiere, said: "Bologna Children's Book Fair is a fantastic brand under great leadership and we are understandably proud of everything that has been achieved over the past half century. As publishing goes from strength-to-strength so do we and our ambition remains steadfast in being the premium destination for the children's publishing world; as the alignments between publishing, digital developments, entertainment and knowledge sharing move ever closer we

are enthusiastic about ensuring that we reflect that in our offering and are delighted to welcome Jacks as our Guest Director to drive this."

Thomas said: "I feel immensely privileged to have the opportunity of working with the brilliant team at BCBF and the BolognaFiere on BolognaBookPlus. Children's publishing is the launchpad of so much and the gateway to so many avenues of innovation and audiences. It is also fantastic to be able to work with talented colleagues here in the UK. Bologna in June is delightful and I very much hope that bringing the global industry together in this flexible venue will be a great opportunity to which we can all look forward after a long drought in European book fairs."

Ex-LBF colleagues Katie Morris and Sheerin Aswat, and Emma House, deputy chief executive of the PA-turned-consultant, are working with Thomas on the project.

Organisers released more details of the BolognaBookPlus initiative.

'BolognaBookPlus is a new initiative launched by BCBF to reach a general publishing audience via a one-day conference and a three-day exhibit - among other opportunities - taking place alongside the acclaimed Bologna Children's Book Fair June 14 – 17 2021.

'As the past year has shown, the publishing industry is both resilient and adaptable and 2020 has seen an acceleration of change and priorities. The global industry faces new and different challenges and the future-proofing of books, how they are produced, distributed and accessed is arguably more important than ever.

'This international conference is for professionals from all areas of the publishing industry and will be examining the key challenges from changing business models, technological enablement, accessibility, sustainability and inclusivity.

'There will be an international line-up of speakers and delegates and a targeted exhibiting opportunity building on and expanding the core Bologna exhibitor base.'

Thomas submitted her resignation as the director of LBF in the autumn of 2019 after seven years in charge, and left soon after the Covid-induced cancellation of this year's event in March. Thomas is also co-founder of the Chiswick Book Festival and the former ceo of Midas PR. Before that, she was director of communications, Europe, for Reader's Digest, and she has worked at Victor Gollancz, Simon & Schuster, Michael Joseph and HarperCollins,