



CHINA SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR
A SUCCESSFUL FIRST CO-ORGANISED EDITION BY BOLOGNAFIERE
Latest news, future perspectives and different views of the publishing market
at the most important children's book fair of the Asia Pacific Region

The 6th China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair's (CCBF) ended on Sunday, November 11th. For the first time the fair was co-organised by BolognaFiere. The most important event entirely dedicated to children's and YA's contents in the Asia Pacific region was a great success, representing a unique opportunity for international stakeholders. Indeed, thanks to the collaboration with Bologna Children's Book Fair, numerous newcomer exhibitors have had the chance to take a deep look into the Asian publishing market for the first time.

A nearly **20 000 square metre exhibiting hall, 367 exhibitors, 237 events, 33 796 visitors**: more than just a marketplace for trading rights, the fair is a unique opportunity for worldwide experts to gather, confront and share new ideas and future perspectives of the publishing market, as it traditionally happens in Bologna.

The exciting programme included meetings, panels and conferences featuring great international experts, who covered the most strategic topics of the business and analysed the whole range of opportunities offered by children's content, going from literature to illustration, audiobooks and licensing as well as augmented reality technologies. Experts also focused on the study of most popular characters in children's literature.

One of the most attended meetings presented the **children and YA publishing market and the amazing scenarios opening up in China**. According to the "*National Press and Publication Industry Overview 2017*" the Chinese children's books market has rapidly



increased in the past ten years. The book price tally proportion of children's books in overall books market has risen from 12.07% to 24.6%. They have become an important driving force for the growth of books sales in China. Furthermore, online retail has become the most important sales channel for children's books. In 2017, the share of online retail in the book industry was 57%. In the children's books segment the share reaches 80%.

Children's books from abroad have drawn more and more attention in China in the past few years. The Chinese government and publication industry have mostly been supporting national production, but the major driving force of sales still relies on foreign books translated into Chinese.

The children's book industry has a solid base in China, and according to market forecasts it will continue to increase in the next three to five years. In the meantime, with a growing number of readers, a significant increase of market contenders, and an intensified demand, the market will be facing fierce competitions and strong challenges. The competition has already raised the entry standard of the industry for new contenders, splitting the market more and more. Branding will therefore become an inevitable trend. In the near future, translated books will continue to play the main role in the market. Nevertheless, the Chinese production is growing at fast speed.

Great interest was drawn by the panel on ***Augmented publishing, apps and children's books***: *"Delivering a quality experience on screen is key to making a bridge for the touch generation to cross back into books"* said Japhet Asher, Digital Director Carlton Books (UK).

A standing-room-only audience gathered to hear a panel of picture book makers explaining how they create their most popular characters. In the panel **What Makes a Classic Picture-Book Character?** the Children's Literature Specialists Leonard Marcus (USA) said: *"we began by remarking the fact that children must be provided a way to enter the world of a picture book; most often it is via an emotional connection with the main character that the child is able to do so"*.

And yet, *"We introduced the panel **East Meets West** by noting that children's books express each generation's hopes and dreams for its children, and that all groups do not necessarily share the same hopes and dreams, whether it comes to differences in basic*



values or in the assumptions about what children know or ought to know, and even in styles and conventions of picture making and storytelling”.

One of the most interesting comments came from Ajia, Chinese translator, storyteller, and bookseller. He suggested that *“the picture books that travel best across cultures are those that have both “something old and something new” to offer readers by drawing on the traditions of their culture of origin while adding a fresh twist or interpretation of more general appeal”.*

According to Marco Ferrario, Country Manager for Storytel in Italy, who took part in the panel **Listen Up! —Audiobooks and Paid Audio Content: Global Presence and Future Trends**, *“All the speakers’ presentations made it clear that the audio content represents a new big opportunity for all publishers and that it is becoming more and more a pivotal area for new editorial and commercial strategies”.* The supply and demand of audio content in different formats is indeed growing by double digits everywhere, be it in China, US or Europe: smartphones and broadband increasingly used to access content in streaming have opened a marginal publishing sector to large scale distribution through scalable platforms able to deliver an unprecedented quantity of content.

With reference to the children’s content field, Wang Zhao Yang, Vice President of Beijing Kaisheng Culture Media Co. Ltd, said *“experimenting new ways to engage and to immerse children into stories using voices, sound effects, music and dramatization responds to an existing demand for a better use of the electronic devices that children are experiencing nowadays, and this is made clear by the huge and increasing number of downloads (dozens of millions) in the most popular dedicated apps”.*

As for the Bologna Fair, **The Illustrators Survival Corner** – concept, brewed in Italy by Milan-based illustration school Mimaster in partnership with Bologna Children’s Book Fair - proved to be one of the most amazing events for illustrators, with about **2000 people** attending its activities: participants were excited to discover western and eastern sides of creativity and picture-book design displayed during masterclasses.

Great responses were gathered by all the worldwide exhibitors and guests in the Fair, both the newcomers and the familiar visitors. Caroline Muir, International Sales



Director at Walker Books Group (**UK**), noted how *“on our first visit to CCBF in 2015 we said we thought the fair could have the potential to become the ‘Bologna’ of the Far East, so it is great to see that it has come to fruition with the collaboration of the BolognaFiere this year. We have been very impressed by the many panels discussing illustration, picture book making and international collaboration in children’s publishing which help to promote cultural understanding and exchange”*.

Rosemary Hinde, International Development Manager of **Australia** Council for the Arts, also marked how CCBF has been a big step forward for them in both understanding the Chinese children’s books market’s needs and building relationships with local publishers.

“CCBF gives us an opportunity to show our best editions for children on the main publishing platform for children’s literature in the eastern hemisphere. This book fair is extremely important for us, as Russian and Asian book markets have a lot of mutual interests”, Maria Vedenyapina Director of the Russian State Children's Library (**Russia**) said, *“CCBF is a place for a professional dialogue between representatives of different international institutions focused on publishing children’s books”*.

Following the great results achieved by this new successful collaboration with BolognaFiere, the China Shanghai International Children’s Book Fair is already working on a brand new edition, aiming to reconfirm its key role as the Asiatic benchmark in the children’s contents international industry.

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