

Fairytales: Other Worlds

Fairytales continue to enjoy great popularity, to include among illustrators. Is it their multifarious levels of meaning that challenges artists repeatedly to engage with these familiar tales?

The scope of possible artistic approaches is demonstrated, for instance, by the case of *Red Riding Hood*, probably the most frequently illustrated fairytale with the widest variety of interpretations. The stylistic range of the examples selected here is enormous, stretching from seemingly traditional illustrations with sensitively composed, atmospherically compact single images (Lisbeth Zwerger); to photographic representations of the tale between comedy and horror (William Wegman, Cindy Sherman); to decorative, or emotionally charged, interpretations composed of abstract symbols (Květa Pacovská, Warja Lavater). A further level of interpretation is offered by a visually, richly allusive reinterpretation of *Red Riding Hood* as a story of sexual seduction, whose images are subtly borrowed from the repertoire of art history (Alain Gauthier).

The long historical tradition of fairytales obviously inspires artists not only to produce extremely detailed pictorial compositions, but also to experiment with stylistic elements such as collage, photography, and abstract figuration. The broad spectrum of fairytale texts is thus often juxtaposed with extraordinary, convention-breaking images, thereby opening up unimagined worlds of terror and dread—as well as worlds infused with gentle poetry.