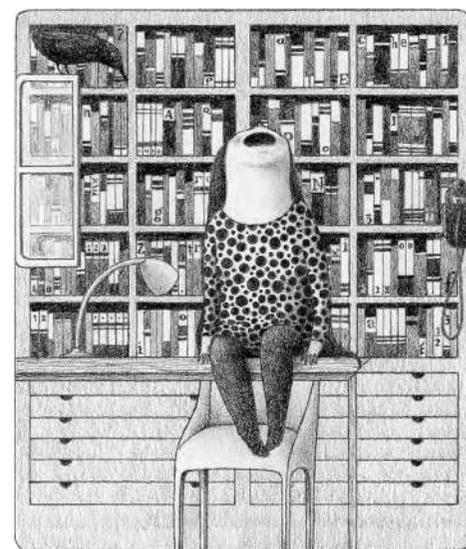


Spanish Candidate
for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2022



Elena Odriozola



Elena Odriozola Index

Introduction by:

It is often said that Elena Odriozola is a subtle, delicate illustrator. That may be true, but this widespread statement says very little of the merits of this Basque artist and undoubtedly these qualities do not constitute a sufficient motive to nominate her for the Hans Christian Andersen Award. By contrast, we do believe there are other weighty reasons for which she would deserve this accolade. Firstly, for her capacity to bring her own personal interpretation to a literary text, which is able to increase its meaning and significance (even when illustrating works as famous as *FRANKENSTEIN*, *CINDERELLA* or *LA CELESTINA*). Secondly, for her successful and creative use of narrative genres from the past (such as paper theatre, panoramas, the superposition of transparencies or the traditional Spanish *ALELUYA*, a series of pictures with captions arranged on a single page) when appropriating literary works. Thirdly, for offering young readers a complex and close vision of the psychic reality, which makes both identification and play possible. Lastly, for the fact that her talent and artistic excellence transcend an aesthetic search in order to delve into the truth. Elena Odriozola is not content with merely producing beautiful images, she aspires to understand what is hidden behind the obvious and to express her findings using the only medium through which she knows how to: illustration.

For each project Odriozola creates her own fictional universe. She gives the impression that the characters which inhabit it have a life outside the book: they already exist before the first page and will undoubtedly continue to exist when we have closed it. Through the narrative sequence we readers are witness to a particular moment in their biographies. It is almost as though we have poked our head out of a window only to suddenly see how the life of the protagonist is undergoing a moment of inflection that will change their story. But what makes us fix our attention on them and makes them stay in our memory or

our imagination is not what happens to them but the way in which they look at the world. What Elena Odriozola brings to the text does not consist of transporting the argument of the word into the picture. What this illustrator offers is her highly personal interpretation of the literary work. Thus, the reader has the chance to read what the text says, to read what the image says and to find a third reading: their own.

If we feel like spectators when we enter the books illustrated by Elena Odriozola, it is because she has been researching the dramatic possibilities of the illustrated book for several years. Above all she plays and experiments with the staging, she depicts the characters' conflicts without succumbing to simplified viewpoints or overacting and she particularly concerns herself with the rhythm, movement and time that each of the illustrations articulate in a unified narration. Therefore, it is not the same to see an Odriozola illustration framed on a wall or decontextualized in a catalogue as to read one of her illustrated books. Her work often makes the reader (whether child or adult) feel they need to read the book again. Her books definitely gain as much with re-readings as with the reflections and conversations they tend to provoke.

Elena offers each child an intimate space in which to find themselves. This space might be warm and tender, or sometimes playful and carefree; it might be marked by a nostalgic luminosity, or it might even show anxiety and the sense of fragility. The chiaroscuro of childhood reside in her illustrations and, like the children for whom she illustrates, Elena Odriozola has the curiosity and the need to understand things that many adults no longer worry about.

Gustavo Puerta Leisse
Peripatetic School of Children's and Young Adults' Literature



Elena Odriozola San Sebastián 1967

Having worked in an advertising agency for eight years, in 1997 Odriozola began working as a full-time illustrator. Since then she has illustrated over 100 books (as well as posters and covers, among other things), mainly published in Spain but also in France, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Taiwan. Her books have been published in Basque, Spanish, Galician, Catalan, English, French, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, German, Italian, Brazilian Portuguese, Dutch, Polish and Turkish.

Highlights in her career include the following:

Selected for the 2005 exhibition “Illustrious. Panorama of Children’s and Young Adults’ Illustration in Spain” at the Bologna Book Fair, at which Spain was the Guest of Honour.

Included in the IBBY Honour’s List 2006 for the book *ATXIKI SEKRETUA* (KEEP THE SECRET).

Second prize for Best Children’s and Young Adults’ Illustrations 2006 for her work in the book *LA PRINCESA QUE BOSTEZABA A TODAS HORAS* (THE PRINCESS WHO YAWNED AT ALL HOURS; *OQO*).

Finalist for the Kate Greenaway Award 2004.

Selected at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava in 2003, 2013 and 2015.

Basque Award for Illustration 2009 for her work in the book *APLASTAMIENTO DE LAS GOTAS* (THE SMASHING OF THE RAINDROPS) by Julio Cortázar (Laberinto de las artes). And in 2013 for *TROPECISTA* (Tumbler) by Jorge Gonzalvo (Barbara Fiore Editora).

Selected for the Bologna Book Fair exhibition in 2010.

CJ Picture Book Award 2010 in the New Publications category for the book *ODA A UNA ESTRELLA* (Ode to a Star) by Pablo Neruda (Libros del Zorro Rojo).

Invited to the 28th and 30th International Fair of Illustrations for Children “*LE IMMAGINI DELLA FANTASIA*” (The Images of Fantasy) in Sarmede, Italy, 2010 and 2012.

Nominee for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Junceda International Award 2014 for *FRANKENSTEIN* by Mary Shelley (Nórdica Libros).

National Award for Illustration 2015.

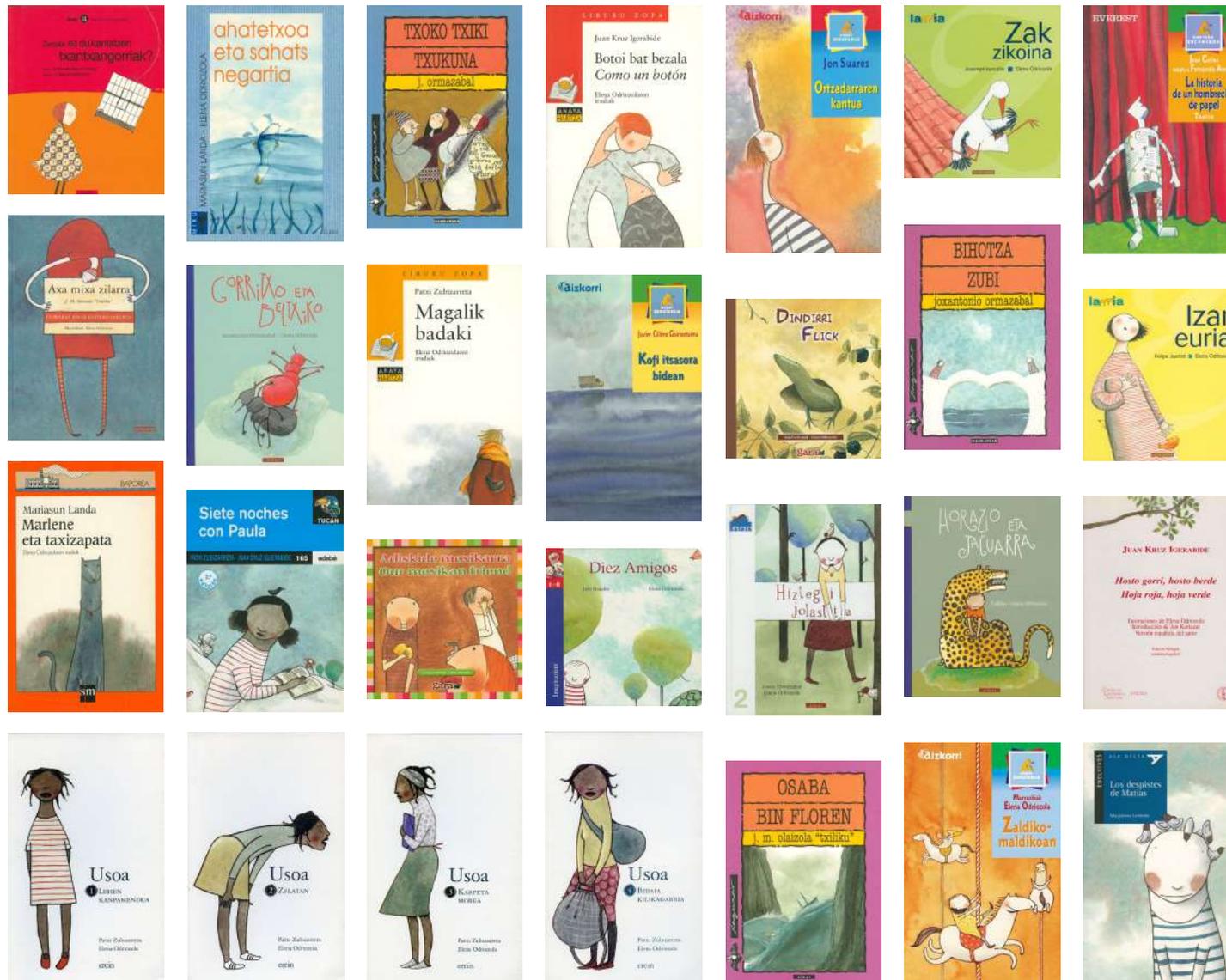
BIB Golden Apple 2015 for *FRANKENSTEIN*.



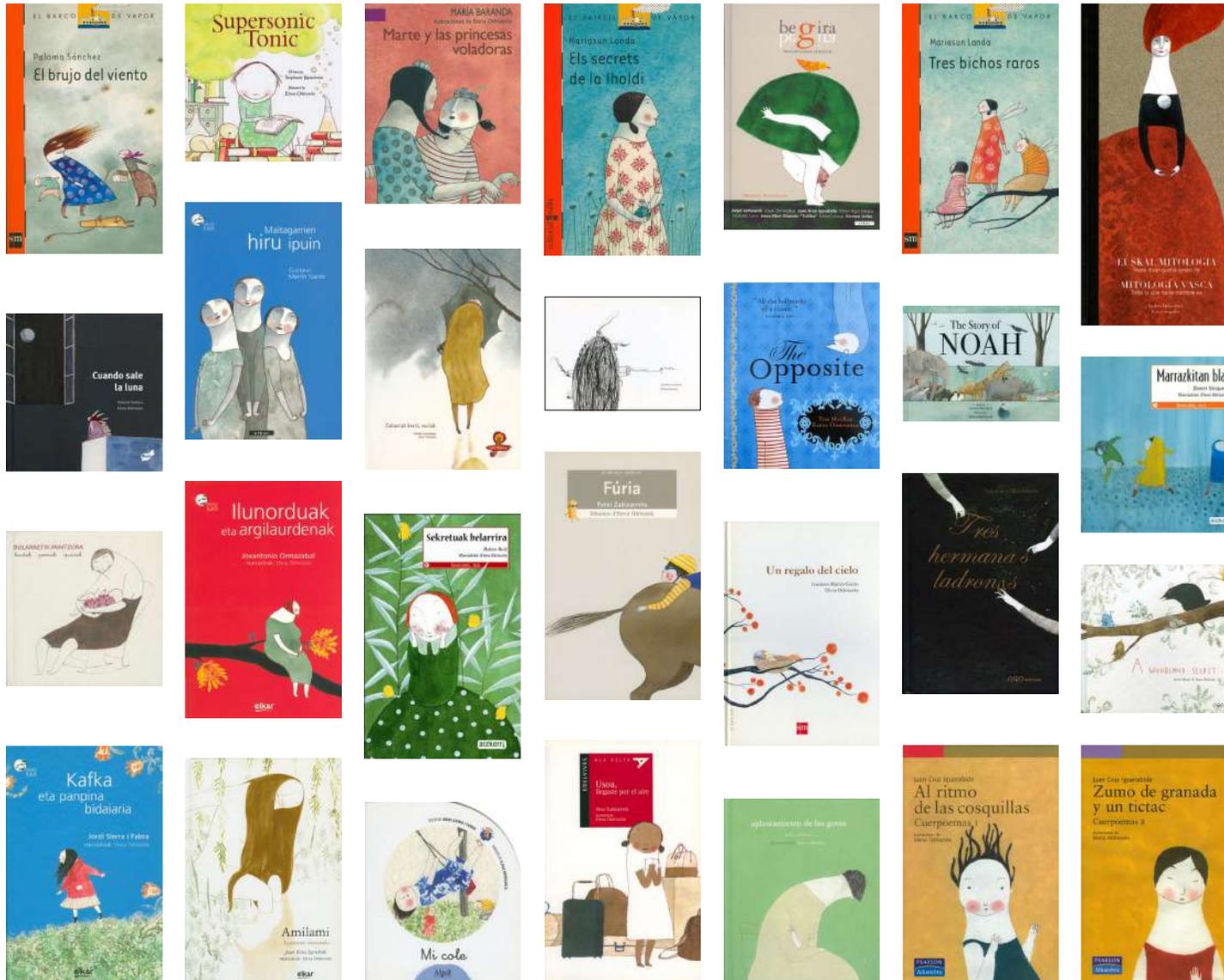
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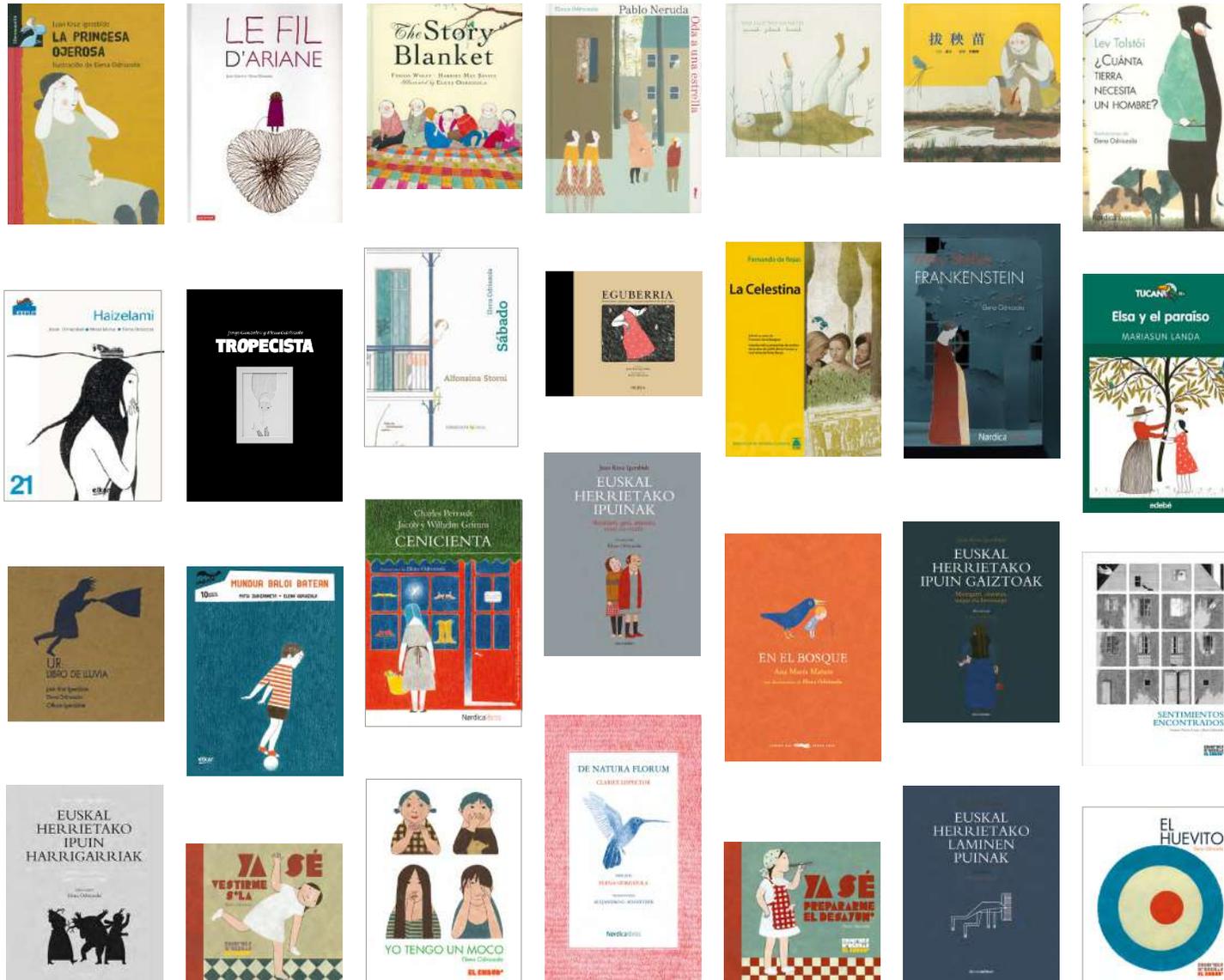
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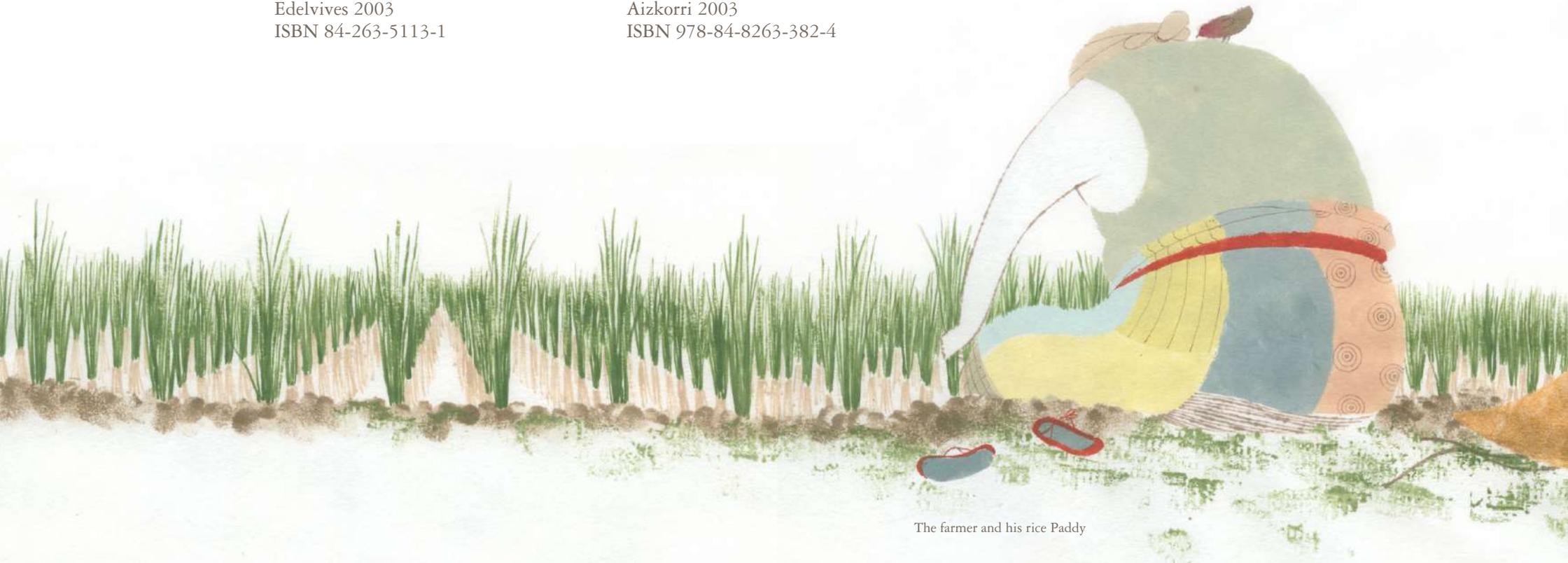
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The farmer and his rice Paddy



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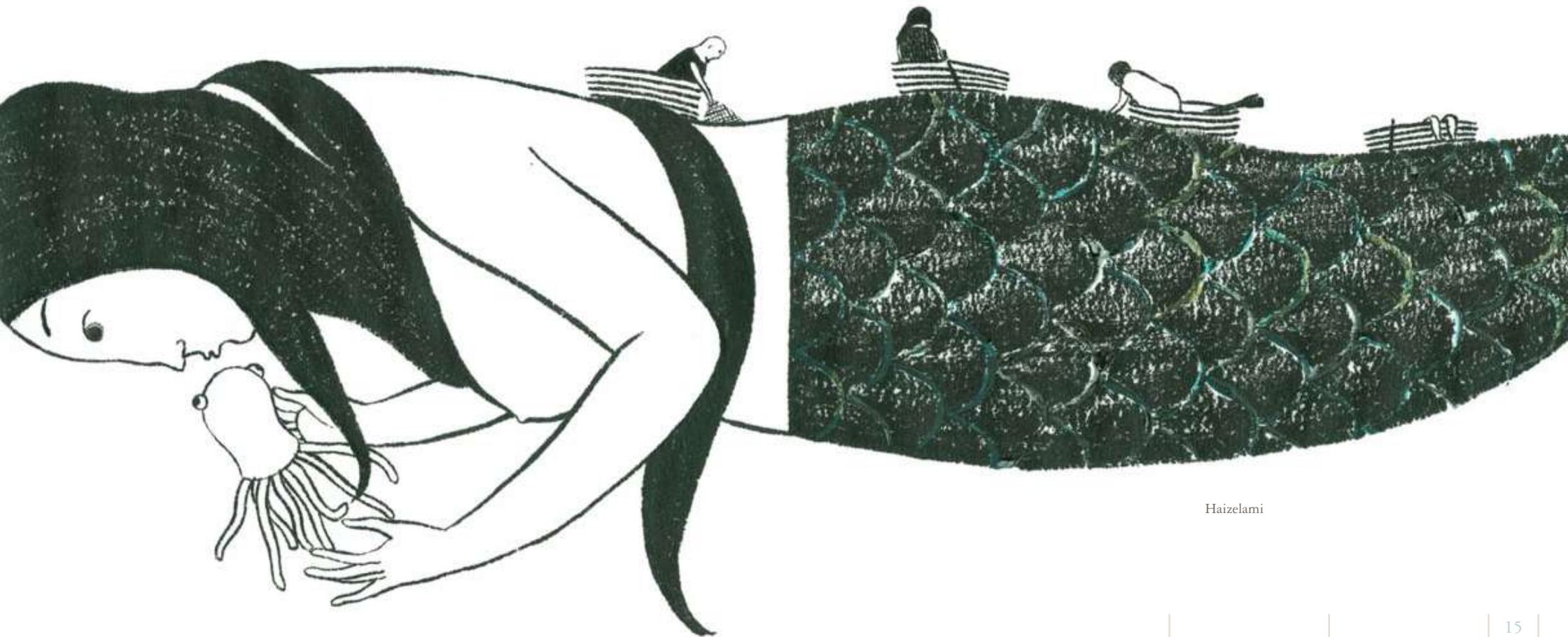
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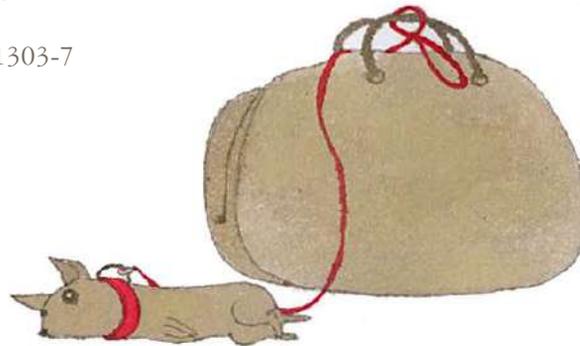
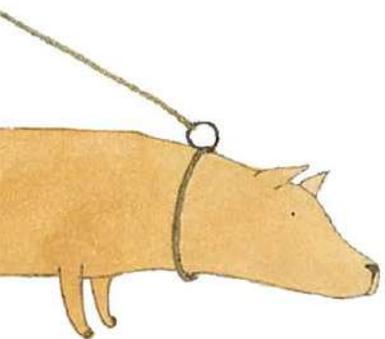
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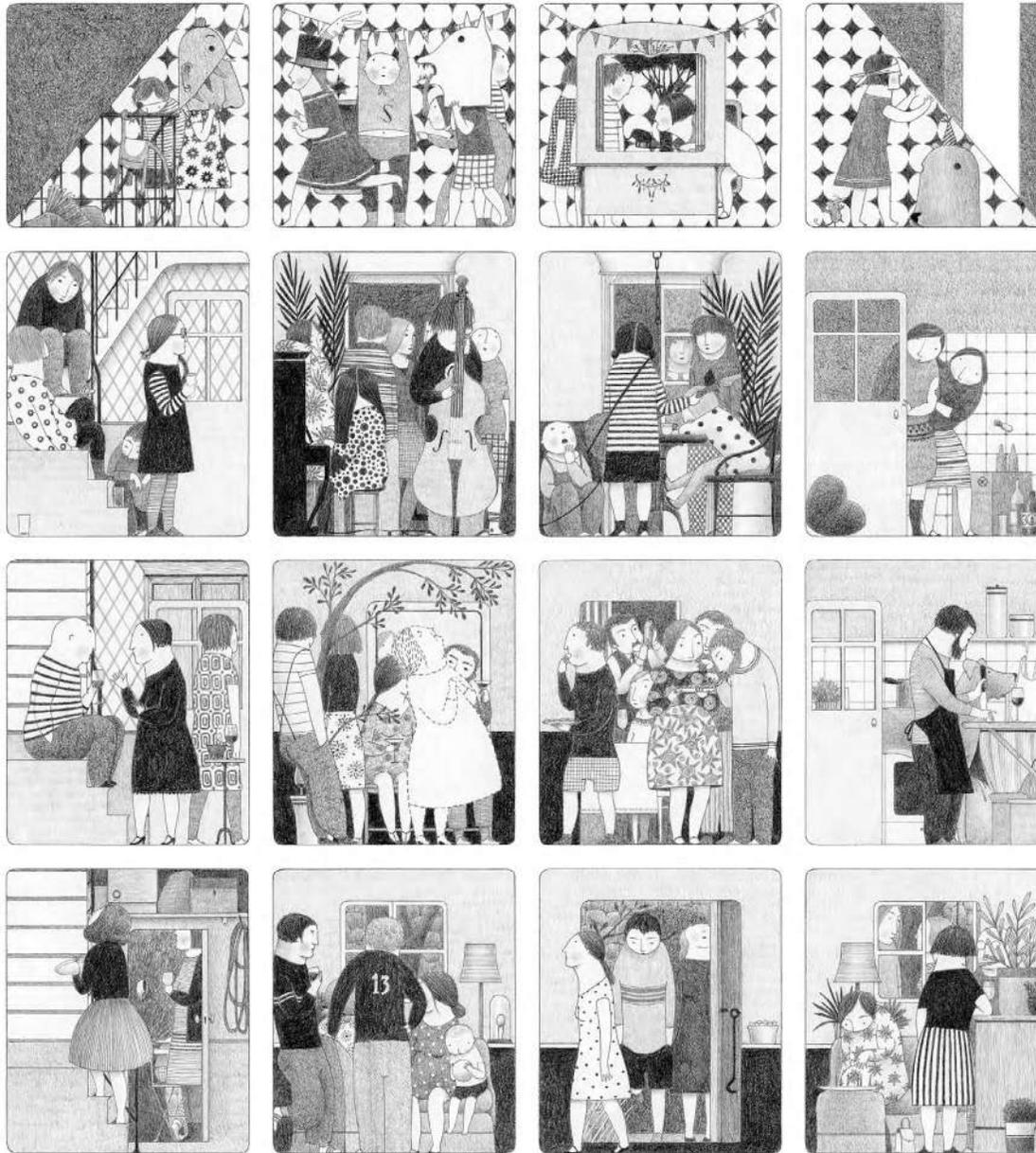
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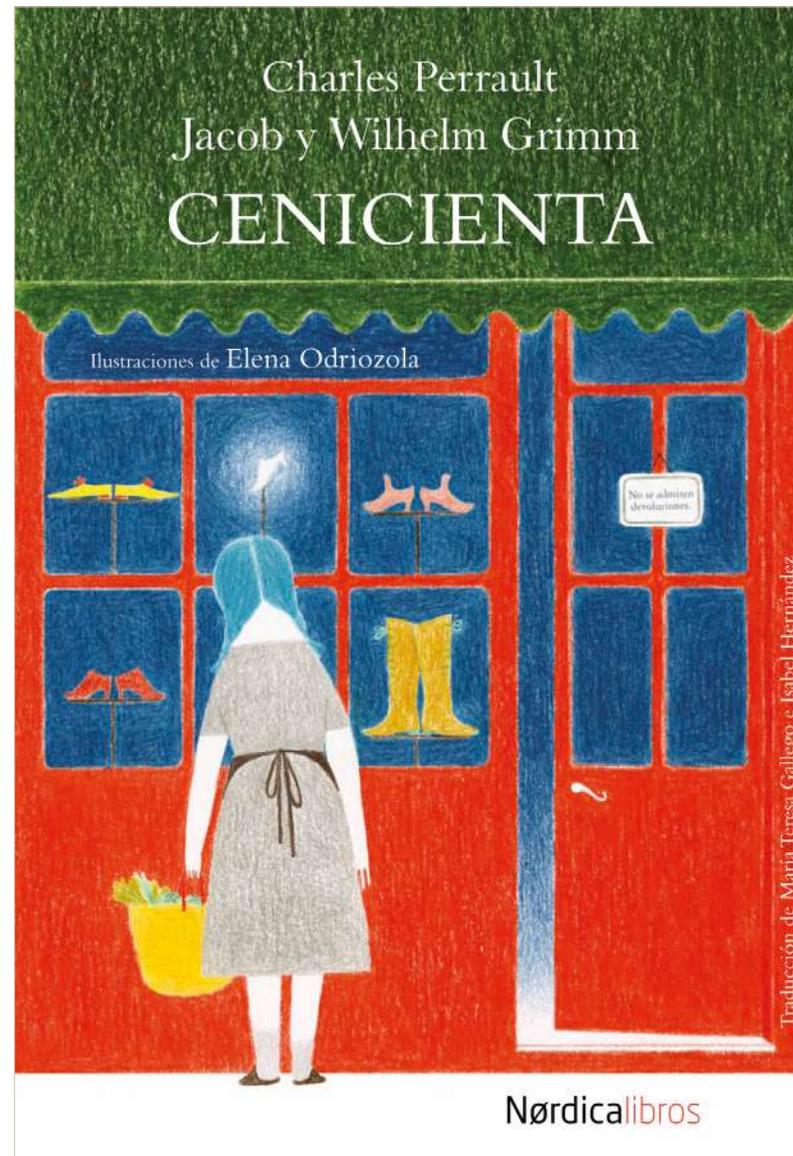
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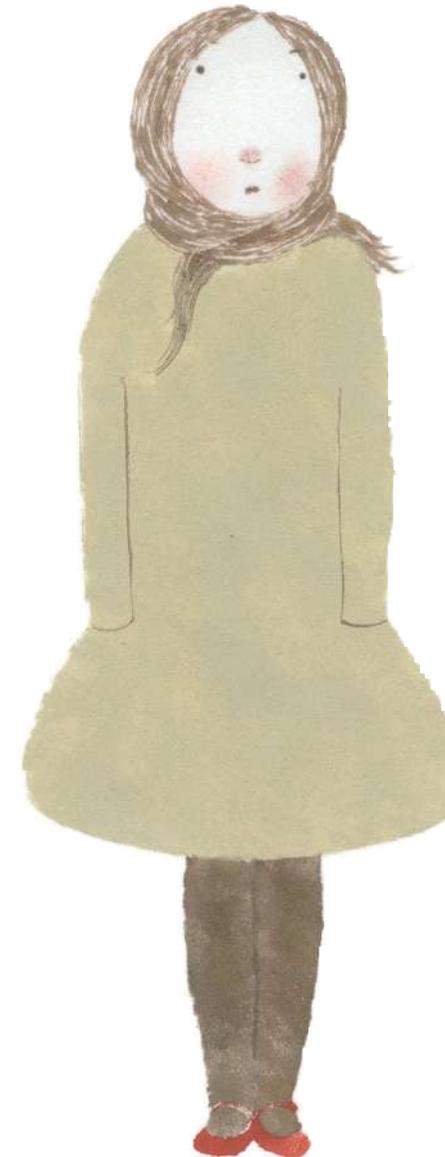
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UR: BOOK OF RAIN

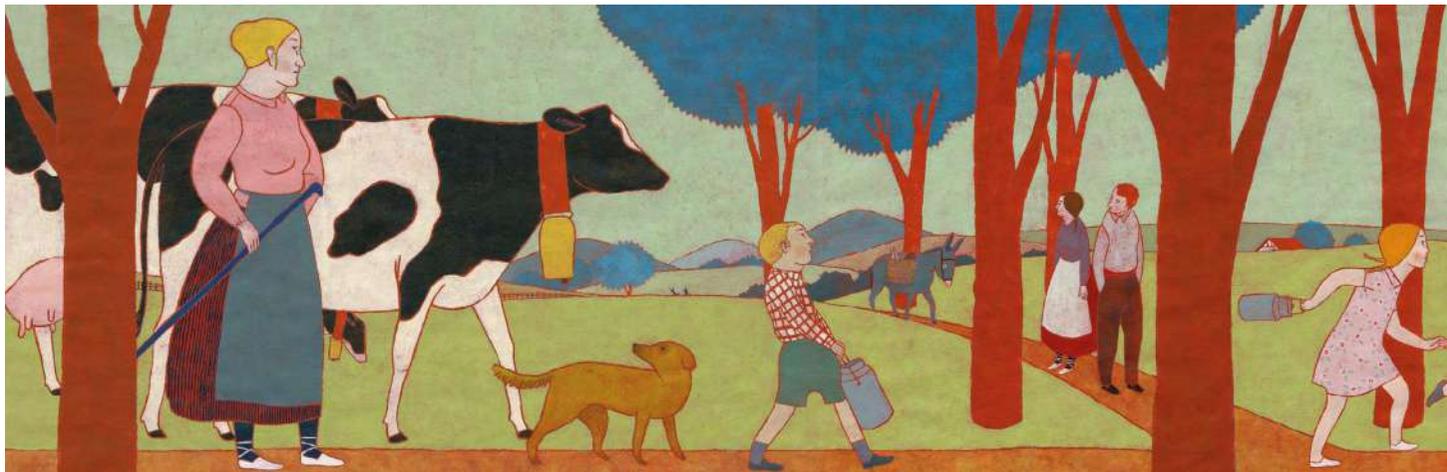
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EN EL BOSQUE
IN THE FOREST

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IPUIN GAIZTOAK**
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Gustavo Puerta Leisse
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YA SÉ VESTIRME SOLA
I ALREADY KNOW HOW
TO DRESS MYSELF
Elena Odriozola
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YO TENGO UN MOCO
I HAVE A SNOT
Elena Odriozola
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DE NATURA FLORUM
Clarice Lispector
Nórdica libros 2020
ISBN 978-84-18067-32-7

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I ALREADY KNOW HOW TO
PREPARE BREAKFAST
Elena Odriozola
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2020
ISBN 978-84-120418-8-0

**EUSKAL HERRIETAKO
LAMINEN IPUINAK**
CUENTOS DE LAMIAS
DEL PAÍS DE LOS VASCOS
Juan Kruz Igerabide
Denonartean 20120
ISBN 978-84-17940-36-2

EL HUEVITO
THE LITTLE EGG
Elena Odriozola
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2021
ISBN 978-84-122475-1-0



UR: Libro de lluvia

A watercolor illustration in shades of brown and tan. On the left side, there is a large, textured circular shape that resembles a profile of a person's head, facing right. Below this, there are several horizontal, brush-like strokes. To the right of these strokes, there is a thick, curved line that forms a semi-circle or a thick arch. The background is plain white.

Elena Odriozola “Bularretik Mintzora”



With the aim of developing a systematic campaign to encourage reading, “*BULARRETIK MINTZORA*” (FROM THE BREAST TO THE WORD, www.bularretikmintzora.org) was founded in 2007 as a result of a collaboration between the Basque Government’s Department of Culture and Galtzagorri Elkarte (Association for the Promotion of Children’s and Young Adults’ Literature in the

Basque Language), of which Elena Odriozola has been a member since it was established. This campaign was held in 21 locations in the Basque Autonomous Community and involved 56 schools, 542 teachers and 8,819 children.

The campaign was especially aimed at parents and teachers of boys and girls between the ages of 0 and 8. Their objective was to establish children’s reading habits in their natural surroundings: at school, at home, in the library, even in their local medical centre. In order to do this, the campaign offered different workshops, materials and activities to adults and educators who live around the children. The idea was to train the adults so they can in turn encourage the children’s reading habits.

All the printed material for this campaign was designed by Elena Odriozola: the logo, graphics, posters, pamphlets, bookmarks, backpacks and suitcases. As a basis for this campaign, Galtzagorri Elkarte published two CD-books containing Basque tales, lullabies, clapping games and poetry. The material was designed to transmit these elements of traditional Basque culture to parents and teach them how to tell stories, sing songs and recite poems to their children.

The Galtzagorri Association decided to cancel the Bularretik Mintzora systematized campaign in 2017 and make it the MINTZOAN KUX-KUX project.

This project pursues the same objectives as its predecessor, but this time, each town decides how to participate. Within this project bibliographies, reading clubs, workshops for mediators and dissemination materials, among other things, are offered...

It is carried out in various locations in the Basque Country and, in each case, it is the City Council that finances it. Elena Odriozola has been in charge of designing the logo and all the graphic design for this new project.





BULARRETIK MINTZORA
CD-book. Songs, plays, tales and poetrys.



Information
and poster.



**HAURRAREN GARAPENA
ETA KOMUNIKAZIO ILDOAK**

 **0 - 6**
hilabete

Haurrak gurasoen aurpegia, gorpuzta eta ahotsaren doimaa "badaki irakurtzen".
Begiak finkatzen ikasten du ahotsaren moralideari jarraituz.
Eskuari begiratzen dio.
Bere emozioak entonazioa eta bokalizazioen bidez adierazten ditu.

Haurra besotan, seaska kantak eta jolasak erabiltzen ditu.
Garrantzak: Erro eseri eta liburu bere aurtsan ireki: testua esan eta ilustrazio jakin bakoak erakutsi, objektuak erakutsi...

 **6 - 18**
hilabete

Haurra esertzen da, begirada zuzentzen du interes guinea bila.
Arazamatz nahi duena erakusten du.
Arazak, kantak eta abarrik oinez, mugiarako autonomia lortzen du.
Silaba errepikapenekin hasi eta lehenengo hitzak adieraziko ditu.
Liburuen orriak pasatzeko gai da eta begirada hainbat ilustrazioetan finkatzen du.

Errimak, seaska kantak eta esku jokoak erabiltzen ditu.
Garrantzak: Eguneroko gaiak eta pertsonaiek dituzten liburuak erakutsi: objektuak, pertsonak eta animalak erakutsi eta erakutsi...
Triketak, testua, dieberdinak eta besteak erakutsi dituzten liburuak erakutsi.

 **18**
hilabete
3
urte

Ziurtasunaz ibiltzen da oinez. Mugimenduari esker, nahi duena bereganatzeko independentzia lortzen du.
Bere burua identifikatzen du.
Hizkuntzaren bidez komunikatzen da, perpausa simple eta hainbat menpekokoaren bidez, nahi duena adierazten du.

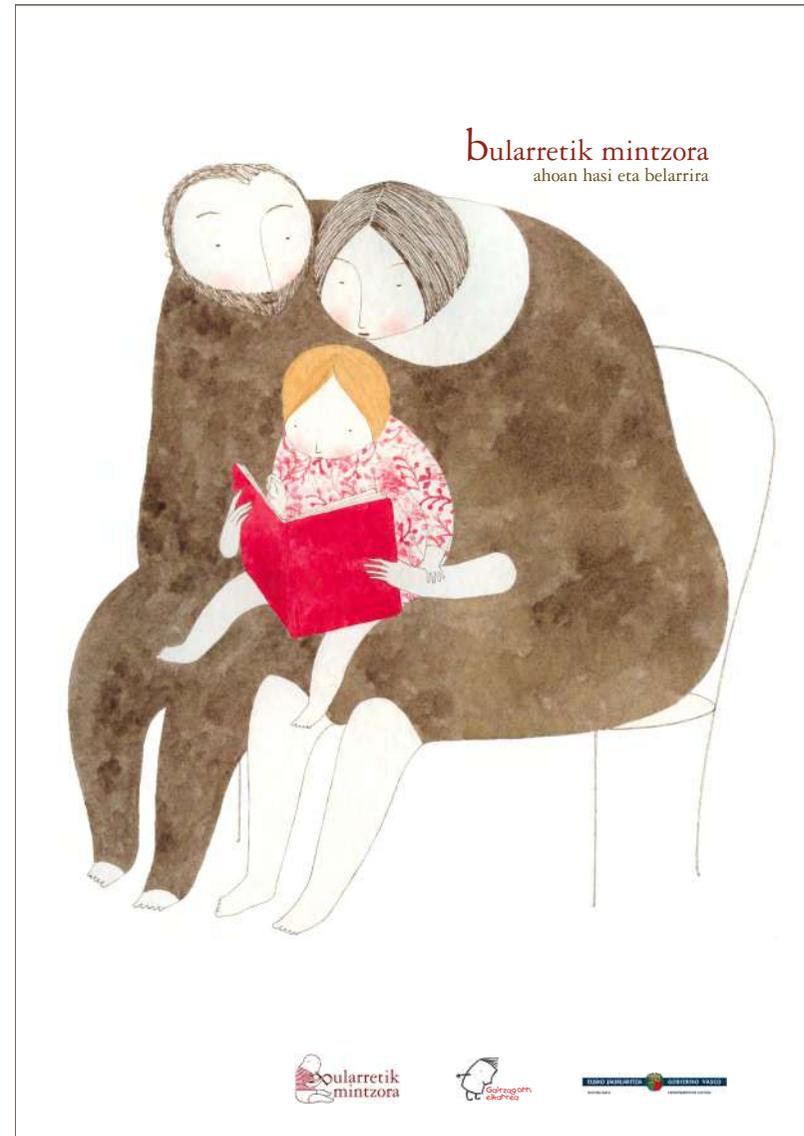
Une apropos bat sortu egunero haur literaturako balaboleak erabiltzeko.
Eguneroko erreferentziak dituzten ipuinak kontatu, ipuin klasikoek eskema erabiltzen.
Garrantzak: Errima eta poesia jokoak inkurri eta ikasi errepikatzeko.
Errima dutes ipuinak behin eta berri errepikatu eta jokoak egin.
Album ilustratuak erabili; irudietatik abiatu testu silabata eta alderantziz.
Irakurketa ohiturak sustatu etxean.

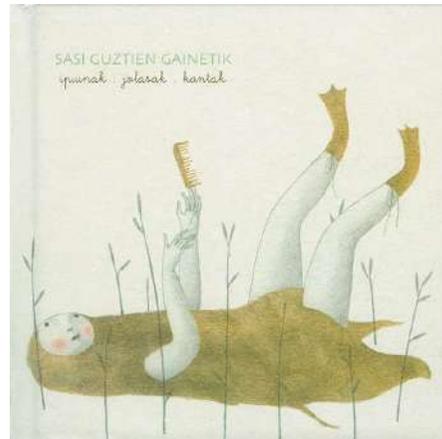
 **3 - 6**
urte

Hiztegia zabalduta eta ikasteko zaletasuna erakusten du.
Hizki eta zenbaki jolasak ditu gustuko, errimak eta bestelako hitz jokoak modu espontaneo baten erabiltzen ditu.
Hizkuntzaren ezaugarri manipulatu eta umorea dastatzen hasten da.
Idazkeran trebatzen hasten da, oraindik ez nahikoa testu luze bat ulertzeko.
Istorio luzeak maite ditu eta bere liburuak aukeratzen ditu.
Behin eta berri errepikatzea nahi izaten du gustuko ipuinak.

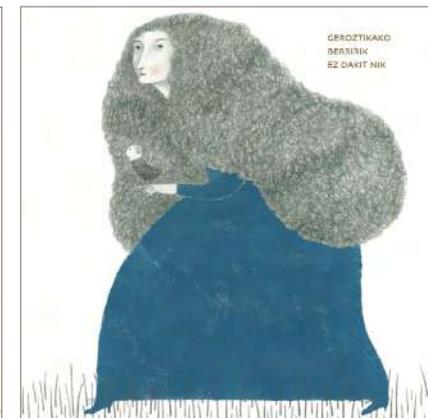
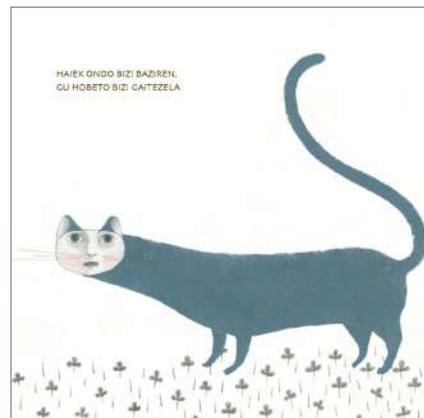
Oenki irakurri eta kontatzeko ohiturarekin jarraitu.
Etxean irakurketa denborak sortu, norberak bere testuak irakurtzeko.
Liburu egokia aukeratu haurren eta gurasoen gustuko, irakurketa partekatzeko.
Garrantzak: Tradizioak ipuinak, amandre ipuinak, alegiak, poesia, egunerokotasunaren gusurten dira ipuinak...





SASI GUZTIEN GAINETIK
CD-book. Songs, plays, tales and poetrys.





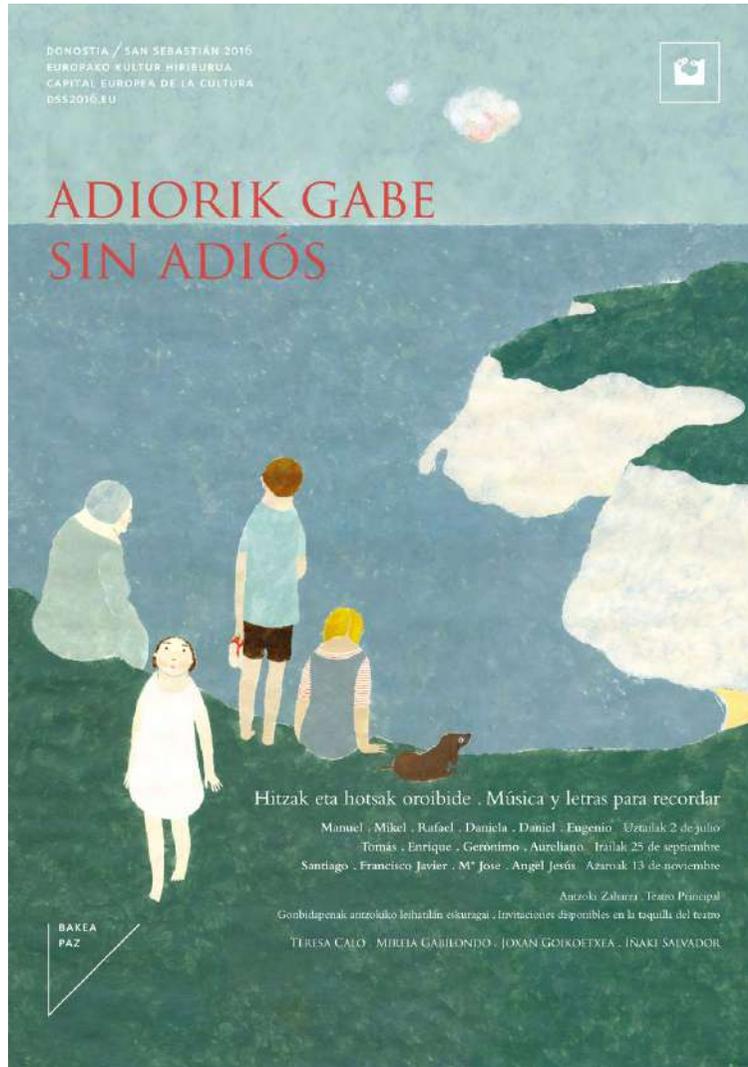
Books guide and information about the programme.



Elena Odriozola Some Poster



“ADIORIK GABE” SIN ADIÓS
(NO GOODBYE)



CUANDO EL LIBRO ERA UN BOSQUE
WHEN THE BOOK WAS A FOREST



DÍA DE LA BIBLIOTECA
LIBRARY DAY



DÍA DE LA BIBLIOTECA

Uno luciferago es una isla perdida en la noche más densa. Cien luciferagos, una correlación matemática que marca el viento hacia otros universos. Así, con esa vibración de luz, se inspiran los libros que moran en las bibliotecas. Son caracoles fosforescentes que encienden los sueños y recomponen los corazones grises hasta hacerlos recolorar su color rojo brillante. Cualquier individuo que produce el síndrome del corazón gris, debería pensarse en manos de un experto y visitar una biblioteca.

Para escribir un libro, además de hacer melodías con las palabras hay que ser uno desorganizado a un loco. Un amado, una redacción descontrolada. Lleva un collar de lentejas, otro de arroz y los pelos de punta. Una creta como las que lucen los cocodrilos sería un penicilo muy interesante para un escritor. Sólo las mentes más desorganizadas son aptas para escribir libros. Pero para custodiarlos no es suficiente con tener un escritorio en los coblos celestiales. Es indispensable ser de hueso. Un excremento. Las bibliotecas albergan seres con antenas gráficas, cavilosa milimétrica que memorizan miles rebuscadas, reibonizantes, comparadas. Las personas que custodian libros siempre me han parecido o ratos singulares. Están dotadas de extremidades reticadas que estiran y estiran hasta alcanzar aquel volumen al que parecen imposible acceder. Y a continuación, como si nada, se recomponen y todo vuelve a su posición natural. Parecen seres humanos, pero a poco que los observas percibidas que no son de aquí. Uno de los cosas que más me fascina de las bibliotecarias es su cenitral. Me parecen tan fijas! Los libros fabrican pensamientos. Pasar tantas horas dentro de una factoría de ideas es bueno para tener un corazón rojo y brillante y una cabeza repleta de planetas fantásticos.

Alguien me ha contado que el 24 de octubre es el Día de las Bibliotecas. Sería genial organizar una fiesta con corrilos y piqueos de jabón. Celebrarlo por todo el mundo. Me encantaría sentarme frente al escritorio con el perfume de algún libro, sentarme en la mesa de una biblioteca de la ciudad donde vivo y esperar a que lean o visiten. En las bibliotecas puedes ser quien tú quieras. Desde Mary Poppins hasta Marilín, Araya, Dóculo o incluso Pippilotta Fiksdalová Rullgärdena Knästyrtta Eldmadrötar Lögmungu. Pueden ponerle baba de perro, plumas, zarcos y zarcos. Sombrazos! Eso sí! Imagino a una pesadilla bastante asustadiza o en desesperación, atado por las colinas y torres de su universo.

—Sombrazo loco, ¿qué fiesta más maravillosa! Sería tan amable de servirme una taza de té!

Yo se la serviré con mucho gusto, poniendo cuidado muy refinado, y luego ambas haremos ruido al tragar. Sonaría algo parecido a gup gup gup. Y antes de que nos dese tiempo de tomar a ver de forma desenfrenada, aparecerá el bibliotecario, como surge de la nada, que para eso posee la facultad de materializarse delante de ti en el momento más inoportuno, y esa subterfuga de que las bibliotecas no son meras salas. Hay que reconocer que son ómnibus custodiando libros. Entran y salen con el corazón rojo y brillante. Qué cosa tan extraordinaria. ¡Feliz Día de las Bibliotecas!

24 DE OCTUBRE DE 2016



POESÍA ILUSTRADA
ILLUSTRATED POETRY

POESÍA ILUSTRADA

Abril 2015 / Biblioteca Pública de Valladolid / Plaza de la Trinidad, 2 - Valladolid

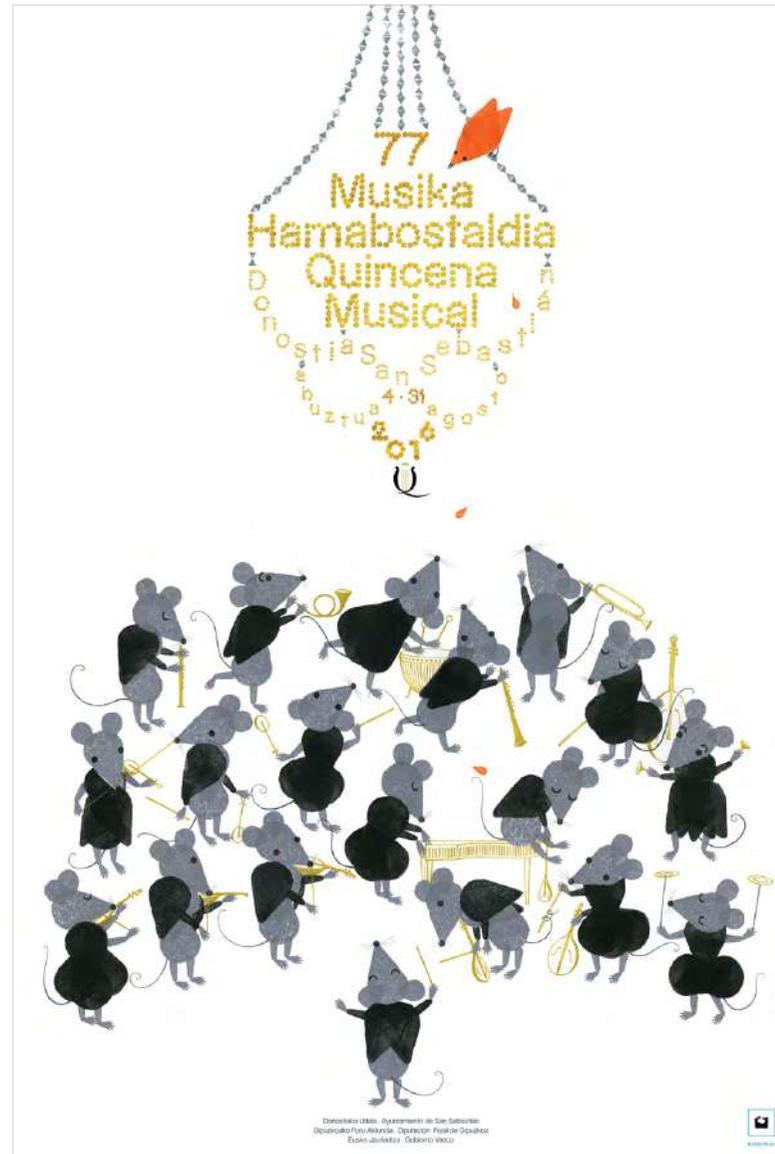


ACTIVIDADES MASTERCLASS ADULTOS / Taller de ELENA ODRIEZOLA para ilustradores (profesionales y aficionados) / 10 de abril, de 17 a 21 horas / 15 plazas. Inscripción de forma presencial en el mostrador de información desde el día 6 de abril TALLER INFANTIL con ADOLFO SERRA / 11 de abril, de 11.30 a 13.30 horas / A partir de 6 años / 12 plazas. Inscripción previa desde el 6 de abril en Sala Infantil.



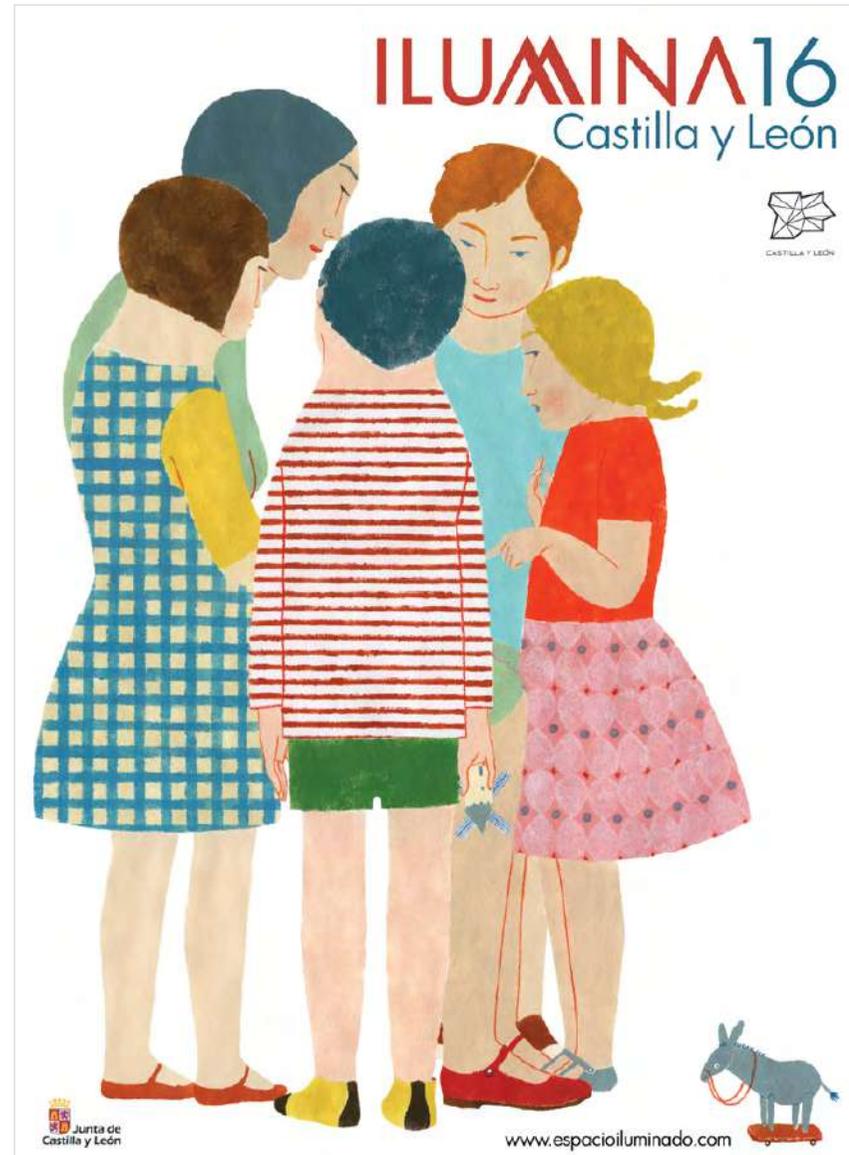
77 QUINCENA MUSICAL DE DONOSTIA
77TH MUSICAL FORTNIGHT OF DONOSTIA

[View on line](#)



ILUMINA

ILUMINA is the reading and book promotion programme organised by the Government of Castile and León's Department of Culture at book fairs, libraries and other similar forums in the region. Gatherings and workshops with illustrators, authors, storytellers, magicians and publishers provide an opportunity for readers and creators to share spaces and experiences.



MUJERES Y EL MAR
WOMEN AND THE SEA

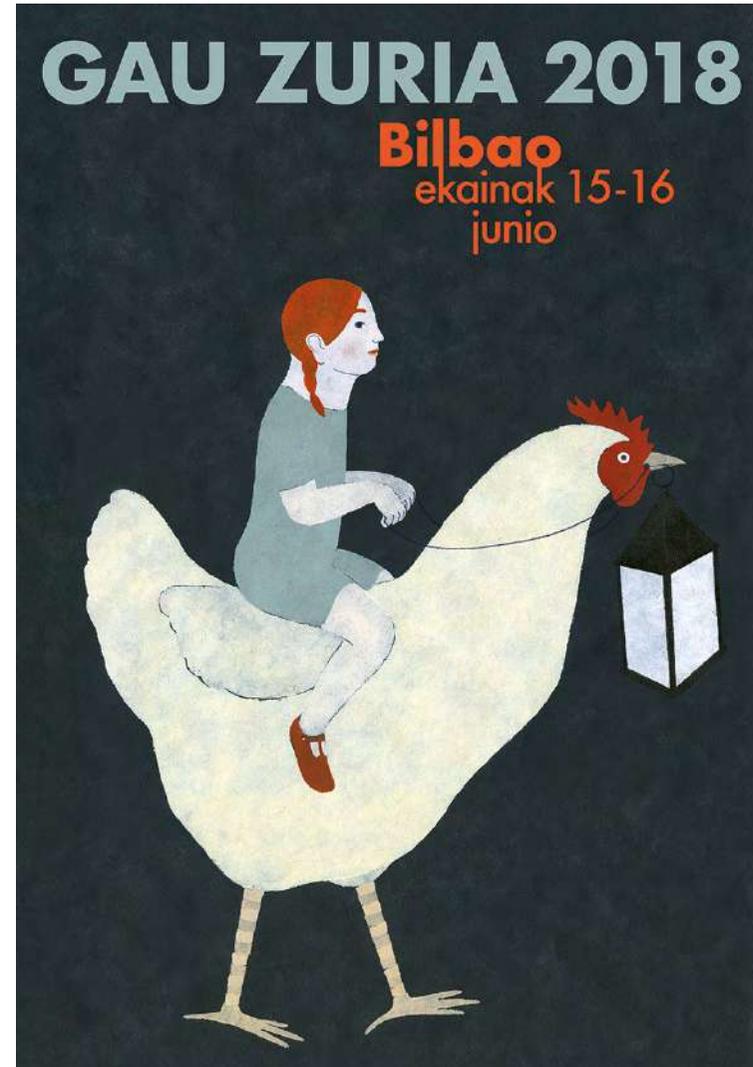
[View on line](#)



GAU ZURIA
WHITE NIGHT



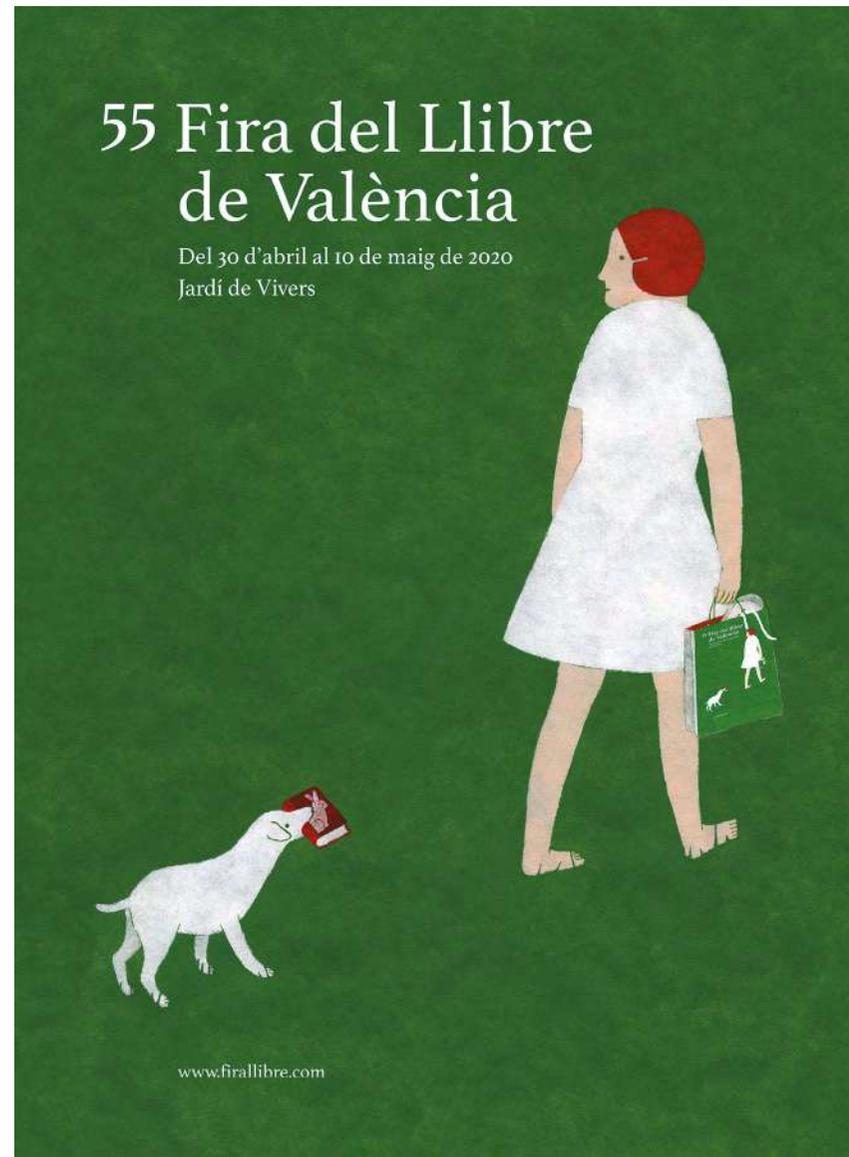
GAU ZURIA
WHITE NIGHT



CUÉNTALO (FESTIVAL DE NARATIVAS)
TELL IT (FESTIVAL OF NARATIVES)



55 FIRA DEL LLIBRE DE VALÈNCIA
55 VALENCIA BOOK FAIR

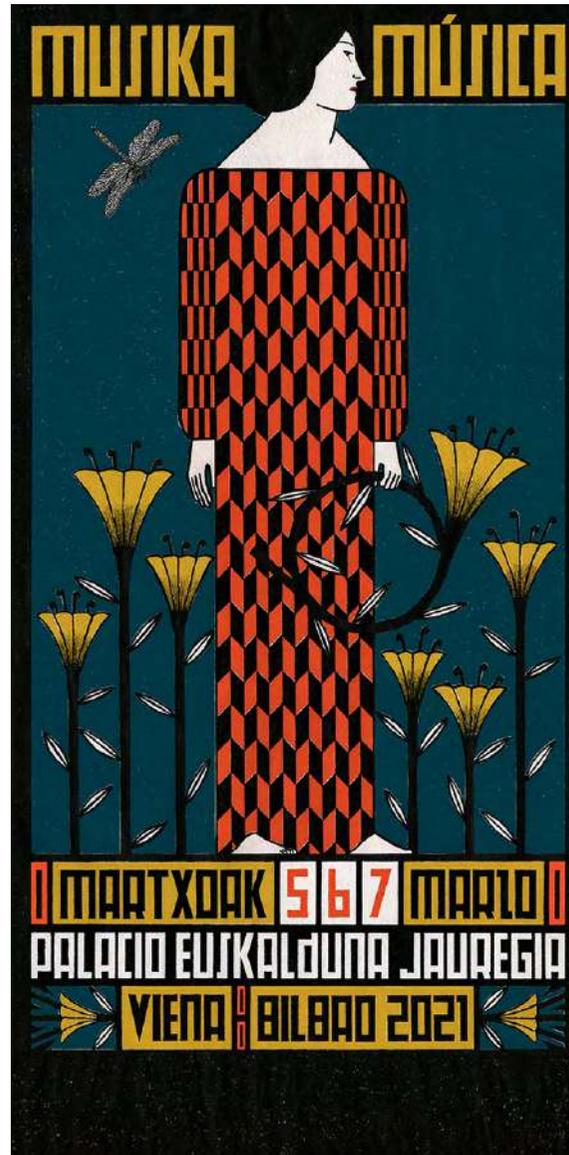


CAMPAÑA *ESKERRIK ASKO DONOSTIA*
THANK YOU DONOSTIA

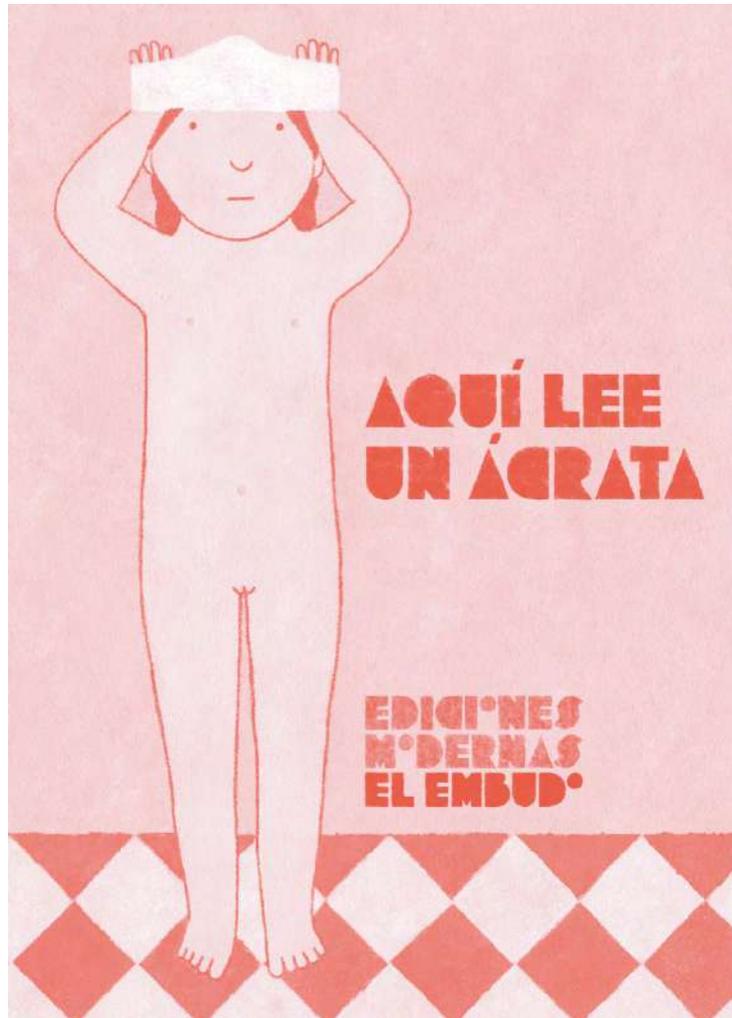


FESTIVAL MUAIKA MÚSICA
MUSIKA MÚSICA FESTIVAL

Elena Odriozola Some Poster



SERIGRAFÍAS PARA EDICIONES MODERNAS EL EMBUDO
SCREEN PRINTINGS FOR EDICIONES MODERNAS EL EMBUDO



Elena Odriozola Exhibitions



Image from "txoritxoak" exhibition catalogue

TXORITXOAK

Elena has taken part in some individual and collective exhibitions. In 2009 she did an individual one named “txoritxoak”(little birds in basque language), in San Sebastián.

The sculptor Javier Malavia made the birds and Juanjo Elola the wood work. All designed and painted by her. The writer Alejandro Fernández gave them a history.

The birds were exactly like she thought.

[View on line](#)



1 Pájaro Bobo Noruego, 2 Ruiseñor García, 3 Pájaro nublado, 4 Pájaro Pillo, 5 Pájaro Bufón, 6 Chin Pón, 7 Chorlito del mediterráneo, 8 Ave Rapazzzzzz, 9 Ave César, 10 Pájaro Incógnita, 11 Jilguero de casa ajena, 12 Plumífero, 13 Pío XIII, 14 Pájaro en mano, 15 Rara Avis.

TXORITXOAK



TXORITXOAK



TXORITXOAK



LAS MUJERES Y EL MAR
WOMEN AND THE SEA

January to November, 2016

This exhibition of own production reveals to the general public the relationship that women have had with the sea throughout history without forgetting the place they occupied since ancient times in the imaginary and mythology of the maritime world. The exhibition offers an approach to the subject from a global perspective, although it deals with the Basque coastal space.

Elena Odriozola is the author of the graphic design of the exhibition.



Mujeres y barcos.
(Women and ships).

LAS MUJERES Y EL MAR
WOMEN AND THE SEA

El trabajo portuario: bateleras,
cargueras y sirgueras.
(Work in the Port: Boatwomen
and Female Stevedores and
Barge-Pullers)

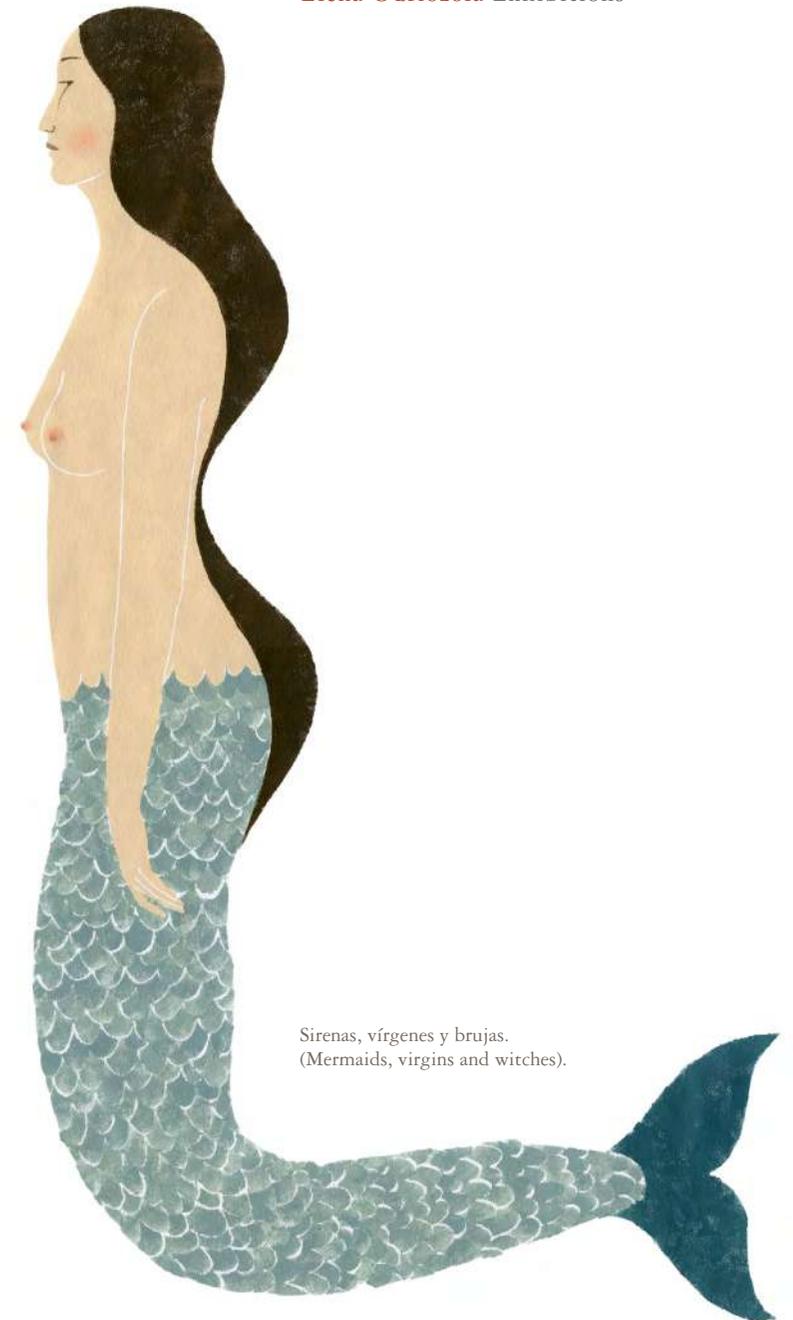


En torno a la pesca.
(Around fishing).

LAS MUJERES Y EL MAR
WOMEN AND THE SEA



Piratas y corsarias.
(Pirates and corsairs).

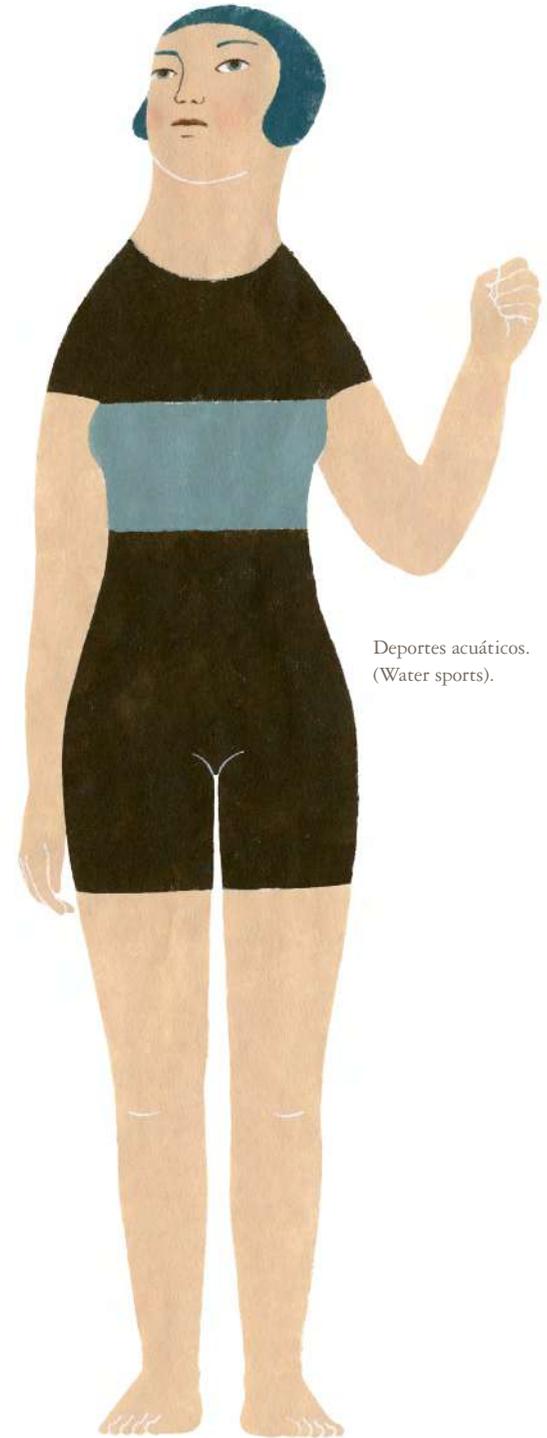


Sirenas, vírgenes y brujas.
(Mermaids, virgins and witches).

LAS MUJERES Y EL MAR
WOMEN AND THE SEA



Baños de Ola.
(Wave Baths).



Deportes acuáticos.
(Water sports).

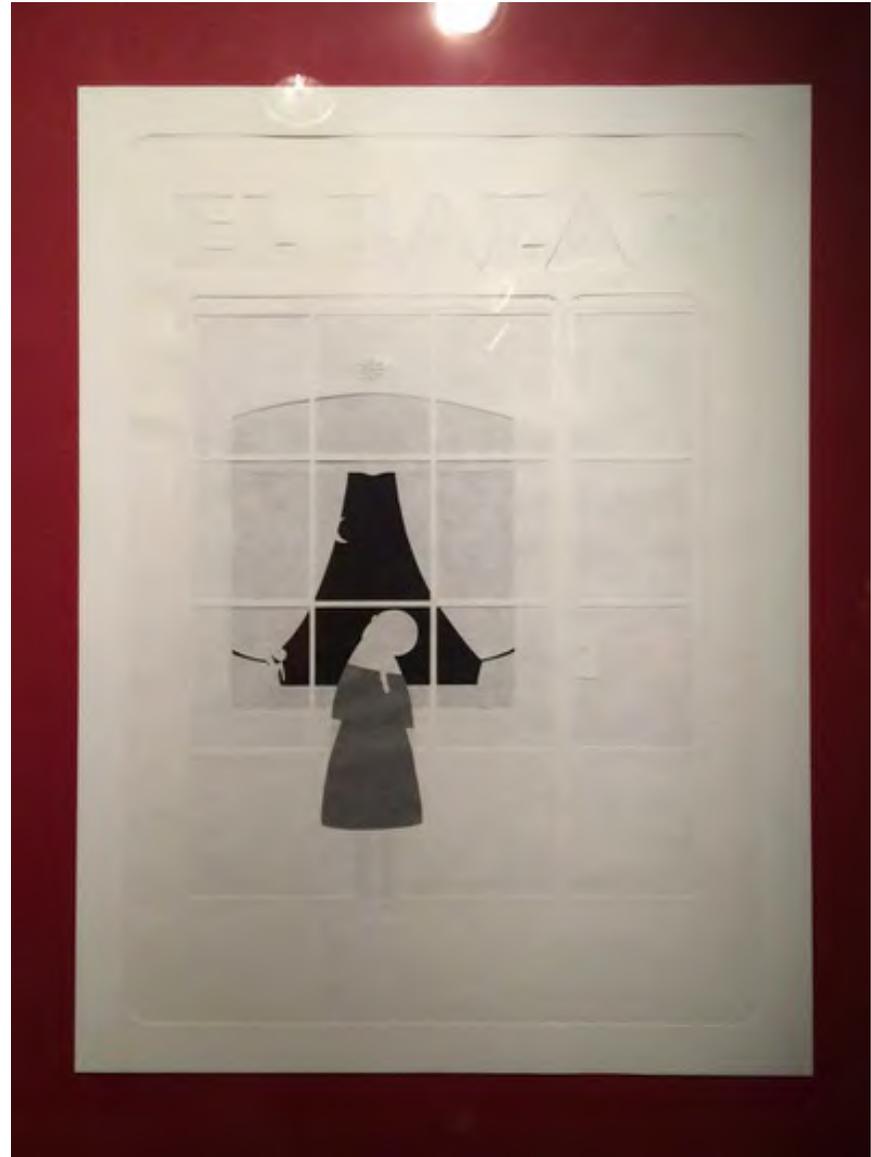
EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR

Bookshop "Panta Rhei", 2015

Presents a series of illustrations under the title "BAZAR - Catalog of toys".



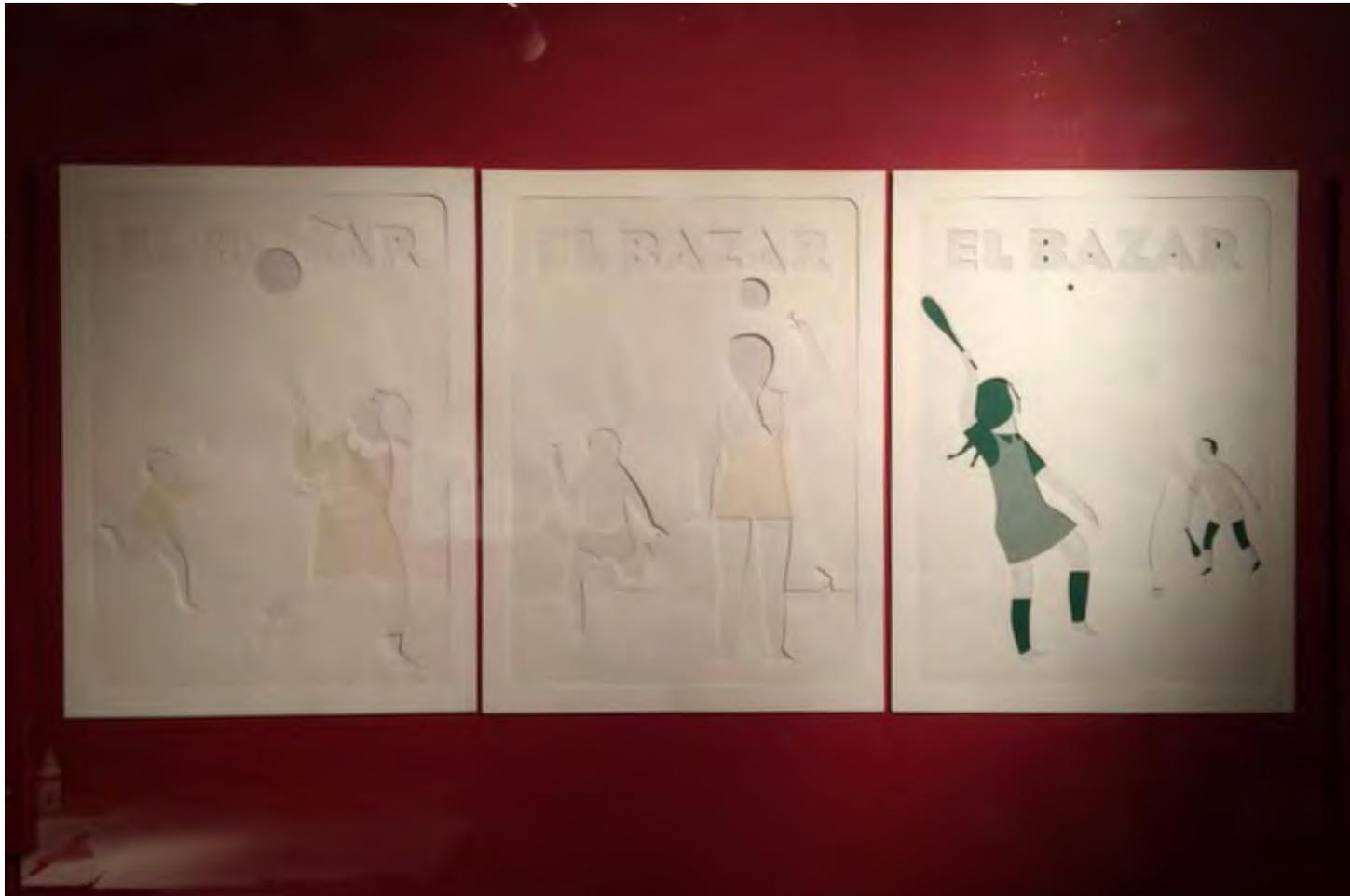
EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR



EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR - CATALOG OF TOYS



EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR



EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR



EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR



*CAPAS, MANCHAS, TEATRILLOS, MOVIMIENTOS,
SILUETAS, TIRAS Y DEMÁS TRASTOS*
LAYERS, SMUDGES, PUPPET THEATRES, MOVEMENTS,
SILHOUETTES, STRIPS AND PARAPHERNALIA.

Valladolid 2016.

A journey through her entire career.



*CAPAS, MANCHAS, TEATRILLOS, MOVIMIENTOS,
SILUETAS, TIRAS Y DEMÁS TRASTOS*
LAYERS, SMUDGES, PUPPET THEATRES, MOVEMENTS,
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SILUETAS, TIRAS Y DEMÁS TRASTOS*
LAYERS, SMUDGES, PUPPET THEATRES, MOVEMENTS,
SILHOUETTES, STRIPS AND PARAPHERNALIA.



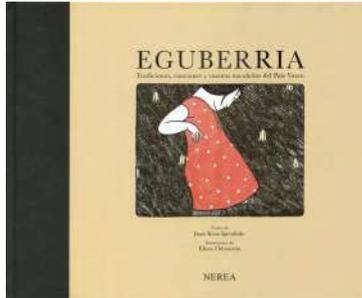
Elena Odriozola Selected Books



Selected Book for Jury

Elena Odriozola Selected Books

1. EGUERRIA



PUBLISHING DETAILS:

“Eguberría: 24 ohitura, kantu eta istorio”

Nerea, 2012. pp.76

ISBN: 978-84-15042-55-6

Rights sold: Nerea (Spanish)

EXCERPT: Christmas

SYNOPSIS:

The book gathers old and new habits linked to Christmas. The narrator is the granddaughter and she is busy making the Christmas preparations together with her grandmother; at the same time, the elderly woman tells the little girl all kinds of tales and superstitions, and they sing Christmas carols together. This book won the National Prize of the Spanish Ministry of Culture for best book published in the category of books for children and young people in 2013.

Granny pointed to the horizon and whispered an old saying in my ear: “The white Christmas sun: a candle about to go out”.

My bedroom window faces south. The Christmas sun gently knocks on the window shivering with cold. I let it in and it lies down on the bed sweetly, just like a newborn child. Granny showed me how to do that.

Granny knows lots about Astronomy, because she’s got a book about the stars and planets and because she’s spent a long time looking at the sky; you see, she’s very old. She told me the Christmas sun rises above the horizon as if it were lying down, like a fire about to go out.

And she told me how when she was a child they used to light a big bonfire on the farm to warm up the sun and revive it. And this is what they used to shout: “The old Sun is dead. The new Sun has been born”.

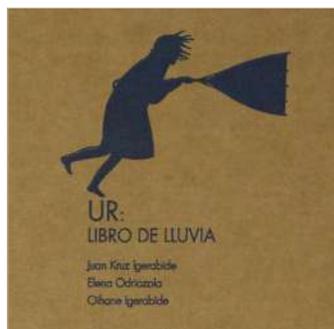
And I’ve been watching and it’s absolutely true: on those days the sun goes right down low, as if were dead.

[Book in Spanish](#)



Selected Book for Jury

2. UR: LIBRO DE LLUVIA (UR: BOOK OF RAIN)



PUBLISHING DETAILS:

“Ur: Euriaren liburua”

Juan Kruz Igerabide

Denonartean 2014

ISBN 978-84-15756-48-4

SYNOPSIS:

These texts were created by playing with memories of a rainy childhood. Elena's illustrations were created by playing with rain and the texts. Oihane's music was created by playing with melody, the rain and words. And these recorded recitals were created at a party with friends who got together to play with the melodies and the words.

This box of surprises is an invitation to play with the rain, an invitation to the game of life which rains down on the world and carries us to its sea. Many children, parents and friends have spent several enjoyable afternoons recording the texts, repeating them until we were satisfied, experiencing the emotion of each word.

THE GAME OF LISTENING AND READING:

WITH THE FAMILY, IN THE CLASSROOM

Depending on the child's age and their reading speed, they can start by just listening to the recording and then by listening again and following the text with their eyes. Younger readers can do it in parts or they can read poems that are easy for them before gradually increasing the level of difficulty. According to some pedagogical experts, following the text with their eyes while listening to the recording is one of the best exercises to improve reading comprehension. But most importantly, it is a great way to enjoy listening and reading in unison.

ARTISTIC GAMES:

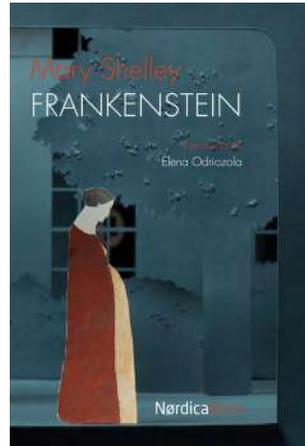
UR: LIBRO DE LLUVIA (BOOK OF RAIN)

The diverse types of rain that Elena Odriozola has designed, from the lightest drizzle to the heaviest downpour, can be combined with one another so that each reader can create different rains. They can superimpose them or place them over the scenes of the characters in each series of silhouettes so that the scene takes place under the rain of their choice. There are multiple possible combinations to play with the images. Apart from all this material, you can create your own book of rain using some or all of the material in the box. You can also invent your own texts, illustrations and melodies.

[Book 1](#) [Book 2](#) [Book 3](#)



3. FRANKENSTEIN



PUBLISHING DETAILS:

“Frankenstein”

Mary Shelley

Nórdica libros 2013

ISBN 978-84-15717-60-7

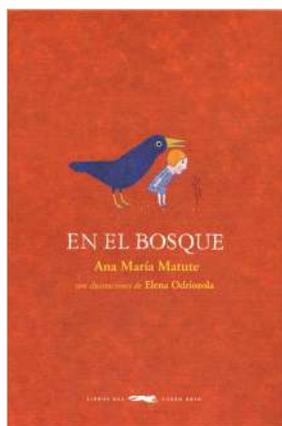
SYNOPSIS:

Mary Shelley’s *FRANKENSTEIN* in an edition notable for the illustrations by Spanish illustrator Elena Odriozola. Using a type of paper puppet theatre placed at the beginning of the book, a pregnant woman wanders around a desolate stage and the curtain opens and closes until we are allowed to catch a glimpse of one of the most monstrous creatures in literature.

[Watch video](#)



4. EN EL BOSQUE
(IN THE FOREST)



PUBLISHING DETAILS:

“In the forest”

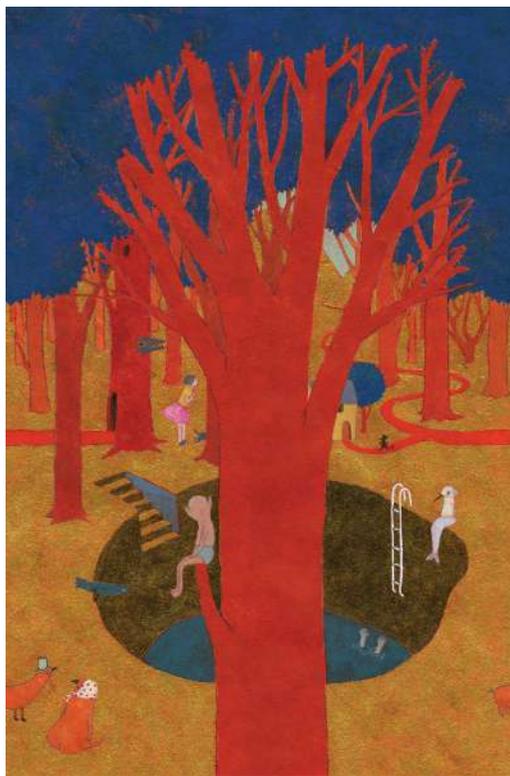
Ana María Matute and Elena Odriozola

Zorro Rojo 2018

ISBN-10: 8494773437

SYNOPSIS:

This edition includes a booklet with the text “In the forest”, by Ana María Matute (extracted from the speech on the occasion of its entry into the Royal Spanish Academia), and a collection of nine illustrated cards, which combined at random and arranged in a row, they allow to create more than three hundred thousand scenes and infinite stories within the same landscape: the forest. An interactive pastime inspired by the popular nineteenth-century mirioramas.

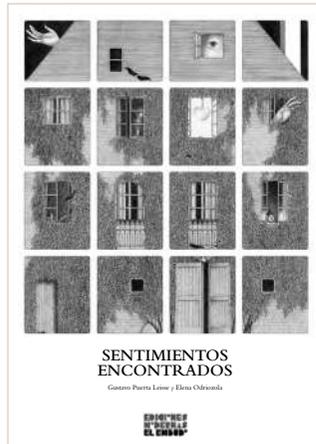


[Book in Spanish](#)

Selected Book for Jury

Elena Odriozola Selected Books

5. SENTIMIENTOS ENCONTRADOS (DISCOVERED FEELINGS)



SENTIMIENTOS ENCONTRADOS (DISCOVERED FEELINGS) is a book that talks about feelings and emotions, and for that it uses a house and its inhabitants. It consists of sixteen full-page illustrations in which the longitudinal section of a house is represented. In each one of them we can observe the activities carried out by its seven human inhabitants (there are also animals), in the four floors that make it up. In this way, when we see a page individually, we participate in the story that is narrated in it. But we can also turn the pages and follow the story of a character and its evolution throughout

the book. In addition to reading the page and the sequence, the book enables combinatorial reading since each page is divided into five strips (four dedicated to the illustration and one to the text) individually punched in such a way that the sixteen illustrations that make up the first floor can be combined with any of the sixteen illustrations that make up the second floor and with any of the sixteen illustrations that make up the third floor and with any of the sixteen illustrations that make up the fourth floor and with any of the sixteen texts. Allowing a total of 1,048,576 possible combinations.

PUBLISHING DETAILS:

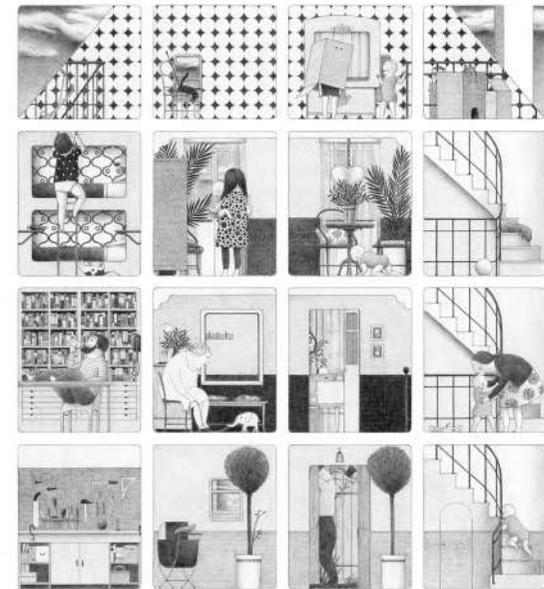
“Discovered feelings”

Gustavo Puerta Leisse and
Elena Odriozola

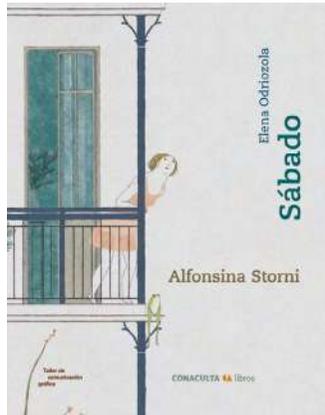
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo



[Book in Spanish](#)



6. SÁBADO
(SATURDAY)



PUBLISHING DETAILS:

“Sábado”

Alfonsina Storni

Taller de comunicación gráfica 2012

ISBN 978-607-774-612-6

SATURDAY

- P. 3 I arose early and walked barefoot through the hallways:
- P. 4 I went down to the gardens and kissed the plants.
- P. 5 I absorbed the clean vapours of the earth, stretched out on the grass;
- P. 6 I bathed in the spring that green canna lilies encircle.
- P. 7 Later,
wet with water,
I combed my hair,
perfumed my hands
with odorous juice
of Arabian jasmine.
- P. 8 Fine, prissy herons from my skirt stole golden crumbs.
- P. 9 Then I put on a clarion dress lighter than gauze itself.
- P. 10 With a light jump
I carried to the vestibule
my straw chair.
Fixed on the gate
my eyes remained
fixed on the gate.
- P. 11 The clock told me: ten in the morning.
Inside a sound of crockery and cut glass:
dining room in shadow;
hands preparing tablecloths.
- P. 12 Outside, sun like I have never seen on the white marble of the steps.
Fixed on the gate my eyes stayed, fixed.
- P. 13 I waited for you.

[Book in Spanish](#)

[Book in English](#)



De un árbol ligero
lívelo como un árbol
en el árbol de papá
fija en la tierra
sin que quedara,
fija en la tierra.

El reloj me dijo que de la mañana.
Adentro un sonido de loza y cristales
comedor en sombra,
manos que preparaban mantel.

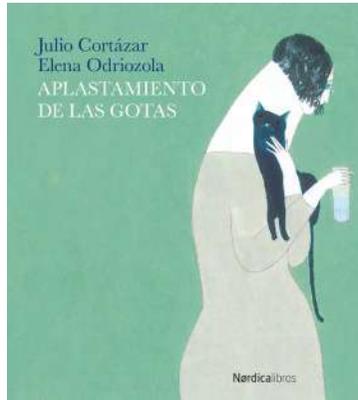


Adentro, un sonido de loza y cristales
fija en la tierra, manos que preparan.

El espejo.



7. APLASTAMIENTO DE LAS GOTAS
(THE SMASHING OF THE RAIN DROPS)



PUBLISHING DETAILS:
“Aplastamiento de las gotas”
Julio Cortázar
Nórdica Libros, S.L. 2016.
ISBN: 978-84-15042-55-6

THE SMASHING OF THE RAINDROPS

- P. 4 I don't know, look at that rain. It's terrible.
- P. 5 It is raining non-stop, dense and grey outside, with big fat hard drops against the balcony
- P. 6 that audibly splash and smash like slaps, one after the other, how tiresome.
- P. 7 Here comes a droplet at the top of the window frame;
- P. 8 it hangs on, quivering against the sky, which fragments it into a thousand dulled sparkles, it grows and wobbles,
- P. 9 it is about to fall but does not, it does not fall still. It is hanging on by all its claws,
- P. 10 it does not want to fall and one can see how it grips with its teeth while its belly grows;
- P. 11 now it is a huge, pregnant drop hanging majestically,
- P. 12 And suddenly, plop, there it goes, splash, nothing, slime on the marble.
- P. 13 But there are some that commit suicide and give themselves up immediately, they appear on the frame and throw themselves down there and then;
- P. 14 it seems as if I see the vibration of the leap, their little legs pushing them off
- P. 15 and the cry which intoxicates them in the nothing of falling and annihilating themselves.
- P. 16 Sad drops, round, innocent drops.
- P. 17 Goodbye drops, goodbye.

[Book in Spanish](#) [Book in English](#)



8. LA PRINCESA Y EL GUISANTE (THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA)



PUBLISHING DETAILS:

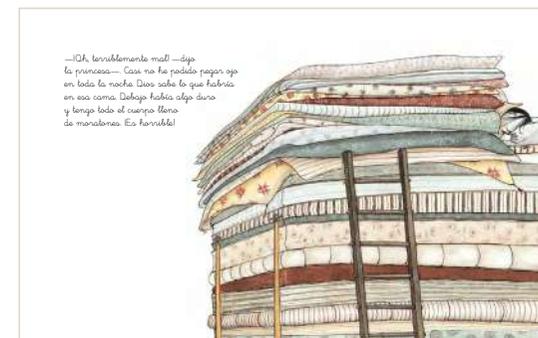
“Prindsessen paa Ærten”
Hans Christian Andersen
Anaya 2003
ISBN 978-84-667-2551-4

SYNOPSIS:

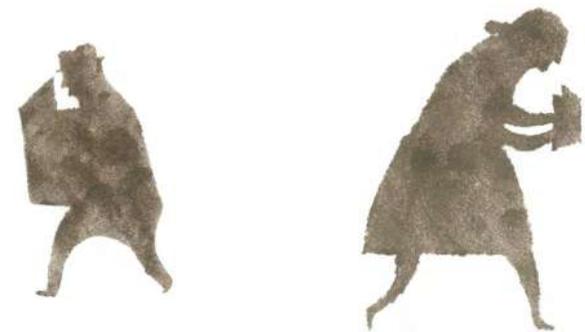
Once upon a time there was a prince who travelled the world in search of a true princess. One night, in the middle of a tremendous storm, a young woman knocked at the palace door. Could she be a real princess?

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA is a classic story written by the marvellous Hans Christian Andersen.

[Book in Spanish](#)



Elena Odriozola Interviews



SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN
ILLUSTRATOR.
ELENA ODRIOZOLA'S CAREER PATH.

CLIJ Magazine. N° 216. Junio 2008.

Author: Pep Molist

Elena Odriozola is undoubtedly one of the most individual illustrators in the field of children's book illustration. In this study of her work, Pep Molist reveals the key aspects of her style: the characters' bodies and faces as the essential elements of telling any story; the lack of superfluous details; the ability to exploit the relationship between the figures and their backgrounds; the restricted use or sometimes complete lack of exteriors and landscapes; and her skill in creating an atmosphere....



Picture caption Elena Odriozola, *Peter Pan*, Edebé, 2006

Ever since I first saw her illustrated books, I have been captivated by the work of Elena Odriozola and enchanted by her capacity for suggestion, her balanced compositions and her ability to create spaces by using the smallest features. Sometimes an article is the best excuse to delve into a subject that has aroused your curiosity. After reviewing her bibliography and choosing the most important works, and having captured the overall vision of her work, I decided to contact her to find out more about how she creates the protagonists of her illustrations: the characters.

Childhood, the Beginnings of an Illustrator

Elena Odriozola Belastegui was born in San Sebastian in 1967. She states that she owes a lot to the seven years she spent working in advertising, but she also expresses gratitude to her father. Although he was not involved in drawing professionally, he was a good artist, and what has stuck in her memory is that during her childhood there was never a lack of notebooks or drawing materials. Her grandfather was also an artist, as well as owning a company which sold paint.

Her childhood was also marked by the number of books in the house and by her great-aunt, who told her stories every night. She remembers a book of short stories in English that she would look at longingly while getting dressed, gazing at princesses, witches and fairies, who would later become regular features in her illustrations.

Elena also talks of the summers in her childhood that she spent in Baztan, a valley to the north of Navarre, a beautiful natural and human landscape that somehow influenced her way of seeing the world.

Education as an Illustrator

When she was 13 years old her father signed her up for drawing classes in the studio of sculptor

José Zugazti. While she was at secondary school, Elena spent several years studying with the sculptor, from whom she learned a great deal. When she finished her final exams she wanted to study architecture, but left the course after finding it too challenging. She also abandoned her studies in Fine Arts as she disliked the teaching style, and ended up studying Art and Decoration by a process of elimination. In June 1989 she finished her university studies and in September she began working at an advertising agency, first as a layout artist and later as an art director in the agencies Publis and MAR. Meanwhile, a colleague introduced her to the publishing house Elkar, for whom she illustrated textbooks.

Seven years later, when the agency she was working in closed down, Elena was not at all upset. She could see her future clearly. By that time she had already published two books and decided not to look for work. Her career evolved naturally. "It has always been that way," Elena says. The phone calls started to come in and her illustrations began to be seen in book shops, where they received more and more recognition. And so it has continued to the present day.

Her Work as an Illustrator

In terms of her idols, Elena Odriozola has nothing but admiration for Lisbeth Zwerger ("I really like her work for a reason that I cannot put my finger on; it gives me a strange feeling in my stomach," she writes in an article on Zwerger in the 75/76 edition of Peonza magazine). She is also drawn to the work of Arthur Rackham, Gabrielle Vincent and Sempé, and to the atmospheres created by the artists Carl Larsson and Gustav Klimt.

Elena Odriozola draws what she likes the most, drawing for herself rather than thinking about the reader. When she sees her illustrations, she always



thinks she could do better. She doesn't overthink things. She does her research, although not too much, and works as she goes. She walks around, travels and lives without a sketchbook at hand. While she has many, she does not dare to show them. Elena keeps everything in her head. Her work in advertising has helped her to interpret the text, to see what it suggests. When she has a structure in mind she starts to draw and she is not fond of repeating herself. She uses pencil, watercolours and inks in flat colours. Her computer is only used for scanning and formatting. She has no desire to use it for illustration.

Playing with the white space on the paper is increasingly appealing: “Adding anything else is too much.” When she reads a text, she immediately sees the character in her head, but she finds it difficult to talk about them, although many critics often use the same adjectives when talking about her illustrating style.

“I want to express feelings and emotions, sadness and joy, all with the absolute minimum. With a look, with gestures, with postures... That’s the most important thing.” A simple and eloquent declaration of her principles.

Six Characters in Search of an Illustrator

When looking closely at Elena Odriozola’s work, and when talking to her, one has the feeling that her characters have a life of their own. There are so many of them and they are so diverse that, out of context, they could fill the walls of a museum with a world bursting with people and life. Some of them have names, but many do not. Most of them show the artist’s signature style. Sometimes they move inscrutably and slowly, while others are expressive and quick. They gaze out with round eyes, showing kindness or surprise, or they simply pose, neither looking at us nor showing us anything, but suggesting an infinite range of feeling. And there are many more characters who constantly call out to be featured in their own story. Once drawn, the characters embark on dramas, adventures and joyful moments of their own, even though there is a story that tries to determine their destiny.

«“DIRECTOR. But what do you people want here?
FATHER. We just want to live, sir!
DIRECTOR. [Ironically] For eternity?
FATHER. No, sir. But for a moment at least.
In you.”»

(From *Seis personajes en busca de autor* {Six Characters in Search of an Author} by Luigi Pirandello)

Six characters in search of an illustrator, six types of character – in reference to Pirandello’s work – to define the illustrator’s approach to illustration and style over time. Let us delve into the most important works for each type of character and analyse the way Odriozola communicates meaning through her characters.

«“Yet if the characters are alive, really alive, for their author, he does nothing but observe the words and gestures they suggest to him; he needs to accept them as they want themselves to be.”» (From *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.)

• Animals

From *Abatetxoa eta sabats negartia* (The Duckling and the Weeping Willow) to *The Story of Noah* by way of *Diez amigos* (Ten Friends) and *Dindirri*.

Elena Odriozola began her career as an illustrator with two books featuring animals as the main characters: a robin in *Zergatik ez du kantatzen txantxangorriak?* (Why Doesn’t the Robin Sing?) by Xabier Mendiguren and a duckling in *Abatetxoa eta sabats negartia* (The Duckling and the Weeping Willow) by Mariasun Landa, both part of collections for early readers.

Landa’s book is a work of fiction in which, as in most stories in the genre, illustration is used to illuminate the story and make reading more enjoyable. Although this is her main aim, Elena manages to narrate the story by using just a few brushstrokes and a minimal amount of space. On each double page there is an illustration, in most cases a detail or a scene, which can sometimes occupy the entire page. The only colour is on the cover.

The title alone (The Duckling and the Weeping Willow) gives the reader a clear idea of where the story is going through the drawings, as should be the case in any illustrated book, even though in this type of the story this is not necessary or usual:



Picture caption

Up: Elena Odriozola, *Diez Amigos* (Ten Friends), Imaginarium, 2003

Down: Elena Odriozola, *The Story Of Noah*, Meadowside, 2006

a duckling who wants to be a diver is observed and offered advice by a weeping willow, while his companions are against his dream. An incident with a couple changes their mind and reaffirms the main character’s decision.

The book offers a good example of the illustrator’s work on composition on a blank page. Without the need to specify details and while using minimal elements, such as a line of grass or a wavy line that marks the surface of the water, the illustrations perfectly outline the spaces in which the action takes place, and the movement of the characters gives information about where they are.

The weeping willow is defined by its drooping branches and serious, haughty face, the most enigmatic in the story. Here, the human characters drawn by Odriozola are thin with spindly legs, they wear dresses that have a hint of a pattern and have faces with slight dots to symbolise the eyes and sometimes a smile. These dots, this minimal gaze, among other things, start to define her style.

As for the animals, the action focuses on the protagonist, who is shown as gentle and energetic, characteristics defined by the lines of movement the artist uses to frame him. In this book, he is the only one who elicits certain empathy from the reader. His companions are drawn with great realism and with a minimal level of expression on their faces, which could be called neutral, and therefore represent an objective channel of communication. They are static, inexpressive characters, who could easily belong to a textbook or similar, accurate representations of their real image with little or no subjective feeling. This is most clearly seen in Anjel Lertxundi's *Dindirri* and in Stephanie Rosenheim's *The Story of Noah*.

When addressing very young children the illustrator uses the channel of empathy, a trait which can be observed by comparing some of the works for readers of different age groups; this is particularly clear when she draws animals. In these cases, her characters are energetic and have kind expressions, shown in their smiles, their round shapes, the larger size of their faces and the use of warm colours. One example is *Diez amigos* (Ten Friends), a tale that aims to help readers count to ten.

The Story of Noah

Odriozola has twice illustrated the story of Noah: in *El arca y yo* (The Ark and I) by Vicente Muñoz Puelles and again in the book by Stephanie



Picture caption
 Left:
 Elena Odriozola, *El Arca y Yo* (The Ark and I), Anaya, 2004
 Right:
 Up: Elena Odriozola, *Magali por fin lo sabe* (Magali Knows at Last), Anaya, 2000
 Down: Elena Odriozola, *Bototi bat bezala* (Like a Button), Haritza Anaya 1999

Rosenheim. In both works there is an emphasis on the power of the sky in the background landscape, painted in watercolour, with different shades that conjure up either the coming storm or the subsequent calm. Both versions manage to communicate the grandeur of nature in contrast to the smallness of the characters. People and animals appear with the same degree of protagonism, and in the second book they can be admired in all their splendour.

In both works, the animals are prominent in the same way: they are not the main characters, but they do play a decisive role. In the book, printed

in a landscape format, there is a notable double page spread showing several pairs of animals of different species (elephants, giraffes, etc.) on their way to the ark. They are drawn realistically, with their essential features and an expressionless face, and in this case it would be difficult to guess the illustrator in question, which is not the case with her other characters.

For the majority of the book the illustrator plays with the double page format, giving her landscapes a vast scope; on other occasions she uses two separate pages with the intention of narrating different scenes. She also plays with colour, both in

the background to describe the forces of nature, and in the protagonists, managing to transmit strength and fragility at the same time. The reader can see that not only does the illustrator not fear the white background, which she uses to situate and give emphasis to her characters, but also that she uses it as an integral part of the landscape, action, and illustration, as we will see in other works.

• Girls

From *Magali por fin lo sabe* (Magali Knows At Last) to *Els secrets de la Iholdi* (Iholdi's Secrets), by way of *Botoi bat bezala* (Like a Button), *Usoa* and *Vegetable Glue*.

“Could a story exist without any characters? Fortunately it seems impossible, because it is through the characters that we can have other experiences. Illustration tends to highlight the protagonists and remind the reader of the importance of each character.” This is how character is defined in *Siete llaves para valorar las historias infantiles* (Seven Keys to Assessing Children's Stories; Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 2002), and it can be seen in many of Elena Odriozola's works.

Whether by chance or by choice, several of the more realist books illustrated by Odriozola have a girl as the protagonist. While in the majority of her works the reader focuses more on the type of character than on their name, in these books there is almost always a clear, specific name for the main character: Magali, Usoa, Iholdi and so on, as mentioned in the titles. They are names that embody stories from real life and which the illustrator depicts as they go about their daily lives.

This category of her work can be divided into two types of books: narrative stories and collections of poetry or short stories. The books are written by some of the authors she has worked with most

often: Mariasun Landa, Juan Kruz Igerabide and especially Patxi Zubizarreta. They are connected by a similar sensibility and style when it comes to telling a story, transmitting ideas and awakening the reader's emotions. This is a notable aspect in Zubizarreta's work; the author is known for her poetic, concise prose, which has a unique sensitivity and shows a great admiration for the power of the written and oral tradition.

One of the first books by Zubizarreta and Odriozola is *Magali por fin lo sabe* (Magali Knows at Last), in which the main character does not know what she wants to be when she grows up, unlike her peers. The arrival of her older sister helps put her mind at ease. The novel is for readers aged 7 and up and is written in short sentences with a clear plot line that reaches the heart of the reader as well as having a sincere protagonist, who shows herself as she really is.

The drawings of the characters are energetic, friendly and have a great expressive delicacy, supporting the text in its aim to bring the character closer to the reader by transmitting her worries and feelings. The main focus of the composition is Magali, her smiles and her gaze, which, although only depicted by simple dots, are clear and express a range of emotions. The illustrator still refrains from emphasising the settings, but fills the background with the characters and objects that are part of Magali's everyday life.

Another character that brought the author and illustrator together is *Usoa* (Paloma in Spanish). She was first seen in the story *Paloma, llegaste por el aire* (Paloma, You Came on the Wind; La Galera, 1999), which described the adoption of an African girl and was illustrated by Asun Balzola. Shortly afterwards, *Usoa* was shown growing up in stories published every Saturday in the Basque newspaper *Egunkaria*, written by Zubizarreta and illustrated by Odriozola.



Picture caption
Elena Odriozola, *Hosto gorri, bosto berde* (Red Leaf, Green Leaf), Centro de Lingüística Aplicada Atenea, 2002

After a while, these stories developed into a series of four books that told her story from childhood to adolescence. They are very personal books, ones in which the illustrations focus on human figures on a white background, figures like the one on the cover of the first edition. Some wear clothes with stripes, checks or lively colours, and the protagonists' necks are surprisingly thick or they simply have no neck at all. The proportions are peculiar and they have disturbing expressions, which are not at all clear or gentle like the expressions shown by Magali. They have been called “enigmatic” and this description is even more apt for the characters that represent evil and in the works aimed at young people and adults.

As for the anthologies, this is where we can capture the essence of Odriozola's illustrations, characterised by a minimal use of pictures to express as much meaning as possible, and they show her extraordinary ability to make use of the relationship between figures and the background. At certain points the scenes are depicted using just a line or a smile. The lack of superfluous details stands out: the illustration is reduced to the bare essentials, placing the main focus on the character – a figure who is usually stylised and given great expressiveness – or on the idea expressed in the poem. This is where, more than anywhere else, her statement from the conversation we had before writing this article really holds true: "I want to express feelings and emotions with the absolute minimum. With a look, with gestures, with postures...".

One such example can be found in *Botoi bat bezala/Como un botón* (Like a Button) by Juan Krutz Igerabide. It contains short poems influenced by the Japanese haiku, which describe an idea with only the most crucial words. The illustrations aim to reflect this in the same way. Another good example comes from 2006 with *Els secrets de la Iholdi* (Iholdi's Secrets), a collection of stories by Mariasun Landa in which Iholdi, a young girl, describes the world from a fantastical, innocent and ironic point of view. The stories are accompanied by some of Odriozola's illustrations in black and white, in which Iholdi appears in different poses and with different gestures that, without expressing anything explicitly, implicitly suggest a great deal. Her figure is shown in the foreground, taking up almost the entire page, accompanied by some tiny items which make up the background. Her figure is powerful and suggestive, subtly magnifying the ideas shown in the text.

To give yet another example, there is a story entitled *Qué cal fer quan es té por?* (What Should You

Do when You're Scared?) in which Landa compares fear with a toad. The illustration shows a frightened girl, however, upon closer inspection we see that her skirt is in the shape of a toad. Minimal elements shown with the maximum expression and precision.

• Witches and Fairies

From *Atxiki sekretua* (Keep the Secret) to *Maitagarrien biru ipuin* (Three Fairy Tales)

The admiration for the oral tradition that is shown in some of the stories by Patxi Zubizarreta and his work with Elena Odriozola reaches its peak in *Atxiki sekretua. Sorginaren eskuliburua* (Keep the Secret. The Witch's Manual). Xabier Etxaniz described it in edition 176 of CLIJ magazine in November 2004: "Starting with a short story about the main character's elderly neighbour, the author weaves together a series of folk tales about witches through the relationship between the old woman and Joana, the narrative voice. Through a series of magical journeys the girl undertakes with Graziana, the old woman, and especially through the stories she tells, Joana discovers the fantastical world of witches." Etxaniz says that it can be taken as a collection of Basque folk tales, but this would be a disservice to half the book, which shows the relationship between a young girl and an elderly woman as well as telling us about love, loneliness and many other things.

If the realist works showed us a vast array of characters, in *Atxiki sekretua* (Keep the Secret) they increase both in number and variety to incorporate the mysterious world of witches and fantastical characters. In addition, this touch of mystery matches some of the adjectives that critics have always used to describe Elena Odriozola's illustrations:

"... with the enigmatic figures that are the signature of her style," on the work *Rumbo sur* (Heading South; CLIJ magazine, no. 189).



Picture caption
Left: Elena Odriozola, *Atxiki Sekretua* (Keep The Secret), Elkar, 2004
Right: Elena Odriozola, *Margarita*, Imaginarium, 2003

"... with its strange, intricate characters in peculiar proportions, which are both elegant and disturbing at the same time... giving the story a special sense of enchantment," describing *La princesa que bostezaba a todas horas* (The Princess Who Yawned at All Hours; CLIJ magazine, no. 191).

"The ever-stylised, elegant and enigmatic illustrations," in reference to *El arca y yo* (The Ark and I; CLIJ magazine, no. 180).

The two protagonists, Graziana and Joana, belong to books about real people, both for their traits and for the characteristics of their clothes and

movements. The only difference is that their faces have a greyish, sombre background, in keeping with the stories about witches and with the dark backgrounds the illustrator uses to envelop some of the landscapes and characters in the book.

Joana and Graziana's expressions are in some cases alert and attentive, unlike those of the other characters – witches, giants and demons – which are shown as deadened, hard and terrifying, as befits the tragic events that befall them. But all of the characters – and this could be extended to the entire cast of actors that Elena Odriozola brings to life – do not just communicate with their facial expressions, but also with their bodies, which the illustrator controls to perfection. Their postures and gestures tell us about the personality of the characters.

In the book, we also enter some of the illustrator's habitual landscapes. Outdoor scenes that are difficult to attribute to any real place: meadows, lakes and skies captured in watercolour; tree trunks reminiscent of poplars crossing the page from top to bottom; branches that fork out and cross the page from left to right; isolated houses; stagnant waters. These are the backdrops for scenes that create atmospheres rather than feelings, something that is extremely important in her work.

In *Maitagarrien biru ipuin* (Three Fairy Tales) by Gustavo Martín Garzo, real people are again mixed with fantastical characters: in this case, fairies and dragons. Here, the drawings are in black and white and are very clear, with fine, delicate lines in pencil or ink.

As for the landscape, the illustrator again uses logs and branches with a forest or house as a backdrop to evoke the atmosphere of the stories. They are landscapes that are unidentifiable and could therefore be described as “non-places”. But the important thing is that the characters float on a white background. The illustrator focuses on

defining the figures with a precise and very fine line, weaving in the floral prints of their clothes in a fantastical way that is increasingly subtle and delicate. The figures are scattered throughout the book, in the outdoor scenes as well, and Odriozola defines the absence of expression on their faces, suggesting a rich, hidden inner world, and plays with the fine lines of their hair.

These two books palpably show the elements that define both the outdoor scenes designed by illustrator and the characters that make up her varied catalogue, which can broadly be divided into two categories: the real and the fantastical. To this catalogue we should also add princesses, characters which come from classic fairy tales but which the artist uses to combine ingredients from both tradition and the real world in order to unite these two worlds. In the stories in which princesses are the main characters, she fuses reality with fantasy to show the communicative power and the recurring features of her illustration.

• Princesses

From *La princesa y el guisante* (The Princess and the Pea) to *La princesa que bostezaba a todas horas* (The Princess Who Yawned at All Hours) by way of *La bella mandarina* (The Beautiful Mandarin Lady)

It is interesting to note that, coincidentally or not, princesses have become a recurring theme in Elena Odriozola's illustrations. She turns the duality between girl and princess into a resource that allows her to delve into their main descriptive characteristics. In this duality, she unites her most realist side with her most imaginative, fantastical side: she designs incredibly intricate prints for their dresses; she gives them her most enigmatic, haughty faces; and she envelops it all in an atmosphere that is sometimes Gothic, sometimes unreal, sometimes fantastical.



Picture caption
Both: Elena Odriozola, *La Princesa que bostezaba...* (The Princess Who Yawned...), OQO, 2005

The character of the princess, which we will examine in three very different examples, can also be related to the appearance of her illustrations in picture books – the penultimate rung on her career ladder – in which her unique style can be admired. Her final step to date is the illustration of classic stories, where the publisher looks for an artist with their own consolidated reputation.

In *La princesa y el guisante* (The Princess and the Pea), the illustrator once again shows her serene use of empty space. You only have to look at the drawing of the pea, proof of the princess's authenticity, on the last double page. A very thin

thread holds it in place under the curious gaze of some children at a museum. The characters in the story, who are almost all royalty, are shown in the foreground wearing tight-fitting dresses in muted colours and discreet prints. They are shown moving among external objects, such as the staircase railing, which allows the illustrator to play with a Gothic stamp, or the bed where the princess will spend the night. Almost all of these characters have an expressionless face, with thick necks that give them a noble look or without any neck at all, emphasising their faces. Their eyes and mouths are closed and their faces have a shade somewhere between white and grey with pink cheeks. The only one who shows a flicker of expression or emotion is the princess, although she does so in a contained way. The royalty examine her with a sad air that transmits the melancholic air of Hans Christian Andersen's tales.

In *La bella mandarina* (The Beautiful Mandarin Lady) the characters become tiny, like those of an ancient Chinese miniature, and the colours are reduced to just two – orange and brown – or three if you count the sepia tone of the paper, which represents antiquity and, as with the habitual white page, also becomes a part of the illustration.

The illustrator clearly wants to measure up to a story that relates events from time immemorial. It really looks like a story from ancient China and conveys the atmosphere of the country. It is a very distinctive book, alternating between very different formats and layouts on the pages, and the aim of capturing the story is applied coherently. Evidently, some of her recurring features appear, but in this book the characters lose the personality the illustrator normally confers upon their faces. She uses characters and objects in small sizes, except for a particular moment that changes the course of the story, when the powerful lord's wife



Picture caption
 Left Page:
 Left: Elena Odriozola, *Hirn Lagun* (Three Friends), Idaizabel, 2005
 Middle: Elena Odriozola, *Un regalo del cielo* (A Gift From Heaven), Sm, 2007
 Right: Elena Odriozola, *Tres bicbos raros* (Three Strange Friends), Sm, 2006
 Right page:
 Left: Elena Odriozola, *Peter Pan*, Edebé, 2005
 Right: Elena Odriozola, *El viento en los sauces* (The Wind In The Willows), Anaya, 2006

decides not to give an orange to the poor man. Her anger and selfishness is so strong that the illustrator makes her grow in size. In fact, in this book, Odriozola does something that we have only seen in books of poetry or short stories: she creates a metaphor through a picture. When the text states that the lord's heart is large enough to shelter many people, the illustrator draws a tree with branches extending across a double page spread in which all of these people sit.

La bella mandarina (The Beautiful Mandarin Lady) becomes an exercise in which Odriozola shows us that, when the story requires it, she

knows how to set aside her usual style and provide different results. In the picture book, the illustrator is dealing with a format that she can use to try out new possibilities, something that does not happen in the narrative works.

One of the most highly regarded works by the artist is *La princesa que bostezaba a todas horas* (The Princess Who Yawned at All Hours), which has earned Odriozola many awards. In this book she employs another resource that is unusual in her work, using a colour background on the pages to differentiate between the action that occurs indoors and outdoors. The intense colours, such

as fuchsia and blue, are sometimes mixed with those of the main characters, giving each of the double pages a certain intensity. The characters here are large and often shown in the foreground. The expression on their faces is softened (except for the adults, who maintain their coarseness), which makes them seem more appealing and closer to the age of potential readers. The illustrator focuses on the details, mostly floral prints, which are shown both on the clothes and in the landscapes.

One particularly notable aspect is the sensation of movement created by the characters and the fact that Odriozola manages to achieve this with the use of shapes and curved lines. While you can follow the story through the illustrations in other stories as well, this book accentuates that feeling. Accustomed to more static figures, in this book they become more dynamic through their movement, which is treated with a different approach on each of the double pages.

Her work on the princesses and picture books secures Elena Odriozola's place in terrain reserved for well-established illustrators, which will allow her to experiment with illustration and layout and to give the best of herself to each new work. Her approach varies depending on each story, showing her flexibility and her boundless ability to change, adapt and evolve. Moreover, the range of authors she works with is ever greater.

• The Classics

From *La sirenita y otros cuentos* (The Little Mermaid and Other Stories) to *El viento en los sauces* (The Wind in the Willows) by way of *Peter Pan*

When republishing classic books, the publisher wants to offer a new vision or reading of the work and often entrusts it to an illustrator with an established career and unique style, looking for the work of a true artist. "Style is in no way a decoration

as some people believe; it is not even a matter of technique. It is a quality of vision, the revelation of a particular universe," said Marcel Proust in a quote that appears in *La materia de l'espirit* (The Matter of Spirit; Proa, 2005) by Jaume Cabré. Through this subjective means, the illustrator tells us how he or she reads and understands the text. "In literature everything leads to style. The style is the writer [in this case the illustrator]. It is the place that shows a glimpse of their soul and it is illuminated not so much by the things that are explained, but by the way in which they are told," said Cabré.

Let us look at those illustrators who communicate using their own visual poetics. "What the illustrator aims to achieve is the most authentic aesthetic voice that can be conjured from his palette, or rather, his own poetic voice. He knows that he is the gatekeeper to a poetic world that belongs to him and that only he is able to express," says Teresa Duran in the article "En el ruedo de la ilustración" (In the Arena of Illustration; *Peonza*, no. 75/76), adding that the risk of miscommunication when taking this route is very high.

Over the last few years, in which Elena Odriozola's career has really taken off, she has received requests to illustrate a number of classics in which we can see this subjective means of communication, expressing what the artist sees and how they see it. In chronological order, she has illustrated editions of *La sirenita y otros cuentos* (The Little Mermaid and Other Stories) by Hans Christian Andersen, *Peter Pan* by J. M. Barrie and *El viento en los sauces* (The Wind in the Willows) by K. Grahame. Although in all of these works we can see her interpretation as well as the features shown in many of her works, it is in *Peter Pan* where Odriozola takes more risks and works more freely, breaking with existing



Picture caption
Left: Elena Odriozola, *Amona basoan gaidu zenekoa* (When Granny Got Lost In The Woods), Elkar, 2005

stereotypes. In the other two works it is clear that her work is determined by the type of book and the layout of the pages. *Peter Pan* was published in 1911. Over nearly one hundred years it has been read by countless readers and illustrated by artists such as Arthur Rackham, M. L. Atwell and Mercé Llimona. It has also reached a far wider audience through cinema, with the work being interpreted by directors such as Spielberg or Disney.

The version of *Peter Pan* illustrated by Odriozola aims to bring the classic tale to children of a younger age than the original intended audience. It is an adaptation that encapsulates

and maintains the essence of the original and one in which the accompanying illustrations are outstanding in terms of their style and beauty. The main characters in the book in particular do not closely resemble the previous models offered by Atwell, Disney, Rackham or Llimona, ones which have lived in our imagination until now. Odriozola's illustrations convey tenderness and magic, although at times they show coldness. Because they break with tradition, it is harder for the reader to understand them, but anyone who pays close attention to them will be guided into the fantastical world she illustrates.

Through the clothes worn by the characters and through the furniture, Elena Odriozola centres the action in an unmistakable universe: the bourgeois world of early twentieth-century England, where the delicate prints are barely painted onto the ample dresses and the curtains of the window that leads to Neverland. The window in question is one of the best details in this edition. When it appears, it is so tall that the page is not high enough to fit it all in. It is as infinite as the night that carries the characters to the land of Peter Pan.

Peter Pan, the most surprising character, is depicted as a tall, gangly, lacklustre teenager with a face that shows an indefinite age and has a neutral, sometimes enigmatic, expression. He does not look anything like the boy we knew from earlier versions, except for his discreet outfit of ochre-coloured leaves. Another surprising fact is that he does not appear during a fight or adventure scene at any time.

Wendy is drawn as a young woman wearing a plain dress in neutral tones, the same as those used for her face and thick neck. Her expressions are similar to those of Peter Pan, although she does exude a mother's tenderness and warmth. But what Elena does not apply to the protagonists she does



give to the other characters. She particularly plays with colour and action when drawing the Lost Boys, who sometimes form a magnificent border on the white of the page with their striped t-shirts, lack of necks and friendly faces. The same applies to her illustrations of the baddies, who do not appear as threatening as they might hope. Both Hook and his pirates are in some cases portrayed in a more personal, sweeter way. Smee, for example, looks more like a friendly teacher who has fun with his students than a pirate. But during moments of action his expression becomes evil and he grows so large that the page is not wide enough to capture him. His image is truncated, although we can still

see his expressions and understand his feelings at that instant.

Peter Pan is a milestone in Elena Odriozola's career, an homage to a classic that showcases her most outstanding qualities: her signature characters, her unique way of describing them and making them expressive, her serene use of the white page and her sparing use of resources that reveals a great capacity to convey a poetic, melancholic mood. A singular and daring vision that provides new nuances and stands among the most notable readings which illustrators have created for J. M. Barrie's classic tale.

Picture caption

- Left Page: Elena Odriozola, *Gorputz osorako poemak* (Poems For The Entire Body), Aizkorri, 2005
- Right: Elena Odriozola, *Furia* (Fury), Erein, 2007
- Right page: Elena Odriozola, *Cuando sale la luna* (When The Moon Rises), Thule, 2006

• Objects

From *Cuando sale la luna* (When the Moon Rises) to the present

Cuando sale la luna (When the Moon Rises) was published in 2006, when I was finishing the outline of this article. I decided that, because of its unique nature, it would be a good way to end the piece. It is a work in which Elena uses a type of character that is different from those used so far: humanised objects. What is more striking than that is the technical and descriptive way in which they are drawn, which could even be a turning point in her career or, to be less dramatic, a new direction. This different approach, just like others she has offered in the past, again highlights her remarkable versatility and the varied scope of her talent and artistic skill.

Cuando sale la luna (When the Moon Rises) is a story for early readers in which extraordinary things happen – for instance, when, on a moonlit night like any other, the toys come out of their box to play – but are treated as if they were everyday occurrences. It is worth noting that at first glance it would be difficult to attribute the book to Elena Odriozola. But if we examine the characters carefully, we see that they combine several of the traits from the different styles the illustrator has employed over time. The protagonists do not have strange proportions, like some of her real or fantastical characters, but the toy animals here have quite a realistic appearance – perhaps that is why it is hard to attribute them to the artist – just like the animals she draws, although they are shown in unrealistic colours. They are more static in their movements, something that the illustrator is able to depict with great mastery of gesture and movement by showing them as toys. They are shown to have an appealing friendliness that is typical of characters aimed at young children, but here this feeling is somewhat constrained. Above all, we observe this

friendliness through their eyes and the gestures they make towards the reader.

As with most of the works illustrated by the artist, the longer you look the more you are surprised by the details. For example, the use of the white page, which is not a gratuitous colour or a background landscape but is instead part of the story. In this case, it is the colour of the box where the toys live and on several pages almost seems to be one of the protagonists; the artist uses it to create different perspectives and to give the text and the characters she draws more prominence. She chooses a diminutive size for the characters and cheerful colours that are still delicate, like their smiles.

There are some noteworthy characters, such as the pink elephant, who is the most mobile in the scenes, or the two rabbits who sit on the edge of the box as if it were the top of a wall, watching as the story unfolds. In the background, one of the highlights is another infinite window that shows us the face of the moon. It is more modest than the window in *Peter Pan* but equally expressive. The pattern on the blanket covering the protagonist, who pretends to sleep, also stands out. It is a print with a different pictorial treatment compared with that used for the fur and hides of some of the animals. It seems less well defined, rougher, as a way to differentiate the elements of the real world from those of fantasy.

In short, it is a work in which, when we stop to analyse the details, shows most of the elements that have become recurring themes throughout Elena Odriozola's career. If we list these traits, they will serve to define the way in which she communicates meaning:

—The main focus is always on the characters. She uses them to transmit the meaning of the story.

—A minimal and considered use of resources and no superfluous details with the aim of achieving the maximum level of expression.



Picture caption
Elena Odriozola, *Bototi bat bezala* (Like A Button), Haritzal/Anaya, 1999

—A precise delimitation of the different spaces on the page. She has an exceptional ability to exploit the relationships between the figures and the background and places importance on the white on the page, not just as a background but as another element which forms part of her illustrations.

—The use of different channels of communication depending on the type of characters, the work in question and the target age range: an objective channel in her work with animal characters; an empathetic channel in the characters aimed at early readers; and a subjective channel in the majority of her work.

—The body and faces of her characters are the main elements that express meaning. They feature very particular traits, including: the thick necks, which give the characters an incredible strength, or the lack of a neck, which highlights the characters' facial expressions; their fine, delicate gazes, which are sometimes warm and friendly but more often inexpressive; the subtle colours of their skin; and the movement of their bodies, with an excellent command of different gestures and poses through which she expresses each character's personality. All of this along with her enormous capacity to elicit a range of feelings and different adjectives to apply to her way of illustrating.

—The patterned decoration of clothes and other personal items belonging to the characters in order to define their daily life, personality, attitude towards life and main traits, as well as serving to enhance the characteristics of each type of story or genre.

—The scant or sometimes non-existent specificity in landscapes and the outdoors, leading us to talk about “non-places”, and her talent for creating an atmosphere that envelops each story.

—Her use of a highly varied colour palette adapted to the tone, genre and type of story as well as to the age of the reader.

Increasingly, all this is treated with extreme delicacy and greater subtlety. Her potential as an illustrator is demonstrated by her career to date: she does not stay in one place nor label herself, she is as diverse as a box full of different toys. Her potential comes from within and expresses itself freely, just like the toys leaving the box when the moon rises and just like the six types of characters who will continue to look for an illustrator like Elena Odriozola, whose style has continually matured and become more defined and who surprises us with particular ideas, which

sometimes break with her usual methods yet do not betray her style and which always enhance her progression as a professional illustrator.

«“DIRECTOR [at the end of his rope] Fiction! Reality! To hell with all of you! Lights, lights, lights! [at a single stroke the whole stage and auditorium is flooded with very bright light. The DIRECTOR breathes again, as if freed from an incubus, and they all look each other in the eyes, bewildered and lost.] Things like this don't happen to me, they've made me lose a whole day. [He looks at his watch] Go, you can all go. What could we do now anyway? It is too late to pick up the rehearsal where we left off. See you this evening.”»

(From *Seis personajes en busca de autor* [Six Characters in Search of an Author] by Luigi Pirandello)

*Pep Molist is a librarian and writer.

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Picture caption
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Picture caption
Elena Odriozola, *Arxiki sekretua*
(Keep The Secret), Eikar, 2004

–*Usoa. Karpeta morea* (Usoa. The Purple Folder). San Sebastian, Erein, 2003.

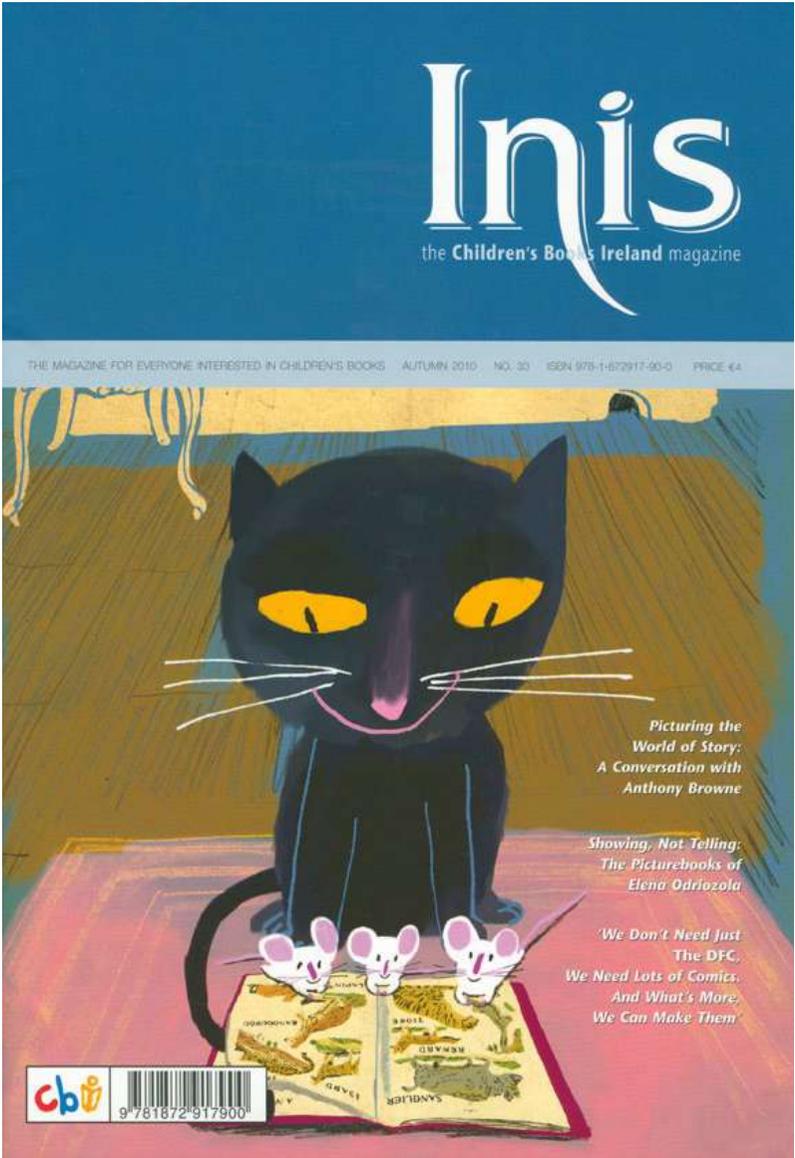
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Showing, Not Telling

The Picturebooks of Elena Odriozola

Valerie Coghlan

Valerie Coghlan considers the importance of stimulating children's aesthetic sensitivity and visual literacy skills in her conversation with the Basque writer Elena Odriozola, whose picturebooks provide young readers with accessible yet visually sophisticated narratives.

THE importance of encouraging children to read the visual is gradually gaining recognition, and picturebooks that play a significant role in this are garnering the acclaim they deserve. The process is slow – too slow – nevertheless it is under way. In schools and libraries there is a growing awareness that visual literacy is another important competence. Through its annual summer conference CBI is playing a part by bringing talented picturebook artists – some of whom are not widely known in Ireland – to the attention of its audience. In 2007, in conjunction

with IBBY Ireland, German master illustrator, Binette Schroeder presented her work. Then, in 2009, there was an opportunity to see and hear Martin Salisbury, a freelance illustrator, lecturer and leader of the much-praised

“The Basque artist is someone whose work can stand with the best of 21st-century book illustration”



Elena Odriozola and her translator showing an example draft of her illustrations at the CBI conference, May 2010.



Master's programme in children's book illustration at Anglia Ruskin University. The audience was fascinated by Salisbury's introduction to illustrators from the non-Anglophone world whose work is generally not published in English, often because it is considered too avant-garde and not likely to have sufficient appeal in a difficult picturebook market.

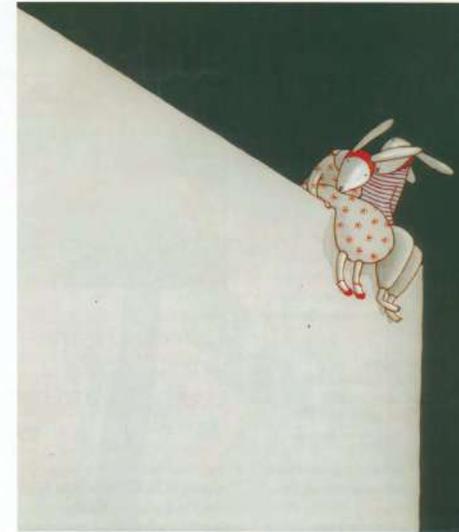
Elena Odriozola is an illustrator admired by Salisbury, and in 2010 she introduced her work at the CBI conference. Although she spoke through an interpreter, the power of her illustrations and her evident commitment to her art ensured that there were no barriers to realising that the Basque artist is someone whose work can stand with the best of 21st-century book illustration.

Odriozola was born in 1967 in San Sebastián where she still lives and works. At college she studied Art and Decoration, and she subsequently worked as the art director at a publicity agency. Artistic talent runs in her family – she says her father and

grandfather both drew well – and when she was a child Odriozola's abilities with a pencil were encouraged.

Her drawing ability is evident in her work. Outlines are often spare, relying on a curve or an angled body or a tilt of the head to show character or emotion, and the way she uses line to suggest these is evident throughout her work. She tends not to fill the space on the page, one of the reasons why the colour, quality and texture of the paper in which she works is very important to her. She doesn't like working on a computer, preferring the physical contact with paint and ink on the page. She used to favour watercolour paper and sketching paper, but now prefers Japanese paper which is intended for ink. Acrylics used on this paper make it wavy when the paint dries, giving her work a particular texture. Sometimes she presses pages together for particular effects, and she frequently uses her fingers as well as paintbrushes to achieve a less structured look. When she started work as an artist she usually painted in watercolours and also used sepia inks. Now, however, she much prefers acrylics, saying that one day she 'realised the watercolour box was closed'.

The colour of the paper is important also; she likes paper that is white, but not too brilliant or too yellowish. Not surprisingly, Arthur Rackham, Quentin Blake and Lisbeth Zwerger are the three illustrators most admired by Odriozola. Zwerger is admired by many picturebook artists, partly for her deployment of negative space, and mastery of the line hallmarks the work of Rackham and Blake.



“Odriozola says she likes 'everything in its place' in her pictures; well-defined line is the means of achieving this”

Odriozola shares with Blake a fluidity of line, seemingly effortless, but derived from close observation of their subjects and complete control of technique.

Odriozola says she likes 'everything in its place' in her pictures; well-defined line is the means of achieving this, giving her work its recognisable look. Bodies are often rounded, and faces may be shown as child-like circles or ovals with dots for eyes, and noses and mouths represented by the simplest pen

stroke. Yet this cartoonish approach does not reduce the way in which features express feelings; instead their very simplicity intensifies what Odriozola wants to portray.

Supersonic Tonic (text by Stephanie Rosenheim) and *Vegetable Glue* (text by Susan Chandler) both feature a similar looking little girl in domestic situations that take strange turns. Madeleine Daisy in *Supersonic Tonic* creates a special potion to restore her ailing grandfather to

Showing, Not Telling

good health, but the power of the tonic reinvigorated Grandpa too much. The first-person narrator of *Vegetable Glue* tells a moral tale about the importance of eating vegetables – otherwise various body parts fall off and have to be stuck back with the eponymous glue. Grandpa is shown leaping over rooftops, 'doing the limbo under the door ... press ups ... sit ups, cartwheels galore' in vigorous style that distribute the elderly man's activities all over the pages, intensifying the sense of movement. In *Vegetable Glue* the ridiculous rhyme is echoed by the drawings:

Oops, pardon me
I've made a rude sound. My
bottom's dropped off
And is now...
... on the ground.

The girl and her dog are shown gazing in bemusement – and on her part – embarrassment – at a bottom lying on the grass.

Odriozola's liking for double-page spreads is shown in both the scenes described. She also considers that the physical layout of text and illustration are integral to one another. The overall design of her books is



“Odriozola claims that she is an observer within her own work”

important to her; this is very evident in *The Opposite* (text by Tom MacRae), where *The Opposite* is integrated into wallpaper effect endpapers. In *Cuando sale la luna* (text by Antonio Ventura), the spare text is matched by sharp angles and large spaces and characters that are only partially on the page or appear small in proportion to



bigger objects. When drawing characters, Odriozola likes them to remain the same size throughout the story. This she feels gives a structure to what she is showing, and provides stability, especially when lower parts are cropped out of the picture.

Frequently, her people have elongated necks, thick and almost part of the torso. This is very apparent in a picturebook for adults, *Aplastamiento de las gotas* by the avant-garde Argentinian writer, Julio Cortázar. This story of a lonely woman who is comforted by a man who brings her flowers allows full rein to Odriozola's liking for suggesting rather than showing too much. The woman's emotions are all suggested in the curve of her neck and upper body, capturing the spirit of Cortázar's text, the

English title of which means 'the crushing of drops', signifying the woman's observation of raindrops on a windowpane, all of which eventually drop to their 'death'.

In other cases, characters' heads seem directly attached to their bodies, like that of Nate in *The Opposite* or the children in *The Story Blanket* (text by Ferida Wolf and Harriet May Savitz). Here Odriozola shows a group of children sitting on the 'story blanket', but mostly her pages show individuals or at most only two or three people together. Some of the spreads, however, typify the way in which she often emphasises the curves of characters or gives them extra stability by setting them against perpendicular objects, frequently trees.

Odriozola claims that she is an observer within her own work – she likes the main focus of the action in a story to happen off the

page leaving her free to suggest the unseen and show participants' reactions rather than actions. It is certainly true that many of the stories she has illustrated have a quirky quality which is intensified by her ability to capture odd angles and aspects, asking the viewer to look, but then to look again to verify what is perceived. Within the English-speaking world, *The Opposite* was the book that first drew attention to Odriozola. It is the story of a boy who woke one morning to find *The Opposite* 'standing on his ceiling, staring down at him'. Of course Nate's injunctions to *The Opposite* to go away lead to the opposite happening, but when his dad enters the room and Nate tells him there is an *Opposite* on the ceiling, as one would expect, there is nothing there. Throughout the day Nate is plagued by *The Opposite* reversing everything he does: carefully poured milk splashes up to the ceiling and drips down again, and a school painting session results in Nate's paint splattering over everything and everyone, including his teacher. Odriozola shows Nate's reactions to his perceived messiness – the *opposite* of his usual neatness – and his mother's and teacher's disappointment rather than *The Opposite* actually causing these occurrences.

In *Un secreto del bosque* (text by Javier Sobrino), a squirrel falls in love, but not until the final pages is the object of her affections revealed. Odriozola hints at the identity of the mysterious one here and there, but never undercuts the text by telling too much. Also by Javier Sobrino, *El hielo de Ariadna* shows Ariadna running in fear from an unknown

“Odriozola says that Anglophone publishers are more conservative and find some of her artwork 'too risky'”



threat that only in the closing pages is revealed as 'a minotaur' outside her house door – her metaphorically conjured interpretation of an upset with her father. Sobrino's story, a modern play on the myth, in which Odriozola is complicit as she shows the little girl escaping from her worries and into an imaginative world by means of a piece of thread found in her pocket. The thread leads the reader through the story also, lying on the right-hand page turn, as if asking to be followed

overleaf. The thread becomes a ball, a tightrope, a fishing line, and a swing, sweeping Ariadna up in the air, from where she observes the city below spread out like a maze through which she must pass to overcome the monster of her concerns. At last she meets her friends, and the thread becomes a skipping rope, suggesting perhaps that Ariadna is becoming more grounded and is ready to return home, to safety and the end of her adventures.

The visual simplicity of *El hielo de Ariadna* belies the complexity of

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Ariadna's emotions and her inner journey through her maze of fears, led only by the thread of her imaginings. She is suggested rather than depicted in detail and shown small on the pages, most of which are mainly left white. This beautifully crafted picturebook has not been published in English, and it is unlikely that it will be. Odriozola says that Anglophone publishers are more conservative and find some of her artwork 'too risky'. Nevertheless, her work has won acclaim. She illustrated or contributed illustrations to over sixty books. These include a volume of Hans Christian Andersen's stories, a *Noah's Ark* with Stephanie Rosenheim, and Pablo Neruda's *Oda a una estrella*, for which she was shortlisted for a Ragazzi Award at the 2010 Bologna Bookfair. She has also illustrated textbooks, theatre programmes and posters for reading promotion campaigns. Her forthcoming *La Celestina* is currently in the form of a



3.5-metre long frieze, the ends of which can be joined to make a circle. To put this into the covers of a book will be challenge for her publishers, but is eagerly looked forward to by her growing number of fans.

Listening to Odriozola and looking at her work, there is no doubt that she is an artist committed to her work, which she says she must enjoy if it is to turn out well. CBI and the Instituto Cervantes in Dublin, in bringing Elena Odriozola to the attention of an Irish audience, have helped to lower the fence that hinders the development of an aesthetic appreciation of picturebooks as an

art form. Illustration is an international language, but sometimes it is necessary to be guided through its intricacies and Elena Odriozola proved to be an excellent interpreter.

I want to thank Maeve Friel for her invaluable assistance with the research for this article, and David O'Connell of the Instituto Cervantes in Dublin for making available some of Elena Odriozola's books.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

September 2010

7th–12th September

The Mountains to Sea dlr Book Festival will take place in Dun Laoghaire with many children's authors appearing, including PJ Lynch and Michael Scott. For programme and booking information, see www.mountaintosea.ie

11th September

'Between the Lines', a CBI and SCBWI Ireland information seminar on writing and illustrating for children, will take place in South Dublin. Booking information is available at www.childrensbooksireland.ie.

30th September–2nd October

The Reading Association of Ireland's annual conference 'Promoting Effective Language and Literacy Instruction in 21st Century Classrooms' will be held in Marino Institute of Education, Dublin. See www.reading.ie.

October 2010

1st–31st October

The national Children's Book Festival will be taking

place across the island. Contact the CBI office for more information on this exciting programme of events.

11th–17th October

The Baboró International Arts Festival for Children will take place in Galway. See www.baboro.ie for more information.

28th October

CBI, in partnership with the National Library of Ireland and HarperCollins, presents Oliver Jeffers in conversation with Martin Salisbury at 6.30pm at the National Library, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Tickets for this free event must be booked in advance through CBI: 01 872 7473.

November 2010

13th November

British IBBY and NCRCL are holding a one-day conference, 'Conflicts and Controversies in Children's Literature', at Roehampton University, London. See www.ibby.org.uk for more details.





ENTREVISTA

ELENA ODRIOZOLA

«Si no tengo nada que contar, prefiero no hacerlo»

Texto: Miren Sáenz
Fotografía: Conny Beyreuther



EL OFICIO Y LA PASIÓN DE DIBUJAR

Elena Odriozola (Donostia, 1967) nos abre las puertas de su casa en estos días en los que la pandemia del coronavirus obliga a guardar distancias. Vive en un pequeño apartamento frente al río Urumea que le sirve de vivienda y estudio, con una espléndida vista al Teatro Victoria Eugenia. Presidido por una estantería repleta de libros, la imprescindible mesa de dibujo tiene un sitio privilegiado y un sofá en el que, terminada la sesión fotográfica, nos sentamos de esquina a esquina dadas las circunstancias. En este lugar, la ilustradora ha ideado la mayor parte de sus creaciones. Recuerda que hace 17 años ya se asomó a las páginas de 7K. Desde entonces, ha seguido progresando y buscando nuevos caminos.

Y los ha encontrado. Con esas manos delgadas y eficaces ha ilustrado revistas de calidad, superado el centenar de libros, realizado carteles, diseñado logotipos y cumplido sueños. Lo mismo imprime su sello en las etiquetas de unas botellas de vino que en el último cartel de la Feria del Libro de Valencia. Y en todos, sus trazos parecen tener la vida que les da ella.

Recientemente ha emprendido otra aventura al embarcarse en una pequeña editorial destinada al público infantil que atiende al nombre de Ediciones Modernas el Embudo. En su página web dicen esto de su socia y dibujante: «A Elena Odriozola no le agrada que cuando alguien la presenta diga, por ejemplo, que es Premio Nacional de Ilustración, Premio Euskadi de Ilustración o Manzana de Oro de la Bienal de Ilustración de Bratislava. No le gusta que la califiquen como una ilustradora 'sutil' y, mucho menos, que se sostenga que sus imágenes son 'poéticas'. Tampoco termina de aceptar que sus personajes se parezcan a ella. Cada cosa que hace, la hace así por algún motivo. Por ejemplo, los cuellos que dibuja son gruesos porque 'asi sujetan mejor la cabeza'».

Queda claro que es una dibujante reconocida, premiada y que no le gusta alardear de ello.
Eso es cosa del editor (Gustavo Puerta Leisse) y eso que le pedí que no lo pusiera. Me da un poco de pudor.

Seguramente, tampoco se considera la ilustradora vasca más internacional.
Eso no lo sé. Seguro que hay muchos ilustradores por aquí que tienen libros en otros idiomas.

¿Lleva la cuenta de cuántos libros ha ilustrado y en cuántas exposiciones ha participado?
Tengo 111 libros, los acabo de contar porque me habían pedido ese dato, también muchos trabajos de diseño, pero exposiciones no tantas.

Lo que es evidente es que está entre las ilustradoras más premiadas.

Los premios son un poco lotería. Dependen del jurado y de otros factores. Yo siempre pienso que no me lo van a dar. Es verdad que estás ahí, entre los que optan a ganarlos pero, más que por la suerte, creo que las cosas pasan o no pasan porque quizás tenía que ser así. Cuando te dan un premio te pones súper contenta, te hace ilusión, pero al día siguiente piensas: "Ya está, ya ha pasado".

Recordemos los más importantes: En 2015 se llevó el Premio Nacional español de Ilustración -años después de obtener el Segundo Premio Nacional (2006)- y La Manzana de Oro de la Bienal de Bratislava por «Frankenstein». Logró el Premio Euskadi a la Mejor Ilustración por «Aplastamiento de las gotas» en 2009 y por «Tropescista», en 2013. En 2010 le concedieron el CJ Picture Book Award For New Publications por «Ola a una estrella» y en 2018 y 2020 fue seleccionada como candidata del Estado español a los prestigiosos Hans Christian Andersen -de periodicidad bianual- y en los que este año ha quedado finalista.

Yo no esperaba ganar y, además, pienso que al Andersen no me van a proponer más. Generalmente la nominación no se repite, van cambiando a la gente y, seguramente, en 2022 presentarán a otra persona. Me hace mucha gracia cuando dicen: "Es como el Nobel". Si pero sin dotación económica (rie). Eso sí, tienen mucho prestigio, también la Bienal de Bratislava. Cuando lo recogí, como soy una torpe y las escaleras están un poco así, pensé que me iba a tropezar. Total que la manzana se me fue rodando y tiene un bollo... (que enseña mientras ríe divertida y abre el trofeo doado por la mitad, donde esconde un castillo).

Estuvo a punto de no ir a recogerlo, sus amigos tuvieron que convencerla.

Pues sí. Soy muy sociable en las distancias cortas, pero en el grupo desaparezo. Cuando no conozco a nadie soy muy cerrada, y a mí estas cosas de los premios... Me han invitado a sitios y no he ido. Antes siempre decía que no a dar charlas, pero pensé que tenía que superar mi timidez y terminé aceptando.

En su casa la pintura era importante, su padre y su abuelo pintaban y usted lleva toda la vida dibujando.

Mi padre y mi abuelo materno pintaban, pero la pintura no era su oficio; mi madre también era muy manosa. Mi padre pintaba realista y dibujaba muy bien; también le encantaba la fotografía y hacía unas fotos maravillosas. Entonces, en el primer piso de la casa donde vivíamos en el Antiguo, había un pintor que se llamaba José Zugasti. Me apuntaron a clases de dibujo, no sé exactamente cuándo, quizás con 13 años, y estuve años yendo allí a pintar a carboncillo, óleos... Mi

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EL OFICIO Y LA PASIÓN DE DIBUJAR



abuelo, que murió el año que yo nací, hacía cuadritos, plumlilla, paisajes y hasta alguna escorografía. Conocía a Zuloaga, Regalado, los pintores de esa generación, aunque era más joven que ellos. Zuloaga le llegó a decir que se fuera a París, pero él no quiso. Era muy de la tierra. Yo, como mi abuelo, me quedo aquí.

¿Su mundo es este?

Una vez en una charla sobre libros me hicieron unas preguntas. Entonces, yo que nunca analizo, me puse a analizar y salieron cosas curiosas, tales como que mis personajes tienen que ver con mi forma de ser; por ejemplo, les cuesta salir de su espacio, algo que me ocurre a mí. He nacido aquí y me muevo muy poco de mi sitio. Como mucho me voy quince días o una semana de vacaciones. Me voy a Baztan, porque mi abuela era de allí, está a 20 minutos en coche y es mi casa. Cuando tengo que moverme lejos, si voy sola, la víspera me pongo triste. No tengo espíritu viajero, pero cuando he dicho sí, normalmente, no me he arrepentido.

Y necesita su habitual espacio para trabajar.

No soy de dibujar en cualquier sitio, si estoy de vacaciones nunca llevo un cuaderno, ni un lápiz. Es algo que hacen muchos ilustradores, pero cada uno es distinto. Aunque dibujar sea lo que más me gusta, yo no. Necesito un proyecto, pensar cómo hacerlo y eso es lo divertido.

¿Ilustrar es interpretar, expresar?

Cuando leo un texto, pienso qué puedo contar de él, qué significa para mí. No tiene sentido hacer lo mismo que han hecho otros, tienes que darle tu punto de vista y, cuanto más complicado es, más me gusta. Me pasó con "Frankenstein", del que hay un montón de imágenes. Ahí estaba el reto, que te dé qué pensar. Es lo que más me gusta de mi trabajo, buscar, decidir la técnica según lo que tengas que contar.

Tengo libros de distintos sitios y en varios idiomas. Pueden tener unos dibujos preciosos, pero para mí lo más importante es que me cuenten una historia. Para mí eso es ilustrar un texto, sea para niños o para adultos, disfruté igual de los dos. Hay ilustraciones que, por muy estéticas que sean, no me dicen nada. Eso no me basta.

¿Se agobia ante la página en blanco?

Sí y no. A veces me agobia, pero poco, porque es una angustia conocida y tengo la confianza de que en algún momento va a salir. Hay libros que te cuestan una barbaridad, pero los dejas reposando y sale; luego dices "sí no tiene nada que ver con lo que había pensado" y te dejas llevar para descubrir qué era eso. Otros salen enseguida, depende de cada trabajo. Hay libros que te llevan a la infancia, que te han gustado mucho, pero no sería capaz de dibujarlos.



¿Lo suyo es oficio o arte?

Me gusta la palabra oficio, el arte son palabras mayores. Hay quien se autodefine como artista y no lo puedo entender, porque le viene grande. Puedes ser muy bueno en tu trabajo, pero eso no significa que seas un artista en mayúsculas. El arte engloba una serie de disciplinas. Igual estoy equivocada, pero creo que tienen que pasar muchos años y hay muchas cosas; por eso hace falta poner distancias y ver cómo sobrevives al paso del tiempo.

Cuando algo no te sale puedes tirar de oficio, hacer cualquier cosa, pero eso no me interesa. Si trabajara de oficio no me avergonzaría pero cast, es un poco como engañar. Hay que intentar siempre hacerlo lo mejor que puedas y, si no tengo nada que contar, prefiero no hacerlo. Mi intención es que los trabajos que hice hace años me sigan gustando; y eso que la mayoría de esos libros ya no me gustan, aunque hay alguno que se salva. A veces te piden que hagas algo que ya has hecho, pero no va conmigo. No me gusta repetirme. Yo no soy artista, soy dibujante e ilustradora. Hay ilustradores como Quentin Blake que parece que siempre hacen lo mismo, pero no lo hacen.

¿Tiene una rutina?

Tengo pocas rutinas. Depende de cada trabajo, no es lo mismo hacer un libro que un cartel. Pero me inspi-

ran las vivencias, mi forma de ser, cómo veo las cosas.

Ha utilizado acuarela, tintas, acrílicos, rotuladores, lápices de colores... ¿El material es importante o secundario?

El material es importante. Rotuladores y lápices de colores he utilizado muy poco, solo en cosas concretas, porque se prestaba. Hace años que no utilizo las acuarelas, ni siquiera sé dónde está la caja. De repente, empecé a usar tintas, son cosas graduales que ocurren sin darme cuenta. Uso acrílicos hace bastante tiempo y me encantan. Otros dibujos los hago con lápiz, es que hay libros que no se pueden hacer a color.

No cabe duda de que tiene un estilo propio. ¿Es importante evolucionar?

Como en cualquier trabajo, si no, es muy monótono. Si llegas a un punto en el que no puedes seguir, es mejor dejarlo y dedicarte a otra cosa. Si me ocurre, que me puede pasar, no me gustaría arrepentirme de cosas que he hecho.

¿Si lo dejara, a qué se dedicaría?

Ni idea. No me lo he planteado. Soy realista, sé que hay muchas cosas que no podría hacer. Cuando pienso en algo tiene que ver con lo que yo hago, con la estética, el diseño.

«A veces te piden que hagas algo que ya has hecho, pero no va conmigo. No me gusta repetirme. Yo no soy artista, soy dibujante e ilustradora»

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¿Se puede vivir de estos oficios?

Un libro tiene un montón de intermediarios y, de toda la cadena, los que menos porcentaje se llevan son el escritor y el ilustrador. Hace falta una editorial, la librería, que tiene que pagar un alquiler, para venderlo... Hay libros a los que les he dedicado dos meses, y con un adelanto no cubro ni el mes. Para cuando cobras los derechos de autor, que son birriosos, igual ha pasado un año o dos. Se cobra al final, y primero hay que financiarlo. Además, el mercado funciona como funciona y prioriza las novedades. Para mí, lo importante es sacar menos cantidad y libros más pensados. Nuestra intención en la editorial es que sean libros de fondo, cuando se agoten volver a publicarlos y no descatálogos. Para hacer libros de usar y tirar y poder vivir de ello tienes que hacer uno al mes. Es impensable. Hay trabajos que salen rápidamente y están muy bien y a otros que les dedicas mucho más tiempo. Cuando los premios son económicos te ayudan, si no, no te da. Por eso, si estoy trabajando en un libro y me encargan un cartel, algo que me encanta hacer, me alegro.

¿Siempre fue así?

Hace veinte años ingresaba más de lo que cobro ahora. Hacía muchos libros y eso que nunca he hecho un libro por hacer. Lo que pasa es que me compensa personalmente. Cuando cerraron la agencia de publicidad es la que trabajaba supe que quería dedicarme a esto. Mi madre puso el grito en el cielo. "¿Cómo que no vas a buscar trabajo?", me decía. Siempre he tenido esa confianza en que ya pasará algo, pero hace unos años la perdí. Empecé a dedicarle mucho tiempo a algunos trabajos y a uno, especialmente, en el que invertí un año, y ni siquiera se ha publicado. Este trabajo es muy difícil de valorar. Puedes hacer algo grande en un día o una semana, ¿y por eso, vale menos?

¿Tiene que esperar a que suene el teléfono o le llueven los encargos?

Depende. Te dan un premio importante y alguien piensa «esta se ha subido a la parrá» y, de repente, no te llama nadie. La gente se hace ideas sin conocerte.

¿Es importante que el autor o la autora tengan el control absoluto de la obra?

Si y no, porque a veces estás tan metida que necesitas distancia o una persona que sepa aconsejarte. Me pasó con "Frankenstein". Es fantástico que no te digan nada, pero a veces hace falta y hay que saber escuchar. Un buen editor es alguien que mejora tu trabajo y yo tengo a alguien así.

Cuando se trabaja en publicaciones para niños, ¿existe cierta censura o autocensura?

Para tratar algo con normalidad hay que poner las cosas. Es realista poner a una abuela en bragotas, a una

adolescente que ha bebido -aparecen en "Sentimientos encontrados", que publicó Devon Artes en euskara y posteriormente El Embudo, en castellano-. Nada tiene que ser gratuito, pero hay que tratar las cosas porque, si hacemos como que no existen, parecemos tontos y se consigue el efecto contrario. También pienso: "si hago esto me van a decir que no, pues que me digan que no". La corrección política la llevo bastante mal. Además, ocurre que influye la interpretación de cada uno: yo no he hecho esto, tú ves eso.

¿Cómo ve el panorama vasco, hay cantera?

Hay muchos ilustradores y muchos que no conozco. No estoy muy puesta. Ahora es más fácil ver lo que hace uno de Nueva Zelanda que uno de aquí, pero no suelo buscar. Llevo 25 años en esto y antes éramos muchos menos. Cuando yo empecé, no existía Internet. Ahora hay escuelas, congresos, festivales, encuentros de ilustradores; entonces, no. Vas a un congreso y piensas: ¿hay trabajo para tan gente? A mí me ha pasado que me digan: «Ilustradora, que bonito y ¿eso que es?».

Yo siempre he funcionado de boca a oreja. Hice un libro con Elkar, lo vieron en la editorial Anaya y me llamaron. Pero también es verdad que con Internet te ve alguien desde cualquier lugar.

Tanto, que a usted le llamaron de Inglaterra. ¿Qué tal fue la experiencia?

Tienen otra forma de ilustrar muy encaminada, muy dirigida y yo con eso no puedo. Lo tuve que dejar. Eso sí, las condiciones económicas no tienen nada que ver, el mercado anglosajón es más grande y tiene más tradición.

Internet ha beneficiado al universo del diseño?

En muchas cosas. Hasta hace poco yo mandaba los originales y todo era más rudimentario. En mi caso dibujo a mano pero hay quien lo hace por ordenador. Lo puedes mandar a cualquier sitio, es más barato. Ha mejorado todo, pero al mismo tiempo te puedes perder entre tanta oferta.

¿Papel o digital?

Yo siempre voy a ser del papel, disfruto tanto dibujando, aunque hay gente que en digital hace maravillas. Pero la digital es otra técnica.

El sector editorial atraviesa un momento complicado y usted se embarca en Ediciones Modernas el Embudo, un proyecto de libros para niños.

Nunca habría pensado que iba a estar en una editorial. Soy de que me propongan un trabajo y me guste, pero no de iniciar. Me llamó Gustavo (Puerta Leisse) y dije que sí. No sé si soy una inconsciente porque tengo que seguir haciendo otras cosas, pero son libros que dan tantas ganas! ¡Es una gozada! Algunos son para leer entre varios, hay textos muy trabajados, que hacen



«El mercado funciona como funciona y prioriza las novedades. Pero para mí lo importante es sacar menos cantidad y libros más pensados»

pensar. Son imparciales y tienen distintas formas de leerlos y distintas interpretaciones.

Optaron por suspender la campaña de presentación de algunos de sus títulos en puertas del confinamiento por el coronavirus.

Cancelamos las presentaciones de la versión en castellano de "Ya sé vestirme sola", "Sentimientos encontrados" y "Yo tengo un moco" -también editados en euskara y catalán- que el 11, 12 y 13 de marzo se habían organizado en Donostia, Gasteiz y Getxo. En Madrid ya los habíamos presentado, pero teníamos otra presentación pendiente.

Nosotros somos muy pequeños. De momento, tenemos cuatro libros y cuatro colecciones. No sé qué va pasar con todo esto. Si antes no se vendía mucho, imagínate ahora. La gente que se va al paro tiene otras prioridades. El mundo de la cultura está mal, pero no solo ellos. Las librerías han abierto, pero los bares, ¿en qué condiciones? Es terrible para los autónomos.

¿Qué proyectos tiene entre manos?

Ahora me voy a meter con la colección "Qué ya sé", destinada a niños pequeños para proseguir con otras acciones. También un... me parece que son de esos que todavía no se pueden contar.

Elena Odriozola Courses, Workshops, etc.



ILUSTRATOUR 2011



INTERNATIONAL COURSE OF ILLUSTRATION
AND GRAPHIC DESIGN.

Albarracín, 2013



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SARAMAGO FOUNDATION
Lisboa, 2016.



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MARRAZIOAK
San Sebastián, 2019



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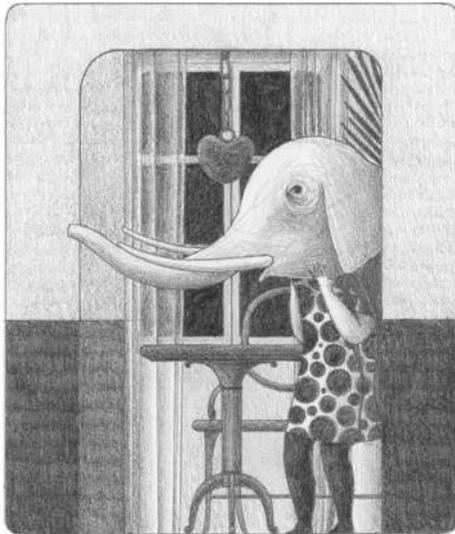


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Translation by Sarah Marshall