

NOVEMBER 2019 - APRIL 2020
BIBIANA - CENTRE FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, READING, AND SK IBBY

SK IBBY NEWSLETTER



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE SLOVAK SECTION OF IBBY ON 1 DECEMBER 2019



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019 ON "ROOMS OF READING"

In November 2019, the Centre for Children's Literature, Reading, and SK IBBY organised an international conference on the "Room of Reading" - WELCOME TO A BOOK LAB! The aim was to evaluate the existing experiences with the Rooms of Reading organised at BIBIANA, an international house of art for children, so far. The participants included authors and experts in the field of literature and dramatic and fine arts from Slovakia and abroad. At the same time we sought to use examples and available parts of installations to present the Room of Reading as a unique artistic format that aims to introduce children to the possibility of moving "inside a book," experiencing new situations and emotions, solving tasks, and sensitively perceiving and reflecting on the story a book presents. The Room of Reading project motivates children to pursue these objectives very well.

The conference presenters included Mária Bačová who had prepared the book *Dierožrút* (The Hole Eater) as a scenic laboratory. Creatively adapting the rather challenging book that deals with existential questions (such as the meaning of life, the sense of void), she succeeded in mediating the story also to children of the primary school age through a suitably approached graphic concept. Through physical encounter, the children were enabled to search for holes together with the "hole eaters" (objects), reflecting on what it is like to live on holes, while also getting to know the symbolic meaning of other objects in the story and the pathways of the hole eaters at the same time.



MÁRIA BAČOVÁ SPEAKING ABOUT THE ROOM OF READING - DIEROŽRÚT (THE HOLE EATER) AS A SCENIC LABORATORY

In another Room of Reading, entitled **The Secret of the Castle Treasure**, the scenographer Juliána Dubovská created the scene using a passage from the book by Ján Milčák, *Starec, ktorý lietal* (The Old Man Who Flew), together with a fragment from the legend of the Červený Kameň Castle. Both texts were interlinked by the motif of a treasure and hidden mysteries (e.g., an exhausted old man suddenly finds himself at an abundantly set table just to hear a warning inner voice not to eat of it despite his immense hunger). In this Room of Reading, the scenographer materialized a tempting table that included cryptical messages warning against an impending danger. These messages at the same time served as an attractive riddle for the visitors. The facilitator Timotea Vráblová used a small fraction of the story only to work with children. She worked with the moment when the old man enters the room with the feast awaiting him there. This scene gave the children a plenty of impulses, for instance, they had never experienced hunger before, thus were not able to evoke the sense thereof. Posing the questions, such as Can we eat from the table?, Who had enjoyed this table before?, T. Vráblová explored symbolic language, children's attention (they did not even take note of many things, such as the shadows of the hands on the table cloth, the candleholder with a face), the interconnection of stories, and the processing of impulses.

Yet another Room of Reading, called **Attention! Excavation of the Stories**), graphically designed by the psychotherapist Zoltán Mátyus, was exceptional, there were only objects, no story.



Based on getting to know and selecting the objects at the excavation site, children were asked to search for a story (Who did the given object belong to? What kind of persons they were? Where did they live? What did they do?). The process of selection and searching for the objects was mind-stimulating. The children were led to browse and make decisions, whether they would hold on to the object they found, or whether they would put it back, considering whether and why the object fits into the story, etc. In this process, the children learned to assertively bring themselves into the shared space, arguing why they want to have a certain object in the story and taking responsibility for themselves and their decisions.

Finally, the children created one common story to which all the selected objects were included.



TIMOTEA VRÁBLOVÁ SPEAKING ABOUT THE ROOM OF READING - THE SECRET OF THE CASTLE TREASURE

SAVE A STRANGE CREATURE

Between January and June 2020, we at BIBIANA offer a Room of Reading entitled **Save a Strange Creature**. This Room of Reading enables children to enter space of the story about Beauty and the Beast, thus leading them close to both known as well as mysterious characters. Journeying through the story the children are helped by symbolic references, scenographic and costume objects, emotions, intuition, and imagination. The Save a Strange Creature Room of Reading is a result of a joint research project under the study program of Alternative and Puppet Theatre and its Theory at the Academy of Performing Arts (DAMU) in Prague. In this Room, the author of the story, Zuzana Vojtíšková, and the author of the graphic design, Jitka Pospíšilová, created a home space that evokes the sense of security and comfort (fire place, arm-chair, gifts, family photographs). Playing with "semi-masks" of the characters in the story, the children revealed the relationships between the characters (father, sisters, Belle) and tried what it feels to be like them (What kind of characters they are? How are we going to understand them? How are we going to feel around them? Does their appearance help us find an answer to these questions?) The children explored under what conditions they would be able to leave their safe zone to enter a strange environment, not knowing what to expect there, and to what extent they would be able to intentionally sacrifice themselves for a fellow human being.

In a separate room the children had an opportunity to think about the Beast (e.g., what images it evokes, what it may look like, whether it takes on a human or animal countenance). Thanks to props (body parts) the children themselves created the Beast using a magnetic board. They gave the Beast hair, eyes, a body, arms, and legs. It was up to them whether they would use human or animal body parts. The Save a Strange Creature Room of Reading motivates children to thinking about characters, their personalities, appearances, and behaviours and seeks to employ sensitivity and empathy to create space for mutual respect and friendship among children.



CHILDREN CREATING THE BEAST ACCORDING TO THEIR IMAGINATION IN A ROOM OF READING

AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY

In January 2020, BIBIANA - Centre for Children's Literature, Reading, and the Slovak Section of IBBY, organised a national award presentation ceremony for the 2019 Ľudovít Fulla Award and the 2019 Triple Rose Award (Trojruža). The ceremony took place in the Radio and Television Slovakia (RTVS) Chamber Studio. The ceremonial evening with award presentations also featured Pressburger Klezmer Band.

2019 ĽUDOVÍT FULLA AWARD

The Fine Arts Foundation (FVU), SK IBBY, and BIBIANA - International House of Art for Children presented the 2019 ĽUDOVÍT FULLA AWARD to the illustrator Daniela Krajčová for her original style of graphic expression through which she fosters the imagination of the child reader.



2019 TRIPLE ROSE AWARD

The Literary Foundation, SK IBBY, and BIBIANA - International House of Art for Children presented the 2019 TRIPLE ROSE AWARD to Erik Jakub Groch for the way he expresses profound human values in new contexts to make them intelligible to the child addressee.



The ĽUDOVÍT FULLA AWARD is a prize for an excellent work of art or the previous artistic production that has made a significant contribution to developing Slovak children's and juvenile illustration art.

The TRIPLE ROSE AWARD is a prize for a significant literary work or a work in literary studies or the previous artistic production that has made a significant contribution to developing Slovak children's and juvenile literature.



PRESSBURGER KLEZMER BAND PERFORMING AT THE AWARD PRESENTATION

LANGUAGE AS A SPACE OF HOME

In February 2020, BIBIANA - Centre for Children's Literature, Reading, and SK IBBY organised, under the auspices of the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, a conference entitled LANGUAGE AS A SPACE OF HOME that marked the 2020 International Mother Language Day.

The mother language is more than merely an ability to express oneself in a certain language. It is the language of the heart through which one experiences and expresses one's emotions, thoughts, and feelings.

The creative conference explored the theme of the mother language from the perspective of its influence on the formation of the child's inner security. It emphasized the role the mother language plays in cultivating human personality and discussed the mother language as a constructive element in the psychosocial development of children.



In conversation with Timotea Vráblová, the musician and a founding member of Mucha Quartet shared his experiences with music that is a "mother language" of his predecessors and also becomes a language of his children, thus having broadened the context in which one thinks about the mother language.

The "struggle" for the mother language was a theme discussed by Gabriela Dittelová, a writer and author of books for children.

The task of a parent in the development of the communication skills of children was explored in a workshop prepared by Timotea Vráblová for the participants. The author, poet, creative thinker, and innovator

Daniel Hevier spoke about the mother language as roots for the future. The concluding part of the conference belonged to Timotea Vráblová and the theme of The Mother Language - A Journey to the Inner Image of the Self and the World.

