

THE SILENT TRAVELLING

Place: BIBIANA, Dušan Roll Gallery
Time: 17th of September - 22nd of November 2020
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This playful and inspirational exhibition offers a journey through the world of 'silent' books. These books, made up only of images without text, are made solely on the voices of illustrations, and are only a little-known genre of children's literature. In its visual form, they 'tell' their stories, translate emotions, guide the reader into the world of dreams and fantasy but can just as well interpret facts and realities. They are universally useful for everyone, no matter their language capabilities or cultural environment. They are most popular mainly with the youngest of readers and pre-school children who have not learnt to read yet. They are, however, equally as helpful as a motivational tool for raising children with special needs, mainly with children who are mentally handicapped. In recent years, this genre found its way into the mainstream as a useful means of eradicating language or culture barriers when working with foreign children of migrants, for instance.

Their main benefit is the ambiguity of its interpretation. Therefore, the children 'read' what they feel from the images, they implement their visions, emotions, experiences... Reading of these 'silent' books helps the children to evolve their creativity, perceive the richness of details, the meaning of colours, to improve their expression and form a positive relationship towards books. The proximity of an adult is of the utmost importance in this process, however, be it as a companion, a navigator, a partner or just a silent listener who can wonder at the inner world of children.

The visitors of our exhibition have a unique opportunity to seek, explore and get to know the stories hidden behind images. We chose 130 titles from all over the world from the international collection of BIBIANA Library, mainly the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava and the IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) Honour List. The exhibition offers a large spectrum of admirable books of various genres, from the workshops of both the young and experienced artists.

The first part of the exhibition is made up of a group of picture books with minimal text in both slightly foreign and very distant languages (Korean, Japanese, Latvian, etc.) alike. This is already a perfect place for the visitors to figure out how a book only needs images, especially if those images are the works of art of such world-renowned illustrators such as Michael Dudok de Wit, Piet Grobler, Petr Sís, Akiko Miyakoshi and Nikolai Popov.

The overarching theme of the whole exhibition, as the name suggests, is journeying. Dreams, fantasy, flight, journey through the world and through time, those are all imaginary worlds the characters of many of these textless books find themselves living in. Titles such as *Czarostatki i parodieje* (Pawel Pawlak), *Tabi no ehon* (Mitsumasa Anno), *Time flies* (Eric Rohmann), *Journey* (Aaron Becker), *Sooyungjang* (The Pool, Ji-hyeon Lee) or *La nuit quand je dors* (Ronald Curchod) are all a feast for the eyes, a festival in itself, fantasy inviting you to join her. Not only dreams and poetic motifs can be told in images for you will also find epic stories full of adventures and twists, in books such as *Robinson Crusoe* (Alberto Ajubel), a proof of the artist' mastery of visual storytelling. Graphic novels await the younger visitors, offering social and ecological themes with thriller, horror, visions of the future (*Vertigo*, *The Middle Passage*, *Les*

mots, Flut, Belonging). Naturally, the stunning title *The Arrival* by the internationally hailed Australian artist Shaun Tan is a must read for everyone, showcasing the graphical epopee of the history of mankind of the 20th century. Stories where the children can play at a fantastical hairdresser (*Fridolin Franse frisiert*), a message whisperer (*Telefone sem fio*) or chat about an apparition in the Venetian lagoon (*La Rumeur de Venise*) are all a testament to how funny 'silent travelling' can really be. The smallest of children can enjoy folding picture books, hide-and-seeks, pop-ups, traveller's guide books and other titles themed 'search and find'.

Thanks to its numerous activities, the exhibition encourages group playing, chats and experiential learning for individuals, families and collectives. The introductory game is one where children complete tasks and write their progress down into a diary. If they accomplish the tasks, they can take part in a competition and win books.

Workshops are also an option, for various young age groups.

For more experienced types and professionals, the exhibition offers a catalogue of the showcased books.

The Silent Travelling interactive exhibition will move on after its time with BIBIANA and will be made available in other cultural institutions and libraries throughout Slovakia.