

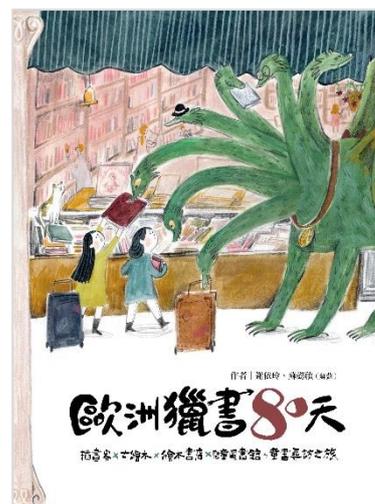
80 DAYS OF BOOK HUNTING IN EUROPE: ILLUSTRATORS, BOOKS, BOOKSTORES, CHILDREN'S BOOK LIBRARIES

歐洲獵書八十天：插畫家× 古繪本×繪本書店×兒童圖 書館，童書尋訪之旅

Two picturebook fanatics spend eighty days in Europe, visiting over sixty cities on an odyssey to know more about children's literature and meet its most celebrated artists in the cosmopolitan centers of the continent.

When most Asian readers think of European children's literature, we focus on Hans Christian Andersen and the Dutch character of Miffy the rabbit. But the field in Europe is much, much wider than that, especially in the less-familiar nations of eastern Europe. With hearts full of hope, picturebook fanatics Su Yi-Chen and Hsieh Yi-Ling take off on an eighty-day tour of Europe's illustration landscape, visiting over sixty cities in an attempt to see all they can see.

Their tour of thirteen countries takes them to Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Balkan states, and even further. As we the readers watch them read, buy books, and peruse bookstores, we are treated to stories about writing and illustrating across Europe's dramatic political history as well as to short biographies of famous writers and illustrators. Each new place reveals its own literary wonders, local talent, and rich mythology represented on paper, offering the visitors far more than they could ever hope to take home in a single trip.



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By Su I-Chen & Hsieh Yi-Ling

Translated by Anne Henochowicz

CONTENTS

Foreword

01 Eastern Europe

Slovakia (Slovenská republika): An Illustration powerhouse — where tradition meets modernity

Poland (Polska): My hand paints my heart — the creator on the page

Hungary (Magyarország): Classics of Communism, stars of a new era

Romania (România): Rekindle your love of reading in old-town bookshops

Bulgaria (Република България): Children's literature hidden in the ancient capital

Serbia (Srbija): Library and reader — a beautiful friendship

Croatia (Republika Hrvatska): Home of the creative Slavic spirit

Slovenia (Slovenija): State and citizens build a reading community

Czech Republic (Česko): Artistic and childlike — Classics of the Communist era

02 Western Europe

Germany (Deutschland): Picture book history on the Fairytale Route

Belgium (Koninkrijk België): Brilliant translingual creations

The Netherlands (Nederland): A happy country with children at its heart

03 Children's Book and Illustration Exhibitions in Europe

Bologna Illustrators Exhibition: A dream stage for every creator

Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava: The art of the picture book

Afterword: Meet You in the Pages — Hsieh Yi-Ling

Afterword: After the Fall Must Come "Joy" — Su I-Shen (Su-su)

Slovakia

Slovenská republika

An Illustration Powerhouse:
Where Tradition Meets Modernity





Let's talk about Slovakian illustration



You could call Slovakia (Slovenská republika) the inspiration for our tour of children's literature in Europe as well as our first stop. 2015 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the world's most distinguished children's book exhibition, the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB). We saw a BIB show while we were studying in Japan, but going to the real thing had always been a dream of ours. So we packed our bags and set off for the long journey. Essays later in this book go into more depth about BIB. For now, we will introduce Slovakia, a place not too familiar to our Taiwanese readers, but a European picture book powerhouse.

The best-known Slavic children's book illustrator is the magical Dušan Kállay, but modern Slovakian illustration is all quite extraordinary. Let us go back to the early twentieth century and get to know how the art form has developed by learning about some of the country's great illustrators.

Breathing new life into tradition

First up is L'udovít Fulla (1902-1980), the father of Slavic modernist illustration. He was also one of the first professors at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (AFAD). The three luminaries we will come to after him, along with almost every Slovak artist of note, all graduated from AFAD. Before the Second World War, Fulla was already known throughout Europe and had won a number of international prizes. After the war began, he turned his creative focus to book illustration. He was the first Slovak artist to conceive of the picture book's key elements as a whole. In his collection



● Illustration by L'udovít Fulla.



● Fulla reached the pinnacle of his work in Slovak Fairy Tales (Slovenské rozprávky).

of essays titled Perfect Slovak Books, Fulla wrote, "As I see it, the text is not a rigid pattern, but a road sign... leading to the lives our ancestors lived, to the dark corners of ancient castles... this road sign brings alive scenes in my mind, laying the foundation for my illustrations." He dismissed the idea that illustration should exist in service to the text, and drew inspiration from trends in contemporary art — such as Cubism, decorative arts, and the folk tradition of block prints — to breathe new life into traditional styles. His series of illustrated folk tales now define the modern Slovak picture book.



Laying the foundation for modern Slovak art

Albín Brunovský (1935-1997) stands out among post-war Slovak artists. He studied at AFAD, and later went on to teach there. AFAD is known for the breadth of its curriculum, and Brunovský was a master of many media, including hand-printing, woodcutting, copperplate etching, installation art, postage stamp design, and set design. Even while publishing his gorgeous illustrated edition of *The Little Tin Soldier*, he still found time to make black-and-white pen drawings of scenes from *Don Quixote*. He also designed Czechoslovakia's last set of banknotes before the dissolution of the republic. Brunovský's surreal style has come to define modern Slovakian art. He excelled at creating characters on the page and bringing fantasy worlds to life in excruciating detail. Beyond his artistic achievements, Brunovský was also an exceptional teacher and one of the core conveners of BIB, who devoted himself to mentoring and supporting young illustrators. In this way, Brunovský plays an important role in passing down Slovakian illustration arts to future generations.



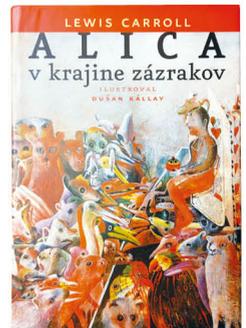
● Illustration by Albín Brunovský.



● Illustration by
Albín Brunovský.

Magnificent, mysterious, surreal, renowned

At last we come to Dušan Kállay. Compared to Brunovský's intricate background composition and bright colors, Kállay's work feels more dreamlike. He zooms in and out; the outlines of his figures are sometimes bold, sometimes faint; his colors suggest the supernatural. His unique style has earned him more collaborations with foreign publishers than any other Slovak illustrator, not to mention the International Hans Christian Andersen Award, given to Kállay when he was 40 years old. His wife, Kamila Štanclová (b. 1945), is an accomplished illustrator in her own right. In 2001, the couple embarked on the most ambitious project in the history of Slovak children's literature: an illustrated edition of all one hundred fifty-six of Hans Christian Andersen's stories. Kállay once joked in an interview: "Andersen lived with us for four years. We didn't have to cook for him or make his bed, and we didn't worry that he would hog the TV or make long-distance calls, but he dominated our daily life — we ate breakfast and dinner together, we went to bed together; in the morning our first thoughts were of what Little Ida looks like, how the chimney sweeps were doing." Over the course of those four years, husband and wife produced the equivalent of seven hundred and fifty-six pieces. Some they created independent of each other, others as a team. Kállay is also an outstanding mentor. He took over the engraving and illustration curricula at AFAD upon Brunovský's retirement. Peter Uchnár and Iku Dekune are among Kállay's students.



● Illustration by Dušan Kállay.

