



- 1 Kinderbuch, Doppelseite, почта (Die Post) – Der Leningrader Postbote unterwegs, 1933, Illustration: Michail Cechanovskij, Text: Samuil Maršak, Donation: Walter Roshardt. Abbildung. Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK.
- 2 Kinderbuch, Doppelseite, почта (Die Post) – Der Berliner Postbote unterwegs, 1933, Illustration: Michail Cechanovskij, Text: Samuil Maršak, Donation: Walter Roshardt. Abbildung. Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK.

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The children's book *Pochta* (*The Post*) by Samuil Marshak (1887–1964), with illustrations by Mikhail Tsechanovskij, also written as Michail Cechanovskij (1889–1965) is considered a masterpiece of Soviet avant-garde book design. The drawings strongly adhere to the aesthetic of Constructivist poster art and follow the rhythm of the children's rhyme.

*Who's that knocking at my door?
His shoulder bag is big and fat.
His bag is stamped with Number 5.
And he's wearing a dark-blue cap.
Is it him? It must be him!
The mailman from Leningrad!*

These lines from the original poem *Pochta* are familiar to every Russian child. Their author, the poet and translator Samuil Marshak, is one of the most beloved children's book authors in Russia to this day. The poem first appeared in 1927 as a children's book with illustrations by Mikhail Tsechanovskij and was an enormous success. This 1933 edition alone was printed in 75,000 copies. In 1930, Mikhail Tsechanovskij created the animated film of the same name, which achieved cult status.

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Pochta shows us four mail carriers from four different nations who try to deliver a letter to the writer and globetrotter Boris Žitkov. It finally reaches him in Leningrad. The depiction of the settings—Leningrad, Berlin, London, and Brazil—as well as the images of the protagonists manifest the linear language of Constructivism, combined with a wealth of humor and imagination. The hurried, mustached postman from Leningrad; the sturdy, corpulent Berliner; the gaunt Londoner; and the lithe Brazilian are distinctly different from each other in both appearance and gait—yet they are connected by their work and their main attribute: the large mailbag. The glorification of speed and technology is clearly recognizable in the design: the letter “travels” around the world by rail, plane, and ship. The children's book *Pochta* appears as a congenial synthesis between the music of poetry and the language of images. (Tatiana Arquint)

Kinderbuch, почта (Die Post), 1933
Illustration: Michail Cechanovskij
Text: Samuil Maršak
22.5 x 19.3 cm
Donation: Walter Roshardt
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