



Bologna
*Where Your Taste
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BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR

THE 2023 GRAND TOUR ARRIVES IN NEW YORK WITH A TRIBUTE TO ITALO CALVINO IN HIS CENTENARY YEAR

The exhibition *Italian Excellence. Illustrations for Italo Calvino* and the events at the Society of Illustrators and the Rizzoli Bookstore on November 11 and 13

The third edition of Bologna's Grand Tour – with the Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF), BolognaBookPlus and the Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids – arrives in New York. From **18 October to 6 January 2024**. The exhibition *Italian Excellence. Illustrations for Italo Calvino* will be on display at the illustrious **Society of Illustrators** venue.

This New York institution, which over the years has been building a relationship with BCBF, will host the illustrations inspired by the literary production of the great 20th Century Italian writer, the most translated contemporary Italian writer at the time of his death. His last book, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, published in 1988 after his sudden death in 1985, is a collection of six lectures that Calvino was supposed to hold at Harvard University.

He visited the US for the first time between 1959 and 1960, building a **connection with the American world that would remain unbreakable**: *"something like falling in love"*, as he wrote on many occasions. His huge affection for New York led him to write in one of his correspondences for the weekly ABC: *"I love New York and love is blind. And dumb: I cannot counter the reasons of the haters with my own... Shall I have it written on my tombstone, under my name, 'New Yorker'?"*.

His centenary gives Bologna Children's Book Fair the occasion to celebrate his life and works in a country - the United States - that reciprocated and deeply admired his art.

A programme of events will also take place at the Society of Illustrators and the Rizzoli Bookstore, providing opportunities for the Fair to meet with both new publishers and professionals, and also a broader public.

The programme includes: on **11 November** a double event at the **Rizzoli Bookstore**. From 6 pm to 7 pm, the US publishers **Claudia Zoe Bedrick** (Enchanted Lion Books) and **Angus Yuen-Killick** (Red Comet Press) will talk about the success of Italian illustration in US publishing. From 7 pm to 8 pm, Italian illustrators **Andrea Antinori** and **Irene Rinaldi** will lead a conversation with Grazia Gotti about illustrating Italo Calvino.

On **13 November** from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm the **Society of Illustrators** will host the *Italian Excellence: Illustrations for Italo Calvino* **Panel Discussion**: **Steven Guarnaccia** will chair the discussion featuring **Grazia Gotti**, curator of the exhibition, **Maria Russo**, editorial director of Astra Publishing House's Minerva imprint and former children's book editor of the New York Times and illustrators **Irene Rinaldi** and **Andrea Antinori** about the exhibition and the challenges of illustrating classic literature.

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The exhibition **Italian Excellence. Illustrations for Italo Calvino** provides a valuable opportunity for both children and adult readers to engage with the masterful writing of Italo Calvino, marking the **centenary of the birth** of one of the greats of 20th century literature and one of Italy's most popular and well-known authors. Calvino became one of the world's greatest storytellers, successfully interweaving complicated tales of romance, family, the horrors of war, conflicts of the modern world, politics, and the importance and love of reading.

The **61 artworks** featured in this exhibition provide visitors with a historical and geographical overview of Calvino's words. On display are pieces from 31 **Italian and foreign artists** whose interpretations of Calvino's texts have already been published, alongside the illustrations of 30 **contemporary artists** selected by a jury from entries submitted to the Bologna Children's Book Fair Contest held for the occasion.

Synonymous with the best in international illustrations, the **Italian Excellence project** – now in its fourth edition – is partnered by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Emilia-Romagna regional administration, the Bologna Children's Book Fair, and the Giannino Stoppioni Cooperative/Accademia Drosselmeier, working together to promote children's publishing, a sector that is vital for the education of future generations. This was exactly Calvino's thought when, in his first novel *The Path to the Spiders' Nests*, he remarks that when young, every new book read is like a new eye that opens and changes what other eyes, or "book-eyes", have seen before.

Integral parts of the Grand Tour, together with BCBF, are **BolognaBookPlus**, the general trade fair arm, of BCBF aimed at general publishing and produced in collaboration with the Association of Italian Publishers (AIE), and **Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids**, the leading Italian and European licensing event specifically for brands for children, teens and young adults. Bringing three events together under the umbrella of BolognaFiere represents an opportunity to promote Italian publishing excellence around the world, made possible also thanks to the support of ITA – the Italian Trade Agency and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI).

About Italo Calvino:

The eldest child of travelling tropical botanists and agronomists, **Italo Calvino** (October 15, 1923 – September 19, 1985) was born in Cuba before relocating to Italy at a young age. Calvino's childhood spent outdoors between his father's floriculture station in Sanremo and the family's ancestral land at San Giovanni Battista would greatly influence his later work. Growing up, Calvino kept his literary talents hidden from his family and enrolled to study agriculture, first at the University of Turin before transferring to the University of Florence. However, in 1943 the Germans occupied Liguria and Calvino went into hiding, refusing military service and instead joining the Italian Resistance. Around this time, Calvino first started publishing his work with a collection of stories based on his wartime experiences. After a stint with the Communist Party, Calvino became disillusioned with politics and current affairs, and his work turned to more fantastic allegories and romantic epics. Ever-evolving in style and genre, Calvino began creating his many masterpieces including his most popular books *Cosmicomics*, the "Our Ancestors" trilogy, *Invisible Cities*, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, and *Mr Palomar*. In total, Calvino would publish 30 titles and countless essays and short stories while earning numerous awards and lecturing all over the globe.

***Andrea Antinori** lives in Bologna and studied at ISIA in Urbino and Escola Massana in Barcelona. Since 2013 he has collaborated as an author and illustrator with Italian and foreign publishing houses. In 2023 he was awarded the International Award for Illustration BCBF — Fundación SM. His illustrations have been selected for the Illustrators' Exhibition at the Bologna Children's Book Fair at the 2017, 2020, 2021 and 2023 editions. In 2017, he won the Italian Andersen Award for "best book 6/9 years old" for *La zuppa dell'orco*, and in 2019 the "Best International Illustrated Book" award at Shanghai Book Fair for his book *La grande battaglia*.

***Grazia Gotti** is a curator of many exhibitions, a critic and author. She is the co-founder of the Giannino Stoppioni children's bookshop in Bologna and the Drosselmeier Academy – School for Booksellers and Centre for children's literature studies. She promotes training projects for schools and institutions. For years she has been a consultant to the Bologna Children's Book Fair for cultural programs, exhibitions and conferences.

***Steven Guarnaccia** is an illustrator and Professor Emeritus of the Parsons School of Design. He taught in the SVA MFA Design program and, like Steven Heller, was Op-Ed art director of the *New York Times*. He too never finished college. His illustrations have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Abitare* and *Rolling Stone* and he has

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created murals for Disney and exhibition drawings for the MoMA. He is the author of books on popular culture and design including *School Days*, *Black and White* and *a Stiff Drink and a Close Shave* (as well as three with Steven Heller).

He has designed watches for Swatch and greeting cards for MoMA, won awards from the AIGA, the Art Directors Club, and the Bologna Children's Book Fair and his exhibition, *Fatherland*, has toured internationally. His children's books include *The Three Little Pigs: An Architectural Tale* and *Cinderella: A Fashionable Tale*, both published by Corraini and Abrams. *The Story of Pasta*, published by Phaidon and the *Museum of Nothing*, published by Minerva, will come out in autumn 2023. Like many illustrators, he received his first illustration commission from Steven Heller.

***Irene Rinaldi** was born in Rome, where she currently lives and works. She collaborates with illustrating publishing houses alongside Italian and international magazines. Specializing in handmade print and etching, a crucial part of her work is related to the study of engraving and printing craftsmanship, offering her personal interpretation through the creation of prints and short editions. Taking from mid-century graphic design and from the strong graphic aesthetic of linocut printing, she is also inspired by screen printed poster-art. Among her clients are *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Taschen*, *The New Yorker*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *AARP*, *Mondadori*, *La Nuova Frontiera*, *Topipittori*, *Vogue Italia*, *Elle France*, *Barilla*, *Iliad*.

***Maria Russo** is the editorial director of Astra Publishing House's Minerva imprint. She is the former children's book editor at the *New York Times* and co-author of *How to Raise a Reader* (Workman). Russo has also been a writer and editor at the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Observer*. She holds a PhD in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University and taught at the university's School of General Studies.

Milan, 8 November 2023

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BOLOGNA

Three world-class events for the book industry, managed by BolognaFiere and focussing on the international trade in rights and licences, taking place in parallel in Bologna, a city where culture and style converge and business relationships are forged.

BolognaBookPlus (BBPlus)

BolognaBookPlus is the initiative launched in 2020 by BCBF/BolognaFiere, in collaboration with the Association of Italian Publishers (AIE), to reach out to a wider audience in the field of publishing through a three-day exhibition, training events, conferences and other initiatives. The event takes place in conjunction with the popular Bologna Children's Book Fair. Jacks Thomas has been appointed Guest Director of BolognaBookPlus and will be supported by a British team working in tandem with the Bologna team.

Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF)

Bologna Children's Book Fair is the world's leading trade fair dedicated to publishing and content for children. Attended by **1,500 exhibitors**, it attracts around **30,000 visiting professionals** from around **100 countries**. BCBF celebrated its **60th anniversary in 2023** and each year attracts a unique yet diverse international public of publishers, agents, developers, illustrators, authors, booksellers, librarians and other professionals involved not only in the book industry, but also in multimedia and children's content licensing.

Bologna Licensing Trade Fair Kids (BLTF/Kids)

The Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids is the leading Italian and European licensing event specifically for brands for children, teens and young adults. The event held its 16th edition in 2023. The licensing business fair is an integral part of the prestigious Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF), the world's leading trade fair for children's publishing. The main events at BLTF/Kids include the International Kids Licensing Days, a unique chance to find out more about the main content for children, from animation to licensing, publishing to digital.

BolognaFiere

BolognaFiere S.p.A. is one of the leading trade exhibition organisers in Europe with over 85 events. As a world leader in organising trade fairs in a variety of sectors, including art, children's publishing, cosmetics, agribusiness, construction and design, BolognaFiere has developed a formidable portfolio of international trade fairs in the major North American and Asian markets, including China, with eight events held to date.

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