



**BOLOGNA
CHILDREN'S
BOOK
FAIR**



**31 MARCH
3 APRIL
2025
BOLOGNA
ITALY**

With the support of



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THE 62ND BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR

The exhibitions: the best international illustration at BCBF, from Sidney Smith to the Society of Illustrators of New York, Chinese Excellence in Children's Illustration and showcasing Estonian Illustration

THE ILLUSTRATORS EXHIBITION

A total of **4374 illustrators were entered for the 59th edition** of the Illustrators Exhibition, amounting to **21, 870 illustrations** sent in from **89 countries and regions** around the world: a **new record** for the Bologna Children's Book Fair's (BCBF) longest-running initiative, the exhibition that was first held in 1967 to discover and showcase the world's best illustrations to the book community gathered in Bologna. An opportunity for emerging artists to debut their work and for more established illustrators to make a name for themselves, this year the exhibition consists of **76 sets of illustrations**, the work of **77 artists from 29 countries and regions** of the world.

As is the case every year, the selection was made by an international jury: **Walter Fochesato** (scholar of children's literature and the history of illustration, deputy director of the monthly magazine *Andersen*, Italy), **Chris Houghton** (illustrator, Ireland), **Neal Porter** (publisher of Neal Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House, USA), **Felicita Sala** (illustrator, Italy) and **Gema Sirvent Laguna** (publisher of Libre Albedrò, Spain).

From 31 March to 3 April the exhibition will be on display at the fair and online through the **BCBF Galleries** portal, accessible from the BCBF website. At the end of the fair, the international tour will begin, taking the exhibition to cultural centres in major cities around the world over the next two years, starting with Japan, Korea and China.

The winning illustrations are also brought together in the **Illustrators Annual**, the catalogue published by Corraini in Italian and English, in Japan by JBBY - Japanese Board on Books for Young People, in Korea by CCOC and in China by Dandelion Picture Book House.

SYDNEY SMITH EXHIBITION

One of the world's most successful illustrators and winner of the 2024 H.C. Andersen Award, Canadian **Sydney Smith** designed the cover of the 2025 Illustrators Annual (the task of creating the cover of the Illustrators Exhibition catalogue is, in fact, assigned in alternate years to the winners of the biennial H.C. Andersen Award and the Grand Prix of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava). As such, and in keeping with tradition, a solo exhibition of his work will be held at the centre of the fair. The exhibition will display original works from some of his most famous books, as well as the original cover of the Illustrators Annual 2025 and some unpublished works created specifically for the occasion. The exhibition, also available online on the BCBF Galleries portal, will also be an opportunity to bring together, for the first time ever, all the publishers who publish the books of the great artist worldwide in a collective celebration organized by BCBF.

ESTONIA GUEST OF HONOUR COUNTRY EXHIBITIONS

Every year, at the centre of the fair, next to the Illustrators Exhibition, an exhibition is organised by the Guest of Honour Country. This year, **Hello!/Tere!** will be opening its doors to the world of contemporary Estonian illustration through the works of 40 artists with very different styles, but all united by a narrative strength and dynamic creative approach.

25 Best Designed Estonian Books will be hosted in the BBPlus space, displaying the 25 winning books from the last four editions of the competition of the same name (2021-2024). Organised by the Estonian Publishers' Association, the National Library of Estonia, the Estonian Graphic Designers Association, the Estonian Centre for Children's Literature and the Estonian Printing and Packaging Industry Association, the competition celebrates excellence in



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book design, emphasising both artistic quality and typographic skill, with a particular focus on the harmony between form and content.

THE BRAW AMAZING BOOKSHELF

AND THE BRAW AMAZING BOOKSHELF - SUSTAINABILITY: 17 GOALS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

The BRAW represent an important business opportunity for participants: winning a prize or earning an honourable mention brings the illustrator in question to the attention of the world publishing industry gathered at BCBF, facilitating the sale of the rights thanks also to the important promotional activity carried out by BCBF. Visibility is offered not only to the winning and commended titles, but also to a wide selection of the best entries: **over 150 titles** in the various categories are presented at the fair in *The BRAW Amazing Bookshelf* exhibition. Created with the aim of boosting the visibility of the many worthy illustrators taking part from all over the world, the exhibition offers a unique glimpse into the award.

This year the event will be flanked by *The BRAW Amazing Bookshelf - Sustainability: 17 Goals for a Better Future*, an exhibition of a selection of 150 of the best books nominated for the special 2025 category of the Bologna Ragazzi Awards, organised in collaboration with the United Nations and dedicated to all the themes encompassed in the concept of sustainability: from gender equality to environmental protection, from the right to education to the fight against poverty. The exhibition will also be presented in early 2026 in New York at the United Nations headquarters. The two exhibitions BRAW Amazing Bookshelf are curated by Cooperativa Culturale Giannino Stoppani/Accademia Drosselmeier.

BCBF VISUAL IDENTITY WORKSHOP: BRUNO DE ALMEIDA

The Visual Identity Workshop is managed by the Chialab design studio and every year guides an illustrator chosen from among the winners of the Illustrators Exhibition in the creation of the visual identity that will accompany the next edition of the Bologna Children's Book Fair. The *BCBF Visual Identity Workshop 2024* exhibition, also available online at BCBF Galleries, displays working materials such as sketches, research, layout simulations, sketches and mock-ups, thus reconstructing the entire production process through which **Bruno de Almeida**, the young Brazilian illustrator selected in 2024, gave life to the unique characters that will accompany visitors at this year's edition of BCBF. Colourful figures that mix and merge in a cosmic composition that represents a genuine ecosystem in which everyone is interconnected. The same ecosystem that BCBF represents, animated by the contagious and cosmopolitan energy of its participants from all over the world.

EXHIBITION OF THE BCBF - FUNDACIÓN SM INTERNATIONAL ILLUSTRATION AWARD: HENRIQUE MOREIRA

Now in its 14th edition, the **Bologna Children's Book Fair - Fundación SM International Illustration Award** was created with the aim of supporting and promoting young illustration talents. The award is given to an illustrator under 35 years of age who has been selected for the Illustrators Exhibition and the winner receives a grant to create an illustrated book over the following year, which is then published by the Spanish publishing house SM. The original copies of the book's illustrations are then presented in a solo exhibition organised at the following year's edition of the Bologna Children's Book Fair and can be visited online on the BCBF Galleries portal. The 2025 edition features the 2024 winner, Brazilian **Henrique Moreira**, who has worked on a book entitled *La danza del cielo y la tierra*. This silent book is inspired by the Brazilian indigenous community the Krenak's ritual dance of "suspending the sky", performed in order to re-establish harmony between human beings and nature. Through seemingly simple illustrations, the author tells the story of people who are alienated, isolated and prisoners of a contaminated world, who, thanks to nature, rediscover their individuality and the joy of living, while nature is reborn with them.



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THE "MAKE-A-PICTUREBOOK" PROJECT EXHIBITION

The Illustrators Survival Corner will host the works of Barbara Chiamaka Chukwu and Kayode Onimole, African artists whose works were selected at the end of **The "Make-a-Picturebook" Project**, an illustration course created by BCBF in collaboration with Book Buzz Foundation and curated by Mimaster Illustrazione. The illustrations from their picture books created during the project will be on display, along with some works of all the participants in the course, showing different interpretations of Paul and Esther Okeugo's story *Zizah is different*, which describes the experiences and daily life of little Zizah, a child on the autism spectrum.

UKRAINIAN ILLUSTRATION: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Organised by the Pictoric Illustrators Club and the International Book Arsenal Festival in collaboration with the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture of Kiev, the exhibition brings together the works of contemporary Ukrainian illustrators and artists from the last century, creating a fascinating journey through the evolution of Ukrainian illustration and highlighting the connections and contrasts between past and present and the link between the national visual tradition and global artistic movements. Building a bridge between generations, the exhibition is a true testament to the power of visual storytelling in times of change.

THE ORIGINAL ART

In 2025, a new chapter in the collaboration between BCBF and the Society of Illustrators is being written in Bologna for the second consecutive year. Once again, the fair will be exhibiting **The Original Art**, the annual exhibition conceived in 1980 by painter, art director and artist representative Dilys Evans to present illustrations from the year's best children's books published in the United States. Since 1990, the exhibition has been held at the Society of Illustrators in New York, where the works are selected by a jury made up of illustrators, art directors and children's book publishers. In Bologna, **52 works from the 2024 edition of the exhibition, together with their respective books**, will be on display at the Illustrators Survival Corner, which will also host activities led by some of the illustrators whose works are on display. Featuring at the exhibition as part of the programme of events will be **Beatrice Alemagna**, who won the Gold Medal (the award given to the creator of the exhibition's best illustration) for the second time in 2024. Once again, BCBF will bring together all the publishers worldwide who publish Alemagna's books, in a collective celebration of the great artist.

CHINESE EXCELLENCE IN CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATION

The cultural interaction with China promoted by the Bologna Children's Book Fair in recent years has given impetus to an extraordinary development of picture books in the country, illustrated with a new aesthetic that blends Eastern tradition with modern multicultural voices. With the aim of promoting the best contemporary Chinese illustrators, in 2023 BCBF/BolognaFiere, China South Publishing & Media Group and Sidee Cultural Communication launched *Chinese Excellence*, an annual exhibition format that presents a selection of works by established and emerging Chinese artists. Each year, the illustrations are chosen from among the many entries by a jury made up of prominent Chinese and international experts. The selected illustrations are then exhibited at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, where a winner is announced before the illustrations head off on a long international tour. The members of the 2025 jury were: **Ao Ran** (Deputy Executive Director of the China Audio-video and Digital Publishing Association, China), **Li Jianping** (Dean of the School of Animation at the Beijing Film Academy, Vice-Director of the Committee for the Teaching of Animation and Digital Media at the Ministry of Education, Secretary General of the Animation Art Committee of the Chinese Artists Association and Vice-President of the China Children's Film Association. He is also President of the Beijing Film and Television Animation Association, China), **Long Niannan** (Senior art teacher at the China National Children's Center, expert in art education for children and painter, China), **Cathy Olmedillas** (Founder



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and creative director of Studio Anorak, publisher of the magazines *Happy Mags for Kids Anorak Magazine*, *DOT* and the new *CHEW*, Spain), **Tan Fengxia** (Professor of children's literature at the School of Literature at Nanjing Normal University, China), **Marcella Terrusi** (Researcher and lecturer in the field of childhood culture, history of children's literature and international children's publishing at the University of Bologna, Italy), **Mireia Trius** (Co-founder of Zahorí Books, Spain).

A bilingual English-Chinese catalogue has been published to document the works of the selected artists, helping to offer the international community an overview of contemporary Chinese illustration and a deeper understanding of the country's immense cultural heritage.

SILENT BOOK CONTEST - GIANNI DE CONNO AWARD

As is customary at the fair, the books selected for the **Silent Book Contest - Gianni De Conno Award**, dedicated to the famous Italian illustrator and now in its **12th edition**, will be showcased. Over the years, the international award has played a crucial role in the development and diffusion of silent books, stories told exclusively through images capable of overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers. Organised by Carthusia Edizioni in collaboration with the Bologna Children's Book Fair, Turin International Book Fair, Municipality of Mulazzo, Associazione Montereccio Paese dei Librai, IOB International Organisation of Book Towns, the initiative is sponsored by Iby Italia and supported by BPER Banca.

JELLA LEPMAN. LET US BEGIN WITH THE CHILDREN. BOOKS AS BRIDGES

Also featuring at the fair, next to the International Bookshop, is an exhibition dedicated to the founder of IBBY - International Board on Books for Young People, the non-profit organisation created in 1953 to promote reading and access to books for children all over the world, and present today in 84 countries. The exhibition brings together the contributions of twenty illustrators, ten Italians and ten from the rest of the world, who have embodied and interpreted the core values that guided the founder of IBBY, a true revolutionary. Contributors include: Maurizio A.C. Quarello, Victoria Semykina, Giulia Pastorino, Balusso Twins, Peter Goes, Michelangelo Rossato, Beatrice Alemagna, Mariachiara Di Giorgio, Diego Bianki and Neil Packer.

Created for the 39th IBBY Congress held in Trieste in 2024, the exhibition is curated by Silvana Sola, David Tolin and Paola Vassalli for IBBY Italia, co-organised with the Municipality of Trieste and created with the contribution of the Pirelli Foundation.

BRATISLAVA WINNERS EXHIBITION

The exhibition programme also includes the event celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), a selection of 29 illustrations awarded the Grand Prix between 1967 and 2023. The exhibition is supported by a vast collection of documentation (including posters and photographs that retrace the history of the Biennial), as well as the covers of the Illustrators Annual of the BCBF Illustrators Exhibition created by the winning artists. This is a consolidated tradition that, in alternate years, links BCBF to the winners of the biennial BIB Grand Prix and the H.C. Andersen Award.

THE BOLOGNABOOKPLUS EXHIBITIONS

Finally, the BBPlus area will play host to the fifth edition of the **Jackets Off!** exhibition which explores the different interpretations of the cover of the classic *The Great Gatsby* in its various publications in different countries and cultures. Also featuring will be the books from the award **TALKING PICTURES: an exhibition and exploration of visual books 2025: ESTONIA**, and a preview of the first **retrospective of the Folio Society**, scheduled at the Society of Illustrators in New York from 16 April.



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