

The Shades of Italian Illustration

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Emiliano Ponzi, Guido Scarabottolo, Lorenzo Mattotti, Franco Matticchio, Olimpia Zagnoli, and Gianluigi Toccafondo are just a few of the major names in illustration that are revolutionizing their profession and reinventing the face of the biggest Italian publishing houses.

The immense talent of these illustrators has been recognized all over the world with a long client list that includes the likes of [The New Yorker](#) [2], [The New York Times](#) [3], [Vogue](#) [4], [Rolling Stone](#) [5], and [La Repubblica](#) [6]. Together they have formed a powerful force that is currently taking the illustration game by storm.

Every artist is unique and has a particular stylistic approach, however there are some noticeable common threads in each generation. The art of the older illustrators contains a significantly more subdued color palette with soft hand drawn lines and subtle texture. On the other hand, the work of [Ponzi](#) [7] and [Zagnoli](#) [8] is drastically different, characterized by bold color schemes and strong graphic compositions.

The lines are hard and this is most likely because of the undeniable influence of digitalization on this era of illustrators. The illustrations are typically computer generated, two dimensional, and somewhat minimalist, however they do pack a punch and immediately demand the attention of the viewer.

Even though these visual artists are based in Italy, their work can be found internationally whether it be on book covers or on some of the most popular and best-selling magazines. At the moment, Ponzi and Zagnoli in particular are having great success in the United States partly because their striking illustrations stand out more in an extremely competitive and fierce market. Their boldness seems to be more attractive to the audience which turns them into consumers, a quality that is essential in



American publishing houses.

What these Italian illustrators all have in common is that they have the ability to reflect the language of their time in the most beautiful way. Not only have they provided us with gorgeous images to get lost in, but they also managed to put their country on the map while doing so which is an incredible feat.

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Links

- [1] <http://test.iitaly.org/files/ponzijpg-1>
- [2] <http://www.newyorker.com/>
- [3] <http://www.nytimes.com/>
- [4] <http://www.vogue.com/>
- [5] <http://www.rollingstone.com/>
- [6] <http://www.repubblica.it/>
- [7] <https://www.emilianoponzi.com/>
- [8] <http://www.olimpiazagnoli.com/>