

Presential Book Fair Held Successfully in Shanghai CCBF Navigates the Global Pandemic with Innovative Strategies and Quality Programmes

The 8th edition of China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair (CCBF) concluded successfully on 15 November 2020. It was held under the guidance of the Shanghai Press and Publication Administration, organised by Shanghai Xinhua Distribution Group Co., Ltd., China Education Publishing & Media Group Ltd., and China Universal Press & Publication Co., Ltd., and co-organised by Ronbo BolognaFiere Shanghai.

The COVID-19 pandemic currently affecting most parts of the world has resulted in severe travel restrictions, which have forced fair organisers to cancel their events or redesign their projects on a digital basis. Through strict lockdown and social distancing measures enforced by the government, economic operation and social life have gradually returned to normal in China, allowing the domestic children's book market to stand out for a growth rate of 0.64% in the first three quarters of 2020, which contrasts with the negative figures of the book market taken as a whole, as revealed in the OpenBook Chinese market analysis presented as part of CCBF's Official Conference Programme.

It is in this dynamic context that CCBF has been one of the very few international fairs able to take place physically in 2020.

The only book fair in Asia Pacific fully dedicated to books and other contents for children, CCBF took place from 13 to 15 November at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Centre, covering a total surface of 25,000 square metres. The Fair showcased 60,000 recent children's titles, among which 20,000 are overseas publications hailing from 21 different countries and territories. There were 308 online and offline professional programmes and readers' events held concurrently with the exhibition at more than 100 locations around town, including schools, bookstores, libraries, art museums, etc. CCBF has brought a total of 18,963 visitors to its fairgrounds, while online events streamed on local platforms gathered a total of 520,000 views all across the country.

A Tailored Exhibition with Online and Offline Elements

Although many international exhibitors and visitors were unable to visit Shanghai physically due to global travel restrictions, the international children's book publishing industry has shown eagerness to maintain, and even broaden, their cooperation with Chinese counterparts. This need for cooperation is shown in the enthusiastic response that overseas publishers gave to the CCBF International Book Showcase, an exhibition scheme allowing them to show their books at the Fair with the help of staff locally recruited by the Fair organisers.

This year, CCBF brought together 386 leading publishers and children's content players from 21 countries and territories, including China, South Korea, Canada, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Russia, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Belgian, Australia, Thailand etc. 99 international companies were exhibiting at CCBF, and also comprised stands and booths by 287 Chinese publishing key players.

In addition to the country pavilions regularly represented at CCBF—France (BIEF), UK (Publishers Association) and Korea (KPIPA and KPA) to name a few—, other institutional booths led by FILI-Finnish Literature Exchange, NORLA-Norwegian Literature Abroad, the Dutch Foundation for Literature, the Royal Thai Embassy in Beijing, and the Consulate General of Canada in Shanghai have showcased a great number of books from their respective countries at CCBF 2020. Prestigious and inspiring publishing houses such as Annick Press, Atlantyca, Bayard-Milan, Cappelen Damm, Casterman-Flammarion Jeunesse, Clavis, Éditions du Centre Pompidou, Edizioni Corraini, Dargaud, Dakai, Dea Planeta Libri, Editrice il Castoro, Egmont Kids, Hachette Children's Group, Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, Highlights for Children, HongFei Cultures, Lemniscaat, Éditions Les 400 coups, Malamalama, Nepko Kids, Orfeu Negro, Overdrive, Oxford University Press, Snake SA/Nui Nui, Twig Education, Topipittori, University of Queensland Press, VoiceBooks, Whitestar, Windy Hallow Books, Zahori Books and many more have also participated in the Fair this year.

Throughout the Fair, the International Book Showcase featured the catalogues



of 58 publishing houses. Professional visitors were able to browse through over 5,000 newly published children's titles offered in their original printed form and leave their contact information to the corresponding publishers. A bridge between publishers onsite and in remote, this offline showcase is complemented by an online matchmaking system open to professional visitors and all exhibitors. More than 500 online and offline business meetings are booked to date, and the system remains open until Friday 20 November and will offer the possibility to hold online meetings through an integrated video conference platform.

Despite the uncertainties the pandemic has brought to the industry, CCBF has introduced a catalyst for change, emphasising the importance of digital adaptation to reflect a rapidly changing publishing market. In light of these new trends and needs, CCBF has revamped its Digital Hub to create a brand-new section aimed at exploring innovation in children's digital content and digital marketing. 28 exhibitors specialised in digital content have shown intense demands for collaboration and participated in nearly 100 business meetings in just three days.

Highly engaging and Diversified Professional Events

Through the display of the world's best children's content, and ten thoughtfully designed conferences, 63 new title releases, and hundreds of other related activities, CCBF has enabled international and domestic peers to expand their businesses, explore recent trends, and foster strong relationships.

The CCBF Conference Programme offered visitors ten highly engaging seminars on a wide variety of topics. It also provided a chance to hear recognised figures like Shaun Tan (Greenaway Medal 2020), Albertine (2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award winner for illustration), Cao Wenxuan (2016 Hans Christian Andersen Award winner for writing), and Katherine Patterson (winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award, the ALMA and two Newbery Medals). In a period of drastic changes like this one, it is of utmost importance to stay in touch with the latest business trends. Two sessions—Global Children's Publishing Market Analysis (Nielsen Book and OpenBook) and Publishing in Times of Pandemic—have been designed and held with this purpose. A panoramic seminar about toddlers' books included prestigious publisher

Suzanne Carnell from Macmillan (Two Hoots) and first-class author Xavier Deneux. Other sessions had discussions on non-fiction books, the relationship between education and reading, and how to approach difficult topics in books for children.

For its sixth edition, the 2020 Golden Pinwheel has generated an unprecedented level of enthusiasm, as 2,238 illustrators from 77 countries and territories submitted their works in the competition. Ling Luo (China, 1981) and Veronica Neacșu (Romania, 1983) respectively win the Golden Pinwheel Grand Award (China) and the Golden Pinwheel Grand Award (International), while the three Special Mentions go to Jam Dong (China, 1990), Francesco Giustozzi (Italy, 1986) and Ida Hong (South Korea, 1990).

Illustration is a key field of action for CCBF. The Illustrators Survival Corner, a multi-dimensional area organised in cooperation with the Bologna Children's Book Fair and Mimaster Illustrazione. Throughout three days of ongoing programmes, nine masterclasses, seven workshops, and 27 one-to-one portfolio reviews attracted 1,515 participants, mostly young local illustrators and picture books editors eager to enhance their professional skills. Also, the Illustrators Alley met great success by doubling its number of participants compared to last year. 58 artists from around China joined this mini-fair inside the fair, where they could exhibit their books, prints and merchandising products to publishers in need for contents and to a broader audience looking to buy artworks and small gifts.

This year, CCBF featured two exceptional exhibitions. "Children Plus Toddlers' Books" showcased 140 original board books and activity books for children aged 0–3, brought from all around the world in partnership with the Bologna Children's Book Fair. In the traditional concept of many parents, children under the age of 3 do not need to read books, and this exhibition has allowed them to see how innovative and inspirational toddlers' books can bring to the youngest of all readers.

As 2020 also marks the 100th anniversary of Gianni Rodari's birth, the illustration exhibition—"Italian Excellence: Illustrators for Gianni Rodari"—revisited the work of one of the most innovative literary voices of the last century through 63 beautiful illustrations by Italy's best picture book artists.



In addition to the events and programmes mentioned above, CCBF 2020 also featured a Book Live Show aiming to help Chinese publishers promote their books through live streaming. Ongoing live sessions performed by six top influencers presented books by 80 publishing houses, in partnership with social networks Tik Tok and Red (Xiaohongshu).

In this unprecedented time, CCBF 2020 has continued its mission to lay bridges within the industry, inspire new trends and ideas to book publishers and authors, and encourage young people to cultivate their love for reading. We look forward to seeing you at the next CCBF from 19 to 21 November 2021.

Quotes and Feedbacks by 2020 CCBF Exhibitors and Professional Visitors

This is a beautiful exhibition that confirms how Gianni Rodari's nursery rhymes can, until today, speak to the child hiding inside every artist and inside every one of us. The art exhibition submerges the visitors in a world of visual fantasy and wonders. Illustrations are at the heart of every children's books. Congratulations to BolognaFiere and to Emilia Romagna Region for bringing to CCBF those poems made images, which embody excellence in the field of illustration.

Alberto Manai (Italy), Director of Culture Division of Consulate General of Italy in Shanghai

The most gratifying change of the fair this year is that Chinese illustrators and authors have had many opportunities to show their talents. In the past year or two, we are all putting a lot of efforts in uplifting the creation of original picture books. In this process, I also felt how difficult it is to cultivate new writers and create good original picture books. I am very grateful for the efforts made by Shanghai Children's Book Fair to support the original strength of children's books.

Wu Xingyuan (China), Editor-in-Chief, Post Wave Kids Publishing Consulting Co., Ltd.

This year's children's book fair met great success under complex circumstances and big pressure of Covid-19 prevention and control. The role of CCBF is crucial to boost the confidence of children's book publishing in the world. This edition boasts three big achievements. Firstly, we saw an innovation in form, thanks to the combination of online and offline elements, which allows international exchange to go on in spite the epidemic. Also, the social circle of exhibitors and friends is expanding, with the participation of new publishing houses, the impressive expansion of the Illustrators Avenue, the reinforced participation of cultural and creative product creation that are reshaping the whole industry chain. Finally, the CCBF's influence is clearly growing. The industry exchanges, awards and reading promotion were run brilliantly, its official programmes



have become a big stage for cooperation and exchange between authors, readers and publishers.

Peng Weiguo (China), Vice President, Shanghai Century Publishing (Group) Co., Ltd.

We are happy that NORLA, Norwegian Literature abroad, was able to be a part of the CCBF this year regardless of the pandemic situation worldwide. CCBF provides a great opportunity for Norway to maintain our connection with the Chinese publishing industry and illustrators for our children and young adults. As the pandemic is going on, it is wonderful that the international publishing industry are able to carry on with meaningful activities and that we can be gathered at CCBF in Shanghai, stay in touch, and introduce our excellent Norwegian children's literature and broad topics to the Chinese audience.

Hedda Himle Skandsen (Norway), Acting Consul General of Norwegian Consulate General in Shanghai

My hope is that all children have the opportunity to read high-quality books allowing them to develop their own thinking and form their own understanding. The book fair is very important to facilitate copyright business among publishers, it also dynamises the industry as a whole and gives it a continuous support. Overall, the exhibition was very successful, and I hope to have the opportunity to participate again next year.

Mingzhou Zhang (China), the President at the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY)

This is a truly international children's book fair, which broadens horizons for our local picture book writers, increases the audience's professional knowledge, and provides a very good platform for international children's book creation and exchange. I hope that illustrators will not only increase their international vision, but also maintain their own personality. While I continue to walk on the path of creativity, and I wish Chinese illustrators to get growing success in international competitions, to let the world see the diversity of their styles. I also wish CCBF to do always better and better in the future!



Jiu'er (China), Illustrator and Picture Book Author

Lelequ participates in the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair (CCBF) every year. Due to the impact of COVID-19, CCBF is one of the very few international book fairs that are able to take place offline this year. We cherish this opportunity and want to inspire children to read more. At the same, we can also meet our colleagues and explore new directions for the development of children's books.

George Sun (China), Deputy General Manager of Ronshin Group, Editor-in-Chief of Lelequ

We have all been affected by the global pandemic, and although international exhibitors and some Chinese publishers were unable to participate, we have managed to make a catalogue of 200 titles available to domestic publishers. We have offered our clients with a full range of copyright services and held over 100 meetings during the fair. Thank you to the Shanghai International Book Fair Organising Committee for providing us with such thoughtful, meticulous service in this difficult period.

Yu Wenli (China), Copyright Director of CA-LINK International LLC

I gained a lot from my visit to CCBF. It offers friendly and efficient services to its exhibitors. The creation of a new Digital Hub is also very important. Many publishing houses, book distributors and publishing companies are exploring how to transform online. It was an occasion to understand more clearly and intuitively the digital needs and difficulties of our partners and clients. We appreciate very much to have this opportunity.

Li Bo (China), Book Department Distribution Channel Manager, Youzan Technologies Co., Ltd.