

## **IT MAKES SENSE EVEN WITHOUT SENSES**

### **Outstanding books for and about children with disabilities from the IBBY and BIBIANA collections**

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BIBIANA, the International House of Art for Children, Panská 41, Bratislava, Slovakia

Idea: Hana Ondrejčíková

Script: Jana Michalová

Expert supervision: Miriam Halamičková

Art and space design: Zuzana Kadlčáková

Exhibition prepared by Destin a.s. and BIBIANA Exhibition and Programme Production

Department lead by Valéria Marákyová

*Literary portraits of children and young people with various types of disability in the IBBY selected collection, accompanied by books from the BIBIANA library collection. Visitors can get to know the heroes of the books and carry out tasks as a child with a disability would. What disability will Fate bring you? Can you accomplish all the tasks and solve the cross-word solution?*

BIBIANA, along with their long-time partner IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) has prepared an interactive exhibition – IT MAKES SENSE EVEN WITHOUT THE SENSES. In this book - play project, child visitors can learn about the life of their peers with special needs.

The exhibited books are the most attractive part of the selection from the topic, offered by the IBBY and BIBIANA collections. The collection of 50 titles, representing the 2017 IBBY Selection of Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities, complements over 100 titles selected from BIBIANA's home library.

Every two years the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) awards exceptional books on the lives of children and young people with various forms of disability, together with books created in formats appropriate to their specific needs. Books were nominated by national sections of IBBY from more than 70 countries around the world. A professional jury must choose from hundreds of books received. They take into account the consistency of the literary and pictorial (illustrative) value of the works, which present a dignified image of young people with disabilities, and in particular emphasize their similarities instead of differences. Selected titles are regularly published in the catalogue, and through the use of exhibitions are presented all over the world. The latest "2017 IBBY Selection of Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities" is borrowed from the permanent international collection, which is maintained by the Public library in Montreal (TPL). From there, the selection came to BIBIANA via Bologna, and several locations in Ireland, and is heading to Athens.

The IBBY book selection is complemented by titles from the BIBIANA Library Fund, which maintains a collection of unique international children's literature – among them award-winning titles, awarded not only at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava, but also at other prestigious world forums. These books come from different parts of the world, and visitors

may read titles issued not only in English, German, Spanish, but also Arabic, Japanese, or Persian.

Most of the exhibited books from both collections are literary portraits of children and adolescents with different types of disability. They include image titles, short stories, novels, and also instructional books. Visitors will certainly be interested in the fact that many literary heroes do not feel their disability to be a problem. They have often developed other senses or have special abilities. However, at least in one feature, they do not differ from their healthy peers - in the desire for friendship, play and adventure. You can find strong stories, in which children with disabilities are capable of great deeds. Sosu, a disabled boy from Ghana, saves his village when he warns them about the coming flood and calls for help by drumming (Sosu's Call). Or the story of Alan - a stuttering boy, who is able to fluently speak only with animals, and in adulthood, after overcoming his speech defect, becomes the "spokesman" of the animals and advocates the establishment of a nature reserve in the African wilderness (A Boy and a Jaguar).

Among the exhibits, you can find also books created in special formats and character systems, in particular for people with impaired vision and hearing (books in Braille language, touch illustrations or in sign language). Some titles with original tactile images are true works of art.

Come to see also the so-called "easy-to-read" books. These are titles from regular book production, which are also understandable for children with learning difficulties or deficient mental development due to their minimal text, simple story, and clear design. They are mostly image and photo books, but also "silent books" telling a story entirely without words, and children can be assisted in exploring the world.

The key to understanding the worldview of a child with a disability is a game. Through the game, where the child visitor "draws" his fate and disability and then performs various tasks "in the skin of a child with a disability", they recognize the heroes of these exceptional books. Through personal experience, they can better understand their situation and feelings. To ensure that the children are able to accomplish the task, they must not only deal with the constraints posed by the disability, but also cooperate with the presented books and their illustrations. At the same time, they realize how important it is to get help from others.

The purpose of the exhibition is not to inspire regret, but to allow the visitor to get to know the world of children with disabilities, to feel empowered, to understand their needs and to accept them among themselves.

In addition to the already mentioned books, the exhibition applies a number of game elements and therapeutic tools used by children with disabilities. These were rented from the Social Care Home for Children and Adults SIBÍRKA and from Autism Centre Andreas ® n.o. for the purposes of this exhibition.

And, as usual for BIBIANA, several workshops were prepared to enrich the exhibition.

Catalogues of exhibited books, an exhibition guide and a simulation of individual disabilities can also be found on the BIBIANA website ([www.bibiana.sk](http://www.bibiana.sk)).