

PABLO BERNASCONI

ARGENTINA'S ILLUSTRATOR CANDIDATE
FOR HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARD 2020



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'Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.'

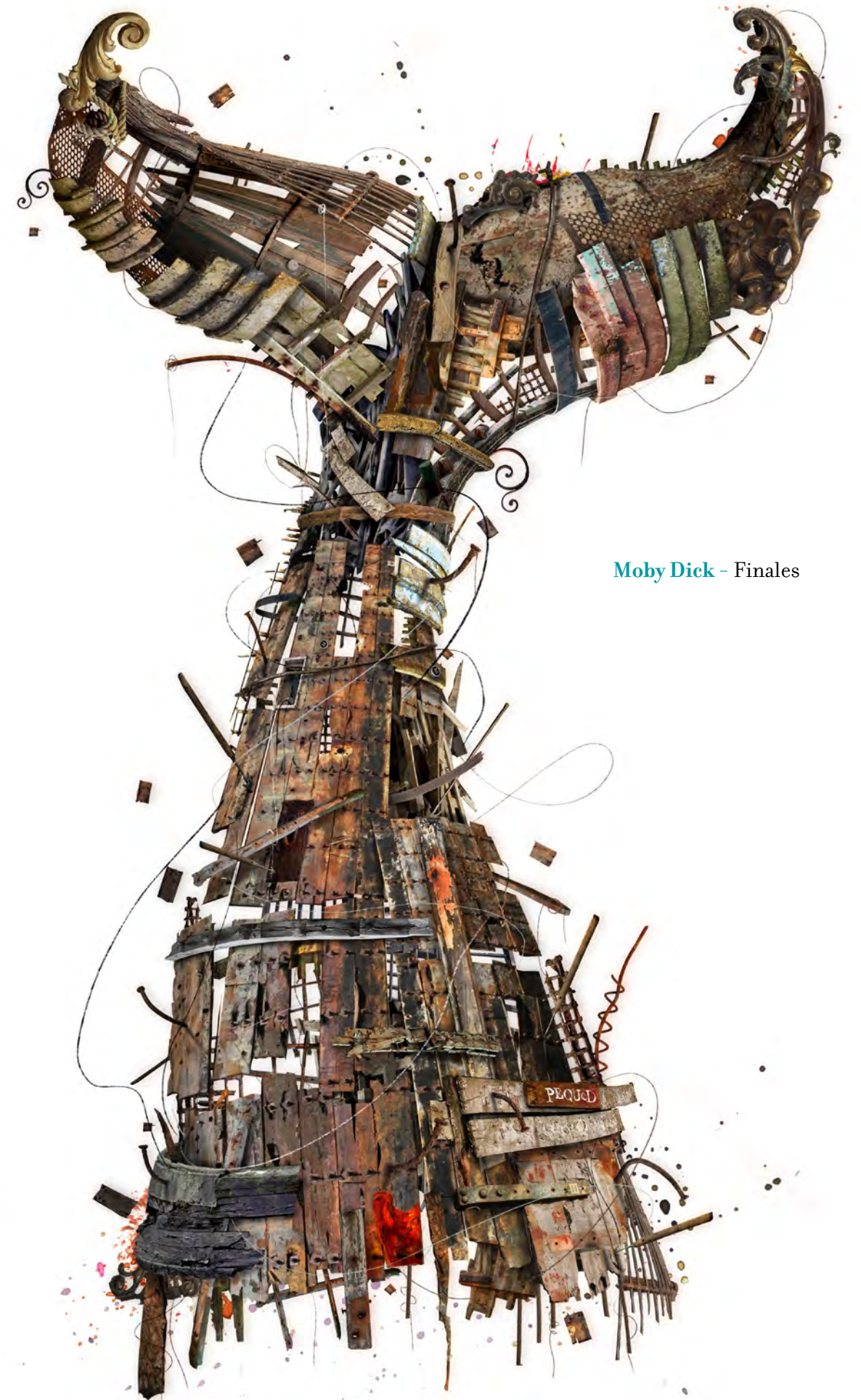
The little prince



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Moby Dick - Finales



MENTIRAS Y MORETONES (THE THEATER CONCERT)

BIOGRAPHY



Pablo Bernasconi was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on August 6, 1973. He is a graphic designer graduated from the University of Buenos Aires, where he was professor of Design and Head of Practical Assignments for five years. He began his career as an illustrator in Clarín newspaper in 1998, creating the cover page artwork for more than three hundred and fifty supplement editions. He also used to publish a critical review in La Nación newspaper every Sunday. Some of his illustrations have been published in newspapers and magazines all around the world, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Saturday Evening Post, Telegraph and The Times of England. He is currently working for various publications in different countries. Besides his work with publishers and media, Pablo is a continuous collaborator with the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo for their design and graphic projects. He is the author and illustrator of sixteen books and he has illustrated another twenty books by different authors. Bernasconi has participated in several individual and group exhibitions in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Italy, Slovenia, Colombia, United States and England. They were:

2007 - Society of Illustrators – New York

2007 - Centro Simón Patiño – Bolivia

2007/2008/2011 - Utem – Chile

2007 - The Coningsby Gallery – London

2008 - Bologna Book Fair – Italy

2008 - Gallery Holz, Retratos (Portraits) – Argentina

2008 - Art BA, Retratos (Portraits) – Argentina

2009 - Bratislava – Slovak Republic

2010 - Bogotá – Colombia

2012 - Denver, Boulder – United States

2010/2016 - More than 25 cities across Argentina with 'Finales' (Endings)

He created a travelling exhibition called 'Finales' that ran for more than six years and was seen by 150,000 people in various cities of Argentina.

2018 - Argentine house in Rome - Italy

Conferences & Seminars

He has delivered lectures and seminars about illustration, design and literature at different cultural spaces and universities, where he also works as an essayist. Some of these are: in Argentina, University of Buenos Aires, University of Morón, University of Cuyo, Viedma Cultural Centre, Museum of Puerto Madryn, Faena Hotel+Universe, School of Fine Arts of La Plata, Association of Graphic Designers of La Pampa (Santa Rosa), Pixelations (Córdoba), and book fairs in different provinces of Argentina.

And abroad: University of Chicago (US), Centro Simón Patiño (Bolivia), Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana (Chile), Universidad Diego Portales (Chile), USPN + Instituto Cervantes + Casa Do Libro (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Creactivo Conference (Hermosillo, Mexico), Edinburgh Book Festival (Scotland), various schools and events in London and Bath (England), Javeriana University (Bogotá, Colombia), Jordi Sierra i Fabra Literature Workshop (Medellín, Colombia).

Hello. My name is Pablo Bernasconi.

I live in Bariloche, a beautiful city in Patagonia, Argentina.

I have two children, Franco, aged ten, and Nina, seven.

And I love to illustrate stories primarily because I love stories.

This is what I believe regarding illustration:

•I am convinced that something meaningful is beautiful.

•As illustrators, as authors, we invent things that we believe deserve to exist. And if they are truly genuine, we work hard to get them right.

•I'm actually making the books that I couldn't find when I was a boy, I'm giving myself these books as an overdue gift. I guess the most straightforward way of working is to dedicate the stories to the child we once were and see if anyone else shares these passions.

•A book should give the opportunity to whet the appetite to read more, to keep on seeking—to avoid the passive role offered by other formats and link directly to the child's imagination. It has to nurture and at the same time, entertain. It should come across as a friendly tool, where neurons can do gymnastics without suffering.

•I can say that illustration is mostly something that I brought from the past, and that I feel comfortable and satisfied with. It's like a language that I just had to remember.

•I consider that the tool should be aesthetic in all cases and be subject to the idea, what you want to tell. My intention is to bring back the author as a generator of ideas, a source of creativity and not just some worker with syntactic skills.

•I think it can be dangerous, albeit comfortable, to become addicted to a single mechanism of speech. It increases security but then you're no longer susceptible to accidents, to improvisation in the face of conceptual surprises. Luckily there is not a manual, a road trip. I am of the idea that we must keep intuition alive and the craft should be invisible.

•I'm convinced everything starts during the pencil stage, which I never avoid. It is the most effective and tacit way of coming up with the idea, experimenting and testing, projecting. I tend to dedicate most of the time to this stage.

•I believe in the physical relationship of an artist with his tools, whether they are brushes, clay, or scissors. And the computer, for that matter, to my mind takes a back seat to more basic tools. We are always talking about tools: none should be considered to be superior to thinking.

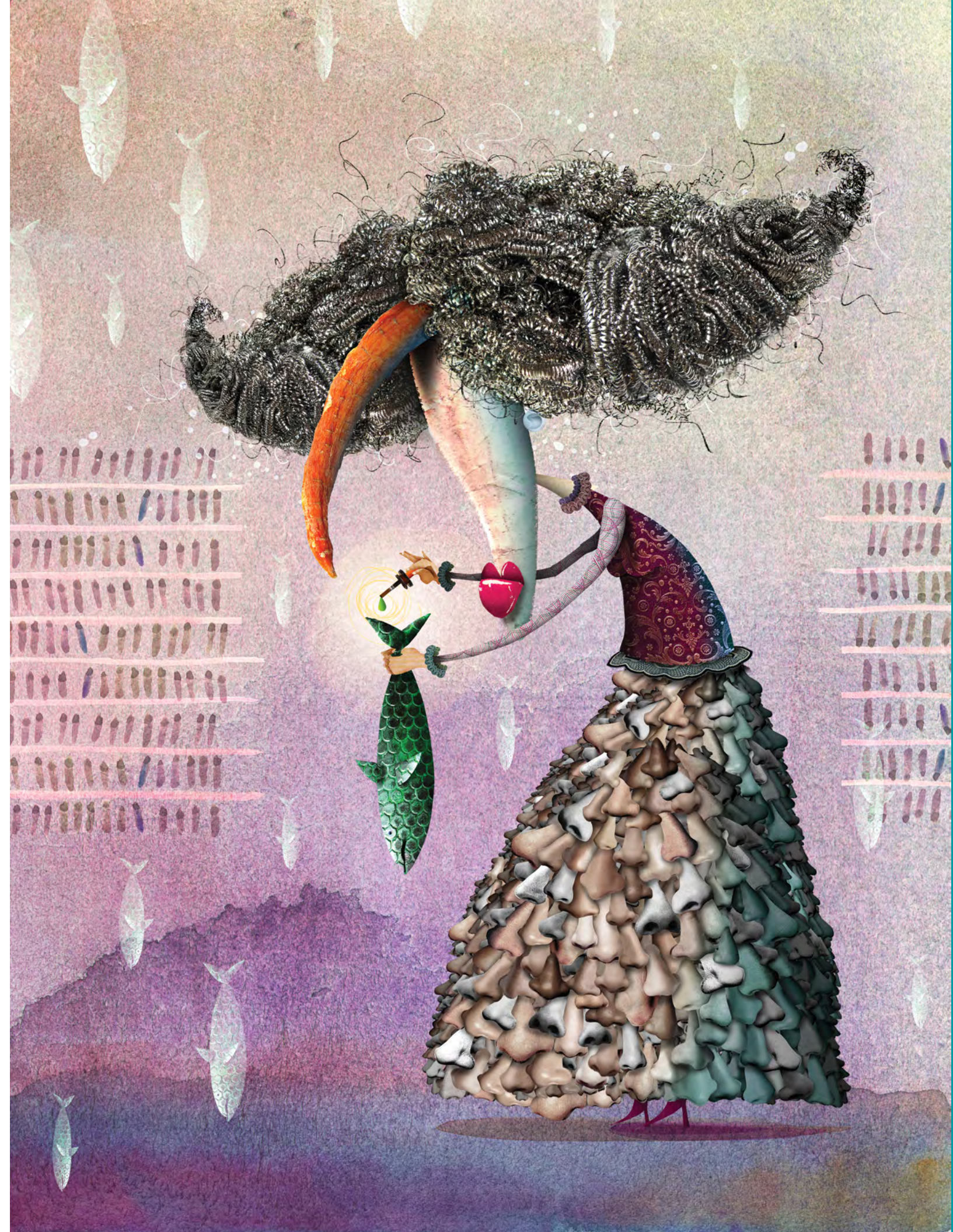


AWARDS

- Shortlisted for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, illustration category. The prize is awarded by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).
- Mentiras y moretones was selected for ALIJA's 2018 Readers' Choice Awards (PFL).
- Selected along with other Argentine authors to represent his country at the Colombia Book Fair (FILBO), 2018.
- Silver Medal - Society of News Design, 2017, for his visual opinion column in La Nación newspaper.
- Silver Medal - Society of News Design, 2016, for his visual opinion column in La Nación newspaper.
- Selected for 'Illustration Now' TASCHEN, 2014, for his visual opinion column in La Nación newspaper.
- Gold Medal - Society of News Design, 2015, for his visual opinion column in La Nación newspaper.
- Gold Medal - Society of News Design, 2012, for his visual opinion column in La Nación newspaper.
- El diario del Capitán Arsenio nominated for the 2010 best books for children and youth by Venezuela's Banco del Libro.
- El diario del Capitán Arsenio selected by the SEP (Secretariat of Public Education of Mexico), 2009.
- Selected to represent Argentina at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava, 2009.
- Selected to represent Argentina at the Bologna International Book Fair, 2008.
- ALIJA Award, best book overall (text, illustration and edition) for El diario del Capitán Arsenio, 2008.
- ALIJA Award, illustration category, El brujo, el Horrible y el libro rojo de los hechizos, 2007.
- 32nd 'April of Journalism' Award, illustration category, Brazil, 2007
- El zoo de Joaquín selected for Daniel Gil's Awards, 2006.
- El diario del Capitán Arsenio, Best Children's Book of the Year, Zena Sutherland Award, University of Chicago, 2006.
- Five Awards of Excellence by the SND (Society of Newspaper Design) for illustrations in Clarín and La Voz de Galicia.
- In 2005, 2008 and 2011, included in Luerzer's Archive magazine's '200 Best Illustrators Worldwide' (Germany).
- Best Cover for Children's School Books at Chicago Book and Media Show, 2006.
- Children's Book of the Week: The wizard, the ugly and the Book of shame, UK, 2006. The Sunday Times.
- First Prize to the poster made for the Children's Book Fair, Buenos Aires, 2005.
- Award by the UK Association of Illustrators 29th Annual Awards, UK, 2005.
- Award by World Book Day, UK, 2004.



MARÍA TERESA ANDRUETTO
ROGER MELLO
NORBERTO CHAVES
THE GRANDMOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO
GREENPEACE
GARRAHAN FOUNDATION HOSPITAL
UNICEF
SECRETARIAT OF CULTURE
MARIANO MORENO NATIONAL LIBRARY
ECUNHI - THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO
UNHCR (UN REFUGEE AGENCY)





María Teresa Andruetto
(2012 Hans Christian Andersen Award winner)

Pablo is a child of scientists, and—he told me once—one of his grandparents was a carpenter. From those two rivers he rises. Easily recognisable, Bernasconi's style largely resides in concept, a place where the artist gets to by means of a combination of volume and collage, using materials of all kinds, myriads of disposable elements and valuable objects, from a piano to threads, wires, or wood shavings. Trained to analyse, and concerned with narration and the multiple meanings of what he is searching for, Pablo Bernasconi pursues an idea rather than a technique. Intellectual art that prevails among debris, living matter supporting concept with spirituality and intelligence. The result is both strange and familiar, a work by a man who takes over fragments of the world, characters and literary texts, and using scissors, fire, a hammer...—like a great alchemist—transforms them into the unexpected.

Like a wizard.

Adding layers and layers of meaning, an artist burns, squeezes, hammers down objects in an effort to communicate. 'I go from the inside to the outside, and sometimes the most important thing in the illustration doesn't make it to the picture. I trust the souls of things. That's why I never use brand-new objects. They're soulless. Things are ephemeral; sometimes they last the brief moments gravity gives me to photograph them before they drop on the floor. When in a creative frenzy, it seems as if something had burst in my studio,' he says, and that is how his pieces of work turn out: outbursts where an idea explodes like a grenade and makes way among such disparate elements as a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table, so as not to forget the Surrealists.

María Teresa Andruetto



DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANGHA / Finales - 2013



Roger Mello
(2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award winner)

Pablo Bernasconi is a vibrant voice in the Americas. His work is powerful and full of fantastic realism—a new kind of visual, urban fantastic realism. He combines the best of the Argentine poster art and comics—from Francisco Solano Lopez’s *The Eternaut* to Quino’s visual thinking—into a dialogue with global contemporary illustration. In his vigorous production of narrative images for children’s books, the chaos of his collages reveals his experiences with artistic particles, giving readers a chance to participate, with affection and vivid art.

Roger Mello



AN APOLOGY

Any realistic representation is, nevertheless, a mere metaphor, or in any case, a well-disguised metaphor... but a metaphor all the same – a dead metaphor where the meaning becomes invisible to the signifier, concealing it. Realism is, for that matter, an art of serenity. Regardless of how tragic the scene might be, peace reigns inside it. There is no tension. Tension appears when the metaphor is alive, that is, when both elements of the analogy fight for the consciousness of the observer. What appears to be something else is nothing else and still it is that which it appears to be. There lies the concern. Arcimboldo tortures us with offensive similarities. Offensive because, despite being arbitrary, they are not negligible. Somehow we are told that every-thing that looks like something is in a way that something. It is and it is not, simultaneously. Ontological anguish appears. Besides, any metaphor is violent. So midway through the observation of Portraits by Bernasconi, that anguish – which has been growing imperceptibly – takes over the observer's mind on a given page. We need to interrupt the experi-ence. Let the calm settle by coming back to reality. But what about reality now? What is left of reality now? Then, it is only natural to ask, in what space of imagination has that unnerving equivalence been forged? How has the one who imagines found the exact schizoid icon?

Maybe it is some dreamy abuse, some hallucinatory ability to see, in certain things, other things. An ability to see ghosts, beings that are not there. Pure nightmares, not surreal ones. Unplanned, unpremeditated nightmares. A brain radically incredulous of the world and its platitudes, which manages to see more than what exists... and show it. Who knows! Possibly it is an anomalous brain, for only an anomalous brain would allow that jump between two completely unrelated ideas and that alienated merging which makes them battle and fight for the same image. Something anomalous. Bernasconi is not normal... that being said with all due respect.

Norberto Chaves

**He is a teacher with 51 years' experience and a partner of I+C Consultores (Barcelona-Buenos Aires), a consulting company specialized in Corporate Image that advises companies and institutions on identity and communication strategies and programmes. Former Head of the Teaching Department and Professor of Design Theory, Semiology and Communication Theory at the School of Architecture and Urbanism (University of Buenos Aires). Tenured Professor at Escola EINA (Barcelona) from 1977 and 1984. Visiting Professor at universities and design schools in Spain and Latin America*





The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo

The purpose of this letter is to express our appreciation for Pablo Bernasconi. He is a truly great artist, both in terms of artistic quality and profound sensitivity. It is surely this sensitivity that has led him to illustrate the injustices of life –but also its beauties– tenderly and firmly. Very shortly after earning his graphic designer degree, Pablo approached us, the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo with a genuine and disinterested desire to help in the search of the grandchildren abducted during the military dictatorship in Argentina. His illustrations filled our institutional newspaper, brimming with colours, snippets of remembrance and invitations to imagine a possible future. His artwork was constantly featured in the Organisation’s graphic exhibitions, and every time his talent is required, he gives it to us wholeheartedly. Pablo and his work have been essential tools to communicate the value of restitution and the right to one’s identity. Because his artworks, like himself, lend themselves to be pierced by reality and its materiality. Because a true artist is one who cannot remain indifferent.

Estela de Carlotto, President



Greenpeace

Greenpeace Argentina has sought the support of Pablo Bernasconi due to his history and commitment to certain values that are fundamental to the Organisation. The inclusion of a transformative, probing perspective in his work, paired with a powerful vindication of human rights and the importance of caring for our planet is attuned to Greenpeace’s mission. Also, his pieces allow us to reach out to children and youngsters with our campaign’s message. For our campaign against Arctic oil drilling, he managed to condense into one image the description of fracking and the scope of the damage wrought to the ecosystem and to humankind strongly, accurately and emotionally. We are forever grateful for his contribution and we look forward to working together again.

https://blog.greenpeace.org.ar/pablo-bernasconi-el-ilustrador-que-hace-visible-lo-invisible/15565/?utm_source=feed-burner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+org%2FOgGf+%28Greenpeace+Argentina%29
<https://blog.greenpeace.org.ar/etiqueta/bernasconi/>

Greenpeace



Fundación Garrahan Hospital (Garrahan Foundation Hospital)

In 2017, we collaborated with Garrahan Children’s Hospital to produce a custom magazine to mark the hospital’s 30th anniversary. When it was time to choose an illustrator for the cover, we at Fundación Garrahan immediately thought of Pablo Bernasconi and what he expresses through graphic language. Better known for his collages, he was the artist that would perfectly convey everything that the Hospital means to the community. We knew it wasn’t easy to squeeze the work of the Garrahan into one illustration but Pablo managed to do so. ‘The Giant in the City’ is a highly appealing, metaphorical image that touched the heart of all of us at the Hospital.

Fundación Garrahan



UNICEF

UNICEF’s Health Division invited Pablo Bernasconi to illustrate the book that compiled opinions and proposals by teenagers in the north of Argentina regarding unwanted pregnancies and suicide among teenagers. Pablo was chosen because of his ability to convey various levels of meaning with just one illustration, and to create artwork that speaks to different targets. In this case the document aimed to reach both teenagers and adults. Pablo Bernasconi created artwork that conveys feelings and concerns and is a call to action for adults. We are very proud of the book, called Voces que cuentan (Tell-tale Voices), as it is a document that combines a strong message of advocacy for the rights of children and teenagers and their real voices. This was achieved with the help of Pablo’s illustrations.

Fernando Zingman, Health Expert



Secretariat of Culture

Pablo Bernasconi has managed to make a text out of his illustrations in the fullest sense of the word. His artworks tell stories through objects laden with meanings, engaging in a dialogue that allows the author’s interpretations to be enriched by the points of view of his readers of all ages again and again. And not surprisingly, each and every one of the members of his huge readership –young or old, in Argentina or anywhere else in the world– are taken on a journey across the universes presented by Bernasconi through every book, every design an every page as a true creator of worlds.

Pablo Avelluto - Culture Secretary



Mariano Moreno National Library

The kind of imagination that permeates Bernasconi’s illustrations has mythical, allegorical and graphic elements that, in and of themselves, belong to literature. This imagination is utterly consistent with the magic flight –reminiscent of an enchanted, nicely deformed world– and its plastic fancy. The fanciful shapes that come out of his pannier of unrepentant collages – and let’s not forget that the collage is the basis of mythological thinking– make up a complete world where both absurdity and tenderness are kings. The idea of giving prominence to letters is not alien to a reader: there is always a hidden wish to anticipate or play hide and seek with the cumulative instruments of the account proposed by an author. Pablo Bernasconi is a reader whose boundless wit takes him to the end, because somehow later he will read everything back against the grain, retrospectively, like a rambler who collects ruins from the past. When he fits them together, these remnants tend to turn into surprising shapes that convert all matter into an animate object. Bernasconi’s blobs are great graphic and sculptural creations, and like the Golem, they expect their spectators to breathe life into them, even though these anthropomorphic figures are alive. They are ghostly inhabitants of a pleasant planet of animated, fantastic objects, and as such, they are full of hope.

Horacio González, Director



Ecunhi - The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

At EcuNHi (Our Children, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Cultural Centre), the artistic and educational projects we design aim to carry on the legacy of life and collective transformation that the Mothers envisioned for this place, so closely linked with the suffering, horror and death of the disappeared --their children-- . This site, was the largest clandestine detention, torture and extermination camp in Argentina; it also functioned as a clandestine maternity ward. The Mothers decided to transform the property imbuing it with art, beauty and education, not with the aim of erasing the traces of its history, which are still present, but to work collectively to build a different here and now, one that is luminous and laden with future.

To carry out such a task, we engaged talented and sensitive artists with a personal and professional commitment to children, art and human rights. One of them was Pablo Bernasconi, who has left his mark in a special, long-lasting way.

Pablo worked hard and was committed to the history and the site. One of the virtues of Pablo Bernasconi's art is that it does not neglect any point of view – it is absolutely integrating.

He appreciated and gave support to the voices of the participating children, leaving his mark with great sensitivity.

We admire his work for its ability to show us the world in a different light, born out of sheer freedom and tenderness. Also for its aesthetic and literary quality. But, above all, we admire his work because it expresses Pablo's commitment to children and human rights, to literature and art as essential rights. His bid for beauty is a bid for the restitution of freedom and dreams.

Verónica Parodi - Director, EcuNHi (Our Children, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Cultural Centre)



UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency)

"#RefugiArte, the Refugee Crisis illustrated is an itinerant exhibition devised by the UNHCR Regional Office for Southern Latin America.

By producing illustrations that reflect the global refugee crisis to help raise awareness and spread the word, through art, on the protection needs of refugees and internally displaced persons around the world who are affected by violence, discrimination or intolerance. It also serves to make the topic more accessible to society and promote a positive attitude towards this population.

Pablo Bernasconi was the first artist selected by the Office to be a part of this project. He was selected because not only is he one of the most recognized illustrators in Argentina and the region, but also because his work reflects a very sensitive, genuine and humanized view of the world, and UNHCR believed these were very important attributes to contribute to an exhibition that has the aim of raising awareness on one of the main humanitarian crisis in the world as is the global refugee crisis.

With thanks for his time and for doing so much for people living under such hard conditions.

Analia Kim - Regional Office for Southern Latin America



ARTICLES AND INTERVIEWS



PABLO BERNASCONI WAS SHORTLISTED FOR THE HCA AWARD 2018

By Natalia Blanc

Pablo Bernasconi is an image-and-text artist. A designer, illustrator and author of outstanding albums, he creates characters by putting together collages with objects that are familiar to children. Using the lid of a rubbish bin, a feather and a saw, he manages to portray Don Quixote, and using a vegetable grater he creates a space rocket. He uses warm colours and writes simple texts that are also very deep. For all these reasons, Bernasconi is much more than an illustrator: he is an integral author, the creator of a fantastic, playful universe.

Born in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 1973, he currently lives in the city of Bariloche (Río Negro, Patagonia), where he grew up. The child of scientist parents (his mother is a chemist and his father, a nuclear engineer), he grew up in a studios, experimental environment, surrounded by books and mathematical formulas. This is why his illustrations and collages are pieces he puts together using fragments of objects he photographs and recreates using a computer.

'The fact that my parents were scientists made me look at things differently,' he said in a 2012 interview in La Nación newspaper's Sunday magazine. 'I like to look at things and then look again. Growing up I was surrounded by very special people. I'm a pilot; my dad, on top of being an engineer, was a flight instructor for a long time and he taught me how to fly [...] In my life there were a lot of nuts and bolts, airplanes, airfields, airports and accidents. All of that is part of my childhood years.' (Fabiana Scherer: 'Bernasconi: The illustrated man,' La Nación Revista [original in Spanish], June 24, 2012, www.lanacion.com.ar)

Bernasconi graduated as a graphic designer from the University of Buenos Aires, where he later taught for five years. He first worked as an illustrator in Argentine press outlets such as Clarín and La Nación newspapers, where he continues to publish an illustrated opinion column on Sundays about current affairs. The column, called 'Ilustrado', received a gold medal from the SND (Society of Newspaper Design) in 2012.

He has published twenty children's books with texts and illustrations, some of which have been translated to eight languages. His latest book, Quetren quetren (Choo choo), published by La Brujita de Papel, was created in



collaboration with his son Franco, aged 10, who has been drawing trains since he was 2. It is an illustrated album with rhymed texts that expands like an accordion. Each page features a colourful train car. Father and son wrote the rhymes together in a free association game that turned out to be great fun. The first verse goes, 'The choo-choo train/ carries breaking news/ good ones and bad ones/ with stories and chronicles/ exchanging secrets/ for bicycles.' The result of this creative game between father and son is a hilarious story about a train that 'gives away futures, full of cloud rides, nectarine peaches, open windows and deserted beaches.'

As a cultural journalist specialized in children's and youth literature, I had the opportunity to interview Bernasconi on several occasions. In August 2017, when Quetren Quetren was published, I asked him about creating a book with his son. He was ecstatic, both as a father and an author: 'I'd had an idea for several years: to make a kind of timeline of Franco's drawings of trains, which were hundreds, checking the evolution and the exploration from a child's perspective, and to compare that with my own vision as an adult (well, almost). Rather than an image or a concept, what came up was a desire, an unpaid debt, a strong drive that magnetized Franco toward trains from a very early age, and therefore, it magnetized me. When such an attractive motif arises before a possible project, the best we can do is to face it and see what it gives us in return. And the truth is we soon find ourselves with material that is full of possibilities.' (Natalia Blanc: 'Pablo and Franco Bernasconi: A creative partnership of father and son,' La Nación Cultura [original in Spanish], August 20, 2017, www.lanacion.com.ar)

Bernasconi gets his first-hand knowledge of the world of children not only from his readers but, above all, from his

"The fact that my parents were scientists made me look at things differently, I like to look at things and then look again. Growing up I was surrounded by very special people. I'm a pilot; my dad, on top of being an engineer, was a flight instructor for a long time and he taught me how to fly".

children. Besides Franco, he's father to a 5-year old girl named Nina. In the interview mentioned above, in which he referred to the creative process for Quetren quetren, he talked about his profession as seen by children: 'Franco has accepted my profession in the most natural way, as was to be expected. Play, experiments and chaos are part of our everyday life. Sometimes it's hard to make him see that this is my job (we still fight over crayons), and it's understandable if you put yourself in his shoes. Having a father that spends his day drawing, writing and collecting objects is as atypical as it is attractive – to any child. But to dive into this world and participate in it means accepting certain groundrules, so we had to agree on those when the project got more serious. The problem is that now the book's out, my other child, Nina, wants me to make one like it with her... about princesses!' (Ibid. previous citation)

In a previous book, the wonderful album La verdadera explicación (The real explanation), published by Sudamericana in 2013, Bernasconi had already explored the creative method of children through a questions and answers game he proposed to Franco. 'My aim was in fact to learn about the mechanism Franco used to answer any question I asked without hesitation, and to try to replicate it using my own logic to answer new questions.' (Ibid. previous citation)

Mentiras y moretones (Lies and bruises), published by Sudamericana in 2016, is made up of twenty-four illustrated stories. In this book, recommended for ages 7 and up, Bernasconi dared to write longer, more personal texts for the first time, and it proves his maturity as an author. Heavy on humour and plays on words, the stories tell us about fears, blows, philosophical questions and legends about endearing characters. 'I wanted to create a book about heavy blows, failure, misfortune, loss, disappointment. As it happened, I went through a lot of those things as the book took shape. The stories reflect some of these processes in a metaphorical way. My central theme is that the relationship between hard knocks, pain and remembrance is closely linked to a person's imagination, their interpretation in hindsight, their mood-related digestion.' (Natalia Blanc: 'Pablo Bernasconi: I write for the bond between parent and child,' La Nación Cultura [original in Spanish], August 14, 2016, www.lanacion.com.ar)



“The growing recognition of authors from our part of the world is no coincidence. Doors get opened because someone who came before us looked for the keys”.

Other books written by him and published by Sudamericana are *Excesos y exageraciones* (Excesses and exaggerations) (2013); *El diario del Capitán Arsenio* (published in English as *Captain Arsenio: Inventions and (mis)adventures in flight*) (2012); *El brujo, el horrible y el libro rojo de los hechizos* (published in English as *The wizard, the ugly and the Book of shame*) (2012) and *Rebelión en Tortoni* (Rebellion in Tortoni) (2009). Under *La Brujita de Papel* he has published *Animalísimo* (2017), a collection of three illustrated stories previously published separately: *Hipo no nada* (Hippo can't swim), *Cuero negro, vaca blanca* (Black hide white cow) and *El zoo de Joaquín* (Joaquin's zoo). Also, *No (es así)* (No, that's it) and *Los Súper Premios* (The super awards), an album with ideas for readers to build their ideal superhero.

When he was among the six illustrators shortlisted for the Hans Christian Andersen Award a few months ago, Bernasconi said to *La Nación*: ‘What makes me most proud about the nomination is that it gives visibility to the material and to Argentina’s history with the genre. The fact that our culture can carve out a place for itself among so many countries is praiseworthy, and surely it’s the result of the dedicated work of many people, including authors, illustrators and publishers, who laid the groundwork so we could be here now. The growing recognition of authors from our part of the world is no coincidence. Doors get opened because someone who came before looked for the keys.’ (Natalia Blanc; ‘Pablo Bernasconi’s nomination to children’s Nobel caps off a great year for children’s books,’ *La Nación Cultura [original in Spanish], February 4, 2018, www.lanacion.com.ar.*) He had already been shortlisted for ‘the children’s Nobel’ for Argentina in 2012.

Dubbed by ALIJA, the Argentine Association of Children’s and Young Adult’s Literature that nominated him for the Anderson Award as an ‘ambassador for illustration,’ Bernasconi participated in the Bologna Book Fair in March 2018, where he gave a master class and a talk alongside other integral authors, including Argentine-born Diego Bianki. The following month, the artist premiered the *Imago Mundi* exhibition at Casa Argentina in Rome, his first individual exhibition in Italy, the country of his ancestors, which he was visiting for the first time.

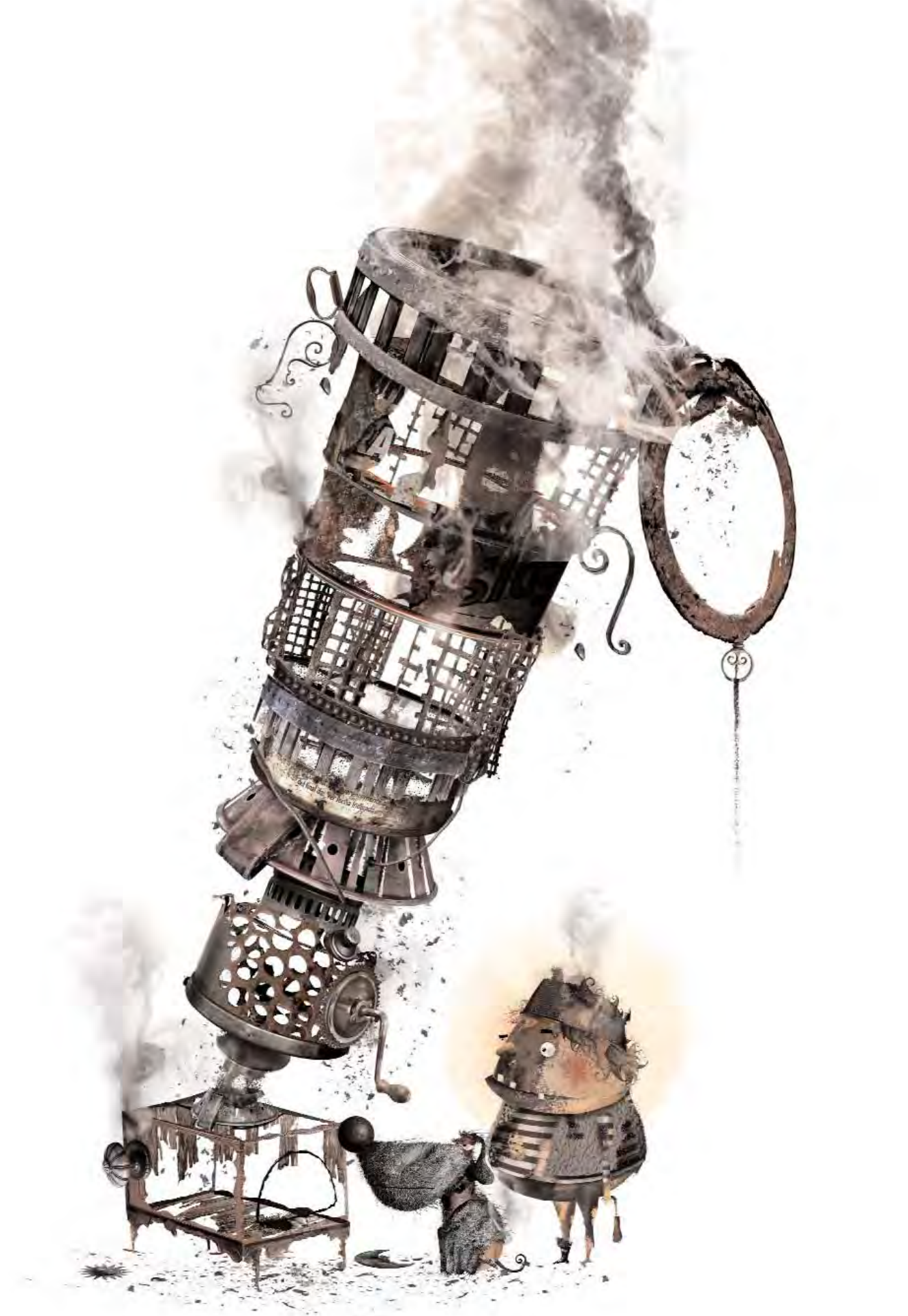
In addition to the children’s albums, he has published

illustrated books for adults: *Bifocal*, *Retratos* (Portraits) 1 and 2 and *Finales* (Endings), all under Edhasa. In them, the starting point is an image (either real or fantastic) that gets linked to a concept. In *Finales*, Bernasconi went even further: he illustrated the last paragraph of several of his favourite books. We can find a tin-clad knight and a saw-headed horse as a symbol of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, and a whale’s tail made with bits of wood, metal and nails that represents the end of Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*.

He used the original artworks of these books to put together an exhibition, also called *Finales*, which has travelled across libraries and cultural centres in Argentina since 2014. In mid 2015, this travelling exhibition arrived in Buenos Aires, more specifically in the National Library building. Bernasconi selected 70 illustrations out of 250 that make up the three books, transferred the original pieces into paintings, intervened them with acrylics, pastels and pencils and then printed them in a large format. ‘This exhibition is very special for me. It is made up of many pleasant readings and experiences. The National Library, with all it entails, is the perfect symbol to house these works, which ooze literature and future beginnings,’ he said at the time. (Natalia Blanc, ‘The literary endings touched by Bernasconi’s wand,’ *La Nación Cultura [original in Spanish], November 17, 2015, www.lanacion.com.ar*)

Early this year, the exhibition was held in the Argentine capital once again; this time, in the exhibition halls of the Library of Congress. ‘The person can approach this exhibition as if going on a personal journey, with surprises at every turn. That’s why the works include hundreds of clues, with nods to the viewer’s sensitivity and intelligence. There are interpretations of classic and modern books, and portraits of well-known and not so well-known characters, including writers, film-makers, musicians and plastic artists. I made a point of incorporating material that can be enjoyed by all ages,’ he explained. (*Ibid. previous citation*)

After participating in the Bologna Book Fair and prior to his trip to Colombia as a member of Argentina’s official delegation of the Bogotá Book Fair, the author delivered a lecture at the legislative library auditorium, where he outlined his creative process. Sitting shyly alone behind a desk on the stage and armed with a computer and a screen, he showed the audience some of the drawings in his sketch books. ‘I can





MENTIRAS Y MORETONES

"I don't know that what I do is writing for children. Or for parents. My aim, in any case, is to write for the bond [between them]"

only start creating when I see an image rendered on paper. I need that. That's why I have several notebooks where I make drawings and doodles in pencil in order to project shapes and objects,' he explained to an audience of various ages that filled the room. Among the works showcased in Finales there are sketches inviting the viewer to approach 'this incessant and mysterious alchemy that is the creative act,' as the illustrator put it. 'Sketches always give you a glimpse of the intimate side of creation, they let us spy on it and try to reconstruct how a certain piece came to be. Each of them offers a world of endless possibilities, until the artist defines the paths and solutions, thus restricting the end result.' (Natalia Blanc, 'The literary endings touched by Bernasconi's wand,' *La Nación Cultura [original in Spanish]*, November 17, 2015, www.lanacion.com.ar)

Multifaceted Bernasconi also created a theatre show based on his book *Mentiras y moretones* in which he performs live using his drawings and music. In his own words, it is a

'theatre concert for children and adults.' 'I like to expand the possibilities of the narrative medium. It is a risk that nurtures me and at the same time forces me to interact and share creative spaces with other people.' (Natalia Blanc, 'Pablo Bernasconi: I write for the bond between parent and child,' *La Nación Cultura [original in Spanish]*, August 14, 2016, www.lanacion.com.ar)

Once I asked him what factors he takes into account when writing for children, as opposed to grown-ups. His answer was forceful and it explains how he creates and conceives literature: 'I don't know that what I do is writing for children. Or for parents. My aim, in any case, is to write for the bond [between them]. That's what I enjoy when I play the role of reading to my children. The way in which a story, a narration, a book, accompanies us in our relationships is very endearing, genuine, inevitable. I like this kind of books and I cherish them. I seek to steer my work in that direction. I think those are the books that are worth existing.'



QUETREN QUETREN

THE CHILDISH IRREVERENCE OF IMAGES

'I spent a lifetime trying to paint like a child,' said once the great artist Pablo Picasso, a statement that artist Pablo Bernasconi (Buenos Aires, 1973) has implemented in his work.

In Retratos (Portraits), his latest book, his creativity is shown with a combination of love and hate for the characters that emerge from an irreverent collage.

He cuts and pastes, orders and disorders pictures, exploring the collage and retouching it with images that emerged from his own imagination. This description may be attributed to a child in his dream machine, with his materials deployed. But the piece was created by Pablo Bernasconi, one of Argentina's most interesting graphic artists of our days. He has already published seven books for children with texts and illustrations born from his ingenuity. Last year he surprised booksellers and readers with an original work that is very hard to classify. *Retratos (Portraits)* is the name of a compendium of 56 depictions of celebrities with the collage technique, put into the furnace of blazing inventiveness from which solid paper sculptures emerge.

Julio Cortázar fantasized about his books being sold in toy shops. Bernasconi wanted to fulfill this dream, and his trick was to deliver a work that he knew in advance would bring problems to booksellers at the moment of assigning a place to it: 'My fear was that once the book shop receives the box full of portraits, they don't know what to do with "this thing," don't know in which section it goes. At the end they were passing through all kind of sections: comic, children's, picture books, visual arts. At first it was a little messy, but then, thanks to the people who were asking for it as a book of graphic art, of design, as a specific genre, the matter was settled.'

Seeking to move away from a graphic art trend that he defines as 'purely aesthetic' but empty in concepts, Bernasconi works by combining techniques to express an idea as clearly as possible, without leaving room for arbitrary interpretation. The key is to let 'the conceptual trigger dictate the technique.' He defines *Retratos* as 'an experiment' and explains: 'From pounding a steak with a meat hammer (to make Rocky Balboa) to working with watercolor and ink or pencil, oil, a collage of objects, photographs – I used everything and cheated all I could.'

The textures of the portraits are different from page to page, even when they maintain a discursive technique: a mixture of objects, a symbolic assembly of things. 'I mix things

that mean nothing when they're apart but that mean a lot together,' says Bernasconi, and this is the only virtue he can claim to have as a designer: 'The difference between plastic and conceptual aspects is very clear to me. In relation to the plastic aspect I have no strength because I never took any course in drawing or using oils. But the conceptual work gives me more freedom, allows me to forget that I can't draw. So I use the collage technique a lot because it is the most efficient way of conveying what I think; the metaphor contained in a collage is so much more direct and less noisy.'

Imaginary friends and close enemies

On a whim, he chose only characters that he either revered or disliked. But none of them was easy to make: 'It was much harder with the ones I have an affinity with. With the ones I dislike it was a visceral thing, you could even tell from the treatment they received, the plastic rendering of them. For those that I love, like Fontanarrosa or the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, you can see the meticulous work so there's nothing missing in them, either conceptually or artistically. They were characters that even took me months. On the



LOUIS ARMSTRONG - RETRATOS

'I use the collage technique a lot because it is the most efficient way of conveying what I think; the metaphor contained in a collage is more direct and less noisy.'

other hand, George W. Bush took me a few minutes to make and even less to think about.'

His sketches are 'an awful mess.' He keeps a sketchbook that is 'gold' to him, even when he defines them as 'doodles': 'In fact it is simply a notebook where I write with images rather than words, and then they take on new life and make their own decisions. Then I'll decide the best way to do justice to the concept graphically and then I do not care if I'm good at using that material or not. I'm not very skilled with watercolor, but there are accidents that happen with it and I've used them because I thought they fit some portraits. For example, for Tom Waits, who's a wild and somber guy –that I adore– I used watercolor and ink, and for his hair, bottles of whiskey.'

National identity or Argentine hodgepodge mix

The Argentine identity is an important subject to Bernasconi and he revisits it in *Retratos (Portraits)*, although it was already present in his children's books, seeping into the way his characters solve conflicts or arising from the stories they contain. *Excesos y exageraciones (Excesses and exaggerations)*, a children's book with unusual, looney characters, is almost a tribute to the indecipherable Argentine personality. 'These are stories that I found around. Stories, characters and anecdotes I find and then overdo. For example, the Lake Monster is Nahuelito from Bariloche, because it always struck me that it appears right during the tourist season, in February and sometimes in winter. So I created this character that appears only during office hours.' 'I work hard on the Argentine identity,' he explains. 'At first I was unconscious and naïve and it was the nicest thing, because it came out spontaneously. Then, when I published books abroad and when I started to work for other countries, I realized they asked me to do exactly that. It was the idiosyncratic way in which situations arose and were solved that most attracted the attention of publishers and readers. And the particular style of working with the objects, this way of mixing them, putting them together to get the feeling that at any moment they can dissolve themselves – it has a certain magic, an alchemy also. It is a very rare balance.'

This reference to the national 'cambalache' (1) is also found in his children's book called *El diario del Capitán Arsenio* (published in English as *Captain Arsenio: Inventions and (mis)adventures in flight*). Captain Arsenio is a simple character who wants to invent a flying machine using everyday elements, without any special knowledge of mechanics. 'It is about the Argentine habit of cutting corners, doing something with what you have at hand or ignoring rules. And the fact that you move forward in spite of having everything against you: the context, history, knowledge... That's very Argentine. In Argentina, children see this as something natural, like "how else will you get things done



EXCESOS Y EXAGERACIONES

if not like this?'"

Despite the difficulties, Bernasconi is about to publish a book that seemed to be an editorial impossibility, because in Argentina there was no technology to develop a puzzle book. *Los Súper Premios (The super awards)* was finally made in China and is presented as a fun exercise for children to create their own heroes and villains. It is a toy-book that challenges the reader's imagination as a way of keeping the PlayStation and television at bay.

'I'm personally interested in speaking to children but not as a "young audience." I'm interested because I share with them a way of thinking, of receiving information. They have a freedom to create metaphors and assimilate them that adults don't always have,' he explains.

Like Pablo Picasso, who once confessed to having spent a lifetime to paint like a child, this other Pablo spends his time being politely irreverent, challenging boundaries and publishing impossibilities. Bernasconi is a mischievous and curious boy who explores all the 'NOes' from the art world to find his own answer.

*(1) *Cambalache: confused mixture of things or objects.*



"The Infinite is the eye of an artist just before start drawing."

EL INFINITO (THE INFINITE)

Author's prologue

'Since the beginning of times, humans have sought to find the reasons for everything that was unknown. Many of those explanations were very long-lasting, just because they were taken for granted and no-one thought of questioning them. Scientists, risk-takers and above all philosophers took it upon themselves to give answers using somewhat logical arguments that more often than not were mistaken.' Everything from the Big Bang to the wind, ghosts and dinosaurs, as well as science and good ideas. The formula to account for these explanations, in my case, does not lie in the search for truth but in an attempt to find the origin, with

beauty as the starting point.

In this book, one of the explanations will attempt to describe what is, in my opinion, the most complex concept of all: the infinite. The definitions work around the topic at the most poetic tangents, using rhetoric and metaphors. When science attempts to describe the infinite, numbers are not enough, formulas fall apart, paradoxes arise and misery ensues. Poetry, on the other hand, proposes to approach the subject at a human scale. It is reassuring in a way that only art can be. It is a way of proving this sort of thesis that I am formulating about the dual nature of beauty and truth.

"What we know, which is only a little, depends on what we believe, which is never much. And this is how the world works."

Welcome to the infinite.



JULIO CORTÁZAR

RETRATOS 2 (PORTRAITS 2)

Article in Los Inrockuptibles magazine

Comte de Lautréamont was the first one to notice that beauty could come not only from the great works of art but that something could be 'as beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella.' Indeed, Pablo Bernasconi's peculiar portraits take this adage a bit further. In the works of this distinguished and prolific illustrator, the chance meeting between objects from various sources becomes the unexpected image –and likeness– of personalities of the likes of Neil Young, Lionel Messi, Albert Einstein or Pope Francis. Bernasconi's greatest skill is in generating surprise and complicity with humour: all his creativity is shown in the way he plays with the most salient features of these famous and not so famous persons, making the collage objects speak more than many words.

A large number of his findings featured on page 2 of La Nación newspaper every Sunday, and were collected in a book called Retratos 2 (a complemented and extended sequel to his first book of portraits), in which the illustrations are captioned by famous words from the protagonists. Looking at the books back to back, one after the other, is an interesting experience; we can dwell on their meticulous details, their bursts of colour, their syntheses and their outstanding possibilities.

RETRATOS 2 (PORTRAITS 2)

Fernando Fagnani, Edhasa editor in chief

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, quoted by Pablo Bernasconi, says: 'There is just one thing worse than a flute: two flutes.' After reading this book, we can reverse the meaning of that phrase. There is only one thing better than Portraits: two Portraits.

Still, this volume it is not a continuation of the first, nor is it its successor. It is its complement and its extension. The resources and the ideas seem more extreme, the endearing elements are sweeter and the humour, darker. Imagination and inventiveness have been unleashed. This is a mature, daring Bernasconi. The exquisite portraits of Che Guevara, Samuel Beckett, Pablo Neruda, Barack Obama and Pope Francis, to name but a few, are a token of his talent and his mastery.



GROUCHO MARX



EXCESOS Y EXAGERACIONES
(Excesses and exaggerations)

By Coni Salgado
from Eterna Cadencia publishing house

When Excesos y exageraciones came into my hands, I could not put it down. I mean, it didn't exactly come to my hands but more precisely my hands were drawn to a very attractive cover in the book shop. I was oblivious to the rest of the books because a large red cross over a black background illustration printed on glossy good-quality paper attracted me almost instantly.

I could write about the rest of the book, but I could never match the wonderful experience of seeing it, browsing it and reading it over and over again. Pablo Bernasconi happens to be a brilliant, outstanding artist that breaks the mold with his use of materials and his creativity. And to my surprise, I also found the text subtle and impressive. One tends to think that a sublime illustrator will only exceed the expectations of his audience in his selected art form, however, in this case, writing is something he can also shine at as a complete artist. I like stories that linger in your head, stories that leave you with questions and encourage your imagination to find an answer for them. I like literature that does not try to teach a lesson. I like a combination of words for its own sake, not for a previous reason: phrases born out of an impulse, a feeling or the innate or acquired talent of the writer. I like an outspoken beginning and an unspoken ending, especially when it comes to children's and youth literature, although I must confess that I cannot find a specific age to read this author, much less to appreciate his artwork.

What I can reveal is that this book has a lot to do with humour. The protagonists of the stories remind us of people we might have met, but their names are peculiar and they are somewhat mischievous. The sonority of words suggests clever nonsense and playful reading.

In these stories, all worlds are possible and anything can happen.

With regard to the illustrations in this book, I'm afraid I have to use a truism and say that 'the images speak for themselves,' and indeed they do. I can't define or convey in words the myriad of universal meanings, daily discoveries, objects used to make these pictures laden with details. As a result of Bernasconi's creativity, a coin can be the sun, a skein of yarn forms a head of hair and a globe becomes an alphabet – there is magic in the fact that there is always something more to discover, something more to decipher in these images...

In Excesos y exageraciones, the stories are many and sundry. This is a fabulous mix of short stories and visual charm,

reunited in perfect harmony.

Two of the stories—for some reason I will not try to figure out now— have touched my heart. I find poetry in their endings and beauty in their phrasings ... 'Merciful collector' is about Manuel, who has a five-shelf cabinet and shows an interest in objects that nobody wants anymore, gives them a place, a companion, a purpose. Sometimes people ask him what he keeps in his closet. His response is very touching. And no doubt, 'Connection' is the unforgettable story of the book. In it, Bernasconi introduces us to Nora, a writer that only believes in letters, which make words, which in turn make sentences. For her there is nothing more important than reading and writing. Also in this story, Diego is a mathematician, and he only believes in numbers, which make figures, which in turn make equations, and is convinced that nothing is more important than doing sums. But one day, Nora finds a number on the floor, and Diego finds a letter of the alphabet. Perhaps curiosity will make their worlds go round.

It was also curiosity that led the book to light up my eyes and reach my hands.

EXCESOS Y EXAGERACIONES. RELATOS ILUSTRADOS
(Excesses and exaggerations. Illustrated stories)

By Romina Sonzini from Jitanjáfora

Excesos y exageraciones is a book made up of twenty-four short stories, with lively illustrations bordering the texts. Using humour, satire and a sharp eye, the author-illustrator presents a full cast of loony, hilarious characters such as Honk Boy, who subverts the established order with his mere presence; Colonel Carlos Gardela, a fan of soap operas, and Confucius, 'the octopus of love,' among others. The wide variety of texts offered by this book includes portrayals, short accounts, a list of a character's likes or dislikes and, surprisingly, a multiple choice test inviting the reader to select the 'right choices' related to the functions a certain machine can perform (the machine is illustrated next to the text). In addition to the unusual characters, these stories provide an ironic, deep look at various aspects of our reality and human behaviour, such as the pursuit of perfection and social recognition. A motley crew of characters including a writer, a musician, a delivery boy and a thick-moustached man pose a series of interesting questions and reflections for the reader's consideration: Is there such a thing as perfection? What are we prepared to do to get our peers' recognition? The answer—or one of the answers— might be in the text the author used as the book dedication: 'For us, the Argentinians, who are always exaggerated.' A special mention goes to the artworks that complete and nurture the texts; many of them are caricatures that add up to the humorous vein of the book.



TRUMPET / EXCESOS Y EXAGERACIONES



EL DIARIO DEL CAPITÁN ARSENIO
Captain Arsenio's Diary

by Cecilia Bajour
 (Source: www.imaginaria.com.ar)

'I will achieve that which mankind has dreamed for centuries: to create the flying machine.'

The obstinacy of inventors, who are never daunted by the magnitude of their mission, has always characterized aviation pioneers. In this case we are reading a fragment from the 1782 diary of doggedly optimistic Captain Arsenio, an inventive pioneer of pioneers, who became a builder of flying machines after a slew of terrestrial and maritime occupations, which included being a diver and the awkward captain of a ship.

The scarce information about Manuel J. Arsenio and the vague circumstances surrounding the discovery of the manuscript that contained his diary comes from a few brief paragraphs in the form of a prologue and an epilogue written by of a sort of unproclaimed publisher. With the narrative distance that any absurd text requires, this narrator portrays the Captain as a character from a legend channeling real-life heroes of the history of aviation.

Captain Arsenio's actions, according to these preliminary words, is known primarily through his diary, the only evidence of his peculiar and humorous contribution to the world of flying machines. Although the manuscript outlines the development of seventeen machines, we learn in advance that only six of them will be shown in detail. Anyway, to satisfy those who want to browse the other contraptions, a small-size sketch and the corresponding illustration of all the machines is included on the first and final pages.

The image of the Captain that precedes the presentation of the projects is a confirmation that 'useless materials' were employed to create the flying machines. Mixed-media collages picture Arsenio wearing an aviator cap that meaningfully reads 'ARGENTINE INDUSTRY' and a mended jacket, holding a bicycle wheel and a battered spring joined to a propeller. Next to it, a brief text that bears his signature wonders, with quixotic foolhardiness, why not see the world from above as birds do.

Each of the six projects is presented on the left page by the narrator that we also read at the beginning and end of the book. In all the cases we learn briefly about some of the circumstances surrounding each project and a few details about the successive failures.

This is followed by a kind of blueprint sketch that shows



doodles and crossed-out drawings of the components and the looney formulas of each project. Arsenio's catchphrase –'It cannot fail!'– accentuates the lunacy, especially because after every failure, the undaunted character still has high hopes of success.

On the right page on a white background we find the image of the Captain aboard the flying machine for each of the six projects.

And following this, the peculiar 'Flight diary' spreads over two pages to show –with a grotesque attempt at scientific rigour– the tragicomic evolution of Captain Arsenio's exploits. It is a double entry graphic table that records in the horizontal axis the time devoted to each phase, starting from the 'rest' position, and shows the moments of ascent that inevitably conclude in a nasty fall. The vertical axis shows the levels of height reached and some humorous information relative to the elevation or to the abrupt landing. Thus, reading the diary of Captain Arsenio is to witness a graphic adventure in the shape of a curve that culminates in an inevitable descent. We get to see every step of the hapless character riding his absurd machine. Every illustrated moment is bordered by a brief description by the

'I will achieve that which mankind has dreamed for centuries: to create the flying machine.'

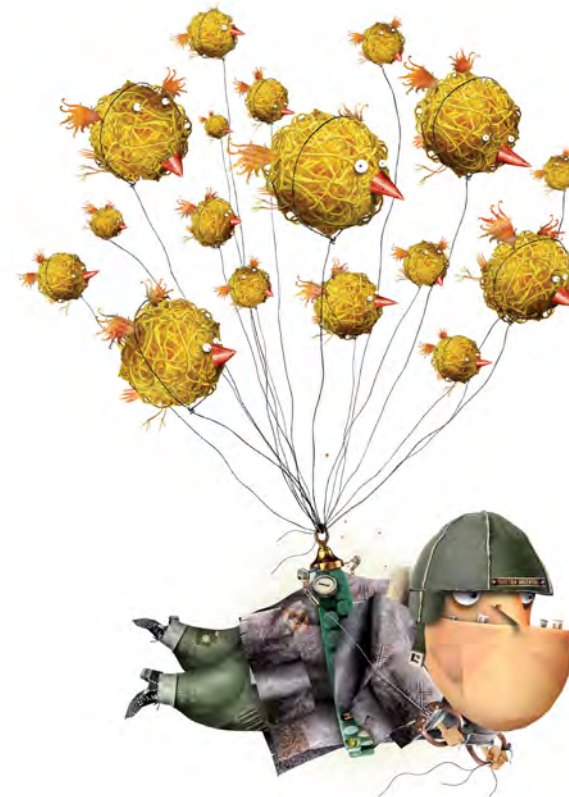
Captain Arsenio; 1782

captain in the first person. The laconic style of the report adds up to the naivety, as it pretends to be written simultaneously with the experience. And the experiences always surpass the delirious yet hopeful predictions.

At the foot of the double page spread in all six flight diaries there is a note by the narrator in the third person, providing comments or explanations of some of the behind-the-scenes events or consequences of what was already stated, suggested and showed in the graphical sequence by sufficient eloquence.

The concept of digital collage, the author's preferred technique, transcends the mere 'pasting' of hodgepodge elements and becomes a daring search for the invention requirements and the unusual narrative. Thus, the machines (the Motocanary, the Corkscrewpterus, the Hamstertronic, etc) are a meticulous mixture of unusual objects that reflect a playful exploration of daily life inspired by an expertise in the art of flying, which Pablo Bernasconi has treasured since his childhood years (1). An interesting discovery, both from a plastic and humorous perspective, is the inclusion of animals in the technology of some of the machines, as in the case of the Motocanary and the Hamstertronic. In both machines, the animals used –volunteer canaries and a hamster ('a helpful buddy') are a significant part of the machine propulsion, even though at the time of the collapse they manage to escape unscathed, unlike the rest of the machine and its pilot. (2)

The uncertainty about the final success of Captain Arsenio's



stubborn endeavors lingers in the text of the epilogue: thus the legendary aura of the character is accentuated. Nevertheless, the Captain has the last words, and like all dreamers, he never doubts that the sky is a possible adventure in spite of the emergency landings.

Notes

(1) In an interview in *La Nación* newspaper, Bernasconi said that 'almost all the contraptions developed by Arsenio – Corkscrewpterus, Aerial Submarine, Hamstertronic, etc– are preliminary versions of real aviation inventions. All the machines designed by Arsenio were built to really work.' In 'Every book that I've made is a book I didn't have,' by Luis Aubele. *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, April 22, 2007.

Both Pablo Bernasconi and his father are pilots. In the book's dedication, his gratitude to his family regarding flying is made explicit: 'My father taught me to fly. My mother taught me to land.'

(2) The 'participation' of animals in the book is acknowledged by way of a parody of the end-credit disclaimer in films that reads: 'No animals were hurt during the making of this book.'

Captain Arsenio: Inventions and (mis)adventures in flight won the Zena Sutherland Award, granted annually by the University of Chicago to the best children's story books published in the US. The prize is awarded in three categories: best illustration, best text and best children's book. Captain Arsenio: Inventions and (mis) adventures in flight was the winner in two categories: best text and best children's book.

“He contemplated the planets, and a flea. He saw his hopes in the colours on the white paper, and all his fears in the black ink. Each blot was a world.”

The wizard, the ugly and the magic book of spells.



EL BRUJO, EL HORRIBLE Y EL LIBRO ROJO DE LOS HECHIZOS
 (Published in English as *The wizard, the ugly and the Book of shame*)

Publishers Weekly

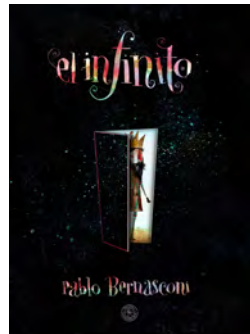


Leitmeritz, the Wizard, solves everyone’s problems with the help of the Red Book of Spells. But he cannot help his assistant, Chancery, the sad blue man whom the townspeople call ‘the ugly.’ One day, while the Wizard is away from the castle, Chancery asks the Red Book of Spells for a wish: he wants to be handsome. This will have unexpected consequences...

Chancery, a hulking fellow known as ‘the ugly’ for his freckled blue skin and jagged underbite, covets his wizard boss’s Red Book of Spells. The benevolent magician doesn’t allow Chancery to play with magic. ‘Wizardry concerns wizards,’ he would say, ‘and that’s only me.’ ‘When the wizard makes a house call, Chancery sneaks a forbidden peek at the Red book. ‘I want to be handsome,’ he tells it, whereupon its contents shower out in a glittery explosion. The blue fellow, whose features don’t change, glues the pieces willy-nilly back into the book before the wizard returns. The wizard’s spells soon fail with alarming (if amusing) results, displeasing a fire-breathing dragon and angering a king. Chancery finally confesses, and ‘must attain his innermost wish —without using any magic.’ Bernasconi (Captain Arsenio) indicates that ‘the mirror’ is to blame for the hero’s self-consciousness; ‘the ugly’ solves his problem by putting on an earnest smile. Lively patchwork collages show magical and not-so-magical transformations, and Bernasconi establishes appealing characters and prickly tension. Readers will sympathize with Chancery’s predicament, even though the stolid conclusion shows the fellow accepting his lowly place (with a grin) and the wizard conserving his special authority (‘if an ordinary person asks the book for anything, it protects itself,’ he tut-tuts). Bernasconi suggests that some embarrassing missteps can be remedied without a swish of the wand. *Ages 5-up. (Nov.)*



LITTLE CAPTAIN ARSENIO



EL INFINITO

(The infinite)

La Nación Newspaper
Interview by Natalia Blanc

'It is a grain of sand, lost in a desert somewhere on Earth, which has inside a map to find oneself.' 'It is reading only the last line of a book and imagining the rest.' 'It is a music box full of silences.' With these phrases (and many more), Pablo Bernasconi rises to the wonderful challenge of defining the elusive, abstract concept of the infinite. Each statement is accompanied by a picture that completes the meaning and sparks the reader's imagination.

Dedicated to Franco, Nina and Tania, his 'present infinities,' this new book was inspired by a previous title, *La verdadera explicación* (The real explanation), published by Sudamericana in 2012, in which Bernasconi offers a series of comical interpretations of scientific and philosophical matters. 'Since the beginning of times, humans have sought to find the reasons for everything that was unknown. Many of those explanations were very long-lasting, just because they were taken for granted and no-one thought of questioning them. Scientists, risk-takers and above all philosophers took it upon themselves to give answers using somewhat logical arguments that more often than not were mistaken', he writes at the end of *La verdadera explicación*. 'In this book I provide a series of playful explanations about the world around us. Everything from the Big Bang to the wind, ghosts and dinosaurs, as well as science and good ideas. The formula to account for these explanations does not lie in the search for truth but in an attempt to find the origin, with beauty as the starting point', says the author. 'One of the explanations will attempt to describe what is in my opinion the most complex concept of all: the infinite. The definitions work around the topic at the most poetic tangents, using rhetoric and metaphors. When science attempts to describe the infinite, numbers are not enough, formulas fall apart, paradoxes arise and misery ensues. Poetry, on the other hand, proposes to approach the subject at a human scale. It is reassuring in a way that only art can be. It is a way of proving this sort of thesis that I am formulating about the dual nature of beauty and truth.' And so, for this latest book, Bernasconi



selected, corrected and expanded some of those texts to turn them into essays. 'The previous book laid the groundwork for what I tried to accomplish with this one. I felt the original material deserved a more thorough treatment, now with an added element of illustration.'

The illustrations (a camel on a sand-timer, an imperfect circle of colour pencils, a strong-man/acrobat on top of a broomstick) came after the text. 'In all the cases, the text presented a metaphor and the illustration proposed a point of view and completed the metaphor. Many of the texts provide a half-finished paradox, and it is the picture that consolidates meaning. I like to see both resources as self-supporting signs – that is: each can defend itself without aid and overcome nonsense. I'm interested in creating a discourse with no seams showing, one that sounds genuine and credible.'

On the cover, over a black background with flashes of colour, there is a cut-out door. When you open it, there is a bearded king wearing a crown. Is it a reference to night, to the infinite sky, to the great beyond? Bernasconi says: 'The black cover denotes an immensity, the absence, a whole that seeks to be filled, space and its borders. Placing a door in the midst of that, and behind it, a king that will be with us all through the book, is like an invitation to the gates of discovery and curiosity. The quote by Shakespeare that I included at the beginning ('I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space') is the same one Borges used at the beginning of 'The aleph.' The king and his nutshell are my tools against despair, against the most obscene disproportion. The mystery.'



"The Infinite is that nightmare in which I am inside the white noise of a television screen and I have to sweep it up with a toothpick."

Also a mystery is the presence of numbers and formulas on the top of even pages. 'All the numbers are there for a reason, they are a symbol of the given page. I looked for references from various fields to avoid being obvious: from physics, mathematics, metaphysics, chemistry, religion, poetry, literature, music and even from the lottery. I guess I did it as one more nod to the reader, one more onion layer that each reader will have to peel off if they wish to complete the experience. Each and every number has symbolic significance and completes the construction of this universe that begins and ends on a double-page spread. Up until the moment I lose control of the book (that is, when it goes to print) I meticulously make a point of rendering it as meaningful as it can be. It's an infinite process,' he says.

Deep, beautiful and laden with humour, all the phrases begin with 'It is.' 'It is an idea that can't, won't, refuses to be a word.' 'It is giving up a book just when it was on the point of changing our life.' And so it goes on until the end. Some of the phrases seem to be possible answers to the big original question. Others are like haikus or poetic statements that play with words and meanings. "The definitions start with "It

is" but they are multiple in nature; they support one another. Some are haikus, some are humorous ('It is the formula for happiness hidden in some cow's hide. But on the inside'), some have a hint of drama ('It is a building on fire, a glass of water, a firefighter who's thirsty'), but they are all written in poetic language. I think this is the virtue of a metaphor: it steers us away from arrogance and provides a pleasant answer to an elusive question. A metaphor is a forceful token of humility and thoughtfulness because it is addressed to the reader's intelligence.'

For the end, the question that begs an answer: what is the infinite according to Bernasconi? 'I guess every person has their own answer, and it varies from day to day. The infinite to me are all these definitions, which came up under the influence of my mood, my understanding and my sensitivity. There are sad statements ('It is dreaming that I am within TV static and I have to fix it using toothpicks') that reflect darker moments, and there are others that give off a cloying optimism. I imagine that my permeability to this concept triggered my defence mechanisms as a means to find meaning in the infinite.'



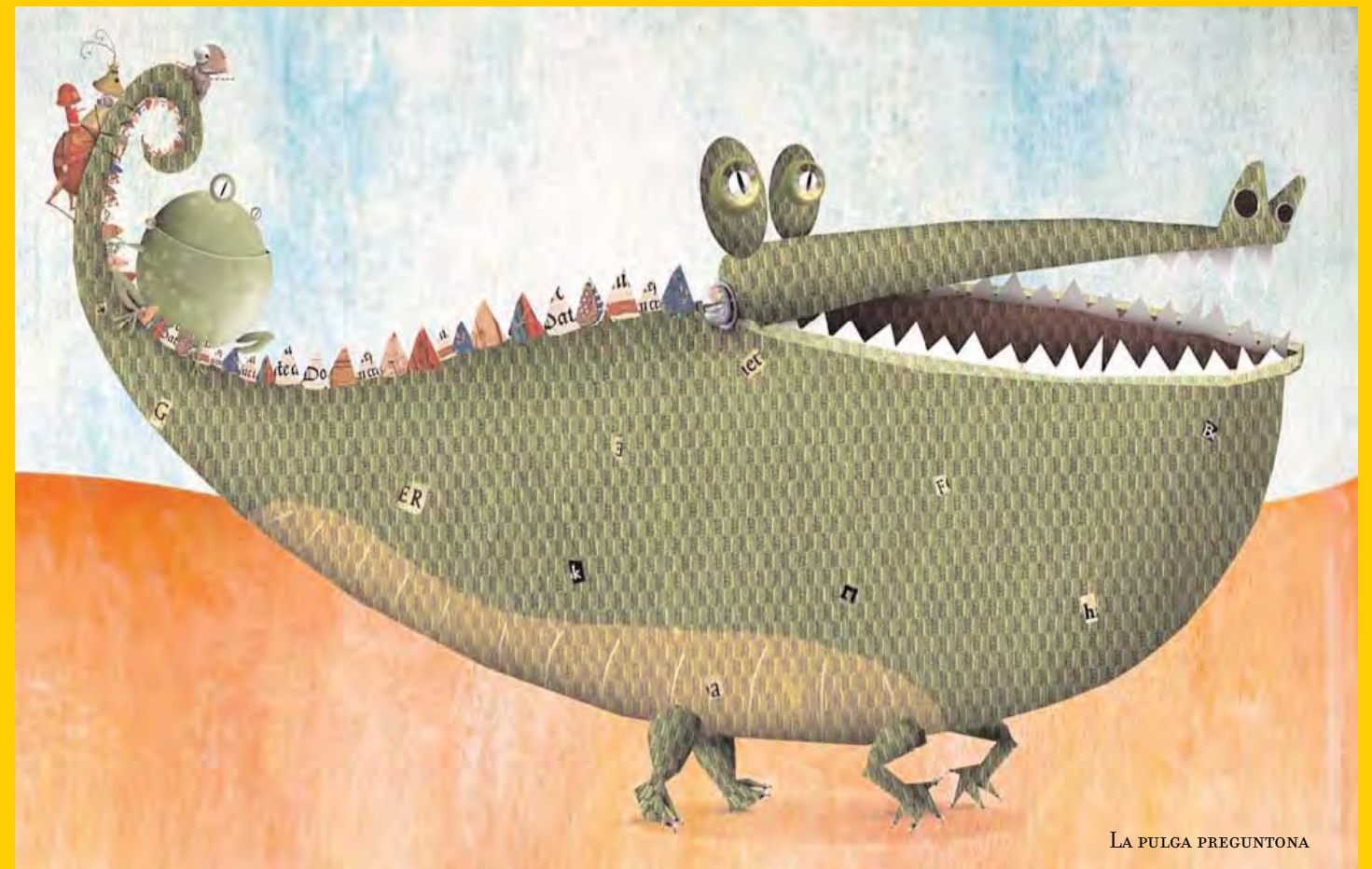


REBELIÓN EN TORTONI



QUETREN
QUETREN
PABLO Y FRANCISCO
BERNASCONI

QUETREN QUETREN



LA PULGA PREGUNTONA

COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TRANSLATIONS



THE WIND - LA VERDADERA EXPLICACIÓN

COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TRANSLATIONS

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(Published in english as Captain Arsenio: Inventions and (mis)adventures in flight)
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Excesos y exageraciones
(Excesses and exaggerations)
Spanish – Sudamericana / 2008 - Argentina Portuguese Girafinha / 2008



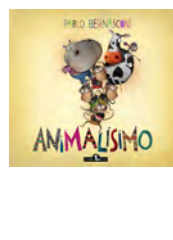
El sueño del pequeño Capitán Arsenio
(Little Captain Arsenio's dream)
Spanish Random House / 2011 - Argentina Portuguese Girafinha / 2012 - Brazil



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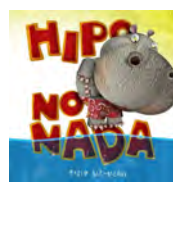
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(Animalísimo)
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(Quetren Quetren)
Spanish La brujita de papel - Argentina and Spain / 2017



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(Black hide, white cow)
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Finales
(Endings)
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El infinito
(The infinite)
Sudamericana / 2018 - Argentina



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NO (Es así)
(No, that's it)
Spanish - La brujita de Papel / 2015 - Argentina



Retratos 2
(Portraits 2)
Spanish - Edhasa / 2015 - Argentina



Bifocal
(Bifocal)
Spanish Edhasa / 2010 - Argentina Portuguese Escrituras / 2011



Rebelión en Tortoni
(Rebellion in Tortoni)
Spanish Sudamericana / 2009 - Argentina Portuguese Girafinha / 2009 - Brazil

“Luna lies on the grass in her garden to look at the Milky Way because if she looks at it standing up she feels dizzy, even though it seems closer. When she lies back, the whole world holds her up, like the sea holds up the waves.”

Luna - Mentiras y Moretones.

“Carts are dragged along by horses, sleighs by dogs, and plows by bulls. I think that if I concentrate enough birds together, the sustaining force will help me win the clouds. It cannot fail.”

Captain Arsenio – February 18, 1784

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Ursula Wolfel (Kalandraka 2004)



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Cecilia Pisos (Sudamericana 2005)



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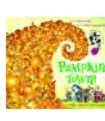
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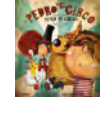
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Marcelo Birmajer (Alfaguara 2006)



También las estatuas tienen miedo
Andrea Ferrari (Alfaguara 2006)



Las visitas
Silvia Schujer (Alfaguara 2009)



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Gastón Silverman (Del nuevo extremo 2010)



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Natasha Wing (Running Press Kids 2010)



Da para acreditar
Luis María Pescetti (Sm 2011)



Zapatero pequeño
María Teresa Andruetto (Comunicarte 2012)



Quién soy
Varios autores (Calibrosopio 2013)



Números que cuentan
Varios autores (La brujita de papel 2015)



Intermitente Rafaela
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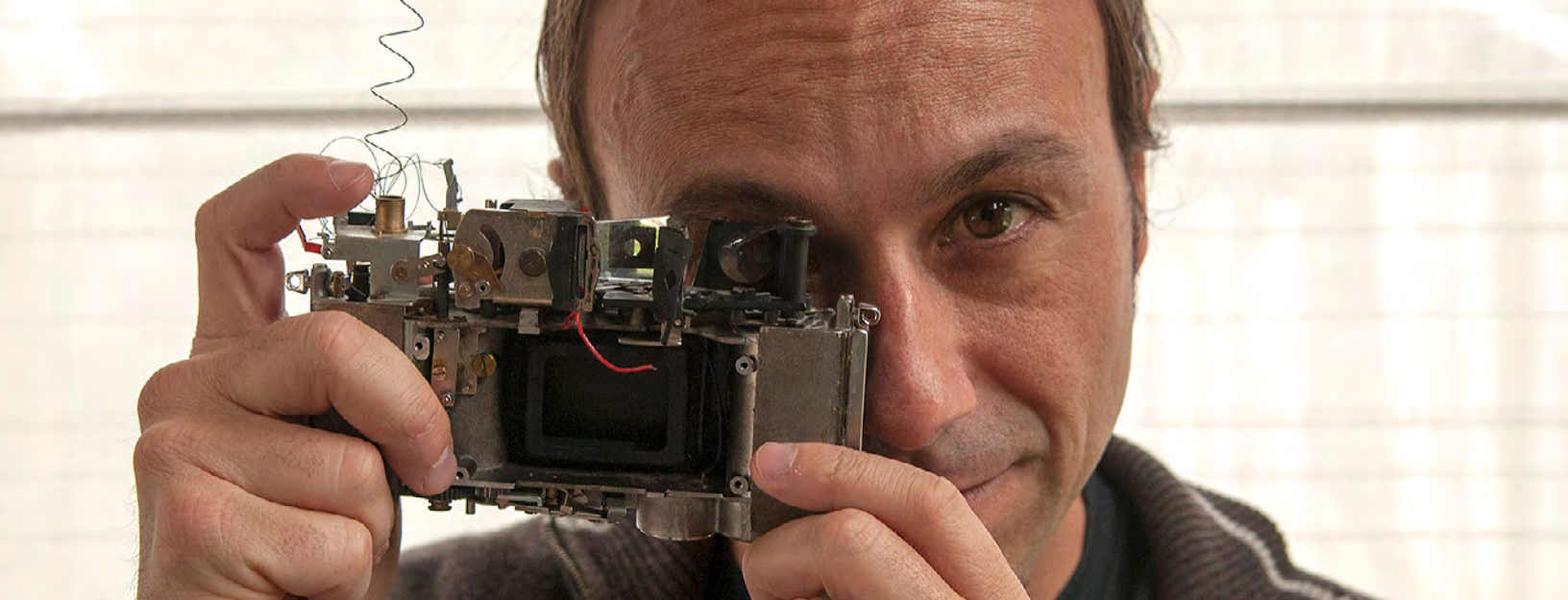
Sucedió en colores
Liliana Bodoc (Sudamericana 2017)



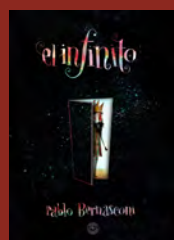
El hombre que quería recordar
Andrea Ferrari (Santillana 2019)



ZAPATERO PEQUEÑO (MARÍA TERESA ANDRUETTO)



BOOKS SENT TO THE JURY



El infinito
(The infinite)

Sudamericana / 2018 - Argentina



El diario del Capitán Arsenio
(Published in English as Captain Arsenio: Inventions and (mis)adventures in flight)

Sudamericana / Penguin Random House / 2007 - Argentina



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(Published in English as The wizard, the ugly and the Book of shame)

Sudamericana / Penguin Random House / 2006 - Argentina



Retratos 2
(Portraits 2)

Edhasa / 2015 - Argentina

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Sudamericana / 2018 - Argentina

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Sudamericana / Penguin Random House / 2016 - Argentina

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Edhasa / 2015 - Argentina

Finales (Endings)
Edhasa / 2013 - Argentina

La verdadera explicación (The real explanation)
Sudamericana / 2012 - Argentina

El sueño del pequeño capitán Arsenio (Little Captain Arsenio's dream)
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Excesos y exageraciones (Excesses and exaggerations)
Sudamericana / 2010 - Argentina

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Sudamericana / Penguin Random House / 2007 - Argentina

El brujo, el horrible y el libro rojo de los hechizos (published in English as The wizard, the ugly and the Book of shame)
Sudamericana / Penguin Random House / 2006 - Argentina



WEB LINKS

El Infinito trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaGUKVj6oFs>

TED talks

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_k_OUCn1go

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5js-HN2tsw>

Mentiras y moretones (The theater show)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4TgzhNF_3E



DON'T BE A MAGICIAN
¡ BE MAGIC !

• LEONARD COHEN





I don't think it's necessary to instil anything in children. I think they can naturally defend themselves against teachings, and I promote this. Short stories, narrations are personal menus that accompany their growth; however, in their most dogmatic versions, they could interfere in their decisions, and this terrifies me. My intention is always to be tangential, to move sideways. And in this sense, rhetoric and metaphor get the job done, they are kind enough that you can hold their hand and not feel a tug.

Thank you!

Pablo Bernasconi

<http://www.pablobernasconi.com.ar/>

<https://www.facebook.com/bernasconipablo>

<https://www.instagram.com/pablobernasconi73/>

Twitter: @BernasconiPablo



