



**BOLOGNA  
CHILDREN'S  
BOOK  
FAIR**



**31 MARCH  
3 APRIL  
2025  
BOLOGNA  
ITALY**

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## **THE 62<sup>ND</sup> BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR**

Bologna Children's Book Fair with BolognaBookPlus and Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids: an increasingly integrated system of fairs with a comprehensive programme concerning the world of publishing rights

The business areas: the TV/Film Rights Centre is back and the new Games Centre makes its debut in collaboration with the Frankfurter Buchmesse

The BolognaRagazzi Awards celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Pimpa turns 50 and Pippi Longstocking 80: all these anniversaries will be celebrated at the fair

Sustainability and collaboration with the United Nations will be central themes at the programme of meetings, which will look at content as well as the publishing market

The 62<sup>nd</sup> edition of Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF) will be taking place in the BolognaFiere Exhibition Centre from **31 March to 3 April 2025** together with BolognaBookPlus (BBPlus), the event for generalist publishing organised in collaboration with the Association of Italian Publishers (AIE), and the Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids (BLTF/Kids), which focuses on the sector of children's brands.

The three Bologna events form an increasingly interconnected world, a genuine ecosystem encompassing all publishing sectors and much more besides. The fair's business line up, in fact, is expanding once again with new areas designed to intercept evolving market segments, thereby opening up wider possibilities for exhibitors and visitors to develop publishing content on new media. About **1500 exhibitors from 90 countries and regions** of the world are expected at the 2025 edition, including, for the first time, participants from: Albania, Azerbaijan, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Iceland, Madagascar, Malta, North Macedonia, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand.

The event has been made possible thanks also to the support of the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)** and **ITA- Italian Trade Agency** with the aim of promoting business opportunities between national and global publishing realities.

Following its inauguration at the 2024 edition, the **TV/Film Rights Centre**, dedicated to the transfer of stories and characters from books to films, series and televisual formats, and vice versa, this year sees the launch of the new **Games Centre**, created in collaboration with the Frankfurter Buchmesse and dedicated to professionals from the gaming sector in search of narrative content to transform into video games. These spaces complement BCBF's range of business areas, which already include: the **Rights Centre**, open not only to professionals in the sector of children's publishing rights, but also to those in the adult publishing worlds; the **Comics Corner**, the exhibition area for publishers of comic books and graphic novels, both specialised and non-specialised; the **Translators Centre** for translators or those interested in specialising in the translation of children's literature; the **Audio HQ**, the space dedicated to audio at BBPlus; **PublisHer**, an initiative created in 2019 by Bodour Al Qasimi (founder and CEO of Kalimat Publishing Group, United Arab Emirates) to address gender imbalances in the industry. The debate venues are also back at the fair: the **Book Lovers' Café**, an area specifically for meetings about new publications is located next to the **International Bookshop**, and the other specialist **Cafés**, plus a new addition: The Next Chapter Café will join the traditional Illustrators Café, The Content Café and Translators Café as a venue for the scheduled events.



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## COUNTRY GUEST OF HONOUR

The 2025 **Guest of Honour Country** is **Estonia**, the small nation on the Baltic Sea that boasts a lively and dynamic publishing market producing high quality content across various genres. The publishing industry plays a significant role in preserving Estonian culture, language and national identity, and sees Bologna Children's Book Fair as an important opportunity to boost its visibility and access to international markets. Estonia is also at the centre of the **Market of Honour** at BolognaBookPlus, and the **Talking Pictures** competition dedicated to the design of visual books.

## GUESTS

Once again this year, for four days Bologna will become the world capital of illustration and publishing for children and young adults. The 2025 edition the fair will be welcoming back some big names, such as **Sydney Smith**, winner of the 2024 H.C. Andersen Award, **Beatrice Alemagna**, winner in 2024 of her second Golden Medal from the Society of Illustrators of New York, **Altan**, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his creation Pimpa, **Jeff Kinney** in an unprecedented meeting with **Davide Cali**, **Paul Cox**, with a special exhibition in the city, and also **Rotraut Susan Berner**, **Marie-Aude Murail**, **Sara Lundberg**, **Daniel Pennac**, **Mariangela Gualtieri**, **Nikolaus Heidelbach**, **Joelle Jolivet**, **Igort**, **Susie Morgenstern**, **Serge Bloch**, **Ole Könnecke**, **Sergio Ruzzier**, **Maicol e Mirco**, plus tributes to **Katsumi Komagata** and **Leo Lionni**, whose granddaughter Annie Lionni will be in attendance in Bologna.

## SUSTAINABILITY

**Sustainability** will once again take centre stage at the fair: the **collaboration with the United Nations** that began in 2024 continues this year, as does BCBF's ongoing commitment to promoting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainability also features as a special category of the BolognaRagazzi Awards 2025 and will be the focus of the exhibition **The BRAW Amazing Bookshelf - Sustainability: 17 Goals for a Better Future**, a display of the 150 best candidates in the special section of the awards created in collaboration with the United Nations, and which will be exhibited at the UN headquarters in New York at the beginning of 2026. At the centre of contemporary debate in publishing worldwide, sustainability will therefore be a key theme of events and initiatives from both a content and industry point of view. For the first time, a panel organised in collaboration by BCBF and BBPlus will discuss sustainability in the industry at the debate **"Sustainability Summit - Taking Stock and Reviewing the Roadmap to a Sustainable Future in the Book Industry"**. The **"Focus on the SDG Book Club"** will be discussing the UN's 17 goals, the SDGs.

Furthermore, in keeping with the themes of the sustainable development goals are the topics of gender representation and the role of literature in the education of tomorrow's men, explored at round tables with international guests who will offer comprehensive points of view: **"Boys will be boys?"**, **"Trans-cendent: Embracing inclusive gender expression beyond tokenism or issue books"**, **"Where the Boys Are: The Right Books Can Make Them Heroes"** and **"In search of a literature free from stereotypes: the European G-BOOK projects"**.

## AFRICAN AND MINORITY PUBLISHING

The fair always endeavours to reserve space for marginalised voices, **from minority publishing to support for African publishing**. After the three-year experiment of Spotlight on Africa, which brought 100 African publishers to BCBF, the fair's commitment has now turned to training the illustrators of tomorrow, both from an artistic and managerial point of view. The **"Make-a-Picture book" Project** is an initiative by Bologna Children's Book Fair in collaboration with the Book Buzz Foundation, curated by Mimaster Illustrazione: an online course for 35 artists, who had been selected based on their portfolios. At the end of the course the two projects considered to be the best are to be presented at an exhibition at BCBF. Minority publishing is the topic of the panels **"Thousands of Roots, One Shared World: the Strength of Diverse Voices in Children's Books"**, **"Bridges of Literature: How Books Cross Borders"**



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**Between Latin America, Spain and Italy” and “In search of a literature free from stereotypes: the European G-BOOK projects”.**

## ANNIVERSARIES

2025 is also a year of significant milestones: BCBF will celebrate with Altan the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **Pimpa**, a childhood companion for generations of boys and girls; celebrations will also be held for **Pippi Longstocking**, an immortal character who turns 80 this year and will be the subject of a panel discussion with **Donatella Di Pietrantonio**; and a tribute will be paid to the great illustrator **Katsumi Komagata**, one year after his death. Some of the fair's own initiatives will be marking important milestones: the **sixtieth anniversary of the BolognaRagazzi Awards**, the prizes established to showcase the best and most innovative illustrated books at an international level, while **the Strega Ragazze e Ragazzi prize**, an extension of Italy's most prestigious literary award but dedicated to literature for children and young adults, in all its forms will be commemorating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A focus on Artificial Intelligence could not be missed, as it is at the centre of many debates in the industry. The **AI Summit**, organized by BBPlus, will address copyright protection, creative work, and the development of specific regulations, while also exploring the opportunities this tool offers the industry to enhance or simplify processes such as distribution and targeting.

## EXHIBITIONS

The fair's established and highly anticipated exhibitions return with: the **Illustrators Exhibition**; the exhibition of the Country Guest of Honour, Estonia, entitled **Hello! /Tere!**, which will be joined by an exhibition in the BBPlus space dedicated to the best Estonian illustrated books of the last four years, **25 Best Designed Estonian Books**; the solo exhibition of the artist responsible for the cover of the Illustrators Annual, **Sydney Smith**, winner of the 2024 H.C. Andersen Award; the solo exhibition of the winner of the 2024 Bologna Children's Book Fair - Fundación SM International Illustration Award, Brazilian **Henrique Moreira**; the exhibition tracing the development of the BCBF 2025 visual identity, created by the Brazilian **Bruno de Almeida**; **Chinese Excellence in Children's Illustration**, which for its second edition brings the best of contemporary Chinese illustration to BCBF; the selection of works from the exhibition **The Original Art**, by the Society of Illustrators of New York; the exhibition curated by the Book Arsenal Festival Kiev, this year entitled **Ukrainian Illustration: Yesterday and Today**, which showcases the evolution of Ukrainian illustration; the exhibition of African illustration as part of the initiative **The 'Make-A-Picturebook' Project**; **The BRAW Amazing Bookshelf**, a selection of the 150 best books nominated for the BolognaRagazzi Awards, which this year is complemented by the aforementioned **The BRAW Amazing Bookshelf - Sustainability: 17 Goals for a Better Future**; the exhibition dedicated to the finalists of the **Silent Book Contest - Gianni De Conno Award**; **Jackets Off!**, an exhibition that this year analyses the different interpretations of the covers of *The Great Gatsby*, held in the BBPlus area; finally, a preview of the exhibition organised by the prestigious **Folio Society**; an exhibition about Jella Lepman, founder of IBBY, entitled **Jella Lepman. Let us begin begin with the children. Books as bridges** and, finally, on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary, the exhibition of the winning works at the **Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava**, whose winners have always alternated with the winners of the H.C. Andersen Award in creating the covers of the BCBF Illustrators Annuals.

## AWARDS

The awards organised by BCBF with BBPlus and BLTF/K at each new edition recognise excellence in the field of illustration and children's publishing, but above all they represent an important promotional opportunity for the winners. Among the most established initiatives at the fair, the **BolognaRagazzi Awards** celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup>



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anniversary this year and, together with the **BolognaRagazzi CrossMedia Awards**, recognise the best editorial projects published during the last two calendar years. The **BOP - Bologna Prize for the Best Children's Publishers of the Year** is also back, acknowledging the most innovative publishers around the world. Another important milestone is the 10-year anniversary of the **Strega Ragazze e Ragazzi Prize**, which with BCBF has given life to the Best Narrative in Images category, for illustrated books. There are also opportunities for illustrators selected for the 2025 *Illustrators Exhibition*: the **Bologna Children's Book Fair - Fundación SM International Illustration Award, Ars in Fabula - Grant Award**, and the **BCBF Visual Identity Workshop**. The **Carla Poesio Award**, assigned to the best Italian degree thesis on children's literature. The **In Altre Parole** (In Other Words) Award for translation, this year focussing on the Korean language. The BLTF/Kids awards, the **Bologna Licensing Awards** and the awards dedicated by BBPlus to generalist publishing, including **Talking Pictures**, in collaboration with Hamelin Associazione Culturale. Finally, the **Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award**, the unofficial "Nobel Prize for children's literature", the winner of which will be announced live during the fair.

### THE ILLUSTRATORS SURVIVAL CORNER

The Illustrators Survival Corner is the space at Bologna Children's Book Fair specifically for current and future illustration professionals. Created in collaboration with **Mimaster Illustrazione**, an eminent training organisation in the international illustration scene, it is a space designed to facilitate professional growth, with meetings and opportunities for in-depth study covering topics that range from designing a children's book to self-promotion, from managing meetings with publishers to contract negotiations, from the use of social media to portfolios. With dozens of events scheduled, including masterclasses, workshops and portfolio reviews by publishers, art directors, illustrators, agents and industry professionals, The Illustrator Survival Corner has become a successful format that BCBF presents at the world's major book fairs during its Grand Tour and at the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair, of which BCBF is co-organiser.

### BOLOGNABOOKPLUS

BBPlus, the area dedicated to generalist publishing, returns for its **5<sup>th</sup> year** with exhibitions and awards for book design and a packed line up of events and training courses for professionals, with topics ranging from the sale of rights to Artificial Intelligence. The **Market of Honour** initiative is also confirmed, dedicated to Estonia, Country Guest of Honour at BCBF, the **Audio Forum** and the **Author Ambassador**, this year's guest being the writer, **Tom Benjamin**. The latter project will be replicated in 2025 with a version specifically for illustration: the first **Illustration Ambassador** will be the Polish artist, **Joanna Karpowicz**. The **Talking Pictures** award is also dedicated to illustration, and this year it puts the spotlight on visual books from Estonia, Guest of Honour Country, intended for a generalist public, the shortlisted books will be exhibited at the fair. Further planned events include the **centenaries of Andrea Camilleri and F. Scott Fitzgerald**.

### BOLOGNA LICENSING TRADE FAIR/KIDS

The **18<sup>th</sup> edition** of BLTF/Kids, the exhibition area dedicated to the licensing of publishing content for children and young people, is eagerly awaited at the exhibition centre. New features for 2025 include: the **Games Centre**, a collaboration between BCBF and Frankfurter Buchmesse; a new matchmaking service to help visitors to network and arrange meetings; the **licensing portfolio review** and the **Arts Licensing Area**, an exhibition space and a meeting place for the worlds of illustration and licensing. The **International Kids Licensing Days (IKLD)** are back for their **4<sup>th</sup> edition**, three days of panel discussions on the latest licensing and publishing trends, and the **8<sup>th</sup> edition** of the **Bologna Licensing Awards**, the only industry award in Italy for licensors/agencies, licensees and retailers at an international level, relating to the development of intellectual property and brands over the course of 2024.



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## BCBF IN THE CITY

As is the case every year, the energy, creativity, ideas and content that converge at Bologna Children's Book Fair are sure to overflow from the exhibition halls, surging into cultural venues, libraries, schools and buildings in the city of Bologna in a genuine festival spread across the city: a rich and diverse range of exhibitions, meetings and initiatives for the general public of adults and children.

**BOOM! - Crescere nei libri** (BOOM! - Growing up in books) is the title of the **programme of initiatives in the city**, promoted by the Municipal council of Bologna and BolognaFiere, organised by the Libraries and Cultural Welfare Department together with Hamelin Cultural Association as part of the Bologna Reading Pact, and sponsored by IBBY - International Board on Books for Young People Italy. More than 40 exhibitions, 150 events among workshops and meetings, and 100+ artists are expected to take part. Scheduled events include **a site-specific exhibition** by the great illustrator **Paul Cox**, in collaboration with BCBF: the fruit of a week-long residency the artist spent at Palazzo Paltroni, exhibition space and headquarters of the Fondazione del Monte. The exhibition will feature **a huge continuous painting, 75 metres long**, that will cover the entire space.

At the Testoni Ragazzi Theatre, **Little Design. Katsumi Komagata** is an exhibition of eight illustrations created by the great illustrator Katsumi Komagata on the theme of early childhood responses in the context of the performing arts. **Little Design**. Curated by La Baracca – Testoni Ragazzi, Bologna Children's Book Fair and ONE STROKE, is a tribute to a master of contemporary illustration and an invitation to continue investigating the aesthetic experience in early childhood, emphasising the importance of international artistic cooperation as a tool of cultural policy.

Finally, the second edition of **OFF FAIR**, organised by Accademia Drosselmeier, is a programme that, beginning in Bologna and taking place throughout the year, brings the wealth of books that inhabit the fair to various cities in Italy and all over the world, transforming them into a collective heritage. The project involves national and international libraries, museums and schools, which, thanks to donations of books from the fair's archive can expand the scope of their own collections: Florence will host silent books; Sesto Fiorentino will experience the most beautiful books from China; in Scandicci the focus will be on women; comics in Bergamo and at the Comics Museum in Pordenone; in Subiaco, Capital of Books 2025, books that talk about books; in Milan, at the Museum of Science and Technology, popular science books; in Vilnius and Taiwan, a rich selection of the most popular illustrated books at BCBF.

Milan, 25 February 2025

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