

## Book of Abstracts

Conference: Marie Neurath and Isotype Picturebooks. Transforming knowledge for children

Social and Economic Museum, Vienna, October 19-20, 2022

**Susanne Blumesberger (University of Vienna)**

### **“What I remember”. Autobiographical Reflections by Marie Neurath**

The estate of Paul Neurath, born in Vienna in 1911 and died in New York in 2001, son of Otto Neurath, contains a 119-page undated typescript by Marie Neurath. The text is divided into the sections “The Early Years”, “The Years with Otto Neurath” and “After Otto Neurath’s Death”. The text begins with a recollection of her brother’s baptism when she was two years old and ends with an explanation of why she wrote these memoirs, namely to support a book project. Her notes reveal not only her own life story and that of her family, but also the socio-political influences and, above all, the development of Isotype. Neurath also vividly describes how she began using sign language to convey important information to children in Africa, among others, who could not read, and how she prepared her children’s books. Neurath’s notes demonstrate that she had a greater role in the development of Isotype than most works about it give her credit for. Her talent for remembering visual impressions from her earliest childhood showed her the importance of communicating knowledge through a simple and clear visual language.

#### REFERENCES

Blumesberger, Susanne (2014). Neurath-Reidemeister, Marie. In: Susanne Blumesberger (ed.). *Handbuch der österreichischen Kinder- und Jugendbuchautorinnen*. Vol. 2. Köln: Böhlau. 809–812.

Blumesberger, Susanne (2017). Vertriebene Kinder- und Jugendliteraturforschung. Der kritische Blick von außen. In: Susanne Blumesberger and Jörg Thunecke (eds). *Deutschsprachige Kinder- und Jugendliteratur während der Zwischenkriegszeit und im Exil*. Frankfurt: Lang-Ed. 305–329.

Blumesberger, Susanne and Jana Mikota (2016). Das „Fremde“ und das „Eigene“ in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur des Exils. In: Gunda Mairbäurl and Ernst Seibert (eds.). *Kulturelle Austauschprozesse in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur. Zur genrespezifischen Transformation von Themen, Stoffen und Motiven im medialen Kontext*. Wien: Praesens. 77–93.

**Susanne Blumesberger**, Ph.D. in Media and Communication Studies and German Studies at the University of Vienna. From 1999-2014, Coordinator and Principal Investigator of several scientific research projects at the Institute for Science and Art, Vienna. Since 2007 Phaidra Management at the University of Vienna (Repository). Since 2016 Head of the Department Phaidra, the Repository of the Vienna University. Focus on Cultural Heritage issues, e-Learning and Research Data. Member of the Open-Access-Group at the Vienna University Library. Lecturer at the University of Vienna. Co-Editor of the Journal *libri liberorum*. She published many articles in the field of exile, children's literature, and women's biographies.

**Marnie Campagnaro (University of Padova)**

### **The Reception and the Impact of Marie Neurath on Italian Children's Literature**

Founded in 1947, the publishing house Fabbri Editori has been a benchmark for entire generations of Italians and has contributed to the promotion of culture across the country also with specific regard to children's books, which played a special role in its historical catalogue. At the end of the 1950s, Fabbri Editori decided to translate into Italian and published more than 20 informational books, by Marie Neurath. These books showed some interesting similarities with other important artists like, for instance, Bruno Munari, an Italian artist, graphic designer and illustrator who succeeded in combining art and design to great effect in his picturebooks. Both Neurath and Munari were interested in the observation of nature, and in experimenting with visual communication to explain visible reality. They both thought that some stories could be told better by pictures than by words. They took the idea of combining geometric elements and organic forms and using simplified contemporary imagery to represent everyday life, and realised the potential for expanding the idea into books for young people. The aim of this paper is to analyse the reception and translation of Marie Neurath's picturebooks in Italy and to compare her Isotype method with other Italian illustrative styles and methods.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Munari, Bruno (1968). *Design e comunicazione visiva*. Bari: Editori Laterza
- Neurath, Marie L. (1950/1951). Report on the Last Years of Isotype Work. *Synthese* 8 (1/2): 22–27.
- Walker, Sue (2017). Marie Neurath: designing information books for young people. In Alison Black, Paul Luna, Ole Lund, and Sue Walker (eds.). *Information Design. Research and Practice*. London: Routledge. 117–126.

**Marnie Campagnaro** is Assistant Professor at the Department FISPPA, University of Padova and didactic coordinator of a postgraduate course in Children's Literature (<https://www.childrensliterature-unipd.it/>). Her main research fields include picturebooks, objects, design & architecture, sustainability, fairy-tales, and Italian children's writers and artists. In 2017, she hosted the 6th International European Network of Picturebook Research Conference and in 2020 the 1st International Conference Fostering Dialogue on teaching children's literature at university. Her most recent works are *Green Dialogues and Digital Collaboration on Nonfiction Children's Literature* (2021, co-written with Nina Goga), *Picturebooks and aesthetic literacy in early childhood education* (in Ommundsen, Haaland and Kümmerling-Meibauer (eds.), 2021), *Stepping into the world of houses. Children's picturebooks on architecture* (in Goga, Iversen and Teigland (eds.), 2021), *Materiality in Bruno Munari's Book Objects: The Case of Nella notte buia and I Prelibri* (Libri & Liberi, 2019).

**Gökhan Ersan (SUNY Binghamton)**

### **Building a Graphical Language for Electromagnetism: Marie Neurath's A Message Around the World (1953)**

After Otto Neurath's death in late 1945, ISOTYPE co-founder Marie Neurath pursued the institute's science communication ideas with Adprint, a book production company in London to which Otto had pitched children's books. Rather than directly following Otto's vision for character-driven picture books, Marie crafted these works as infographic volumes that communicated scientific concepts to young readers. The first few books titled *If You Could See*

*Inside* (1948), *I'll Show You How It Happens* (1948), *Railways Under London* (1948), and *Rockets and Jets* (1952) used a graphical language to reveal layers of technology hidden within everyday settings and innovative products.

After a number of successful entries into the series, Marie Neurath took on the ambitious task of explaining fundamental science to children. *A Message Around the World* (1953), was a book about wired and wireless communication, demonstrating telephone, radio, and television technology. In this paper, I will utilize documents from the Otto and Marie Neurath Collection at the University of Reading, UK, to discuss how Marie Neurath used this particular technological topic as an opportunity to envision concepts of physics. I will demonstrate the ways in which Marie Neurath translated scientifically available knowledge of electromagnetism into a modular and coherent graphical language. I will also discuss Marie's strategy to weave together various forms of electromagnetic phenomena within a single 'story arc'. I will utilize original technical drawings and typewritten notes of Marie Neurath to demonstrate how she translated them into relatable graphics within self-contained double-page spreads, that each served a place within the larger story arc. Furthermore, I will discuss how these double-page narratives compare with contemporary renditions of similar topics that are found in science textbooks. Finally, I will discuss how the 'double-page spread' and the 'story arc' strategies worked to humanize scientific subject matter of the book *A Message Around the World* (1953) and the significance of this approach for science communication today.

## REFERENCES

FOUNDATIONS (1938). *Foundations of the Unity of Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hogben, Lancelot Thomas (1949). *From Cave Painting to Comic Strip: A Kaleidoscope of Human Communication*. London: Parrish.

Neurath, Marie., and Robin. Kinross. (2009) *The Transformer: Principles of Making Isotype Charts*. London: Hyphen Press.

Matthew, Eve and Christopher Burke (2019). *From Hieroglyphics to Isotype: A Visual Autobiography*. London: Hyphen Press.

Neurath, Otto, et al. (1973). *Empiricism and Sociology*. Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing Company.

**Gökhan Ersan** is a design practitioner, educator, and historian located in New York State. He holds a PhD in art and design history from UIC, Chicago. Ersan's academic and creative work explores relationships between technology and design in shaping material culture. His artists' books are in the special collections of the Getty Institute, The MET, MoMA, Ryerson, Newberry Library, and more. He is engaged in grant-funded collaborations to develop information design that bridges humanities, natural sciences, and engineering research. He joined SUNY Binghamton in 2015 after fourteen years of teaching at the SAIC, Chicago.

## **Sarah Hoem Iversen (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences)**

### **Isotype, Gender, and the Gendered Body**

"Words divide, pictures unite" was the slogan of the Isotype Institute. After World War I, unifying culture and universalizing the human form through design marked a break from the nationalism that had divided Europe (Kostelnick 2019, 153). However, pictures too, could arguably divide, for instance as regards representations of gender. When the goal was to present "universal" visual signs for, for example "Peoples of the World" (Nikolow 2011, 92), the male body served as the norm, the prototypical human being. By contrast, when the aim was to depict

sexual reproduction, the female-gendered body took on particular significance. The process of transformation, extracting “the essential facts” from the experts and converting them into picture form (Neurath 1974, p. 136) may have been particularly challenging when producing books for children on complex and challenging topics. This paper considers the issue of gender and Isotype in general, before moving on to an investigation of the visual and verbal strategies used to convey information about gender and the gendered body in children’s information books such as *A New Life Begins* (1961) and *How the Baby Came* (1963).

## REFERENCES

- Allan, Dorotheen and Neurath, Marie (ill.) (1963). *How the Baby Came*. London: Heinemann Press.
- Kostelnick, Charles (2019). *Humanizing Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Neurath, Marie (1961). *A New Life Begins*. London: Max Parrish.
- Neurath, Marie (1974). ISOTYPE. *Instructional Science* 3.2: 127–150.
- Nikolow, Sibyl (2011). ‘Words Divide, Pictures Unite.’ Otto Neurath’s Pictorial Statistics in Historical Context. In *Image and Imaging in Philosophy, Science and the Arts*, volume 2, Richard Heinrich, Elisabeth Nemeth, Wolfram Pichler and David Wagner (eds.). Heusenstamm: Ontos Verlag. 85–98.

**Sarah Hoem Iversen** (D.Phil, Oxon) is Associate Professor in English Language and Literature at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Bergen). Her research interests include historical children’s dictionaries, nonfiction picturebooks, formative assessment, and digital technology in education. Recent publications include “Organization and presentation of knowledge in picture dictionaries” (2020), “‘When you have said your les-sons well, then you shall go out to play’: Play, Gender, and the Child Addressee in Nineteenth-century Children’s Dictionaries (2020), and the co-edited anthologies *Teaching and Learning English* (2020) and *Visual and verbal strategies in nonfiction picturebooks: theoretical and analytical approaches* (2021).

**Silke Körber (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)**

## Marie Neurath and Adprint after 1945

This paper examines the contribution of Marie Neurath and a group of émigrés in Great Britain to the development of illustrated non-fiction books (“Bildsachbücher”) as an instrument of knowledge transfer for the common reader.

In British exile after their flight from National Socialism, the Austrian social scientist and philosopher Otto Neurath and his later wife Marie Reidemeister, focused on creating a new type of book based on the close integration of text and image. The prototype was *Modern Man in the Making*, published in 1939 in the US. In the years that followed, Otto and Marie founded the Isotype Institute in Oxford and cooperated with other Jewish émigrés and left-wing publishers, in particular with Wolfgang Foges of the book-packaging company Adprint in London. Striving to mediate objective and well-designed information, Isotype and Adprint established creative practices and structures in cooperation with British publishing houses. After Otto Neurath’s death in 1945, Marie continued to work with Foges and his partners and specialised in non-fiction books for young people and children. Through her work as author, principal transformer and later director of the Isotype Institute, she contributed to the further development of close image-text structures, by broadening the range of topics and by an increasingly free visual design: in the dual role as author and designer, she achieved a great creative freedom, which Otto had also aimed for in cooperation with Adprint. She held a special

position, as very few authors had the understanding for the requirements of a modern design and were able to write texts that matched the visual language in terms of style and content. With the increasing internationalisation of publishing, these types of books proved successful and set standards in the design and processing of knowledge to meet the general educational demands and concerns of post-war Western societies.

## REFERENCES

- Black, Alison, Paul Luna, Ole Lund, and Sue Walker (eds.) (2017). *Information Design: Research and Practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Burke, Christopher, Eric Kindel und Sue Walker (eds.) (2013). *Isotype: Design and Contexts, 1925–1971*. London: Hyphen Press.
- Neurath, Marie (1982). „Otto Neurath, Wiener Moderne, Isotype – Ein Bericht“. In *Arbeiterbildung in der Zwischenkriegszeit. Otto Neurath – Gerd Arntz*, Friedrich Stadler (ed.). Wien: Löcker Verlag. 24–30.
- Neurath, Marie und Robin Kinross (2009). *The Transformer. Principles of Making Isotype Charts*. London: Hyphen Press.
- Waldner, Gernot (ed.) (2021). *Die Konturen der Welt. Geschichte und Gegenwart visueller Bildung nach Otto Neurath*. Wien, Berlin: Mandelbaum.

**Silke Körber**, PhD at the Humboldt University Berlin at the Institute of Philosophy (2021), Magistra Artium in German Studies, Political Science, Communication Studies at the Free University Berlin; work as a freelance research assistant for Prof. Dr. Gerd Graßhoff and for the Excellence Cluster Topoi of the HU Berlin (planning and development of the Digital Humanities infrastructure Edition *Topoi*); as well as freelance and employed copy-editor for various publishing houses, editorial offices, and the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale); travel scholarships from the German Historical Institute London and Washington; scholarship of the Elsa Neumann Foundation and of VG Wort.

**Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)**

## **Developing a New Design Language: The Impact of Interwar Avant-garde Movements on Marie Neurath's Isotype Picturebooks**

The interwar period experienced a burgeoning surge of picturebooks and illustrated children's books that were instigated by ideas taken from Reform pedagogy and vanguard tendencies of the 1920s and 1930s. Three prime issues exerted a great fascination: the idea of the active and engaged child, the turn to current political, technical, and scientific issues, and the development of a universal art language that can be understood well even without prior knowledge. While the first concept points to the vision of the child as future citizen of a society in which all members have equal access to education and culture, the latter was key in Avant-garde movements, such as Constructivism, the New Objectivity, and the Bauhaus, that strived to draft a new design language which is based on simple geometrical forms, serial arrangement, and a limited color palette. Such visions also flowed into contemporary children's literature and shaped, for instance, the picturebooks *Pro dva kvadrata* (About Two Squares, 1921) by El Lissitzky and *Die Scheuche* (The Scarecrow, 1925) by Kurt Schwitters, Käte Steinitz, and Theo van Doesburg. While these two books employ geometrical forms or elements from the letter case to tell political stories whose open endings invite the reader's active participation, other book projects, such as *Die bunte Welt* (The Colorful World, 1929) by Gerd Arntz, aimed at making complex knowledge processes comprehensible even for children. Therefore, authors and illustrators dovetailed the criteria of clarity, accuracy, and attention to detail to achieve this

goal. These decisive factors characterized modernist informational children's literature in many European countries, such as Germany, France, Poland, Russia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Against this backdrop, the Isotype picturebooks by Marie Neurath played an exceptional role. Neurath, who was in lively exchange with artists, theoreticians, and authors of that time, refined the artistic and literary demands of these evolving vanguard trends to facilitate knowledge transfer to children. A comparative perspective that considers these different aesthetic efforts to develop a new design language in the interwar period and after serves as a starting point for the crucial question of whether Neurath's Isotype picturebooks can be regarded as Avant-garde children's literature. Moreover, the reasons for the deviation in some of Neurath's later books from earlier Isotype graphics and their orientation towards an illustrative style influenced by postwar modernist design will be discussed.

## REFERENCES

- Burke, Christopher, Eric Kindel, Eric, and Sue Walker (eds.) (2013). *Isotype. Design and contexts 1925-1971*. London: Hyphen Press.
- Druker, Elina and Kümmerling-Meibauer, Bettina (eds.) (2015). *Children's Literature and the Avant-Garde*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Perez, Carlos (ed.) (1999). *Infancia y arte moderna*. Valencia: IVAM Centre Julio González.

**Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer** is a professor in the German Department at Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Germany. She is co-editor of the book series "Children's Literature, Culture and Cognition" (John Benjamins) and advisory board member of several international scholarly journals. She has edited *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks* (2018) and co-edited *Exploring Challenging Picturebooks in Education* (2022). Her research interests focus on the history and theory of the picturebook, postwar German children's literature and culture, canon processes in children's literature, and the impact of the Avant-garde on children's literature and children's films.

**Laura Little (London College of Communication)**

## Marie Neurath, Non-fiction Children's Publishing and the Isotype Method

Within the history of UK children's publishing there is a strong tradition of non-fiction publishing. It is currently a growing part of the UK market, worth £51 million in 2019 and seeing a 25% uplift in sales during lockdown in 2020. Developments in children's publishing and education in the 1940s led to a vibrant children's non-fiction market in the UK. In 1940, Noel Carrington became the editor of Puffin Books, a newly founded imprint of Penguin which specialised in children's non-fiction picturebooks. Inspired by Soviet and French children's books, Puffin's colour-lithography printed books are recognised for their high-quality editorial, illustration and print values. Puffin Books from the 1940s are still widely available and distinguishable by their distinctive designs. This period formed a significant moment in UK non-fiction children's publishing, the legacy of which can still be seen today.

While visually very different, Marie Neurath's non-fiction picturebooks from the 1940s–80s share a similar ethos for high-quality editorial and illustrative content. Describing her work as 'transformation' Neurath specialised in conveying complex information with graphic simplicity. Techniques that Neurath pioneered include cross-sections, 'through the microscope', and the use of striking, graphically bold shapes combined with a flat colour palette. Although Neurath's books are scarcer in today's market, the influence of her pioneering techniques can still be seen in both the wider field of graphic design and in non-fiction children's books today.

Drawing on examples from the late 1940s, with a science and technology focus, such as *If You Could See Inside* (1948) and *Railways under London* (1948) this paper will explore the legacy of Neurath's non-fiction children's book design to offer insights into the non-fiction children's market in the UK and consider its wider cultural and educational benefits.

## REFERENCES

- Burke, Christopher, Eric Kindel, and Sue Walker (eds.) (2013). *Isotype: Design and contexts (1925–1971)*. London: Hyphen Press.
- Kinross, Robin and Marie Neurath (2009). *The Transformer: Principles of making Isotype charts*. London: Hyphen Press.
- Twyman, Michael (1975). *Graphic Communication through Isotype*. Reading: University of Reading.

**Laura Little** is a Senior Lecturer in Publishing at London College of Communication. Her research interests include avant-garde picturebooks, children's publishing and artists' books, with a focus on design and illustration. Before joining the higher education sector, she worked in the publishing industry for a decade in editorial and design roles. She originally trained as an illustrator and still practices as a visual artist. Her own artist's books can be found in public and private collections including the Tate and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

**Jörg Meibauer (Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz)**

## **Truth and transformation in Isotype picturebooks. Analyzing *Railways under London* (1948) by Marie Neurath**

Together with *If you could see inside* (1948) and *I'll show you how it happens* (1948), *Railways under London* (1948) belongs to the first descriptive picturebooks by Marie Neurath that follow Isotype principles. The latter book is special in that it addresses children aged 9-12, and relates to the overarching script of entering and leaving a subway station. For Isotype picturebooks, it is essential that they represent facts about the world in a true and reliable manner. By reading these books, children should gain knowledge about the world, in particular about those things and processes that are "hidden" and thus are not easily accessible, so that they may appear as a "wonder". However, the necessary process of "transformation", understood as a process of coarsening events and facts by careful simplification ("durch vorsichtige Vereinfachung vergrößert", see Groß 2015: 240 citing Marie Neurath), is risky. It requires, both on the pictorial and textual levels, that aspects of the complex reality are simplified or even omitted. In the present paper, this tension between truth – the correct representation of an event or fact – and transformation is discussed in detail with respect to *Railways under London* (1948). The close reading of this book reveals that some technical aspects, for instance the electrical circuit systems, are not easy to understand. The colors are not used in a consistent manner, since red and blue can mean different things across the whole book. Finally, the combination of simple and complex texts, containing technical vocabulary, may distract from the overall didactic goal. It turns out that this book, while broadly achieving its aim to inform about the London Underground in a convincing and aesthetically appealing manner, leaves out facts that could have been relevant for the child reader. In sum, with its ideological aim of showing the speed, efficiency, and safety of the London Underground, it reflects the optimism of the postwar years and the hope in a new era of wealth propelled by technical inventions. The modernity of this approach lies in the fact that these aspects are still relevant for constructing systems of transportation in the world's big cities.

## REFERENCES

- Groß, Angélique (2015). *Die Bildpädagogik Otto Neuraths. Methodische Prinzipien der Darstellung von Wissen*. Heidelberg: Springer.
- Meibauer, Jörg (To appear). *As 'objectively' as possible*. On truth and objectivity in photographic early-concept books. In *Photography in Children's Literature*, Elina Druker and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (eds). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Walker, Sue (2013). Graphic explanation for children, 1944-71. In *Isotype. Design and contexts. 1925-1971*, Christopher Burke, Eric Kindel, and Sue Walker (eds.). London: Hyphen Press. 390–447.

**Jörg Meibauer** is Professor emeritus of German Language and Linguistics at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, Germany. His recent linguistic fields of research include lying, bullshitting, and insulting. Currently, he researches the visual culture of picturebooks from the German Democratic Republic, with a focus on architecture, design, and photography. He is the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Lying* (2019) and the co-editor of *Pragmatikerwerb und Kinderliteratur* (Pragmatic acquisition and children's literature, 2021).

## Nikola von Merveldt

### Strange Ways of Seeing Nature – Visual Strategies in Marie Neurath's "Wonder World of Nature" Series Between Magic and Science

Otto and Marie Neurath shared the conviction that you could capture children's attention by presenting the familiar in strange new ways. This "Verfremdungs"-technique worked both on the conceptual level (e.g. looking at modern machines/buildings as "boxes") and informed the visual strategies deployed in ISOTYPE picture books. In *If You Could See Inside* (1948), the Neuraths developed the use of cross-sections to present the hidden interior workings of buildings, machines, or animals. They used the rather strange metaphor of the "magic knife" to describe this way of revealing the hidden insides of buildings, machine, or animals. How does the concept of "magic" square with their highly scientific approach to creating a standardized visual language? What is the relationship between "magic" and scientific tools of investigation (such as dissection and vivisection, for example, which use real knives, not magic ones, to learn about the natural world). In my presentation, I want to explore how Marie Neurath goes on to use "strange ways of seeing" (cross-sections, magnification, repetition, diagrams) in the series "The Wonder World of Nature", and how scientific pictorial conventions and isotopic magic intersect in this transformation aimed at young children.

## REFERENCES

- Anon (1951). *If You Could See Inside* by Marie Neurath; I'll Show You How It Happens, by Marie Neurath. *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 26.2: 196.
- Neurath, Otto and Marie Neurath (1980). *International Picture Language: A Facsimile Reprint of the (1936) English Edition*. Reading: University of Reading.
- Walker, Sue (2017). Marie Neurath: Designing information books for young people. In *Information Design: Research and Practice*, Alison Black, Paul Luna, Ole Lund, and Sue Walker (eds). New York: Routledge.

**Nikola von Merveldt** is associate professor and director of graduate studies of German Studies at the *Département de littératures et langues du monde* of the Université de Montréal, Canada. Following her studies in medieval and comparative literature in Strasbourg, Neuchâtel,



Cambridge, and Munich, she discovered book history as an inspiring interdisciplinary and international field of research, which allowed her to combine her interests in children's literature, media, and cultural studies. Her main research focus is on non-fiction children's literature from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. She is a fellow of the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany, and a member of the non-profit organization *pinselfisch* ([www.pinselfisch.de](http://www.pinselfisch.de)) promoting literature and literacy.

## **Emma Minns (University of Reading)**

### **The Otto and Marie Neurath Collection at the University of Reading**

This talk will provide an overview of the Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection housed in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading. The Collection was gifted to the University of Reading by Marie Neurath in 1971; it contains a rich and diverse range of items including original large-format exhibition charts from the 1930s and several versions of the Isotype "Picture dictionary". Since the publication of *Isotype: Design and contexts 1925–1971* in 2013, and the exhibition *Isotype: international picture language in 2010/11 at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London*, many of the charts, as well as books and drawings, have featured in exhibitions throughout Europe, and regularly appear in books and papers that range in subject from the history of graphic design to respiratory health.

However, this talk will include those items in the Collection that are less well-known, such as the correspondence between Marie Neurath and her team at the Isotype Institute and the numerous maps, prints, games and ephemera collected by the Neuraths, and which arguably provided inspiration for their innovative and pioneering work in visual communication.

**Dr Emma Minns** is Assistant Curator of the Lettering, Printing and Graphic Design Collections in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication, University of Reading. Amongst the collections she cares for is the Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection. Emma has been working with the Neurath Isotype Collection since 2007 and is particularly interested in pictorial statistics in the Soviet Union and the Neuraths as collectors of maps and ephemera. She has worked with Sue Walker as a research assistant on two funded projects about Marie Neurath's books for young people. More recently Emma has worked with galleries and museums in Germany, Spain and France to facilitate the loan and display of items from the Neurath Isotype Collection at Reading.

## **Sonja Schreiner (University of Vienna)**

### **A Viennese Wonder World of Isotype - Marie Neurath and the Schönbrunn Verlag**

In the second half of the 1950s, the renowned Viennese publishing house "Schönbrunn Verlag" was responsible for the distribution of a promising 'best of' of Marie Neurath's iconic children's (and young adult) books, famous for their revolutionary and pioneering isotype style. Thereby, the Austrian firm decided more than a decade earlier than the Westfalian "Engelbert Verlag" to make German-speaking children familiar with Neurath's 'Wonder World'. (The German company situated in the small town of Balve began to sell isotype books in the late 1960s and early 1970s.) Besides highlighting some aspects of the author's didactic strategy and concept, the paper aims at determining the special position of the modernistic books in the Austrian publisher's portfolio, and tries to answer, what determined the rather specific selection from Neurath's much broader oeuvre for the colorful and nicely arranged series called "Wunder der

Welt”, focusing on the interests of the target audience. (The booklets are 32 pages, comprising the typical size of picture books.) Furthermore, it will show the ‘brain drain’, Neurath’s emigration caused for her (chosen) home country’s intellectual elite, and figure out the range of variation between the English and German versions. Finally, it will show the impact of the Horatian motto *ut pictura poesis* on the emblematic structure of the illustrator’s new and futuristic mode of presentation.

## REFERENCES

Marie Neurath (1956). *Außen – innen. Was ist drinnen?*, Wien: Schönbrunn Verlag.

Marie Neurath (1956). *Die Wunderwelt der Tiere*. Wien: Schönbrunn Verlag.

Marie Neurath (1956). *Flug durch den Weltraum*. Wien: Schönbrunn Verlag.

<https://www.marieneurath.org/>

<http://biografia.sabiado.at/neurath-reidemeister-marie/>

**Sonja Schreiner** is academic staff member at the Institute for Classical Philology, Medieval and Neo-Latin Studies at the University of Vienna, is interested in Neo-Latin literature (especially zoological and medical texts), Human-Animal Studies, comparative literature, reception studies, mythology, and children’s and young adult literature. She is external associate in the international cluster “The Past for the Present”, cooperates with the Children’s University Vienna, regularly publishes in *libri liberorum*, and teaches Latin at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna.

**Ilgin Veryeri Alaca (Koc University, Istanbul)**

## Relating and Comparing Neurath’s Work with Informational Books from Turkey

German author Marie Neurath’s innovative works had such a revolutionizing influence on picturebook design that it spread to other countries with probable resonances on informational picturebooks internationally. Did Neurath’s picturebooks also influence the design of Turkish informational picturebooks? To understand and trace the chronological transformation of this influence on picturebook design in Turkey, this article reviews a selection of children’s books published over almost four decades from the 1930s up until the late 1960s. The selection of works covers subject matter ranging from natural sciences to technology to analyze how visuals are utilized to convey information, systems, processes, and data, drawing parallels to Neurath’s preferred set of themes. A comparison of informational books produced by Neurath and those by Turkish authors and illustrators highlights the similarities in sequences and detailed explanations for the basic principles of communication, physical phenomenon, and nature. However, there are areas of interest based on the differing priorities of the country of origin that do not necessarily have a corresponding counterpart. *Ekinlerimizi Koruyalım (Let us Protect our Crops)*, for instance, is a work that reflects the agricultural concerns of that era in Turkey that has no direct equivalent in Neurath’s body of work. Similarly, Neurath’s informational books on technological advances such as the peculiarities of the atomic structure do not have an exact counterpart in Turkey at that time. This study of the differences and similarities in content extends to include an analysis of text-picture relationships that demonstrate where Neurath’s style has potentially influenced Turkish picturebook design and where it has not. Based on a selection of Neurath’s books and those informational books published by Çocuk Esirgeme Kurulu (Child Protection Society), Ministry of National Education (MEB) and Nebioğlu Children’s Encyclopedia, this article compares and contrasts how these books selected and passed information on to young audiences.

It is possible that Neurath's subject selection and graphic language inspired the informative picturebook design in Turkey at times not as a whole but in bits and pieces such as color use, the simplifications to attain clarity, utilization of abstract patterns or simple graphics to directly explain a fact. Some of Neurath's influence likely filtered to Turkey through educational exchanges between Turkey and Austria in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. *The Animated Alphabet* (Canlı Alfabe, 1954) written by Osman Yalçın and originally sketched by Ömer Uz and Davut Akidil but visually reillustrated in Vienna is an example of the collaboration between the educational ministries in Turkey and Austria. While pictorial realism and use of linear perspective was on the rise in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Turkey, Neurath's simplification in formulating pictograms, flat, two-dimensional visual space became a patently recognizable style that was uniquely hers. However, it might also be said that Neurath's stylizations of imagery to the bare minimum have perhaps drawn inspiration from the numerous motifs in traditional arts objects found in Turkey and other cultures. While this deserves a separate study of its own, this concept that what was old is new again will be considered here more as a bridge connecting innovations in children's literature with traditional arts. Pattern, motif, ornament, and their utilization in differing visual traditions, old and new, convey and communicate information in Neurath's work. In some instances, these remind age-old symbols, motifs used at her work to demystify groundbreaking knowledge for the audience. Neurath's innovative amalgamation of strategies has a legacy that resonates to this day echoing in different geographies and visual cultures.

## REFERENCES

### Primary Sources:

- Ali Rıza (1933). *Haluk ve Tayyare*. İstanbul: Resimli Ay Matbaası.
- Çakıroğlu, Emin (1970). *Haritalar*. ill. Hüseyin Özcan. Ankara: MEB.
- Çilenti, Kamuran (1964). *Ekinlerimizi Koruyalım*. ill. Hüseyin Özcan. Ankara: MEB.
- Derener, İlhami. *Eğlenceli Tabiat Tecrübeleri ve Oyunları*.
- Kaya, Kemal (1958). *Sınıf Yazı Tahtasında Öğretim Resimleri*. İstanbul: İstanbul Öğretmenler Derneği.
- Nebioğlu *Çocuk Ansiklopedisi Cilt 3*. Nebioğlu Yayınevi.
- Ölçün, Mustafa (1965). *Suyun Hikayesi*. ill. Nevzat Akoral. Ankara: MEB.
- Örs, Hayrullah. *İlkokulda Kağıt ve Karton İşleri*. Ankara: Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu.
- Örs, Hayrullah & Kaya, Kemal (1944). *Küçük Elektrikçi*. Ankara: Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu.
- Özcan, Zeki (2021). *Viyana Çevresi*. Ankara: Fol Kitap.
- Taştan, Şevki (1964). *Uzunlukları ve Alanları Nasıl Ölçeriz?* ill. Nevzat Akoral. Ankara: MEB.
- Taştan, Şevki (1964). *Ağırlık ve Hacim Ölçüleri*. Ankara: MEB.

### Secondary Sources:

- Calvert, Sheena and Nanette Hoogslag (2019). Decriminalising Ornament: The Pleasures of Pattern. *Journal of Illustration* 6.1: 9–32. DOI: 10.1386/jill\_00002\_1
- Burke, Christopher, Eric Kindel, and Sue Walker (eds) (2013). *Isotype. Design and contexts 1925-1971*. London: Hyphen Press

**Ilgım Veryeri Alaca** is an Associate Professor at Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey. Her research focuses on picturebooks, materiality, cultural heritage and art. She contributed to *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks* and *The Routledge International Handbook of Early Literacy Education*. She edited a book on cultural communication through art (Norgunk, 2012) and a special issue on materiality of picturebooks (Libri & Liberi Journal, 2019). Her latest publications include *Consumable Reading and Children's Literature: Food, Taste and Material Interactions* (John Benjamins, 2022). She supports White Ravens (IYL, Germany) and ALMA awards (Sweden) in Turkish children's literature.

**Valerie Danzer, Tina Frank, Andreas Lehner, Tom Marschall, Christiane Thenius, Gernot Waldner (speaker) (University of Vienna)**

## **Isotype Reloaded**

Marie Neurath led the Department of Transformation at the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum* in Vienna between 1925 and 1934. Establishing a feedback loop between scientists, designers, educators, and visitors, her department was the core of a new organization which held that educational problems could be solved through revisions of exhibitions. This process of "transformation" put visitors at the centre of the institution, which was paradigmatic of a participatory involvement of children and working-class people; an attempt to communicate fundamental data about the world, to stimulate further interest, and to encourage political participation. Nearly one hundred years after the museum's founding, a team from the Austrian Museum of Society and Economy is attempting to build on this tradition. A sociological study by the University of Vienna, *Wege in die Zukunft* (Paths to the Future), examined the lives of young Viennese at secondary schools over a period of several years. The study asks: what influence do family, gender, migration background and other factors have on the education of young people? Our project "Isotype Reloaded" aims to return the sociological knowledge gathered by scientists to youths of the same age. We use Isotype charts to give an overview of the history of the Austrian educational system, which is followed by a role-play that discusses the possibility of overcoming obstacles the study surveyed. We documented the development of this project in order to help this tradition of visual education, co-founded by Marie Neurath, live once more.

**Gernot Waldner** is a PostDoc at the University of Vienna. He studied Literature, Philosophy, and History of Science in Vienna, Berlin, and Cambridge (MA). He received his PhD from Harvard University in 2018. His research focuses on the interwar period in Europe, especially the usage of scientific models in the Arts. He edited "Die Konturen der Welt" (Mandelbaum 2021), an interdisciplinary volume discussing history and present of visual education after Otto Neurath.

## **Sue Walker (University of Reading)**

### **Marie Neurath's Isotype books for Children: Pioneering Work in Graphic Design and Illustration for Young People**

This talk will summarise Marie Neurath's work on the writing, illustration and design of Isotype children's books from the 1940s to the 1970s including the series 'Visual History of Mankind', 'Visual Science', 'Wonders of the Modern World', 'The Wonder World of Nature' and 'They Lived Like This'. It will draw on and show material from the Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication, University of Reading that has underpinned Sue Walker's funded research on Marie Neurath's work, and that will contribute to her monograph about Marie Neurath's publications for young people, and how the books were made. The talk will identify techniques that Marie Neurath used to illustrate complicated historical and scientific ideas and show how she worked with others to achieve her aims, including with Adprint who pioneered book packaging in the 1940s.

**Sue Walker** is Professor of Typography in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading. Her research interests are in information design, books for children's reading and engagement and communication design in health. Her work

on Marie Neurath extends over many years with particular focus on the children's books produced at the Isotype Institute in London from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Her exhibition 'Marie Neurath: Picturing Science' at House of Illustration in 2019 was received to wide acclaim, serving to raise the profile of Marie Neurath's work. A website based on the exhibition is here: [www.marieneurath.org](http://www.marieneurath.org)