

1 - INVISIBLE LINES - CALL FOR ARTISTS

1.1 THE PROJECT

Invisible Lines is an international project on comics, graphic novels and illustrations developed by the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, (Italy - coordinator); Central Vapeur, (France); Hamelin Associazione Culturale (Italy); Baobab&Gplus s.r.o. (Czech Republic); and co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

In accordance with the objective of the Programme, this project aims to circulate ideas and artworks, to develop new opportunities for young artists and to enhance the internationalization of the creative sector of illustrations and comics.

Invisible Lines intends to gather young artists from all around Europe, challenging them with inspirational tasks: how to draw the invisible? How to draw the feeling of belonging to a community of people and the people that live on the fringes of our society? How to express the meanings and the tiny everyday rituals that are interwoven in our lives, the habits we inherited from our family, the forgotten reasons that tie us to a place, our faiths and our unanswerable questions?

Visual storytelling can be an important medium of literary, visual and graphic codes to give back or enhance visibility to these hidden realities; on the other hand, we believe that addressing this artistic challenge in a cross-national setting could be a unique opportunity to empower the professionalization of young artists and the internationalization of their careers.

1.2 THE CALL

Invisible Lines is going to select 12 young comic and illustration artists, with a particular focus on their narrative and artistic skills, from across Europe and neighbouring countries, that will embark on a journey of discovery through three international workshops, each of them mentored by international comics and illustration masters (see section 3 for details). This international training will lead them to the creation of original artworks that will circulate in the most important comics festivals in Europe.

Each workshop will focus on a different meaning of the “invisible”: invisible matters such as the spiritual and religious quest, that were considered to be fading by many intellectuals but which are instead claiming their place in several European countries; invisible matters such as the lives of migrants and refugees, at the center of media representations and yet rarely present with their own stories and voices; invisible matters like the abandoned places that are scattered all over Europe, a result of the ever-changing landscape.

The approach of the workshop will be “from artist to artist”, a process of co-creation where mentors will guide the young artists along their own artistic path. Each workshop will be a site-specific experience so as to provide the artists involved with an opportunity for new inspirations and ideas. Guests with different backgrounds will join the workshops, so to begin an inter-sectoral dialogue that could be an inspiring source for their works.

The workshops will take place in Venice (Italy), Strasbourg (France) and Tábor (Czech Republic).

All the young artists will be requested to participate in all three workshops, which will be held in English and will last approximately one week each. Costs of travels, meals and overnights will be covered by the *Invisible Lines* project and free of charge for the participants (for further details see section “2.1 What is offered upon selection”).

A selection of the original artworks produced during the workshops will be exhibited in the main comic book festivals across Europe: Baobab Books (Czech Republic), Central Vapeur (France) and BilBOlbul (Italy).

After each workshop, a collective work will be produced, to be shared during the exhibitions.

A selection of the artworks produced by the artists will be published in a book at the end of the project for dissemination purposes.

1.3 TIMELINE

The deadline to send the application and the portfolio following the procedure described in section 3 is the 31st January 2021 (see section “3 - How to participate” for more details).

The final results of the jury evaluation will be communicated by the end of February 2021.

The timeline of the workshops is:

June 2021, workshop with Juraj Horváth at Tabor (Czech Republic)

June/July 2021, workshop with Stefano Ricci in Venice (Italy)

July 2021, workshop with Joseph Béhé at Strasbourg (France)

Exhibitions will take place approximately between September 2021 and December 2022.

1.4 THE WORKSHOPS

First workshop: Landscapes

Location: Tábor (Czech Republic)

Date: June 2021

Duration: between 5 and 7 days

Landscapes can be viewed in many ways. Most people today pass through them in cars, trains, or in the better case, bikes. If we wend our way through them on foot, it is usually passed important places, along marked hiking trails, in search of breathtaking panoramas, historic landmarks, the remnants of noble artistry. Our aim during the seven-day encounter in the Czech Republic is to see landscapes in a new light. To view them as witnesses to the stories that have played out in them and continue to play out in them to this day. To attempt to understand the multi-layered testimony of the places we walk through (whether from the historic, social, or mythical perspective) and to strive to record the tales we encounter on the way.

Not only will we be guided on our journey by an art historian and an architectural theorist, but also – and first of all – by the people who themselves dwell in the landscape. We will become witnesses of their stories, which we will then attempt to retell in pictures. Just as we embark on our journey together, we will eat together and sleep under one roof together, and even work in one print shop together. We will become distant witnesses who wish to pass on what we have experienced, or what the storytellers experienced, or what happened in their stories. Everyone who takes part in this journey will create their own layer to the story of the landscape they saw and proceed to record it. The resulting book, map, or travelogue will come about through collective reflection where each pilgrim will contribute with his or her own unique abilities.

Biography of the mentor Juraj Horváth

He studied at the Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design in Prague in the Studio of Illustration and Graphics. He is engaged in drawing, graphics, graphical design, illustration and publishing books for children and youth with Baobab publishers. Many times he has received a Most Beautiful Czech Books award. For the book Stories from the Steam Baths, he received the Most Beautiful Book in the World award at the Leipzig Book Fair in 2001.

Second workshop: Revelations

Location: Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy

Date: June/July 2021

Duration: between 5 and 7 days

The workshop is held at the Centre for Comparative Studies and Civilisations of the FGC, which promotes the dialogue on spiritualities and cultures, fostering both knowledge and aesthetic production. The mentor, Stefano Ricci, will guide the participants to retrace a path where artistic inspiration takes the shape of a revelation: artists will be requested to live draw, searching for tiny personal epiphanies. Then, the material collected will take the form of a story composed in an elementary graphic/narrative structure.

Artists will cross their artistic process with different religious and visual traditions, and will discover the incredible FGC library heritage composed of books, miniatures and incunables. Renown comic book artist David B. will also be part of the workshop as guest artist, and will hold a masterclass during the residency.

Final days will be dedicated to the construction of a collective book: an opportunity to understand deeply, with a choral practice, the technical aspects that complete the art of drawing and writing.

Biography of the mentor Stefano Ricci

Comics artist and illustrator, His works, oscillating between art and comics, are characterized by great atmospheric density and intensity. Stefano Ricci is currently one of the most sought-after illustrators - he works for leading magazines and newspapers such as “Frigidaire”, “Esquire”, “La Repubblica”, “Libération” and many more. He teaches comics and contemporary graphics at the Ecole européenne supérieure de l’image - EESI in Angoulême (FR), at the University of Udine and at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna (IT).

Third workshop: Borders

Location: Strasbourg (France)

Date: July 2021

Duration: between 5 and 7 days

The mentor, Yvan Alagbé, guides the workshop inspired by the experience of the young refugees of The Bernanos Centre in Strasbourg, which welcomes them. According to their recorded testimonies, participants are requested to produce drawn reportage about their experience of border crossing (physical, but also cultural or psychological borders). The stories are created in 4 days, in the premises of Central Vapeur, a former industrial site at 500 meters from the German border.

On the 5th day participants are joined by eight illustrators selected by Central Vapeur (students, professionals, members of the associations, refugees being integrated, local or European authors...) for the 24 heures de l’illustration #5. The group will work for 24 hours: in this time artists will produce between one and four images for posters about the subject of the workshop. On the last day Central Vapeur prints participants’ images and showcases their artworks, prints, and originals for a one-day ephemeral exhibition.

Biography of the mentor Yvan Alagbé

Yvan Alagbé was born in 1971 in Paris. He spent part of his childhood in Benin, before going back to France. Here he meets Olivier Marbouf and together they fund the association Dissidence Art Works. In 1993 they publish their first comic book, *Ville Prostituée*, and a year later they start their first imprint, Amok, which, merging with the Belgian association Fréon, will later become Frémok. Alagbé’s comic book stories, titled *Nègres jaunes et autres créatures imaginaires* (Frémok, 2012), has been published in the U.S. by New York Review of Books in 2018, and in Italy by Canicola Edizioni in 2019.

2 - WHAT IS OFFERED AND REQUIRED UPON SELECTION

2.1 WHAT IS OFFERED UPON SELECTION?

Selected artists (requirements and selection process are described in section “3 – How to participate”) will have the opportunity to travel to Venice, Tabor and Strasbourg in order to attend the three workshops of the project. The outcome of the workshops will then be exhibited in three comic book festivals across Europe and a selection of them will be included in a final book showcasing the work done during the project and distributed during said exhibitions. Expenses directly related to workshops attendance, such as travels and accommodation, will be covered by the project. Details on reimburse of expenses or on upfront payment for travels fee will be communicated to the artists upon selection.

2.2 WHAT IS REQUIRED UPON SELECTION?

Upon applying, as described in section “3 – How to participate”, applicants accept and thereby commit themselves, in case of being selected, to what follows, in its entirety:

- full attendance to all three workshops

- availability, following the workshops, to partake in the necessary work leading to the publication
- ceasing of publishing rights of the works produced during the workshops to “Invisible Lines”, for the sole purpose of the project dissemination: this include the physical outputs of the workshops; the reproductions of artworks produced during the workshops for communication purposes (posters, web and social media communications...); publication of some of the artworks in the final book of the project; the 3 post-workshops free-entry exhibitions considered as promotion of the project in 2021-2022.
- availability to document and share the work in progress of the workshops
- availability to attend some of the exhibitions of the project if requested

Acceptance, in case of selection, of the aforementioned point is intended as given in the moment of application and will then be formalized with the selected artists upon selection). Artists are invited to verify their availability for the dates of the workshops.

Selected artists are requested to attend all the three workshops. With the exception of duly justified cases, in case of withdrawal *Invisible Lines* can no longer guarantee the reimbursement of the already incurred expenses, if any, and may also lead to the exclusion from other project activities.

With regard to the COVID-19 situation, more details are given in section “4 – COVID-19 precautions”.

3 -HOW TO PARTICIPATE

3.1 WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The project is aimed to young European artists, mainly illustrators and comic book artists.

The participants must be over 18 years old and below 30 years old at the starting of the selection process, which will be 1st January 2021. So, any young artist with date of birth between 1st January 1990 and 1st January 2002 is allowed to participate.

The participants must be European to participate in the project, which means having a regular citizenship or a valid Residency Permit in at least one of the following Countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Serbia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

3.2 WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR THE APPLICATION?

Applicants that fulfil the requirements described in section “3.1 Who can participate” must compile and submit, before the deadline of 31st January 2021, what follows:

- The online application form, available in the *Invisible Lines* website at the following link (<https://invisiblelines.eu/call>)
- A full Curriculum Vitae, written in English, complete with studies curriculum, work and personal experience in the field of comic books and illustration, complete list of published, self-published and online works
- The copy of a valid ID document (identity card or passport)
- A motivational letter, written in English, highlighting the reasons why the applicant wants to participate in the project
- A personal portfolio of published on unpublished artworks (see section “3.2.1 Format and contents of the portfolio” for more details)

The application form must be compiled online with all the aforementioned attachment before the deadline of 31st January 2021. At the end of the submission, a confirmation email will be sent to the applicants. A physical copy of the portfolio and all other documents is not required to complete the application, which is complete upon receiving the confirmation email.

Shipment of the physical portfolio is therefore optional and up to the applicant, and will not result in a greater chance to be selected.

Any delay in filling the application form or in the shipping of the aforementioned documents and portfolios (with postmark date exceeding 10th December 2020) will result in exclusion of the applicant from the selection process.

3.2.1 Format and contents of the portfolio

The digital portfolio attached to the submission form and the physical one must contain the same 8 artworks, divided as follows:

- 4 consecutive pages of a comic book story (they can be a short story of 4 pages or a consecutive selection of pages from a longer story). If these pages are part of a longer story, a written abstract of the story must be included. The abstract must be written in English and must not exceed 2000 characters (including spaces)
- 4 additional artworks, which can be both illustrations or comic book pages (but from a different story from the previous 4 consecutive pages)
- a page of labels of the previous artworks, this page must be text only with clear references to the 8 artworks specifying for each one: the title of the artwork; the technique used; ISBN number and publisher's name in case of published artworks

Texts are not admitted if they are not an integral part of the illustrations or comic book pages. If any non-English text is present, an English translation of just the text must be included. The 8 illustrations or comic book pages composing the portfolio may be in any technique.

The digital portfolio must be a multi-page pdf of high-quality scans, with a total dimension not to exceed 25MB.

3.2.2 Shipment

All the documents specified in section "3.2 What is required for the application" must be submitted online in the application form. Shipment of the physical portfolio is optional.

If then the applicant, additionally to the online application, wishes to ship a physical copy of the portfolio, they can deliver it personally, by post or express delivery service to:

Hamelin Associazione Culturale,
via Zamboni 15 - 40126, Bologna (Italy)

For the shipment, please use the coupon with pre-printed address, provided in PDF format upon completion of your online entry registration.

Material should be sent "carriage paid", inclusive of any customs and delivery costs, with a tracked shipping. Any different kind of shipping, including shipping which includes costs for the recipient, will not be accepted and the applicant will non-negotiably be excluded from the selection process.

Insurance of the artworks during shipping is the artist's responsibility, as well as the proper tracking of said shipping. The project organization and administration will not be held accountable for the non-arrival or late arrival of artwork, nor will it be held accountable (monetary or otherwise) for damage or loss arisen during shipping.

3.3 SELECTION PROCESS

All artwork sent by the stated deadline – 31st January 2021 – and meeting the specified requirements will be examined and selected by an international panel, comprising seven members: one person from each partner of "Invisible Lines", the mentors of the three workshops described in section "1.4 The workshops" and a publishing expert and comic book critic.

The selection process is up to the jury to decide, and jurors' decisions are final and non-negotiable. However, parameters of the selection will solely take into account the artistic value of the portfolios and the artistic path (through the Curricula) and motivations (through the motivational letters) of the applicants, with no discrimination whatsoever based upon gender, nationality or age (provided the basic requirements stated in section "3.1 Who can participate" are met by the applicant).

At the end of the selection process, which will take place before 28th February 2021, every eligible applicant (i.e. every applicant who fulfilled the requirement specified in section "3.1 Who can participate?" and who submitted

all the required documentation specified in section “3.2 What is required for the application?” and “3.2.1 Format and contents of the portfolio”) will receive before the end of February 2021 an email confirmation of the selection outcome.

Every selected artist will then receive further information about the workshops and the steps to take leading to the beginning of the project.

3.4 RETURN OF THE ARTWORKS

If physically shipped, the portfolio must be composed of high-quality printed replicas of the original artworks, and will not be returned at the end of the selection process. Any original artwork sent in the portfolio will not be returned.

3.5 RESPONSIBILITY

The participant expressly releases partners of the project “Invisible Lines” from any responsibility and thirdparty claims related to the contents of the artwork they are submitting.

4 - COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

We are aware of the ever-changing situation regarding the Covid-19 epidemic, and we are taking every step necessary to guarantee safety for all selected artists, workshops mentors and guests. Every workshop will follow strict safety precautions to monitor the healthiness of everyone involved, guarantee social distancing and keep the experience safe for everybody. Workshops will be held in safe locations, and permanence during the residency will take place in safe structures.

The situation, however, may change, globally or depending on the country the selected artist may be travelling from or to. In this regards, should the pandemic aggravates, we reserve to re-module the timeline of the project, move part of it to a digital form or, in general, evaluate the best solutions on a case to case basis.

5 - INFO AND QUESTIONS

For any question regarding the call, how to submit the application or in general any question regarding “Invisible Lines”, write a mail to the following address: info@invisiblelines.eu.