LIVING WATERS, LIVING STORIES
CROATIA – GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE BOLOGNA CHILDREN’S BOOK FAIR 2015

WATER

Croatian writer Zvonimir Balog calls water the champion of all transformations and the most ancient of all wild poets and John Fowles bestows on it an equally powerful title, naming it Magna Creatrix (the Great Creator). The motif of the “living water” that heals the sick, restores sight and health and reinvigorates the weary is a constant in the opus of our most celebrated children’s author, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, who was the starting point in conceiving the Croatian presentation in Bologna. As we delved into the proto-matter of water as the synonym for artistic freedom in the media of illustration and writing for children, we found that in the period between 1860 and 2015, numerous Croatian authors and illustrators drew inspiration from watery imaginaries.

EXHIBITIONS OR THE CROATIAN ILLUSTRATION DELTA

1) Aquamarine Selection
Bologna Children’s Book Fair, March 30 – April 2

While selecting contemporary Croatian illustrators for this exhibition, the jury looked for artists who fulfilled the following criteria: distinctive and recognizable style; re-examining and pushing the boundaries of illustration as an artistic genre/discipline (whether in terms of the artistic process or in their approach to the dramaturgy of visual presentation); highly developed technical, media and stylistic literacy; ability to contextualize one’s work against the background of history of art and illustration and the ability to develop and constantly enrich one’s own visual vocabulary. The exhibition features the works of these illustrators: Maja Celija, Marijana Jelić, Ana Kadoić, Dubravka Kolanović, Stanislav Marijanović, Jelena Perišić, Ivana Pipal, Danijel Srdarev, Tomislav Tomić, Tomislav Torjanac, Vendi Vernić, Pika Vončina, Marija Vuletić and Danijel Žeželj.

JURY
Neven Antičević (Association of Publishers and Booksellers, Croatian Chamber of Commerce), Nada Beroš and Jasna Jakšić (Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb), Svjetlan Junaković (Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb), Maša Štrbac (Croatian Association of Artists in Applied Arts) and Vanja Žanko (member of the curatorial team)

2) Moorings and Deep Waters of Childhood
Bologna Children’s Book Fair, March 30 – April 2

This exhibition features four parallel histories/timelines of Croatian illustration through the works of more than eighty Croatian artists in the last hundred years. We believe it is important to highlight the intertwining and synchronicity of diverse artistic oeuvres that we follow in four different contexts and to let the viewing audience learn about the
illustrators from several different perspectives. At the same time, we emphasize the plurality of traditions and the permanently open artistic boundary between the past and the present, the familiarity with which is essential to the establishment of artistic criteria.

The first timeline, entitled *The Inkwell*, problematizes the **process of establishing children's illustration as an autonomous artistic discipline in Croatia.**

The second timeline of Croatian illustration, entitled *Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's Watermark*, takes a look at numerous responses of Croatian illustrators to the opus of "Croatian Andersen", covering a hundred-year time span from 1914 to 2015. This exhibition highlights the **deep connection between story and illustration**, or, in other words, the trail of experience that has created some of the greatest illustration oeuvres precisely through the appreciation of what is best in our literary heritage.

The third timeline of Croatian illustration, entitled *The Coral Forest* (inspired by the eponymous picture book written by Mira Boglić and illustrated by Cvijeta Job) looks at utopias and dystopias in Croatian literature for children and responses of so many illustrators to this **quest for the spaces of ideological freedom.** Our literature for children has always been subversive to a certain extent and its “forests” serve as the terrain in which we heal the wounds of different political traumas.

The fourth timeline is entitled *Deck is the Only Land in Sight* and focused solely on the illustrations that are characterized by the **their authors' fully realized artistic maturity, which can only be achieved by taking artistic risks, experimenting and engaging in active dialogue with the literary source.**

**3) Cabinet of Wonders: Svjetlan Junaković's solo exhibition**

**Galleria Forni, March 30 - April 15**

The exhibition is based on the cabinets of wonders, i.e., the collections of wondrous, fantastical and intriguing objects that have fascinated people ever since the Renaissance. Cabinets of wonders are true predecessors to today's museums and exhibitions and an inspiration for the modern exhibition layout that features diverse facets of Svjetlan Junaković as an artist active in several different fields – he is a children's book illustrator, writer, Academy of Fine Arts professor and teacher at illustration workshops. The exhibition shows a selection of his works that embody the ideas of artistic practice deeply intertwined with play and interpretations of children's play. Claiming the right to spontaneous and imaginative children's play has never fascinated artists more than it does today – not even at the height of Surrealism and its need for the return to unbridled imagination. Through his art, Junaković projects a space and time dedicated to fantasy, equating the act of artistic creation with the ideal freedom of the child.

**MEETINGS IN CAFÉS**

**Illustrators Café**

1. Introduction to the *Aquamarine Selection* Exhibition
2. Fantasy and Humour: The Importance of Offering Children a Plurality of Worlds

3. Illustration in Education or the Difference Between the Designer and Artistic Approaches

Authors Café

1. Self-Publishing and the Problem/Advantage of Not Having an Editor
2. Young Adult – the Language of Rebellion and Adrenaline Parks of Teen Fiction

Translators Café

1. “This Translation is Better than Books Written in the Local Language” or How To Think About the Art of Translation Without Fearing the Colonization by “Big Cultures”
2. “As Long as It Isn’t Required Reading” or How Translated Literature Affects the Quality and Pleasure of Reading

Digital Café

1. From Traditional to Digital Techniques in Illustration
2. Digital Zone as a Creative Tool Instead of Consumerist Pastime


ANIMATED FILMS

In association with Animafest and its artistic director Daniel Šuljić, we will also show a programme of contemporary Croatian animated films and several episodes of Professor Balthazar, the most famous Croatian animated series for children. The film programme will be shown in Cineteca Bologna on March 22 and March 29.

- **My Way** – Veljko Popović, Svetlan Junaković
- **Hidden Talent** – Miran Miošić
- **Bo-Tu’s Drum** – Ivana Guljašević
- **Elephant Goes to the Kindergarten** – Milan Trenč
- **The Lure** – Dinko Kumanović
- **In the Shadow** – Manuel Šumberac
ILLUSTRATORS AND CHILDREN

During the Children’s Book Fair, a series of workshops led by Croatian illustrators and intended for children in Bologna will take place in Biblioteca Salaborsa. The following workshops are scheduled to take place:

2. Painterly Approach to Illustration. Dubravka Kolanović: "Let's Dive In!"
5. Illustrations – Spaces for Fictional Places. Ivana Pipal: "Cities in Colour"
6. Using Colour to Illustrate Mood. Maja Celija: "Portraying a Fish"

ILLUSTRATORS AND EDUCATION

The Croatian exhibition space will also feature the works of the most influential Croatian comic book artists and illustrators, who have left an indelible mark on several generations of school students in Croatia through their decades-long contributions to popular school magazines. The exhibition under the name Illustration in Education will take place at Biblioteca Salaborsa.