

BULGARIAN ILLUSTRATORS. BEYOND THE PAGE

13—16.04.2026

Bologna Children's Book Fair

Beyond the Page presents 12 contemporary Bulgarian illustrators through their work on children's books published in 2025 and 2026. The selection features established and emerging artists whose works outline some of the current trends in contemporary illustration.

The exhibition reveals a variety of working approaches—from line or curve and precise composition to expressive color solutions and high-contrast graphic images; from analog techniques to digital perspectives. Illustration functions not as a literal translation of the text but as an interpretation that structures the rhythm of reading and creates additional layers of meaning.

The selection shows different patterns of interaction between image and text—from the leading role of the image to autonomous visual lines. Therefore, illustration strengthens its position both as part of the book and as an independent visual language that can continue beyond the page.

ILLUSTRATORS

Albena Limoni
Antonia Mechkueva
Vesselin Pramatarov
Vyara Boyadjieva
Kristina Toujarova
Kalina Muhova
Martin Stanev
Mila Yaneva-Tabakova
Mira Miroslavova
Mihaela Angelova
Stella Dreis
Yassen Grigorov



Albena Limoni

Illustration from the book
The Keys and Locks

Albena Limoni lives in Sofia, where she works as an illustrator and graphic designer. She is the founder of the illustrator platform Illustration Station. She has worked for the publishers Dakelche, Colibri, Sonm, Klett, Pan, List, Labyrinth, Janet 45, Erove, Freestyle Publishing, Orange Books, etc. In 2019 Limoni and her partner Kostadin Kokalanov launched Studio Frank for graphic design. *The keys and Locks* is her first authored children's book as an illustrator. It is part of the selection BRAW Amazing Bookshelf 2026.

Follow
Albena Limoni



Written by
Zornitsa Hristova
Hardback, 23,5 x 27,5 cm
48 pages, age 7+
ISBN: 978-619-93028-5-9

Published by Dakelche
dakelche.bg

Antonia Mechkueva

Illustration from the book
The Professors' Gang

Antonia Mechkueva lives and works in Sofia. She is an illustrator and graphic designer. In 2002, she graduated from the National Academy of Art, Sofia, with a major in poster art and visual communication, which she followed with a specialisation at LA CAMBRE, Brussels. She has participated in numerous exhibitions and projects for special causes, and develops artistic activities for social projects. She illustrates and designs textbooks for the publishing houses Prosveta and BG Textbook, some of which have received awards at international forums. Mechkueva drew illustrations for the multi-festival award-winning animated film *Finding Home* (ANIMADOCS). She is an illustrator of four books by contemporary Bulgarian authors.

Follow
Antonia Mechkueva



Written by Ivan Radenkov
Hardback, 13x20 cm
152 pages, age 6+
ISBN: 9786191647583

Published by Enthusiast
enthusiast.bg

Kalina Muhova

Illustration from the book
Chromosomes

Kalina Muhova lives and works in Rome, Italy. She is an illustrator and comics artist. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. Her first authored comic book for children was *Upside Down Diana*, which received a special mention from critics in the Comics – Early Reader category at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair. She has illustrated texts by Marco Nucci (*Sofia from the Ocean*), Atanas Dalchev (*The Balcony*), and many others. Muhova teaches creative writing and comics at the New Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. After her works *I’m Sorry* and *Thank You*, she also published the autobiographical graphic novel *I Hate Summer*. She has illustrated children’s books for Bulgarian publishing houses based on texts by Lev Tolstoy and William Faulkner. Along with her participation in comics forums, she has been nominated and awarded at festivals in Rome (Bartoli Prize at ARF! Festival) and Lucca (Gran Guinigi for Best Comic). Her latest book *Chromosomes* was selected as an IBBY Italy Choice for 2025 and received a special mention at the Bologna Ragazzi Award for non-fiction in 2026.

Follow
Kalina Muhova



Written by Fabian Negrin
Hardback, 21x26 cm,
42 pages, age 6+
ISBN: 978-8899136536

Published by
Edizioni Corsare
justrightagency.com

Kristina Toujarova

Illustration from the book
Wind, Colour and Cloth.
The Story of the
Visionary Artists Christo
and Jean-Claude

Kristina Toujarova is a graphic designer and children's book illustrator based in Sofia. She is the founder and lecturer of the Art for Amateurs project, an initiative that introduces both children and adults to the history of visual art. She is the author of three illustrated children's books dedicated to prominent Bulgarian artists, as well as two widely loved illustrated cookbooks for children. She holds a Master's degree in Poster Design from the National Academy of Art in Sofia and is a graduate of the National School of Fine Arts in Sofia.

Follow
Kristina Toujarova



Written by Kristina Toujarova
Hardback, 22x30 cm, age 6+

Published by
Art for Amateurs
artforamateurs.com

Martin Stanev

Illustration from the book
*The 50 States:
Things That Go*
(Discover the USA)

Martin Stanev lives and works in Great Britain. He is an artist and author of children's books. He was born in Bulgaria but moved to England, where he graduated from Falmouth University in 2019, with a degree in illustration. His debut book *The Planet in a Pickle Jar* was chosen as the best children's book by *The Guardian* and has been translated into ten languages. The artist combines various traditional techniques on paper, but also paints with digital tools. He seeks inspiration from classic children's books, vintage objects from different historical periods, nature, and childhood nostalgia. Stanev lives in the Lake District, Northern England, where the landscape brings back memories of his childhood.

Follow
Martin Stanev



Written by Kristen Lee
Hardback, 26x31 cm,
64 pages, age 5+
ISBN: 9781915569820

Published by
Magic Cat Publishing
magiccatpublishing.co.uk

Mila Yaneva-Tabakova

Illustration from the book
A Playground for Snowmen

Mila Yaneva-Tabakova lives in Sofia, where she works as an illustrator and graphic designer. She is the co-founder of a platform for independent publications, TI-RE. Her artistic education was in the areas of illustration, print graphics, and comics, and she attended both the National Academy of Art in Sofia and the LUCA School of Arts, Brussels. She recently completed her PhD dissertation on alternative comics and is currently teaching Illustration at the National Academy of Art in Sofia. She has participated in biennales and illustration festivals in Bratislava, Riga, Antwerp, Prague, and Bologna. Yaneva-Tabakova has illustrated and designed books by Valeri Petrov, Rada Moskova, Dodie Smith, Mary Shelley, and Oscar Wilde. She has published two graphic novels – *On the Way*, 2021, and *The First Five*, 2023. Another book with her illustrations, *Fonchito & The Moon*, by Mario Vargas Llosa, is forthcoming.

Follow
Mila Yaneva-Tabakova



Written by Maria Doneva
Hardback, 22x20 cm
48 pages, age 4+
ISBN: 9786191869930

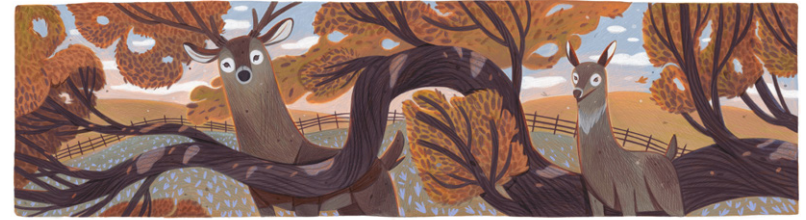
Published by Janet 45
janet45.com

Mira Miroslavova

Illustration from the book
Night of the Deer

Mira Miroslavova lives and works in Bulgaria. Her education in textile design at Manchester Academy, UK, nurtured a taste for detail and the tradition of high decoration. After 2017, she began focusing on illustrating children's books, the first of which, *Princess Stories and Other Extraordinary Events*, was published in 2018. *A Tale of the Lower Land*, with author Irena Parvanova, was nominated for the European Science Fiction Award Eurocon 2021, and *Grimms' Fairy Tales* with her illustrations was a finalist at the Bologna Children's Book fair in 2021. Among the publishers she has illustrated for are Harper Collins, Penguin Books, Algonquin Young Readers, Magic Cat publishing, and Colibri. Since 2020, she has been on staff at the CAT Agency, New York. In 2025, she was a finalist in the Original art exhibition at the 45th edition of the Society of Illustrators and in 2026 she is a finalist in the 68th edition of the Society of Illustrators exhibition.

Follow
Mira Miroslavova



Written by Mary Morel
Hardback, 23x29 cm
32 pages, age 5+
ISBN: 9781534112865

Published by
Sleeping Bear Press
sleepingbearpress.com

Mihaela Angelova

Illustration from the book
The Cloud That Remains



Mihaela Angelova is a graphic designer and illustrator with over 9 years of professional experience in visual communication. Her approach is shaped by her education in illustration, visual storytelling, and graphic thinking. Graduated from the National Academy of Arts, Sofia, and LUCA School of Arts, Brussels, she is now part of the team of Studio Punkt, Plovdiv. *The Cloud That Remains* is her first children's book as an author and illustrator. The book is part of the selection BRAW Amazing Bookshelf 2026.

Follow
Mihaela Angelova



Written by Mihaela Angelova
Paperback, 20x21 cm
20 pages, age 3+
ISBN: 978-619-92134-2-1

Published by Punkt
punkt.studio

Stella Dreis

Illustration from the book
Watch Out!

Stella Dreis was born and raised in Bulgaria, but lives in Heidelberg, Germany. She graduated in fashion design in Hamburg and now works as a freelance illustrator. Her first book was published in 2008 in the Netherlands. In 2012, Phoenix Yard Books published her authored book *Happiness is a Watermelon on Your Head* in a verse translation by Daniel Hahn. The book was enthusiastically received by critics and readers alike. Numerous publications by both German and international publishing houses followed (Thienemann, Nilpferd, Kunstanstifter, cbj, Leykam, Aladin). Among the awards she has received are the Troisdorfer Bilderbuchpreis for an illustrated book, the Hasselt Publication Award, the Golden Plaque at the Bratislava Illustration Biennale, and the City of Vienna Award. Her latest illustrations are for the books *Wie ich die Welt mir träume* (Melanie Laibl, Nilpferd, 2023) and *Was macht die Nacht?* (Dirk Gieselmann, Aladin, 2023), awarded the Deutscher Kinderbuchpreis, 2023, Sonderpreis Illustration. In 2024, she was nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA).

Follow
Stella Dreis



Written by Kerstin Hau
Hardback, 22x28,6 cm,
32 pages, age 4+
ISBN: 978-3-314-10734-4

Published by
NordSüd Verlag
nord-sued.com

Vesselin Pramatarov

Illustration from the book
The Golden Dream

Vesselin Pramatarov lives and works in Sofia. He is an artist and translator, as well as the director of a humanities publishing house. He graduated from the National Academy of Art, Sofia, majoring in graphics. Pramatarov has designed books and the covers of more than 700 books for Bulgarian publishing houses, galleries, and foundations, and has illustrated textbooks in physics and the social and natural sciences for students of all ages. He has illustrated stories, fairy tales and children's picture books (Charles Perrault, Nikolay Raynov, French women writers of the 18th century). He is also a comic book and graphic novel artist.

Follow
Vesselin Pramatarov



Written by Vesselin Pramatarov
Hardback, 24x32 cm
64 pages, age 7+
ISBN: 9786197500660

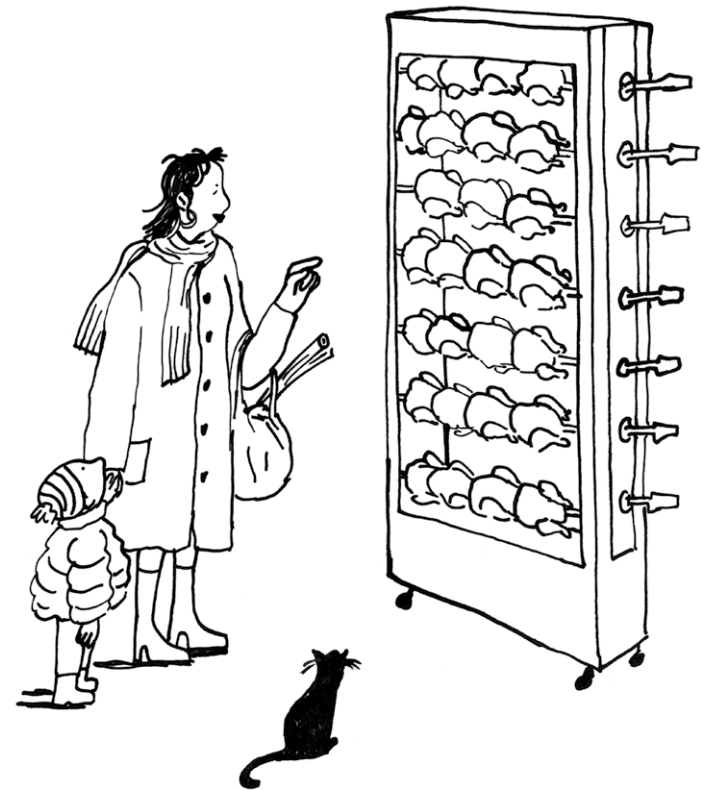
Published by Sonm
sonm@abv.bg

Vyara Boyadjieva

Illustration from the book
With Little Words

Vyara Boyadjieva lives in Sofia, Bulgaria. She graduated from studies in illustration and comics from the Academy of Fine Arts of Bologna and the Cambridge School of Art. She mainly works with illustrations in the picture book genre. In 2020, Boyadjieva received the Victoria and Albert Museum Student of the Year Award, London. She has illustrated several children's picture books, as well as created numerous book covers and magazine illustrations. Her books have been published by Flying Eye Books, Walker Books, La Joie de Lire, and several Bulgarian publishing houses, including Tochitsa and List. She travels constantly and teaches illustration at an art college in the Netherlands.

Follow
Vyara Boyadjieva



Written by Vyara Boyadjieva
Paperback, 14x19 cm
128 pages, age 5+
ISBN: 978-619-93655-0-2

Published by
Nebò Publishing
vyaraboya.com

Yassen Grigorov

Yassen Grigorov lives in Sofia, where he works as an illustrator, painter, and filmmaker. He graduated from the National Academy of Art in Sofia, the École supérieure d'Arts Appliqués in Geneva, L'École européenne supérieure de l'image in Angoulême, France, and the National Academy of Theatre and Film Art, Sofia, where he studied cinema and television directing. He is a feature film director with experience in documentary and television. As an illustrator, Grigorov has published over 60 books for various publishing houses. They have brought him international recognition and awards, and have been translated into French, Spanish, and Korean. Among them are *How Many Strawberries Grow by the Sea*, 2016, and *Les Angesgardiens* (Joie de lire, 2001). Grigorov was awarded a Special Diploma from the Bologna Ragazzi Children's Book Festival, 2002, and he is a winner of the French Prix Octogones for children's literature, 2004, as well as of the Award of the Union of Bulgarian Film Critics, 2011. His book *If I Were a Colour* (Tochitsa, 2021) was included in the White Ravens catalogue, 2022. He received the Konstantin Konstantinov National Award for Illustration for his work on *Sweet Pet Mosquito* (Tochitsa, 2025).

Illustration from the book
A Whole Team of Cats

Follow
Yassen Grigorov



Written by Olya Stoyanova
Hardback, 14,5x20 cm
80 pages, age 7+

Published by Janet 45
janet45.com



Organized by Cult Lab Foundation
cultlab.bg