



Round table (15.45-16.30)

The crème de la crème of Slovene children’s literature

The Slovenian section of IBBY is among others a nominating body for some of the main international awards in the field of children’s literature. With so many excellent artists, how do we choose the crème de la crème of Slovene children’s literature creators? Why is such a promotion important and how far does it reach? Does it help the artists? And how do they see the current state of Slovene children’s literature and their own work within it.

moderator: Tina Bilban



Tina Bilban is a writer, editor, literary critic and researcher (Institute Nova revija). Since her PhD in literature studies she has been focusing especially on the crossroads between literature, philosophy and science, and has recently been focusing especially on children’s literature. She is the

President of the Slovenian section of IBBY and a member of the IBBY Executive Committee (2022-2024); she was a member of the Hans Christian Andersen Award jury in 2020 and 2022, and is a member of the BolognaRagazzi Award 2024.

Participants:

Peter Svetina (2024 Andersen Award nominee)

Peter Svetina was born in Ljubljana, where he received his PhD in Slovene Literature. He is currently Professor of Slavic Literature at the University of Klagenfurt in Austria. His professional interests are poetry and youth literature. He writes for children and young people, and has twice been among the finalists for the Hans Cristian Andersen Award. He also writes poetry for adults and has published several translations of Czech, Croatian, Serbian and German literature.



Photo: Klara Svetina



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Damijan Stepančič (2024 Andersen Award nominee)

Damijan Stepančič is an academically trained painter, illustrator, comics artist and lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana. He has received numerous awards for his work both at home and abroad and is the Slovene nominee for the 2024 Anderson Award. It is illustration that best allows him



to tell stories through drawing, realising his bold visual and artistic ideas. In recent years he has also been working on comics and puppets where art can come to life through various materials. He considers comic strips an extremely vital media that beside stories also offers a powerful reflection of times and events - the world in general.

Anja Štefan (2024 IBBY Honours List)



Anja Štefan is a poet, writer and storyteller whose poems and fairy tales, illustrated by some of the best Slovene illustrators, address both children and adults. Her work is included in school reading books and anthologies. Plays based on her stories are staged in Slovene puppet theatres. Most notable among her works are *Bobek in barčica* (Bobby and the Boat, 2005), *Lonček na pike* (A Pot With Spots, 2008), and the more recent

Zajčkova hišica (Rabbit's Little House, 2021) and *Štiri črne mravljice* (Four Black Ants, 2022). In 2015 an anthology of her work was published entitled *Svet je kakor ringaraja* (The World Is Like Ring-a-Ring o' Roses). In 2022 she was the first Slovene children's book author to receive the Prešeren Fund Award, Slovenia's main award in the arts. She is the founder of the Slovene Storytelling Festival, which she ran for 20 years. With her sensitive adaptations she brought numerous folk tales to life, published either individually or as more extensive volumes of selected tales. In 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, she was chosen as the ambassador of cultural-artistic education in Slovenia. Photo: Nada Žgank





Maša P. Žmitek (2024 IBBY Honours List)

Maša P. Žmitek works as an illustrator, curator and producer.

She received her master's degree from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana. In 2018 she took over the management of the Vodnik Homestead Gallery, later establishing and managing the Slovenian Center of Illustration within the framework of the Divja Misel Institute. She is

interested in artistic illustration but devotes most of her time to scientific illustration, with a recent focus on depicting prehistoric creatures. Her analogue interactive book *Giants of the Cenozoic* (2021) and was followed by *Jurassic Dinosaurs* (2023). She has illustrated several literary projects for Slovene and foreign publishers, and her illustrations have featured in the Slovenian Biennial of Illustration and been exhibited at numerous Slovene and foreign galleries. She received the University Prešeren Award for her master's thesis in the field of scientific illustration, the Graphis Silver Award in New York, the Brumen Award for Excellence in Slovene Design, the Golden Pear Award, and was named on the IBBY Honours List.



Mateja Seliškar Kenda (2024 IBBY Honours List)



Mateja Seliškar Kenda studied comparative literary theory, French and Dutch at the University of Ljubljana. She earned her doctorate in literary theory with a dissertation on Dutch and Flemish avant-garde poetry. She translates Dutch, Flemish and French literature for adults and children. She has translated works by Annie M.G. Schmidt, Daniel Pennac, Marieke Lucas Rijneveld, Arnon Grunberg, Guus Kuijer, Hugo Claus, W.F. Hertmans, Bart Moeyaert, Annet Schaap and others. In 2017 she was nominated for the Sovre Award for her translation of the novel *Sorrow of Belgium* by Hugo Claus and in 2023 for the Vasja Cerar Award for the best translation of books for young readers for her translation of the novel *Lampje* by Annet Schaap.



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