

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

Less than a year after his death, the Bologna Children's Book Fair pays a tribute to Gianni De Conno with “**• D • Notturmi, piraterie e allunaggi. An Exhibition of illustrations by Gianni De Conno**”. The project, created by Ivan Canu, director of Mimaster Illustrazione, Costanza De Conno, Patrizia Zerbi, editor at Carthusia Edizioni, and Fabio Toninelli of the Tapirulan Association, celebrates the career of one of the most important Italian illustrators of the past decades. Featuring around 80 works, the exhibition focuses on the main highlights of Gianni De Conno’s visual language, including picture books, posters, covers and editorial illustrations. The inauguration will take place at the Illustrators Survival Corner (Hall 32) on Monday, March 26th, at 12.30.

During his career, Gianni De Conno illustrated 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, “The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor” by Gabriel García Marquez, in addition to poetry collections such as “Alla Luna”, and many of the most popular contemporary children’s books, from Avi’s “The Button War” and Silvana De Mari’s “The Last Dragon” right down to his latest work “Il Buon Viaggio”, written by Beatrice Masini and published by Carthusia. The evocative power and unrivalled formal and aesthetical consistency of his style are recognized and acclaimed both in Italy and abroad.

The exhibition is staged at the Illustrators Survival Corner. Its catalogue is edited by Ivan Canu, Patrizia Zerbi and Fabio Toninelli and published by Carthusia in conjunction with the Tapirulan Association. Each work of art in the catalogue is accompanied by comments and memories of friends, collaborators and publishers who met and worked with Gianni De Conno throughout his career.

“His extraordinary technical skills – proved by the seamless transition from traditional oils and acrylics to digital painting without losing an ounce of his magic – enabled him to create firm, self-conscious characters: somewhat haughty but kind; shy perhaps; thoughtful; sensible; always worthy of respect. His delicate use of colour insufflates atmospheres, shading smoothly from lights to shadows and vice versa,” (from the introduction to the exhibition catalogue by Ferruccio Giromini).

As for many other artists, the Bologna Children’s Book Fair proved to be the perfect place for De Conno to begin a career as an illustrator, and it is therefore the ideal place in which to collect and present his work. This year the **Silent Book Contest 2018 – Gianni De Conno Award**, which he helped to establish, is also dedicated to him.

Gianni De Conno was born in Milan and spent his teens attending art school and studying music at the Conservatory. 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 then in the publishing industry, for adults’ and children’s magazines and books. His first picture books came out in the early 1990s and he quickly became a reference 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; in 2009 he co-founded Mimaster Illustrazione, an internationally acclaimed education centre for illustrators. From 2014 onwards he helped to conceive and organize the Silent Book Contest, which aims to promote books without words and support emerging talents in illustration. 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 staged personal and collective exhibitions in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, France and the US.