



## **Fansiful Signals from above**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me some introductory words before we start with lectures and discussion. Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava 2005 is characterised by celebrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> jubilee of this event what brings expectations to provide a retrospective view evaluating its previous years and at the same time also a perspective vision of its continuance in the future. This was also the reason why we have prepared a summary of all previous topics for you with the intention to compile what was discussed about in the field of illustration during this 40 years long period, what were the topics that had become up to date (those strictly definite but also those of a general character), what used to be the priority in this or that period, what used to be innovative or problematic.

At our symposiums number of experts on illustration work from all of the continents had taken the floor and the composition of the current symposium is kind of a combination of personalities who witnessed the beginnings of BIB with the experts who honoured us with their participation for the first time and in this way they have brought a moment of comparison into the global view. Speaking about a jubilee year we need to say its festive character was underlined by selecting a topic concerning the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Hans Christian Andersen and at the same time it was a sad farewell with Dutch illustrator Max Velthuijs at the beginning of this year – the winner of H.Ch. Andersen Award – that inspired us to make a deeper analysis of his work as a part of his individual exhibition and a separate block at our symposium.

I am very pleased by the fact that I was able to contact Ms Joke Linders in person at Book Fair in Bologna, an expert on the work of Max Velthuijs and to ask her not only to cooperate in preparation of his exhibition but also to take the opportunity and to invite her to explore his work directly at our International Symposium. We understand this separate introductory block together with the presentation of the exhibition as homage to the author of illustrations well known in the world and to a wonderful man who can hopefully catch our symbolic message of thanks in the other dimension.

Highly elegant fairy-tale Danish topic - Psychological and Sociological Aspects of Illustrations in Works of H. Ch. Andersen – shall be presented and discussed in the second dominant part of the International Symposium. Its aim is to undress the relation between the literary text and the illustration within different social and cultural environments of the respective countries, to use the possibility of transforming the stories in the work of the artist, their interconnection in illustrations with the way of thinking in the respective period and society in which they were created, to try to compare the visual and expressive means of illustrators of a particular literary text in various countries. This is how the topic was roughly defined by the coordinator of the symposium PhDr. Dagmar Srnenská who accepted a repeated appeal from the previous BIB to lead the symposium.

Here I have to mention also the grandiose illustration work created in its full range of illustrated stories in Slovakia presented by Slovak illustrators – husband and wife Dušan Kállay and Kamila Štanclová – at BIB. All these seemingly accidental circumstances mesh as clock rings to capture the exact time of our opinions and I do believe they shall tick inside of us with the same intensity also after the International Symposium is over. And so we have listened subconsciously – expressed in an allegory – the signals from the above to take a break, define, name and first of all to understand.

Psychological and Sociological Aspects of Illustrations in Works of H. Ch. Andersen should indicate human nature of the artist, his motives, life experiences and stories his works originated from, they were linked to, the reflection of which they were. His stories are by far not so fairy-tale and optimistic and maybe this is why they are so precious and attractive. They are based on truth and experience we normally meet in our lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to express my thanks to all who came to share their professional opinions and thoughts with us, as well as my sincere thanks to the coordinator Dagmar Srnenská who organised the symposium this year and last but not least my symbolic thanks to great artists H.Ch. Andersen and Max Velthuijs on behalf of all of us as they gave us an evident reason through their fantastic works (both literary and illustration) to turn back to them, to do into their works and their backgrounds more deeply, not to forget the human aspect in our accelerated and chaotic presence.

And so similarly as the Girl with Matches I will strike an imaginary match and I will symbolically light up a small flame at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> BIB International Symposium which you shall pass as an Olympic baton from one opinion to the other for two days and I do believe you shall make it a big fire of expert discussions. I wish you creative atmosphere and positively provoked working enthusiasm. Let us the man again, somewhere among fairy tales and messages from our artists.

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