

Call for Papers

The 9th International Conference of *The European Network of Picturebook Research*

The Picturebook between Fiction and Reality

28–29 September 2023

Osijek, Croatia

Organised by the European Network of Picturebook Research and the Croatian Association of Researchers in Children's Literature (CARCL)

The general theme of the conference addresses the complex relationship between fiction and reality as a topic that is highly relevant for the picturebook format. Drawing on Barbara Bader's famous definition (1976: 1), we may state that the picturebook as an art form hinges on the interdependence of fiction and reality. Our intention is to initiate a discussion of various aspects of this relationship in picturebooks and to explore the status of the picturebook as a kind of artefact in regard to these two realms.

In picturebooks, this relationship can be observed from different angles, such as semiotic structure, the fiction-nonfiction divide, materiality, metafiction, the reading process, and others. The semiotic structure of the picturebook depends on the ways meanings are conveyed through pictures and words. We may explore which elements of these two media are real (fonts, design, three-dimensionality, covers, etc.), and which of them are purely fictional (characters, settings, actions). Regarding the fiction-nonfiction divide itself, fiction picturebooks often populate their worlds with people, objects or artefacts from the real world. On the other hand, nonfiction picturebooks may include fictional elements, such as fairies alongside chairs in alphabet books. Possible combinations of these elements create specific meanings. Besides, research has shown that the picturebook uses its materiality to convey meanings, which makes it a real object on the threshold of reality and fiction. It would be useful to explore how they coexist, and how the materiality of picturebooks as real-life objects challenges or supports their fictional content. This is only one way in which picturebooks expose their metafictionality, and their customary self-consciousness and frequent self-referentiality make it even more obvious. Finally, the "drama of the turning of the page" (Bader 1976: 1) puts the reader and the picturebook into a specific relationship to each other. The dialogue between the two picturebook discourses, words and pictures, can only happen in the process of reading. It is thus important to consider how reality and fiction meet in this process.

We hope that the conference will encourage us to explore how picturebooks raise some of the deepest existential questions through various encounters of fiction and reality, and how they do so in a way that is attainable to every reader, regardless of age. We also wish to better understand the ways in which picturebooks provide both an early aesthetic experience of the world and an important space for unique and differing perspectives throughout a lifetime, especially through their twofold, parallel existence in the domains of the real and the fictional.

We invite papers related to the overall theme of the conference. Possible areas of investigation include, but are not restricted to:

- The picturebook as a format (art form) between fiction and reality
- Materiality of picturebooks: where do fiction and reality meet?
- Visual and verbal intertextuality: referring to fact and referring to fiction
- Visual and verbal (narrative) strategies exposing the fictionality of picturebooks
- Fictional elements in nonfiction picturebooks: real or fictional?
- Factual elements in fictional picturebooks, their importance and their meanings
- Fantastic and realistic fiction vs. reality in picturebooks
- Cultural and historical facts and their impact on content interpretations (also in translation)
- Reading the picturebook as a process of establishing a relationship between fiction and reality
- Kinds of interactivity of picturebooks and the subtle borderline between fiction and reality.

Submission

Please send an abstract of 300 words maximum and a short biography of 100 words as two attached Word documents to ENPRconf2023@gmail.com. E-mails should have the subject line: Submission Picturebook Conference 2023.

Abstracts should include the following information:

1. Author(s)
2. Affiliation as you would like it to appear in the programme
3. City and country
4. E-mail address
5. Title of proposal
6. Text of proposal
7. Five keywords
8. Selected bibliography with academic sources (3-5 references)
9. Area(s) of investigation (in reference to those suggested above)

Key information

- All abstracts and papers must be in English
- Deadline for abstract submission: 15 February 2023
- Notification of acceptance: 31 March 2023
- All submissions are blind reviewed
- Submit to ENPRconf2023@gmail.com

Up to 40 proposals will be accepted for the conference based on their relevance for the general conference theme, originality and the overall quality of the proposal.

Papers will be 20 minutes maximum followed by a 10-minute discussion.

Conference fee

Early bird fee: EUR 100 to be paid by 15 June 2023

Student and retiree early bird fee: EUR 70 to be paid by 15 June 2023

Regular fee: EUR 130

Reading Committee/Advisory Board

Evelyn Arizpe (University of Glasgow, United Kingdom)

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Yael Darr (Tel Aviv University, Israel)

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About the conference

The European Network of Picturebook Research was established during the first picturebook conference in Barcelona in September 2007.

The network was proposed by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (University of Tübingen, Germany), who was a member of both the reading committee and co-organiser of the Barcelona conference, and of the core group of picturebook researchers, which includes or has included Evelyn Arizpe, Nina Christensen, Teresa Colomer, Elina Druker, Maria Nikolajeva and Cecilia Silva-Díaz.

Since then, biannual picturebook conferences have been held in different European countries:

- 2007 at the University of Barcelona, organised by Teresa Colomer and Cecilia Silva-Díaz (New Impulses in Picturebook Research: Aesthetic and Cognitive Aspects of Picturebooks)
- 2009 at the University of Glasgow, organised by Evelyn Arizpe and Maureen Farrell (Beyond Borders: Art, Narrative and Culture in Picturebooks)
- 2011 at the University of Tübingen, organised by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (History and Theory of the Picturebook)
- 2013 at the University of Stockholm, organised by Elina Druker (Picturebooks as Meeting Places: Text, Image, Ideology)
- 2015 at the University of Gdansk, organised by Małgorzata Cackowska (Picturebooks, Democracy and Social Change)
- 2017 at the University of Padova, organised by Marnie Campagnaro (Home and Lived-In Spaces in Picturebooks from the 1950s to the Present)
- 2019 at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) in Bergen, Norway, organised by Nina Goga, Sarah Hoem Iversen and Anne-Stefi Teigland (Verbal and Visual Strategies in Nonfiction Picturebooks)
- 2021 at Tel Aviv University, Israel, organised by Yael Darr (Picturebooks in Time)

The aims of these conferences are

1. to foster international picturebook research
2. to promote young researchers who are focusing on the investigation of picturebooks
3. to publish selected papers presented at the conferences through international publishers or in peer-reviewed journals.