



**PABLO BERNASCONI**

ARGENTINA'S  
CANDIDATE FOR THE HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARDS 2018

“Las personas grandes  
Nunca comprenden nada por sí solas  
y es muy aburrido  
para los niños  
tener que darles  
una y otra vez  
explicaciones.”

(El Principito)



## WHAT I BELIEVE IN



Hello. My name is Pablo Bernasconi.

I live in Bariloche, a beautiful city in the Patagonia Argentina. I have two children, Franco (nine years old), and Nina, (Six years old).

And i love to illustrate stories mostly because i love stories.

This is what i believe regarding illustration:

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- *I think definitely 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 do them well.*
- *I'm actually doing the books that I couldn't find when I was a boy, I'm giving myself this books on delay. I guess the most straightforward way of working is to dedicate the stories to the child we went once and see if anyone else shares these passions, seeking accession.*
- *A book should give the opportunity to wake up the appetite to read more, to keep on seeking. To avoid the passive role other formats give and link directly to the child's imagination. It has to nourish and simultaneously entertain. Must show that is friendly tool, where the neurons can do gymnastics without suffering.*
- *I can say that the illustration is mostly something that I brought from before, and that I feel comfortable and satisfied with. It's like a language that I just had to remember.*
- *I consider that the tool has to be aesthetic in all cases subject to the idea, what you want to tell. My intention is to refloat the author as a generator of ideas, a source of creativity and not just some skilled operator syntax.*
- *I think it can be dangerous, (although comfortable), becoming addicted to a single mechanism of speech. That raises security but then you're no longer susceptible to accidents, improvisation with conceptual surprises. Luckily there is not a manual, a road trip. I am of the idea that we must maintain this intuition and invisible trade.*
- *I'm convinced everything starts with the stage of the pencil, which I never avoid. It is the most effective and tacit way of meeting the idea, of experimenting and testing, of projecting. I use to dedicate most of the time to this stage.*
- *I believe in the physical relationship of an artist with his tools are brushes, clay, or scissors. And the computer, for that matter, is, to my mind rather a back seat to more basic tools. We are always talking about tools: none should weigh its mark above thinking.*



### Apology

Any realistic representation is, nevertheless, mere metaphor, but in any case, a well-disguised metaphor ... but finally metaphor: a dead metaphor in which the meaning becomes invisible to the signifier, concealing it.

Realism is, for that matter, an art of serenity. For more tragic than the scene could be, inside it there's peace. No tension.

The tension becomes when the metaphor is alive, that is, when both analogies fight to have the consciousness of the observer. What appears to be something else is nothing else and still it is that. That is the concern. Archimboldo tortures us with haunting similarities. Offensive because, despite its arbitrariness, are not negligible. Something tells us that everything looks like something it is, somehow, that something. It is and is not, simultaneously. Ontological anguish appears. And any metaphor is violent. So midway through the observation of "Portraits" by Bernasconi, that anguish, the one that has been growing imperceptibly, on a particular page takes over the mind of the observer. Then we need to interrupt the experience. Restore the calm by coming back to reality. What about reality now? What has it been?

It is then when the question appears: in what space of the imagination was forged that equivalence unnerving? How has the imaginative find the exact schizoid icon?

Maybe it's some dreamlike abuse, some hallucinatory ability to see, in some things other things. Who sees ghosts, beings that do not are there. Pure nightmare, not surreal, unplanned, unpremeditated... A brain radically incredulous of the world and its platitudes, which manages to see more than it exists ... and display. Who knows!

Possibly there's an anomalous brain. For only an anomalous brain would allow a jump between completely unrelated ideas among themselves, and this fusion that makes estranged battle, fighting for the same image. Something's wrong. Bernasconi is not normal ... said with all respect.

### Norberto Chaves

*\* Es Docente con 51 años de trayectoria. Socio de I+C Consultores (Barcelona-Buenos Aires), expertos en Imagen Corporativa y asesores de empresas e instituciones en estrategias y programas de identidad y comunicación.*

*Ex Jefe del Departamento Pedagógico y profesor de Teoría de Diseño, Semiología y Teoría de la Comunicación en la Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo (Universidad de Buenos Aires). Profesor regular de la Escola EINA (Barcelona) entre 1977 y 1984 Profesor invitado en universidades y escuelas de diseño de España y Latinoamérica.*





KURZ





**Pablo Bernasconi** was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on the 6th of August, 1973. He is a graphic designer graduated from Buenos Aires University, where he was professor of Design and Head of Practical Jobs for five years.

He began his career as an illustrator at the newspaper, Clarín in 1998, preparing covers for more than three hundred and fifty supplements editions.

His illustrations are also 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's currently working for various publications in different countries, and every Sunday he published a critical review, in the newspaper La Nación (Argentina). Besides his work with publishers and media, Pablo is permanently collaborating with the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo) on their graphic job. He is the author for the text and illustrations of sixteen books and he has been collaborated with another twenty with his illustrations.

Pablo Bernasconi participated in several individual and group exhibitions in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Italy, Slovenia, Colombia, United States and England, known as:

2007- *Society of Illustrators - New York*

2007 - *Centro Simón Patiño - Bolivia*

2007/2008/2011 - *Utem - Santiago de Chile*

2007 - *The Coningsby Gallery - London*

2008 - *Bologna Book Fair - Italy*

2008 - *Gallery Holz - "Portraits"*

2008 - *Art BA (Portraits)*

2009 - *Bratislava - Slovak Republic*

2010 - *Bogotá - Colombia*

2012 - *Denver, Boulder - United States*

2010/2016 - *over 25 cities around Argentina with "Finales"*

He created a traveling expo around Argentina called "Finales" for more than three years, which was seen by 150000 people this far.

### Conferences & Seminars

He offered lectures and seminars referring: illustration, design and literature, at different cultural spaces and Universities, where he also works as an essayist.

For example, in Argentina: University of Buenos Aires, University of Morón, University of Cuyo, Viedma Cultural Center, Museum of Puerto Madryn, Faena Hotel+Universe, Faculty of Fine Arts of La Plata, adgp Santa Rosa, Pixelations (Córdoba), and book fairs in different provinces of Argentina.

And abroad: University of Chicago (USA), Centro Simón Patiño (Bolivia), Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana (Chile), Universidad Diego Portales (Chile) USPN + Instituto Cervantes + Casa Do Libro (Sao Pablo, Brazil); Congress Creative (Hermosillo, México) Edinburgh Book Festival (Scotland); various schools and events in London and Bath (England) Javeriana University (Bogotá, Colombia); Workshop on Lyrics Jordi Sierra I Fabra (Medellin, Colombia).

*"Pablo Bernasconi creates a nonlinear world, with its image score, composed an incomplete message, snippets of a speech full of winks and implications that the reader, his accomplice, complete and reorganizes the photograph with that is not there, that the illustrator has hidden neatly."*

## IMPORTANT BOOKS FROM THE AUTHOR



### **Mentiras y Moretones** (Lies and Brushes)

Sudamericana / 2016 - Argentina

### **Retratos 1 y 2** (Portraits 1 and 2)

Edhasa 2015 - Argentina

### **Finales** (End)

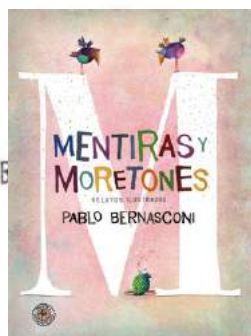
Edhasa 2013 - Argentina

### **La verdadera explicación** (The real explanation)

Sudamericana / 2012 - Argentina

### **El Diario del Capitán Arsenio**

Sudamericana / 2006 - Argentina



## BOOKS SENT TO THE JURY

### **Mentiras y Moretones** (Lies and Brushes)

Sudamericana / 2016 - Argentina

### **El Brujo, el horrible y el libro rojo de los hechizos**

(The wizard, the Ugly and the book of shame)

Sudamericana / 2008 - Argentina

### **Excesos y exageraciones**

Sudamericana / 2010 - Argentina

### **La verdadera explicación** (The real explanation)

Sudamericana / 2012 - Argentina

### **El Diario del Capitán Arsenio**

Sudamericana / 2006 - Argentina



Silver Medal - Society of News Design - 2016

Selected for "Illustration Now" TASCHEN 2014

Gold Medal in the SND (Society of Newspaper Design) 2012

Bank of the book of Venezuela, "The diary of Captain Arsenio" nominated for the best books for children and youth 2010.

Selected in the SEP (Secretariat of public education of Mexico) with "The diary of Captain Arsenio"; 2009.

Selected to represent Argentina in the Bratislava Biennale; 2009.

Selected to represent Argentina in the International Fair of the Book of Bologna; 2008.

Distinguished by ALIJA, best overall book (text, illustration and edition), for "The diary of Captain Arsenio"; 2008.

Distinguished by ALIJA, at illustration category, "The Wizard, the Ugly and the Book of Shame"; 2007

32° Award "April of Journalism", at illustration category, Brazil; 2007

"El Zoo de Joaquin" selected among Daniel Gil' Awards; 2006.

Captain Arsenio, best children book of the year, Zena Sutherland Award. University of Chicago; 2006.

Five awards for excellence at the SND (Society of Newspaper Design) for illustrations in Clarín and La Voz de Galicia.

"The Zoo of Joaquin" selected among Daniel Gil's Awards; 2006

In the years 2005, 2008 and 2011, included for "200 Best Illustrators Worldwide" in the magazine Luerzer's Archive (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 Award to the poster made for the Childhood Book Fair, Buenos Aires; 2005.

Awarded for the UK Association of Illustrators 29 Awards Annual, UK; 2005.

Awarded for the World Book Day, UK; 2004.





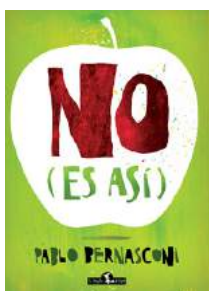
## PUBLISHED BOOKS

*Written and illustrated by Pablo:*



### **Mentiras y Moretones** (Lies and Brushes)

Spanish Sudamericana / 2016 - Argentina



### **NO (Es así)** (It is not like that)

Spanish - La Brujita de Papel / 2015 - Argentina



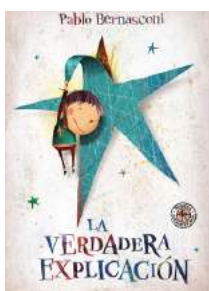
### **Retratos 2** (Portraits 2)

Spanish - Edhasa 2015 - Argentina



### **Finales** (End)

Spanish - Edhasa 2013 - Argentina  
German - Mixtvision 2016 - Germany



### **La verdadera explicación** (The real explanation)

Spanish Sudamericana / 2012 - Argentina

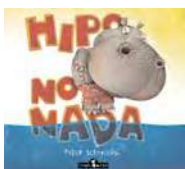


*Written and illustrated by Pablo:*



**El diario del Capitán Arsenio (Captain Arsenio's Diary)**

**English** Houghton Mifflin / 2005- United States  
**Spanish** Sudamericana / 2007 - Argentina  
**Portugués** 2007 – Girafinha. Brasil



**Hipo No Nada (Hippos can Swim)**

**English**  
 Random House. Australia /2005  
**Portuguese**  
 Girafinha. /2006  
**Spanish**  
 La brujita de papel / Argentina and España /2007  
**Korean**  
 Miseghi press / 2007



**Cuero negro, vaca blanca (Black skin, white cow)**

**English** Random House Australia / 2005  
**Korean** Miseghi press /2005  
**Portuguese** Girafinha. Brasil / 2007  
**Spanish** La brujita de papel Argentina and Spain/ 2009.



**El brujo, el Horrible y el libro rojo de los hechizos  
 (The Wizard, the Ugly and the book of Shame)**

**English**  
 Random House Australia / 2004 .  
 Bloomsbury - England / 2005  
 Bloomsbury - Estados Unidos 2005  
**Spanish**  
 Sudamericana Argentina/ 2006  
 Lumen. Spain / 2007  
**German**  
 Bloomsbury Cataluña/ 2006 -  
**Catalán**  
 Beascoa / 2007  
**Portuguese**  
 Girafinha / 2006 – . Brasil  
**French**  
 Bloomsbury /2010



**El Zoo de Joaquin (Joaquin's Zoo)**

**Spanish** Kalandraka /2006  
**Spanish** Editorial Océano /2007 México  
**Gallego** Kalandraka /2006  
**Portuguese** Girafinha / 2009





## **Excesos y Exageraciones (Excess and exaggeration)**

**Spanish** – Sudamericana / 2008 - Argentina

**Portuguese** Girafinha / 2008

Retratos

Español 2008 – Edhasa. Argentina



## **Los Súper Premios (The Super awards)**

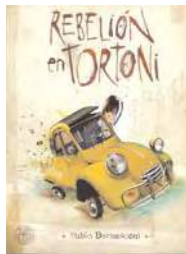
**Spanish** La Brujita de papel / 2009 Argentina and Spain

**Portuguese** Girafinha / 2009



## **Telonio o ambulante do espacio (Thelonio space voyager )**

**Portuguese** Girafinha/ 2009



## **Rebelión en Tortoni (Rebellion at Tortoni)**

**Spanish** Sudamericana / 2009 - Argentina

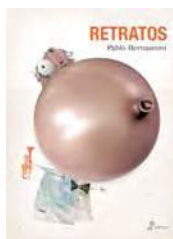
**Portugués** 2009 – Girafinha. Brasil



## **El sueño del pequeño Capitán Arsenio (Little Captain Arsenio's dream)**

**Spanish** Random House / 2011 Argentina

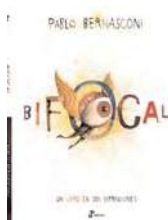
**Portuguese** Girafinha/ 2012



## **Retratos (Portraits)**

**Spanish** Edhasa / 2008 Argentina

**Portuguese** Escrituras/ 2011

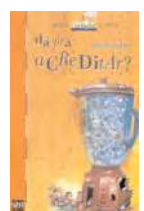
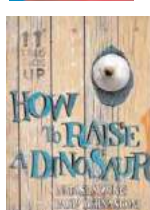
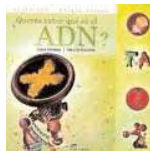
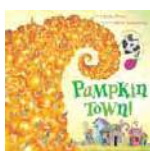


## **Bifocal (Portraits)**

**Spanish** Edhasa / 2010 Argentina

**Portuguese** Escrituras/ 2011

## Illustrations only:



## Spanish

### El perro salchicha

María Elena Walsh. (Alfaguara 2006)

### 27 Historias para tomar la sopa,

Ursula Wolfel. (Kalandraka 2004)

### Un cuento por donde pasa el viento

Cecilia Pisos. (Sudamericana 2005)

### Natalia y los Queluces

Santiago Kovadloff. (Planeta 2006)

### Rafaela

Mariana Furiassi (Sm 2003)

### Demetrio Latov

Angeles Durini. (SM 2003)

### La pulga preguntona

Gustavo Roldán. (Sudamericana 2007)

### Colección Querés saber? (four books)

Paula Bombara. (Eudeba 2002)

### Pedro y el Circo

Fred Philips. (Lumen 2008)

### La Cámara oculta

Silvia Schijer. (Alfaguara 2004)

### Los Caballeros de la Rama

Marcelo Birmajer. (Alfaguara 2005)

### El último Mago o Bilembambudín

Elsa Bornemann. (Alfaguara 2006)

### El once

Marcelo Birmajer. (Alfaguara 2006)

### También las estatuas tienen miedo

Andrea Ferrari (Alfaguara 2006)

### Sin Cortinas

Gastón Silverman (Del nuevo extremo 2010)

## English

### How to Raise a Dinosaur

Natasha Wing - United States - (Running Press - 2010)

### Pumpkin Town!

de Katie McKy (Houghton Mifflin- 2008)

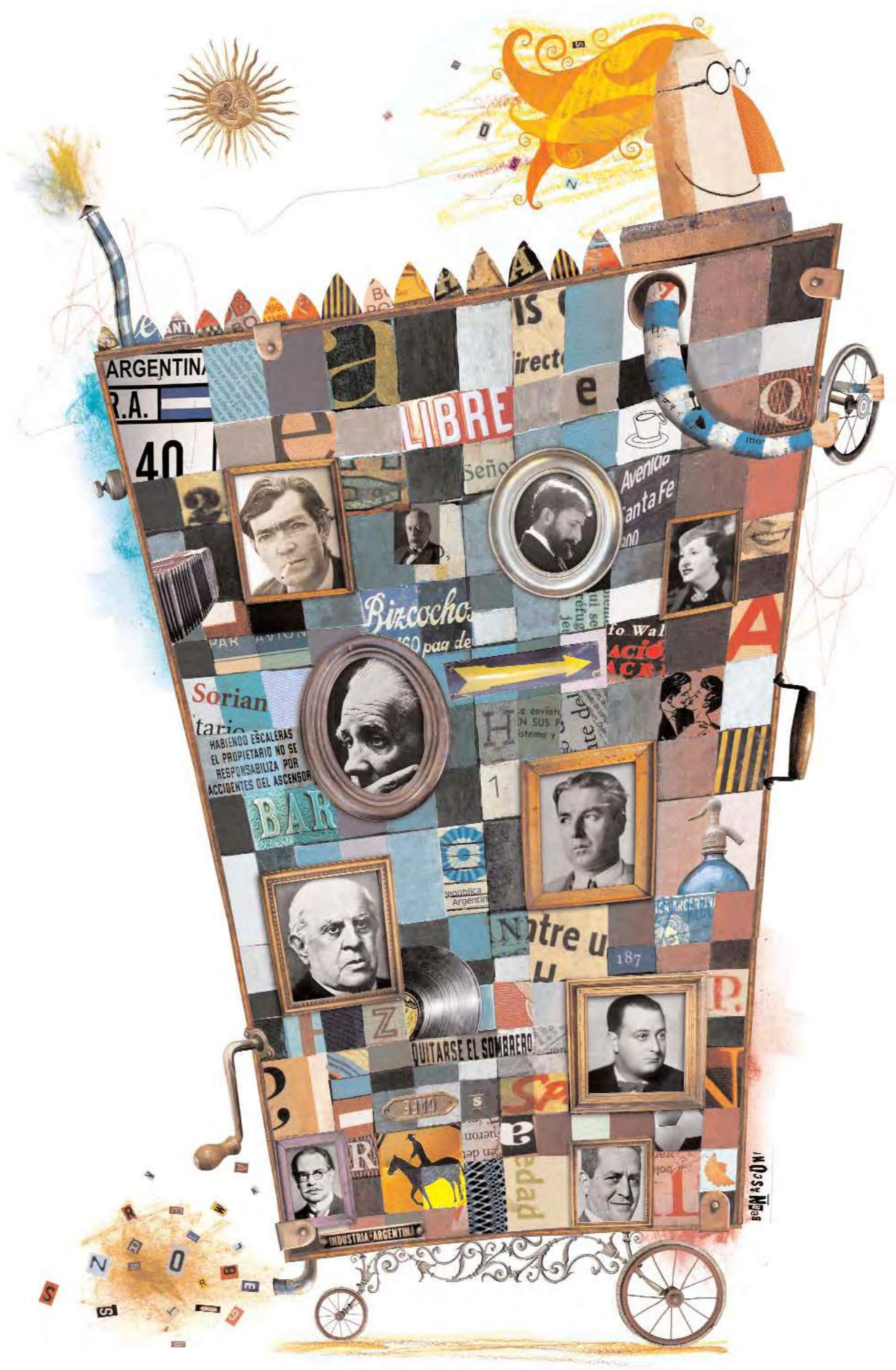
## Portuguese

### Dá pra acreditar?

Luis María Pescetti - (SM - 2010)

### 27 Historias para tomar a sopa,

Ursula Wolfel. (Kalandraka 2004)



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## REVIEWS

Bernasconi did it again.

The new book by Pablo Bernasconi, an illustrated short stories book, makes our reading happier, both to children and adult people.

I fell in love with Bernasconi when I read *El Diario del Capitán Arsenio* (The diary of Captain Arsenio). In fact, I think I fell in love with Captain Arsenio. Since I read it, I bought all the books by this author to my own children. However, they are really for me. Regarding illustrations, Bernasconi is, in my opinion, the best illustrator in Argentina. He could be matched those of the best, such as Edward Gorey, Jon Klassen o Quentin Blake.

*Mentiras y Moretones* (Lies and bruises) is a short story book, and each story is no longer than one or two pages. The narrative is exquisite. That word describes it. Bernasconi possesses the gift, the ability to raise children. In the same way birds, through their beaks or heads push their young pigeons to the edge of the nest so that they can take courage and fly. Pablo encourages us to fly.

This book presents extraordinary short stories, for example: *El hombre que nunca estuvo* (The man who has always been absent). It is about a man who is always thinking of the future, until one day he disappears from his present. Or a crocodile that gets upset with a woodpecker about the noise he makes until he surprisingly finds an ally in the bird.

There is also a short story about a little girl who misses her grandmother who is dead and looks for her on the stars. It is a short story that moves to tears without low blows. Once more, with joy I strongly recommend Bernasconi's books, do not lose the opportunity.

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### BABILONIA / Fernanda Pérez

We have grown up with bruises since we were very young. They are there after a fall or a blow. Unavoidably, they come with tears, but as time goes by, they become anecdotes and memories. Moreover, they have the ability to transform what once were tears into laughter. Lies, for worse or for better, are also part of our living. Some of them are white lies, others are not; some of them are created by fantasy, and others are woven with rests of memory. Some lies are creative and others, necessary.

All these elements come to life in the most beautiful book of illustrated short stories *Mentiras y Moretones* (Lies and bruises) that Pablo Bernasconi presented in Córdoba.

When interviewed, he said "I did not know I was writing for children" And in fact, this is a book with the ability to join perfectly childhood's world to the adult's. It is the kind of texts which children will read with astonishment and eagerness; and at the same time, it has the type of narrative with which adult people will feel a connection through a synthetic, metaphorical and exquisite writing. What is the link between them? Tenderness and innocence pouring from every single page.

In which of the stars do grandparents live when they leave this world? What happens to that man who only thought about the future and, unintentionally, finally disappears from the present? Why do monsters –those who represent so many things –take the decision to be hidden, concealing their fear for the brave girls? Simple and deep at the same time, *Mentiras y moretones* (Lies and bruises) give us beautiful narrative and illustrations that live together in a luxury edition.

It is an amazing book for adults to share with children. A wonderful book in which children let us walk –at least for a while- that place where the most valuable moments of childhood dwells.





### The Childish Irreverence of the Image

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

In "Portraits", his latest book, his creativity appears combining love and hate, towards the characters that emerged from an irreverent collage.

He cut and paste, order and disorder pictures, browsing in the collage and retouching them with images that emerged from his own imagination. This description may be entitled to a child in his dream machine, with his materials deployed. But that job creation is starring by Pablo Bernasconi, one of Argentina's most interesting graphic artists of our days. He already published seven books for kids with texts and illustrations born from his ingenuity. Last year he surprised the booksellers and readers with an original work, very hard to classify. "Portraits" is the name to a compendium of 56 celebrities, drawn by the technique of collage and put into the furnace of blazing inventiveness from which emerge solids paper sculptures.

Julio Cortázar fantasized that his books were sold in toy stores. Bernasconi wanted to fulfill this dream and did a trick on having delivered a work that he knew in advance that it would bring problems to the booksellers at the moment of assigning a place to it: "My fear was that once the bookstore receives the box full of portraits, they do not know what to do with "that", not knowing in which section this goes to. At the end they were passing through all kind of sections: comics, kids, pictures, 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 particular gender, it was settled"

Seeking to move away from a graphical fashion that it

defines as "purely aesthetic" but empty in concepts, Bernasconi works by combining techniques to express an idea as clear as it is, without letting place for arbitrary interpretation. The game was to allow that "the conceptual trigger dictate the technique ". He defines "Portraits" as "an experiment" and explains: "Since crushing a steak with a hammer (to get enlighten Rocky Balboa) to work with watercolor and ink or pencil, oil, collage of objects, photographs; using everything and cheated all I could."

The textures of the portraits are modified from one page to another, even when they hold a discursive technique - the mix of objects, the symbolic assembly of things-. "I mix things that mean nothing apart and together mean a lot," says Bernasconi and this one is the only virtue that he can realize for him as designer: "I have very clear the difference between the plastic toward the conceptual. In relation to the plastic sense I have no strength because I never made any course for drawing or using oils. But the conceptual work gives me more freedom, allows me to forget that I can't draw. Then I use a lot the collage because it is the most efficient way of transferring what I think, the metaphor that the collage contains is so much direct and less noisy."

### Imaginary friends and close enemies

As a caprice, only the characters that sparked him adoration or hatred were being transformed into ideas to the paper. But none of them was it was: "It cost me a lot of more with the ones I have an affinity. With the hated ones worked as a visceral thing, you could even see it from the treatment they received because it relies more on the spot, they have been attacked and shown plastically. For those that I love, as Fontanarrosa or Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, you can see the meticulously work with many clips so they do not miss anything, either conceptually or artistically. They were characters that even took me months. On the other hand, George W. Bush took me a few minutes to do it and even less to think about it."

His sketches are "an awful mess." He keeps a sketchbook that is "gold" to him, even when he defined them as "scribbles": "Actually is, nor more nor less, than a notebook where I write, instead of with words, with images, and they will continue by itself and making decisions alone. Then I'll decide the best way to do justice to the concept graphically and then I do not care if I'm handy with that material or not. I'm not very skilled with watercolor, but there are ways of accidents that happen with it and I used them because I thought they were going on really well with some portraits. For example, Tom Waits who's a wild and dingy guy - that I adore - was worked with watercolor and ink, while his hair was done with bottles of whiskey."

*I use a lot the collage because it is the most efficient way of transferring what I think, the metaphor that the collage contains is so much direct and less noisy."*

National identity or Argentine "cambalache" \*(1)  
The Argentine identity is an important subject to Bernasconi and he turns into it in "Portraits". Even when the matter began to settle after their kids' books, seeping into the way their characters solve conflicts or from the stories they contain. "Excesses and exaggerations", a book for kids with different quirky characters, is almost a tribute to the indecipherable way to be Argentine. "These are stories that I found around. Stories, characters and anecdotes I found and then overdo. For example, The Lake Monster is Nahuelito from Bariloche, because always struck me that appeared in the middle of tourist season, in February and sometimes in winter. Then I set up this character that appears only during office hours. "

"I work hard on the Argentina 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 I asked me exactly that. It was the folk way to build and solve the situations that really most attract the attention of the publishers and readers. And the particular style to work the objects, this way to mixture them, to tie and build them to get the feeling that at any moment they can dissolve themselves, have some magic, an alchemy also. It is a very rare balance."

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

This reference to the national "cambalache" is also found in his book for children named "The Diary of Captain Arsenio". Captain Arsenio is a simple character who wants to invent a machine to fly with surrounding elements, without any special knowledge of mechanics. "It is about the Argentine well idea of "we tie it with wire "(a local expression used to explain that you save the situation with what you have at hand). And the fact of having everything against you, the context, the History, the knowledge... and despite all that move forward. That's very Argentine. In Argentina, kids see it as something natural, as asking 'how else you'll achieve things otherwise? " .

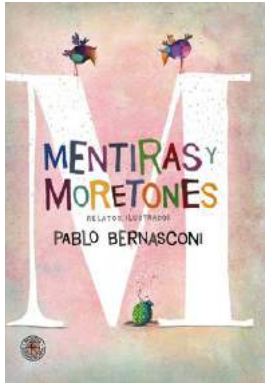
Despite the difficulties, Bernasconi is about to publish a book that seemed to be impossible to publishing level, because in Argentina there was no technology to develop a Puzzle Book. "The Superprize" was finally made in China and is presented as a fun exercise for kids to build their own heroes and villains. A bet to the book to come out his own borders and updated itself in

every use of the imagination, as a way of trying to gain some space ahead the PlayStation and the television.

"I'm personally interested in speaking to the kids but not as a "young audience". I'm interested because I share with them how to think, how to receive information. They have a freedom to construct metaphors and assimilate them, that sometimes the adult does not have", he explains.

Like Pablo Picasso that once confessed to have spent his life trying to paint like a child, this other Pablo grows between irreverence, challenging boundaries and publishing impossibilities. Bernasconi is a mischievous and curious boy who explores all the resultants "NO" from the art world, to find their own answer.





August, 29th 2016 TELAM - Interview by Julieta Grosso.

**Mentiras y Moretones (Lies and bruises)**, the new book by the illustrator is made by twenty-four short stories. It is a combination of revealing images and a subtle poetic prose.

In the same way that blows and pain change as times goes by, memory transforms experiences and create a gap between facts and the way memory rec alls them: the twenty-four short stories deal with this philosophical question and matters related to the process of writing. *Mentiras y Moretones (Lies and bruises)*, the new book by the illustrator is composed of twenty-four short stories. It is a combination of revealing images and a subtle poetic prose.

“Certain pains struggle against memory and transform it until it changes its colour. That is the reason why a well-told lie seems to be more authentic than any truth”. This is the way Bernasconi starts his album book which deals with his thematic obsessions as well as his determination in blurring the boundaries of literature for children reflected on the selection of a title which shows, as a metaphor, hindrances and disappointments of everyday life.

*Mentiras y Moretones (Lies and bruises)* (Sudamericana) aims at a wide readership which includes children, but also questions adult people through stories that enquire the recurring topics of everyday life: nonconformity and the search for perfection *Punto imposible (Impossible)*, *La ansiedad (Anxiety)*, *El hombre que nunca estuvo*, (The man who has always been absent) or interferences in communication (*Galleta*)( Mess).

In parallel, many of the texts which go through the book seem to be fragmented investigations about the nature of writing: the way in which isolated elements relate to compose a story. *Notas para un cuento (Notes for a short story)*, or the way invention and fantasy enrich literature and the world in general.

*-Télam. Which was the trigger in Mentiras y Moretones (Lies and bruises)? It could be thought that according to your profession, the starting point of your work is always an image...*

- Pablo Bernasconi: The last two years in my life have been very special due to personal situations I had to go through, which changed my way of looking into things and behaving. When I began thinking about this book, I had not gone through these experiences yet, and although I already had the idea to develop a project about blows and bruises, I was not prepared yet, from experience, to answer certain questions genuinely. Time placed me in a different position, and a book which was initially defined, was widely reinvented after being questioned by reality. Many of my books start with the image, which is the most natural way I have to work, but especially in this book, I started with words, in order to outline the literary content of every short story to define coherence with the whole work.

*- T: Do your work lead you naturally to find a visual representation of emotions that in the example of pain is illustrated with a bruise?*

- P.B: I guess that the point of view I have to look into everything is touched by my own outlook, from which I can understand and assimilate concepts which would become blurred otherwise, or at least more difficult to support.

*Poetry, (visual or written) makes us feel closer to the human aspect of things; it is inherent to “the brightness of truth”, as a Greek man said...*

Bruises and the way their colours change, are a metaphor of this unavoidable search for healing which all of us are looking for through different elements but in the same direction. It is creativity that tells us the story from a position we can assimilate and overcome.

*-T: The idea included in the book about the impossibility to remember the pain in the same physical way that we went through it is a metaphor of the gap between a fact and the way we recall it? To what extent is fiction useful to reconstruct empty spaces in our memory?*





-PB: Although memory always distorts facts, it has good intentions. Perhaps, at the beginning, the relationship with memory softens painful situations, using fantasy. It is a very kind attitude. The past owns nuances which change their colour as times goes by, and each of us manages to assimilate that polychromy.

-T: *Can children have a different relationship with invention and imagination if we teach them the idea that memory is a construction with a dose of “fantasy?”*

-PB: I consider children do not need to be taught about anything. I think they can naturally be safe from teachings and I promote it so. Short stories, stories are special ingredients that accompany their growth, however, in their most dogmatic versions, they could interfere in their decisions, and that, terrifies me. My intention is always tangential, to take another way. In this sense, rhetoric and metaphor work well, they are kind enough to be a helping hand without pulling apart.

-T: *Are you always thinking of working for children, which at the same time deal with themes related to adulthood?*

- P.B: It is my own concern and my own big question. Who do I write for? I do not write for children or adult people or for anyone in particular. Once I said that I am writing the books I would have liked to read when I was a child. This means that I give books to myself out of time. I believe more and more that my own stylistic and intellectual loyalty is connected with the creative completion of my childhood from my present time.

-T: *The short stories “Uno de miedo” (A horror story) and “Miedoso” (Coward) refer to the unfathomable depth of fears. If you deal with fear through literature, does it have a comforting aspect whilst “playing” with fear through a story lightens it?*

- P.B: I imagine some comforting aspect, a meeting point, empathy with fears may be possible, but it is not my intention. Stories accompany, interfere, and mediate on a human scale with themes that exceed us because of their unfathomable depth. It would be outrageous to search for solutions in the texts, and speaking about responsibility of the authors, would be too much. When I tell stories about fears, I am transmitting intimate thoughts which meet silent readers by chance with things in common.

-T: *Literature for children has a lot in common with poetry, do they require concision, clarity related to the poetic expression?*

*-PB: I love poetry. I think it is one of the bravest and lasting devices of “our time”. Poetry is naturally tangential, and that is the reason why it is so kind and delicate towards our sensibility. And I mean it is brave, because there are many other “effective” devices or ways of encouragement when communicating a message, but poetry analyses our ideas through its undeniable delicacy. This is the way music, dancing, visual art and literature are incorporated, but they are no more than elements, and poetry invites them to play with it.*

-T: *How do you combine your work as editorial artist for the newspaper “La Nación” and your relationship with literature? Are boundaries between fiction and reality rougher than it seems?*

-PB: Exactly, boundaries are rough, and many times it blurs the swiftness of everyday work for the newspaper with the peaceful length of a book project. I guess everything is a feedback; it stimulates us as whole authors. Generally, I do not separate one work from the other because, finally I do not consider they are work, it does not seem to be like that.

-T: *Do you “test” your stories with your own children?*

-PB. Sometimes I do, with some short stories. They are potential tyrants.



**INTERVIEW: LA NACION newspaper.**  
**By Natalia Blanc LA NACION**

**Mentiras y Moretones (Lies and bruises)** (Sudamericana) by Pablo Bernasconi has just been published. It is a book aimed at children with twenty-four illustrated short stories. Fears, strokes, philosophical questions, stories and legends of lovely characters: these and much more are reflected on the most beautiful pages of this album book to be read, watched and collected. About the creative process and writing for young readers, the author and illustrator explains:

*-What was the origin of the stories in Mentiras y Moretones (Lies and bruises)?*

It was a long project which involved processes and stages that I was going through during the last two or three years. I wanted to deal with a book about bumps on the road, failure, losses, misfortune, disappointment. The fact was that I went through many of these things while the book was taking its shape. The short stories partly reflect those processes metaphorically. My proposal is, as a theme, the relationship between bumps, pain and memory. It is mainly composed of imagination, later interpretation and emotional support.

*-Is this the reason why you chose the combination of the two words for the title?*

Every short story transmits small parts of this concept, sometimes from the point of view of humour or poetry, but it always involves image. For example: Where do my knocks accumulate? Where in memory do my bumps hide? (...) Are tears or smiles the true heiresses of blows? I consider that virtue in art as well as ideas help as to trust the advantages of resilience. They are a proof of it.

*-What comes first: short stories or illustrations?*

In this book, the first thing I dealt with was the word. In general, the starting point is the need for an idea, a concept, which needs to come out. Considering this starting point, the image (and sometimes words) comes first and tells its true. In every situation, anyway, the adaptation to the album book (without tautology, literalness; planning of the reading levels) was taken with care so that interaction works. For example, one of the short stories, Uno de miedo (A horror story) had advances and setbacks because it seemed to me that image was slowing down the development of what was happening in the story. In spite of having illustrated it, it was confusable according to the tone I wished it had. Then, I decided to dispense with illustration and compel words to behave visually. And it worked much better. The need to use this dynamic duet (words and illustration) in an album book sometimes may become contradictory if the final aim is to widen the final meaning.

*Last year you made an exhibition of illustrations from your book Finales (Endings). Are you planning to do something like this with Mentiras y Moretones? (Lies and bruises)*

-Something happened about his book that made me try a new language. I am turning the whole book into a play, in which I take part with live music and illustrations. In fact, we called it "theatre concert" and it would be a children's play for adult people. Something like that. I like the fact of enlarging the possibilities of the narrative. It is a risk which, at the same time, nourishes and makes me interact and share the creative processes with other people (we are three people working together). The play will be probably premiered in October.

*-What do you have in mind when you write for children, in contrast to your work for "adult people"?*

*I am not sure if my work is to write for children or parents. My intention is always to write for the relationship. That is the way I do it when I play that role of the reader with my own children. The way in which a short story, a story, or a book, shape our relationships is lovely, genuine, and unavoidable. I love books, they are my treasured possession. I try to lead my work into that direction. I consider those books are worthwhile.*



*"Real" from Mentiras y Moretones*



**Interview: The Argentines**

Pablo Bernasconi, 35, has drawn for *The Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy* among other publications. He designed more than 300 covers for the supplement of Argentine newspaper *Clarín*. He also taught for the University of Buenos Aires, where he studied graphic design, and has written and illustrated five children's books, translated into eight languages.

'Retratos', a book for adults, was published in 2008. His ingenious representations of people and animals, often constructing a body out of inanimate objects, have won various prizes worldwide, from the Sunday Times Children's Book of the Week Award for 'The Wizard, The Ugly and The Book of Shame', to the illustration category of the 32 April Prize for Journalism in Brazil.

*Do you think it is possible to learn to draw or can the ability only come from natural talent?*

Drawing is a means of expression. To draw, therefore, is a way to confront on a sheet of paper the perceptions which someone has of the world. The pencil becomes the most effective tool to translate invisible ideas into the visible. Nobody can teach us this without losing something in the process. What can be taught are techniques, tricks, devices to get closer to what you are trying to achieve.

*Do you like the word 'caricature' or do you use a different term for what you do?*

The word 'caricature' is used to describe the exaggeration of features; it is a portrait taken from someone's exaggerated physiognomy. And I don't do this, I don't

know how to. I make conceptual drawings. I call them conceptual because with them I do not set out to make an accurate physical representation of the subject, but try to construct and define them as a character from their context, history and perception. My portraits carry a metaphoric charge. My portraits are visual opinions of people. Because of this I often do not give them a head or I might directly replace their face with an object.

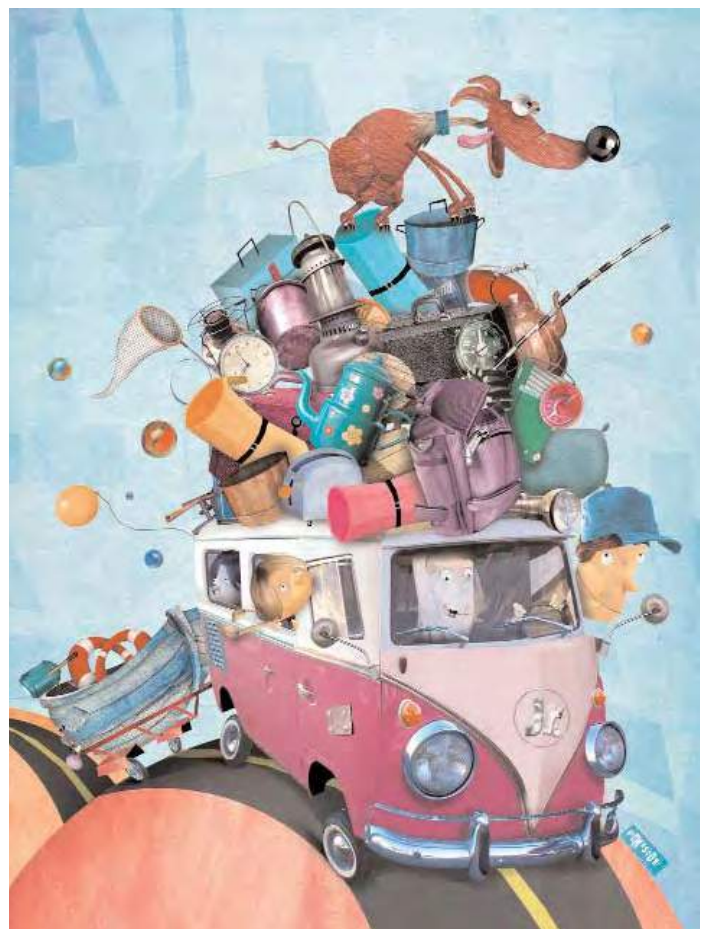
It is essential for me to link myself with a subject intellectually first and with their physiognomy later. I see a union with an object, concept, place or symbol, cross the person with that idea and from there comes the portrait.

*Do you prefer to illustrate children's books or work on books and newspapers aimed at adults?*

They are very different activities which I appreciate for different reasons, but really I don't make enough of a distinction between the two to prefer one or the other. My works always have an image concept behind them; I take care to say something interesting and later I make it public to children or adults. Illustrating children's books lets me be more open to the fantastical universe, more playful, using symbols which an adult might not understand. On the other hand, illustrating for newspapers and adults' books allows me to use sharper and more caustic metaphors, which I enjoy creating.

*Is it possible to praise someone through such a portrait?*

In my work for newspapers and magazines, I learnt to negotiate and create around polemic and delicate subjects. In many cases, it is necessary to find a visual complement to an article which contains aspects difficult to



*Effectiveness doesn't really depend on the medium but on how it is used....The image, the word, are resources to give form to something much more resounding: an idea.*

represent in a photograph or with realistic illustrations. In these cases, metaphor is invaluable; it becomes the most direct and forceful visual method there can be. The image here is not going to be decorative; what is necessary is that it encompasses and amplifies the meaning of the text, which speaks for itself.

Of course I can praise someone through a portrait. In my case, lots of the portraits in my book 'Retratos', like Roberto Fontanarossa, Edgar Allan Poe, David Lynch, Ella Fitzgerald are people I love and admire. In these cases, I expressed a friendly and affectionate opinion. *Is a strong image as memorable and significant as spoken words?*

I think they are two different resources and that each has irreplaceable advantages on its own. Effectiveness doesn't really depend on the medium but on how it is used. Henry James would not write the same thing about a subject as would Hemingway; just as a portrait by Lucien Freud is not the same as one by Rembrandt or Francis Bacon, even though the same subject is seated in front of them. The image, the word, are resources to give form to something much more resounding: an idea.

*Is the role of art to educate as well as entertain?*

I hope not! Certainly, visual art has been attributed many meanings and senses, one of which is teaching.

But I think that the conscious expression of an opinion through an image must be faithful to the subject and not to the public who demands it. It is the most frank and honest way to construct something. If art were to be charged with teaching, it would lose its brave component of spontaneity and sincerity. This does not imply that anyone cannot learn from an artist's work as long as it is always considered closely with their mode of expression, the message and the person.

*Do you prefer to create something beautiful or meaningful?*

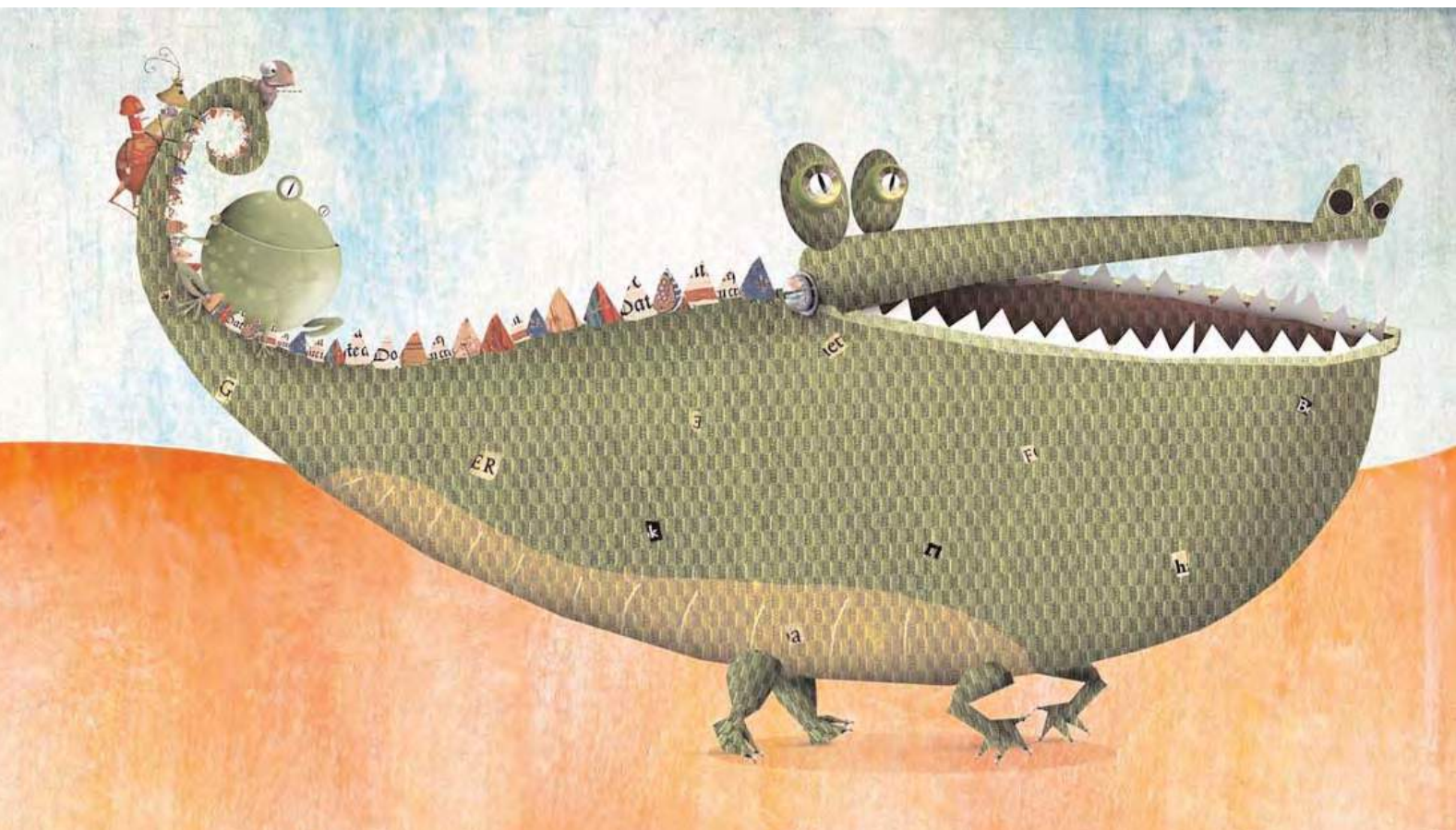
I think definitely that something meaningful is beautiful.

Some of your work suggests that in the modern world, truth is hidden under the surface and appearances deceive, such as 'Desastre del Prestige', which shows a sinking boat, the submerged half of which has turned into a fish skeleton. What do you think are the modern world's most dangerous deceptions?

I suppose that the most dangerous is the increasing tendency to act without thinking; to create without thinking about the effect which this will have. Wildly fast consumption, of media, objects, money, advertising, entertainment, is making us all the time more superficial. Everything becomes brief and disposable. There is no time to think. Honest and sincere reflection has to take a place in our lives if we want to consider ourselves intelligent. It is not easy.

*What is the most important thing you can teach your students?*

I repeat Pablo Picasso's phrase, with which I close my book 'Retratos': "Inspiration exists, but it needs to find you working."





**Interview to Crann Magazine**

*How would you like to define yourself: as illustrator, designer or a mixture of both?*

The labels are changing as I add fields to the form of expressing and building codes. I have done it from design, from illustration and lately from the literature with my books to kids. I think the word that encompasses all this would simply be "author." It seems important to recognize that the forms are adapted to the goal that I raised.

*What ways do you believe that they were bringing you over to the illustration?*

In the distance I can say that the illustration, the conceptual art that I developed is mostly something that I brought from before, and that I feel comfortable and satisfied with. It's like a language that I just had to remember. Anyway, if I evaluate each step separately, meeting points and times when I had to decide on an emergency basis to comply with maximum efficiency and control, something that happened when I worked in Clarín (the largest newspaper in Argentina, founded on 1945, prints and distributes around 330,000 copies throughout the country), that determined graphical actions with the elements that it had to hand. The illustration, this mixture of strategy and expression that so much we stimulate, was the most direct way to achieve this.

*Who do recognize as influence, as teacher and why?*

I think the influences are not always visual, or at least not directly related to the design. I think cinema, music and literature also, are continuously providing

ways of seeing things, ways of thinking and diagnose. I can name Fontanarrosa, Cieslewicz, David Lynch, Heartfield, Kubrick, Cortázar, Mafalda, Spielberg, Lenica, Barthes, Woody Allen, Sabat, Bukowsky, Monk, Calvin, Klee, Duchamp, Borges, Ferrer, Burton, Peter Sellers, Paul Auster, Schiele, George Lucas etc. and etc.

This "cultural salad" taught me what I need to know, that is pleasant to belong to a huge group of people that creates convinced of what they are doing.

*What gave you the career of designer?*

Let's say projection, meaning, that taught me to think of communication objectives, understand that any message can be formally addressed with accuracy and strategy.

*What does offer to the designer the career of the illustrator? What has one that complements the other one?*

Is a very important question, because I think it is very notorious the education of an illustrator when it comes from design. The essential thing is to recognize that the techniques used are not crucial in the resulting image, but they are just tools of the semantic, elements to carry out something else, that is, knowing what to say. It doesn't matter if the designer knows or not to draw, because what he can do is to choose how to convey an idea to an image. I argue that you can't take the picture as an "accessory" to the text, if you really want to raise the level of our profession.

*In the foreword of "Portraits" you said: "I destroy to build." What do you mean with it?*

That phrase is actually something similar to what Pablo Picasso once said. In my speech, constitutes or



*“Everything starts with the stage of the pencil, which I never avoid. It is the most effective and tacit way of meeting the idea, of experimenting and testing, of projecting. I use to dedicate most of the time to this stage”.*

relates to the destruction and mixing of symbols, the fundamental basis of metaphor. Crossing symbols we have the power to generate icons, transform speeches and promote ideas. I use all of this, spoiling the object of their original meaning, and giving it a new one by mixing it to something else.

*How do you describe your creative process, methodology and daily work? Where’s your starting point?*

It depends a bit on the type of order, and especially if it’s something punctual (a publishing illustration), or if it is a part of a project (a book). Anyhow, everything starts with the stage of the pencil, which I never avoid. It is the most effective and tacit way of meeting the idea, of experimenting and testing, of projecting. I use to dedicate most of the time to this stage.

If what I am facing is a book I start by sketching ideas and notes for an argument, then illustrated, and finally write (always in the morning).

*How was the accomplishment of the book, in the case of “The Diary of Captain Arsenio”? How did the idea arise? The book is dedicated to your father (for teaching you to fly) and to your mother (for teaching you to land), could you explain the meaning that these words contain?*

I am a pilot. Usually I found myself surrounded by pilots, aircraft, airfields, deeds, and of course, accidents. I guess it was too good to waste it as material and on the other hand I like to write about topics I know and enjoy. “The Diary of Captain Arsenio” mixture this universe that I love with the classic Argentine culture, the domineering attitude that is not afraid of storms, because they never finished out of one.

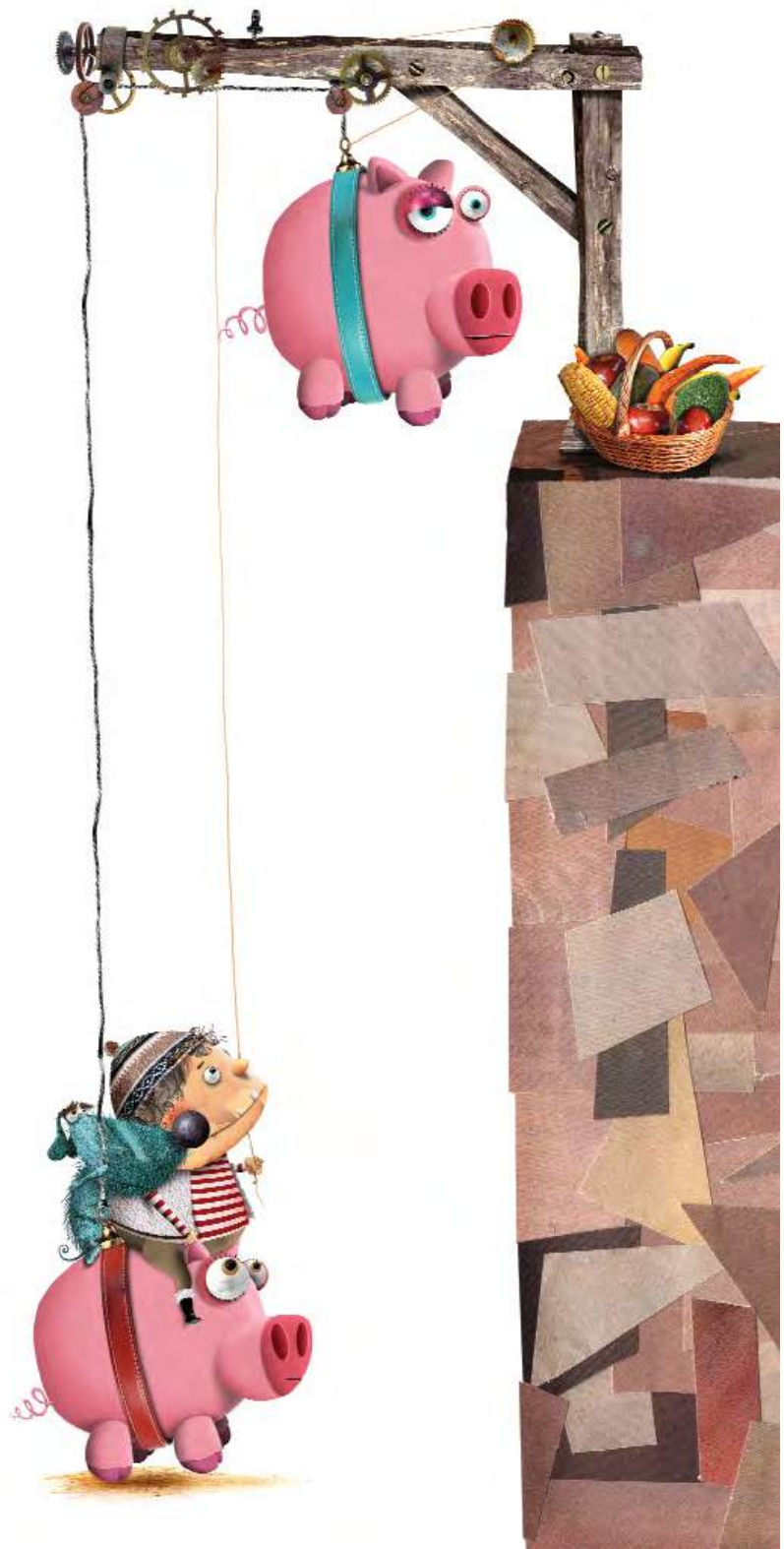
About the dedication, certainly beyond metaphors, my father taught me to fly, was my flight instructor. My mother was always “my cable to land”, where that comes first is the reason. It seemed fair to include them in this book, where the achievements are linked to imagination and madness, but materialized based on knowledge and intelligence.

*In another interview you were holding that “illustration is not an ornament.” What is your vision of the illustration and its role in different fields in which it’s currently use?*

The illustration as a discipline has many sides, many exponents and many ways to take it. My desire is that on this profession we consider that we are actually cre-

ating opinion and that we are helping to simplify the expression of certain concepts that sometimes the text fails to, at least in the way that the illustration does. Take advantage of this situation should be a precondition to any illustrator. It’s the best way to evaluate and professionally define the diluted borders of the illustration.

*You have several books published and rewarded, in*



*I'm actually doing the books that I couldn't find when I was a boy. I'm giving myself this books on delay*

*many of them you're the author of both, the text and images. How do you see from that experience the relationship between text and illustrations?*

It is very rewarding to be able to give a project the form that you like by owning all the decisions regarding the creative aspects. The experience of writing cost me more than illustrate, I guess is because my education starts on graphics arts, but that does not stop me for telling many things and having many stories that I need to materialize. My impression is that it is essential to have something to say, an idea, the way to say so may be many, some more familiar than others, but they are still tools. The union of literature and illustration produced great results and I'm exploring what I can do with them.

*In a society that holds the image comes first, what do you think is the meaning of it? What value do you ascribe it to your own creative work?*

The image constructed reality and deepens our understanding of things because it gives us the ability to interpret and decide. The image materialized. I think that the illustrators are cultural artifacts, little cogs that make up the identity of each country or each culture. That's why sometimes shocked me to see some kids copying Manga or imitating techniques unrelated to our skin, our folklore. I like to believe that we give form to something fragile, but with direction.

*The last books that you published are for an adult public ("Portraits", "Excesses and exaggerations") which is the difference between creating for adults and for children? Does this determine you at the moment of facing a project? Could you explain how?*

Well, actually "Excesses and exaggerations" is good for all age groups, a kind of multifaceted portrait of our character exacerbated, readable by children and adults. It is in this book that I match the acid look and the naive one, linking the observation that an adult could do, and the interpretation that a child would have about the same subject.

I do not usually divide both audiences at the time to face a project, I don't feel myself sincere if I do that because it is truly my way of seeing things, my books are a frank display of observations that resonate with the public adult or child, which depends on who is publishing it.

*Why did you start to do books to kids?*

I began illustrating books for other authors, stories of

others to which I put image, which I gave them illustrations. But then I start to have very specific things to tell that no one was writing or at least I was not lucky enough to get to illustrate, that's when I started to write, as a way to let them enter in my world, to give them existence. We invent things that we believe deserve to exist. And if they are truly genuine, we work hard to do them well.

*From your experience, what has to offer a children's book? Why?*

Offer the opportunity to wake up the appetite to read more, to keep on seeking. A children's book have to avoid the passive role as the other formats gave (TV, PlayStation, etc.) and linked directly to the child's imagination. It has to nourish and simultaneously entertain. Must show that is friendly tool, where the neurons can do gymnastics without suffering. There are so many things a children's book has to be, luckily I do not think all that every time I start a book, would be very difficult!

*How do you get from there with the child you were? How much participation has "the little Bernasconi" in your creations for children?*

Many, of course. Once I said that I'm actually doing the books that I couldn't find when I was a boy, that I'm giving myself this books on delay. I guess the most straightforward way of writing is to dedicate the stories to the child we went once and see if anyone else shares these passions, seeking accession. It is impossible to write to all the kids, I could not do that, nor do I want.

*Once you said that you work from Bariloche (Patagonia) and almost as a hermit. Do you consider the isolation to be necessary for the creative deployment present in your productions?*

I do not consider it necessary as a condition imposed. Many ideas have occurred to me on airplanes, airports, schools, meetings, etc. But I think there comes a time where it brings into play the need to discern whether an idea is good, mediocre or bad, and by that time you need some isolation, concentration. Work in this place put me in focus many things that before might not see.

*In the light of the tradition and the present of the illustration in Argentina, what means to be an illustrator today, here and now?*

It means to be happy.





## Bifocal

**Carlos Guyot for La Nación newspaper**

Pablo Bernasconi and his two-headed book  
Pablo Bernasconi is a man who thinks with his hands. Graphic designer and illustrator, has published eight books for children as the author of texts and images. *Bifocal* just released (Edhasa), a book for adults "in two dimensions", as the subtitle let us know.

Bernasconi, owner of a wide and precise technique, has found in the collage, not only his favorite way of expression, but also their own way of constructing meaning.

*Bifocal* is a book of two heads, which can be read in two ways, giving it back upright, and proposes two routes that are also different but complementary: one of the two courses is bright and the other dark.

The book that emerged as a result of the head light radiates optimism born of a phrase written by the author in the preface for: "Today I have a good day."

At the start of the tour bleak, however, Bernasconi talks about how his "piranha-ideas" transcend the uncertainty to show what can be seen from the middle of the night. His illustrations not only interpret words or ideas of famous people, but these pieces constructed with both text and graphic, which converge a concept and its execution plastic.

*Bifocal*, in its way, continues and expands the path begun with "Portraits", the author's earlier book with his particular caricatures and photographic collage of the great figures of twentieth century culture.

*At Portraits as in Bifocal the starting point of your work are brief quotations that condense powerful ideas of various authors. How does the selection of those phrases?*

Actually, the starting points are not exactly the quotations, but the theme, the "item" to which they and I'm referring. And then it come my own interpretation, my graphical sentence.

*Why do you talk of "sentence"?*

I say this because in 90 percent of the cases, I've produced the image first and then I searched a text that could match with and close the concept. The search was quite chaotic and instinctive: things to remember, texts that once were underlined and now continued to have an affinity with my views, or simply quotes from authors who I wanted to include because they condense in his notions similar to those needed to transmit in every case. That's why the appointments are not just sayings or proverbs but including paragraphs of books, songs, poems, etc...

*What's behind the idea of creating a book with two conflicting paths?*

It is, again, an experiment. I like to play and see what happens if I get involved more and more with themes and exercises that get me into trouble. In this case, I decided to be stubbornly loyal to the point, per day. That means respect my mood at the time of generating an opinion on each of those issues and, above all, make the effort to find the good or evil of all things, staying true to my own ideas. That's even when both sides apparently seem to be opposite, they do not betray the sovereignty of my mind.

*Do not you fear the contradiction?*

No, and I find I can say something positive about politics, and even over death and hell, and also find a negative side to talk about things as beautiful as love, ideas or the sky. All things have their polarities, but we stay often easier to one side or the other. I guess it's just a matter of will.

*The Bifocal graphic metaphors at times accompanying and at other times contradict the meaning of texts. How much of rational and intuitive method of working have you applied?*

Although on the surface are sometimes contradictory to his support graphics, text always end up complete and close an idea. None of the protagonists of each page (text and picture) comes on top, but to multiply the effect. It sometimes happens that deliberately I let leave loose ends on the image to not be redundant when I apply the text and vice versa. I would say that the process involves two stages: first, an intuitive, where I present an opinion harshly, perhaps in the form of words or feelings, and then a cold and rational stage, which consists in finding a metaphor that materialize this intuition.

In *Bifocal*, seems that you are both, deeper and open to your collage.

*I would say that the process involves two stages: first, an intuitive, where I present an opinion harshly, perhaps in the form of words or feelings, and then a cold and rational stage, which consists in finding a metaphor that materialize this intuition.*



The collage as a tool not only aesthetic but also conceptual, gives me more precise and malleable mechanisms. Cross symbols which, when summed, generate new iconic monsters. Yet in this book I try to introduce other ways to control the direction and displaying a view, sometimes goes in the way of scenes, sometimes by touching the joke. I think it can be dangerous, even when it could be comfortable, becoming addicted to a single mechanism of speech. That raises security but then you're no longer susceptible to accidents, improvisation with conceptual surprises. Luckily there is not a manual, a road trip. I am of the idea that we must maintain this intuition and invisible trade.

*Do the concept and the original idea come before the way you express them?*

Exactly: I consider that the tool has to be aesthetic in all cases subject to the idea, what you want to tell. That's why Bifocal goes around so many graphics registers. This generates inevitably better and worse results, because my skills are not the same with each technique. But in my two books I exhibit a clear intention, and that is to refloat the author as a generator of ideas, a source of creativity and not just some skilled operator syntax.

*It would seem that in Bifocal it's more important the amplitude in graphic language: more pen, the ink, handwritten texts. Almost no trace of the computer...*

It's like that. I recently read, just looking for how to accompany a page of this book, that Igor Stravinsky use to say that to compose he needed to get from the pencil and paper to the score, because it was a way of "making dough" with ideas. It seems a very accurate definition of the experience involved in moving a concept to something corporeal, something to share with another. I believe in the physical relationship of an artist with his tools are brushes, clay, or scissors. And the computer, for that matter, is, to my mind rather a back seat to more basic tools. We are always talking about tools: none should weigh its mark above thinking.

*"I believe in the physical relationship of an artist with his tools"*



## El diario del Capitán Arsenio (Captain Arsenio's Diary)

### The Diary of Captain Arsenio

“The flying machine” by Cecilia Bajour (Fuente: [www.imaginaria.com.ar](http://www.imaginaria.com.ar))

"I will achieve what mankind has dreamed for centuries: to create the flying machine."

The own obstinacy of every inventor who does not get scared in front of the magnitude of the mission that they wish to conquer, always characterized the pioneers of the aviation. In this case we are dealing with a fragment dated in 1782 from the diary of the indescribable Captain Arsenio, imaginary predecessor of predecessors, who became a builder of flying machines, after passing along several terrestrial professions and other maritime ones, between them diving and be the captain of a ship of awkward performance.

The scarce information about the character named Manuel J. Arsenio and the vague circumstances surrounding the discovery of the manuscript that was containing his diary, comes from a few brief paragraphs that like prologue and epilogue introduce them a voice, playing the role of a sort of unspoken editor not named as such. With the narrative distance that needs any absurd text, this voice characterizes the Captain as a personage of legend related from the fiction with royal heroes of the history of the aviation.

Everything that has been made by Captain Arsenio, according to these preliminary words, is known especially by his daily diary, only testimony of his singular and humorous contribution to the world of the flying machines. Though the manuscript includes the development of seventeen devices, it is explained in advance, that only six of them will be show in detail. Anyhow, to satisfy those who want to browse other attempts, on both guards, the initial and the final ones, it is possible to see in limited size the sketch and the corresponding illustration to the totality of the machines.

The image of the Captain who precedes the presentation of the projects, confirms the introductory words that brings over the utilization of "useless materials" for the accomplishment of his flying inventions. With the technology of collage that characterizes the whole plastic offer, you can see him of entire body showing an aviator's cap that significantly says "ARGENTINE INDUSTRY", a mended jacket and in his hands, a wheel of bicycle and an injured spring joined a propeller. To his side, a brief text that takes his signature wonders, almost like becoming convinced of his quixotic mistake, "why not to know the world from above as the birds".

Each of six projects is presented in the left page by the voice that also has to post the words that open and close the book. In all the cases it is a question of brief information about

some of the circumstances that they made a detour to every project and on allusive details to the successive failures.

To this it follows a kind of sketch plane where deployed with scrawls and obliterations the drawings of the components and the hilarious formulas of each project. A comment at the expense of the own Captain Arsenio accentuates the previous delirium, especially because in every case and still after the constant frustrations, the intrepid personage culminates with the obstinate and stubborn one: "I cannot fail".

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

And following this, the singular "Diary of flight" uses the double page to show with a grotesque attempt of scientific rigor, to develop all of the tragicomic flying ventures of the Captain Arsenio. It is a question of a graphical table of double entry that from the horizontal axis it records the times used for every phase, in general from the position "in rest", happening from the moments of ascent to that inevitably one, that concludes in a fatal fall. In the vertical axis is possible to visualize the levels of height reached and some humorous information relative to the elevation or to the abrupt landing. Thereby, to read the diary of the Captain Arsenio is to be present at a graphical adventure in the shape of curve that culminates in a necessary decrease. The design there invites to see stepwise the imperturbable personage mounted in his absurd machine. Every illustrated moment possesses a brief description in the first person at the expense of the captain. Laconic style of the report is added to the strength of the ingenuity as it pretends to be written simultaneously with the experience. And lived always it escapes from the delirious ones though always hopeful forecasts.

At the foot of the double page for six diaries of flight there is a note, where the voice reappears in third person, who comments or explains some of the scenes or consequences of what already was said, suggested and showed in the graphical sequence by sufficient eloquence

The concept of digital collage, the author's preferred technique, transcends the mere "stick" of disparate elements and becomes a daring search for the needs that his character required for the invention of his unusual narrative ideas. So the machines (motocanario, sacacorchoptero, hamstertronic, etc.) are a meticulous assemblage of unusual objects provided by a playful exploration of daily life inspired, inspired on the expertise art to fly that Pablo Bernasconi treasures from childhood and adolescence (1). An interesting search from the plastic side and the humor side is the inclusion of animals in the technology of some of the machines, as in the case of the "motocanario" and the "hamstertronic". In both machines the animal employee, volunteer's canaries in the first case and a hamster - friend of valuable assistance- in the second one, are a significant part of the propulsion device, even while flying at the time of the collapse they manage themselves to escape gracefully from suffering the consequences that the rest of the machine and its pilot followed. (2)

The uncertainty about the final victory in the stubborn endeavors of the Captain Arsenio, continues floating in the text that works like epilogue: the air of legend is accentuated

this way on the curious personage. Nevertheless, the last words are yielded to the own Captain, who as every dreamer in spite of the emergency landings never doubts that the sky always is a possible adventure.

Notes

(1) In an interview with the newspaper *La Nación*, Bernasconi said that "almost all the doodles that develop Arsenio - sacacorchoróptero, submarinóptero, hamstertronic, etc. - are real inventions from previous versions at the history of aviation. Each machine that Arsenio designed was built to really work."

In: "Every book that I did is a book that I did not have" by Luis Aubele. *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, April 22, 2007.

Both, Pablo Bernasconi and his father are pilots. The dedication of the book makes explicit gratitude to the family on these flying issues: "My father taught me to fly. My mother taught me to land."

(2) The "participation" of animals in the book is mentioned in a parody to the texts included in the film as credits when guards end stresses that "No animals were mistreated during the making of this book."

Notes by Imaginaria:

"The Diary of Captain Arsenio" receives the Award Zena Sutherland, distinction that the University of Chicago gave annually to the best children's story books published in America. The prize is awarded in three categories: best picture, best text and best children's book. "The Diary of Captain Arsenio" was the winner in two categories: best text and best children's book.

The delightful inventions and (mis)adventures of Captain Arsenio, December 31, 2005

**Lawrance M. Bernabo (United States)**

Leonardo da Vinci has nothing on Captain Arsenio, a retired cheese maker, blacksmith, scuba diver, and ship captain turned inventor, who decided one day in 1782 to build a flying machine. Captain Arsenio was a curious man who liked to tinker and explore, and the fact that he worked with a hodgepodge of materials and was totally unaware of the laws of physics were not account to get in the way of a man who sets off to fly with

the birds (in spite of himself). In this delightful book we learn about his long series of eccentric projects in this quest.

"Captain Arsenio: Inventions and (Mis)adventures in Flight" by Pablo Bernasconi purports to be based on pages from the recently discovered of Captain Manuel J. Arsenio, in which were recorded his many failed attempts to create a flying machine. Of course, this is all fiction, which probably explains why it the book ends up being so much fun. Bernasconi tells Arsenio's story, starting in the 1780s with the Motocanary and the Flying Runner, then progressing to the Corkscrewpterus, Aerial Submarine, Illusion Burner,



and Hamstertronic. These are six of his eighteen most influential projects that have contributed to modern aviation by virtue of teaching that most valuable of lessons, "Don't try this at home." For each of his flying machines we have the details of the project (e.g., the Motocanary involves tying sixteen canaries to a belt), including diagrams and sketches, followed by Arsenio's Flight Diary which details the specific phases of the attempt and the lessons learned (e.g., choose more obedient bird, test the design in a field without any trees, etc.).

Bernasconi's artwork consists of collaged original art and found objects, and if it does not remind you of a cross between Rube Goldberg's inventions and Terry Gilliam's animation for Monty Python, then you are a whole lot younger than I am. Young readers will be delighted by the (mis)adventures of Captain Arsenio and captivated by the various designs and Bernasconi's artistic renderings of them. He even tries to answer the big question (Did Arsenio eventually succeed in flying?) and while a sequel might be possible given the other twelve designs left unexplored, I doubt we will be that

lucky. The copyright page for this book appears in the back instead of the front and I think this was done so that we could better appreciate the dedication to Bernasconi's father, who taught him to fly, and his mother, who taught him to land when he was growing up in Argentina. Captain Arsenio must have been that lucky as well.

### Chicago Tribune

CAptain Arsenio: Inventions and (Mis)Adventures in Flight  
Suppose Leonardo da Vinci wasn't the only one to make sketches of flying machines. Imagine Manuel J. Arsenio, "a careless cheese master, blacksmith, scuba diver, and ship captain." Imagine the standard history of aviation retold, set in an ambience somewhere between the Marx Brothers and Monty Python. Succeeding pages are arranged in the straight-faced history-of-science style ("Project Number 1: Motocanary"), complete with sketches, formulas, Arsenio's journals and commentary ("Maybe the failure is due to Captain Arsenio's misplaced trust in the unreliable canaries").



**El brujo, el Horrible y el libro rojo de los hechizos**  
(The Wizard, the Ugly and the book of Shame)

**Publishers Weekly**

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, though: " `Wizardsry 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.)



**Los Súper Premios**  
(The Super awards)

**By Coni Salgado's from Eternal cadence**

When "Excesses and exaggerations" came into my hands, I could not help "eating it". Actually, it's really how the events happened. I mean, it wasn't like it came to my hands but more precisely my hands were drawn in the bookstore for a very attractive cover in shape and striking color. The remaining books were dumb because a large red cross on a black background illustration printed on a nice quality of paper attracted me almost instantly.

The rest I can tell, but never would match the wonderful experience of seeing it, browse it and read it over and over

again. Pablo Bernasconi happens to be a brilliant artist, outstanding. Rupture in the use of materials and high creativity. And to my amazement, literature also seemed subtle and impressive. One tends to think that a sublime illustrator exceed the expectations of his audience in the art that is responsible, however, in this case, writing is something he can also shine up defined as a complete artist.

I like the stories that let your mind floating a little further, stories that left questions around encouraging the imagination to find an answer for. I like the literature that not is base on giving a lesson. I like the combination of words that simply are, not for a previous reason. Emerging as an impulse, emotion and innate talent of who writes them. I like the beginning that is not silent and the end that is not tell, especially when it comes to children and youth's literature, although I must confess that I cannot find a specific age to read this author, much less to appreciate his artwork.

Pablo Bernasconi is a great artist, known by many as an illustrator and graphic designer, is, however, an authentic and delicious writer.

What I can tell is that this book has much to do with humor. The protagonists of the stories remind us of people who perhaps once knew, but their names are original and bear some mischief in their actions. The sound of words suggests an intelligent nonsense and an entertaining reading.

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

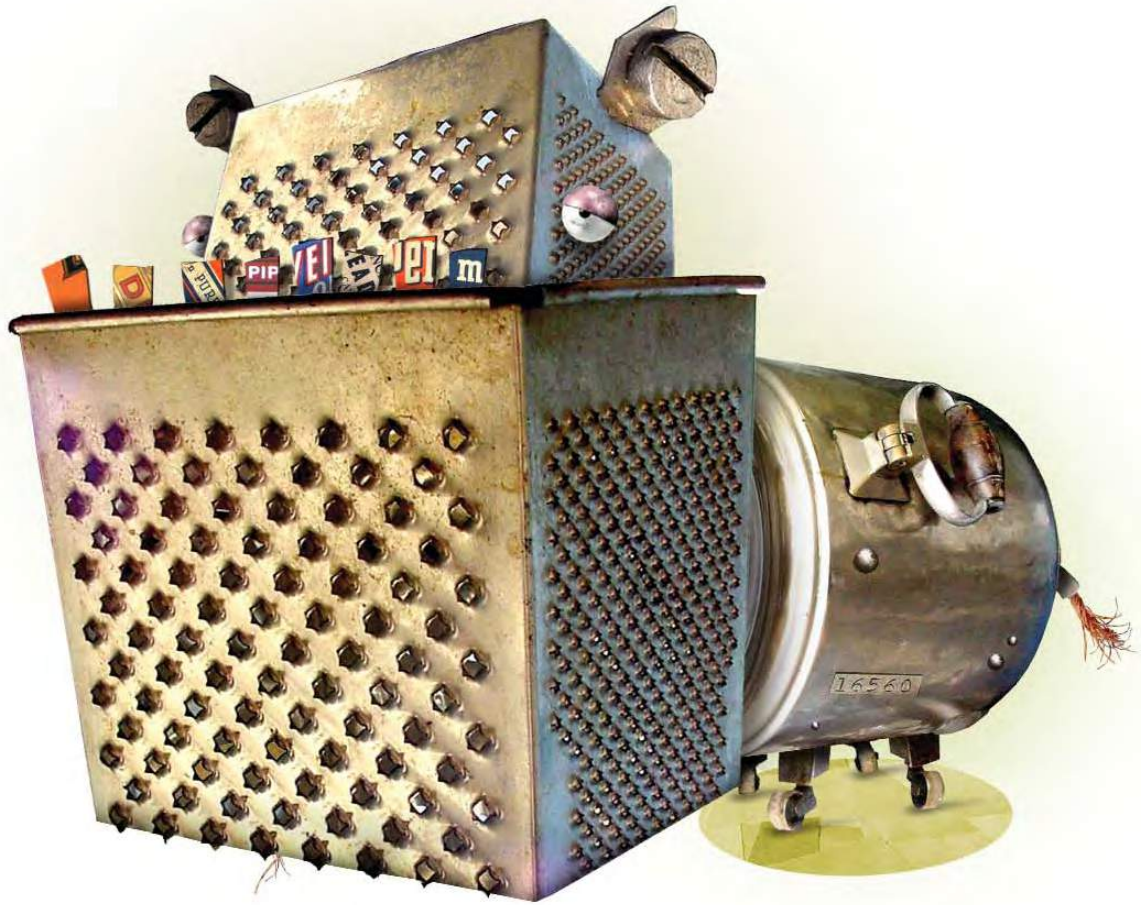
With regard to the illustrations as part of this book, I'm afraid I have to fall into the common assessment states that "the images speak for themselves", and it is true. I do not think myself able to can define or convey in words the amount of universal meanings, daily discoveries, objects use to carry out these works, much rich in features and details as we are accustomed by Bernasconi. In the charm of its creation, a coin can be the sun, a hank of threads they form a hair or a world takes shape of alphabet, the magic is that in assessing the images, there's always more to discover, something else to decipher...

In "Excess and exaggerations", the stories are many and well mixed. This is a fabulous mix of short stories and visual charm, reunited in perfect harmony.

Maybe, two stories are the ones - for some reason I will not try to figure out now, I tend to read often- have touched my heart. Find poetry in their endings and beauty in his words ... The story "The collector pious" tells us that Manuel has a cabinet with five shelves and is concerned with objects that nobody want, give them a place, a companion, a sense. Sometimes I wonder what he keeps in his closet. His response is exciting. And no doubt, "Connection" is the unforgettable story of the book. In this story, Bernasconi introduces us to Nora, who is a writer and only believes in her letters that made words that made sentences. For her there is nothing more important than reading and writing. In this text, Diego is a mathematician, and only believe in their numbers, which are figures, which are equations, convincing himself that nothing is more important than doing accounts. But one day, Nora found a number on the floor, and Diego is in the same way, a letter. Perhaps curiosity makes their world go round.

The same curiosity that led "Excesses and exaggerations" to lit my eyes and reach my hands.







I consider children do not need to be taught about anything. I think they can naturally be safe from teachings and I promote it so. Short stories, stories are special ingredients that accompany their growth, however, in their most dogmatic versions, they could interfere in their decisions, and that, terrifies me. My intention is always tangential, to take another way. In this sense, rhetoric and metaphor work well, they are kind enough to be a helping hand without pulling apart

Thank You.

