



**BOLOGNA
CHILDREN'S
BOOK
FAIR**



**Bologna
Licensing
Trade
Fair**



**BOLOGNA
BOOK
PLUS**

59th edition

Children's Content Rocks!
Join the Party

THE 59th BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR — 21-24 MARCH 2022

FOCUS ON: COMICS CORNER

The Children's Book Fair explores the growth of the comics sector with a new space dedicated to comics in all forms

In recent years comics and graphic novels have been one of the fastest growing segments in the publishing industry. The scene has never looked so lively and involves countries with an established tradition in the genre, as well as new players on the market starting to explore the opportunities. A trend is emerging of two different traditions – the more traditional comic strip and that of illustrated books – thanks to the experimental work of publishing houses new to the medium, which are producing offerings with greater freedom in terms of narrative style and tone of voice. The focus is on young readers and comics offer a perfect language for introducing children to their first experiences of independent reading: most of the titles are aimed at the 6-10 year age group.

Always on the lookout for new trends and developments in global publishing, the Bologna Children's Book Fair has been exploring this sector since the 2020 edition, with the creation of a new permanent category of the **BRAW BolognaRagazzi Award**, dedicated to Comics aimed at three different age groups: Early Readers, Middle Grade, and Young Adult. This first step has been followed, for the first time, by an entire area at the Fair dedicated to national and international publishers of graphic novels – both specialised and non-specialised – and their new offerings: the new **Comics Corner**. The area, including a section devoted to the trade in intellectual property rights and matchmaking, was created with the support of ITA - the Italian Trade Agency and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and is hosting a dedicated programme of meetings. These include a panel discussion on publishing comics in Italy and another dedicated to the international scene, through a discussion between representatives of publishing houses from different countries; a focus on the sale of rights in the comics sector; a panel on comics for children; the conference of independent online bookshops, with a section on the sale of comics in bookshops at international level – from China to Europe, including also Latin America – and, finally, the round table on comics and school, which, on Thursday 24 March will examine good practices to emulate in planning the integration of comics into learning in schools. In recent years, comics have been increasingly central to experiments in the field of education, because of their ability to reach young readers directly through the dialogue between images and text, which makes it possible to tackle even the most complex topics with a straightforwardness that manages to avoid oversimplification. Opening the day's events is Mirella Greco, from the Centre for Books and Reading, followed by discussions involving important Italian and international actors - Canicola, Il Castoro, Salon du livre et de la presse Jeunesse de Montreuil, Actes Sud - together with authors Lorena Canottiere, Marino Neri, Gud and Sualzo, who will share some of the experiences they have had in class regarding reading and the practice of drawing and screenwriting. The meeting is part of BilBOLbul 2021, the winning project of the public contest Promozione Fumetto 2021, organised by the Ministry of Culture's General Department for Contemporary Creativity. There is also a Comics section at the **Global Rights Exchange**, BCBF's digital platform for the trade in intellectual property rights.

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The calendar of appointments dedicated to “the ninth art” will spread beyond the borders of the Comics Corner, to involve all the traditional meeting spaces at the fair. The Translators’ Café, for instance, is hosting meetings on the translation of comics including: ***Drawing the Mediterranean: from children's illustration to comics***, featuring Enrica Battista (University of Venice, Italy) and Lena Merhej (author and illustrator, Lebanon) who, beginning with her graphic novel *Jam and Yogurt*, will talk about Arabic comics and Arabic literature for children and girls. ***Translating comics and graphic novels: Challenges and opportunities in a global market*** will feature guests Michele Foschini (Head of Bao Publishing, Italy), Emanuele di Giorgi (Tunué, Italy) and Bayard, chaired by Ivanka Hahnenberger (VIP Licensing). ***Desperate blédardes: translating the French of the banlieue into a virtual comic book*** will see Ilaria Vitali (University of Macerata) discuss ways of translating the language of the *banlieue* in relation to the digital comic book *Desperate blédardes* by Mayada and Maïssa Gargour.

Furthermore, the Illustrators’ Survival Corner is providing opportunities to meet the most interesting authors on the international scene, such as **Øyvind Torseter, Max Baitinger, Sophie Guerrive, Joëlle Jolivet and Diabolo Edizioni, Nobrow and Sonia Deschamps**, director of the Festival de la bande dessinée de Angoulême, the most important international festival dedicated to comics and graphic novels. There are some unique opportunities for young cartoonists, including portfolio reviews and discussions with international publishers, and meetings to highlight the transformations of the genre in recent decades, with a special focus on new perspectives, experienced by publishers and authors.

A special space is dedicated to the activities of **MeFu - Mestieri del Fumetto** (Comic Book Professions), organised by AIE, which works to promote and protect comic book artists and all the professional figures in the comic book supply chain. This area is for all those who dream of working in a comic book publishing house, with stories from people who work in such an environment every day.

This edition of the Bologna Children’s Book Fair also sees the inauguration of a prestigious collaboration with the international festival **Lucca Comics & Games**. For many years the festival has been organising meetings, exhibitions, prizes, contests and professional opportunities for the world of illustration and writing for children and young people. Lucca Comics & Games is present with a dedicated B2B space inside the Comics Corner, providing opportunities to talk with the managers of different areas of the Festival, present proposals and learn about the opportunities open to new (and not so new) talents. On Monday 21 March, Lucca Comics & Games will also hold a panel discussion *Lucca Comics & Games: opportunities for young creative professionals*, which will see the official launch of the new features of the contests offering genuine opportunities for paid publication and a launch pad into the world of publishing. The contests relate to illustration, comics and writing and have been created in collaboration with publishers and event partners.

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