



The Letterpress Project

Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

An Interview With Francesca Chessa

Q1. What are your earliest memories of books and reading? For example, did you have a favourite or inspirational book?

Everyone in my family has always read a lot and so it was very easy for me to approach reading from an early age.

The first book I remember with great affection is Tomaso a book written and illustrated by Vittorio Accornero, first published in 1944.

There are so many books I was inspired and that still inspire me that it's difficult for me to choose just one. My favourite books are the ones where text and illustration are necessary to each other and you couldn't imagine one without the other.

Q2. What inspired you to become an author / illustrator?

I think that what inspired me was to know the work of the illustrator Štěpán Zavřel .

I read about him in 1991, thanks to a newspaper article which I still keep with many other precious things related to illustration, I decided to explore the world of drawing, so I started to attend courses at the Accademia Pictor in Turin.

In 1993 I went for the first time to the Bologna Children's Book Fair, where I found the brochures of Zavřel's courses in Sarmade .

I enrolled to the course and went to Sarmede. I remember my travel by train carrying a heavy suitcase full of papers, brushes, drawings and projects that I did not show to Zavřel because I was afraid they were not adequate and interesting enough.

Q3. For you, what makes a successful book or illustration?

The books I like more are amusing, have an interesting plot , a turning point, and are able to surprise me until the end.

Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books / plan your illustrations?

Usually I think about what I would have liked to see illustrated or told when I was a child.

Q5. What future do you think the physical book has? For example, do you think the electronic book will replace the physical book?

I don't think the electronic book will replace the physical one. I think it could be like when photography appeared and people were scared that this was the end of painting. I think different media can live together creating exchanges and connections that enrich each other.

Q6. Are you a book collector? Is there a special book you'd love to own?

In my studio I have a lot of books. I would like very much to have a copy of Pierre by Maurice Sendak. I love it! I know that I could buy it on line, but I like the idea to meet it one day in a bookshop by chance and finally buy it!