

LOOK! The artists' biographies

Compiled by Christine Paxmann, editor of "Eselsohr" Magazine, for the March edition of "Bulletin Jugend & Literatur"

Frankfurt/Bologna, 4 April 2016 – Thirty familiar names who also "fit" abroad. If you look at the stylistic diversity, you can't really discern a "German style", even though people are often happy to stress the national aspect when it comes to the marketability of artwork. In fact, some of these illustrators achieved their first major successes with international publishers, before they were discovered in Germany. What else is striking? The disproportionately large number of graduates from the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, a veritable foundry of drawing talent. And the many dual talents: drawing and writing. And repeatedly, we find all the members of a collective atelier. Or artistic duos. Then there are those who travel the world holding workshops and lectures, pursuing a special kind of export trade: the spread of artistic know-how at all levels, internationally. We asked all 30 of these exhibitors to supply a short CV and a statement, to make what is effectively a mini-catalogue for the great Guest of Honour appearance.

Anke Kuhl

Born in 1970, she studied drawing in Frankfurt, Mainz and Offenbach. In 1999 she formed the collective atelier LABOR in Frankfurt with Philip Waechter and Moni Port. Since then, she has worked there as a freelance illustrator and author. She has received many awards, including the German Children's Literature Award.

"Of all the printed media, the children's book has the best prospects. If it catches a young person's imagination, then it gets carried around lovingly, and its pages are opened again and again."

Antje Damm

Born in 1965 in Wiesbaden, she studied architecture in Darmstadt and Florence then worked as an architect in Berlin and Nuremberg. She has written and illustrated children's books since having her own four children. Today she lives with her family, a cat and a tortoise in a timber-framed house close to Gießen.

"For me, making books for children goes hand-in-hand with having fun, but also with responsibility, and with the wonderful memory of having been a child myself once. I think it's one of the loveliest jobs there is."

Einar Turkowski

Born in 1972 in Kiel, he did work experience as a stage designer before studying illustration at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences. He lives and works near Kiel, where he also offers readings and workshop talks. His picture books have earned him numerous accolades, including the Grands Prix at both the 21st Biennial of Illustration Bratislava, and the 45th Golden Pen of Belgrade. In Madrid he was acclaimed as the "Best Illustrator" with the Visual-Premios de diseno de libros. His books have already been translated into many languages.

Ina Hattenhauer

Born and raised in Berlin, she studied visual communication at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, as well as spending time in the USA, at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Since 2009, she has worked as a designer and freelance illustrator in the beautiful city of Weimar.

"As a child, I would immerse myself in the pictures in my books, and stroll through them as through a garden. How wonderful that I can now plant a garden of my own."

Gerda Raidt

Born in 1975 in Berlin, she first studied graphics at the Burg Giebichenstein university of art and design in Halle, before changing to the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig and the illustration classes of Professor Volker Pfüller, with whom she subsequently completed a Masters degree. She has worked as a freelance illustrator since 2004. She lives with her family in Leipzig.

"I probably won't get to visit Bologna. How nice that my pictures will travel there instead! And that it's also possible to travel within pictures: to America, into the past, everything is possible. That's something I always really liked about illustrations."

Elsa Klever

Born in 1985 and brought up in Berlin, she studied illustration at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences as well as the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. She lives in Hamburg and has worked since 2010 as a freelance illustrator for various companies, magazines and book publishers.

"Illustration is a great thing! Not only can you draw on your own experiences, you can also invent new things to go with them!"

Moni Port

Born in 1968, trained as a bookseller, studied communication design in Mainz. 1998: cover designer with Eichborn Verlag and formation of the collective atelier LABOR in Frankfurt, with Philip Waechter and Anke Kuhl. Since 2004: freelance illustrator, graphic designer, author with the collective atelier LABOR.

"A few days ago, I came across an Astrid Lindgren quotation online that I really like, a sentence that parents should always bear in mind for their children (but also for themselves): 'Then you should always have time to simply sit there looking in front of yourself'"

Stefanie Harjes

Born in 1967 in Bremen, studied at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. She has illustrated 34 books to date, and has worked for nearly 22 years as an illustrator and book artist in her atelier "Überm Wind". She has taught around the world and her works have received many awards.

"I am a searcher. In life just as on paper. That will never change. Perhaps that's a good thing!"

Dirk Steinhöfel

Born in 1964, studied porcelain painting and naturalistic design. Since 2003, he has worked as a freelance illustrator for various publishers. His first book "Die Wolke" (The Cloud) appeared in 2011, based on the current of the same name by Shelley. With his graphic novel "Die Kinder im Wind" (The Children in the Wind) he secured a place in the 2014 White Ravens Catalogue.

"Illustration is a key, to which sadly many publishing houses lack the appropriate doors."

Stella Dreis

Born in 1972 in Bulgaria, moved to Germany in 1995. Since 2008 she has worked as a freelance illustrator. Her search-and-find book "Grimms Märchenreise" (The Grimms' Fairytale Journey) won her the Troisdorf Picture Book Award as well as a BIB Plaque "On illustration itself: the thing I do best, and which I really like doing."

Anke Bär

Has worked since 2009 as a freelance author. Illustrator and cultural academic with the atelier ratzbärkönig in Bremen. Her multifaceted illustrations derive from an intensive examination of the historical and cultural background of each story she illustrates.

"Illustration can open up a subjective, yet at the same time authentic vision of the world."

Sybille Schenker

Following a degree in communications design, she completed a Master of Fine Arts in Illustration as Visual Essay at the School of Visual Arts in New York. She has since devoted herself to her illustration work, mainly silhouettes and fairytales. She lives and works in Nuremberg. In December 2014 she was appointed as Professor of Illustration at Nuremberg's Georg Simon Ohm Technische Hochschule.

"The stylistic and thematic diversity of illustration derives from the personality and culture of each and every illustrator. That's what makes illustration so exciting."

Tobias Krejtschi

Born in 1980 in Dresden and studied illustration at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, he works as a lecturer, freelance illustrator and author, and holds workshops and readings. His books have appeared in several languages and have won many awards; his illustrations are exhibited around the world.

"Good children's books can reach, enthrall, entertain and touch adults as well as children with their subject matter and their aesthetic qualities."

Torben Kuhlmann

Born in 1982 in Sulingen, he studied illustration and communication design at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences then gained early experience as a freelance illustrator. From 2010 to 2014, engaged as illustrator by the advertising agency Jung von Matt in Hamburg. 2012, graduation piece: "Lindbergh - Die abenteuerliche Geschichte einer fliegenden Maus" (Lindbergh: The Tale of a Flying Mouse). Today, he lives as an illustrator in Hamburg.

"I always had a passion for painting and drawing, but I even prefer to tell stories using my pictures. Picture books are the ideal platform for that."

Julia Neuhaus

Studied book illustration at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences. She works as a freelance illustrator for book and magazine publishers, and has so far published numerous picture books in Germany and beyond. She lives with her husband and two children in Hamburg, where she has taught illustration at the University of Applied Sciences since 2014.

"Illustration is like a circus. Once the tent has finally been erected and all the artistes have rehearsed their numbers, then the show can begin!"

Lena Pflüger

Born in Leimen in 1981, she grew up in Germany and England. She studied illustration at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and has worked as a freelance illustrator since 2008. In the summer of 2015 she moved from her home town of Heidelberg to seek pastures new in Alexandria, Virginia, where she lives today.

"One of my favourite moments is when children react to my pictures, when they find hidden things and then invent their own stories to go along with mine."

Sebastian Meschenmoser

Born in 1980 in Frankfurt am Main, he studied fine arts at the Mainz Academy of Arts and the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art in Dijon. In 2007 and 2015, he was nominated for the German Children's Literature Award. He lives and works as a painter, author and illustrator in Berlin, where he is now writing and drawing his eleventh book.

"People always ask me how one writes books for children. But I don't know the right answer to that. In fact I write the books for me. By chance, children and other grown-ups also like them. Luckily!"

Reinhard Kleist

Born in 1970, studied design in Munster. He works in Berlin as an illustrator, also producing comics. He has held workshops around the world, including in a refugee camp in northern Iraq.

"For me, drawing stories allows me to create worlds, bring characters to life and take the readers with me into foreign places, to show them lives they don't know and will never live

themselves. Many of my stories are set in the real world, reflecting our supposed reality or history. Readers can infer a reality alongside the facts they can see."

Sonja Danowski

Born in Iserlohn, today she lives as an illustrator and author in Berlin. Her illustrations, published internationally, have won many awards.

"My love of books and the awareness that, with a bit of luck, my stories will find their way into children's rooms around the world: that helps me to carry on drawing. I might not be there in person, but a large portion of my feelings travels along with every book, wrapped up in the pictures."

Sonja Bougaeva

Sonja Bougaeva was born in 1975 in Leningrad/St. Petersburg. There, she studied at the Russian Academy of Arts and then completed training as a cartoon animator. In 1998, she moved to Hamburg to study illustration. Her first picture books were published in 2002 and she has been producing an increasing amount ever since. Sonja Bougaeva lives in Hamburg. (Source: Carlsen Verlag)

Daniel Napp

Born in 1974 in Nastätten. After school and voluntary civilian service in a hospital, he studied design in Munster from 1996 to 2002, with special focus on illustration. Since 2006 he has worked in the collective atelier Hafenstrabe in Munster. He has already been selected four times for the exhibition of illustrators at the Bologna Children's Book Fair.

"As a freelance illustrator I can always sleep in, and I'm usually happy to go to work. It even feels something like a pleasure, when a picture turns out well."

Mehrdad Zaeri

I was born in 1970. I illustrated my first book in 2008. Today I live in Mannheim and I'm a contented book illustrator.

"I've lived in Germany since I was 15. Even as a young boy I already had two dreams: 1) to live in freedom, and 2) to draw pictures every day. It looks like I've been very lucky."

Jan von Holleben

Born in 1977, he studied special education in Freiburg and later the theory and history of photography, in the UK. After seven years as art director and founder of various art and photo organisations in London, he now lives and works in Berlin. His books of educational photography for children have been published and received awards worldwide.

"My pictures tell stories and I try to represent texts or a visual idea, and to communicate, just like a traditional illustrator, just with different tools – for instance, with perspective or collages."

Joëlle Turlonias

Born in 1985 in Hanau, she studied visual communication at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, with a focus on illustration and painting. In 2009 she turned freelance and currently draws, paints, lives and loves in Düsseldorf.

"If I could use words as well as I can use my pencil, and if I could think of clever things to say, then I might have become an author ;)."

Jonas Lauströer

Born in 1979 in Hamburg, he completed a design degree and a Master of Arts at the University of Applied Sciences. Today he works as a freelance illustrator for publishers of picture books, magazines and specialist books. He is also a teacher of illustration at the University of Applied Sciences, and gives readings and lectures. His books and other works, which have been exhibited internationally, have brought him various accolades.

"To quote Amir Andikfar: 'Good children's books are children's books for children with beards.'"

Judith Drews

Born in 1973 in Heide, she studied illustration at the University of Applied Sciences in Hamburg. Today she lives as an illustrator and author in Berlin. Her books have been published in more than 15 languages. She is a leading member of the Illustratoren Organisation, and a jury member of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award and the Reading Foundation.

"Feeling close to children and at the same time being lost in memories of my own childhood – that's what I really adore when I'm drawing my look-and-find illustrations. I feel a bit like when I was a little girl, sitting in front of my dolls' house, playing and forgetting time. That is a real luxury."

Julia Friese

Born in 1979 in Leipzig, raised in Potsdam, she studied in Dublin, Bilbao and Leipzig. Since 2006, a freelance illustrator and graphic designer, she divides her time between drawing, graphic design assignments and projects with children and young people. Thanks to her children's books, she has received invitations to places such as China, India, Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua, Palestine and Israel. She lives in Berlin with her family.

"How wonderful that Germany is this year's Guest of Honour at the book fair in Bologna! Bella Italia, stiamo arrivando!"

Katrin Stangl

Born in 1977, she studied at the Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig. She uses various techniques to illustrate her own and other people's texts. Her graphic prints and illustrations have garnered her many awards. She lives in Cologne with her family.

Kristina Andres

Born in 1971 in Greifswald, she grew up in Mecklenburg, where she still lives today. Having studied art history and literature for a few semesters in Hamburg, she switched to the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg to study painting and drawing. Since 2002 she has worked as a freelance artist. Her numerous children's books have received many awards, including that of the German Academy of Literature for Children and Young Readers.

Markus Lefrançois

Born in 1980, he studied at the Kunsthochschule Kassel and has worked since 2004 as an illustrator, with related teaching assignments.

"The picture-book: it's moving forward! /Breaks the waves foaming round the picture-bow! /The ship, rocking wildly as the knees of parents, /and the knees of the child, /since they're all inside the picture world, /and no one's sitting quietly now! /Even faster on the tracks, /the picture-train, the train in the picture. /Children, grannies, friends and luggage; /the mother feeding baby. /The journey racing ever faster, /picture after picture past the window. /How glad I am to be here! /But if I must, I'll disembark; /the lights go out and parents leave; /Eyes close... /The light goes on! /The picture-book: it's moving forward! /For if I want, I'll get on board!"

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