

Finding a Safe Home in Books

IBBY European Regional Conference

Thursday, 9 March 2023 Sala Notturmo, 1st Floor, Wing D, Services Centre, Bologna Children's Book Fair

Speakers



Feeling at Home: The Importance of Stories – Winnie Ang, child and youth psychiatrist, Belgium

How can stories support our wellbeing and mental health? As Ali Smith says: "Books mean all possibilities, they mean moving out of yourself, losing yourself dying of thirst and living to your full". Stories can help us to navigate our social emotional worlds by turning the continuum of lived events into a – sometimes coherent, sometimes fragmented and contradictory – narrative despite and thanks to life's peaks and valleys.

Making meaning of the world is an important part of child development. It is a way to explore different spaces of belonging.

In this presentation I will reflect on my work on topics of identity, trauma, resilience and imagination on the fascinating intersections of literature and mental health.

Winnie Ang (Belgium) works as a child and youth psychiatrist in Antwerp. She has a Master's degree in Transcultural Psychiatry (McGill University, Canada). In addition to her clinical work with culturally diverse clients, Winnie is affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Antwerp as a teaching assistant and researcher in (diversity) communication. She offers several workshops on 'dealing with diversity' and 'identity and belonging'. Winnie has written three children's books and was involved in Studio Sesam, which is a Flemish Literature project that focuses on the creation of 'diverse' children's books.

Contact details: winny7ang@gmail.com



Sometimes I paint a house for us. Exhibition featuring the book of the same name by Alea Horst and Mehrdad Zaeri & related literature projects with children in Berlin. Kathrin Buchmann, programme director at LesArt, Germany

*"Does every child have a right to a secure home and a worthy life?" Alea Horst explores this question in her book *Sometimes I paint a house for us – Europe's forgotten children* (Klett Kinderbuch).*

Horst interviewed and photographed children and young people in refugee camps on Lesbos/Greece and gives an insight into their living conditions. Vignettes created by the artist Mehrdad Zaeri put the young people's wishes into the picture and reveal what they long for: safety, the opportunity to go to school, have healthy food, medical care, clean toilets, a warm shower, or simply a change of clothes.

*The book by Alea Horst and Mehrdad Zaeri, the accompanying exhibition designed by LesArt and books such as *Blumka's Diary* by Iwona Chmielewska (Gimpel), *Maybe We Can Stay* by Ingeborg Kringeland Hald (Carlsen) or *Everything Will Be Fine, Forever* by Kathleen Vereecken (Gerstenberg), in which the loss and (re)finding of home play a role, were conceptually linked for the interactive LesArt events with children in 2022.*

Kathrin Buchmann (Germany) is programme director at LesArt – the Berlin Centre for Children's and Youth Literature. She has a diploma in speech science (Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg) and another in librarianship (Leipzig University of Applied Sciences). Her work focuses on promoting literature, reading and language in Germany and abroad. She is currently developing a variety of programmes for literary and aesthetic education to create bridges between children's literature and its recipients. Since 2010, she has curated the annual exhibitions at LesArt with original illustrations and concepts for interactive workshops.

Contact details: buchmann@lesart.org · www.lesart.org



Doris Breitmoser (Germany) studied at the universities of Passau, Germany, and Parma, Italy, and completed a MA degree in International Cultural and Business Studies at the University of Passau. She began her career in a publishing house and has been employed since 1997 at the head office of the German umbrella organization, the Association for Children's Literature/*Arbeitskreis für Jugendliteratur (AKJ)*, in Munich, which is also the office of IBBY Germany. In 2003, she became the managing director of AKJ. She is co-editor of the quarterly children's literature magazine *JuLit*. Doris is currently a member of the IBBY EC and IBBY Vice President (2022-24).

Contact details: breitmoser@jugendliteratur.org · www.jugendliteratur.org



Libraries at the Emergency Accommodation Centre for Migrants in Ivry-sur-Seine.
Hasmig Chahinian, IBBY France

A team of dedicated volunteers has created a library for children in the school at the Ivry Emergency Accommodation Centre for Migrants. They have also set up a mobile library that circulates the Centre. They train teams in using the library management system and organise reading activities. In a context where political realities change every day that can have a direct impact on the Centre, they fight to insure that the libraries continue to exist and function in the future.

Hasmig Chahinian (France) holds a PhD in children's literature from University Paris 13. She works in the International Division of the National Centre for Children's Literature, a service of the French National Library. She is the liaison officer for IBBY France and has been a member of the IBBY EC and liaison officer for Europe for many years (2010-2014 and 2016-2020). Hasmig collaborates with the National Centre for Children's Literature's various publications, works on promoting reading and children's literature and holds training sessions in France and abroad. Because of her background – she is Armenian, Lebanese and French – Hasmig is interested in questions related to multicultural identity and languages.

Contact details: hasmig.chahinian@bnf.fr · cnlj.bnf.fr/fr/ibby_france



Charalambos Demetriou (Cyprus) has been a primary school teacher for the past 20 years. He graduated from the Department of Educational Sciences of the University of Cyprus and holds a Master's degree (M.Ed.) in Curriculum Development and Instruction (majoring in Literature) from Frederick University (Nicosia). Since 2017, he has been working for the Cyprus Ministry of Education as a supporter/counsellor for the Literature Curriculum in Primary Education. He is also a founding member of the group called *Mithopori* and, since 2019, he has been a board member of Cyprus IBBY. Through his work, he organises workshops for children, parents and teachers, as well as scientific conferences that promote literature. He also participates in various educational conferences, and generally acts as a book promoter and reviewer.

Contact details: chuckdem@gmail.com



Eva Devos (Belgium) studied Comparative Cultural Studies, Communication studies and Library Science. She started working for the National Centre of Children's Literature in 2000 and since 2006, has worked for the Flemish Reading Association, *Iedereen Leest* (Everybody Reads). She is the librarian at a professional library for children's literature and reading promotion, and coordinates a reading advice website for children and young people. In 2002, she joined the Flemish branch of IBBY Belgium as the liaison officer and in 2015 she became president of the Flemish branch.

Contact details: eva.devos@iedereenleest.be · iedereenleest.be



Sabine Fuchs (Austria) studied German Literature and Catholic Theology in Graz and Media Science in Berlin, before becoming part of the research project on 'Austrian Literature in National Socialism' at the KF-University in Graz for seven years. In addition, she worked as a teacher at different schools. She was Professor of Children's Literature and Teaching Methodology in German /Literature as well as the Head of the KiJuLit Centre for Research and Didactics of Children's Literature at University College of Teacher Education in Graz/Styria. Sabine was one of the founders of the Austrian Research Society for Children's and Youth Literature and is Liaison Officer for IBBY Austria. Her main interests are children's literature, picture books, media and didactics.

Contact details: sabinemfuchs4@gmail.com



Understanding your own story to build your future. Fabio Geda, author, Italy

Stories shape our lives and change the way we see the world. Recognizing ourselves in the stories we are told, allows us to take root in the present and imagine our path in the future.

Fabio Geda (Italy) is a novelist. He worked with children in difficulties and disadvantaged teenagers, and while working as an educator, he started to deal with stories. In 2010, his novel, *Nel mare ci sono i cocodrilli* (Baldini+Castoldi) became an international bestseller translated in more than twenty languages; the UK translation was included in the 2014 IBBY Honour List as *In the Sea there are Crocodiles*. Nearly all his stories, published in Italy by Einaudi and Mondadori publishing houses, deal with coming-of-age issues. He has been a consultant for the Turin International Book Fair since 2016.

Contact details: agenzia@grandieassociati.it



Etc. (Itn.) Festival of engaged writing as an open space. Nika Kovač, coordinator of Etc. (Itn.) – Youth festival of engaged writing, Slovenia.

Books as a community. Books as a safe space. Books as a space of intergenerational collaboration. Books as an opportunity to talk with your models, to connect, to empower. The festival of engaged writing was created with this idea – it combines a programme board of high school students, activists and book editors, who work together to organise a three-day festival, issuing a publication and creating a space where all participants are equal. High school students have conversations with their favourite writers, there is an exchange of poems with young authors and established poems, a performance about a chosen book and a breakfast with writers. Every year the festival also produces a publication comprising letters between high school students and writers about the importance of elections; testimonies of students about covid isolation, as well as a festival newspaper. In the presentation, the speakers will talk about the importance of such spaces in creating a more equal society.

Nika Kovač (Slovenia) is the founding director of the 8th of March Research Institute, a movement-building organization that uses storytelling and advocacy to confront gender and economic inequalities across Slovenia. Nika has a Master's degree in social and cultural anthropology from the University of Ljubljana and was

a member of the 2020 class of the Obama Foundation Leaders programme in Europe. She is also the author of two books, *My Choice: Testimonies, Rights and Prejudices Regarding Abortion and Brave Girls*. She is a coordinator of Etc. (It.) – Youth festival of engaged writing, which connects young people, writers and readers in the creation of a more progressive society.

Contact details: sentis.navadni@gmail.com



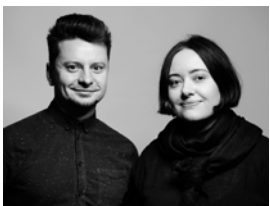
Elena Pasoli (Italy) graduated in Classic Literature from the University of Bologna in 1980. She joined the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 1987 as a special-events manager and went on to become its project manager. In 2006, she directed the Communications department of the University of Bologna Foundation. She returned to the BolognaFiere in 2011, where she was appointed director in 2014. After the first editions of the Global Kids Connect Conference, created in New York in partnership with Publishers Weekly, Elena contributed to the creation in 2018 of the New York Rights Fair (NYRF), which was held for two editions before the Covid 19 pandemic. Her international activities continue with the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair (CCBF), which, since 2018, is co-organised by BolognaFiere through its subsidiary company BFChina. Elena was elected to the IBBY EC in 2020 and in 2022.

Contact details: elena.pasoli@bolognafiere.it · www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it



Chiara Pinton (Italy) was born in Padua, and for many years, was involved in children's literature and the promotion of reading, art workshops and cultural events, combining her passion for literature with the passion for art and cinema. She is currently a member of the board of IBBY Italia as part of the national coordination of BILL Library of Legality, where she coordinates the creation of new BILL networks and organises the training events. She is also one of the founders of *MILEGGI. Diritti ad alta voce*, which is an association established in Padua in 2016 that combines a passion for reading aloud with the desire to reason. Adults and young people discuss social issues, including justice, rights, active citizenship, respect for differences and social inclusion. Her current interests include psychoanalysis and child neuropsychiatry as a way to understand the complex and fascinating world of adolescents. She has also worked for over 20 years in corporate marketing and communication.

Contact details: chiara.regina.pinton@gmail.com



Picture books and storytelling in times of war. Andriy Lesiv & Romana Romanyshyn, book authors, designers and illustrators, Ukraine

Our focus will be our book "How war changed Rondo". We wanted this picture book to be the starting point for a sincere talk between children and their parents about war. We believe there should not be any taboos between parents and children, but parents must pick the right language for sincere conversation with children about war. Storytelling through picture books is one of the best ways to do it. But we should not lie: war changes everything, and we will miss the life we lived before. We will miss so many friends we lose. We will cry. But we have to fight and to think about the future. A happy future, full of stories about hope. It will be hard conversation, but after that children and parents become closer to each other, more sincere and even calmer.

Romana Romanyshyn & Andriy Lesiv (Ukraine) are book authors, designers and illustrators, members of PEN Ukraine. Both were born in Ukraine in 1984, and currently live and work in Lviv. After graduating from the Lviv National Academy of Arts they co-founded *Studio Agrafka*, where they create illustrated books for children and adults. The *Agrafka* duo have received a number of accolades for their work, among them are the Bologna Ragazzi Award (2014, 2015 - mentions, 2018 - winner); the Italian *Premio Andersen* (2019); Plaque and Honorary Mention at the Biennial of Illustration in Bratislava (2017, 2012); NAMI Concours (Purple Island Award - 2019, Green Island Award - 2021), Gold (2020) and Silver (2021) of the

European Design Awards; Bronze medal and Honorary Appreciation of the *Stiftung Buchkunst* concurs *The best book design from all over the world* (2019 and 2022); Appreciations and Third Winner of Sharjah Children's Reading Festival (2015, 2016, 2022); Global Illustration Award (2016, 2017); and their work has been included in the White Ravens list (2013, 2014, 2016, 2021), amongst others.

Contact details: agrafkastudio@gmail.com . <https://agrafkastudio.com>



Home is where the heart is. Experimental 3D Picture Books in Birdhouse Shape. Margaret Anne Suggs, illustrator, Ireland

As an illustrator, and with the support of the Arts Council of Ireland, I have created a series of experimental picture books based on my own immigration experience. The series consists of five pop-up illustrated paper birdhouses. The birdhouse shape relates to ideas of migration, duality of belonging and the ephemeral nature of a home. The word 'Home' to most people will conjure thoughts of comfort, familiarity, safety and family, but 'home' for some people is everything that has been left behind. Though this collection of work, loosely called 'books', is unusual, it has attracted a diverse audience that might not otherwise be inspired by the traditional book. The birdhouses, suspended at child's eye level from branches, are now being exhibited around Ireland at a selection of galleries. To further engage the target audience (immigrants and refugees of all ages) there is a series of workshops to accompany the exhibition.

Margaret Anne Suggs (Ireland) – Mags – was raised in the American Deep South and her dual citizenship has given her illustrations a cheerful colour palette and a distinct femininity. Mags holds a Master's degree in Visual Communication, and another in History of Design and Applied Arts. She serves on the Board of Directors for both Illustrators Ireland and IBBY Ireland and each year helps with the *Bandes Dessinées* Festival at the *Alliance Française* in Dublin. She also lectures part-time at Ballyfermot CFE, where she established its course on illustration. Mags' recent awards include an Arts Council Bursary for her picture book work in *The Dandelion's Tale* and a residency at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre for her work on the silent/wordless book *The Fall*. She is the illustrator for the *Pigin of Howth* series with Kathleen Watkins (Gill Books) and her most recent book is *Holy Shocking Saints* with Sine Quinn (Veritas). Her exhibition of experimental pop-up birdhouses, *Home is Where the Heart is*, is showing at four venues across Ireland.

Contact details: margaretanne@gmail.com . www.margaretannesuggs.com



Author Slash Young Person. Edward van de Vendel, author for children and young adults, Netherlands

How can we fully engage ourselves as authors for children or young people? By giving them a voice in the writing process and crediting them for it. Edward van de Vendel started the Slash project in The Netherlands, which has well-known authors writing a book based on the true-life story of a young person. Two of his critically acclaimed books created in this way focus on a refugee family, bringing together themes of representation and home.

Edward van de Vendel (Netherlands) writes books for children and young adults. He was born in Leerdam and was a teacher in elementary schools before he became a fulltime writer in 2001. He writes novels for children and young adults, poetry, and picture books, most of which are published at the Querido publishing house (Amsterdam/Antwerp). His books were awarded with the Golden Kiss (best book for teenagers, 4x), Silver Slate (best books for children, 14x), the *Woutertje Pieterse Prijs* (critic's choice, 2x), the German Youth Literature Award, and he has been nominated several times for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award and the Hans Christian Andersen Award. His books are sold in more than twenty-five countries.

Contact details: edwardvandevendel@outlook.com . www.edwardvandevendel.nl



Sylvia Vardell (USA) is the current president of IBBY. She is Professor Emerita of Literature for Children and Young People at Texas Woman's University in Denton, TX and has written over eighteen books, numerous book chapters and journal articles. She also has a popular blog, *Poetry for Children*. Sylvia has collaborated with poets around the world to create anthologies of poetry that provide strategies for teachers. She has taught at the University of Zimbabwe as a Fulbright Scholar, studied at the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany, and has conducted over 170 presentations at conferences around the world. As an active member of USBBY she has served on many committees and as President in 2006. In 2017, she was presented with the USBBY Alida Cutts Lifetime Membership Award in recognition of her contributions. Sylvia served as co-editor of IBBY's quarterly journal *Bookbird*. She has also served on the IBBY EC from 2018 to 2022, was a member of the Bookbird Inc. Board and was chair of the IBBY Reading Promotion Jury for the 2022 awards.

Contact details: svardell@gmail.com
