

## Vojtěch Kubašta's Pop-up Books in the Collection of the Società Economica of Chiavari

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### ABSTRACT

The exhibition *Vojtěch Kubašta. I libri animati di Vojtěch Kubašta nella collezione della Società Economica di Chiavari* held at the Società Economica of Chiavari as part of the *Larte in Economica* series, proved to be a significant success in terms of both audience and participation. Installed in the Quadreria on Via Ravaschieri from 6 to 22 December 2025, the exhibition featured 105 works by the renowned illustrator and paper engineer Kubašta, offering a comprehensive overview of his production of pop-up books. The high turnout led to an extraordinary extension of the exhibition through the first days of January 2026. Ancillary activities were particularly well received, including guided tours and workshops dedicated to pop-ups, which helped engage a diverse audience and confirmed the educational and outreach value of the initiative.

### KEYWORDS

Biblioteca Società Economica di Chiavari; Mauro Pierluigi; Vojtěch Kubašta.

### CITATION

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What follows are some essential data and a photographic overview which, although unable to convey the lived atmosphere of voices, colors, and emotions, document the success of this exhibition dedicated to the Prague artist Vojtěch Kubašta and in memory of Mauro Pierluigi, who, with great passion and expertise, created a rich and prestigious collection.\* Visitors to the exhibition were not only collectors or field specialists, but above all a general audience of adults and children who are still fascinated and intrigued by this type of book. In short, these are objects that make you want to discover what they tell and how they manage to do so with such wonder. From flat, two-dimensional forms, with the simple gesture of turning a page, they expand and grow into space, only to return quietly to their place when closed. The success of the exhibition layout was certainly supported by the work of a united team that brought together diverse and passionate professional skills. The valuable patronage of Iby Italia and the Fondazione Tancredi di Barolo also played an important role, allowing this project not to remain isolated and confined within local boundaries, but to open up – hopefully – to future and much broader collaborations. In the three exhibition rooms of the Quadreria of Palazzo Raschieri, visitors found, at the entrance, informational panels on Kubašta's life and on the collector; proceeding further, they encountered display cases and exhibition columns – some enclosed, others simply marked off by red cords. This arrangement allowed the catalogue curators, during guided tours, to take and show some of the books on display. The creation of shaped panels with enlarged illustrations made it possible to set up small scenographic elements that gently accompanied the visitor. The few additional light features, including some with a Christmas theme given the exhibition period, along with other discreet lighting points in the rooms, helped focus attention on the books displayed and the stories told. The aerial suspension of some of Kubašta's pop-up books, as well as those created by children in workshops, effectively enhanced a 'light' dialogue between generations without weighing down the exhibition spaces. In a quiet corner, a video station was set up where visitors could sit and watch a selection of the books in motion.

### And afterwards, what remains to be done?

First of all, we will undertake the cataloguing of all the books from the donation so as to make them visible and properly highlighted in our online catalogue ([www.bigmet.org](http://www.bigmet.org) – Catalogo Biblioteche Genova Metropolitana), which is part of the national system. Given the specificity of this collection, consultation with other librarians will be essential in order to define a precise and shared bibliographic terminology.

At the Library of the Società Economica of Chiavari, a dedicated space is also currently being set up for the proper preservation and the rotating display of selected items. It is our intention, as soon as possible, to return to the portion of Mauro Pierluigi's collection that was excluded in this first phase, which includes non-three-dimensional illustrated children's books and, above all, his collection of advertising and illustrated graphic works.

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\* The translation of this contribution, originally written in Italian, was carried out by the editorial team of "JIB" and was produced in order to provide wider dissemination of the content to an international audience. The exhibition and its catalogue were presented in Turin at the Pop-App Museum on 26 February 2026 as part of the "Pop-Appuntamenti", a series of eight events dedicated to pop-up books of the past and present and to their transmedia developments (12 February–28 May 2026). The full recording of the event is available on the website of the International Centre on Interactive Books: <https://tinyurl.com/yeypyjv3>. The "Mauro Pierluigi" donation and its related enhancement project had already been presented in the previous issue of this journal (Maria Simonella, "Kubasta. Magie dei libri pop-up di Vojtech Kubasta nella collezione di Mauro Pierluigi," *JIB*, 4, 2025, 76-77. DOI: [10.57579/2025.7](https://doi.org/10.57579/2025.7)).

## EXHIBITION

**Venue:** Chiavari (GE), Biblioteca della Società Economica, Quadreria di Palazzo Ravašchieri

**Promoted and organized by:**  
Biblioteca della Società Economica di Chiavari  
Comune di Chiavari – Assessorato alla Cultura

**With the patronage of:**  
Regione Liguria, Città Metropolitana di Genova, Comune di Chiavari  
Fondazione Carige  
Ibby Italia  
Fondazione Tancredi di Barolo

**On display:** 105 three-dimensional books from the “Mauro Pierluigi” donation to the Library of the Società Economica of Chiavari

**Exhibition design by:** Lia Gnecco, with contributions from Miriam Badalotti, Isadora Bucciarelli, Angelica Pileggi

**Video editing:** Chiara Olcese

**Dates:** 6–22 December 2025

**Special openings:** 27–28 December 2025 / 3–4 January 2026 21

**Opening period:** 21 days, with the following hours: Monday to Friday 4:00–7:00 pm; Saturday, Sunday and holidays 10:00 am–12:00 pm / 4:00–7:00 pm. Free admission

**Guided tours** by Donatella Curletto for the general public, by reservation (4 sessions).

School visits: 14 classes (approximately 300 students) – kindergarten, primary, middle, and secondary schools (Art High School, Technical Institute for Accounting and Surveying). On two Saturdays, pop-up construction workshops for children and adults were organized, open to the public by reservation.

In October and November 2025 – in preparation for the exhibition – 11 workshops entitled *Il pop-up scenografico*, by Isadora Bucciarelli, were held for all fifth-grade classes of Chiavari’s primary schools: 11 classes, for a total of 205 pupils and as many works, which were displayed as part of the exhibition.

**Total visitors:** 3,000



## EXHIBITION CATALOG

Creation of the corresponding catalog in **300 copies**, curated by Donatella Curletto and Maria Simonella, with valuable scholarly contributions by Massimo Missiroli, Walter Fochesato, and Pompeo Vagliani. The catalog, cm 26 × 26, 151 pages, with color photographs taken by the TIFF Collective – Tigullio Foto Forum, is published by the Società Economica di Chiavari (2025) in its series Quaderni, 9, printed by PACINI, Pisa. The cover features a graphic reinterpretation of Vojtěch Kubašta’s autograph signature.

The publication documents all three-dimensional books – and also some pop-up scenes – by Vojtěch Kubašta that have come to the library of the Società Economica through the “Mauro Pierluigi” donation. The items are presented in **eight sections**, each preceded by a brief introduction: *Fairy Tales*, *Panascopici*, *Tip+Top (+Tap)*, *Stories*, *Disney*, *White Series*, *Prague and Surroundings*, *Christmas*. These sections were also adopted in the exhibition layout.







