

ROOTS IN THE FUTURE



ITALY

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NOT JUST A POSTER: WHAT'S BEHIND THE IMAGE OF THE GIRL ON A LILY

The young reader on a lily: a familiar figure in the run-up to the Frankfurt Book Fair's 76th edition. Directly from the pencil of master Lorenzo Mattotti, the symbol of Italian Guest of Honour at the Fair is ready to land in Germany to mark this historic participation.

The image embodies the motto 'Roots in the future'. The girl is reading while suspended in the air, but is firmly supported by the lily rooted in the earth. Mattotti chose a type of plant that conveys the idea of comfort and adopted a light colour palette, an identifying trait of the Italian painting tradition.

The young reader perfectly embodies the goals with which Italy presents itself in Frankfurt: to win the bet on reading by the new generations and honour the boom of writers in the national publishing market. Participation as Guest of Honour at the Book Fair will consecrate the international appeal of contemporary Italian literature, without denying the underlying roots that connect it to the heritage of the past, symbolised on the poster by the endless, breathtaking landscape behind the central figure.

The stratified terrain is reminiscent of history, while the open sky leads us into the future.

In between, the dominant figure of the girl immersed in her reading and sitting on a lily gives the scene a sense of solidity. With the book, she prepares herself to meet the world around her, consciously and fearlessly. This is also the spirit with which Italy is about to return 'home,' in the role of Guest of Honour, a reprise of its role as the first ever country to be honoured in that way, at the 1988 Book Fair.

The significant relevance of Mattotti's poster can be seen as an anticipation of the centrality that is rightfully attributed to illustration in the publishing program, a feather in the cap of Italian publishing and a preferred bridge to the new generations of readers.