

## **RETRO BIB 1967–2025: Documentary exhibition from the history of BIB**

BIBIANA, the International House of Art for Children and the University Library in Bratislava, would like to invite you to the opening of the documentary exhibition titled **RETRO BIB 1967–2025**

**The official opening will take place on 17 July 2025 at 16:00 at the Exhibition Hall of the University Library in Bratislava, Michalská 1.** The exhibition marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB). It showcases, in a unique way, the history of one of the most prestigious international events dedicated to the illustration of books for children and young people. BIB's anniversary is a celebration for the entire world of children's book illustration. Since its inception in 1967, the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava has enjoyed the support of numerous international organisations, including UNESCO and IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People).

Today, IBBY is its leading partner and co-organiser, and the Slovak Commission for UNESCO has taken over patronage. The exhibition **RETRO BIB 1967–2025** introduces visitors to the milestones of BIB and the key figures who shaped it. Using an abundance of documentary exhibition material from BIBIANA's archive, the exhibition brings to life the colourful history of the individual years since 1967, culminating in Bratislava becoming the meeting place for the best illustrators, publishers, and professionals in the field of picture books for children and youth from around the world.

**The exhibition consists of 26 panels showcasing BIB's history, including:**

- BIB's history and mission
- Significant developments
- BIB exhibitions around the world
- Albín Brunovský workshop in cooperation with UNESCO
- The faces behind BIB
- The story of Dušan Roll and the birth of BIB
- Jella Lepman and IBBY – (IBBY founder)

The exhibition also includes 29 reproductions of illustrations honoured with the highest accolade - Grand Prix BIB. The exhibition will be officially opened by Ing. Petra Flach, Director of BIBIANA, the International House of Art for Children, and Ing. Silvia Stasselová, Director General of the University Library in Bratislava. The exhibition was conceived and designed by BIB's general commissioner, **PhDr. Zuzana Jarošová**, chair of BIB's International Committee. *"It is with great joy that we open this exhibition to the public. It is the first of many events commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava, a cooperation with the University Library in Bratislava. The exhibition is much more than a showcase – it is an embodiment of our cultural memory, a living archive of visual beauty, and proof that book illustrations have the power to shape values, awareness, and the perceptions of whole generations. RETRO BIB 1967–2025 is a tribute to all those who stood at the inception of this extraordinary project and also an invitation to be part of an exciting story that has been unfolding for more than sixty years in our town, Bratislava. I am confident that the exhibition will appeal not only to professionals but also to the general public. I hope it will remind us of the importance of educating children in the field of art and visual arts from their early years,"* says Ing. Petra Flach, the director of BIBIANA.

The director general of the University Library in Bratislava, **Ing. Silvia Stasselová** continues in the same vein: *“It has been a great honour for the University Library in Bratislava to host this retrospective exhibition celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Biennial Illustration Bratislava also because we are the institution officially entrusted with storing and conserving books, we look after and make available to the general public all the books for children and youth that are an integral part of the Slovak cultural heritage – including their unforgettable illustrations by Slovak and foreign artists. Thanks to our location in the heart of the Old Town, situated on a busy tourist route, I believe this retrospective exhibition will be visited not only by locals but also by people from all continents visiting our town. I wish this unique exhibition commemorating the history of BIB would attract many visitors, and I hope that it is an inspiration to other illustrators and authors of children’s books.”*

## **History of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava**

The Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) was founded in 1967 as an international competition showcasing original illustrations of children’s books. Its parents are enthusiasts of beautiful children’s books – **Dušan Roll**, illustrators **Albín Brunovský**, **Ján Švec**, **Miroslav Cipár** and others, who believed that children deserve the best when it comes to book illustrations and that the best original illustrations of art from all over the world should be sought out and honoured in the capital of Slovakia – Bratislava. That is how the town became the global capital of illustration.

*“The mission of the Bratislava Biennial is unique and invaluable – it teaches children to appreciate beauty and enriches their souls through outstanding artistic illustration. For children, book illustrations are often the first gallery they visit, and it is thus imperative to ensure that children find real art instead of commercial kitsch there. Though Slovakia is a small country, its impact on bettering the artistic quality of book illustrations for children and youth all over the world over the last 60 years has been immense,”* says **PhDr. Zuzana Jarošová**, **General Commissioner of BIB**

## **Awards and honours**

Every two years, BIB presents 11 awards, including the Grand Prix BIB (the leading award), Golden BIB Apples, and **BIB Plaques**. These awards honour the contributions of artists in the field of children’s illustration and are often a gateway to the international art world.

## **Global reach and significance of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava**

Since its early days, BIB has grown into a platform that brings together illustrators, professionals, publishers, and the general public from all corners of the world. Since 1967, the event has presented more than **9,000 illustrators from 105 countries, exhibiting over 60,000 original illustrations and 10,000 books**. Thanks to its non-commercial and apolitical character, the event has become a stable and respected institution, even in the face of the geopolitical changes that the world has witnessed over the last few decades.

The exhibition **RETRO BIB 1967–2025** is open until August 31, 2025