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BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR AND THE CHINA SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR

The fair, organised by BolognaFiere/Bologna Children's Book Fair together with its Chinese partners, is set to begin its second decade having seen growth of 192% since its first edition in 2013.

The Shanghai fair, from 15 to 17 November, will feature a lecture by Alessandro Barbero on Marco Polo, an exhibition about fashion in picture books plus numerous opportunities for exhibitors at the Asia Pacific area's leading event.

This year will mark the opening of the second decade of the **China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair (CCBF)** (15-17 November 2024, Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Center), the only professional publishing fair dedicated to the trade in rights and the promotion of content for children and young people in the Asia Pacific area. The Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF) has been co-organiser of the event since 2018 in collaboration with its Chinese partners, with whom it shares its sixty plus years of know-how as the world's reference event for children's publishing.

Founded in 2013, the fair opens its 11th edition continuing its journey of positive growth: this can be seen in the **192% increase in the number of exhibitors since its inaugural year** (from 154 in 2013 to 450 in 2024). The arrival of BolognaFiere/Bologna Children's Book Fair as co-organiser in 2018, in particular, led to a **22% increase in the total number of exhibitors** (from 367 in 2018 to 450 in 2024).

Concerning the participation of **international exhibitors**, moreover, BCBF's contribution was decisive from the very first year, resulting in an **increase of 100%** (from 66 foreign exhibitors in 2017 to 132 in 2018). While there will be 180 international exhibitors from a total of 32 countries taking part at the 2024 edition, welcomed in an exhibition space spanning **25,000 square metres** that last year attracted **42,733 visitors, a 26% increase on numbers for 2018** (33,796).

With strategic support from Bologna and the wealth of global connections that have become part of BolognaFiere's DNA, CCBF has grown to represent a genuine hub for international publishing in an area of the world that is seeing substantial development and transformation. The event therefore represents a **strategic showcase for those seeking to seize the opportunities of the Asian market**. BCBF, in its role as a promoter of the global children's publishing industry, has in fact stimulated new and original production of Chinese picture books that stand out on the international scene for their fusion of traditional Oriental aesthetics and modern multicultural voices.

"Despite the fact that the Chinese publishing market is facing challenging times," states Elena Pasoli, Director of Bologna Children's Book Fair, "I see that the mutual interest in dialogue and interaction between the global children's book industry and the Chinese scenario is lively and growing. We saw it in Bologna last April, where Chinese participation was at an all-time high, and we see it now in Shanghai, where international participation has reached excellent levels both in terms of numbers and in the representation of different countries. I don't think I am being presumptuous when I say that BCBF's role is crucial in this continuous expansion of dialogue and trade."



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CCBF, endorsed by the Shanghai Press & Publication Administration, is organised by Shanghai Xinhua Distribution Group, China Education Publishing & Media Group and China Universal Press & Publication, co-organised by Ronbo BolognaFiere Shanghai and promoted by BolognaFiere Group.

THE PROGRAMME, CHINESE EXCELLENCE IN CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATION AND THE SPECIAL EVENTS DEDICATED TO MARCO POLO AND FASHION

As organiser, BCBF participates in the planning of CCBF events with a series of initiatives aimed at boosting **opportunities to raise the profiles** of its international exhibitors – from the lounges dedicated to the finalists and winners of the Strega Prize Ragazze e Ragazzi and the BOP-Bologna Prize for the Best Children's Publishers of the Year, to the exhibition that brings together the winning titles of the 2022, 2023 and 2024 editions of the BolognaRagazzi Awards – and providing opportunities for discussions and in-depth analysis about some of the most pressing current issues for the industry. Topics include: artificial intelligence, from creativity and copyrights to their strategic application in the publishing supply chain; debates on the challenges that the digital era poses to bookshops all over the world; innovation in reading spaces for children and young people; reasoning on the educational aspect of children's content, such as social-emotional learning. [An overview of the CCBF programme can be found at this link.](#)

Another constant is the privileged gaze that BCBF always casts over young illustrators. The **Illustrators Survival Corner**, with its initiatives for youngsters and featuring the big names in illustration and children's publishing worldwide, such as Jon Klassen, Xiong Liang, Gao Cai, Gui Tuzi, Yang Dong, Cathy Olmedillas, Emily Sutton and Maeva Rubli, will be held again in Shanghai this year in collaboration with Mimaster Illustration. **Chinese Excellence in Children's Illustration**, a new series of exhibitions organised by BCBF/BolognaFiere, China South Publishing & Media Group Co. Ltd, and Sidee Cultural Communication Co. Ltd, continues with its second edition. Replicating the successful format of *Italian Excellence* (which held its fourth edition in 2023 and was successfully presented in more than 50 countries during several international tours), *Chinese Excellence* aims to **showcase the talents of Chinese illustration** by presenting a selection of the best illustrations by both well-known and unpublished contemporary artists each year, selected by a jury composed of Chinese and international publishing and illustration experts. The finalists of the selection are presented at CCBF, while the winners, and the exhibition displaying their illustrations, will feature in Bologna.

Two new exhibitions have been designed specifically to **celebrate the relationship with China and as opportunities to raise the profiles of the best releases from publishers around the world**, as well as to offer the public gathered in Shanghai a taste of excellence in publishing for children and young people. **Marco Polo. Traveller, merchant, storyteller**, thanks to a selection of international titles for children and young people (curated by Giannino Stoppioni Cooperativa Sociale/Accademia Drosselmeier), will guide visitors on a journey through time and space to explore – on the occasion of the seven hundredth anniversary of his death – the legendary life of the great traveller, merchant and storyteller who was the first to act as a bridge between Italy and China, thus celebrating the bond that has linked the two cultures for centuries. Accompanying the exhibition will be the *lectio magistralis* **'Marco Polo's Description of the World and its Readers: A Travel Account Mistaken for a Fantasy Book'** (16 November, 10-11 am, Conference Room) in which Professor **Alessandro Barbero** will explain how Marco Polo's travel diary has become a true work of legendary fantasy for future generations. The event will be chaired by **Ivan Canu** (illustrator and Director of Mimaster Illustration) and will include an opening address by **Elena Pasoli** (Director of Bologna Children's Book Fair) and Professor **Francesco D'Arelli** (Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Shanghai). The meeting will be held in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute of Shanghai, as will the book exhibition, the masterclass dedicated to comics **'Marco Polo, a comic book series: from idea to project'** (16 November, 11.50 am-12.50pm, Illustrators Survival Corner) and the live painting event **'Bridging Worlds: A Live Painting Tribute to Marco Polo'** (15 November, 12.10pm -12.30pm, Illustrators Survival Corner), featuring international illustrators, authors and artists.

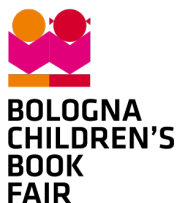


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Furthermore, thanks to the collaboration with the Shanghai Italian Cultural Institute, Professor Barbero will also be appearing in the city, giving a *lectio magistralis* on Friday at the prestigious **Shanghai Public Library**, one of the world's largest libraries.

Threads, fabrics, tailors, imaginary clothes and those imbued with extraordinary powers permeate the literature of every age and corner of the world, and narrative language itself is rich in metaphors from the world of sewing: terms such as *text*, *weave* and *thread* indicate a strong affiliation with textile techniques. After all, stories have been whispered and passed down over the centuries as hands weaved, sewed and mended. All this will be highlighted at the exhibition **A Fabulous Wardrobe. Fashion, Clothing and Threads in Children's Picture Books**. Created with the patronage of the University of Bologna's Rimini Campus, the exhibition will be divided into 6 sections, with a total of 150 books from 21 countries. A selection of books featuring the best of children's publishing from all over the world will follow the traces of embroidery and explore patterns that take on surprising shapes and ever-changing identities, investigating the relationship between childhood and clothing, between dressing and being dressed, evoking real and imagined wardrobes by discovering epochs, styles, techniques, anecdotes and languages of fashion from every era, in an endless game of quotations and cross-references. A journey through so many different aspects of the relationship between fashion, childhood and storytelling, because in the colourful and well-designed world of children's books, fashion goes beyond being an art form, inspiring and nourishing the sensibilities and innovative thinking of the youngest children.

Accompanying the exhibition is the conference **"A Fabulous Wardrobe: Threads of Imagination. Where Children's Books Meet Textiles and Fashion"** (15 November, 11 am-12. 30pm, Conference Room), a discussion between publishing professionals chaired by **Silvana Sola** (Professor of History of Illustration, ISIA Urbino) and **Marcella Terrusi** (Professor at the Department of Sciences for the Quality of Life, University of Bologna), both co-curators of the exhibition together with Mariaelena Schiavo (Special Projects Manager Bologna Children's Book Fair). Speakers include: **Justyna Karpinska** (Senior Foreign Rights Manager, Wydawnictwo Dwie Siostry, Poland), **Jon Klassen** (author and illustrator, USA), **Giulia Rizzo** (Deputy Editorial Director, Terre di mezzo, Italy), **Kristian Steinberg** (Director of Education, Istituto Marangoni Shanghai, Sweden), **Emily Sutton** (artist, illustrator, Print Maker, UK), **Wu Binrong** (Hua'er) (author, editor, curator, China) **Xiao Aozi** (artist, Associate Professor, School of Design and Art, Hunan University, China). The conference will be followed by a guided tour of the exhibition.

CCBF is also one of the destinations on the Bologna Grand Tour, the annual tour around the worlds' publishing fairs undertaken by BCBF, accompanied by **BolognaBookPlus** (BBPlus), the initiative for generalist publishers organised in collaboration with the Association of Italian Publishers (AIE) and by **Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids** (BLTF/Kids), the event that focuses on the relationship between the worlds of publishing and licensing. The tour is made possible thanks to the support and collaboration of ITA-the Italian Trade Agency and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

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