



miscellany

# 24<sup>th</sup> BIENNIAL of ILLUSTRATIONS BRATISLAVA

International symposium  
BIB 2013

Theme:

*„Identity Today: The National Cultural  
Identity of Illustration in the Time  
of Globalization.“*

miscellany

24. Bienále ilustrácií Bratislava  
24<sup>th</sup> Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava

<b>Viera Anošíková</b> (Slovak republic).....	<b>102</b>	<b>Zohreh Parirokh</b> (Iran) .....	<b>148</b>
<i>Identity in Globalization and Globalization in Identity</i>		<i>The Bell-Foot Goat Story: Global Theme, National Identity in Illustration</i>	
<b>Austra Avotina, Ilze Stikāne</b> (Latvia).....	<b>103</b>	<b>Leo Pizzol</b> (Italy) .....	<b>158</b>
<i>Children's Books as Medium of Communication in Modern World. Sense Awards in Latvia</i>		<i>History of the Exhibition</i>	
<b>Ali Boozari</b> (Iran).....	<b>113</b>	<b>Marloes Schrijvers</b> (Netherlands) .....	<b>161</b>
<i>Iranian Illustration in a Global Context</i>		<i>Oppositions, Identification and Disidentification through Text and Image in The Wall by Peter Sís</i>	
<b>Jana Čeňková</b> (Czech republic), <b>Iku Dekune</b> (Japan)..	<b>120</b>	<b>Andrej Švec</b> (Slovak republic).....	<b>169</b>
<i>Notes on the Development of Illustration to Fairy Tales by Karel Jaromír Erben published in Czech. The Live Water – Illustrating selected fairy tales by Karel Jaromír Erben“.</i>		<i>Continuity in Being Changeable, or always “Being Oneself” The Identity of Slovak Illustration in BIB</i>	
<b>Renáta Fučíková</b> (Czech republic) .....	<b>130</b>	<b>Manuela Vladić Maštruko</b> (Croatia) .....	<b>180</b>
<i>Come and Hear Old Legends</i>		<i>Identity Today: The National Cultural Identity of Illustration in the Time of Globalization</i>	
<b>Lubomír Krátky</b> (Slovak republic).....	<b>134</b>	<b>Myry Voipio</b> (Finland).....	<b>188</b>
<i>Illustration for Children's Books and Graphical Design</i>		<i>Families, Tradition and Togetherness: Finnish National Cultural Identity in the Time of Globalization</i>	
<b>Steffen Larsen</b> (Denmark).....	<b>140</b>	<b>Anita Wincencjusz-Patyna</b> (Poland) .....	<b>195</b>
<i>Identity Today: The National Cultural Identity of Illustration in the Time of Globalization</i>		<i>The Intriguing Mosaic. Elements of National History and Culture in Coin Temporary Book Illustration in Poland</i>	
<b>Bjørn Ousland</b> (Norway) .....	<b>144</b>		
<i>My Norwegian Cultural Identity</i>			



# Miscellany

## International symposium BIB 2013 Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava

*Theme:*

**„Identity Today: The National Cultural Identity of Illustration in the Time of Globalization.“**

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## Viera Anoškinová, (Slovak Republic)



*She studied at Comenius University in Bratislava, Philosophical Faculty, Department of Theory on Visual Arts. Later a postgraduate study at Academia Istropolitana in Bratislava. Since 2001 she was a gallery director; the gallery focused first of all on graphic art works and book illustrations. She worked as a curator of exhibitions both in Slovakia and abroad and she wrote number of articles. She is a jury member at The Most Beautiful Book in Slovakia competition, Tripple Rose, Ľudovít Fulla Prize and a co-ordinator of an International BIB Symposium since 2007. She has been working with BIBIANA, International House of Arts for Children, BIB Department since 2009. She is the head of BIB Secretariat since 2010.*

### Identity in globalization and globalization in identity

Defining the concept of globalization is actually quite simple. It is a process of a growing international inter-connection in all as-

pects of life such as economy, politics, communication and culture. In very simplified terms, because of globalization local traditions and inter-regional differences may be becoming smaller and less prominent while development of a homogeneous global culture is being promoted. Modern technologies make connections between countries and cultures faster and contribute very much to the development of globalization. Immigration, bringing cultures so much closer to each other, enriching them, letting them intertwine, is also an integral part of globalization. The concept of identity, which may be perceived as the opposite of globalization, is derived from the Latin “idem” meaning the same, identical. That is why the concept has two meanings; the first one means absolute sameness or identical and the other one assumes a certain specificity to which it pertains. And that exactly is the interpretation which is crucial to us and the topic of our symposium, namely national cultural identity of illustration in this time of globalization. The Biennial of Illustration Bratislava may be a good example of globalization. During the 24 gatherings of BIB there have been 7,225 illustrators from 109 countries who presented 27,434 illustrations to almost 9,000 books. One could and still can watch trends and directions in which illustration was (and is) heading in countries from all the continents. One can clearly see that every country has its “handwriting” drawn from national traditions that has been quite resilient to demands made by global publishers, although that kind of tendency does appear in publishers occasionally.

An illustrator can make use of modern communication technologies and seek to have their illustrations published not only in their home country but anywhere else in the world as well, which, in return, may enrich their works and simultaneously bring new cultures or a different view of the world to readers. It is this presentation and offering of various distant and close cultures to people that undoubtedly is a major contribution of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava and I believe it will also keep playing that role in the future.

**Austra Avotina** (Latvia)



*She studied art history at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, received her doctoral degree from the Latvian University in Riga, and has worked as an associate professor in the Department of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art at the Latvian University in Riga since 2011. She is the author of many professional papers and books on children's book illustration and is a member of several organizations, including the Latvian IBBY Section, and has served as a member of other juries for illustration of books for children and youth.*

**Ilze Stikāne** (Latvia)



*She received her degree from the Latvian University with a major of philology and teaching Latvian and is now a professor at the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art at the Latvian University. Since 1998 her focus has been assessment systems, peculiarities and history of literature for children and youth. She has published over thirty books and has been the president of the Latvian IBBY Section since 2003.*



## Children's books as medium of communication in modern world. Sense awards in Latvia

(Translation from Latvian Ira Ērika Kivrāne)

Book design is an aspect much less discussed in comparison with the two more traditionally discussed features of every book: content and illustrations. A book is an internationally recognizable design object, which can communicate in a language understood by everyone. The best proof of it is international events.

When acquainting oneself with books published in foreign languages the first impression is of the greatest importance. The first impression forms from the image of the book, which ensures wide, natural and self-evident possibilities of international communication. The source of the first impression is the visual design of the book – binding, cover, paper, smell. During one's lifetime it is the design of the book that is kept in memory, thus becoming one of the factors of human identity development.

After the first impression the content of the book – theme, main ideas, storyline, values etc. – introduce the reader with the book as the whole. Thus the harmony and integrity between the text and design of the book are very important.

Sense awards were included in the Latvian children's book nominations five years ago. There are five awards: sight award, hearing award, smell award, touch award and taste award. It is not easy for books to compete in any of the categories. It is a challenge to guess the target audience's favorite taste of ice cream, the smell of popcorn or the emotional excitement that electronic media ensure. Therefore books should not only be exciting, extraordinary and beautiful - they should also cause sensations. As such they will be internationally recognizable and will migrate easily and self-evidently.

The authors will present the Latvian experience and will share ideas on potential criteria for sense award nominations.

### Sense awards

We suppose we will say nothing new by stating that we perceive the world by making use of the five senses given to us by God. Sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste are given to man to have maximum perception of the environment. Therefore it seems quite natural that the things we have created should result in the evaluation of man's unique abilities, and we should be glad about everything we can see, hear, smell, touch and taste. Likewise, the book is not to be perceived only in the traditional way – visually and audibly. The emotions and associations aroused by the book are the cause of a number of feelings, which are common of all the people in all the continents. They are features going across all the borders. The children's book comes to the reader with its message, which is the result of the unity of all its components.

Every book as an object is different – it has its weight, form, color, smell, texture – it is like each woman's individual hairdo and dress. Everything is relevant – the amount of the text, compactness, the size of letters, the character of the pictures.

The outward shape is the first thing why we take a book into our hands, the first impression – it is like meeting a person – first of all we catch sight of it, inspect it, then we feel it, then we smell it, then we begin to acquaint ourselves with its content – by conversing. We usually take with us what we have seen in the photos of our trips, we recall what we have tasted. Our senses are influenced by the experienced smells and sounds, when closing our eyes we feel the texture and recall the touch of our feet with the earth. This spectrum can be also created by children's books, which are the guides of the little ones' first journey.

The book is like a house – with many walls and rooms.



We get to know a person gradually by conversing, but we cannot see everything in a book simultaneously – it is the same when entering an unfamiliar house – we enter slowly and only gradually we begin to see the rooms and the shape of all the things there in the semidarkness. When we acquaint ourselves with a book it is not important sometimes to begin from the very beginning of the book – the child can begin doing it from any place. The child can “read” an illustrated book without reading it. He is ready to build up a story of his own.

We think it is necessary to start almost a fight – a serious fight for the renewal of one’s sight, not only that of the spectators and the readers, but also the renewal of the sight of the authors of books.

**The evaluation of books at art competitions is determined by several COMMON FEATURES:**

1. the conception of the design and its compliance with the content,
2. the layout,
3. the choice of paper,
4. printing,
5. mastery of technique – it is the foundation in the illustration,
6. originality – a stylistic unity, the idea, the chosen technique and its execution.

The conferment of the sense award requires more precise criteria besides the common features of a good children’s book, in which are included as equally important not only the aspects of the visual character of the book, but also informative nuances, the quality of the language and the promotion of the world cognition in general. Senses are discussed in the literary aspect, too – sense pictures which the author has created with the figurativeness of the language. The criteria of each award have been developed in the experience of several years, when choosing the prizewinners of sense awards. The final gain is:

- one can ascertain the special quality of each author and be more precise when advancing the projects, thus achieving a higher final result;
- by specially singling out a sense spectrum (or paying special attention to them), it is possible to secure a more successful spread of children’s literature, its identification and international cooperation;
- according to contemporary pedagogical conceptions on the increase of the role of independent learning (influenced by the internet and the mass media) the improvement of senses should be paid more attention to;
- emphasis on man’s senses in the childhood ensures the development of skills of a wide spectrum and the development of a positive attitude to lifelong education process in general.

**Examples of the sense awards winning books of recent years in Latvia**

**SMELL AWARD**

The dominant criteria:

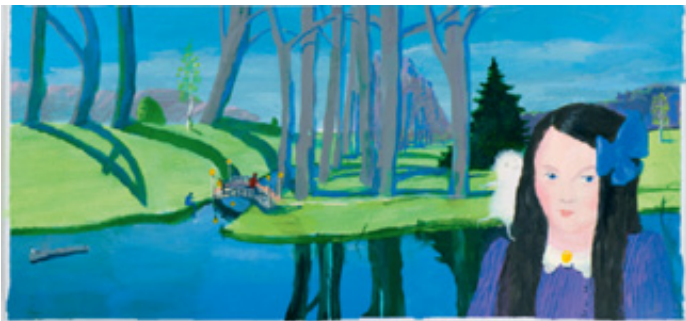
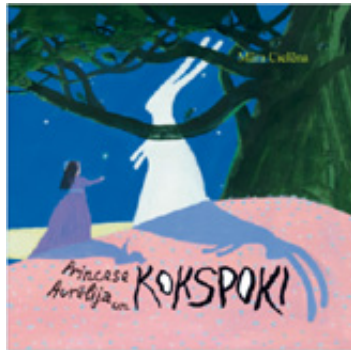
1. when looking through and reading the book we feel the smells of the wind, the sun, the trees, the grass – sweet, bitter, thick, volatile;
2. the choice of details is directed to the variety of smells, the nuances of smell;
3. visually essential “sweet- smelling” coloring;
4. the smell of the paper and printing ink.

**Māra Cielēna. Princese Aurēlija un kokspoki [Princess Aurelia and the Tree Ghosts] Artist Aleksejs Naumovs. Content**

The artist Aleksejs Naumovs has painted eighteen panoramic landscapes for the book, and each of them has been given a particular, bright, original coloring. Virtuoso dabs, contrast-



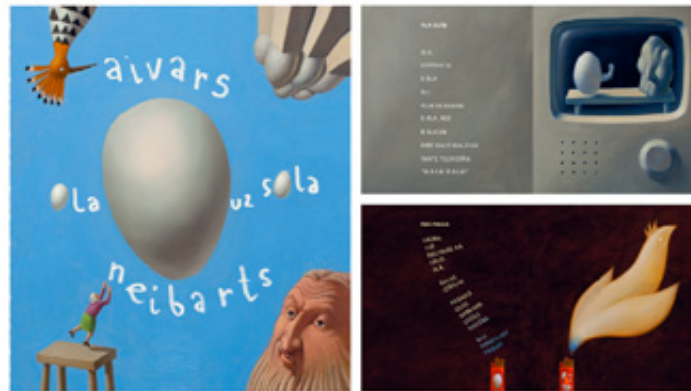
ing lights and darks and the unusual foreshortens create the impression of dynamic movement, a real fairy-tale mood, in which live peculiar characters created by the writer and visualized by the painter's imagination, the individual and unusual characters Princess Aurelia, the Shaggy-Haired Bear, Adam the Philosopher and others. There everything is alive and sonorous - the wood and the Echo, the Moon and the orange, the trees and even the shadows. The range of smells around tells much about the mysterious world and the events although in our everyday life we have accepted the priority of seeing, established by realistic traditions. Yet, "bringing the nose to motion" there easily take shape images before the closed eyes. What is the smell of your room, what is the smell of the afternoon sun in the green grass? Does the night have only sounds? Is it true that the cake and the merry-go-around have the same smell? Nothing can be compared to the aroma of



fresh sea wind, when speeding in a cabriolet. But what is the smell of "the rain" of a blooming apple-tree, and that of unsteady steps on the plank-way, in the depth of the wood or in the marsh, where hundreds of trees are whispering, and what is the smell in a cool cave?

"The hollow of the lime-tree was wonderful, because it smelt of honey. It led into a cave, which smelt of moist sand and bats." [p. 53]

However, the most fragrant of all is peace on tranquil late afternoons.



**Aivars Neibarts. *Ola uz sola* [Eggs Have Legs] Artist Jānis Blanks.**

**Visual image**

Each illustration was created first as a painting, which later was reproduced in the book. You get pleasure from the square contrasts, the nuances of tones, lines, the nuances of the deceptive texture. Once again we see that paintings have unique quality – they can be printed. You feel a sense of space – cool, clean air. Mystical fancy at the points of view, real objects move, make friends with one another – it is interesting to watch it and pleasant to inhale it. (Illustrations 3-5)





## TASTE AWARD

The dominant criteria:

1. when looking at and reading the book there arise different taste nuances – sour, sweet, bitter.....;
2. the choice of details and fragments, refers to textures, manner of execution, contrasts of soft and hard materials, a variety of the surface;
3. visually essential “delicious” coloring and tastes with familiar details;
4. soft , environment friendly paper, preferable with tonality.

**Indra Sprōģe.**  
**Joka pēc alfabēts**  
 [The Alphabet for Play] Artist Indra Sprōģe.  
 Content

In this original work the artist has succeeded in achieving a harmonious balance in everything, and the result is that it reminds of an



outstanding cooking – nothing prevails and nothing overwhelms. Everything tastes like a long and happy game – it is as the author has said about herself: “I live inside a children’s book. I’m a child: I like playing and larking about inside it. And I give up everything I have to this wonderful world. I need it to be alive, and I’m happy if I manage to bring it to life.” [Avotiņa 2012: 57]



**Ieva Samauska.** **Pilsēta no A līdz Z** [The City from A to Z] Artist Gundega Muzikante.

### Visual image

Delicious, indeed - children are sure to like the richness of tones – almost all the rose-colored and violet tones are represented in it. It is like cream of wheat. Maybe, there is a little bit too much of it all. Lovely, boastful characters, a dear rabbit, an excellent hedgehog. Some characters are too stylized. Good paper, binding and design. The compositions of the spread have been well considered, the form of the spatially real situations is a delight to the eye. It is really delicious:



T  
\*\*\*

If I could I'd write verse  
of how nice it is to live in **Tea Street.**  
of how fragrant was the smell of tea,  
of how the tea was poured in with gentle hands.  
of how the sugar-basin and the cream-jug laughed,  
of how much power the wind has  
to turn an ordinary flower or leaf into tea.  
If I could, I'd write verse, indeed.  
But most likely I won't do it because it's time to have tea. [p. 95]



**TOUCH AWARD**

The dominant criteria:

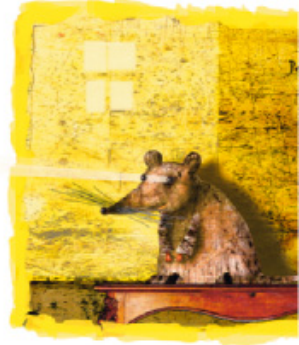
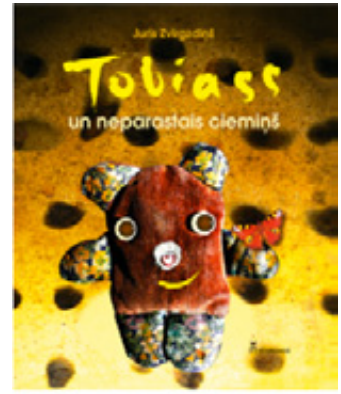
1. when looking at and reading the book it especially well fits into the hand - it is easy to leaf, it is pleasant to touch, and there is a desire to keep it in the hands;
2. the choice of details and fragments is directed to textures, the manner of execution, the contrast of soft and hard materials, the variety of the surface;
3. visually essential spatiality;
4. soft, environmentally friendly, small format.

**Juris Zvirgzdiņš. *Tobiass un neparastais ciemiņš* [Tobias and the Strange Guest]**

**Artist Gita Treice.**

**Content**

The author's cherished view on the world enables him to feel the soft and the gentle, the harsh and the hostile, the near and the far world texture. By using complicated computer technique – the illustrations are made like mixed combinations of drawing, photography and computer animations – the artist has created touchable stage design situations in the unusual everyday life of the *real* plush teddy-bear Tobias. Especially pleasant for *touching* is the bitten oatmeal biscuit - by creating a very strong sense of touch of its sharp surface. There is great temptation to *press* Tobias, which is like a computer key, and he hides the contents of the book.





**Juris Zvirgzdiņš. *Lāča Bruņa medības* [The Hunt for Bruno the Bear] Artist Reinis Pētersons.**

**Visual image**

Organic unity in everything – the format, the materials, illustrations. It is pleasant to take it in hands, thumb through and read and read it again. The skillful laconic drawings by R. Pētersons organically suit in the text, and they confirm visually as well that everything is real – joy, sorrow, friendship: “Kaspars with Bruni [the teddy-bear] had never roamed so deep into the wood. The moss lay soft under their feet, the air smelt of marsh tea. Then all of a sudden there was no more wood, farther in a small sunny meadow there grew raspberry bushes. The raspberry bushes moved apart and what did Ilze and Kaspars see? A bear, a live bear, big and brown, like man he stood on his hind legs and, it seemed to Kaspars, with a guilty smile on his lips.” [p. 65]



**HEARING AWARD**

The dominant criteria:

1. when looking and reading we hear sounds - noises, uproar, growls, whispers;
2. the choice of the details and fragments is turned to subtle nuances of sounds;
3. visual temperament;
4. unusual, unconventional formats, “loud” paper.

**Māra Cielēna, Gundega Muzikante. *Lidojums. Flying Adventure.* Artist Gundega Muzikante**  
**Content**

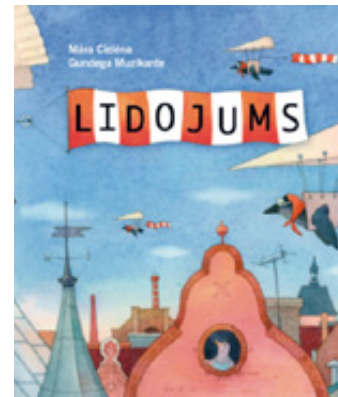
Excellent quality of the image. A story about the City of Nev-

ersleep, whose birds living in Heightstown have forgotten their nature of being birds take the reader to a particular adventure of the Strimals family. The Strimals, a simple family of gulls, after the experienced air crash, encouraged by their daughter Zelibet Liara, fly to the seaside. The story and the illustrations form a united entirety – the carefully planned disposition of the text allows the illustrations “to speak” absolutely equally. G. Muzikante’s illustrations do not only supplement the text, carefully taking into account and respecting the satirical nuances in the text by M. Cielēna, but they form the environment of the text – each spread creates a certain sound - the sounds of the town interchange with the freshness of the daybreak, the freedom of the night with the fever before the journey. The compositional solutions found by the artist give joy to the reader in each spread. The spectrum of the senses caused by the illustration is saturated foreshortens, which occasionally make you feel to be an inmate of a stork nest, sometimes you feel like tripping courageously along the edge of the roof hanging out the washing, now and then jubilating free and happy like a somnambulist on the gable of the roof. The story is visually supplemented with different details of social life and human understanding of the noisy everyday life of town birds:

“The plane rose heavily into the air. An escort of crows materialized on both sides; more out of curiosity than a sense of honour.

Winner twisted his beak – he didn’t like the smell that rose from the chimneys of the City of Neversleep.

Joyously Zelibet struck at a church bell as they flew by.



The bells of all the other towers, great and small, moved and rang happily.

Strimals family left behind the city boundary. It was impossible to converse over the roar of the engine.” [p. 13]

**Cecilie Lanes, Ilze Dambe. *Ķerot trolli* [Troll Hunt] Artist Ilze Dambe.**

**Visual image**

Ilze Dambe works in her recognizable developed style, and within its framework she is able to achieve a range of strong, different feelings. The book is unique as an extraordinary project – the result of international cooperation. The unity of the text and the illustrations is absolute -- it seems that the Norwegian Cecily has written the text for Ilze Dambe's illustrations. Each personage precisely characterizes what he has to say, there is even no need to read the text. On the ship *Hurtigruten* taking the troll family from Trumse to Svolver everyone's eyes are either completely open or completely closed, while their mouths move in the craziest vibrations. The emotions are loud and vigorous- especially



on the pages dedicated to the events in Surtlanne at 1.p.m.

The impression is that the artist has really gone by ship together with the family of trolls and has experienced the whole wide range of all the emotions.

**SIGHT AWARD**

The dominant criteria referring both to the content and the visual design:

1. it urges looking sharp, looking in closely, looking for with one's eyes...;
2. small details;
3. precise nuances of the depicted forms;
4. the proportion of golden section, unbleached paper.

**Juris Kronbergs. *Mākoņu grāmata* [Book of Clouds] Artist Anete Melece.**

**Content**

A very particular book of poetry. Firstly, useful and recommendable to all generations for training one's eyesight – thus absolutely corresponding to the latest tendencies in the world children's books, absolute *crossover*. Secondly, a unique book, as it can be included in the category of travel notes (particular and peculiar), which is not a very popular genre in Latvia. The artist A. Melece has made drawings with a light tint of water- colors, in which we can recognize not only the manner of how children draw, but also how it would have been done by an accurate traveler supplementing his notes - he has fixed everything he has seen, interpreted it all and he has even given smart commentaries. Such is also J. Kronberg's poetry – there interchange impression ranges of the adults and the children, they change, come closer and then again they quarrel - just like clouds in the sky. In any case when reading and looking at the pictures the most important thing is – it must be done outdoors, preferable lying on the grass looking at the clouds over the edge of the book

### Clouds in the Sky

Clouds in the sky come and go,  
they watch us from above,  
they hear our laughter and quarrels from  
above.

Do they or don't they know how we are getting on?

Year after year  
they only come and go.

They are never alike,  
some are poor, others rich,  
their norm is to change forms.

Clouds can be as big as barns  
or small and tiny,

The majority are joyful,  
but some are fond of talking rot,  
or sitting sour on the spot  
silently the whole day and night long  
till there is not a single drop left.

Clouds are of a rather complicated type,  
some toddle bravely in the sky,  
while others only crawl.

When you see a shadow hurrying over you,  
it may be a cloud,

which wants to say to you: hallo! [p. 6-7]

**Māra Cielēna. *Divas pastaigas* [Two Walks] Artist Anita Paegle.**

#### Visual image

High artistic professionalism, joy to the eyes – it is the way of characterizing any illustrated book by the artist. In this case – there is a good harmony with two poems by Māra Cielēna, which come forward with a new way of the acquisition of letters and figures. The black drawn letters in the illustrations are particular, alive, spatial, mobile and they can speak. The gentle transition of the tones and the diverse objects spare

one's eyes, arouse the wish to return, look at it another time and search for what has already been seen and invite one to develop coherences. The illustrations by A. Paegle in this "house" are like a live grain, like a piece of furniture of a refined style.



Everything in the book should be addressed to a particular reader, taking into consideration his age and needs. The basis of visual culture could be, for example, natural paper – “the green book”, which spares not only nature, but also one's eyesight, makes the learners' rucksacks lighter, promotes “green” thinking, supports proper use of natural resources. It is necessary to achieve the state that everything – the format, the edges, the binding, the rhythm, the spaces, the proportions – the height, the width, the thickness, the weight – all of them should put emphasis on the content, be ideally matter-of-fact and usable. A book is a spatial, matter-of-fact object, the perception of which proceeds by degrees, it requires definite time – it is the same as in modern art, where the familiarization process with the object is not only its visual survey. In modern art the most successful objects are those, which affect several senses – preferably all of them – touch, hearing, sight, smell and taste.



Therefore it is expedient to think of how to come to it that the illustrated book is a modern masterpiece – a conceptual, spatial, collective piece of art.

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**Ali Boozari** (Iran)



*He studied graphical design and book illustration at the Art University of Teheran and has written more than fifty papers on children's literature and art history of Persia and three textbooks on the history of Persian art. He has illustrated over thirty books for children and exhibited his works in Iran, Turkey, Korea, Denmark and other countries. He also works as a coordinator of workshops for children and has served as a member of several committees for exhibitions and juries for illustration.*

**Iranian Illustration in a Global Context**

Ali Boozari<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:**

Life in the global village<sup>2</sup>, where the national borders are removed and people – regardless of culture, race, nationality, and language – have a more or less unified understanding of the universe, is a phenomenon with contrasting characteristics.

While transferring so much information to children, modern media on one hand facilitates social integrity and globalization, and on the other hand it diminishes conventions and individual features of each nation. As a result, while this village has certain advantages (e.g. understanding other people), there is always the risk of losing one's national conventions and individual features. This article is responding to the problem of how Iranian illustrators try to create indigenous images in a global context.

The introductory section of this article discusses the way indigenous visual elements infiltrate Iranian illustration, then it goes on to explore the methodology of naturalizing images by illustrators. In both cases, two illustrators (one precedent and the other antecedent) will be referred to. The article considers the works of illustrators who have the criteria for becoming globalized, i.e. those who have won domestic and international awards and their works have been translated to different languages. The material has been prepared based more than 300 children's books, published between 1960 – 2013.

Keywords: illustration, Iranian illustrators, indigenous visual elements, globalization.

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<sup>2</sup> Global Village is a term closely associated with Marshall McLuhan, popularized in his books *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964). McLuhan described how the globe has been contracted into a village by electric technology (McLuhan, 1964, 6). and the instantaneous movement of information from every quarter to every point at the same time (McLuhan, 1987: 254). In bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion, electric speed heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree (McLuhan, 1964, 6).

## Introduction

Iran today is part of the Great Persia<sup>3</sup>, an immense land with a multi-millennium civilization. Although the first Iranian regal dynasty, the Medes, was established in 728 BC, but from 3000 BC onward, multiple civilizations had existed in this geographical region. Since then, numerous fine items and art pieces have been created under the influence of different states and ruling systems.

The first excavations aimed at discovering the civilization of Iran, started in 1840s. However, regular excavation of ancient areas in Iran started toward the end of nineteenth century with the exclusive contribution of French archeologists. The excavations were continued with the establishment of the archeology major in the University of Tehran (1936) and the collaboration of its graduates with Russian, English, and French archeologists. These excavations and discoveries helped introduce the products of Iranian civilization to the world, through the publication of various books about the art of Iran<sup>4</sup> and the displaying of the discovered items in national and international museums<sup>5</sup> (Abdi, 2001: 51 – 76).

These archeological activities served the policies of the precedent government: showcasing the greatness and magnificence of ancient Iran to the world. One of the results of this approach was the annual Shiraz Art Festival<sup>6</sup> (1967 – 1977) and the festivities of the 2500 year celebration of the

Persian Empire<sup>7</sup> (12 – 16 October, 1971). The celebrations were accompanied by the publication of numerous books about the art, dress-code, and manners of ancient Iranians.

These social changes and state policies certainly affected the way newly-founded children's publishing companies – including the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon), one of the first authoritative institutes in field of children's literature – perceived related issues. With this new outlook, Kanoon – originally founded with the pupose of publishing and illustrating children's books according to modern perspectives – started publishing books with mythological themes, such as Shāhnāme<sup>8</sup>, for children and using illustrations related to the rich artistic and cultural treasures of Iran. This approach, applied continuously for 14 years, i.e. since the establishment of Kanoon until 1979, eventually created one of the major categories of children's literature and illustrations in Iran<sup>9</sup>.

In 1979 with the victory of Islamic Revolution, this approach was influenced by the resulting social transformations. On one hand, publishers changed their policies, and on the other hand, other social and political changes, e.g.

3 For more information see: Xavier de Planhol, "IRAN i. LANDS OF IRAN", In *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. XIII, Fasc. 2, 2008: 204-212. Available at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iran-i-lands-of-iran>

4 Among the most important instances of the books written and published in this period is:

Arthur Upham Pope, *Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, 15 vols, Oxford, Oxford Press, 1938-64.

5 In order to keep all the discovered items at the same place, the museum of Ancient Iran was built in 1937 by the well-known French archeologist, Andre Godard.

6 For more information see: Robert Gluck, "The Shiraz Arts Festival: Western Avant-Garde Arts in 1970s Iran", *Leonardo*, Vol: 40, No. 1, 2007: 20-22.

7 The 2,500 year celebration of the Persian Empire consisted of an elaborate set of festivities that took place on 12-16 October 1971 on the occasion of the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Iranian monarchy (*Persian Empire*) by *Cyrus the Great*. The intent of the celebration was to demonstrate Iran's long *history* and to showcase its contemporary advancements under *Mohammad Reza Pahlavi*, the Shah of Iran. For more information see: Mohammad-Mehdi Mousā-Khān, Akharin Pādeshāh, *Zamāneh*, 3, 21, June 2004: 46-52.

8 For more information about *Shāh-Nāme* in children literature see: Ali Boozari, "Baresi-ye Tasvirsāzi Motoun-e Kohan Barāye Koudakān", In *The Second Children's Literature Congress*, Shirāz, Shirāz University, 2009: 9-26.

9 For more information about the children's literature and illustration see: "Children's Literature", in *The Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, available at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/children-vii>; Ali Boozari; Masoud Nāseri Daryāyee, "Children's Literature in Iran, 1961-2012", in *Bologna- Fifty years of Children's Books Around the World*, Bologna, Bologna University Press, 2013: 373-393; Zohreh Qāeni, *Tasvir-gari-ye ketāb-hā-ye koudakān, tārikh, tẓārif-hā va goune-hā*, Tehran, Nashr-e Chistā, 2011; Jamāl al-din Akrami, *Koudak va tasvir, Tasvir-gari-ye Ketāb-e Koudak dar Iran*, Tehran, Sāzmān-e Pajouhesh va barnāmerizi-ye Āmouzeshi, 2005.





Fig. 1



the Iran – Iraq war, caused audiences to show less interest in mythological books with indigenous images<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the publication of war/revolution literature took off. Although in recent years, a new wave of mythological material containing such images has started to be published, Islamic Revolution continues to be the main genre of children's literature.

Iranian illustrators have different methods of using indigenous visual elements in their works. I will go on to discuss each of these methods, while surveying two related artists, one antecedent and the other precedent. The illustrators discussed here have won national/international awards and their works have been translated to other languages; in other words they have the capacities of becoming globalized.

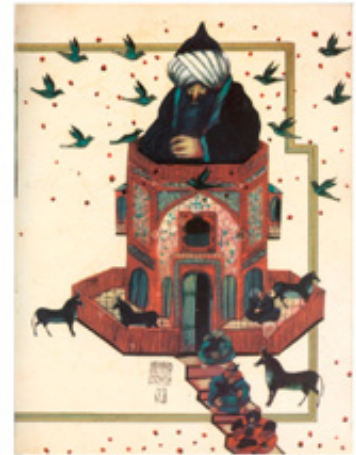
### Using Indigenous Visual Elements in Illustrations Persian Miniature (Negārgari):

What we know as Negārgari today, is the illustration of classical literature of Iran. At times of peace, Iranian kings would order the scribing and illustration of the texts of Iranian clas-

10 For More information about The Children's literature after Islamic revolution in Iran see: Mahdi Hejvani, Sayri dar adabiyāt-e koudak va Now-Javān-e Iran pas az Enghelāb, 1358-1378. [1979-1999], Pajouheshnāmeḥ adabiyāt-e koudak va now-javān, nos. 20-21, Spring – Summer, 2000.



Fig. 2



sical literature; then, they would treasure these works – masterpieces in calligraphy, illumination, and illustration – as symbols of art in their libraries. Thousands of miniature (Negāre) images, which have special designs and aesthetical features, were created between approximately 300 AD and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These images were kept in museums around the world<sup>11</sup>.

Naturally, contemporary Iranian illustrators used the images of Persian manuscripts – the historical root and origin of illustration in Iran – as one of their first sources. These images that have been printed in various catalogues and made available for artists and researchers, have always been then primary inspirational material for Iranian illustrators.

Nureddin Zarrin Kelk (1937 – )<sup>12</sup> is one of the first artists who was inspired by Negārgari. In his works, compositions are organized based on geometrical two-dimensional struc-

11 For more information about Persian miniatures see: Nasrollah Pourjavādy (editor), *The Splendor of Iran*, London, Booth-Clibborn Editions, 2001.

12 Winner of Golden Apple BIB 1971 and IBBY HL 1974 and 1976.



Fig. 3

tures of Negārgari. Zarrin Kelk used his experience in animation production to change generic and idealized portraits of Negārgari in order to create tangible portraits and make the figures simple and appropriate for children. He found Negārgari a proper paradigm for the illustration of mythological/folklore Iranian texts (figure 1).

Alireza Golduzian (1976 –)<sup>13</sup> is an illustrator who was inspired by Iranian miniature while creating some of his works. Golduzian saw the architecture and figures of Negārgari in unconventional ways and with his expressive method, he gave them a new life. The lack of logical ratio in items and figures, happy and commical faces, along with the folklore texts give a humorous atmosphere to the images. Furthermore, he uses the layout of old manuscripts in his works; he places the texts in colorful frames, uses Persian calligraphy, and even water-washes and



Fig. 4

fades parts of the text, just like the original manuscripts<sup>14</sup>. The combination of these elements led to the creation of images appropriate for the ancient text, yet with a modern tone.

### Portraits:

Contrary to Iranian miniature (Negārgari), portrait-making does not have a long history in Iran. Even though portraits of some kings appears – as manuscript sponsors – in some books, there is no individual similarity and their faces have idyllic forms (just like other images of the time). Since the Safavids' reign (1501 – 1722), with the influence of foreign art on Iranian art, portrait-making became popular in Iran. Portrait-making reached its climax during the reign of Qajars

<sup>14</sup> This method of layout design for children's books was first seen in a book named *Hekāyat-Nāameh*, which went on to win the New Horizon award at Bologna exhibition in 2004: Hosien Mo'alem, *Hekāyat-Nāameh*, Illustrated by Bahram Kha'ef, Tehran, Kānoun, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Winner of Grand Prix BIB 2005 and IBBY HL 2012.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



(1785 – 1925) and kings, princes, music players, and dancers of the court became subjects for the artists. A type of this portrait-making, prevalent during Fathali Shah's reign (1797 – 1834) has features both related to Negārgari and European painting style; these portraits are two-dimensional like the decorative images of Persian manuscripts, while being realistic and large in size, like European portraits. These portraits have sometimes inspired contemporary artists.

Firuzeh Golmohammadi (1951 – )<sup>15</sup> is one of the artists who used such portraits in her illustrations. Because of her great interest in Indian images and motifs, and due to her living experience of many years in India, she combined the visual elements of these two close, yet different cultures and created her own Eastern style. She recreated Qajar portraits with much accuracy, as well as bright and vibrant colors (figure 3).

Farshid Shafi'ei (1968 – )<sup>16</sup> is another illustrator, who uses

Qajar portraits for his illustrations. Shafi'ei's approach is that of a painter; he creates his visual narration based on Qajar portraits and other Iranian miniatures.

He takes away the dull and static from the Qajar portraits and gives them a new life through the king's perspective in *One Thousand and One Nights*. His illustrations are not accurate reworks of portraits; he has merely used the ancient design of dress-code in his images (figure 4).

### Lithographed Images:

Print came to Iran in 1818. Of course the primary methods of printing did not allow the usage of images and decorations in books, but printing houses gradually managed to produce books with fine and beautiful images and decorations. These images were always in monochrome and were designed with simple lines. These same characteristics made the images quite interesting for graphic designers and illustrators; because they reflected old themes, while their simplicity and monochrome look made them appropriate for the modern

<sup>15</sup> Winner of IBBY HL 1994.

<sup>16</sup> Winner of IBBY HL 2006 and BIB Golden Apple 2007.



audience<sup>17</sup>. Many of the contemporary Iranian artists, illustrators, painters, costume designers, and graphic designers have used these images in their works<sup>18</sup>.

Farshid Mesghāli (1945 – )<sup>19</sup> is one of the first artists, who used lithographed images in his illustrations. Mesghāli used primitive copy machines to transfer lithographed images from microfilm to paper. One of the features of this method is that dark shades are moved to the margins of shapes/forms, while the center becomes gray or white. By cutting and putting together the pieces of these images, the final images are created and then colored. Using the images of different lithographed books with various visual features and qualities – from amateur to professional and from abstract to realistic – has given his illustrations a dismal, yet mythological and strange atmosphere, which helps elaborate on the text<sup>20</sup>. Mesghāli's approach can be considered bold, because he has combined these images with the least manipulation possible (figure 5).

Mohammad-Ali Bani-Asadi (1955 – )<sup>21</sup> is another illustrator who uses lithography in his art. He tries to use pieces of lithographed images and complete them with his own drawings. Lithographed images constitute a small part of his works and are sometimes hidden among colors and drawings. Nevertheless, his drawings are more than anything heavily influenced by the composition and drawing style of lithographed works (figure 6).

### Handicrafts:

Ancient Iranian hand crafts that mostly consist of functional items are an inspiration for illustrators. These items that were used by ancient Iranians for daily purposes– including lower and upper classes – have images and illustrations on them that show the artistic characteristics of the chronological and geographical aspects of their environment.

Nafiseh Riāhi (1944 – 2000) is one of the first illustrators, who used the images of functional items in her works. Considering the fact that the book belongs to the Sassanid era (224 – 651), Riāhi used images from metal dishes of that period. She tried to remain faithful to the motifs, aesthetic features, designs, and composition styles of these dishes and managed to accurately recreate these images with the use of the right techniques (figure 7).

Elham Asadi (1990 – ) is another illustrator, who uses functional items and handicrafts of Iran in her works. She uses bronze items from Lorestān (created in 3000 BC) as inspirational material. These items include armament, riding gear, and idols decorated with animal, plant, and human images. She also uses brownish hues and primitive drawing styles to create an ancient atmosphere in her works (figure 8).

17 For more information about Persian Lithographs see: Ulrich Marzolph, *Narrative Illustrations in Persian Lithographed Books*, Leiden, Boston, Köln, Brill, 2001.

18 For more information about the influence of lithographed images on contemporary artists, please see:

Ulrich Mrzolph, "Lithographic Illustrations of the Qajar Period as a Source of Inspiration for Contemporary Iranian Art, In *Amidst Shadow and Light, Contemporary Iranian Art and Artistes*, Liaoning Creative Press, 2011.

19 Winner of BIB Golden Apple 1973, HCA award 1974, 1<sup>st</sup> place of Graphic Prize Fiera di Bologna, 1969 and BIB Golden Plaque 1985.

20 For more information about Mesqāli's style see: Ali Boozari, "Āfarinesh be Shive-ye Mesqāli") Creation in Mesqāli's way(. *Khat Khati*. Vol.2, 2008: 62 – 72.

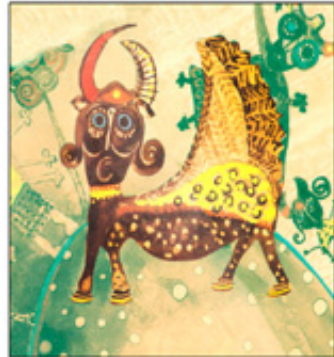
21 Nominee for the HCA award 2012.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



**Conclusion:**

In order to naturalize their images, Iranian illustrators have used multiple sources. These sources vary – including miniature (Negārgari), Qajar portraits, lithographed images, and Iranian handicrafts – but what is not changeable is the illustrators' efforts in creating an indigenous image. Illustrators have had different approaches to using the above-mentioned sources; some use only the composition and structure of the images, some go for an accurate rework, and some create their works using a collage of older images. It appears that this approach, which was created by the social changes and transformations of a certain period of time, has now become one of the main distinguished features of Iranian art of illustration.



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## Iku Dekune (Japan)



*In 1992 she graduated from the department of oil painting, specialisation graphics, at the Musashino Art University in Tokyo. In her art, she focuses primarily on illustrating children's books. She has illustrated many books in Japan. Her first book, her own fairy tale "The bath room" was published in 1994. In 2003 "Das Meerhäschen" (2001) was awarded the Grand Prix at the International Biennial of Illustration in Bratislava. In 2006 "Mascia and the white birds" was awarded Nihon ehon taisho (The Japan prize for picture books 2005). She has lived in Prague since 2002. She illustrated "Živá voda" (K.J.Erben, Albatrs), "Vánoční pošta" (Daniel Hevier, Práh) for Czech publishers.*

## Notes on the Development of Illustration to Fairy Tales by Karel Jaromír Erben published in Czech

Books by Karel Jaromír Erben were richly illustrated since the beginning of the previous century. They represent over a century of development of Czech and Slovak illustration art associated with the extensive works by an important Czech classical writer of the 19th century. I will focus on illustrations to his fairy tale collections. Covering all the many illustrators to all the books published is not possible and for that reason I will apply a sensitive and art-historical approach to make a selection that will present an awesome arch up to the contemporary illustration to Erben's *Živá voda* (*The Live Water*) which was edited by me and illustrated by artist Iku Dekune in 2011.

First of all, I would like to briefly introduce the works by Karel Jaromír Erben (1811 - 1870). He collected and wrote Slavic and Czech fairy tales, songs, ballads, riddles, magic formulas and published old Czech works and fable studies. As early as in the 1840s he started publishing fairy tales in the magazine *Česká včela* (one of the first was *Dobře tak, že je smrt na světě; It is Right That There is Death in the World*). He was a fan of the mythological etymology of fairy tales and reconstructed their written versions on the basis of two or three variants (*Zlatovláska* (*The Maiden with the Golden Hair*), *Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševěda* (*Three Hairs of the All-Knowing Old Man*), *Živá voda* (*The Live Water*) and more). He followed the examples of collecting and adapting done by the Grimm Brothers and was well knowledgeable of the German Mythology by Jacob Grimm. According to Erben, fairy tales include an on-going struggle between winter and spring, darkness and light, death and life which are symbolized by the dead ice and live flowing water.

The selection also includes examples of carols, riddles and songs from the monumental collection *Prostonárodní české*

*písňe a říkadla* (*Czech Folk Songs and Idioms*) (1864) and examples of Slavic fairy tales which Erben had published in the collection *Vybrané báje a pověsti národní jiných větví slovanských* (*Selected Myths of other Slavic Nations*) (1869), containing 90 translated and attuned tales and myths narrated in a fine language. Of the best known of Erben's work – *Kytice* (*A Bouquet*), first published as *Kytice z pověstí národních* (*A Bouquet of National Legends*) (1853), an extended issue under the title *Kytice z básní Karla Jaromíra Erbena* (*A Bouquet of Poems by Karel Jaromír Erben*) (1861), the selection includes three ballads, namely *Poklad* (*The Treasure*), *Svatební košile* (*The Wedding Camisole*) and *Vrba* (*The Willow*). *A Bouquet* is very often interpreted, put to music, filmed, painted and illustrated. Erben sought to uplift and preserve legends but in the end he produced a piece of a lasting artistic value. He did not manage to publish Czech fairy tales or complete his plans for further studies of the folk art in his lifetime but nevertheless he is the founder of Czech ethnology and a leading personality of the romantic period domestically and internationally. Erben's *České pohádky* (*Czech Fairy Tales*) were later published by Václav Tille (1905) and as a critical issue by Antonín Grund. *Kytice* (*A Bouquet*) has the most illustration cycles and artists have also frequently illustrated Erben's fairy tales.

Of the numerous illustrators I picked two from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Artuš Scheiner, an Art Nouveau artist with a focus on fairy tales and František Kobliha, a top-notch artist. What I consider exceptional art is the selection of illustrations by Ludmila Jiřincová to Erben's *Poklad* (*The Treasure*) (1958) and by Jiří Trnka whose Erben's fairy tales were published several times in the 40s, and then I will touch upon the multifaceted post-mortem book opus by Antonín



Strnadlo to *Pohádková kytice (A Bouquet of Fairy Tales)* of 1980.

Fruitful illustrators of Erben's fairy tales include Cyril Bouda who illustrated Erben's *České pohádky a báje (The Czech Fairy Tales and Legends)* as early as 1922, Václav Karel (*Mateřidouška vlasti naší milé, výbor z říkadel a pohádek, (The Thyme of Our Dear Homeland)* in 1956 and Josef Lada whose illustrated Erben's *Pohádky (Fairy Tales)* of 1953 are published until now. That list already indicates the status of Erben's works and, besides the tales by Božena Němcová, Erben's works are revisited by illustrators who apply various approaches. There is a certain interconnection and mutual development with Slovak illustration art. Erben's fairy tales were most recently illustrated by David Ursiny, whose representative selection entitled *Panna z jablíčka (The Apple Maiden, 2011)* included five well-known fairy tales and a Khod region fairy tale from Domažlice called *Jirka s kozou (Jirka with a Goat)*.

Fairy tale books were illustrated in the Czech lands since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that interest in belles-lettres was also related to a group of writers and artists, technological development, inventions and improvement in book printing. The group of Czech artists gathered around the *Moderní revue* magazine (1894) who "put emphasis on imagination and the psychological aspect of art, and by enhancing and intensifying the role of imagination in literature they discovered strong bonds of poetry and imagination with sensual and visual aspects".<sup>1</sup> Their organizing activities were intensified through the foundation of Spolek výtvarných umělců Mánes (Manes Association of Visual Artists) in 1887 and establishment of their own art magazine *Volné směry*

(1897). They implemented the "modern art concept" which involved growing cooperation with contemporary European, especially French art.<sup>2</sup> There were close mutual influences between Czech and German literary and visual art, their mood toward the "spiritual tendencies in the modern world cultures".<sup>3</sup> There are scores of excellent examples of their cooperation which attest to the mutual influences. As for our topic, a strong influence on the final version of art in book illustration was exerted by the representatives of symbolist poetry, including Karel Hlaváček who illustrated the works of authors in the *Moderní revue* magazine or accompanied his own verse, and Otokar Březina and Antonín Sova.

The opportunities opened up to illustrate books which then became artwork and nourished the desire for aesthetically balanced works of text and visual art. There was a meeting point for various styles, just like they were offered first by a decadent influence of the circle of artists around the *Moderní revue* magazine and the new charge of the decorative Art Nouveau. A representative of Art Nouveau illustration and also one of the best known artists is Artuš Scheiner (1863 - 1938) who started illustrating books quite early and produced a large collection of fairy tale illustrations. I will one more time refer to the *Volné směry* magazine in relation to the artist since a set of illustrated texts was published in its supplement in 1903 and five illustrations to the short story *Kikibius, kuchař pana Konráda z Dekameron* were made by Scheiner.<sup>4</sup>

Let us come back to the beginnings of his artwork. Scheiner was not a trained artist. He started working for

1 VLČEK, Tomáš: Malířství, kresba a grafika generace devadesátých let (Painting, Drawing and Graphics of the Nineties). In *Dějiny českého výtvarného umění. 4.2, 1890-1938*. Praha: Academia, 1998, p. 27

2 Ibid, p. 28

3 Ibid, p.77

4 The Supplement includes illustrations by Mikoláš Aleš, František Kupka, Jan Kotěra, Stanislav Sucharda and other artists. Viz STEHLÍKOVÁ, Blanka. *Cesty české ilustrace v knize pro děti a mládež. 1. vyd.* Praha: Albatros, 1984, p. 15





magazines such as *Světazor*, *Švanda dudák* and *Paleček* as a skilled drawer. Gradually he was focusing ever more on fairy tales and his love of decorativeness and his “inclination to Art Nouveau luxury was a certain complement to and a counterpart of the realistic drawing by Mikoláš Aleš”.<sup>5</sup> He started illustrating fairy tales and legend books at the beginning of the 1920s and went on doing so for over thirty years. He illustrated not only Erben’s fairy tales but also those by Božena Němcova, Václav Říha, H. C. Andersen, Hoffmann’s *Louskáček* (*The Nutcracker*) and *Slabikář* (*Primer*), made illustrations for children’s magazines and illustrated popular picture series such as the verses *O Kulihráškoví* (authored by Marta Voleská). The publishing house Dědictví Komenského published *Zlatovlaska* (*The Maid with the Golden Hair*) as the first volume of that edition in 1911 with 16 pages of original, richly illustrated glossy books. He kept cooperating on that edition and in the 1920s the first set of his illustrations (*České pohádky, Czech Fairy Tales, 1925–1926*) were published. At that time several fairy tale volumes were published with unifying illustrations by Artuš Scheiner (2009). *Zlatovláska* altogether contains eight illustrations of which two are spreads and present all of Scheiner’s Art Nouveau wit, namely decorated pages and drawings bringing the figures’ silhouettes to the forefront while for the sake of the story line while they also thrill the artist with humorous folk scenes. The background figures express surprise and joy in scenes such as when Jiří, the main character, comes back to life after the dead and live waters were used. In my presentation I will keep coming back especially to illustrations to the fairy tale *Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševěda* (*Three Hairs of the All-Knowing Old Man*) whose idea is known from ancient tales and also from newer

literary adaptation. The story has a mythological motif of an abandoned baby who was rescued from water, a poor boy whose destiny was to become a ruler’s heir. In the Czech alternative of the story he can earn the king’s daughter when he brings three golden hairs of the Old All-Knowing Man, who actually is the sun. It is interesting to see how individual illustrators handled that character. Artuš Scheiner perceived the sun as an old grumpy man having a conversation with his mother who asked questions every time she pulled a hair out – but the mother does not appear in the illustration. The room is represented realistically, with a cabinet for items of day-to-day use and a barrel in which our hero can hide.

Now let us look at almost a peer of Scheiner, namely František Kobliha (1877 - 1962), who was one of the younger symbolists of the Sursum group (1910 - 1912) who focused on the psychological and spiritual motifs of visual art. Kobliha was influenced by the mysterious lyrics of Karel Hlaváček and produced xylographs to both of his collections, and during that creative period he became the author of the famous images illustrating Mácha’s *Máj* (*May, 1910-1911*). His illustrations to Erben’s tales on that specific genre are an exception from his usual topics and usually are not included in the list of his works. The issue of Erben’s *Česke pohádky* (*The Czech Fairy Tales*) of 1919 is not important owing to the number of illustrations. František Kobliha made the frontispiece and decorative initials hinting at the principal fairy tale motif (a snake in the *Maiden with Golden Hair*) and at the end of each fairy tale there is a miniature wood engraving. In the *Three Golden Hairs of the All-Knowing Old Man* the final drawing represents a boat with an eternal ferryman who gives a piece of garment to the old king seeking youth and wealth, and that motif resembles Charon, the underworld ferryman.

It seems like we skipped a long period of Erben’s illustrated fairy tales but interest in them was very much alive. We have

5 HOLEŠOVSKÝ, František. K jubileu ilustrátora dětské knihy z počátku století (On the Anniversary of a Children’s Books Illustrator of the Beginning of the Century), *Zlatý máj*, 1984, roč. 28, č. 2, s. 74.



to mention Trnka's illustrations. In World War II, while our land was occupied, Jiří Trnka (1912-1969), laureate of Hans Christian Andersen Awards (IBBY), illustrated Erben's fairy tales twice. The first set is from 1940, the year when his unforgettable pen drawings of the Bugs to Jan Karafiát's book were published, and the other set is from the last year of the war (1945). His selection of Czech and Slavic fairy tales published under the title *Erbenovy pohádky (Erben's Fairy Tales, 1945)* is interesting. He made color drawings which have an engraved background and are rich in several story scenes such as the composition representing the boy rescued from water in search of three golden hairs who is being guided by an old lady, a Fate, guiding him on his way to the All-Knowing Old Man. There also is a picture with the boy riding his horse and arriving to the ferryman with a glittering golden castle in the far horizon with the head of the sun shining on it, who actually is the All-Knowing Old Man as if he is watching all the story action.

Another illustrator of Erben's works is Ludmila Jiřincová (1912-1994), an important Czech graphic artist in whose illustrations "a role is played by symbols and romantic style with its fundamental lyrical mysteriousness".<sup>6</sup> She produced illustrations to the selection *Poklad (Treasure, 1958)*, with a title taken from one of Erben's ballads. It includes a collection of ballads – *A Bouquet*, Slavic and Czech fairy tales, poems, and Erben's correspondence. The *Maiden with the Golden Hair* is only accompanied with a fine black and white drawing of a maiden who could live in any time but the full-spread, softly colored painting to the *Three Hairs* represents an old lady with her human-like son in her lap at the moment when she is going through his hair. The entire set of sixteen

full-spread illustrations to fairy tale motifs hides the deepest desires and wishes of the characters.

Antonín Strnadel (1910-1975), born in the Walachia region, was a painter and illustrator whose works went beyond that region's inspiring folk art. Fairytales, fables and historical topics prevailed in his works. He was a master of a wide array of techniques including graffiti, glass painting, tapestries and other large-size works. He worked on Erben's illustrations for almost a decade and they were published five years after his death as a concise work *Pohádková kytice (A Fairy Tale Bouquet)*. The book included an epilogue by Jan Tomeš evaluating the overall contribution of Strnadel to Czech illustration from its beginnings at the end of the 1930s till the end of his life when he concluded his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague under Professor Max Švabinský. He chose color collages finished with various techniques and different materials for illustrations to Erben's fairy tales. Jan Tomeš added "And in the technique of collages from color, transparent and printed paper, complemented with drawing, pastel colors, charcoal, painting, pieces of golden thread and a surprising artistic skill. Just look at the profile of the Maiden with Golden Hair, the streams of hair with several shades of golden paper..."<sup>7</sup> We can have another look at the introductory illustration to *Three Golden Hairs of the All-Knowing Old Man* and see circles of the sun containing three pairs of eyes, the eyes of a child, a man and an old man, and then we can see a figure flying over the sun indicating that the All-Knowing Old Man and sun are split up and three golden rays run between them. The next spread represents twelve horses in a row covered with canvas on one side and a shining load on their other side. The reader has no doubt about the end of

6 HOLEŠOVSKÝ, František. *Čeští ilustrátoři v současné knize pro děti a mládež (Czech Illustrators to Contemporary Books for Children and Youth)*. 1. vyd. Praha: Albatros, 1989, s. 136

7 Jan Tomeš: *Malá studie o Antonínu Strnadlovi (A Little Study on Antonín Strnadel)* In ERBEN, Karel Jaromír. *Pohádková kytice. Ilustrace Antonín Strnadel*. Vybral a jazykově upravil Rudolf Lužík. Praha: Albatros, 1984, s. 382

the fairy tale when she or he looks at the last spread: we can see the leg of the escaping ferryman and the surprised king in the boat who from then on will have to wait for someone to whom to pass the eternal ore.

This brings us to the selection called *Živá voda* (*Live Water*, 2011) illustrated by Iku Dekune, a Japanese illustrator who studied graphics at Musashino Art University of Tokyo and has lived in Prague since 2002. Her illustrations are acclaimed in Japan and worldwide. She was granted the Grand Prix BIB 2003 at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava for her illustrations to the fairy tale *Das Meerhäschen* by the Grimm Brothers. Iku Dekune likes testing out new visual art techniques, for example she used a medieval distemper and oil color technique to illustrate *Mascia and the White Bird* (*Divoké labutě*) by Mikhail Bulatov that was awarded the title The Most Beautiful Book of 2005 in Japan. The distemper drawings by Iku Dekune guide us to the fairy tale with a drawing of Sisters Fate whose transparent gowns and soft expression indicate that certainly something extra-natural is going on. Tiny drawings are on every page: a basket with a baby in it, the main characters such as the king submitting a letter to the young man with instruction for his execution, and we can see how that letter is replaced by another one by an old lady, one of the Sisters Fate. The fairy tale has two leading compositions, namely a spread with the All-Knowing Old Man represented as a semi-human as his head looks like the sun with golden rays and is the only image of the character where he is not an old man, with a wondering look, and the barrel whose contours indicate that there is a human hiding in it. The double spread with twelve white and black stallions and the treasure, the young hero riding a white horse, is essential. The painting makes clear that the character and his treasure are coming from somewhere very far and that is something we have not yet captured in our central European illustrations. There is an ocean and distant silhouette

of a castle. In the conclusion the king is leaving towards the distant horizons in search of youth and immortality and that is the end as represented in the illustration by Iku Dekune.

May this account of illustrations to Erben's fairy tales be inspiring for you. It was an unbelievably exciting adventure for me as I realized that illustrations have the capacity to keep unveiling yet new ways of perceiving the text even though it may just be a "fairy tale".

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Zlatovláska,  
Artuš Scheiner,  
1911



Tři zlaté vlasy, Artuš Scheiner, 1914



frontispis České pohádky, František Kobliha, 1919



Zlatovláska, František Kobliha, 1919



Tři zlaté vlasy, František Kobliha, 1919



Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševeda, Ludmila Jiřincová, 1958



Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševeda, Antonín Strnad, 1980



Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševeda, Jiří Trnka, 1945



## “The Live Water” – Illustrating selected fairy tales by Karel Jaromír Erben

When I received the offer from the art editor of the Albatros publishing house I was very surprised and excited. That was my first cooperation with a Czech publisher despite my nine years already spent in the Czech Republic. I was approached as the spirit of my illustrations to the Russian fairy tale “*Mascia and the White Bird*” (*Husy divohusy*) by Mikhail Bulatov, which I made for a Japanese publisher in 2005, matched the world of Karel Erben’s works.

The selection “*Živá voda*” (*The Live Water*) includes several fairy tales and three ballads from the collection of poems “*Kytice*” (*A Bouquet*). There were several friends of mine who claimed they were traumatized when they had to read *A Bouquet* in their childhood. *A Bouquet* is a piece that looks at the world in a peculiarly dark and heavy way. There is the story of a mother who almost lost her child because of her

desire to be rich, the story of a young woman when the spirit of her friend who died in war appears in front of her and wants to kidnap her to his afterlife world, and similar stories. Works such as these that capture the darker aspects of human souls are rather rare in books in the modern Czech land.

When I read those ballads for the first time, it occurred to me that they had something in common with Japanese fairy tales. There are quite a lot of Japanese fairy tales which depict negative human emotions such as hatred, jealousy and revenge. Japanese people tend to like melancholic stories. I also am interested in works that dig deep into people’s thoughts. *A Bouquet* made a strong impression on me, especially with its melancholy. I found my illustrating job very interesting and exciting. Later on I could express *A Bouquet* using different and varied manners.



Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševeda,  
Iku Dekune 2011



Tři zlaté vlasy 2, Iku Dekune, 2011



Tři zlaté vlasy3, Iku Dekune

Every illustrator who reads Erben's fairy tales, especially the "Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševěda" (*Three Golden Hairs of the All-Knowing Old Man*) may be inspired with several interesting images. The story is not just an interesting fairy tale but is a story that encourages and provokes the imagination of illustrators. The *All-Knowing Old Man* is the sun who rises as a baby in the morning, is an adult man at noon and goes back home as an old man in the evening. Many artists illustrated that specific image and I also very much wanted to illustrate it. I illustrated a scene from *The Live Water* fairy tale for the cover, which is also the title of the selection. The illustration, however, was rather dark and that is why the final pick for the cover was an illustration to the *All-Knowing Old Man*. I think that was a good decision. The scene with the main character leading the 12 white and 12 black horses loaded with treasures at the black ocean was very provocative to my imagination and I have to admit, this was one of the most challenging illustrations to the selection.

Erben often wrote about Czech customs and traditions. *The Live Water* selection includes couple of them. I am very

much interested in Czech folk customs and traditions. The killing of the goddess of death is my favorite tradition. I am pleased that I found a story of the killing of the goddess in this selection.

At the end of winter children parade and sing across the village and hold up a straw doll called Morena. When they reach a river outside of the village they light the straw Morena on fire and toss it into the water. Morena symbolizes death or winter. The ritual means that death = winter has come to an end and new life = spring is welcomed. That is a very poetic and awesome tradition that impressed me so much that now I travel across the Czech lands to watch and get inspiration. I illustrated *The Live Water* just as what I really saw of that tradition in Moravia.

There are people everywhere who seek to maintain beautiful and important traditions and customs. I want to thank those people for what they do. For me it is a great honor that I had the opportunity to somewhat contribute through my illustration to maintaining a tradition in the Czech lands.

## Renáta Fučíková (Czech Republic)



*She studied at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague in the Illustration and Applied Graphics Department. She illustrates books, adapts classical stories into comic strips, designs stamps and in recent years has also authored picture books about the history and lives of outstanding personalities. She has received numerous domestic and international awards and was included in IBBY's list of honor and nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. She has illustrated fairy tales (Grimm Brothers, Hans Christian Andersen, Oscar Wilde as well as Chinese, Celtic and Arabic fairy tales), the Chronicles of Narnia by C. S. Lewis, Staré pověsti české a moravské (Old Legends of the Czech and Moravian Lands) by A. Ježková, Příběhy českých knížat a králův (Stories of Czech Princes and Kings) by A. Ježková, Moj mír, Cesta pravého krále (The Trip of the True King) by R. Štulcová, Vianoce (Christmas) by J. Krček, Krajinu domova (Homeland) by V. Čilek and many more stories.*

## Come and hear old legends

“Come and hear old legends. Hear about our forefathers, our ancestors, how they arrived in these lands and settled along the rivers Elbe and Vltava and other streams in this land. Hear what has been preserved from the darkness of old ages, what has been preserved from the tales of the previous generations of people who bent their knees to gods in the twilight of old forests and who brought their sacrifices to springs in tacit wells, lakes and rivers and the holy live flames.”

This was the beginning of the introduction to the Czech literary work that has become a traditional, integral part of instruction at schools. The author, Alois Jirásek, compiled this mosaic of myths, legends and tales and called it “Staré pověsti české” (Old Czech Legends). The book originated as an echo to a century's period of art in which the Czech people were seeking their national revival. Linguists were rescuing the national language while historians were working hard to identify any event of importance to underpin the awareness of the people who were losing their ethnic identity under the Habsburg Central European Empire that consisted of many ethnic groups and states. This was a period that experienced a patriotic upsurge and enthusiasm, searching for one's roots, and logically, also resulted in many errors and self-deception.

Jirásek's legends were published at a time when illustration was an expected and integral part of books for children and youth. The legend's first illustrator, Věnceslav Černý, faced a challenging task: make the most persuasive possible visual representation of the dawn of Czech national history. While Jirásek could support his writing with authentic texts of old chronicles and legends, the illustrator could only produce illustrations following up on rather recent history's romantic and idealizing works.

Painter Josef Mánes was the most prominent predecessor of Věnceslav Černý and one of the first artists who started reconstructing historical traditions in the 19th century. He travelled across Moravia and Slovakia and made sketches



of working and festive clothes and costumes of peasants. His attention was attracted to embroidered decorated coats, hairdos and head covers. He used some of these elements in his calendar of the Prague astronomical clock.

Other artists followed the example of Mánes and patriotic issues were almost a holy mission for them. The most distinguished and outstanding painter and illustrator, in addition to Mánes and Černý, was Mikoláš Aleš who had an influence on the visual idea of the image of the oldest Czech history. He produced an unbelievably large number of illustrations, sketches, drawings, frescoes and pictures on that topic. He designed, for example, lunettes for the foyer of the Prague National Theatre which was then the expression and materialization of Czech re-discovered self-awareness. The foyer was decorated by another painter, Josef Ženíšek.

Where did those artists draw inspiration for such important work? In the country, above all. The topic was Czech history but we can see elements of Carpathian and Balkan folklore in their art and also motifs taken from Germanic and Celtic artifacts. The painters considered them to be Slavonic despite being several centuries or even a thousand years older. That gave rise to a mix of elements whose actual value can be compared to a combination of an Egyptian sphinx and Assyrian bull. That was a common approach to handling historical material in the 19th century. Let us just mention the imperial style: heterogeneous units were put together and resulted in an impressive whole.

The figures in the pictures were represented with the then ideal: women were supposed to be plump and have red cheeks; men had to look strong and mature. One cannot laugh over that kind of stylization now as the images were made out of an earnest effort to create an impressive image of the history of the Czech people.

The question, though, is what can be caused by errors which then turn into a tradition. Let us have a closer look at the meaning of the expression 'tradition'. It means 'handing

over', 'passing on', and of course, we refer to passing on the best of the best, namely values and patrimony. The word 'tradition' is also used in another context, namely when we want refer to an established, generally acknowledged value. At that moment it is perhaps more appropriate to use the expression 'conventional' which means 'mutually agreed'.

Patriotically-tinged representation of the oldest Slavonic history of the Czech lands became traditional and subsequently conventional in a matter of a couple decades at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The image of the old Czechs was conventionally fixed and no one dared picture Prince Přemysl, the legendary founder of the Czech ruling dynasty, in a way other than as a strong man with braids and moustache, wearing a canvas camisole and a wide belt. And another example of an error: a pagan idol which had been created by Mikoláš Aleš, perhaps to the image of Germanic buckle, with sun-rays like arms.

Archeology now has knowledge of what the clothes of early medieval Czech noblemen looked like and they were quite similar to clothes worn by Frank nobility. We also know that statues of Slavonic deities were simple posts with faces on them.

No one dared change the established way of representing things in book illustrations for many decades. The convention had taken deep roots and turned into a cliché. It ruled over many following issues of the "Old Czech Legends" and also their paraphrasing and is included in modern textbooks for literature, national history and science. Illustrators of those books, perhaps because they had no courage or because it was comfortable for them, kept reiterating the visual opinions of the 19th century patriots.

The untrustworthy cliché of illustration now condemns Jirásek's legends to ridicule. The book is on the list of mandatory literature titles but children read it based on coercion. Patulous and archaic expressions in Jirásek's narratives hamper readers from fully perceiving the beauty of the old

legends which can be duly compared to the stories of King Arthur's Knights or Scandinavian Vikings.

This unfair omen of Czech myths provoked me some years ago to offer one of the major Czech publishers a project that would bring modern readers a captivating and historically-true way of presenting the climate at the time of the origin of the Czech state. I was really lucky that I met Alena Ježková, a writer with similar thoughts.

It took a couple months of hard work, struggling through the twists and turns of respective legends. Alena added a brief description of the historical background and lifestyle of those times. I tried to capture the world of the oldest Czechs in the truest possible way.

These veristic illustrations are the result of our effort. Double pages and full pages represent not only events from the legends such as love affairs, disputes and wars but also the climate of festive occasions and day-to-day work, the structure and interior equipment of dwellings, and seasons of the year in a Central European country. These historical details were not just a background for me to represent the legends. To the contrary, I used the action in the stories to present the early medieval world in the truest possible way.

I studied many up-to-date historical publications on that period of our history. In my illustrations early Czech noblemen and noblewomen are wearing appropriate clothes and jewels of that time. Their image is somewhere in between the antique style and top middle ages. I also made use of my old passion for historical textile material and national folklore but I used those elements with prudence. I used them to frame large-size illustrations while the small-size ones were interlinked with artifacts complementing the meaning of the illustrations.

This publication, originating in that way eight years ago, has won a solid position in schools. The book's intention was not expelling and replacing the classic versions of Jirásek's works. Stories that can easily compete with fantasy bestsellers and de-

serve to be filmed speak to people at least from the pages of a book. Neither of us authors sought to compete with the great authors of Czech books, we just felt a strong inner need to offer readers a modern alternative to the traditional historical stories.

There is certain paradox and also the point to my story – I revisited the topic this year:

I processed a piece of the mosaic of Czech legend, the stories of St. Ludmila and St. Wenceslaus, in the most responsible way. My work on the text and illustrations, after I had corrected the established errors once again, managed to progress farther than eight years ago. I somewhat shifted the visual perception as well. In this book I pay homage to medieval illuminations and simultaneously show Prague to young readers to give them an idea what it really looked like in the 10th century.

Tradition is valuable and has to be passed on. An honest processing of common experience and memories is its essence. Tradition then may become an inexhaustible source, an inspiration for work and more profound studies, or just for simple interest in our roots.





STARÉ  
POVĚSTI  
ČESKÉ





## Lubomír Krátky (Slovak Republic)



*He studied at the Graphic Art Vocational School in Prague in 1957 and also studied typography at the Illustration Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. He focuses primarily on graphic design of books and calligraphy and works as a graphical designer for several Slovak and Czech publishing houses. More than eighty of his books have received awards for graphical design in Czechoslovak and Slovak competitions for The Most Beautiful Book. He also has received several other awards such as the Silver Medal at the Biennial Brno (1988), the Bronze Medal at IBA Leipzig (1977, 1982, 1980), and the Award of the Minister of Culture SR for calligraphy for the bibliophilic book Daniel (2000). He lives and works in Bratislava.*

## Illustration for children's books and graphical design

Many children's books are published every year. We now pay attention to illustration, something that it certainly deserves. We are pleased to review these illustrations and we grant awards to artists for their accomplished works. Illustration alone, however, is not the only guarantee of the aesthetic quality of a book.

A book is an artwork that consists of several components that are inter-related and inter-dependent, and there is not a single factor that has more preference than others. Graphical design plays a significant role in producing a book as it organizes all components into a single, harmonious whole. It takes care of the right interplay between the text and illustrations. Book illustrations play their role well if their setting and inclusion in the book is right.

Book illustration completes the literary, verbal text, adding a visual perception to it. Modern books, the way we know them, have the sheets bound together on one side within the backbone of the book so that we can comfortably turn the pages and perceive the text in parallel with its illustrations. That is important so that individual components of the book are arranged into a smooth, harmonious whole.

Illustration is not a free-standing piece of fine art since it must be inspired by the literary text and therefore it is an integral part of the book it was made for.

Progress in printing technology has contributed to massive dissemination and development of illustration for children's books. Illustration was no longer dependent on laborious artistic techniques, was no longer confined to monochromatic print and hence new graphical procedures appeared and books could hold many more illustrations – their shapes became more intricate and more visible and assertive against the area of the text and the rectangular shape of book pages.

Innovation in the creative work also brought about new arrangements. Illustrators sometimes got the impression that their illustrations were the most important thing for a book and the rest of the components were supposed to be subordinate to them. The value priorities have changed and the aesthetic principles of book struc-



ture in place until then were shaken. Practices that were applied for years by typographers, with exquisite skill and a sense of the visual aspect, at the printing houses were no longer enough for the good organization of a book's components. That is how the work of a book designer came into existence.

Graphic designers coordinate all visual and technical aspects of a book as a whole. They must understand the script, typographic aspects, the aesthetics of a specific book, and book printing methods.

Graphical design is the essential factor in the creative book-making process. It is often compared to an architect's job. As a matter of fact, a book is a structure. But there is a significant difference between creative processes involved in graphical design and other creative processes. Not all illustrators are attracted to this kind of visual art but it is useful for them to at least know the principles of the task.

An illustrator needs to have an idea of where the illustration will be positioned in the double page, against what background made up of the sheet and the text, and remember that including and positioning an illustration on a book page may often have the most important role in the final impression the book makes. An illustrator also must plan how many and how big the illustrations will be, and all those things are purposeful actions, because additional adjustments to the dimensions of already finished illustrations may significantly change their visual image.

Professor Albin Brunovsky, well known to all as an outstanding illustrator, was very well aware of how important it is for the illustrator to know the essentials of book design and to that end he used to invite experts to his illustration department to give presentations on typography, graphic design and book printing. He did the same thing as well when he conducted workshops organized by BIB on a regular basis.

Let us come back to the principles of graphic book design.

The principles of book-making have been carried over through centuries as a tradition in the noblest spirit of humanism but they are not a straightjacket and there is no reason to be afraid of them.

A designer must be creative but also needs to possess a deeply-rooted essence of those rules as they guide her/him to pick the right choices that are in the interest of both contemporary books and their readers.

A double page is the building block of a book. The principle is to compose two opposite pages.

The illustration and the text must act as a single whole. There are no limitations in choices of script in our era of digitalized typesetting but it becomes more challenging for the job of the designer who is a true professional who wants to make the right choices. The myriad possibilities entail a temptation to use fashionable kinds of letters, of various sizes, boldness or color. But a small and inexperienced reader does not have fun reading this kind of text; it is rather hard work cracking the riddle of unusually-shaped letters, be they outline, negative, plastic, ornamental, or look-alike letters. In children's books with usually large-sized letters, these kinds of practices are rather disturbing to the reader.

A book always has to make a good first impression because a book must not look like a magazine with too many colors or of poor taste. A book with quality text is not intended to be used just for a single read.

Children's literature is specific and is intended for the categories of the youngest and the older, more experienced readers alike. These groups have different levels of perception and that has to be taken into account by a graphical designer above all.

Graphical design plays an irreplaceable role in the process of book-making for children. The illustration and literary works become a book artwork.

The graphics designer is responsible for the entire structure of a book, from the cover to all its introductory components, through to its concluding sections. Various degrees of laboriousness may be involved but what is always needed is concurrence between the illustrator and the designer. Working on a book involves team work. The goal of their effort always has to be a perfect book, a piece of art.

Lubomir Kratky  
Slovakia



## Illustration in Children's Books and Graphical Design

Let me now show a couple of examples of children's books that will help us better understand the principles of graphical design.

Books for the youngest readers typically have many illustrations that break up the text and pose a challenge to the graphical designer.



The graphical layout of this book is in line with traditional graphical design principles. The text area in the page is situated at the smallest distance from the backbone of the book so that it has optical integrity of a whole in the double-page spread. That intention is underpinned with a blue-black double line with the page numbering at the headline. Every fairy tale starts with initials of the size of three text lines and it deliberately is black with just soft red ornament to avoid challenging the colors of the illustrations.

The illustration is always situated in the bottom portion of the page. To avoid a stereotypical impression from a double-page spread, the title of the book also appears in blue on even pages. There is a small decorative illustration as a counterbalance on the right of odd-numbered pages. The headline above the double line is printed in tiny italics and it is only on odd-numbered pages. The overall book project has to be thought over in detail to make it work well for inclusion of the text and illustrations in every double-page spread.

The text area in this book is a little narrow to make room for smaller illustrations along the edges. The illustrations reach into the margin and give dynamic freshness to the plain black text. The typographic text, together with unprinted white pages, becomes their stage.



The right side page illustration is inserted into just a couple lines of text to let its full power work. An appropriate siting of illustrations in a double-page spread gives the impression of integrity, one of the principles of book composition.



For the next two examples a text dummy of the book was produced before illustration. The publisher wanted illustrations on each page. The typographic text used one-size letters to let the dynamic and colorful illustrations get deserved attention against a uniform text area.



Various restricting requirements that may arise in book production do not have to be trouble for the artist; to the contrary, they may be a challenge for his or her inventiveness. The ingenious mastery of the artist yielded illustration compositions that make a unique whole with the text.



A comprehensive visual story in the double-page spread of the book is the result of the graphical designer's composition of text with illustrations that give life to those illustrations.



In this double-page spread the designer made a single story out of two illustrations. The character is looking through binoculars above the text into which the illustration was sunk. The illustration is only several lines deep so that it still has enough room to breathe and be optically connected with the opposite illustration.



Text in two columns resembles a magazine layout but it saves room on the page of the book. That kind of restriction does not mean a halt to creativity in graphical design. We can see that the designer found a good spot in the illustration to make a witty inter-connection to the typographic text. The illustration has become an integral part of the text and regardless of the narrow room between the columns it still is free to walk in its own right.



# ■ Ľubomír Krátky



Working on a book with a more intricate structure is a more interesting challenge and responsibility for a designer. The relationships between text and illustrations are organized in detail by the designer. This calls for a more profound knowledge of the meaning and hierarchy of the texts in order to be able to give them a correct graphical interpretation within the book. Prose and verse have their given form but they can be given a typographical shape in a book that brings them in harmony with illustrations.



Text in verse provides a good opportunity for creativity. The typographic style used in these texts is usually bigger and for that reason it must be perfectly drawn, easy to read and match the illustrations.



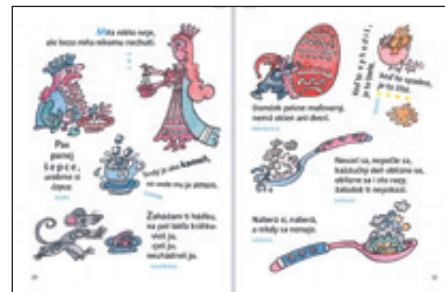
Graphical design with an appropriate formatting of an illustration and inclusion into the book permits the visual action and story to unfold in a double-page spread, making it into a stage that intensifies the power of the illustration.



This kind of literature gives more room for creativity in typography. Letters can be colored, as or if needed, as long as it does not hamper readability and if it matches the illustrations. We frequently have to view illustrations as living organisms and assign them the right living area in the text.



Let us notice how a simple illustration got new life when the typography looked like legs. On the opposite page the various sizes and colors of the letters make the page playful and help make a matching composition of text and illustration.



Even if there are illustrations to a variety of topics, the double-page spread must be composed as a single whole. The formatting of the illustration must be thought over well and the composition should be playful, even poetic. Adding color initials of a small calligram may be useful. In the conclusion let me give a couple of examples of perhaps a rather unfortunate way that the graphical designer handled the task. Poor examples are the best display of where and how the expression of the book illustration was disturbed.





This book is over-colored. The text along the edges, page numbers and headings are all in color. A lot of color does not necessarily express a joyful mood. Here colors rather spoil the illustrations.



In this example the illustration was embedded into too many lines. That is an example of insensitive approach to both the illustration and the text.

Graphical design is a matter of perfect harmony of all book components. That is true especially in books for children.

My brief comments to several examples of pages of books were intended to draw your attention to issues of graphical design and to also emphasize that graphical design must always participate directly in the process of making children's books.

Ľubomír Krátky, Slovakia



## Steffen Larsen (Denmark)



*He studied history for several years and worked as a children's literature reviewer for a leading Danish paper beginning in 1972. Currently he works for Politiken, the top cultural paper in Denmark and also writes for specialized journals such as Børn & Bøger (children & books). He gave numerous presentations on children's literature for librarians, teachers and other experts and wrote two books, in addition to many papers for journals. He has been a member of the Danish IBBY Section and has been a regular BIB participant. He served as a member of the BIB 2005 jury and a member of the jury at TI in Tallinn and organized an exhibition of Iranian illustrators in Denmark. He participated in the BIB Symposium several times.*

## Identity Today: The National Cultural Identity of Illustration in the Time of Globalization

Once upon a time there was a kingdom in the far north. (1.) The inhabitants were dressed in old fashioned clothes the women were wearing headscarfs the men were wearing wooden shoes and people were living in half-timbered houses with thatched roofs. The world was full of fairy tales and ducks with small ducklings - and they were not ugly all of them. (2.-4.) The painters painted the beautiful landscapes with green grass and summer all year round except for christmas when snow were silently falling on happy children.

So it was until some decades ago. A few painters and illustrators keep the spirit high even today and proceeds making pictures long time after these pitoresque scenery has vanished. If it has ever existed. (5.) As we all know: The past is often just a dream getting nicer as time goes by. Or as our great philosopher Soren Kierkegaard – who has 200 anniversary this year – has learnt us: Life is lived forwards but is understood backwards. So it is also with the concept of "national identity".

I cannot think of any of the 11 Danish contributions to this year's BIB that is representative of a certain national identity. One of the artist is even born in Poland. If you must try to find a clue however there is one special book illustrated by Otto Dickmeiss called "The Fox Trap". (6.) It also won the Ministry of Culture's great prize this year. It is the second time the artist is awarded this way. And it has something about it that could be said to be Danish. An innocent, melancholic solemnity. Or is it Central European? At least you can find part of it there!

For many years Danish illustratores has worked with figures disconnected from the solid ground. Most of them also draw people (children) with super-sieze heads. Big eyes. Big mouth. (7.) Is it special Danish? No it is not. But you could find something in "The Fox Trap" that is different from this type of illustration and perhaps you could argue that here is



a kind of national identity. Otto Dickmeiss's heads are big. But they have a solemnity about them that is – I think – not a traditional Danish mood! But with him it is. We are normally a happy-go-lucky kind of people. But we could be serious if the luck vanishes and the plate is empty.

To be brief: "The Fox Trap" is a story about revenge and sadness. When the fox takes the boy's rabbit the father just says: "Oh, I'll buy you another", but the boy wants to take revenge. He is crying. (8.) And he steals his father's gun and shoots everybody he meets that looks like a fox or could have been present when the rabbit was killed. (9.) At last – of course – the boy turns into a fox himself. (10.) You will always end up being what you hate! Then the boy-fox is caught and exposed by a group of travelling entertainers. People come at look at the fox and says: "What an ugly animal". (11.) Everybody says that except another child who stays with the fox and although the fox is growling at him the boy is caressing the animal. (12.) Then because of friendship and childish understanding – almost love – the fox is transformed back to the boy he used to be.

There is the same kind of seriousness about Otto Dickmeiss's heads that you will also find in the faces created by the great Dusan Kallay. Dusan Kallay and Otto Dickmeiss! (Did they ever meet?) But there is a difference. In my study I have several poster hanging on the wall from Kallays Alice-book. And I love them! They remind me of the world of yesterday. (13.) Of all the things we lost – and may never find again. Otto Dickmeiss does the same, but where Kallays expressions are neutral, emotionless the Danish illustrator combines them with a sadness and a melancholic look and he attaches it to our national genetic code. Is it right? I do not know, but there is something special about this book. (14.)

"The Fox Trap" is also special in a sense, that it is black and white illustrations in four colours. How come? It is because

the artists think that using green, red, blue and yellow in the originals gives the pictures a depth and a fur-like surface. And right he is! I guess an illustrator like Dusan Kallay has several of these technical secrets in his artistic sleeves. And we do not need to know all of them. Go and look at the pictures from "The Fox Trap" at the exhibition and you will see what I mean.

So the message is: There is no national identity anymore. Is it sad? No. Because it is an open question if there was ever one. Look at these books (presented at the exhibition):

Rasmus Bregnhøj is a well known guest at BIB. He normally works at the computer. And you can always recognize his style. (15.) Not because his figures mostly have big heads and big eyes wide open. (7.) It is the way they have big heads and big eyes. It is interesting that Rasmus Bregnhøj can add personality when venturing into the photoshop. But that does not make him Danish.

Look at Lilian Brøgger – winner of a golden apple in 2005 – she is unique. (16-17.) But not more unique than she has colleagues sharing her visions in Denmark and foreign countries. They are all members of the "United Surrealistic Hearts Club's Band". And they can live in both Iran and Argentina – as they do, actually.

And Pia Halse – to mention yet another member of this "club". (18-19.) She is more friendly than Lilian Brøgger but she has the same feeling of a world flying and tumbling around separated from the solid ground. I once saw an artist from South Korea – I forgot her name – who made almost exactly pictures in this mood.

Kamila Slocinska was born in Waszaw but she lives in Denmark. (20-21.) She portrays loneliness which is a global feeling and mistreatment that happens everywhere and she does it in a way that is understandable to children all over the world. Not in harsh scenes and colours but as banal as it often is. Grey. Grey. And Grey.

So it is. Facebook. Twitter. And globalization makes the



# ■ Steffen Larsen

world smaller and ourselves more alike. But this does not mean we shall be bored and stop being innovative. It means we shall do it together and meet sometimes on the internet or here in lovely Bratislava to share our images of the world around us. And see how recognizable things can be.

So I will now return to rural, innocent Denmark and its half-timbered houses with tatched roofs where the scenery is full of magic tales and ducks with small ducklings. (1.) And that is a fact – as our great storyteller Hans Christian Andersen says. That is a fact!

PS

(You may argue that this particular fairy tale giant in his language is representing a national identity of the Danish people. So we hope at least. I am not sure myself. But this a another story – as he himself would put it. This is another story.)

### Biography

Steffen Larsen (born 1943) has been a critic of children’s literature in Denmark for several decades. He is currently writing for the newspaper Politiken and also contributes to sev-

eral magazines. He gives many lectures for librarians about new books. In 2005 Steffen Larsen was a member of the international BIB-jury. He has written and translated several books. The latest is a rewriting for young people together with Liselotte Wiemer of Martin Luther King’s story about the Montgomery bus-boycott (1955-56).

- 1. Ib Spang Olsen portraying Hans Christian Andersen as a child
- 2.-4.: Ib Spang Olsen illustrations from The Ugly Duckling
- 5. Charlotte Pardi: We Live in the Flower Neighborhood, vol. 4
- 6.: Rasmus Bregnhøi: I am Looking and Looking and Looking ...
- 7-12.: Otto Dickmeiss: The Fox Trap
- 13.: Dusan Kallay: Illustration from Alice in Wonderland
- 14: Otto Dickmeiss: The Fox Trap
- 15: Rasmus Bregnhøi: I am Looking and Looking and Looking ...
- 16-17.: Lilian Brøgger: Fresh Fish Rhymes
- 18-19.: Pia Halse: Tork and Horse
- 20-21.: Kamila Slocinska: The Hound Dog



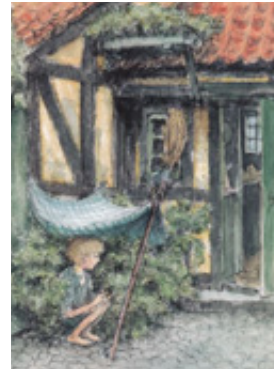
Pic. 1



Pic. 2



Pic. 3



Pic. 4



Pic. 5



Pic. 6



Pic. 11



Pic. 15



Pic. 19



Pic. 7

Pic. 8



Pic. 12



Pic. 16



Pic. 20



Pic. 9



Pic. 13



Pic. 17



Pic. 10



Pic. 14



Pic. 18



Pic. 21



## Bjørn Ousland (Norway)



*He studied at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in the U.S.A and is an illustrator and author of children's books. He has illustrated about thirty-five books and authored thirteen of them. His books have been translated into seven languages and his works have been granted several awards.*

## My Norwegian cultural identity

For being such a small country Norwegian Children's book illustrations have gained recognition for being exiting and eksperimental with illustrators winning international prizes, like two recent BolognaRagazzi Awards.

On the other hand, an Italian publisher that was speaking on a symposium in Norway recently described the "Nordic style" as being depressive, not pretty, with muted colours, and concluded that Scandinavian illustrations could not be used in southern Europe.

So, are there anything special about Norwegian illustrators? Do we have anything in common? Is there a cultural identity?

I am not sure if I am competent to answer. Being an illustrator with my nose in my originals, I have not had that much time to compare and conclude. Instead I will look back at my own career, and see how being a Norwegian has influenced my illustrations.

Starting out as a comic book artist, I definitely did not want to have a "Norwegian" style nor having a desire to be influenced by Norwegian culture. Early influences were French and Belgian comics, while my studies were at Joe Kubert's Cartooning School in the US.

Trying hard to be international, my style then could be described as Euro-American.

However, I returned to Norway, and got the chance to put out my own graphic novels. There was a need to find a subject matter that would make it worth my time and effort. This proved to be the Norwegian middle ages. Three books set in the time of the black plague. There was a need to examine my roots. Going all the way back to look at the art in Norway at the time of my subject matter. Looking at woodcarvings and art from medieval churches, as well as viking ornaments. Also art from the national revival in the romantic era were studied. Even Edvard Munch, especially his woodcuts. This resulted in a very graphic black and white style with stark contrasts.



So for a while I think my work looked Norwegian, were about Norwegians and was probing the core of Norwegian cultural identity, telling how we evolved as a nation.

This was in the late 1980's. But by 1990 the optimism about publishing graphic novels for such a small market vanished. I had to look for other means of income, and pretty soon found myself doing funny comic strips for magazines and newspapers. It was a challenge, and quite rewarding, writing these strips. But the drawings had to be simplified and adopted for being printed in small frames on low grade paper.

And these cartoons did not have a specific Norwegian style or show any trace of our national culture. It was a truly international drawing style, with generic jokes that could have been made anywhere.

This started to bother me, as I anyway did not manage to export my cartoons. But mostly I got tired of the limited space for the drawings in comic strips.

Children's books, on the other hand, promised double spread illustrations and unlimited variations in techniques and colours. As I ventured into that field, there was a need to develop a new and unique illustration style. A comic book inked line with flat colours was not what the publishers and the audience deserved.

For a while, again, I believe my way of illustrating was truly international; Clear, bright colours, simplified forms, an emphasis on storytelling, showing the message clearly learned from years of cartooning.

A lot of the subject matters were also universal, The Children Police and Kalle Comet flying in his spacecraft in the future.

In my own line of books about the dog BISK, the figures are stylised. The environment, with buildings being large doghouses with orderly gardens in a generic suburbia, could be placed anywhere. And there is nothing about the stories that are specific Norwegian either. Maybe that is why one of the books has been such a success in India and is being translated to Nepalese.

But again, I was not that happy about not heeding my cultural identity.

Norway has a rich tradition of folk tales and legends about kings and queens, princesses and the hero, the ash lad, facing mighty and dangerous trolls and other scary creatures. Every Norwegian kid hears these moral tales while they grow up.

These subject matters have nested in the back of my mind since childhood.

A decade or so ago, I used the opportunity to adapt three of the tales of Asbjørnsen and Moe, the brothers Grimm of Norway, into comic book graphic novels. But that was existing texts, being faithful to the original stories.

Suddenly an idea appeared: A very spoiled princess wants a live dragon for her birthday.

Of course she gets her dragon. And of course it does not end well for all. The bad gets punished and the good gets their reward. Finally, I was to illustrate my own eventyr, the Scandinavian word for folk tale.

I knew that this story had to feel like one of the traditional tales if it was to work for the young readers. A too modern and international style would not do.

Back to the roots and the traditions again.

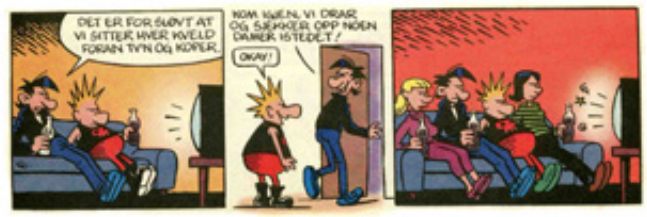
The illustration for Asbjørnsen and Moe's folk tales are as well known to Norwegians as the texts themselves. The trolls of Kittelsen and kings and animals of Werenskiöld are iconic. Made in the 1880's and 90's these images, along with the same period illustrations of the Viking sagas, are so strong and well known that one cannot be too influenced or copy the style either.

There was a need to make a new twist. Modernise, add even more humour and action, but keep the mood and feelings of the sagas. Still, the king has to be big and imposing, with a large beard and a crown on his head, the buildings and clothing should be romantically Norwegian. While the setting was mostly medieval, it was it a deliberate goal to



# Bjørn Ousland

make the characters act according with our modern sets of values. I can only hope to have succeeded. Hope that the stories I tell have a root in our cultural identity. That the illustrations for The DRAGON HUNT and the upcoming The TROLL PRINCE will look like they could only have been made in Norway. But with another hope, that just because of this, the books will have universal appeal.









## Zohreh Parirokh (Iran)



*She studied personnel management and now works as the head of a pre-school committee. She has worked as an editor for children's magazines and participated in courses focused on children's book illustration. She is the co-author and illustrator of several books for children and youth and has received several awards for her work.*

## The Bell-Foot Goat Story Global Theme, National Identity in Illustration

My daughter's grandma knows only one story, the story of Bozakeh Zangoolehpa (the story of the goat and her 3 kids). Several years ago, when my daughter was a kid, whenever she asked her grandma to tell a story she told the same story, only this particular story. I always wonder why she only knows this story. I think one of the reasons might be related to her previous education. She studied in Maktab-khane (The classic school in Iran before the 20<sup>th</sup> century). On those times, they had a few stories or classic books for teaching, including "The goat and her 3 kids", which from here on will be called "the goat story". At last one day I asked her, she laughed and told: OK, my mother used to tell only this story to us. The story of the goat and her 3 kids has been one of the favorite stories which used by mothers and grand-mothers for storytelling from the past to the present in my country.

The goat story is the story of a mother goat that has three kids (in Iran she has usually three, four or five kids.) she leaves them in her house to go for grazing and producing milk. But when she comes back she encounters a wolf attacking them. Just one of her kids is saved, the one who is cleverer than the others. The little kid helps the mother goat to save the other kids.

In this article I am looking into the illustrations of the book "The goat and her 3 kids". Although, the content and the illustrations of the goat story are based on almost the same theme in many countries, that is, transferring similar emotional and social feelings, they also illustrate similar features such as simplicity of the life of the goat and the luxurious life of the wolf. This is the symbol of showing the contradiction between the good and the evil. These concepts also represent the symbols of national identity of each country. Through this discussion we can realize that, in spite of environmental changes, these concepts have sustained throughout the his-



tory. Here, I also will discuss how this story has been taking shaped, and how it has changed through the history in Iran. Furthermore, the influence of other countries on the illustrations of this story will be investigated in the article. A few examples on the goat story as narrated in some other countries are also provided in order to show this similarity.

### Why this story?

Whenever I read this story, I find human feelings and emotions, such as happiness, anger, love, sorrow, effort, friendship, resistance against the evil in this it. I can also trace wisdom and also our national values and beliefs in this story.

I think we should go back to some thousands years ago, when pre-historic humans inhabited in Iran. Instead of fighting with the nature, they tried to make friendship with it. One of the animals which responded positively to this friendship was the goat<sup>1</sup>. Many mountain rocks with a variety of goat pictures on them which were the signs of this friendship can be seen in different parts of Central Iran (Farhadi 1377, 66). The valley Gharghab-Ghido, which the natural borderline between the two cities of Golpaigan and Khomein (situated in Central Iran), is one of such places. This valley was a very good and busy road in the ancient time. It is now a valley between dust and stone mountains symbolizing a book opened to the wind, the rain and the sun (ibid, 66).

The number of the pictures on the rocks of the two sides of the Valley Gharghab-Ghido is about 5000 illustrating humans, animals, objects and other symbols (ibid, 127). However, if we count the pictures on the mountain rocks around the branches of the River Khomein-Golpaigan they will increase to about 30000. What can be seen on the first look at these pictures is the picture of the mountain goat which

was a local prey in Iran and the region. The mountain goat, specially the male one, with long horns in a variety of shapes, is the dominant picture in every scene. The smallest size of such a picture is about 7 \* 8 cm (Farhadi 1377 [1998], p.130).

Subtitle image: Goat on rock carvings Mahan , Seh Kong, Mahan, Kerman (Farhadi 1377 [1998], 327)

Subtitle image: Tange Gharghab , gaint goat with long and complicated horns that is bigger than the rider. Circular flower resembles the sun and ride like that ( Farhadi 1377 [1998], 308).

Subtitle image: Antelope , Morteza Farhadi photographer (Farhadi 1377 [1998], 309).

Subtitle image: The greatest and full figures work in the Gharghab-Ghido valley ( Farhadi 1377 [1998], 302).

Except these pictures, several years later, there were a lot of stelized forms with exaggeration and deformation shapes of goat on dishes made of clay. These are manifestations of human mental pictures of this animal.

Subtitle image: Earthen cups with goats Susa 4000 BC.M  
The reason of this special attention to the goat in the literature is not because of the fact that the goat was the first animal been domesticated in Iran. The result of the investigations shows that, since the goat had a critical role in the life of human beings, it was one of the most important animals to them. The Asoric tree<sup>2</sup> story which is one of the ancient stories (Mohamadi & Ghaeni 1380[2001], p.188) is a dialogue between a date tree and a goat. In this dialogue, each of them talks about his/her own competitive specifications and values. The competitive advantages of the goat are actually those specifications assigned to him/her by human beings. The advantages of the goat is neither for nutrition nor for

<sup>1</sup> About 10000 years ago Goats were domesticated in Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Asoryk Tree, the oldest texts of children's literature that antiquity is nearly three thousand years ago.



clothing purposes, but since the goat is normally living on mountain heights, he/she is a symbol of self-ambition and dignity, has hard personality and is a hard worker, men's ethics and aggressive manner and worrier, but believe in wisdom (Abdollahi, 1381 [2002] v.1, 155-156). These specifications help the goat play a special role in literature in Iran. This animal has been the main characteristic of many stories in children literature in this country. One of the most famous one is "the goat and the 3 kids", which is an ancient story. As mentioned earlier, although it is a very famous story in Iran, there are a lot of such stories with similar theme around the world. The main reason for this similarity is because this story travelled from this country to the other places. In these days, with regard to the new communication systems, our planet has turned into a small world. A computer can help us to go to the library in other countries and read a national story. But, several years ago our story, the goat and the 3 kids, travelled by merchants and adventurers from one place to the another. This is the main reason that we have different versions of this story around the world. Arne Thompson (Vakilian 1377 [1998], 121), for example, registered this story entitled: The wolf and the young goat kids<sup>3</sup>. Different versions of this story have been published in many countries so far<sup>4</sup>.

In general, the content of this story is based on symbolic identifications of the national identities of each country. But, in terms of the close relationships between different countries, the question is:

## Could a similar theme<sup>5</sup> results in the production of similar illustrations?

Illustrations in children story books are known as meta-texts, that is, they not only complete the meaning, but they also make children familiar with the environment and the atmosphere in which they live. On the other hand, they resemble to the national culture, ethics and religion. They are also capable to transfer emotional feelings such as kindness, anger, sorrow, sadness, and the like. These help children become familiar with national and human identity. These two dimensions can be realized in our story, the goat and her 3 kids.

This story has more than 150 versions in Iran. This means that many other stories have been based on it. The first written version of the Goat story is a lithographic print produced about 150 years ago. It is a verse edition called "Nassayeh-ol-atfal" (Zolfaghari & Heidari, 1391 [2012], V. I, p. 379) or "Shangol va Mangool" by an unknown poet. This version has 131 lines of poems in 12 pages with 10 black-and-white illustrations. Although the story develops a colorful picture in the reader's mind, but as mentioned, it is a black-and-white book. The goat is described in red color with white sides, white and long bear reaching near the ground. Her hoofs are reddish colored. She has four children called Shangool, Mangool, Talskerkeh, and Joldameneh.

### Layout of the story

If we consider the layout of the page as a part of illustration,

<sup>3</sup> code number is 123.

<sup>4</sup> Arne Thompsons references : Discription Grimm bros stories , the No. 5 Qs ;the story of Anderson's number 2 and 5 of the Finnish version. Estonia<sup>2</sup>, Lithuania 1, Latvia 64, Lithuania 35 languages Lapandy 2, Sweden 1, Norway 4the language of Denmark 1, Ireland 20, France 52, Netherlands 4, Germany 24, Hungary 5, Slovenia 3, the language of Serb and Croat 3, Russia, 8, Greece 9, Turkey 10, India 1, China 2, French Americans<sup>6</sup> , spanish Americans Language 2,( Argentina 1, Puerto Rico 1) Black American West 14, Jamaica 1, American Indian 1, South Africa 11

<sup>5</sup> The division of the story in all of the narration is :

1. Wolves in the absence of sound and color changes to deal with the goat, the kid's mom pretends to be and no one devours them.
2. Mother goat to coyotes, wild boar, bear, and is suspected of predatory animals.
3. Blacksmith goats for milk or eating takes up her horn sharp wind to therake scrip instead, blacksmith and wolf, wolf tooth and takes place cotton leaves.
4. Finally,the goat and the wolf bragging after the battle of them, the goat brings out her kids from the wolf's belly. (Zolfaghari & Heidari, 1391 [2012], V. I, p. 381). The literature of Classic School of Iran



there are vertical and horizontal lines .the title is located in an inscription being formed from these lines. From the point of using symbols the story is a rich one. For instance, a naked man is sleeping in a grave. This illustration is simpler than others as designed with more borderlines. The dark background highlights the man but it implies the warning of death.

The illustrations can resemble the emotional feelings between the mother goat and her kids. The illustrations resemble naturalism but are simple. The striped lines around the figures make them voluminous on the borderlines resemble depth of the pictures. In this story we cannot see exaggeration and deformation in pictures, but we can notice perspective. Although the mother goat talked with her kids about their permanent enemy, i.e. the wolf, the illustrator shows a monster who stands with two swords in his hands. This is a national symbolic picture of the evil. In Iranian culture, evil is the god of misleading (Alen et al. 1384 [2005], 33). This picture resembles the feeling of danger by the reader.

In the illustration that when the wolf comes to the goat house, we can notice that goat's house is very simple one. So the goat is a symbol of an ordinary people .When the mother goat comes back to her house and notices that something has happened, she bends her sword and goes to fight the wolf. In this picture the fastening style of sword is similar to the men. The illustrator has given the mother goat a masculine identity. In fact this identity is very close to the symbolic identity that the goat has in the Iranian culture. Mother goat with the sword in her hand is standing on the wall, but at last we do not see sword fighting. It seems that the mother goat fights with her horns based on her insight.

On the other side, the wolf's house was as a lord property house is similar to a landlord houses, big single houses in a big garden, used to be built in Iranian gardens; years ago. Here the house specifies the identity of the wolf. The building is a combination of traditional Iranian arch, vaults and pavilion (which is not an Iranian architectural form). The cedar

trees that usually decorated Iranian gardens and give them glory and beauty are in the garden. In the illustration, that mother goat has stood on the wall without any sword. The appearance of the garden is similar to the European classic paintings. The specifications of these illustrations, i.e., the volume processing (voluminosity of the striped lines around the figures), and the perspective (the depth in the picture) in the last three pictures are very obvious. In the foreground, the mother goat and the wolf are bigger and the building in the background is smaller. Here comes a question: although the story and the illustrations have traditional Iranian culture and symbols, why some of them get away from those simplifications: exaggeration and deformation of ancient periods.

#### **What has happened from ancient periods till 150 years ago?**

We can say that these changes always existed; tribes and nations always impressed each other but in Iran from the Achaemenid period these relations developed because of the development of commercial and military contacts. These relations became widespread gradually. Cultures and civilizations such as Greece and Egypt were mixed with the Iranian culture. Familiarity with the Greece naturalistic art and the great Egypt works brought another view in the Iranian art. Iranian art neither completely impressed with the Greek art nor with Egyptian art. However, certain forms of naturalism with simplification appeared in the Iranian art.

After Islam, Iran's relations with the countries of Far East like China had some impacts on the art of our country. In this period the Iranian paintings (miniatures) were far away from volume processing and perspective. The colors were also flat. The Iranian painters with the help of vertical and horizontal divisions show different sides of a story in one image. With these divisions they also created a sense of balance and static in his illustration. On the other hand, they wanted to show their spiritual and religious ideas and the desire to climb the world of



heaven. So they pushed away the frame of his work. From the tenth century A.D. when the Iran's relations with the European countries progressed the Iranians got familiar with the paintings formed after the Renaissance in Europe. The paintings try to paint a 3-dimension image on a 2- dimension surface and did this with the help of perspective. These desires were shaped gradually and affected iranian works. However, they always want to maintain ethnical, national, religious, and social characteristics of their countries in their works till now.

But if we come back to the illustrations of Shangool and Mangol or Nasayeh-ol-atfal story, the ancient story of the goat, we can see the interaction and mutual influence of different nations on the illustrations of this story. As mentioned before, the illustrations are black and white. While simplification is main focus, we can see naturalistic impacts. The illustrations have depth and volume processing. Using volume with hatching (or cross -hatching) in the design of the figures like the mother goat, her kids and the wolf resemble naturalistic style; but the style of iranian painting can be more realized in rocks; however, we can realize that spiciness' of plants scattered over the hills, buildings are drawn with simple lines .buildings which are farther are smaller and the goat that is closer is hyperbolized larger. Vertical and horizontal lines which divide the screen resemble the iranian paintings. The lines help to balance the page creating a sense of rhythm and war.

## Reviewing the illustrations of the Goat story in recent years

In the illustrations of this story which were published in the recent years, we can see a multiple view. In some of them like Boz bozeh Qandi<sup>6</sup>. there is a naturalistic view and in some others like

6 Anoun. Boz bozeh Qandi , 1370 [1991]. Illustrated by B. Gharibpour, Tehran, Rangin kaman Publishing.

Bozi bozi<sup>7</sup>, there is a return to the traditional simplification. But we can realize a conscious approach towards preserving the national identity, ethical, religious and humanitarian values in all of them. For example, in Boz bozeh Qandy story<sup>8</sup> the influence of the European naturalism can be seen. In this story the mother goat is an animal. She is not dressed like humans. Although her house is like a human house, it is in the heart of the forest.

The design of the character of mother goat is close to the one which was designed about 100 years ago. The mother goat always sits at the top, with her neck raised high and arched back. These all are the resemblances of her pride. Her prominent chest indicates a warrior character for her. In the entire story, all positive forces, that is, the goat and her kids and even the old barber who sharpens the goat's horns and pulls out the wolf's teeth are illustrated using warm color. On the other hand the color of the wolf and his environment is cold like grey, purple, blue and pink. Volume processing and depth is formed with a specific color spectrum. The illustrator formed the background element with the help of contour.

In this decade again the books which are recreation of this story were published. In these stories we can trace the cultural evidences in illustrations. For example, in a work named Boz Bozi<sup>9</sup>, which is another version of Boze zangule pa, the goat has animal figure; while she has beautiful and delicate character, she has curious and fighting spirit. The other characters such as the barber and the weaver are also animals. Although they talk about the wolf, he is not in the illustrations.

In the Shangule and Mangol<sup>10</sup>, we can see very native and

7 Homa Ehsan. 1370 [1991]. Bozi bozi, illustrated by Fozi Tehrani. Soroush.

8 Leila Hosseini. 1369 [1990]. Boz Boze Qandy, Illustrated by Mehran Zamani. Tehran, Ghasedakeh Shadi.

9 Homa Ehsan, 1370 [1391]. Boz Boz, illustrated by Fozy Tehrani, Tehran, Soroush.

10 Afsaneh Shabannejad. 1384 [2005]. Shangule and Mangol. Based on an animation by Farkhondeh Toraby and Morteza Ahady. Tehran, The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon).



folk characters (the goat, the kids and the wolf) and the atmosphere of the illustrations is resemble Iranian culture. For example, decorative knitting (known as the patch bafi) in illustrations shows an intimate native setting. The goat, the kids and the wolf appear in their animals figures with a very slight exaggeration.

In another recreation of the same story, 11 Bozeh Zangolehpa, a new story of a fable... we can see a completely Iranian traditional atmosphere which illustrated with borderlines. The goat is in her animal figure, but with a female human beauty; she is not an old style goat who was proud and worrier, she is more like a herd goat not much like a mountain goat.

In another recreation, Boz Boz Qandy<sup>12</sup>, the symbolic identity of mother goat in Iranian culture is gradually fading; the goats has superficial figure which is similar to the unicorn in Walt Disney's animation. Depth, volume processing, and non-flat colors can be recognized in the illustrations of this work.

In another group, the illustrations show that the characters gradually go away from showing the animal life. The goat appears in a women cloth, something, that is rare in Iranian illustrations and paintings. It seems that the impact of the illustration of other countries, especially Western animations, decreases attention towards national culture. Even the houses are no longer in the villages or in the wood; they are located in urban areas. This shows that, since today the environment of the children are more like urban arias, the writers and illustrators try to turn the atmosphere of even an ancient story into an intimate environment. That is, the theme of the story takes place in the city or town and city elements become part of the illustrations.

Bozeh zangoolepa (by Nayyerehsadat Jalili, 1386 [2007]) and Bozeh zangoolepa (by Mehrangiz Mehri 1379 [2000] have these features.

In a work, named Boz Boze Qandi (Anoun, 1370) the goat has a female and fully human identity walking proudly in the prairie. A bag, which is made by carpet weaving and is a symbol of women art in Iran, is on her shoulder. However, the European naturalism view (depth and volume processing) has been used in its illustration at high level. Once again we can notice the folk and native view in the style of her wearing, dresses and ornaments.

Again, in the book "Where Were Bozeh Zangulepa's Children?"<sup>13</sup>, the goat appears in women dress, living in a full modern house having T.V. too. Although we realize the European impact on the illustration such as depth, and volume processing, the goat has a human character. However, she also keeps her symbolic and worrier character.

In the works which are based on the goat and her kids while we can see this influence of other nations through the similar characters, at the same time we can experience the preservation of the national identity of each country. For example, when we look at the illustrations of "What a Beautiful House" (Tolstoy, 1972) which is a Russian animal fable, we can also recognize national and folk symbols in its illustrations. Unlike most similar stories in Iran that keep the figure of the goat as an animal, in this story goat dressed like a rural woman. In terms of the social class we can see similarities between this story and the goat story in Iran, that is, the wolf from petty aggressive bourgeois class, while the goat house

11 Mohammad Reza Yousefi. 1391 [2012]. Bozeh Zangolehpa. (new story of a fable...), Illustrated by Sarah khoraman, Peaidalesh, Tehran,.

12 Fathi, H. 1369 [1990]. Boz Boz ghandi, Illustrator: Prisma Tahbaz, & Roya Mashoof. Tehran: Khashayar Publications.

13 15 Bozeh zangoolepa (by Nayyerehsadat Jalili, illustrated by Ome-kolsoom Nazari, Fatemeh Hosseini, 1386 [2007]) and Bozeh zangoolepa (by Mehrangiz Mehri, illustrated by Ali Ame-kan, 1379 [2000])

16 Ali Asghar Seidabady. 1390 [2011]. Where Were Bozeh Zangulepa's Children? Illustrated by A. Goldouzan, Tehran: Ofogh Publishing.



has a simple but clean house. The fire of her stove and her love to her kids made her house a warm place for her kids. But this fire in the jungle burns the wolf with his heavy belly and saves the kids.

Similar to Iranian illustrated the goat stories, in the tale “the Wolf and the Seven Little Kids”, compiled by the Grimm Brothers, which has an English illustration, the wolf has preserved his animal identity. But, the goat is a lady in a clean and nice house. With a pair of scissors, a needle and thread she fights with the wolf and brings out the kids from his belly. Then she replaces them with stones and sews his belly. The thirsty wolf with heavy belly falls into the bottom of the well. (both of them has full technical European features painting with voluminous and perspective)

In all goat stories there is fight. In some of them, the fighting tool is a sword, in some other stories, the fire or stone. In all goat stories the good and the bad are fighting with each other. In this story, there are two symbols of good and evil. The wolf has a fierce nature and the goat is a character that does not easily yield to the evil. The story has a world message that celebrates concepts such as mother love and sacrifice, simplicity, sincerity, kindness, and effort. In fact these features are those which are against evil and help be the winner in the war. In fact the human desire for peace, friendship and harmony is the winner.

This story is placed in the hearts of the people of different countries. Although in each country, different elements are used in shaping the goat story (like sword, fire, and stone), but the illustrations covers special cultural features of each country. On the other hand, with the power of illustration, similar senses of anger, kindness, sorrow and happiness can be realized in all goat stories from different countries. This can demonstrate the special role of the illustrations in children picture books. . A child, with the help of these illustrations, (the social relations, tools, elements, or clothes)

can understand the social atmosphere, and culture of his/her country and other parts of the world. This will open her mind and will find global insight towards the value of stories and illustrations. Through these stories and their illustrations he/she can finds out that it does not matter where you are living, you belong to a culture, art, beliefs which are very valuable and can make him/her very special and with the help of them he/she can creates new values. This realization itself is also a value.

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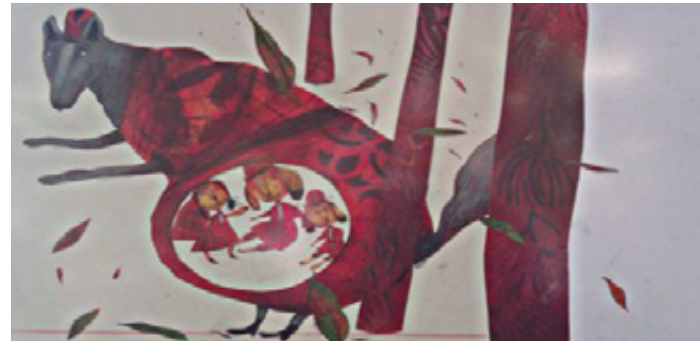
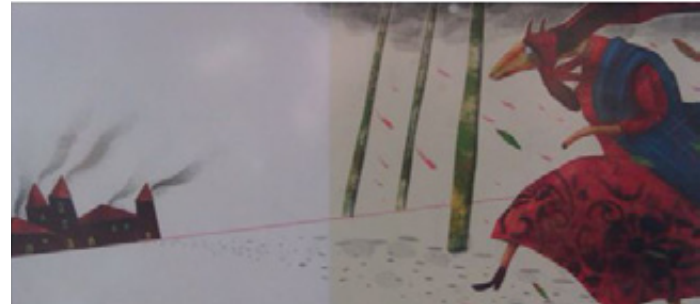
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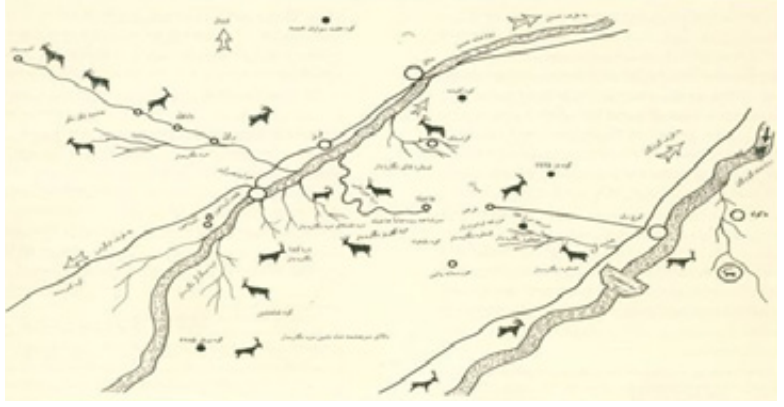
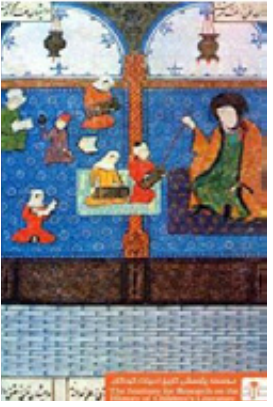


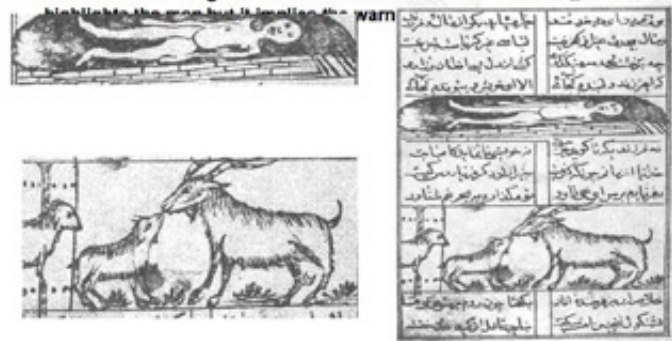
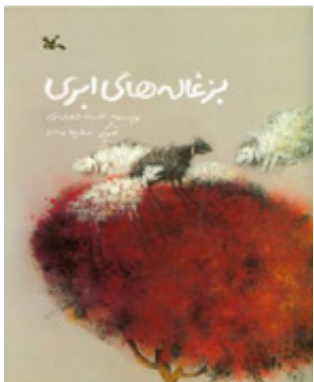
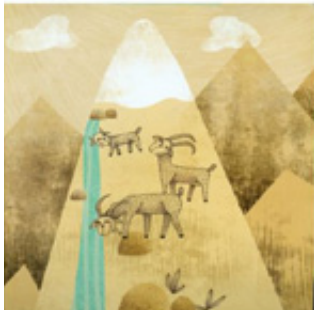


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## Leo Pizzol (Italy)



*At school he studied Humanistic Sciences and graduated from university in Economics. For five years he worked as a teacher in secondary and high schools and then for 22 years was employed by the Treviso provincial government in the fields of education, culture and tourism.*

*For over 30 years he has been involved in the organization of the International Exhibition of Children's Book Illustrations, "Le immagini della fantasia", which two friends and he founded with Stepan Zavrel. In 1987 he became chairman of the exhibition's organizing committee and since 2000 has chaired the Foundation for the International Exhibition of Children's Book Illustrations. In this role he has dealt with several exhibitions around the world, keeping in touch with many public and private institutions. He has also helped to organize the courses held by the International School of Illustration and sat on juries for literary prizes, illustration and drawing competitions.*

## History of the exhibition

Sarmede is a small town in the north-east of Italy, 60 km north of Venice, distinguished by its painted and frescoed buildings and known as the "fairy tale town" because for 30 years it has hosted events and activities relating to illustrated children's books, aimed at parents, teachers and illustrators. The most important, internationally acknowledged event is the "**International Exhibition of Children's Book Illustrations**", which will celebrate its 31<sup>st</sup> edition in October 2013.

It all started in 1968 when Prague artist Stepan Zavrel took up residence in the town. He illustrated children's books and invited artists and intellectuals from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world to his home on the edge of the woods. He also began to organize exhibitions of his own and friends' work in several cities in Veneto and together with a Czech friend founded the "Bohem Press", a publishing house for children's books, registered in Zurich. A popular figure in Sarmede, especially among those in the worlds of culture and voluntary work, in 1983 he brought together some of the town's young people, the local authorities and the Pro Loco to found the International Exhibition of Children's Book Illustrations (later known as "Le Immagini della Fantasia"), an event supported by sheer goodwill and no money. About twenty illustrators from different parts of the world participated in this first experience, which was so successful that the organizers, all volunteers, decided to continue in the future with a special eye on schools.

Over the years ever-increasing numbers of artists have taken part and exhibited their illustrations (4-5 works for each artist, approximately 40 artists) and the books involved.

We are convinced this is an important occasion to help achieve maturity, develop an ability to appreciate what is different and understand values far from our view of the world. For this reason the exhibition's aim has always been to give visibility to the best art for children by hosting artists from



all over the world and diffusing “far off” cultures and stories through art. Styles, cultures, art experiences and different ways of approaching children have a single aim: to bring them good tidings through artistic images of excellent value, away from the barrage of certain types of television.

We then went on to dedicate more space in the exhibition and catalogue to special guests including: Dusan Kallay, Svjetlan Junakovic, Linda Wolfgruber, Roberto Innocenti, Jndra Capek, Beatrice Alemagna and Jozef Wilkon. The first editions also had a different guest nation each year. In 1989 Lithuania (before independence) with 15 artists and in 1996 Slovakia with 6 artists (Olga Bajusovà, Peter Cisarik, Dusan Kallay, Peter Klucik, Luba Koncekova Vesela, Karol Ondreika and Miro Pogram). This latter edition also transferred to Bibiana in 1997.

The exhibition is dedicated to original drawings from illustrated books published in the previous three years, and fifteen years ago a themed section was added: in different years Pinocchio, Witches, Imps, Cinderella, Cats, and Peter Pan were illustrated. In 2005 these themes were replaced by Tales from the World, starting with tales from the Middle East, then Africa, the Far East, Oceania, the Arctic Circle, Brazil, India, and Russia, illustrated by artists from all over the world. The next edition, which opens on 26 October, will feature Tales from Mexico. A selection of people who have attended the courses organized by the Sarmede International School of Illustration, as well as professional illustrators will participate in this section.

In the second year (1984) Stepan Zavrel took parties of school children round the exhibition. In 1985 the guide was the French artist Muriel Dussussois, who ended her tours with workshops for children where they drew the characters that had impressed them most. This exhibition was also presented at the Treviso Civic Museum. The following year the exhibition guides were Linda Wolfgruber and Gino Alberti,

who were exhibiting their original drawings and book. This edition was also later transferred to Treviso, in a splendid Veneto villa, and then to Padua. In 1987 the guide was Massimo Mostacchi, an artist who cooperated with the Sarmede exhibition for several years and introduced animated readings at the end of his tours. Currently, in the exhibition period (October-January) 9-10,000 children come in school parties from all parts of North eastern Italy to visit the exhibition and take part in the workshops.

The exhibitions have always been itinerant. The main cities to have hosted them, some a number of times, are Paris (Pompidou Centre), Lisbon, Madrid, Vienna, Stuttgart, Istanbul, Rome, Naples, Milan, Ljubljana, Florence, Siena, Bratislava, Seville, and Sarajevo. The themed sections of the exhibition, such as Tales from the World, Pinocchio, etc. have travelled to other cities: Frankfurt, Bochum, Bremen, Venice, Sarasota in Florida, Barcelona, Edinburgh and Belo Horizonte in Brazil. Also in these cities there were guided tours and workshops for school children. Transferring some of the exhibitions abroad was facilitated by the fact that for some years the Stefanel fashion group sponsored our activities. The exhibition has also received UNICEF and IBBY patronage.

In 1987 an “Exhibition Committee” was set up by the volunteer founders, to provide continuity, and an organizational and legal structure to the event. Street entertainment was organized (jugglers, puppet shows, minstrels ...) during the 1988 exhibition, and later market stalls were added. They were so successful that it was decided to repeat them and a “Theatre Fair” was established with the introduction of more children’s workshops, bringing 30-40,000 visitors a year to Sarmede.

In that same year Zavrel began to open his home to young people who wanted to learn and/or advance their illustrating skills; another great success, so much so that in 1991 the Committee and Sarmede municipality decided to hold illus-



tration courses in a former junior school, giving birth to the International School of Illustration. In recent years about 280-320 participants have spent a week in Sarmede attending the school's courses in the period from March to September.

For the past three years some of the courses have been aimed at publishing a book of children's stories written and illustrated by the participants. The teachers now working in the School are Linda Wolfsgruber, Svjetlan Junakovic, Maurizio Olivotto, Eva Montanari, Giovanni Manna, Anna Laura Cantone, Javier Zabala, Chiara Carrer, Valeria Bertesina, Paolo Canton, Anna Castagnoli, Miguel Tanco and Gabriel Pacheco. Past courses were given by Stepan Zavrel, Jozef Vilkon, Jindra Capek, Arcadio Lobato and Roberto Innocenti. Other shorter courses (2-4 days) dedicated to writing stories and fairy tales are attended by around 170-180 people during the exhibition period (October –January). Many of those who attended the courses have become important illustrators, such as Anna Castagnoli, Maurizio Quarello, Lucie Muellerova, Octavia Monaco, Violeta Lopiz, André Neves, Bimba Landmann, Giovanni Manna, Giuliano Ferri, Beatrice Alemagna, Lucia Scuderi and Loretta Serofilli.

Following the death of Stepan Zavrel in February 1999 the organizing committee became the "Stepan Zavrel Foundation for the International Exhibition of Children's Book Illustra-

tions" which has opened a museum containing the Bohemian artist's most significant works. The works can be borrowed for exhibition by other cities.

In the last years of his life, Zavrel took up the art of frescoes and left many paintings inside and on the external walls of his own home and houses in Sarmede. Other artists, such as Jozef Wilkon and Linda Wolfsgruber, continued to paint murals on the walls of many houses and public buildings and school parties often extend their guided tour of the exhibition to the Sarmede murals. The interior of Sarmede town hall is painted by Jozef Wilkon.

With a contribution from the European Union and the Veneto Regional government, in 2012 a new building called *La Casa della Fantasia* was inaugurated to house all the activities involved in the exhibition. This new permanent seat is a multi-functional area where the Foundation will boost its cultural activities with its "International History of Illustration". A new space dedicated to imagination and illustrated books will host courses, illustration workshops, temporary exhibitions, educational activities for schools, animated reading sessions, meetings with authors, and training sessions for teachers, parents and cultural operators.

**Marloes Schrijvers** (The Netherlands)



*Marloes Schrijvers (1989) holds a master's degree in Children's Literature from Tilburg University. She graduated on the topic of multimodal life writing in children's literature and plans on extending this research in a PhD. Additionally, she writes picture book reviews for the Flemish magazine on children's literature *De Leeswelp* ('The reading lionet') and is author and editor for the Dutch IBBY-journal *Literatuur zonder Leeftijd* ('Literature without age').*

**Oppositions, identification and disidentification through text and image in *The Wall* by Peter Sís**

**Introduction**

My contribution to this Biennial is based on my masterthesis, which focused on life writing through text and image in children's literature (Schrijvers, 2013). 'Life writing' refers to the act of telling a life story (about the own life or the life of someone else) using a variety of media (Smith & Watson, 2010; Eakin, 2004). My research focused in particular on the self-referential act of life writing using both words and illustrations: I analyzed several autobiographical picture books. In this contribution, I will discuss one of these books: *The wall: growing up behind the Iron Curtain* by Peter Sís (2007), in which Peter Sís tells about his youth in Prague behind the Iron Curtain, during the Cold War.

Distinctive characteristics of self-referential life narratives are that they refer to the real, text-external world of the past, and that the author claims to tell about events he or she once has experienced in this real world. When the reader accepts this claim, what happens is exactly the opposite of the 'willing suspension of disbelief' in reading fiction. Rather, there is a relation of trust between the author and the reader, in which the reader trusts the author to tell his or her own life story truthfully. This relates to what Lejeune (1989) calls the 'autobiographical pact'. In *The wall*, Peter Sís refers to the world outside the text textually and visually, thereby applying an innovative interplay of text and image.

In his semiotically based analysis of this interplay, Sipe (1998) has argued that the reader of a picture book constantly goes through a process of transmediation between text and image: by looking at the images, the text is reinterpreted, and vice versa. I will therefore show how Peter Sís innovatively combines the textual and the visual mode in

*The wall* and how readers are challenged to constantly adjust their interpretations of the text and the images in terms of the other semiotic code. Since growing up during the Cold War has caused Peter Sís's youth to be dominated by several central oppositions (such as the opposition between East and West and the opposition between suppression and freedom), I will focus on how the interplay of text and image is applied to present these oppositions. Finally, related to the theme of this Biennial, I will discuss how these 're-created' oppositions show acts of identification and disidentification.

## Textual and visual techniques

### Textual techniques

In the paratexts of *The wall*, such as the texts on the backside and the insides of the loose cover, the reader is notified of Peter Sís's claim to tell a part of his own life story. This is done, for example, by phrases like: 'Peter Sís's story of growing up under a totalitarian regime [...]' and 'Peter Sís draws us into the world that shaped him – Czechoslovakia during the Cold War.' The story itself is preceded by an introduction and followed by an afterword, in which we hear the voice of the adult Peter Sís who created this book in the 2000s. In the introduction he states: 'I was born at the beginning of it all, on the Red side – the Communist side – of the Iron Curtain', and signs with the initials 'P.S.' Thereby, he clearly claims to tell a story that refers to his own youth – a claim confirmed by voices of others in the other paratexts I mentioned – and thus, he refers to the past world outside the text.

Apart from the paratexts, Sís also refers to the real past world in the story itself. He does this, first, by applying factual, historical pieces of text, which give the reader much historical information. These texts are placed around and next to the images and are printed in italics, as the upper part of one of the pages (figure 1) shows. The use of the present tense draws the reader effectively into the society that has shaped Peter Sís.



Figure 1. Example of informational pieces of text about the past, placed around the image.

Second, Sís uses another variety of text to refer to his personal childhood. These texts are printed underneath the images, in a normal and slightly larger type than the informational texts, as figure 2 shows (which is the lower part of the same page as above):

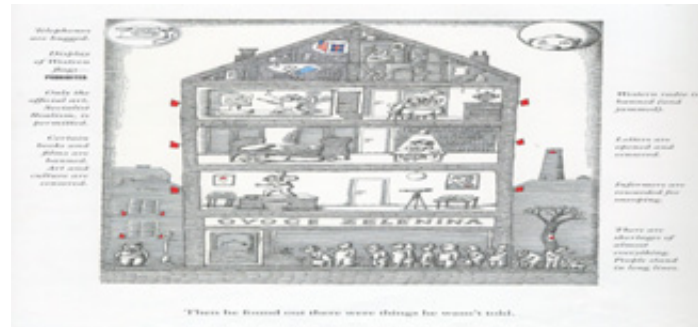


Figure 2. Example of a personal text, placed under the image.





Third, Peter Sís has included three double spreads with diary entries, which are authentic documents from the past: Sís wrote them himself when he was young. The diary spreads mark the three different periods in which the story is divided: 1954 – 1963, which was ‘a time of brainwashing’; 1965 – spring 1968, a period characterized by the Iron Curtain opening up and Western influences penetrating the Eastern Bloc, leading to the Prague Spring; and August 1968 – 1977, in which the Soviet Union invades Czechoslovakia and the Soviet regime is reinstalled in its most powerful form. The diary entries are placed against a background of photographs and childhood drawings, which I will discuss in a moment.

### Visual techniques

What is particularly interesting in the light of life writing, which refers to a real world outside the text, is that the images – in contrast to the text – do not all reflect this outer-textual reality in a straightforward way. Applying the instrument of ‘naturalistic modality’ (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001), we can make statements about to which extent an image reflects reality. On a sliding scale, the highest degree of naturalistic modality would be photographic realism and the lowest would be a highly abstracted work of art.

The first type of images are simplified, almost cartoonesque black-and-white drawings. Often, Sís applies them sequentially, almost as a storyboard or comic book, but he also uses this technique in larger images which cover a page or a double spread. When we apply the instrument of naturalistic modality, we conclude that this visual technique does not reflect the outer-textual reality in a straightforward way. Figure 3 shows this: we see a recognizable but stylized toddler, as his body is strongly simplified. It is interesting to see how Sís depicts the influence of the Communist regime by showing the toddler wearing a red scarf.

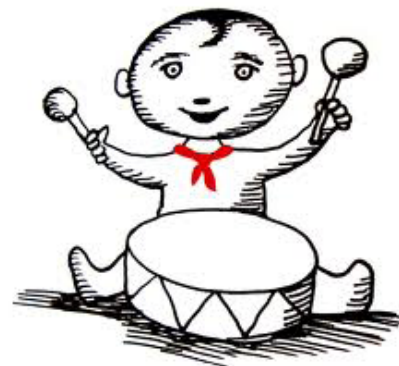


Figure 3. Simplified black-and-white drawing of Peter Sís himself as a toddler.

The second visual technique is the use of childhood drawings, photographs and historical graphic elements (like music posters) on the spreads with diary entries. These, in contrast to the first technique, do reflect the past reality in a direct way, though there are differences between the photographs, drawings and graphic elements. The photographs show what reality looked like in the past, since they are the most naturalistic documentation of the past – for example, we see Peter Sís himself at various ages – whereas the childhood drawings give us an impression of how young Peter Sís interpreted the world around him in those days. They are not exactly a straightforward representation of reality, but they do show how Peter as a young boy characterized his surroundings. He has drawn bombs and tanks, which gives us clues about how it must have been like living behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. We could conclude these historical documents are authentic in the experiential sense.

Third, Sís uses various colors in a symbolic way to represent the different perspectives on society existing during the Cold War. To represent Communism, he applies red ele-

ments in his black-and-white drawings, as figure 3 already showed. The freedom of Western society, which slowly starts to perforate through the Iron Curtain, is symbolized by using bright and lively colors. As the Western influences increase, Sís uses more and more colored elements in his black-and-white drawings. As can be seen in figure 4, this eventually leads to a full-colored double spread.



Figure 4. Right half of the full-colored double spread representing the Prague Spring.

In what follows, I will give several examples of how Sís effectively presents oppositions that characterized his youth behind the Iron Curtain, by applying a symbolic use of color and complex forms of interplay of text and image.

## Expressed oppositions

### 1. East – West

The first opposition is related to the theme of the book: the geographical but also symbolic opposition between East and West. On the endpapers at the beginning and at the end of the book, a map of the world is depicted, on which the Communist countries are colored in red, whereas the Western countries are colored in white. Here, Sís shows the global separation created by the Iron Curtain. The global perspective on the Cold War is in the story itself expressed by depicting, for example, nuclear missiles on Cuba and the assassination of president John F. Kennedy. Towards the end of the story, there is a double spread on which the oppositions between East and West are shown in a very symbolic way (see figure 5). The Iron Curtain is depicted as a solid brick wall, and we see the difference in color: the Eastern part of Europe is colored in greyish blue, whereas the Western part is colored in bright shades of orange and pink. On this spread, text and image work together to emphasize the oppositions between East and West: the lower part of the spread, representing the East, shows terms like ‘stupidity’, ‘injustice’, ‘terror’ and ‘fear’. The upper Western part is covered with words like ‘freedom’, ‘virtue’, ‘honor’, ‘equality’, ‘respect’ and ‘wisdom’.



Figure 5. Left half of the spread expressing the opposition between East and West.



## 2. Suppression – freedom

The opposition between East and West closely relates to the opposition between suppression and freedom that Peter Sís has experienced during his youth. The character of young Peter develops over time: in the first part of the book, he is not yet aware of the Soviet suppression, but after a while he realizes ‘there were things he wasn’t told’ and that ‘this was the time of brainwashing’. This latter phrase is accompanied by a double spread on which we see Peter as a young boy with a sad look on his face and a huge red thinking cloud above his head. In the cloud, Lenin, Stalin and other Soviet rulers are depicted: Lenin with a gun in his hand, and Stalin with his left hand deformed into the barrels of cannons and with medals on his chest, on which we see little children depicted. The interaction of text and image leads to the interpretation that Peter starts to realize that he is suppressed and influenced by the Soviets. We know he feels ‘brainwashed’: his own feelings are mentioned explicitly in the text, and the depiction of the Soviet rulers ‘in his mind’ implicitly strengthens this.

His development is also innovatively symbolized by a visual detail on the diary spreads. In their left upper corner, the three spreads show a head with a brain (see figure 6). The first brain is colored red and belongs to the period of brainwashing. The second brain is variously colored, relating to the period of the Prague Spring and incoming influences from the West. It seems to reflect joy and happiness, but also the fact that Peter is confronted with many new views on his life and the society he lives in. The last brain is sober green, symbolizing that Peter now is mature in his thinking, but not naively happy since the Soviet suppression is worse than ever before. The single color can be interpreted as a signal of the Western free thinking as the new standard in Peter's life: the various views that came to him in the former period, have merged into one single, ‘Western’ point of view he has adopted.

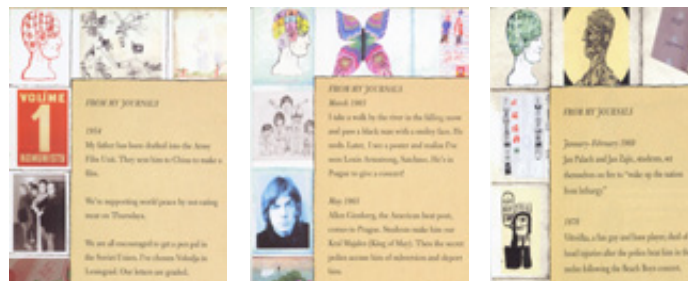


Figure 6. Visual details of the diary spreads: brains in various colors.

Color, thus, is clearly a symbolic tool to express oppositions between East and West and, related thereto, suppression and freedom. Finally, the opposition between suppression and freedom is depicted through the characters of Soviet officials on the one hand, who are depicted as pig-like figures, and the suppressed Czechoslovakians on the other hand, who are depicted as ordinary people. Figure 7 clearly shows this opposition.

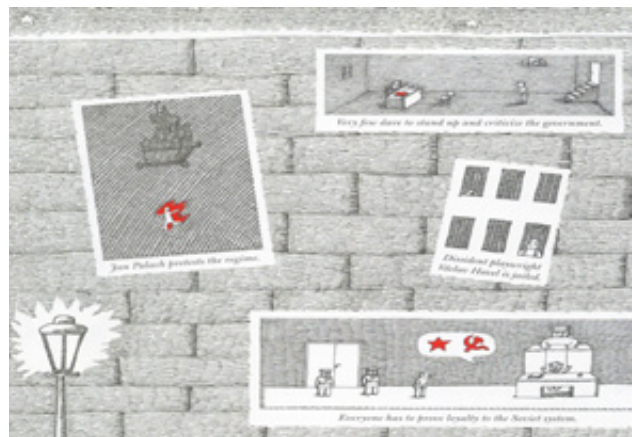


Figure 7. Depiction of a Czechoslovakian versus two Soviet officials.

### 3. Despondency – hope

In the use of color, we also see the opposition between hope and despondency. Before the occupation of Prague, feelings of hope are conveyed by adding a bit more color in each following black-and-white image that represents the period of Western influences in Eastern Europe, eventually bursting out in the full-colored double spread concerning the Prague Spring, which was already partly shown in figure 4. When the occupation of Prague is shown – the start of a hopeless and miserable period in Peter Sís' life – we first see a highly stylized tank, which is threatening in all its simplicity. On the next page, Sís applies a double allusion of *The Scream* by Edvard Munch, which may be regarded as one of the most famous and powerful paintings symbolizing pain, grief and despondency. In the background, Prague is depicted as a round maze which is full of tanks (see figure 8).

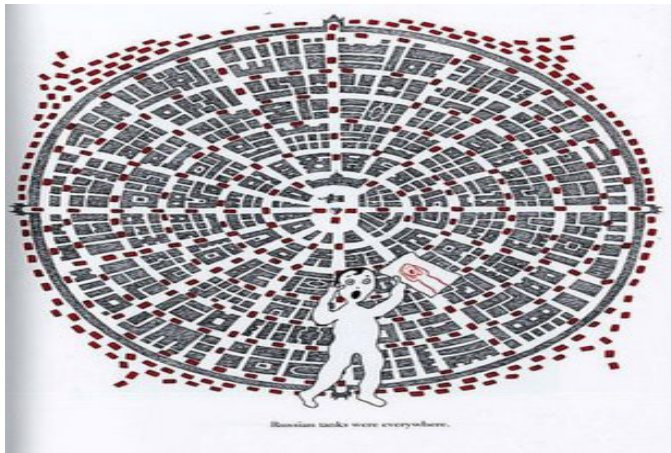


Figure 8. Lower part of the spread with a double allusion on *The Scream* (Edvard Munch).

After the occupation, hope, however, isn't completely lost. Sís shows this, for instance, on the sequence of images in which he and his friends over and over again paint the wall between East and West in bright, joyful colors, whereas Soviet officials constantly repaint the wall in white (see figure 9). Here again, the visual technique of using color is applied symbolically to represent the protest against the regime and to express feelings of hope for freedom.

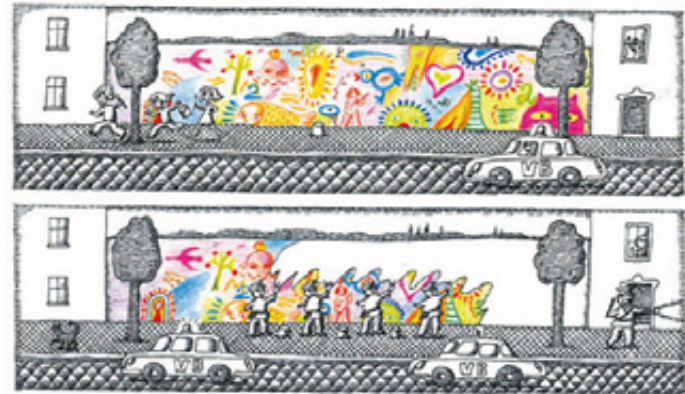


Figure 10. The painting and repainting of the wall.

### 4. Reality – dreams

The oppositions between East and West, between suppression and freedom and between despondency and hope are closely related to each other. For Peter, it is however hardly possible to reach the West and to become free. The Soviets are everywhere: we see them literally depicted in nearly every image, for example threateningly leaning over the crowd of Czechoslovakians when the Beach Boys give a concert in Prague. Because freedom seems to be out of reach for Peter and his friends, towards the end of the book a fourth opposition comes into play: the opposition between reality and



dreams. Here, the interplay between text and image conveys the full meaning of two following double spreads. The text only mentions: ‘He dreamed of being free. Wild dreams...’ The image then takes over and shows us Peter on a bike, with his drawings under his arm, fleeing for Soviet police officers. He rides on a winding road through a landscape in which his dreams are depicted. As figure 11 shows, these dreams all represent innovative ways to escape to the West: Peter as a pole-vaulter to jump over the border, Peter disguised as a tree walking towards the border, Peter with a fake duck on his head swimming over the river to reach the West...

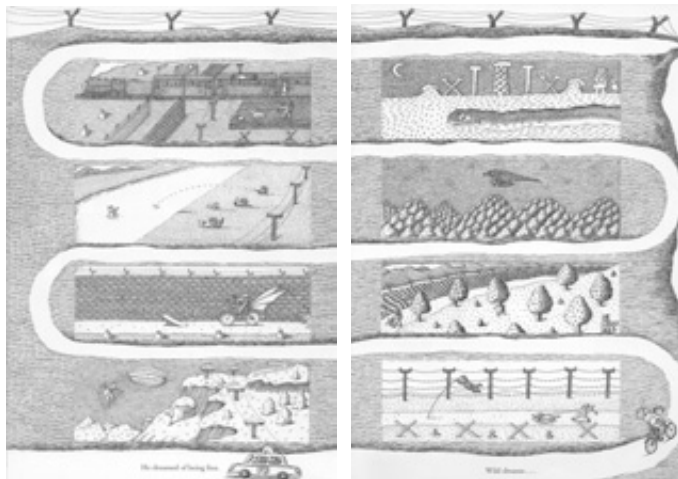


Figure 11. Cycling through a landscape of dreams, on the way to freedom.

Finally, without any words, the next spread shows how Peter jumps with his bike off a cliff into the West (as was already partly shown on figure 5). In this image, Peter’s drawings become his wings, symbolizing that creating art has always been his way to be free. In a surprising, innovative and complex way, the images completely take over the story, thereby

fully conveying the power of dreams in what seems to be a hopeless situation.

## Identification and disidentification

The various oppositions Peter Sís expresses through the use of text and image, show acts of identification and disidentification. It is specific for a life narrator that the ‘present self’ (the adult author creating the book) creates a character representing a younger version of him- or herself in the book. This character in the story is what I call the ‘past self’. Both the present self and the past self – intrinsically belonging to the same person – are fluid, narrative-based concepts that change during life. Our ‘self’ enables us to reflect on our thoughts, feelings, actions, social interactions, bodies, and so on (Eakin, 1999). Because of the fluency of the concept of self, the past self and the present self are not necessarily alike at all. The life narrator thus has to somehow persuade the reader that the life story being told is indeed his or her own life story. Therefore, ‘autobiographical acts involve narrators in *‘identifying’* themselves to the reader. [They] make themselves known by acts of identification’ (Smith and Watson, 2010, p. 38, my italics).

Peter Sís identifies himself as a victim of the historical circumstances and as a secret protester against them, trying to escape the Soviet regime. This identity of being a victim relates to the concept of a *collective identity*: Peter Sís is surely not the only victim, but represents the whole group of suppressed Czechoslovakians. Speaking for others is an action often seen in life narratives based on an experienced trauma (Sommer, 1988). In *The wall*, this is visually done by allocating red elements to the Soviets in black-and-white or partly colored images. The red color represents threat, invasion and suppression. Moreover, the Soviet officials are depicted as pig-like figures with big, round noses, whereas the Czechoslo-



vakian citizens are depicted as ordinary people. In this way, Sís emphasizes the opposition between the threatening, beastlike Soviet suppressors and the civilized oppressed Czechoslovakians. He leaves no doubt to identify with the latter group, and shows to strongly disidentify with the Soviet officials.

The oppositions also cause Peter Sís to identify himself as an artist. Art is an essential element in the book, referred to in both text ('As long as he could remember, he had loved to draw') and images, on which we see drawings and paintings everywhere. Creating art has always been a way for Peter Sís to express his emotions and to experience feelings of freedom. His identity as an artist enables us to link his past self, the boy drawing and painting constantly, to his present self: the man who created a work of art in the form of a picture book to tell the story of his youth.

## Conclusion

As I have shown, the interplay of textual and visual techniques in *The wall* express four main oppositions that have characterized Peter Sís's youth: East-West, suppression-freedom, despondency-hope and reality-dreams. By expressing these oppositions, Peter Sís identifies himself as a member of the suppressed group and as a secret protester against the Soviet regime, strongly disidentifying with the Soviet officials. In his multimodal life narrative, in short, Peter Sís addresses the global separation created by the Iron Curtain in a social-historical context, but he also succeeds in expressing the insinuating influence of this separation on his own youth.

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*He is a visual art historian and critic and focuses on visual art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially illustrations to children's literature in recent years. He wrote reviews of numerous exhibitions of illustrations and organized several independent exhibitions in that field. He participated in professional preparation of several BIB symposiums.*

**Continuity in Being Changeable, or always "Being Oneself"**

The Identity of Slovak Illustration in BIB

*"Bratislava Biennial has given the world a great lesson in visualization of children's picture books. The way books for children were illustrated in Slovakia and the Czech Republic in the second half of the 20th century was not usual in the West." (Italian art theoretician L. Sossi, BIB 2012 Catalogue, p. 13.)*

**BIB and the National Cultural Identity of Illustration**

In the light of the topic of this symposium BIB exhibitions have always been an ideal opportunity for presentation of "national cultural identities of illustration". Looking back, Japanese illustration ("national art without stylizing violence", E. Šefčáková, 1972, p. 181) and its influence on the world of illustration (globalization) needs to be pointed out.

BIB has also witnessed how other distinct "schools of national illustration" were taking shape with their clear and distinct features, specifically those of the Polish, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian (former Soviet), Iranian and others, which was eventually expressed in their harvest of awards, specifically 15 of 23 Grand Prix awards at BIB.

**Slovak Winning Illustrations at BIB**

Slovak illustration has also become a visible phenomenon in the world owing to BIB. The world has gradually gotten acquainted with Slovak illustration through the individual poetics of the illustrations by award-winning artists. That also is the focus of my presentation on the Identity of Slovak Illustration in the light of BIB.

BIB awards have been granted on a continuous basis since 1967 and there have been only three BIBs without a Slovak illustrator winning an award (1997, 2003 and 2007). Slovak



illustrators, 16 of them, have received 27 awards (Grand Prix, Golden Apple, Plaque or Honorary Mention), some individuals repeatedly, throughout the 23 BIBs (1967-2011) which attests to the continuous development of the high standard of the illustration genre in Slovakia since the 1960s.

## Slovak Illustration of the 1960s

Slovak illustration benefited from the legendary 1960s. The illustrator community welcomed professionally-trained artists (Academy of Fine Arts and Design = ACAD in Bratislava, Professor Vincent Hložník 1954-1972) and they all had the opportunity to produce illustrations for the state-run Mladé letá publishing house. A new creative foundation was laid and space was opened to implement new concepts and strategies in illustration. Albín Brunovský was an important personality in the young artist community. He offered his “imaginary world”, illustration oriented toward the world of art rich in imagination, as an asylum at the time of suppression (70s and 80s) and as an escape avenue from art occupied by ideologically political restraints.

As early as in the 1960s a generation of artists was on the rise whose works kept surprising the world at BIBs: V. Bombová, M. Cipár, R. Dúbravec, V. Gergeľová, R. Fila, J. Filo, A. Klimo, Ľ. Končeková-Veselá, J. Lebiš, O. Zimka and others. Modern art changed the position of illustration in children’s books. Illustrations were becoming “significant internally, independent from the literary source. That actually was the onset of lyrical and imaginative illustration which is of higher artistic values than epic illustration”, (M. Tokár, 2010, p. 229).

### 1. “Magic Imagining the Magic”

#### Viera Bombová

Towards the end of the 60s, when all were at awe admiring Japanese illustration at the first BIBs, Viera Bombová

(1932), an equal competitor from Slovakia, entered the stage of world illustration. Her appearance at the first BIB was a success (Plaque BIB 1967, Image 1). Her book illustrations are imaginative, lyrical, using almost just symbols – limiting the action elements for the sake of metaphors. Bombová makes her illustrations free of visual dependency and builds them upon inner ideas, combining graphical and painting techniques with the essence of folk art and also accepting inspiration from world art (P. Klee).

Bombová received her next award for her original visual language (Plaque BIB 1969, Image 2) and it is associated with her life accomplishment, namely illustrations to the book of Slovak tales *Janko Gondášik a zlatá pani* (Janko Gondášik and the Golden Lady, 1969) which ranks among the cornerstones of contemporary Slovak illustration (F. Holešovský, 1980, p. 16). O. Sliacky interpreted Bombová’s illustration as the “magic imagining the magic” (Bibiana 2/2002, p. 5).

## 2. Imaginative Illustration by Albín Brunovský

Yet another version of the so-called imaginative strand in Slovak illustration, namely its poetic-epic version, is represented by **Albín Brunovský** (1935-1997). His illustrations, a visual counterpart to tales, are bursting with rich imagination and brilliant technique. His visual interpretation of Andersen’s *Mala morská panna* (The Little Mermaid, 1967) was a combination of pen drawing and watercolor and shocked the illustration world right at the first BIB, just like Bombová, and Brunovský was rewarded with a BIB Plaque 1967 (Image 3).

In the following years Brunovský was winning the world of illustration with his minute detail-rich drawings of imaginary color visions, which intensified the literary qualities of the illustrated books and displayed his distinctive manner, underpinned by a tested-out, visual *manière* style rather than conventional illustration. His BIB presentations were rewarded



with more awards, namely the Golden Apple BIB 1977 and the Golden Apple BIB 1981 (Image 4).

### Brunovsky's Followers

The enchantment from Brunovský's "fantasy realism" lasted well into the 1980s. His teaching and illustration programme (he was the head of the graphics and illustration department at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava from 1967 to 1990) had a major influence on where Slovak book illustration culture was heading. The expressiveness of his illustrations and their imaginative orientation inspired many followers.

**Róbert Brun** (1948) was a student of Vincent Hložník but, similarly to Brunovský, he also had an imaginative approach to children's book illustration. Brun's illustrations are dominated by his specific poetics as an artist. Several typical elements reappear in his illustrations, namely figures as a geometric ornament, mirror images of the left and right portions of the composition, pop-art-like repetition of decorating motifs, shape distortions (stylization) of the figures, colors, and color and light (M. Vančo, 2013). These elements first appeared in his illustrations to the book *Kominár v bielom klobúku* (Chimney Sweeper in a White Hat, 1986) which caught the attention of the BIB jury (Golden Apple BIB 1987, Image 5).

Brun brought such an unusual figurative illustration perception that a view was expressed (B. Brathová, 2010, p. 10) that his "joyous and smart craziness" will have to wait a little till it is accepted by the community of children readers.

**Igor Piačka** (1962), a student of Brunovsky, had no problem with winning children's admiration as attested to by the Children's Jury Award BIB 1993 (Image 6). Piačka attracted children with painted illustrations expressing strong feelings through expressive (naturalistically-depicted) figures. Image 6 is from his representative book of ancient Chinese myths

*Príbehy dračích cisárov* (Stories of the Dragon Emperors, 1993). The book was not a typical children's book. "What makes a book a children's book is the illustrations rather than the literary work. The artist has combined the specific nature of the Chinese landscape tradition with an original typology of the figures of respective heroes' stories," (M. Veselý, *Bibiana* 4/2007, p. 59).

Towards the end of the 1990s a member of the middle generation, **Peter Uchnár** (1970), Kállay's student, followed up the imaginative line of the Brunovsky's school (a fantastic visual counterpart to the text). Uchnár's works remind the viewer of Brunovsky's school but his work (under post-modern influence) represents an original perception of that visual concept. His illustrations to *Gulliver's Travels I* (his first illustrated book!) attracted so much attention at BIB that he was awarded the Golden Apple BIB 1999 (Image 7).

The accomplishment in terms of Uchnár's visual view (painting poetics, detail, spatial vision and sharing the feelings with the story's character – B. Brathová, *Bibiana* 1/2010, p. 32) over the last decade is attested to by his winning the Children's Jury Award BIB 1999 for illustrations to *Peter Pan* (2008, Image 8).

### 3. Naive and Humorous Elements

Let us travel back in time. Since the turn of the 1960s-1970s the style of Slovak illustration was marked with a new trait of naïve art and children's visual expression.

The empirical version of that expression of illustration was developed by **Ondrej Zimka** (1937) who also belonged among distinguished representatives of illustrator humor. He found soil and food for his visual grotesqueness in funny texts (L. Feldek) and in his own personality. A distinct typology of the characters with caricaturist traits, strong colors, fantastic scenes with naïve-looking figures of living objects are just a few signs of these illustrations which evoke strong memories



of one's childhood experience. F. Holešovský (1980, p. 139) believed that this feeling played a role also in decision-making by the jury when it granted Zimka's works two awards in a row, namely a Plaque BIB 1969 and a Plaque BIB 1971 (Image 9).

A peculiar contribution to the epic illustration line was made by **Miroslav Cipár** (1935), an experimental artist with a special relationship to folk art. Typical signs of his internationally-acclaimed illustrations (Plaque BIB 1973, Image 10 and Plaque BIB 1977, Image 11) include: decorative drawing, realistic color of illustrations, style-related influence of folk baroque and Art Nouveau displaying richness of decorative elements, specific perception of humor and visual exaggeration.

Graphic artist **Viera Gergeľová** (1930-2004) studied under Hložník in "Wave 2" of his school (together with V. Bombova) and had her illustrations exhibited at the earliest BIBs (in 1967, 1969, and 1973). Her individual artistic contribution to the development of the "naïve" magical view of illustration (a high degree of poetry in the content, seeking a modern expression, civil composition of the characters' stories and phenomena – M. Veselý, 1980, p. 69) were intended primarily for the youngest readers and received international recognition only when she made a later return to BIB (Golden Apple BIB 1989, Image 12).

#### 4. Graphic Illustration to Folk Literature

The variety of expression in Slovak book production for children in the 1970s included not just the epic line but also the lyrical line of graphical illustration to folk literature. That trend was noticed by the BIB jury that awarded Plaque BIB 1975 (Image 13) to illustrations by **Róbert Dúbravec** (1924-1976). He incorporated the folk wood-carving tradition in his work. He moved from the monumental perception of the 1960s to an expression that is closer to our time. The image presented is the artist's interpretation of ancient Russian

epic songs in the book *Bohatsierske byliny* (Heroic Legends, 1965). He drew inspiration from the patrimony and heritage of Russian printed folk materials.

#### 5. The Imaginative-Poetic Direction of Illustration

The imaginative and poetic direction of children's book illustration during the 1970s and 1980s is associated with artists who studied under Professor Hložník, namely J. Kiselova-Sitekova, Ľ. Končekova-Vesela, D. Kállay, and K. Ševellova-Šutekova.

The works by Kiselova-Sitekova and Kállay will be discussed later and that is why we will now look at the BIB presentations by **Luba Kočeková-Veselá** (1942). Her poetic feeling best fits a fairy tale in which the artist can fully implement her emotion (G. Kordošová, 1981).

The artist first entered BIB in 1973 with her watercolor-based images evoking lyrical and poetic ideas of illustration with a speck of humor. The impression of the artist's charming and civilized illustration is intensified with her use of color. Her inspiring poetics as an illustrator led to the Plaque BIB 1979 award (Image 14).

**Katarína Ševellová-Šuteková** (1948) makes the content of her illustrations close to the children's view. While the illustrations of the previous artist can be characterized by "ethereal fragility, tenderness and kind humor", Ševellová-Šuteková puts more emphasis on the cognitive and educational role of illustration, perceiving it as an idea captured in a drawing.

*"Šutekova's illustrations for children rank among the imaginative-poetic line, with the artist's distinct endeavor to engage in a suitable visual communication with the children's psyche. In that respect Šutekova's illustrations display more frankness than visual fineness, being of an end itself. The overall nature of her illustrations is made complete with a civilized, sober, color mood underpinned with watercolors or*



combined technique. The characteristic signs of Šutekova's works include a specific and stereotypical (like in ancient icons) typology of the figures", (A. Švec, Bibiana 4/1995, p. 62). The artist's individual illustration style was awarded a Plaque BIB 1989 (Image 15).

Poetic embracement of the world of insects and plants in soft, watercolor tones and inks is the handprint of illustrations by **František Blaško** (1951), another student of Brunovsky, which started appearing at the end of the 1970s. His top artwork of that time was awarded with Honorary Mention BIB 1985 (Image 16). The awarded illustrations combine essential traits of visual language that the artist associated with children's books.

### Illustration in Wonderland or

Kállay's Developmental Turning Point

Professor Hložník's student, **Dušan Kállay** (1948), brought new initiative to paraphrasing children's books in the mid 1970s in the lap of color illustration. He started a new wave of ink drawing (Golden Apple BIB 1973) to soon afterwards enchanting viewers with painted color illustrations and paintings on wood (Golden Apple BIB 1975). The 27-year-old artist displayed the first synthesis of illustration art (F. Holešovský, 1980, p.126-137).

Kállay's visual interpretation of Alice in the Wonderland (1981, Image 17) was a turning point in the development of Slovak and world illustration. "Meeting Alice influenced all my work", the artist admitted. His accomplishment was rewarded with the top award, Grand Prix BIB 1983. His international success was also recognized by the Hans Christian Andersen Award (1988) for his lifelong accomplishments.

Vibrant vitality, high standards and a variety of expression can be found in Kállay's art, which is the product of "a magic symbiosis of sensual and intellectual aspects, inspired by contagious high spirits of life" (F. Kriška, Dušan Kállay – The

Magic World, Bratislava 1998, p. 16) which was appreciated at BIB 1983 and then another time 10 years later (Plaque BIB 1993, Image 18).

Since then Kállay's illustrations have been an "inseparable", integral part of the Slovak BIB collection (6 presentations since 1993 and 12 presentations altogether since 1971).

Kállay's fairytale world comes in two versions to BIB 2013, namely illustrations to the motifs of the world of bugs (Bohem Press, Italy 2011) and visual paraphrasing to *Slovenske rozprávky (The Slovak Fairy Tales)* by P. Dobšinsky (2012). Let the illustration to the tale *Nebojsa (Brave Heart)* stand as an example on behalf of all the rest (Image 19).

Professor Kállay has been the head of the Graphics and Book Illustration Department of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava since 1990.

### Image Poetics: "Finger drawing on a fogged-up window" Jana Kiselova-Sitekova

**Jana Kiselova-Sitekova** (1942), Professor Hložník's student, entered the illustration world with extraordinary poetic-lyrical qualities and imaginative expression at the end of the 1960s. Her watercolor drawings (the first synthesis of illustration works presented at BIBs in 1981, 1985 and 1987) were followed by a break-through expression style that turned into canvas painting (1986). Her fourth participation in BIB international competition brought her an award (a Plaque BIB 1991) at the right time and reassured her that she had picked the right way.

The illustrator kept patiently developing her art in a lyrical-epic style, multiplying the expressive possibilities of color (fine nuances) on one hand and intensifying drawing details and the fantasy-realistic spaciousness of the poetic line of the Slovak illustration on the other hand. Her illustrations to the book *Adam a Eva (Adam and Eve)* won a Golden Apple BIB 1995 (Image 20) and attracted earned attention.

Her visual poetics “*finger drawing on a fogged-up window*” (F. Kriška, Bibiana 4/2002, p. 41) kept attracting attention at BIBs and brought her multiple successes (Golden Apple 2001, Image 21), (Plaque BIB 2009). She is the second most successful Slovak illustrator (and the top woman illustrator!) in terms of BIB awards, with Kállay ahead of her and Brunovský following her.

## 6. New Versions of Expressionism (or Raptures from the Game!)

The end of the 1990s witnessed the arrival of perhaps the greatest talent, besides Bombova, Brunovsky and Kállay, to the Slovak children’s illustration stage, namely **Peter Uchnár** (1970). Kállay’s idea of illustration is closer to Brunovsky, his teacher, as has already been pointed out.

Kállay’s student, **Luboslav Paľo** (1968), has presented his works at BIB since 1999, and is more influenced by Japanese illustration than by his teacher. He has gone through dynamic development as an illustrator, gradually moving from conventional expression graphic elements to painting compositions full of creative ingeniousness. His original painting style, rich in colors and comic stylization of animal figures (with big emphasis on detail), was appreciated as a contribution to illustration poetics and rewarded with the Golden Apple BIB 2005 (Image 22). The image is an illustration, actually “a visual recital” (M. Veselý, Bibiana 4/2008, p. 20) to his authored book (2005) published the following year under the title *Haló, haló, pani Mačka!* (Hello, Hello, Mrs. Cat!).

The arrival of young artists – some of whom had a study major other than fine arts or illustration at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava – brought new vividness to Slovak illustration. **Martina Matlovičová-Králova** (1975) added her set-designer vision that together with her animation training revived the perception of illustration that was also touched by a “post-modern spirit”.

Her fifth BIB presentation brought her the Golden Apple BIB 2009 (Image 23). Her illustrations represented a new course in the art of the new generation that is somewhat more “aggressively” oriented due to the influence of graffiti, street art, space decoration and signs (M. Tokár, 2012), seeking to develop an suitable visual language from her illustrated children’s books to capture a contemporary feeling.

Matlovičová-Králová “*does not bear the burden of visual formulas and with every new book she relies on her (valuable) spontaneous and creative power. She develops the expressive illustration line influenced by naïve children’s visual expression... I do not know how far she bears in mind the receiver of her illustrations but my impression is that she is just like the little (potential) reader and makes her illustrations so that she would like them if she were that little girl. And in that way she finds self-fulfillment in illustration*” (M. Tokár, Bibiana 1/2010, p. 36).

The most recent success for Slovak illustration is the Golden Apple BIB 2011 award for **Tomáš Klepoch** (1981), a member of the youngest generation of illustrators (Image 24). He challenges the refined, style-perfected “handicraft” art by D. Kállay and J. Kiselova-Sitekova with an invitation and temptation to simultaneously integrate several components (graphics, painting and computer) with his illustration art. He put it as follows:

*“It is making a drawing using a tablet in a digitalized environment of computer software. A tablet is a gadget that can be used to make a drawing with a tool similar to a pen. This way of drawing is natural to artists; the tablet pen differentiates as many as a thousand kinds of pressure. A similar story then occurs in the computer to what would happen on paper. But the computer will not do anything instead of you; one has to do his/her part of the job and work hard on it.”* (O. Sliacky, Bibiana 4/2011, p. 19).

Similarly to Matlovičova's illustrations, the vectors determining Klepoch's final image of the illustration include irony and enchantment with the game. Both artists sprinkle their illustrations with spices of strong expression, which is the characteristic feature of contemporary Slovak illustration (M. Tokár, 2012, p. 141).

## Two Views of Slovak Illustrations Receiving BIB Awards

### 1. Development trends

The national identity or distinct image of Slovak illustration was perceived by BIB via certain tendencies that were setting the developmental direction of Slovak illustration since the late 1960s which did not go unnoticed in works by individual artists at BIBs.

BIB's attention was first attracted by: **1. Imaginative illustration with a lyrical setting** in works by Viera Bombova (Images 1, 2); and **2. Imaginative illustration with a poetic setting** by Albin Brunovsky (Images 3, 4). That trend continued and was visible in works by Brunovsky's followers such as R. Brun (Image 5) and M. Piaček (Image 6) and received a special, most-modern flair, and was the driving engine in the illustrations by P. Uchnár (Image 7) at the turn of the centuries.

A living source of inspiration is: **3. Illustration with naïve elements and humor** in original strategies of O. Zimka

(Image 9), M. Cipár (Image 10) and V. Gergeľova (Image 12). A role certainly was played in illustration development by: **4. Graphic illustration to folk literature** (inspired by folk woodcarving) in works by R. Dúbravec (Image 13).

The largest array of illustration styles is under the umbrella of: **5. Imaginative and poetic direction of illustration in several original variations and positions:** Ľ. Končeková-

Veselá (Image 14), K. Švellová-Šuteková (Image 15), and F. Blaško (Image 16). The dominant positions belong to D. Kállay (Images 17, 19) and J. Kiselova-Sitekova (Images 20, 21), who both received several BIB awards.

After the turn of the centuries, in the "post-Brunovsky era", the "Kállay era" and the "Sitekova era", a younger generation of more assertive illustrators arrived at the scene sharing: **6. New expressiveness.** That style permits representing what is invisible and unpronounceable and is targeted at unexpected feelings and emotions. We can see original illustrations of various styles, namely realistic-imaginary (P. Uchnár, Images 7, 8), multicolor-stylized (Ľ. Paľo, Image 22), unconventional, full of colors and humor (M. Matlovičová-Kráľová, Image 23) and illustrations with brutal lines and regions (T. Klepoch, Image 24).

Including individual illustrators in respective trends cannot be permanently fixed as there are artists who belong to several different lines of expressions or trends. Let us mention a representative of the middle generation, P. Uchnár (Images 7, 8), whose expressive (painting) manner fits in the category of the "new expressiveness" and simultaneously follows the Brunovsky illustration school (Image 4).

### 2. Across Individual Styles and Settings

A brief recap of Slovak illustration may be imagined as a tree with many branches with several kinds of fruit on those branches (Ľ. Kepštová, 2008, p. 5) and we visualize the following mosaic of individual original poetics of Slovak illustrations over the past half century, a period that also corresponds with BIBs:

Children-friendly "naïve-like" illustrations by **František Blaško** (Image 16), magic-imagining-magic by **Viera Bombova** (Images 1, 2), "coat-of-arms-like geometric style" by **Róbert Brun** (Image 5), magic realism by **Albin Brunovsky** (Image 4), calligraphy-like drawings with a grotesque trend

by **Miroslav Cipár** (Images 10, 11), a graphical decorative style by **Róbert Dúbravec** (Image 13), lyrical “naïve” imaginings by **Viera Gergel’ova** (Image 12), painting and drawing of sensual-intellectual illustration frescoes by **Dušan Kállay** (Images 17, 19), image-like poetics “finger drawing on fogged-up glass” by **Jana Kiselova-Sitekova** (Images 20, 21), aggressive, graphics-revitalizing “new expressionism” by **Tomáš Klepoch** (Image 24), humorous and charming watercolor lyrics by **Luba Končekova-Vesela** (Image 14), “innovative style” of grotesque collage by **Martina Matlovičova-Králova** (Image 23), painting-like humorous, colorful, frolicking animal figures by **Luboslav Paľo** (Image 22), symbolic-poetic image ideas by **Katarína Švellova-Šutekova** (Image 15), an imaginative and mysterious world of “ideas from beyond” by **Peter Uchnár** (Images 7, 8), and a grotesque idyllic setting by **Ondrej Zimka** (Image 9).

## Conclusion

This review sought to point out certain characteristic features of Slovak illustration to children’s books over the past half a century of BIB’s existence in works by 17 awarded illustrators (BIBs 1967-2011) and to identify certain development trends, individual styles and points of view.

Contemporary Slovak illustration is imaginative, lyrical, epic, poetic, humorous, balladic, melancholic, meditative, decorative, naïve-like, expressive – painting and graphics alike – as well as serious and frolicking, colorful, associative and so forth.

Its most complex version is “Kállay-like” with a “puzzle” to crack, inviting readers to cooperate by using their own vision, their own thinking. Its most sensitive version, the lyrical and epic setting is “Sitek-like” and encourages readers to receive images with “open hearts and eyes wanting to see more” and guides them to emotional experiencing of the text.

D. Kállay and J. Kiselová have already become “classical”

Slovak illustrators for children. The counterpart to their poetics are illustrations by the youngest generation who seem to be self-confident enough as one of the BIB 2011 award winners, T. Klepoch, put it: *“Let us mention Matúš Maťátka, Daniela Olejníkova, Ďuro Balogh for example. They are excellent illustrators who bring perfect and original visual views to the world of illustration in a worldwide setting. They are not the kind of persons who do international trend spotting and then beat their chests telling everyone how awesome they are. They do have a powerful visual language of their own and they worked hard to develop it”*, (O. Sliacky, Bibiana 4/2011, p. 16).

The creative story told by Slovak illustration in BIBs (through the awarded illustrators) appears as “continuity in being changeable”. In this time of globalization the Slovak illustrators seems to keep “being oneself”, to paraphrase the view expressed by M. Vesely (Bibiana 4/2005, pp. 57-58) when he referred to one of Slovakia’s most promising artists, Peter Uchnár.

Coming back to the fact that Slovak illustration has been able to keep attracting BIB attention (attested to by the numerous awards), primarily due to having integrated into its form and style the artistic charge and spark from graphics and painting in a very natural way by actually initiating them several times. This reality has often escaped the outside, international view.

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Img. 1 Viera Bombová, Golden Apple BIB 1967  
*Illustration to Obrova stupaj*  
(*The Giant's Footprint*, 1965)



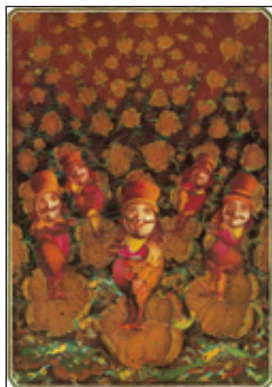
Img. 2 Viera Bombová, Golden Apple BIB 1969  
*Illustration to Janko Gondášik a zlatá pani* (*Janko Gondášik and the Golden Lady*, 1969)



Img. 3 Albín Brunovský, Plaque BIB 1967  
*Illustration to Malá morská panna* (*The Little Mermaid*, 1967)



Img. 4 Albín Brunovský, Golden Apple BIB 1981 *Illustration to Pávi kráľ (The Peacock King, 1979)*



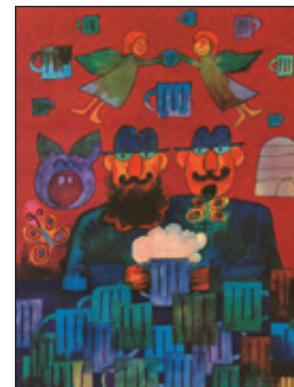
Img. 5 Róbert Brun, Golden Apple 1987 *Illustration to Kominár v bielom klobúku (The Chimney Sweeper in a White Hat 1985)*



Img. 6 Igor Piačka, Children's Jury Award BIB 1993 *Illustration to Príbehy dračích cisárov (Stories of the Dragon Emperors, 1993)*



Img. 8 Peter Uchnár, Children's Jury Award BIB 2009 *Illustration to Peter Pan (2008)*



Img. 9 Ondrej Zimka, Plaque BIB 1969 *Illustration to Zelené jelene (The Green Deer, 1969)*



Img. 7 Peter Uchnár, Golden Apple BIB 1999 *Illustration to Gulliverove cesty I. (Gulliver's Travels, 1998)*



Img. 10 Miroslav Cipár, Plaque BIB 1973 *Illustration to Biela kňažná (The White Princess, 1973)*



Img. 11 Miroslav Cipár, Plaque BIB 1977 *Illustration to Dunajská kráľovna (The Danube Queen, 1977)*

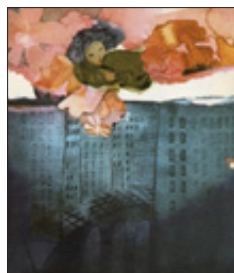


Img. 12 Viera Gergeľová, Golden Apple BIB 1989 *Illustration to Čertov mlynček (The Devil's Mill, 1988)*

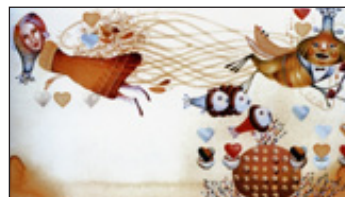




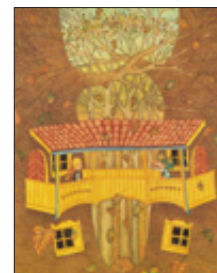
Img. 13 Róbert Dúbravec, Plaque BIB 1975 *Illustration to Bohatierske byliny (Heroic legends, 1974)*



Img. 14 Ľuba Končeková-Veselá, Plaque BIB 1979 *Illustration to Hodinový kvet (Momo, 1979)*



Img. 15 Katarína Švelllová-Šuteková, Plaque BIB 1989 *Illustration to Rie-kanky (Children's Poems, 1988)*



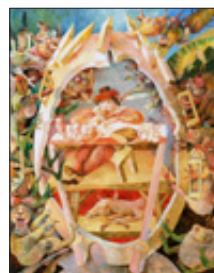
Img. 16 František Blaško, Honorary Mention BIB 1985 *Illustration to Kamaráti pašinkovia (Friends, 1983)*



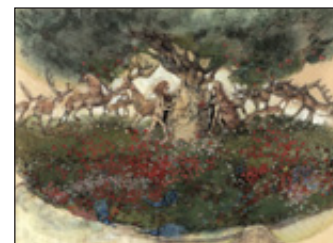
Img. 17 Dušan Kállay, Grand Prix BIB 1983 *Illustration to Alica v krajine zázrakov (Alice in Wonderland, 1981)*



Img. 18 Dušan Kállay, Plaque BIB 1993 *Illustration to Ein Strich zieht durch die Welt (1993)*



Img. 19 Dušan Kállay, *Illustration to Slovenské rozprávky (Slovak Fairy Tales, 2012)*



Img. 20 Jana Kiselová-Siteková, Golden Apple BIB 1995 *Illustration to Adam a Eva (Adam and Eve, 1994)*



Img. 21 Jana Kiselová-Siteková, Golden Apple BIB 2001 *Illustration to Palculienka (The Thumb Girl, 2001)*



Img. 22 Ľuboslav Paľo, Golden Apple BIB 2005 *Illustration to Nicht erwischt! (2005)*



Img. 23 Martina Matlovičová-Kráľová, Golden Apple BIB 2009 *Illustration to Tracyho tiger (Tracy's Tiger, 2009)*



Img. 24 Tomáš Klepoch, Golden Apple BIB 2011 *Illustration to Ako som sa stal mudrcom (How I Became a Wise Man, 2010)*



## Manuela Vladić-Maštruko



*Manuela Vlado - Mastruko was born in 1962 and grew up in Zadar, Croatia. She went on to finish her schooling in Zagreb and graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in the class of Prof. Ferdinand Kulmer in 1985.*

*She has had a number of one-person shows and group exhibitions in Croatia and abroad. Alongside her professional involvement in art, she conducts practical research within the field of human visual expressiveness and creativity . She is the author of a number of multimedia art projects for children and adults and now co-operates with museums and galleries by organising and managing arts projects for visitors.*

*Manuela was a member of several juries dedicating to art and illustration. She has written and illustrated 10 original picture books for children and wrote number of articles on art . She has received a number of awards and prizes for her work.*

*Manuela lives and works in Zagreb and Zadar, Croatia. She is a member of the Croatian Artists Society and the Croatian Association of Independent Artists.*

## Identity Today: the National Cultural Identity of Illustration in the Time of Globalisation

### Once there were Two Brothers: the Lowest and the Highest

Our planet is fast losing its regions of virgin wilderness and our links with nature are fading away. Global climate changes are increasingly threatening the diversity of the world's plant and animal life, and the pressure of global socio-political changes is weakening our cultural uniqueness, our links with our roots, national culture and tradition. At this moment tradition is crumbling in the all segments of society, and thus also in art and illustration.

Illustration has always been linked with the written word, and in connection with the subject we are discussing here, this means with literature for children, which developed from oral folk tradition. Thus its visual expression has always used the symbols and iconography of the culture and nation in which it developed. This is so in cultures with strongly expressed racial and national characteristics, such as Iran, China, Japan and Africa, to mention only some, and also among European peoples whose cultural diversity is not as strong. Just as individual identity is built through the **consciousness of difference – of self with respect to others**, so national identity was also built and became part of people's consciousness through their connections with the cultural tradition and its **specific characteristics within a nation – with respect to another nation**.

On the other hand, folk myths, legends, stories and fairytales, and the illustrations that accompany them, target the fundamental and universal/global human being in accordance with the **highest common denominator**.<sup>1</sup> Regard-

<sup>1</sup> In this term the author plays with the mathematical concept of the , which in mathematics refers to what all units have in common to. The term has entered popular culture with a different, non-mathematical meaning which indicates the least sophisticated element in a particular situation.



less of gender, race or nation, we all feel pain, fear, devotion, love... I believe that we all know what war is, and peace, we differentiate between good and evil.

This primeval universality of stories for children is often achieved by using **archetypes** which turn all regional subjects (by employing spiritual language) into universal ones and ensure their healing properties, accompanied by a series of instructions to guide the child through the complexity of growing up and living. However, despite all similarities and equality, there are also natural differences among the people of a coherent community. In the field of child rearing, it is an old rule that besides respect for the universal nature of the human being and the specific features of the national being, each child must be reared as an individual. In doing so, account must be taken of all his or her physical and psychological characteristics, and also of the aspects that the national culture promotes and emphasises, and those that it disregards or undervalues.

During history and throughout the story-telling tradition, the cultural approach to the structure of the story changed, leading to its rearrangement in accordance with the current ideological views and principles. There is strong suspicion that the folk story-tellers who passed their knowledge down to the Grimm brothers “purified” many of their stories because of the brothers’ strong religious feelings. It can also be assumed that the famous brothers covered pagan symbolism with the symbols of their own religion, as did many other tellers and recorders of cultural tradition. Most of today’s collections of old fairy-tales and myths were in the same way “cleansed” of what the contemporary globalised society considers culturally *taboo* in books for children. Luckily, by using the **archetypal integrity** of the story some contemporary tellers and illustrators are able to renew many myths and legends and to bring back their primeval healing powers “because for them the story is

cure that strengthens and corrects the individual and the community.”<sup>2</sup>

In the materialistic global society the socio-economic policy is the same everywhere: all Europe is under the rule of the *extreme centre of liberal capitalism*, and in this kind of capitalism variety is not permitted. “Today we witness two intertwined processes: in politics the dictatorship of capital, and in culture the process of market realism. Just like in the past socialist realism, as an art expression, always had to include a dose of political propaganda, so **today the cultural product must promote the ideology of profit.**”<sup>3</sup>

“The children’s picture-book is a *product* and is subject to the laws of production and good sales but, unfortunately, it is today increasingly being treated only as *merchandise*. In the atmosphere of the consumer society the ideology of profit and commercialism requires that **merchandise must bring a disproportionately greater amount of material than of spiritual gain.**”<sup>4</sup> The global market is dominant, so processes of cultural independence and development fade under the burden of homogenisation. In Croatia this process began long before the process of joining the European Union: some Croatian publishers always found it cheaper (= more profitable) to import picture-books (which are printed “somewhere” in millions of copies) than to pay domestic authors. This is why many Croatian illustrators joined the international market where they made successful (= profitable) careers and secured their living. Of course, one might ask whether this cost them some of the authenticity of their artistic expression, and to what degree. Too often imitation is seen instead of originality: if a book is successful (on the US

2 Clarissa Pincola Estes, (Women who Run with the Wolves), p.32Algoritam, Zagreb, 2004  
3 Tariq Ali, from an interview in the HRT programme 2013.

4 Manuela Vladić-Maštruko, from the explanation of the Grigor Vitez Prize for illustration for 2012.



market, for example) – the market promptly responds: let us make our (European) version!

“The globally widespread prejudice about the simple structure of the child’s personality, which is still developing, has led to the mass production of simple and low-quality material designed to provide **instant universal fun and pleasure**.”<sup>5</sup> Possibly the main taboo of the global culture is cultural diversity (because what is globally universal eliminates the diversity of emotions, reactions, thinking, imagining... and places them all under the *common denominator* of shallow fun understandable to all).

Today scenes of cruelty are often censored both in ancient stories and in contemporary literature for children on the grounds of wanting to shield children from violence, although they are at the same time exposed to endless scenes of violence in other technological media. However, while the archetypal scenes of cruelty in fairy-tales symbolically lead through a psychological process of **processing and guiding**, the explicit violence of the surface world contains no map of knowledge, nothing but naked fear. Therefore, tradition can be a guide through deep psychological foundations and through the everyday life of the contemporary surface world, because “...fairy-tales and myths left us a clear map of knowledge from the past, which we must follow in the present.”<sup>6</sup>

Today people are alienated from their work and from nature and excessively rely on technology, which has led to **pseudo-cultural uniformity**.

The character of a particular culture is based on unique verbal and visual symbols, wealth of language, way of think-

ing and imagining, religion and tradition, and its fundamental distinction may be transcended, as we have said, in the **highest common denominator**, in essential universal humanity. Unfortunately, the character of the global pseudo-culture is most often brought together under the *lowest common denominator*. The ideology of profit **censors the diversity of symbols** and replaces it by its own symbols: the wealth and diversity of language and image are replaced by **pictographic signs: so as to be understandable to all**. Materialistic profit has replaced spiritual profit; possessing a large amount of cheap goods creates an illusion of wealth and the motto: *the more you have, the more you are worth*, fuels insatiable materialistic hunger.

Perhaps we could have said all this as follows: “Once upon a time there was a King who had two sons: one was called Highest and the other Lowest. When he felt that his time was drawing near and that he must choose which son will be his heir, he called them to his bedside and said:

- *My Sons, go into the world and look for an answer to this question:*

- **What is the same and different for everybody, and what is the same for everybody but can be different for one person?** - *who brings back the right answer shall inherit my kingdom.*”

On this occasion, and on this subject, I would like to introduce to you four Croatian authors and illustrators. Two have achieved an international career and their picture-books sometimes appear on the Croatian market as imports bought from foreign publishers, because of the principle that we mentioned above. The authors openly admit that they must very often tailor their original expression to the needs of the market so as to also open up space for their non-commercial writer and illustrator projects. However, each of them is strongly tied to the identity of his or her home region, which is

5 Manuela Vladić-Maštruko, from the explanation of the Grigor Vitez Prize for illustration for 2012.

6 Clarissa Pincola Estes, (Women who Run with the Wolves), Algoritam, Zagreb, 2004.



mirrored in their use of palette, atmosphere and various contemporary materials, approach and media, choice of subject matter and in each of the subjects that they illustrate. Their illustrations reflect the diversity of Croatian regions (seaside, sea, fertile plains, hills, mountains...) with their geographical, traditional, mythical and cultural particulars, and carry a mark of national and cultural identity.

**Zdenko Bašić** wrote and illustrated the picture-book *Sjeverno zapadni vjetar* (*The North West Wind*) inspired by memories of the stories his grandmothers told him when he was a little boy. He grew up in the small town of Samobor under hills inhabited by many mythical beings that are now quietly disappearing, although some continue to survive even under the weight of the progress of civilisation. In fact, we could say that this picture-book has provided them with a new/real home.

As we slide into the atmosphere of mystical flowerbeds and primeval forests, the wind, as the symbol of the story-telling force, blows the story in our face and soul in gusts. We are met by beings brought alive in several media and techniques, through the creative alchemy of puppets, drawings, photographs and computer graphics, which entered our human world to give us messages in quiet voices.

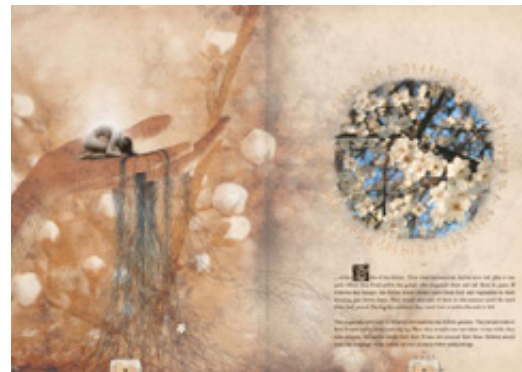
“His illustrations and animations emanate the coded mysteriousness of the fairy tale, they are very lyrical and the scenes are based on the story’s atmosphere and mood. By using collage and gently blending the figures with the architecture of the background/foundation/scene he creates an atmosphere of ancient fairy tales, in which he occasionally includes elements and metaphors of the urban culture which gives them a very contemporary appearance. While using urban motifs to remind us of the boundary between story and reality, Bašić at the same time preserves his characteristic inclination for fairy tales through a sophisticated sense of atmosphere and feeling for detail. Deeply connected with nature and its changes, and

with stories and fairy tales from folk tradition, this young artist also includes elements of mysticism and the decorative in his illustrations, which give them a nuance of ethno character”.<sup>7</sup>

**Illustrated contributions:**



1. Illustrations from the author's picture book *The North West Wind*, Planeotopija, Zagreb, 2011



2. Illustrations from the author's picture book *The North West Wind*, Planeotopija, Zagreb, 2011

<sup>7</sup> Manuela Vladić-Maštruko, iz obrazloženja za nagradu za ilustraciju Grigor Vitez za 2007. godinu

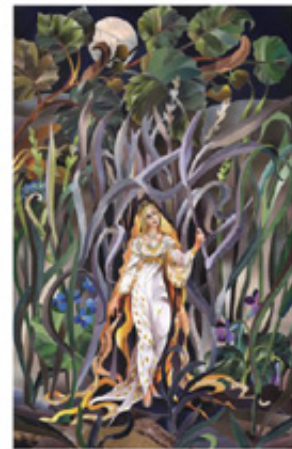
**CV:** Zdenko Bašić was born in Zagreb in 1980. He graduated from the Zagreb School of Applied Arts and Design, Department of Graphic Design, in 1999, and from the Department of Animation of the Academy of Fine Arts, University of Zagreb, in 2005. He was awarded as best graduate for his stop-motion graduation film *Snow Story – Angels in Snow* (10 min). He has been working as an illustrator since 2002 and has illustrated many children's books, book covers and magazines for major Croatian publishers. Since 2006 he has collaborated with the *London Bright Agency*, as well as with various British (*Carlton Books*), American (*Hachette*, *Running Press*) and other European publishers. His original approach and creativity were recognized from the beginning, and many of his illustrations were either nominated for, or won, the most prominent Croatian awards.

He has his own studio and works as a free-lance artist, illustrator, and animator.

**Ana Jakić-Divković** was born and grew up in Erdut in Slavonia, the great, fertile Croatian plain which has since days of old been inhabited by various mythical beings. It is, therefore, not surprising that she devoted much of her creative work to illustrating folk tales and stories, and also contemporary stories that contain traditional elements. Ana has set up a very postmodern dialogue between the traditional and the contemporary: her illustrations of traditional fairy-tales are a "skilful intermedia dialogue in which she makes use of what the contemporary digital media have to offer; she paraphrases the universal pixelisation of our digital field"<sup>8</sup> and the density of the digital record by applying manual craftsmanship, in which she creates a dense, fine tapestry of collage. She meticulously weaves lyrical pictures of enchanted landscapes, fairy carriages and the mythical scenography of long-lost kingdoms. Ironically, "just like a fairy-tale maiden

who goes through her initiation by counting grains of millet",<sup>9</sup> she makes precisely-tooled cut outs from illustrated women's magazines which dictate secular global models of the ideals of beauty, fashion and success of the contemporary girl/woman. Like an enchantress, she uses metaphysical forces to transform the complete debasement of global culture and contemporary reality into the primeval indigenous realms of the imagination. As we look at her illustrations, the world that they show suddenly sucks us in: we hear the rippling of the stream, are surrounded by the scent of moss, stand before a mythical castle/kingdom. It is as if our vulnerable reality of an observer has been transcended by the spatial and swirling structures created by scraps of paper.

### Illustrated contributions:



1. *Cvijetnjak velebitskih vila* (*The Flower Garden of Velebit Fairies*), Jozo Vrkić, Glagol, Zagreb, 2011

2. *Little Fairy*, *Cvijetnjak velebitskih vila* (*The Flower Garden of Velebit Fairies*), Jozo Vrkić, Glagol, Zagreb, 2011

<sup>8</sup> Goran Blagus, predgovor samostalnoj izložbi Ane Jakić-Divković u , 2005. godine

<sup>9</sup> Zvezdana Jembrih, predgovor samostalnoj izložbi A.J. Divković u , 2011., Zagreb



**CV:** The painter and graphic artist Ana Jakić-Divković was born in 1963 in Erdut (Croatia). She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in the class of Professor Frano Paro in 1986. She showed her work at many group and solo exhibitions of painting and sculpture. She has worked as an illustrator since 1982 and has illustrated many picture books, books and textbooks for children. She cooperates with cultural and scientific institutions in the design of diplomas, charters and scrolls of honour. She publishes illustrations and texts in Croatian magazines for children. She has written and illustrated two picture books. She lives and works in Zagreb.

**Dubravka Kolanović** began an international career very early, when she was only 18 she won the Landmark Editions competition for her first picture book. Since then Dubravka has become a citizen of the world, travelling widely with the ecological organisation *Earth watch* and making illustrations for UNICEF. She has illustrated over 150 picture books for foreign publishers, some of which she wrote herself.

Considering her biography, it is easy to understand the universal quality of her expression characterised by figures and landscapes shown in gentle silhouettes defined by contrasting colours, not contours. Using the techniques of dry pastel and watercolour, she paints scenes from far-away tropical jungles or, with the same strength, the icy areas of the North Pole (which she visited herself!). However, in these harmonious and balanced compositions Dubravka remembers even the smallest details which so gladly capture the attention of the child's eye.

I also want to mention this author's domestic editions. As a child from the sea, she made excellent illustrations for two stories from the Croatian coastal region: the first about the brave sailor *Miho Pracat* who lived in the Dubrovnik Republic in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the second for *Halugica* by the Croatian writer Vladimir Nazor. The wealth of texture and the colour contrasts provide powerful dramatic counterpoints in the illustrations of

these two picture books: from the foaming sea to the autumn wood, from submarine scenes contrasting strongly with the surface-dwelling world and the figures that live in it.

In the illustrations that were awarded and published in the American *Creative Quarterly* journal, Dubravka uses a gentle palette of subdued tones and this time she found inspiration somewhat further away from her coastal homeland: in the Zagorje hills of continental Croatia and the traditional wooden toys of that region

**Illustrated contributions:**



1. Illustration from *Creative Quarterly Magazine* inspired by a traditional wooden toy from Zagorje, New York, 2010

2. Illustration from *Creative Quarterly Magazine* inspired by a traditional wooden toy from Zagorje, New York, 2010



**CV:** Dubravka Kolanović was born 1973 in Zagreb. She studied at the Savannah College of Art and Design and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, where she majored in painting. Dubravka began her career as a children's book illustrator at the age of 18 when she won a Gold Award for her first picture book *A Special Day*, published by Landmark Editions in the USA. Dubravka illustrated more than 150 picture books and text books, and also painted 40 UNICEF cards and posters. *Bookbag* nominated the picture book *Shine Moon Shine*, written by David Conway and illustrated by Dubravka, among the top ten picture books in 2008. She won an award of the *Oshima Museum* of Picture Books in Japan and her illustrations were published as silver medal winner in *3x3, The Magazine of Contemporary Illustration* in NY. Dubravka also twice won the *Creative Quarterly's* competition in the category of professional illustration. Currently she and her family live in Zadar, Croatia, and she is represented by the *Bright Agency* in London.

**Manuela Vladić-Maštruko** is an author and artist who grew up at the sea, in the city of Zadar. She devoted much of her painting and illustration to the subject of growing up, i.e. childhood, under the title of *Otok djetinjstva (Island of Childhood)*. In a 2009 she wrote and illustrated the picture book *San o moru (The Dream about the Sea)* which speaks about man's archetypal dream of freedom, for which the sea is a metaphor. Addressing people of all age groups, Manuela uses picture and word to structure the story on several levels of communication: for the youngest there is a succession of educational elements: a variety of small fish, colours of dawn and dusk, kinds of boats, ways of fishing...some of them found in all the littoral regions of the world, others completely regional – specific to the place in which the author grew up. Especially interesting and original objects in this picture book are the fish and boats made of driftwood and pieces of wire

and net thrown out by the sea... The force of the sea transformed these elements, and in them the author recognises and defines what the sea merely indicated.

The hero of the story dreams on the seashore and the sails of his imagination lead him to conquer the high seas, until a strange set of circumstances wakes him up, with his feet in a basin! In this moment of global crisis, when recession is the subject on everyone's lips, people who are slightly older will certainly remember the formerly popular saying: "*Who has money bathes in the sea, who hasn't, at home in the basin.*" However, the author does not suggest escape from (harsh) reality but invites us to persevere in one of the basic human abilities: the power to close our eyes and focus on visions leading us into worlds of fiction, not to escape from reality but to gather the strength to change it.

### Illustrated contributions:



1. Illustration from the author's picture book *The Dream about the Sea*, 2009, Sipar, Zagreb



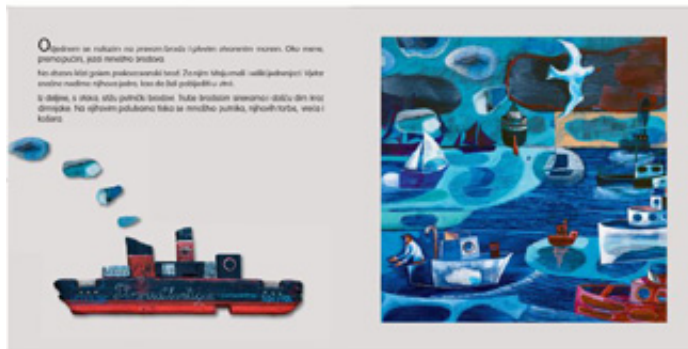


Manuela Vladić - Maštruko was born in 1962 and grew up in Zadar, Croatia. She went on to finish her schooling in Zagreb and graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in the class of Professor Ferdinand Kulmer in 1985.

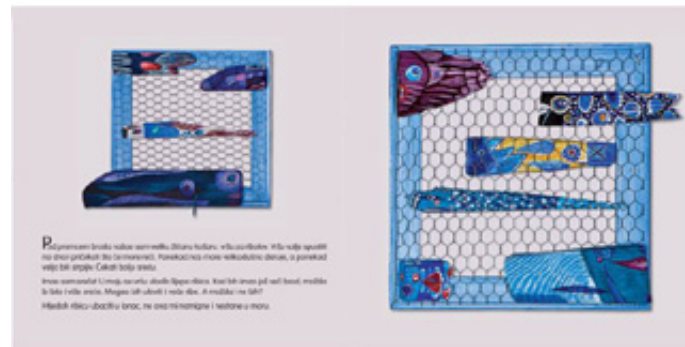
She has had a number of solo and group exhibitions in Croatia and abroad. Alongside her professional involvement in art, she conducts practical research in the field of human visual expressiveness and creativity. She is the author of a number of multimedia art projects for children and adults and co-operates with museums and galleries by organising and managing arts projects for visitors.

Manuela was a member of several juries for art and illustration. She has written and illustrated 10 original picture books for children and is the author of several articles on art. She has received a number of awards and prizes for her work.

Manuela lives and works in Zagreb and Zadar.



3. Illustration from the author's picture book *The Dream about the Sea*, 2009, Sipar, Zagreb



2. Illustration from the author's picture book *The Dream about the Sea*, 2009, Sipar, Zagreb



4. Illustration from the author's picture book *The Dream about the Sea*, 2009, Sipar, Zagreb

## Myra Voipio (Finland)



She is a doctoral student at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. She received her MA in literature from University of Oulu in 2009. Her research interests include children's and youth literature, particularly girls' literature, popular romance and chick lit. She has worked as freelance editor of children's books and children's literature trainer and lecturer. Voipio has published articles about fairy tales, girls' literature, recent Finnish young adult literature and chick lit. She has also translated children's books into Finnish and written a children's novel, *The Overweight Unicorn and Other Stories* (Ylipainoinen yksisarvinen ja muita kertomuksia, Helsinki: Lasten Keskus: 2010). Her PhD investigates the development of Finnish girls' literature. She is president of IBBY Finland's Review Committee

## Families, Tradition and Togetherness: Finnish National Cultural Identity in the Time of Globalization



Father is vacuuming in the living room. Illustration from Salla Savolainen's *Maikki ja kellarin kummitukset* ('Maikki and the Ghosts in the Cellar', WSOY 2011).

### Introduction

In this article, I focus on contemporary Finnish picture books for children published within a few years. The main focus is on the analysis of national cultural identity in the time of globalization. How is Finnish national cultural identity represented in recent illustration? Do the representations challenge the conventions or do they preserve them? Is there a difference between the national cultural identity represented when comparing realistic picture books to stories with humanized animals or fairy-tale creatures?



**Us and ‘the Others’. Constructing Identities in a Global World**

In the time of globalization the Internet can connect people like never before. Globalization of popular culture together with the web have enabled the rise of global networks which almost everyone despite of the region can become a part of, at least in theory, as soon as she/he has an access to the Internet (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh 2007). People from all around the world can share their experiences, thoughts and pictures via Facebook, Instagram and blogs. In times like this, is there a national cultural identity to be found at all?

The answer is not only ‘yes’, but a strong one, too. However uniting the Internet can be, and even if for example teenage experiences in different countries probably have more in common now than never before, national cultural identity comes up as one of the cornerstones of identity (see Hall 2005). ‘Cultural identity’ is a construction: we belong to linguistic groups, ethnical groups, religious groups and national cultural groups (Hall 2005). Besides these, there are naturally other parts in our identity that construct of for example gender, class and sexual orientation (Butler 1990; Hall 2005). Of course, not everyone in Finland thinks being a Finn or living in Finland is a central for their identity. However, for most of the people who have been born and grown up in some specific country, that country, and the national cultural identity that comes with it, is a central part of their (individual) identities (Hall 2005).

For a few years the newspapers, magazines and television talk shows have been discussing the Finnish national cultural identity from different viewpoints, this way emphasizing the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘the others’. The question of national cultural identity has also had racist tones when linked to the recent political, social and economic circumstances in Finland. Who are the Finns that have the right to live in Finland? What makes a ‘real’ Finn? Are we responsible of people who seem to be different than we are? In many cases, people tend

to look the outside instead of bothering to get to know each other. And by separating ‘us’ from ‘the others’, the national cultural identity gains strength (see Hall 2005).

The specifically Finnish national cultural identity represented in contemporary picture book illustration is founded on the aspects that are familiar to Finnish people, and the traditional ways of illustrating books for children in Finland. The long winter with lots of snow, light summer nights, birch trees, sauna and irritating mosquitos, detached houses painted red on their own plots, a mother and a father and their family car, two children and a dog. Also, Finnish people are blonde, blue-eyed and drink buckets of coffee per day. These are the kind of stereotypical representations that come up when discussing Finnish national cultural identity. (Yet many people are living in larger cities, in blocks of flats – and not every Finn loves to bath in a sauna.) Several of these things can be found in the contemporary Finnish picture book illustration, for example on this spread by in Christel Rönns’ Finlandia Junior Award winning picture book *Det vidunderliga egget* (‘The Utterly Strange Egg’, Schidts 2012):



Chisterl Rönns’s illustration from *Det vidunderliga egget* (Schidts 2012).



We see the red-painted house, blonde-haired mother taking a sun-bath (and a coffee cup on the blue table!), father doing a cartwheel, and two children playing outside with the odd little thing that has hatched from the unusual egg. However, one of the girls seems to be adopted, which is not expressed in the text. Hence this shows that to be a Finnish girl you do not have to belong to the same ethnical group, which is rather encouraging when thinking about the wide debates on racism in Finland. Rönns' illustration revises the normative representation of Finnish family construction, even though it at the same time renews many of the representations considering Finnish national cultural identity.

In the Finnish picture book illustration, the variety of ethnicity has been longed for now over a decade (see Heikkilä-Halttunen 2001). Luckily there are new picture books that contain ethnic variety by portraying children from different ethnical backgrounds; however the volume leaves room for more. Some of the stories tell about for example the encounters of cultural traditions. In Leena Virtanen and Salla Savolainen's *Xing ja sukulaiset* ('Xing and the Relatives', Tammi 2010) the little adopted girl Xing starts to ponder her identity (she has a rather practical way of thinking about the issue, though) as a Finnish girl who looks Chinese and has Finnish parents in Finland, and birth-parents in China.



In Salla Savolainen's illustration from *Xing ja sukulaiset* (Tammi 2010) Xing is telling her classmates about her Finnish relatives. In Maikki Harjanne's *Minttu ja paras ystävä* (Otava 2013) the girl Minttu is missing her best friend Eiko.

Not all the picture books with ethnic variation in the characteristics tell about cultural differences. In Maikki Harjanne's *Minttu ja paras ystävä* ('Minttu and the Best Friend', Otava 2013) ethnicity is not stressed, as is the case with Rönns' *Det vidunderliga egg- et*. The readers of course see that Eiko does not look typically Finnish, and know that 'Eiko' is also not a Finnish name. However, the theme of the book is friendship – and at least in this case, the girls' friendship does not look at your ethnical background.

### Family Values: Tradition and Togetherness

Children's literature reflects the norms, the culture and the society of the time of its writing (MacLeod 2011). For a few years, the contemporary Finnish picture book has been standing quite still. This is the case in both with the storylines and the illustration. The stories concentrate around family, being together and, if the main character is a lonely one, finding a friend or a loved one. Family time is important and children and adults do things together, which, of course, is not a bad thing.





Karo Hämäläinen and Salla Savolainen's *Hurraa Helsinki!* ('Hurray Helsinki!', Tammi 2012) was published to celebrate the Design Capital Year of Finland's capital city Helsinki. The book presents Finnish design as the family – in a playground in this picture above – goes for an expedition in Helsinki. Hellevi Putkonen, Jussi Sinnemäki and Anita Polkutie's *Mahtava matikkamatka* ('The Magnificent Mathematic Travel', Lasten Keskus 2013) also places a family in a non-fictional book for children.

Is the family-theme reflecting the wishes of the authors and illustrators, audiences (parents, children and grandparents, teachers, to name a few) or the publishers? It may be one, two or all of these above, but most of all this kind of underlining of what can be considered as traditional family values and norms has always been typical to the times of economic recession. During strict economic periods society turns inside, into units such as families. (See Jallinoja 2006.) However, even if the picture book concentrates around family, the families are not only nuclear families but can consist of for example single-parent father, his son and the son's 78-year old friend, as is in the case Anna and Eppu Nuotio's series *Veikko ja Veikko* ('Veikko and Veikko', Otava 2012-, illustrated by Kristiina Louhi).



Kristiina Louhi's colorful illustration from *Veikko ja Veikko lomalla* ('Veikko and Veikko on a Holiday', Otava 2013). Veikko is on all fours on the kitchen table and his father is baking pancakes – not the most normative and traditional family way!

Also, a short notion, what comes to clothing the characters: In surprisingly many cases girls are portrayed wearing skirts or dresses and boys wearing trousers. Of course girls *do* wear skirts and dresses (boys usually do not, as there is still a taboo in our normative culture) and boys *do* wear trousers – but then again, so do girls and their mothers, and have been wearing trouser already for quite a long time.

The realistic contemporary Finnish picture book seems to lean more on the traditional ways of illustrating than artistic layouts or styles. This, however, should not be a surprise, since revolutions in the children's illustration happen relatively less frequently than in fine arts (Laukka 2001). Also the social-economic situation creates a challenge. The Finnish publishing houses are careful what comes to publishing new, artistic and/or revising picture books. A picture book, espe-

cially four-colored one, is still expensive to publish (Oittinen 2004). Since the recent global economic recession has hit Europe and also Finland, publishers are not willing to take risks. Instead they play safe and publish books that should appeal to as many audiences (and buyers) as possible, however different these audiences can be. Therefore, the current situation seems more of undevelopment than going forward.

However, the phenomenon of picture book relying on tradition might not be only a Finnish one. It would seem that also other European countries have been leaning on their own traditions and the ways that have been considered to be typical to their national cultural identities. In the light of the European wide recession, this would not be a surprise.

### **Challenging Characteristics. Dreams, fairy-tale creatures and fractures in the Norms**

The realistic contemporary Finnish picture book renews and relies on tradition both in the normative, sometimes conservative, storylines and in illustration. But what comes to the imaginary worlds, fairy tales, fantasy and dreams, the laws of the ordinary life do not apply anymore. For the illustrator it may be easier to create more artistic views in a story which contains magic, spells, giants and talking animals than in a story of a day at the sandpit. Also the publishers can sigh of relief – surely parents understand that a fairy tale can be ‘differently’ illustrated.

For example in Anssi and Maija Hurme’s picture book *Peiton alla* (‘Under the Duvet’, Shildts & Söderströms 2012) the story starts when the little girl Elsa follows a hedgehog under her duvet and finds herself in a weird world where one can ride on a panda:



Maija Hurme's illustration from *Peiton alla* (Shildts & Söderströms 2012).

The imaginary stories do not always revise the storylines or the illustration, even though there seems to be more room for the ambitions of the author and/or the illustrator. Also the value of family and togetherness are seemingly on display also in these stories, as well as the meaning and importance of friendship.

The imaginary stories usually do not contain that much of the markers of national cultural identity. In contemporary Finnish picture book illustration there is nevertheless one outstanding Finnish quality that transcends all the different kind of stories: the winter time, and snow. Whether the characters are toddlers as the boy Toivo in Katri Tapola and Karoliina Pertamo's *Toivon talvi* (‘Toivo’s Winter’, Tammi 2013), giants as the Giant in Esko-Pekka and Nikolai Tiitinen's *Jätti ja jänöset* (‘The Giant and the Rabbits’, Tammi 2012), old gay-couple as Allan and Udo in Minna Lindeberg and Linda Bondestam's *Allan och Udo* (‘Allan and Udo’, Söderströms 2011) or animals, as are the field mouse Tupsu's family in Tuula Korolainen and Marjo Nygård's *Kuono lumessa* (‘Nose in the Snow’, Lasten Keskus 2012), the winter setting slips easily in the illustration .



Marjo Nygård's snowy illustration from *Kuono lumessa* (Lasten Keskus 2012). Tupsu is following father who is already far ahead.

In picture books, most of the love stories handle opposite sex love relationship: a princess and a prince fall in love, a bull finds a cow, and families have mothers and fathers. Even though most of the contemporary Finnish picture book handles and illustrates the characters in heterosexual matrix (in which heterosexuality is a norm and homosexuality opposes the norm, Butler 1990) and represents for example children as (supposedly) heterosexual beings, there are a few exceptions. These liberal exceptions occur mostly in the recent Finnish-Swedish picture book that has been more experimental also what comes to typography, layout and the use of styles and techniques (see also Österlund 2013).

*Allan och Udo* (Söderströms 2011) written by Minna Lindenberg and illustrated by Linda Bondestam widens the conventional characterization of picture books: it tells about an old male couple, Allan and Udo. The loving relationship could be interpreted as a tight friendship between two male, however, both the text and the illustration show the mutual care and love:



"One can be two./ The other can explain and the other can understand/ why the darkness is so great and the stars are so small." Linda Bondestam's illustration from *Allan och Udo* (Söderströms 2011).

### Conclusion

The contemporary Finnish picture book illustration both revises and challenges the representations of what has been thought to be 'Finnish'. However, even if some unconventional characters and storylines challenge the stereotypical representations and normative thoughts, it seems that family and togetherness come up as centered themes both in the text and in the illustrations. The recent Finnish illustration in picture books for children also mainly follows traditional ways of illustrating, with some exceptions.

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**Anita Wincencjusz-Patyna** (Poland)



*She is an assistant professor at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław. She teaches art history, art theory and history of painting. She also runs classes in applied arts in Poland in the 20th and 21st centuries at the University of Wrocław (Art History Department). Author of a book dedicated to Polish book illustration in 1950-1980 as well as numerous articles on theory and history of Polish and foreign illustration. Member of the Polish Section of IBBY.*

**The intriguing mosaic**

Elements of national history and culture in contemporary book illustration in Poland

References to the national heritage, in aspects of both the local culture and history, have been always present in a quite significant number of the titles published in Poland in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One could even single out a noticeable tendency in Polish book illustration after 1945, which derived greatly from some patterns elaborated over the centuries in the rich national folklore. The artists used to follow colour combinations, popular motives, simplified forms equipped with a lot of expression, the techniques applied by folk artists (painting on glass, pottery decoration, hand-woven fabrics, clay figurines and music instruments, paper art work, decorations, toys and many others. It is not difficult to name just a few artists, famous for their contributions in children book illustration, active in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Ewa Fryszak-Witowska, Halina Gutsche, Adam Kilian, Zbigniew Rychlicki and Zdzisław Witwicki among many others.

However, it is difficult to trace such an evident stream in the contemporary Polish book illustration, we still may find some examples which benefit from achievements of the local folk culture. The young artists active nowadays recreate colour arrangements, synthesised forms, specific composition patterns and ornaments. These realisations follow some of the chosen folk art disciplines, mainly: art paper cutting, pottery, fabrics, costume design and wall decoration. The best example to illustrate this artistic strategy are two recently published titles by Andrzej Owskiński, which are designed to help kids learning new English words: *Kolory/Colours* and *Zwierzęta/Animals* edited by Muchomor in 2012. The little square books contain graphic design which follows paper cuttings and motives from folk art originated in the region of



Kurpie, Łowicz, Rawa Mazowiecka and the area of Warsaw – i.e. mainly from the central part of Poland. The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw cooperated within this edition.

Some basic ideas of brightly coloured compositions with simplified forms we can also find in graphic proposals served by Jan Bajtlik in two of his titles: *Tańcowały dwa Michały* [*There Were Two Michaels Dancing*], published also by Muchomor in 2012, and *Auto* [*A Car*], a book by J. M. Brum, which is a humorous pseudonym, edited by Dwie Siostry only this year. “Two Michaels” originate in a very popular Polish folk song and continue a series of the publishing house Muchomor that guarantees a fresh look on old folk texts. It is not surprising then that an artistic inspiration from the national folklore has been used here. Though it is not so evident and truthful to the original patterns as in the case of Owsieński.

Totally different approach to the lyrics of yet another popular folk song *Maryna, gotuj pierogi!* [*Mary, Cook Some Dumplings!*] has been introduced in a design by Katarzyna Bogucka in the book edited in 2011 by the publishing house Tatarak. The illustrations follow art deco style in its extremely elegant, international version, resembling more fashion journal illustration than any folk associations, what quite interesting, was typical for Polish variant of art deco. The pictures by Bogucka evoke the subject only in the sphere of the narrative contents, still, the image which presents the dish of dumplings – famous Polish *pierogi* – appears to be a nice still-life of the home culture.

Nevertheless, in the growing numbers of books being published nowadays in Poland, we are able to find far more examples of national history and culture. These are titles dedicated to great historic events and figures as well as ordinary people’s fates, especially those of the World War II period. This insight into the own country’s history in various aspects seems to be more and more frequent, attractive and, what is also crucially important, awaited by the young readers and

their parents. The titles which have appeared on the Polish book market quite recently (I’ve taken a closer look at the last three years only) have an original indeed and a very interesting graphic design.

I would like to present shortly a selection which I find exceptionally valuable. My first choice is Janina Rudniańska’s *XY* with illustrations by Jacek Ambrożewski and a graphic design by Emilia Pyza. The book was published in 2012 by Muchomor and short-listed for the Book of the Year 2012 competition of the Polish Section of IBBY in the graphic category. The volume tells a dramatic story of twin-sisters separated by the war. The graphic design of the book is very ascetic, as it makes use of turquoise green, grey, black and white only. Still the world depicted here is extremely dynamic, eventful and able to evoke many more tales than the number of them included in the text. The main graphic idea is based on a motive of a bundle which is given different shapes throughout the story: tree-branches, bunches of flowers, human palms, burning flames, steep thatched roofs etc. Some pictures look like they were created by a child’s hand, the others reveal master strokes. They seem to build up an imaginative collage diary of the tragic days.

Another sad story of a small girl named Jutka, who happened to live in the Litzmannstadt ghetto (situated in the present city of Łódź), is told in delicate pencil drawings with only little colour added in a book by Dorota Combrzyńska-Nogala *Bezsenność Jutki* [*The Sleeplessness of Jutka*] with illustrations created by Joanna Rusinek. The title was published in 2012 by Literatura in their series called *Adults’ Wars – Children’s Stories*. Many of the drawings are lyrical, the others seem to be aggressive and foretell dramatic events. The end of the book is optimistic, as Jutka is luckily rescued from the ghetto.

Yet another story, this time having a lot of comic elements, is a tale of *Wojtek spod Monte Cassino* [*Wojtek of Monte*



*Cassino*] recorded by Wiesław A. Lasocki – a somehow optimistic travelogue of a famous bear who, as an adopted animal, had been looked after by Polish soldiers during WW2 and crossed many countries with General Anders' Polish II Corps. This Syrian bear, after having taken part in the Battle of Monte Cassino of 1944, died eventually in 1963 in Edinburgh, Scotland. The creature was treated as an equal to the soldiers hero of that difficult time and became an emblem of courage and devotion. The book was honorary mentioned in 2012 edition of the IBBY Polish Section competition – The Book of the Year. Jan Bajtlik – responsible for graphic side of the title – decided on very few colours, though noble in their character, as he wanted to paint a kind of a monument for the bear (except for classical graphic contrast of black and white, in the visual side of the book, we mostly get mat gold and a little bit of slightly greenish dark blue). The simplified forms resemble shapes typical for Polish graphic art of the inter-war period, they refer to the best traditions of book design related with the avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s.

Strongly connected with the period of war is also a biography of Janusz Korczak. Poland celebrated widely the year 2012 as the Korczak Year. There were many books published on this occasion, some of the titles appeared quite coincidentally, which only shows how important Korczak's legacy is still in our country. Among them one can find new editions of his well-known works and the titles inspired more or less by the story of his life. In the first group I would like to single out *Król Maciuś Pierwszy* [*King Matt the First*] and *Król Maciuś na wyspie bezludnej* [*King Matt on the Desert Island*], both delightfully illustrated by Marianna Oklejak and published by W.A.B in 2011. This edition was honorary mentioned in The Book of the Year 2011 competition of the IBBY Polish Section in graphic category. The story of a little king of all the children, though generally melancholic, is brightly coloured and tends to evoke also humorous moods by selecting some

comic situations from the text. The protagonist is extremely friendly and lives his adventurous life page by page. Oklejak reaches out for good tradition of Polish satirical illustration. In her colourful compositions, drawn with a very fine line, she creates illustrations that echo the achievements of Zbigniew Lengren, Mirosław Pokora and Zbigniew Piotrowski, to name but a few, in their designs for children books.

The second group of "the Korczak titles" may be represented by a very interesting approach to Korczak's biography in Anna Czerwińska-Rydel's book entitled *Po drugiej stronie okna* [*On the Other Side of the Window*], published by Muchomor in 2012, with an original graphic design by Małgorzata Frąckiewicz and Poważne Studio, with portraits of the children from the orphanage drawn by Dorota Łoskot-Cichočka. The main graphic concept for this book is based on coloured and slightly enriched archive photos. The passed-by stories seem to gain a new life in this way. It also reminds us of a typical for kids strategy of drawing something on the found by them printed materials, or colouring black-and-white photos. The whole graphic concept derives from a typical note-book filled with circling, deletions, spots and scribbles. A modern way of perceiving is cast on an old story.

Yet another original visualisation of the life dedicated to children is an author book by Iwona Chmielewska entitled *Pamiętnik Blumki* [*Blumka's Diary*], published by Media Rodzina in 2011. Typical aesthetics for Chmielewska creates an extremely individual version of the hard times spent by children in the orphanage in Krochmalna Street in Warsaw. Blue colour, originating from old copy pencils, is the visual skeleton of the design. A frequent motive is also a pattern of lined pages from old notebooks. Detailed drawings and collage works fill the pages of this book which was praised Main Graphic Award in category: picture book of The Book of the Year 2011 competition.



Somehow similar in this ascetic approach and refined lines of drawings are also illustrations by Gabriela Cichowska (2012) to the not yet published book by Adam Jaromir entitled *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki* [*Little Miss Esther's Last Performance*].

It is obvious that some all-national celebrations of great events from history bring along jubilee editions. This was the case of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald, for instance, which resulted in numerous comics and occasional publications. Among them worth mentioning is *Bitwa pod Grunwaldem 1410* by Tomasz Diatłowicki with illustrations designed by Agnieszka Malmon and Jan Bajtlik again.

In the recent years in Poland we may observe a tendency of making children familiar with big and small history of their home country and, specifically, the places they happen to live. A very good example here is a picture story of the Polish capital city of Warsaw. Since its "ancient" beginnings, when it was only a small fishermen's village, through the moment of becoming the official royal site (the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century), stormy times of annexations, an optimistic inter-war period, the tragic history of the WW2, socialist post-war decades and gloomy Martial Law years of the early 1980s, to the energetic contemporary days. The whole history has been fantastically depicted by Marianna Oklejak in the book *Jestem miasto. Warszawa* [*I Am the City. Warsaw*] with the text by Aleksandra Szkoda. The title was published in 2012 by Czuły Barbarzyńca and it was honoured Main Graphic Award in category: picture book of The Book of the Year 2012 competition. This comic-like narration of numerous simultaneously happening events take place mainly in the central part of Warsaw. The tale has some repeating motives: of a mermaid (the city heraldic emblem) and a devil living in a willow-tree on the River Vistula. Obviously enough, there are lots of historic figures: kings, queens and national heroes, but also some ordinary people queuing, shopping, entertaining them-

selves, rebuilding their city after the war. Lots of details to be searched and follow throughout the book makes it a continuous attraction with piles of information on history of Warsaw.

A particular district of the former Polish capital city of Krakow has also its own title, which is *O Nowej Hucie twórczych zabaw kilka* [*A Few Creative Games about Nowa Huta*], written and elaborated by Maja Dobkowska and graphically designed by Zbigniew Dobosz. The book was published by the Museum of Polish History in Warsaw in 2012. It is a book of various activities which leave a lot of space for children to contribute to the final visual shape of the volume. The style of the drawings is of a comic-strip character. Distinct contours, bright colours, cut-outs, folded pages – just to name the most evident features. Each page seems to be totally different from the previous and the next one. It also deals with national history, folklore of the Little Poland region, Polish legends and well-known tales.

The choice was thought to be representative and I tried to show the most interesting, considering their artistic value and originality, examples of the recently published in Poland books that focus on the cultural heritage and national history. Every year there come new intriguing titles that wish to familiarise young and even the youngest readers with the rich legacy of the passed-by times.



Illustrations: Katarzyna Bogucka



Illustrations: Katarzyna Bogucka



Illustrations: Jacek Ambrożewski



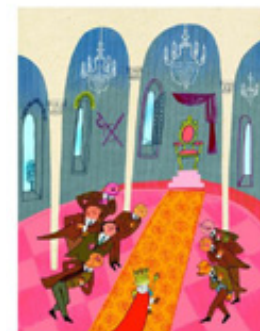
Illustrations: Joanna Rusinek



Illustrations: Joanna Rusinek



Illustrations: Jan Bajtlik



Illustrations: Marianna Oklejak



Illustrations: Jan Bajtlik



Illustrations: Iwona Chmielewska



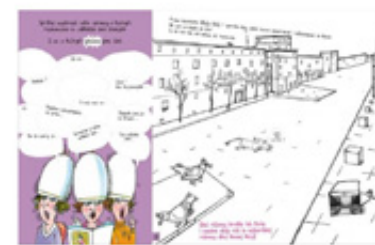
Illustrations: Agnieszka Malmon, Jan Bajtlik



Illustrations: Jacek Ambrożewski



Graphic design: Zbigniew Dobrosz



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