

**• D • NOTTURNI, PIRATERIE E ALLUNAGGI
AN EXHIBITION OF ILLUSTRATIONS BY GIANNI DE CONNO**

Bologna Children's Book Fair pays tribute to Gianni De Conno with an exhibition entitled “ • D • **Notturmi, piraterie e allunaggi. An Exhibition of illustrations by Gianni De Conno**”. The exhibition, put together by Ivan Canu, director of Mimaster Illustrazione, Costanza De Conno, Patrizia Zerbi, an editor at Carthusia Edizioni, and Fabio Toninelli of the Tapirulan Association, celebrates the career of one of the leading Italian illustrators of the past several decades. Featuring around 80 works, the exhibition focuses on some of the main highlights of Gianni De Conno's visual language, including picturebooks, posters, covers and editorial illustrations. The inauguration will take place at the Illustrators Survival Corner (Hall 32) on Monday, 26 March, at 12.30.

During his career, Gianni De Conno's illustrations have graced some of the masterpieces of modern and contemporary literature, such as “Moby Dick” by Herman Melville, Italo Calvino's “The Path to the Nest of Spiders”, “Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde” by Robert Louis Stevenson, “Relato de un naufragio ” by Gabriel García Marquez, as well as poetry collections like “Alla Luna”, and the most popular contemporary children's books, from Avi's “The Button War” and De Mari's “The Last Elf” right down to his latest work, “Il Buon Viaggio”, written by Beatrice Masini and published by Carthusia. The evocative power and unrivalled formal and esthetic consistency of his style are recognized and acclaimed both in Italy and abroad.

The exhibition, situated at the Illustrators Survival Corner of the Bologna Children's Book Fair, has a catalogue compiled by Ivan Canu, Patrizia Zerbi and Fabio Toninelli and published by Carthusia in conjunction with the Tapirulan Association. Each work included in the catalogue comes with comments and recollections offered by friends, co-workers and publishers who have supported Gianni De Conno throughout his career.

“His technical mastery – evidenced by a seamless transition from traditional oils and acrylics to digital painting at just the right time and without sacrificing an ounce of his charm – enabled him to impart substance, suppleness and self-awareness to characters on the page; some haughty but compassionate; bashful perhaps; thoughtful; sensible; always worthy of respect. His inspired use of colour, gliding pleasingly from light to dark and back again, creates gales and breezes” (from the introduction to the exhibition catalogue by Ferruccio Giromini).

For Gianni De Conno, as for many other artists, the Bologna Children's Book Fair was the perfect place to start out on a career as an illustrator, and therefore the ideal place to gather together and display this cross-section of his work. This year the **Silent Book Contest 2018 – Gianni De Conno Award**, which he helped to establish, will also be dedicated to him.

Gianni De Conno was born in Milan and spent his teens attending art school and studying music at the Conservatorio. He majored in animated film and set design at the Milan Film School. In addition to set design he also worked as an illustrator first in advertising and later for magazines periodicals and books for both adults and children. His first picturebooks came out in the early 1990s and he quickly gained prominence both in Italy and internationally. His work has been widely published by Bayard, Black Cat, Bohem Press, Carthusia, Casterman, Computer World Magazine, De Agostini, Fabbri RCS, Fatatrac, Gallimard, Giunti, Grimm Press, Finmeccanica, Hachette, Hermes Paris, Interlinea, Yale University Magazine, Lapis, Lorenzo Marini & Associati, Milan, Premio Bancarella, Principi & Principi, Purple Bear Books NY, Random House NY, Salani, Sterling Publishing NY, and Vivenza. He was the Chairman of the Italian Illustrators Association from 2005 to 2007, and in 2009 was one of the founders of Mimaster Illustrazione, an internationally acclaimed training center for illustrators. He has helped to organize and promote the Silent Book Contest since 2014; the Contest aims to foster books without words and support up and coming illustrators. Gianni De Conno has won numerous awards and prizes both in Italy and abroad, including the Gold Medal of the Society of Illustrators, New York (in 2009 and 2010). He has appeared in one-man shows and collective exhibitions staged in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, France and the US.