CHILDREN'S BOOKS SALON

January 2018 / New York City

Anja Wörner and Jana Haußmann (Arena Verlag)

US and international children's publishers discuss new titles

Marie Dessaix (Éditions Nathan)

GBO NEW YORK
German Book Office

FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE

PUBLISHING PERSPECTIVES

Frankfurter Buchmesse New York's Inaugural Children's Books Salon: January 23–24, 2018

The New York office of the Frankfurter Buchmesse, together with Publishing Perspectives, hosted the first two-day Children's Books Salon in New York City on January 23–24, 2018.

The Salon aims to build a platform where international children's book publishers can meet each other in person, strengthen their international relationships, learn about new titles, and discuss issues specific to the children's book market.

Some 30 publishers, editors, and rights directors from nine countries came to New York City to participate in the inaugural Children's Books Salon, where they met with nearly 40 American editors and publishers.

"This event is about relationship-building. We want to give children's book publishers an opportunity to grow their networks in the US and internationally," said Thomas Minkus, vice president of English-language markets for the Frankfurter Buchmesse. "This is very much in keeping with the mission of the Frankfurter Buchmesse and our office in New York. Our Children's Books Salon offers an environment in which children's book publishers can discuss new titles and trends, buy and sell rights, and find opportunities to work together."

On January 23, the Children's Books Salon convened at the Goethe-Institut New York, with David Walter, Business Development Director for Commerce Solutions and Metadata for the NPD Group, delivering a keynote address on trends in domestic and global children's media to start the day. Presentations and networking with editors and rights directors from Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, and Macmillan followed. In the afternoon, international participants took part in one-on-one meetings and discussions with some 20 American editors from publishers including Abrams, Candlewick, Holiday House, Little, Brown and Company, Sourcebooks, Sky Pony, Sourcebooks, and others.

On January 24, international publishers visited the offices of Scholastic and Penguin Random House, where they met with editors and rights directors and discussed the latest developments in the US children's book market.

"Through our cultural work as the German Book Office, our New York office has years of experience bringing together publishers from different countries and helping them forge new connections," said Riky Stock, in charge of cultural projects at the Frankfurter Buchmesse New York. "This Salon is the next step in our ongoing work to contribute to international publishing and translation." •

"We want to give children's book publishers an opportunity to grow their networks in the US and internationally."

Thomas Minkus,
Frankfurter Buchmesse

A group of German publishers and editors were able to participate thanks to generous funding from the German Federal Foreign Office.

Auswärtiges Amt

Eva Kutter (S. Fischer) and Jolise Beaton (Groundwood Books)

FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE NEW YORK

The Frankfurt Book Fair New York Inc. is one of four international offices of the Frankfurter Buchmesse. The Frankfurt Book Fair New York Inc. is a business office of the Frankfurter Buchmesse as well as a liaison office for American editors, and German rights directors, editors, and translators. With funding from the German Federal Foreign Office, the New York office manages several cultural projects under the label German Book Office, such as the annual Editor's trip, Festival Neue Literatur, translation workshops, and Book of the Month Picks, and promotes selected German titles from such lists as New Books in German, Children's Books on Tour, and Geisteswissenschaft International.

FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE

www.book-fair.com

PUBLISHING PERSPECTIVES

Publishing Perspectives is an online trade magazine that covers the trends, people, and companies shaping the global book industry. As part of the Frankfurter Buchmesse's New York office, our mission is to help build and contribute to the international publishing community by offering information that publishing and media professionals need to connect, cooperate, and work together. With a network of correspondents and publishing experts who live and work around the world, Publishing Perspectives offers coverage of global markets and companies, along with deeper insight into the business of publishing and writing.

PUBLISHING PERSPECTIVES

publishingperspectives.com

Frankfurter Buchmesse: October 11–14, 2018
Meet us in BOLOGNA (Pad 21, Stand A/5) and in LONDON (6D80)

PARTICIPANTS

Children's Books Salon 2018

USA:

Abrams
Candlewick
Clarion Books (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)
Enchanted Lion Books
HarperCollins:
- Balzer + Bray
- Greenwillow
- HarperCollins Children's Books
- HarperTeen
- Katherine Tegen Books

Holiday House
Lee & Low Books
Little Bee Books (Bonnier Publishing USA)
Little, Brown and Company (Hachette)
Macmillan Children's Publishing:
- Farrar, Straus & Giroux
- Feiwel & Friends
- Flatiron Books
- Henry Holt
- Imprint
- Roaring Brook Press

NorthSouth Books
NPD Book
Penguin Random House:
- Crown
- Delacorte
- Dutton
- Knopf
- Penguin Young Readers
- Philomel
- Puffin Classics
- Random House Books for Young Readers
- Random House Children's Books
- Razorbill
- Schwartz & Wade
- Viking
- Wendy Lamb Books

Scholastic
Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing:
- Atheneum
- Margaret K. McElderry Books
- Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

Sky Pony
Sourcebooks
Sterling
Workman / Algonquin

INTERNATIONAL:

Arena Verlag
arsEdition
Éditions Nathan
Ena Forlag, Forlaget Vigmostad & Bjørke
Gemser Publications
Groundwood Books
Hanser Verlag
Hurtubise / Groupe HMH
Kustantamo S&S
La courte échelle
Lilla Piratförlaget
Loewe Verlag
NORLA – Norwegian Literature Abroad
Oslo Literary Agency
Rabén & Sjögren, Norstedts Förlagsgrupp
S. Fischer Verlag
Schildts & Söderströms
Second Story Press
Shanghai Juvenile & Children's Publishing House
Shared Stories Rights Agency, representing:
- Uitgeverij De Fontein, Luitingh-Sijthoff

Thienemann-Esslinger Verlag
WSOY

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Photography by John Harris (unless otherwise stated)

Visit to Penguin Random House's offices (Photo: Thomas Minkus)

"Since the salon, I've felt energized, bubbling with new ideas that I want to try in my own market."

MARI KOLI
CEO, Schildts & Söderströms
FINLAND

July Huang (Shanghai Juvenile & Children's Publishing House)

SCHEDULE
Children's Books Salon 2018

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23
Location:
Goethe-Institut Library, 30 Irving Place, New York, NY

8:30 — Doors open
Light breakfast of coffee and pastries served

9:00 — Keynote address on trends in children's media
Speaker: David Walter, Business Development Director, Commerce Solutions and Metadata, NPD Group

9:30 — Simon & Schuster presentations
Presenters: Caitlyn Dlouhy (Atheneum), Reka Simonsen (Atheneum), Karen Wojtyla (McElderry Books), David Gale (S&S Books for Young Readers), and Deane Norton (Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing)

10:30 — HarperCollins presentations
Presenters: Ben Rosenthal (Katherine Tegen Books), Kristin Rens (Balzer + Bray), Andrew Eliopulos (HarperTeen), Stephanie Stein (HarperTeen), Martha Mihalick (Greenwillow), and Alpha Wong (HarperCollins)

11:30 — Macmillan presentations
Presenters: Kristin Dulaney (Macmillan), Connie Hsu (Macmillan), Anna Roberto (Feiwel & Friends), Sarah Barley (Flatiron Books), Kate Farrell (Henry Holt), Emily Feinberg (Roaring Brook Press), Rhoda Belleza (Imprint), Grace Kendall (FSG)

12:30 — Networking luncheon

14:00-17:45 — Speed-dating meetings

18:00-20:00 — Drinks and networking reception

18:30 — Closing remarks
Speaker: Porter Anderson, Editor-in-chief, Publishing Perspectives

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

10:00-12:00 — Meeting with Scholastic
Introduction: Jennifer Powell/Emily Clement
Cartwheel: Celia Lee
Middle-grade and YA: Mallory Kass
Licensing Overview: Chloe Fraboni
Clubs and Fairs Overview: Stephanie Peitz
Q&A/Networking

12:30-13:30 — Lunch

14:00-16:00 — Meeting with Penguin Random House
Introductions:
- Welcome and Introduction to RHCB: Barbara Marcus
- Market overview: Diana Blough

Random House Children's Publishing Presentations:
- Knopf: Jenny Brown/Melanie Nolan
- Wendy Lamb Books: Wendy Lamb
- S&W: Lee Wade
- Delacorte Press: Beverly Horowitz
- Random House Books for Young Readers: Michelle Nagler
- Crown: Phoebe Yeh

Penguin Young Readers Presentations:
- Introduction to Penguin Young Readers: Jocelyn Schmidt
- Penguin Young Readers Sub-rights: Kim Ryan
- Viking: Ken Wright/Kendra Levin
- Philomel: Jill Santopolo
- Razorbill: Ben Schrank/Casey McIntyre
- Dutton: Julie Strauss-Gabel
- Puffin Classics: Eileen Kreit

Q&A/Networking

“The Children’s Books Salon was more than I hoped for. We got to meet all the major US children’s publishers and some independent presses, so we got a really good overall picture of the way things are at the moment on the other side of the Atlantic.”

MIRJAM ILVAS

Publishing Manager, Kustantamo S&S, FINLAND

Discussions of Global Issues, US Trends, and Rights Sales

Following a keynote speech from NPD Bookscan on the first day of the Children's Books Salon, US editors from Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, and Macmillan talked about trends and titles.

Books on display at the Children's Books Salon (Photo: Hannah Johnson)

By Porter Anderson

At the inaugural Children's Books Salon on January 23, close to 40 US acquiring editors and publishers gathered in New York City at the Goethe-Institut Library to meet with roughly 30 publishers from Canada, Finland, China, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Exchanges of information ran from issues of how editors gather information about their young readers—often including the input of librarians and teachers—to what level of engagement they have in social-media marketing.

In this regard, for example, HarperCollins' Martha Mihalick told the group that using social channels to support a book is common, particularly with teen readers, but that such efforts have more to do with sheer enthusiasm for the work than marketing intent.

The library quickly became packed with colorful books for kids in myriad languages as the visiting publishers' offerings went on display. The more non-English titles were on view, the more pertinent the advice of the American editors became: a generous sample translation of a book is essential in attracting American interest, especially when so many US editors today are emphasizing author's voice and strong writing as a key draw to a work.

And in one predictably strong area of current interest, Canada's Margie Wolfe from the socially conscious Toronto publishing house Second Story Press asked if there's any data yet to indicate what impact the US political climate might be having on children's book sales.

Tracking the Market

To kick off the day, NPD BookScan's David Walter provided a comprehensive overview of the children's book market that included several key points publishers are factoring into their decisions.

For example, Walter broke out three cultural markers in these turbulent political times:

1) Digital engagement is taking over many areas of life.

2) Millennials have graduated from the role of consumers in the younger divisions to parents.

3) Political noise and "cultural paranoia" have begun to dominate the American national conversation.

The kinds of consumer-response trends Walter said NPD's research is tracking include how nostalgia is providing appealing respites from negative news; how social issues offer context for books for young readers; and how "real life" experiences are becoming more valued as counter-balances to digital screen time.

In terms of growth areas, Walter pointed to the remarkable advances of children's comics and graphic novels in the United States, representing a compound annual growth rate of 32 percent since 2014 in NPD's tracking.

And, per the question from Wolfe about how politics is affecting the children's book market, Walter reported that NPD is seeing the fantasy/dystopian series trend of past years gradually giving way to higher interest in social situations, frequently having to do with family and health issues, people and places, and, yes, interpersonal relations.

One example of this trend toward ad-

dressing social issues in books for young readers was pointed out by HarperCollins' Kristen Rens. She presented Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*, a National Book Award longlisted title about a teenager navigating life between her poor neighborhood and her suburban prep school.

In nonfiction, Walter said, there are ongoing interests in coding, wind energy, science, and digital programming.

A consistent message throughout the day, starting with Caitlyn Dlouhy's observation from Simon & Schuster's Atheneum, was about the importance of the author's voice. "I look for voices," she said. "I look for unsual ways of telling stories, rather than a traditionally told tale."

The message: the subject of a book is important, but so is the delivery: good storytelling and compelling writing remain powerful keys to the market—whether these stories are girl power entries, emerging hard-edged themes of YA, video games, or history.

Speaking of what's compelling, one of Walter's most eye-opening graphics was about another kind of impact: book sales. In 2016, he told the group that JK Rowling's work contributed an extra 4.8 million units over what was sold in 2017.

And for those interested in seeing changes in ebook market share—not only in children's and YA work but also in adult fiction and nonfiction—Walter's presentation showed a small drop: from 28-percent share overall in 2013 to 21 percent in 2017.

Diversity: 'Making Up for Lost Time'

From Karen Wojtyla's viewpoint at Margaret K. McEderry Books (Simon & Schuster), realistic fiction is an emerging trend in the US market right now. Her colleagues agreed, sharing comments on emotional journeys, sometimes unreliable narrators, and twisting plots.

HarperCollins' Stephanie Stein talked about National Book Award winner Robin Benway's *Far From the Tree* as Harper's Andrew Eliopulos signaled Amie Kaufman's *Elementals: Ice Wolves* as an important release coming in March.

And the Macmillan team pointed to submissions today that feature the stories of strong women in history whose contributions have needed to come to light—diverse voices in a US market that's "making up for lost time," as one member of the group put it, by comparison to the longtime activity of many European publishers in multicultural content for children and YA.

Feiwel and Friends' *The Treehouse* series by Andy Griffiths has been a strong seller in the difficult teen boys' market, the Macmillan team said.

FSG's Grace Kendall told the group that if looking at a book from Germany, what she'd like to find is a strong, authentic voice reflective of German points of view, something resonant with its own culture to present to her own.

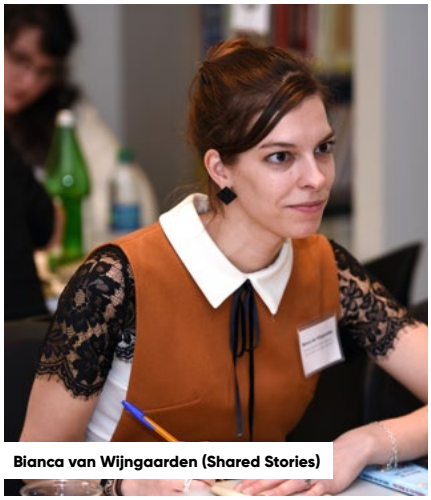
Overall, these were the themes of a long and energetic day at this first iteration of the Children's Books Salon.

Hours of one-on-one "speed-dating" sessions between the visiting publishers and American editors left the crowd ready for a drink at the evening's reception, but much more deeply versed in what works in a complicated market and in an era of social and political conflict. •

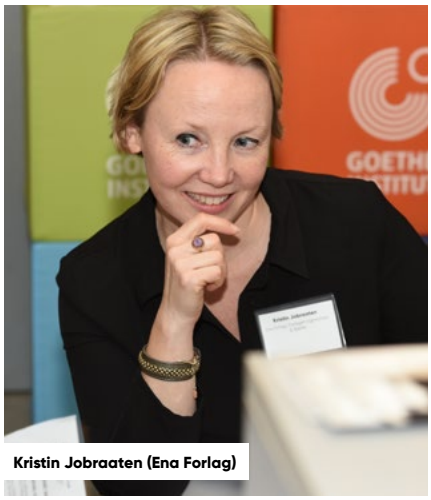
Editors from Macmillan present titles and discuss trends (Photo: Hannah Johnson)

Keynote presentation from David Walter, NPD Book (Photo: Hannah Johnson)

Bärbel Dorweiler (Thienemann-Esslinger)



Bianca van Wijngaarden (Shared Stories)



Kristin Jobraaten (Ena Forlag)

"I wanted to get to know the American children's book publishing houses and their market better. And that certainly happened. It was great to get to know so many houses, foreign rights managers, and editors."

BÄRBEL DORWEILER

Managing Director, Thienemann-Esslinger
GERMANY

INTERVIEWS

Children's Books Salon 2018

Before and after the event, Publishing Perspectives interviewed a number of participants to learn more about their publishing houses, home markets, and interest in attending the Children's Books Salon. Interviews by Porter Anderson.

Thomas Minkus (Frankfurter Buchmesse), Porter Anderson (Publishing Perspectives)

Evy Tillman (Olso Literary Agency), right, meets with editors from Algonquin Books

Ann Sköld (Rabén & Sjögren, Norstedts Förlagsgrupp)

Michael Schweins

Managing Director, arsEdition
GERMANY

Originally created as a house of religious prints and theological writings in 1896, Munich-based arsEdition is focused on the children's book market and has been part of Sweden's Bonnier Group since the year 2000.

Publishing board books, picture books, activity books, and a selection of middle grade and YA titles, arsEdition looks for innovative formats, striking illustrations, and exciting and educational content. The company also publishes a range of gift books and calendars.

We opened our exchange with managing director Michael Schweins by asking what's selling well now in Germany.

Michael Schweins: Sticker books of all kinds; scratch books in which you scratch colorful patterns on a blank surface page; books with sound, books and stories for rebel girls, and books on nature and ecological themes.

Publishing Perspectives: Why do you think the children's book sector has been so consistently strong in recent years?

MS: Parents still want to see their children grow up with books. This is related to still-existing educational standards in Germany, but that doesn't automatically mean that the books themselves have to carry educational content.

PP: What are some of your new titles that you're excited about right now?

MS: We have on our list some books based on bestselling characters, such as *Die kleine Hummel Bommel* (*The Little Bumblebee*) and some really strong and fast-selling titles in our *Touch and Feel and Sound* line.

PP: Why are you interested in visiting the US for the Children's Books Salon?

MS: We're selling strongly into the US market, especially board books and activity books of all kinds. And we're interested in new and exciting approaches in activity books as well as good and thrilling nonfiction for middle-grade, pre-teens, and outstanding gift books.

PP: Germany produces a great deal of very strong children's literature. Does this mean that the competition at times is daunting?

MS: It's always a challenge. •

"We're selling strongly in the US market, especially board books and activity books of all kinds."

Michael Schweins

Editors from Sterling meet with Michael Schweins

Marième Talbot

President, La courte échelle
CANADA

Located in Montréal, French Canadian publishing house La courte échelle prides itself on being the first Québec publisher to specialize in children's books.

The company was purchased by Marième Talbot and Raymond Talbot in 2015, and now includes four divisions and also publishes books for adults.

Publishing Perspectives: Tell us something about your company. What are some defining features of your books?

Marième Talbot: Created in 1978, La courte échelle is the first publishing house in Québec to specialize in literature for young people. Our catalogue, with more than 700 active titles, appeals to all age groups. There are albums for the very young, books for beginning readers and novels for pre-teens and teens.

We offer stories that speak directly to children and that stimulate their imagination and capture their attention. More than 300 titles of La courte échelle have been translated and the work we produce is seen as a standard of excellence in children, and young literature.

Many of our titles have won prestigious literary prizes and awards, including the Canadian Governor General's Award, the Prix jeunesse des bibliothèques du Québec, and the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award. And we were selected for the White Ravens Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature.

PP: What do you find to be the main successes of your publishing work? And what are some of the key challenges?

MT: I'd say we've been quite successful recently with our new "fear collection" for middle-grade as well as hybrid formats—they fall between picture books, comic books, and novels for young children seven and older. A good example of these hybrid formats would be our title *Mammouth Rock*.

As for the challenges, I guess the fact that we have a small market—not even 10 million francophones are in Canada—makes our print runs quite small, so it's hard to afford expensive books on such small print runs.

PP: Were you surprised at something you heard or learned or encountered during the events of the salon?

MT: Yes, I was really surprised to hear about the trend going on around the scientific books for very young children.

PP: And how do you see the big picture in your market today?

MT: The emergence of many small, independent publishing houses can lead to market fragmentation. And at the same time, strong publishing groups get into the Montreal market from France and invest a lot in promotion, which makes it even more difficult to reach our own public. •

"We've been quite successful recently with our new 'fear collection' for middle-grade as well as hybrid formats—they fall between picture books, comic books."

Marième Talbot

Margie Wolfe (Second Story Press) meets with Marième Talbot (la courte échelle)

Georgina Segarra

Co-owner, Gemser Publications
SPAIN

Mercè Segarra and Georgina Segarra, center (Gemser Publications)

> **"Kids get hooked on screens, and parents are worried about this. Books give parents and kids a little breath."**
>
> Georgina Segarra

Gemser Publications is a book packager specializing in illustrated children's books and content. Sisters Georgina and Mercè Segarra worked as agents with other publishing houses before deciding in 1999 to establish Gemser. Today, the company has an international reach, having sold content into more than 20 languages, and the company produces close to two dozen titles annually.

Publishing Perspectives: Give us an update on how your business is doing.

Georgina Segarra: We are packagers. We develop projects in illustrated children's books and we sell them to publishing houses all over the world. Gemser sells its products through other publishers, providing the printed books with the seal of the publishing company that acquired the distribution rights. Even in Spain we work like this, we don't have our own distribution.

This year, we've sold a book for little kids about feelings, and it's going really well. Also we're doing well with science books and drawing books.

PP: And in markets outside Spain?

GS: Other markets that work well for us are the USA, Greece, Croatia, and China. Each country has its own particularities.

PP: What do you think has made the children's sector so consistently strong for publishing in recent years?

GS: Nowadays, kids get hooked on screens, and parents are worried about this. Books give parents and kids a little breath.

PP: Could you point out to us any new titles you're especially excited about at the moment?

GS: We have a new series called *Little Big Heroes* that handles issues of values through a nice story and beautiful illustrations from Heidi and Daniel Howarth.

PP: What makes you interested in visiting New York for the Children's Books Salon? You've mentioned that the USA is a strong market for you, right?

GS: We've been in touch with many American publishers over the years. We've been working with different ones—for example, with Barron's Publications—for more than 19 years. We see these American publishers at the different book fairs around the world, and we always come to BookExpo in New York City.

We think this event is more personal. It gives us a new way to meet American publishers.

PP: And considering the breadth of the Spanish-speaking world, how easily do you find that the cultural issues and values in children's literature can "travel," say from Spain to the Latin American markets?

GS: The Spanish language is huge in terms of culture and language. For example, when we sell a Spanish book for Spain and the same one in Mexico, the language is very similar but not the same.

Many words change and little things in the text have to be adapted to the different markets. For instance, we think of such cultural points as how, when we sell into the Caribbean market, kids pictured must be dressed in summer clothes.

However, the values are always universal and they can travel all over the Spanish markets. Our books are always thought of in global terms. •

Saskia Heintz

Publishing Director, Children's and Young Adult Books, Hanser Verlag
GERMANY

Still owned by its founding family, Carl Hanser Verlag is a fixture in Germany's publishing industry. The company began publishing children's books in 1993, and has been steadily growing its children's and YA program since then.

Publishing Perspectives: Tell us something about your company. And what are some defining features of your books?

Saskia Heintz: Hanser Children's and Young Adult Books was founded in 1993 as part of the Carl Hanser Verlag GmbH & Co.KG publishing house. This year we're celebrating our 25th anniversary.

We're known for bestselling literary quality in fiction for young adults and children. We publish about 34 to 40 books a year: YA, middle grade, picture books, and nonfiction. We're looking for eye-opening, clever, and intense stories from distinct voices, as well as emotional, heart-warming, and funny characters.

In our 25 years, we've become the most-awarded publisher, the only 12-time winner of the German state prize for YA and children's literature, the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis. The weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* awarded us with the VerlagsLuchs for being the "most successful publisher," as we won the monthly prize Der Luchs more than 40 times—more often than any others, surpassing even much older publishing houses. We were the first publisher this prize was awarded to.

PP: What do you find to be the main successes of your publishing work? And what are some of the key challenges?

SH: With authors like John Green, Jostein Gaarder, Rafik Schami, Raquel Palacio, Elke Heidenreich, Isabel Allende, Lene Kaaberbol, Angie Sage, Rainbow Rowell, Jenny Han, Georgia Byng, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Holly Goldberg Sloan—and illustrators like Wolf Erlbruch, Rotraut Susanne Berner, and Quint Buchholz—we have a very exclusive list of nationally and internationally outstanding and successful artists. And these are talents whom we mostly discovered, making their debuts in the children's book market.

We have a gift for literary quality and trends. Books about "strong girls" are also a trend in Germany. We're one of the first who realized it and published *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* in Germany.

What keeps me awake at night is, can I still find those talents and discover these trends after being 25 years in this business for children's literature?

PP: What was your main interest in coming to the Children's Books Salon?

SH: My interest was to meet editors who love to speak about their favorite books and new discoveries. And the Children's Books Salon was more than I expected, as I also learned a lot about the US book market, which is also interesting for the German market.

PP: Were you surprised at something you heard or learned or encountered during the events of the salon?

SH: I was quite surprised and impressed by the professional approach and innovative power in publishing picture/board books in the US. While we mostly believe in the creative potential of our illustrators following their ideas, the American way to forge and develop ideas very close to the market is convincing.

I'm willing to focus a bit more on discovering trends and developing them with authors and illustrators than I was in the past. And I also realized that my list is very frontlist-driven. We should focus more on strengthening our backlist.

PP: And how do you see the big picture in your market today?

SH: What we need in general is a higher appreciation for books. We need to make books and reading sexier for children and young adults. Going into a bookstore browsing for books should be again something that everybody enjoys more than computer gaming, gambling, internet shopping. That is a social challenge. •

Saskia Heintz

"I'm willing to focus a bit more on discovering trends and developing them with authors and illustrators than I was in the past."

Saskia Heintz

Sandra Felteau

Rights Manager, Hurtubise / Groupe HMH
CANADA

"Our editors take time to learn what young readers want to read, and their authors are often strong communicators, accessible on social media."

Sandra Felteau

Sandra Felteau (Photo: Hannah Johnson)

Family-owned Groupe HMH was started by Claude Hurtubise and comprises four publishing houses—Éditions XYZ, Marcel Didier (MD), Éditions Hurtubise, and Éditions MultiMondes—each with a distinct niche in the market.

Groupe HMH has long been recognized as a leader in the Québec book industry. The fifth-generation publishing Foulon family that acquired the company from Hurtubise has been closely involved in guiding and structuring the market to strengthen its authors and fellow publishers.

Rights manager Sandra Felteau talks about the company's children's and YA publishing program.

Publishing Perspectives: What sorts of children's books do you see selling well now in Canada?

Sandra Felteau: Realistic novels and series about family life and everyday teenage life—those that explore a particular topic like school life, autism, mental health, sexual harassment, and so on. Some first novels, too, and we find that comic novels are also popular.

PP: Why do you think the children's book sector has been so consistently strong in recent years?

SF: It may have to do with the appeal of series. Young people talk together, we get some good word-of-mouth going, and the schools and libraries then want to buy the books for teenagers.

Our editors take time to learn what young readers want to read, and their authors are often strong communicators, accessible on social media. Young readers—teenagers and young adults—are asking for stories about different topics in a known universe.

They like some suspense, too, and we find appropriate authors to develop on these topics. For us, I'd say that middle-grade and teen realistic series are the bestselling right now.

PP: What are some of your new titles that you're excited about right now?

SF: Our Marie-Renée Lavoie books; *Comme une chaleur de feu de camp*, a first novel from Amélie Panneton; the series *Juliette* from Rose-Line Brasset; *Dépourvu*, a first novel from Victoria Grondin; and novels for young adults from Sarah-Maude Beauchesne.

PP: Why are you interested in visiting the US for the Children's Books Salon? Is the US market a strong one for you?

SF: We're very excited to discover the major trends in the USA and different successes related to young adult and teenage literature, both in America and from around the world. And of course, with its large readership and so many worldwide successes—including some in the French-speaking world, too—the USA is very appealing for us. Canadian culture seems close to American culture.

PP: How well do you find that Canadian children's literature is "traveling" these days in terms of international rights sales and translations? Are there any specific challenges you've run into?

SF: We're selling rights in France, English-language Canada, and some in the Spanish world or in other European countries. Having a partnership with a US publisher is a vital goal for us, but we find it very difficult to reach them.

This may be because the roles in the book chain in America vs. French-language Canada or France are quite different.

We have a more traditional approach to publishing, and we don't work as much with scouts and agents. So this event is a very interesting window for us, a way for us to network with US and international publishers as well as learning more about the market. •

Mirjam Ilvas

Publisher, Kustantamo S&S
FINLAND

Kustantamo is part of the Finnish-Swedish publishing house Schildts & Söderströms, which has been in business for more than a century. Kustantamo publishes literary fiction and nonfiction, as well as children's and young adult books.

Publishing Perspectives: Tell us about the publishing program at Kustantamo:

MI: We publish an eclectic selection of quite literary and yet accessible titles that are always in some way current—a common denominator for all our books is that they're socially conscious, enjoyable, and thought-provoking. Also, fun. That's important.

PP: What are some of the successes and challenges you see right now?

MI: In the past few years, we've had success with commissioned, mostly nonfiction, books—books based on our own ideas, which we've sourced authors for. Or at times, we've reached out to popular bloggers. These are books that are current, trendy, and often humorous.

This spring we commisssioned a book that will be published not only in Finland but also in the US, in June, by HarperCollins, called *Pantsdrunk: Kalsarikanni, The Finnish Path to Relaxation* by Miska Rantanen. It's a [parody of] the Nordic lifestyle trends like hygge...We've sold this title to about 10 countries even before it's been published.

Of course, sometimes I worry because the market in general is not doing particularly well in Finland, and even small successes take a lot of work.

PP: What was your main interest in coming to the Children's Books Salon?

MI: Even though I publish a varied list, there's a special place for children's books in my heart. I'd previously attended a hugely interesting children's book conference in London, and learned a lot about how the children's and YA market works in the UK. Of course, the Children's Books Salon tempted me with the chance of getting to learn in a similar way about the US market, and also hearing about current trends, new titles, meeting and networking with some US publishers and international colleagues simultaneously—always inspiring.

The Children's Books Salon was more than I hoped for. We got to meet all the major US children's publishers and some independent presses, so we got a really good overall picture of the way things are at the moment on the other side of the Atlantic.

PP: Were you surprised at something you heard or learned or encountered during the events of the salon?

MI: I wasn't exactly surprised, but perhaps a little overwhelmed by the sheer amount of various "girl power" titles on different US publishers' lists, and the way editors were talking about this trend made it seem the market isn't even nearly saturated yet. Which is only great.

Also, I loved the fact, which became very clear, that children's books in the US are seen as valuable backlist titles, and that the backlist actually creates good, solid sales, too.

In their talks about their actual day-to-day work, many editors mentioned trusting their instincts, and that they're always looking for that strong voice. These are both things I absolutely can agree with, and this was also, in a way, reassuring to hear: we all, big or small, really have very similar ways of recognizing what makes a great book.

PP: And how do you see the big picture in your market today?

MI: The Finnish book market in general struggles with the same problems that the global market does, only on a smaller scale. It's the competition for consumers' time with other things, such as TV, streaming apps, and social media. Then, there's the disappearance of independent book stores and a centralization of the book market on every level in the supply chain.

This is a challenge for independent publishers especially, but in a market as small as ours, it's a challenge for everyone, in my opinion.

What's more, the rightful attention that any book deserves is also becoming more difficult to attract, when traditional newspapers are struggling with their own problems, and have drastically cut down on book reviewing and reporting on literary news and books.

It's a consolation, though, that we have active book bloggers and are able to use social media to get our message across to the reader. And one new, exciting trend right now is the successful launch of new book-subscription apps that allow consumers to e-read and listen to audiobooks for a small monthly payment. I believe a younger audience can be found through these channels. •

> **"We all, big or small, really have very similar ways of recognizing what makes a great book."**
>
> Mirjam Ilvas

Evy Tillman

Literary Agent, Children's and Young Adult, Oslo Literary Agency
NORWAY

"Nothing makes me happier than to meet dedicated publishers who understand the importance of publishing the best books for the youngest readers."

Evy Tillman

Hege Langrusten (NORLA), Evy Tillman (Oslo Literary Agency), and Dina Roll-Hansen (NORLA)

What was the in-house literary agency for Aschehoug became the Oslo Literary Agency in 2016. Today the agency represents titles from Aschehoug and Forlaget Oktober, as well as individual authors.

Publishing Perspectives: Tell us something about the agency. And what are some defining features of your books?

Evy Tillman: Oslo Literary Agency is Norway's biggest agency, representing authors in the genres of literary fiction, crime, and commercial fiction, plus children's and YA books and nonfiction. We were established in 2016, replacing the in-house Aschehoug Agency.

We represent international bestselling authors like Jostein Garder, Maja Lunde, and Per Petterson. Our bestselling children's title in 2017 was *The Girl Who Wanted to Save the Books* by Klaus Hagerup and illustrator Lisa Aisato—now 20 languages.

PP: What was your main interest in coming to the Children's Books Salon?

ET: I'm always happy to meet with my international colleagues, to talk books, to be updated on each other's lists and how business is going. I'm very thankful to have been invited to the Children's Books Salon with such a great program. And so many US publishers and editors took the time to meet us. Everyone was really well prepared.

PP: Were you surprised at something you heard or learned or encountered during the events of the salon?

ET: I'm surprised to see how big backlist is also in the US. It's always inspiring to see what kind of children's book titles wors in the different markets.

PP: And how do you see the big picture in your market today?

ET: I sense that children's book publishing still has room for a wide range of titles in all genres. From literary to commercial, from board books to YA, standalones and series. Publishers are of course looking for titles that will fit their profile, and titles with bestselling potential, but they're also interested in titles that they love.

Nothing makes me happier than to meet dedicated publishers who understand the importance of publishing the best books for the youngest readers. Quality and great storytelling are the keywords for me in building my list. I believe in books that can travel.

What publishers are concerned about in many countries, though, is how hard it is to achieve sales goals. The markets and sales channels works so differently.

But the biggest challenge in our time, I'd say, is that children instead of reading books prefer to be entertained digitally. •

Mari Koli

CEO, Schildts & Söderströms
FINLAND

"Schildts & Söderströms has been publishing books since 1891," says CEO Mari Koli. "Today we're the biggest publisher of literature and educational literature in Swedish in Finland."

We asked Koli to tell us more about her company and market.

Mari Koli: Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. Some 5.2 percent of the population speaks Swedish as their mother tongue. We also publish books in Finnish: Kustantamo S&S is one of our imprints.

We publish 70 new titles annually in Swedish and Finnish in a wide range of genres from books for children and juveniles to fiction and nonfiction, also translations from other languages. We cherish strong stories, and not only what's told, but how the story is told. It's important for us to publish well-written and beautifully designed books, so each title on our list is carefully chosen.

Publishing Perspectives: What do you find to be the main successes of your publishing work?

MK: What's selling well are chapter books in the age group 8 to 12. *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* was a huge success in 2017 and continues to thrive.

PP: What was your experience in coming to the Children's Books Salon?

MK: The best part was learning so much new about the US market, including statistics and trends. And making new contacts with North American publishers was a big plus, as well as meeting with old friends among the invited group. Since the salon, I've felt energized, bubbling with new ideas that I want to try in my own market. A few of the titles that the US and Canadian publishers showed us will hopefully land on our lists, and I'll most definitely continue following their lists in the future.

PP: Were you surprised at something you heard or learned or encountered during the events of the salon?

MK: Surprises? The counter-attack to Trumpianism that seems to penetrate children's books as a whole in the US—this gives us all so much hope for the future. Such empowering stories and feminism, the emphasis on diversity, and stories about caring for other while showing respect and empathy.

PP: And how do you see the big picture in the Finnish market today?

MK: Sales numbers for general fiction have been steadily declining the last 10 years in Finland, but in the last two or three years, we have seen signs of positive growth in sales of books for children and YA. The Finnish market is frontlist-driven compared with the US market, and series sell better than single titles. •

Mirjam Ilvas (Kustantamo S&S) and Mari Koli (Schildts & Söderströms)

"We cherish strong stories, and not only what's told, but how the story is told."

Mari Koli

Margie Wolfe

Publisher, Second Story Press
CANADA

Concepts of diversity, inclusivity, and multiculturalism are the stock-in-trade of Canadian children's book publisher Margie Wolfe and her team at Second Story Press in Toronto.

Wolfe co-founded Second Story with two other women in 1988 with the mission of publishing "feminist-inspired" books. Today, Second Story publishes for adults and children, with a focus on social issues and strong female characters.

"We've done this for a very long time," Wolfe says in an interview with Publishing Perspectives. "And we don't do anything else. It's taken time, particularly on the kids' books side for people—parents, educators, librarians—to accept that you can deal with difficult content for young people and do it in a way that's both compelling and often entertaining."

Near the end of January this year, Wolfe took part in the Children's Books Salon—produced by *Publishing Perspectives* and the Frankfurter Buchmesse New York—where international publishers met to discuss new titles and trends in the children's book market.

There, during a presentation by children's books editors from HarperCollins, Wolfe asked if US publishers have seen changes to the children's and YA book market as a result of the divisive American political climate.

While there were some at the Children's Books Salon in New York City who said that they couldn't see a direct correlation between the charged politics of the moment and book sales, "There were at least four people," Wolfe says, "who came up to me later" during some of the event's networking sessions among editors, "and told me that they are seeing response."

The 'Trump Bump' in Sales of Socially Conscious Childrens Books

"It's not so much in what you're commissioning," she says, "that you see the reactions. It's about the response of the consumer now. If before Trump you were doing some of this kind of books for children and you weren't getting a response, the Trump era has made it important that there is a big consumer response, and we've seen that.

"Some of the rights we're selling is because of this" political climate in which immigration has become such a fiercely contested flash point. "For example, refugees are not bad people, and the parents who want someone to explain that will look to a book like *Where Will I Live?* about children looking for a home. They're seen as human beings, not as aliens or awful people."

> **"You need to have content that deals with the world around us in a way that's interesting for the children and doesn't frighten them."**
>
> Margie Wolfe

This is, Wolfe says, a very clear "positive impact on a publisher like ourselves. The 'Trump bump' is because there's a recognition among educators and librarians and parents that you need to have content that deals with the world around us in a way that's interesting for the children and doesn't frighten them, a way that enlightens without being scary.

"And," Margie Wolfe laughs softly, "more publishers—colleagues of mine, who would never have described their books as dealing with human rights in the past—are describing them that way now." •

July Huang

Editor, Shanghai Juvenile and Children's Publishing House
CHINA

The rights business in China is growing, with Chinese publishers both buying and selling rights. Editor July Huang attended the Children's Books Salon to further strengthen her contacts in US and international children's publishing

Publishing Perspectives: Tell us something about your company and some defining features of your books.

July Huang: The Juvenile and Children's Publishing House (JCPH) is the first children's book publisher established in China, founded in 1952.

The best of JCPH's backlist are found in *365 Bedtime Stories*, *Five Thousand Years of Chinese Nation*, *Sanmao's Big World*, and *Big Head Son and Small Head Dad*, all of which got National Book Awards. That tradition continues with our new generation of modern classics, such as *Baby Alone*, *The Complete Story of Jia Li*, and *100,000 Whys*, winner of the Shanghai Science and Technology Progress Award and, in a later "New Century" edition, the Government Award.

We value ingenuity as a mark of JCPH's publishing. Along with its famous backlist, JCPH's portfolio has grown to produce some of the most popular children's brands in Chinese children's literature.

JCPH has a long tradition, too, of promoting traditional Chinese culture. While we try to find books that will engage, entertain, and inspire young readers on the way to adulthood, JCPH also supports the ethos of public service.

PP: What do you find to be the main successes of your publishing work? And what are some of the key challenges?

JH: In my opinion, the success of JCPH in publishing is mainly based on our historic content and the deep understanding of each generation of children in China that these books give us. And the biggest challenge we have now is that books are increasingly being marginalized, as digital media is everywhere in people's living environments. How do we redefine our publishing work in this new environment?

PP: What was your main interest in coming to the Children's Books Salon?

JH: It was mainly a learning trip. I'd wanted to take a look at some of the new publishing trends, and also to find out what's new in the context of dealing with digital media environment. And I think I learned a lot.

PP: Were you surprised at something you heard or learned or encountered during the events of the salon?

JH: I felt a sense of self-assurance and purpose in the careers in the editors I met at the salon. Some of our conversations inspired me to think about new topics that we rarely consider in China.

PP: And how do you see the big picture in your market today?

JH: Print still has its market in China, and both content and formats are very demanding. We need to provide our children with reading and knowledge services in high technology.

We're truly concerned that traditional book editors can't understand the changes that publishing's content may undergo in the coming high-tech conditions. •

"The biggest challenge we have now is that books are increasingly being marginalized, as digital media is everywhere."

July Huang

July Huang meets with US editors

Bärbel Dorweiler

Managing Director, Thienemann-Esslinger
GERMANY

Thienemann-Esslinger is a powerhouse in German children's book publishing, the result of a merger between two of the oldest children's publishers in the country.

Publishing Perspectives: Tell us about Thienemann-Esslinger and the company's publishing program.

Bärbel Dorweiler: Thienemann-Esslinger goes back a long way: Esslinger was founded as J.F. Schreiber Verlag in the town of Esslingen in 1831, Thienemann in 1849 by K. Thienemann who had worked previously at Schreibers publishing house. So the merger in 2014 brought the two houses together again.

We're part of Bonnier Media Deutschland and publish children's books under four imprints: Thienemann, Esslinger, Planet!, and Gabriel. Our focus is on books for children and teenagers and covers all ages up to 18, from high-quality picture books to novels for young adults.

PP: What are some of your main publishing successes? And key challenges?

BD: After the merger, it was important for us to make sure that the four imprints in our house have a clear focus that can be recognized and is valuable to booksellers. I'm glad that we managed to establish this focus, and sales in the past year seem to show that this is a successful way.

At Thienemann, we're looking for new authors' voices and strong storytelling. We publish many German classics, from Otfried Preußler's *Robber Hotzenplotz* to Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*, and we're well-known for building authors' reputations.

Esslinger is publishing all full-color formats, from board and picture books through search-and-find and activity books and beautiful collections of fairy tales, as well as other read-out-loud stories. It's home to *Die Häschenschule*, a picture book that's very popular since 1924, and Raven the Little Rascal, a very popular picture book character.

At Planet! we publish books for middle-grade and YA, looking for fast-paced reads and strong trends. Here we publish two successful horseriding series by Nele Neuhaus, a famous and prolific thriller author in Germany.

And Gabriel is our imprint for religious and ethical value-driven children's books.

The competition is quite strong in the German children's book market, and with far more than 7,000 new children's books published every year, it's hard to find a place for every title, especially since in the past years, we've seen smaller bookshops closing and chains reducing their space. The newest problem that keeps the whole branch worried is the lower frequency of people shopping in cities.

In such a market it's hard to build new authors for new generations of readers, although that's our mission.

That said, I'm proud we had quite a few very successful authors and titles, of which I will only name two: a biography of Martin Luther at Gabriel that went into the *Spiegel* nonfiction-bestseller-list for weeks, and a very well sold translation from the Italian of Davide Morosinotto's *Il famoso catalogo di Walker & Dawn*, an adventure story set in the 1920s in the US.

PP: What was your main interest in coming to the Children's Books Salon?

BD: I wanted to get to know the American children's book publishing houses and their market better. And that certainly happened. It was great to get to know so many houses, foreign rights managers, and editors. With some of them we already share titles, like Eliot Schrefer's *The Lost Rainforest*, which we'll publish next fall. I was very happy to be able to meet his editor, Ben Rosenthal, at the Children's Books Salon—and to get to know the author himself and publisher Katherine Tegan later at a reading in town.

PP: Were you surprised at something you heard or learned or encountered during the events of the salon?

BD: I was very surprised that imprints at the American publishing houses didn't seem as sharply defined as we try to define ours.

I was surprised that digital wasn't an issue in any way, too. Yes, the children's book market is mostly print as parents both in the US and Europe seem happy to see their kids reading from paper. But what happens when especially young parents do almost everything from electronic devices? What happens when they allow their kids to do the same?

It's interesting to see which themes are trending in the US—especially the unanimous wish to publish more diverse books. And I also realized that we bought some of these titles, while it wasn't primarily because of their "diverse" authors' voices or themes—for example, *Riazi*, T*he Gauntlet and Clayton*, *The Belles*. Other interesting themes and trends: Girl power, activism, kindness/mindfulness.

I was impressed by the possibilities Scholastic has opened up to reach kids directly through their book clubs and fairs. And so much knowledge about their customers' needs and wishes they're getting through this.

And I was impressed that Penguin Random House employs a category manager who's responsible for analyzing the market and finding new niches and sweet spots. •

Paula Halkola

Publisher, Children's and YA, WSOY
FINLAND

Established in 1878, WSOY—Werner Söderström Ltd.—is among the best-known publishing houses in Finland, a part of the Bonnier Books group. It's led by publisher Anna-Riikka Carlson and isn't limited to children's content. WSOY publishes both Finnish and translated works of fiction and nonfiction for all age groups.

In our exchange with WSOY's publisher for children's and YA books, Paula Halkola, we started by asking what types of children's books are selling well in Finland.

Paula Halkola: Humor has been a big thing in Finnish children's literature for some time now—especially humorous picture books and some that are humorous but still realistic.

Domestic middle-grade series have been bestsellers for some time now. Our translated bestseller of last year was definitely the *Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney.

Publishing Perspectives: Why do you think the children's book sector has been so consistently strong in recent years?

PH: We have big brands that are selling steadily, but also a really wide selection of different kinds of books, especially considering the size of our market.

PP: What are some of your new titles that you're excited about right now?

PH: We're happy to notice that some really new kind of offerings are working well. For example, the heavily illustrated space adventure *Kepler62* has now broken through for new and quite wide audiences from 7 to even 14 years old. The series is a Finnish-Norwegian collaboration between authors Timo Parvela and Bjorn Sortland and illustrator Pasi Pitkänen. The second season of this series begins this autumn.

PP: Why are you interested in visiting the US for this event? Is the US market a strong one for you?

PH: The USA is our strongest market in translated fiction. I've started my work as a publisher just last year, so I'm eager to get to know people and meet new contacts—and, of course, get to know what is happening right now on the US market.

PP: With so much fine children's literature being produced in Finland and other Nordic markets, do you find that this increases competition when it comes to looking for international rights sales?

PH: I haven't really met this problem. The Nordic connection—and how it defines us as part of that region—might br even better than simply being a small country competing with everybody else. All Nordic countries have their own characteristics, but still we also share some kind of point of view, the Nordic vision. •

"Humor has been a big thing in Finnish children's literature for some time now—especially humorous picture books and some that are humorous but still realistic."

Paula Halkola

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German Book Office

FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE

PUBLISHING PERSPECTIVES

Meetings during the Children's Books Salon

Visit to Scholastic's offices (Photo: Hannah Johnson)

CHILDREN'S BOOKS SALON

JANUARY 2018 / NEW YORK CITY

Networking reception