Dossier

Claudia Rueda

2018 Hans Christian Andersen Award Candidate
Fundalectura, Colombia
DOSSIER

Claudia Rueda

2018 HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARD CANDIDATE
Nominated by Fundalectura, the Colombian Section of IBBY
Claudia Rueda is a Colombian writer and illustrator of over twenty picture-books for children. Her work has been described as an ingenious graphic exploration of superb refinement. Rueda's books have been published in Mexico, Colombia, Spain and the United States and have been translated into ten different languages around Asia and Europe. Her work has received several awards including Italy's Nati per Leggere Prize, the selection for the New York Society of illustrators and for the IBBY Honor List. She's also a New York Times Best Seller illustrator and a New York Public Library selection.

Claudia's work has always played around the rich contrast between visual and verbal narratives. Before becoming a picture book author, she developed an interest in political cartooning while attending law and art school in her hometown. Rueda's cartoons were published in the main Colombian newspapers during the times of the drug and guerilla wars. Her law school graduation thesis was a Graphic History of Roman Law. After publishing some educational graphic books on environmental and political issues, Claudia and her husband moved to San Francisco, California to learn about computer graphics and animation. By serendipity she found a course on Children's Books Illustration at the University of Berkeley. Rueda's final class project developed into her first published picturebook after a visit to the Bologna Book Fair while living in Madrid, Spain. She also holds a MFA in Creative Writing from Lesley University at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Claudia was born in Colombia and grew up among three siblings and a book eating dog. She currently lives at 2620 meters above sea level in the big city of Bogotá with her husband and her two daughters.
One of the most recent picturebooks by author Claudia Rueda, *Ahí Estabas*, begins with a pencil finishing a page of straight lines, achieving an orderly and monotonous golden background. It seems that its purpose is to give time to the protagonist, a school-aged girl, to find the right words to express the pain and confusion that she experiences while growing up. That pencil contains something that she also finds in the wind, in stories or in music. It is the essence of what gives meaning to her life: the act of creating worlds in which imagination, humour and reflection can all come to life.

Such are the worlds that Claudia Rueda creates. The pencil brings order to her experiences and memories, the raw material for her children's books. Through the many sketches that precede each one of her works, she takes control of the characters, learns their movements and gestures, and surrounds them only with the elements that she needs in order to tell the story. There is nothing superfluous in her work, often crafted with colour pencils (her favorites), ink, or digital interventions. And to complete her process, Rueda adds many hints and narrative resources to her spare illustrations, compelling her young readers to turn page after page.
Claudia Rueda approaches each one of her books as an opportunity to innovate, to deeply reflect on the nature of her craft and to reinvent her style.

With her youngest audience in mind, Claudia Rueda treats her characters with tenderness, humour and respect, and fills them with curiosity and intelligence. The stories have cheerful, loving mothers, always ready to play or to encourage the little ones' adventures, giving them security as they explore their independence. They are ready to help them when they fail or when they make the many mistakes that happen in the early years.

But Rueda's work moves further. Books like A veces and Ahí estabas resonate with older children, whose questions transcend their own home's walls and who are beginning to look inwardly for answers. Just like the characters from her books, these kids are trying to reconcile the external world with their most intimate feelings and fears. These books seek to explore the uncertainty and even the pain that often come with growing up.

There are several elements that characterize Claudia Rueda's stories, making them solid and consistent: a flawless narrative sequence, extremely expressive characters, the use of a wide variety of creative resources and the employ of counterpoint between the visual and the verbal.

Claudia Rueda approaches each one of her books as an opportunity to innovate, to deeply reflect on the nature of her craft, to reinvent her style, always exploring new possibilities in the relationship between words and pictures. The wide diversity of her picturebooks and of her illustrations shows an unusual versatility that extends even to the books written by other authors. Rueda is a Colombian author and illustrator, whose work is deeply universal, as the nature of all children is essentially the same. The strength of her work lies at the intersection of her endless creativity and her deep understanding of the child's curious mind.
The tasks of learning how to socialize, to have self-control, to incorporate norms and codes and to recognize the other, give the child a coherent framework necessary to grow up as a person, with boundaries and constraints. In order for that to happen, the adult needs strength, attention and flexibility. All the times the child's desires feel suppressed by duties and rules, tension begins between children and adults, and both need to compromise. Compromises are indispensable for the child to grow up surrounded by respect towards his/her young freedom.

The child's disobedience is a theme appreciated by authors who prefer sense of humor to seriousness as a tool for the dramatization of conflict. That's the choice of Claudia Rueda when she writes and illustrates a little bear and his mother in the context of bedtime. The mother knows how much patience she needs with a child that always says “No”, one of the infant's first words and where the first rebel act is registered. The bear cub in Claudia's book “No” challenges his mother systematically, because he doesn't want to hibernate to avoid the cold weather, the hunger and the dangers of Winter. The bear cub argues that he doesn't feel sleepy, he doesn't feel cold, that he has saved some nuts, that he's very strong and that he loves the snow and the storms.
The bear cub reassures himself in front of his mother by acting against her will, illustrating the child’s first phase called opposition, a phase where the child becomes conscious of being different from the others. By using the magic word “No” the child reaffirms his differentiation from the others and begins to exist as an individual. The mother, on the other side, knows how much his cub needs reference points that will allow him to lean solidly and boundaries that will make him feel secure and protected from external aggressions. So the mother uses dialogue, the exchange of words and gazes with her child, so he can enjoy the power of words, of the negative affirmation, and endless source of enjoyment used by every child in an immoderate form.

The final cub’s pirouette is an exchanges of roles, since now he wants to protect his mother from the Winter, feeding the triumphant narcissism of the child... although spoiled by his mother in an enjoyable complicity.

Claudia Rueda confirms her dimension as a great and sensible artist by knowing how to use minimalist narrative techniques to suggest profound issues, making them accessible to young readers. All her picture book goes on that same direction: the texture of the pages so soft to the touch, the roundness of her characters and their position in the page in order to suggest the relationship among them, the dialogues and the final vignette that reminds us how the mother’s frustration assumed by the mother until that final moment.
Interview
Three Blind Men and an Elephant was the name of Claudia Rueda's first picture book. While living in San Francisco, California she found a Children's Books illustration course at UC Berkeley of what would become her work and her passion. A passion that has lead her to write and illustrate more than a dozen of books for children and for the adults who preserve their childhood's curiosity. Her titles have been translated into more than ten different languages and have received outstanding awards. Among her books are the resonating Vaya Apetito Tiene el Zorrito (What a Hungry Little Fox), the amusing La Vida Salvaje (The Wild Life) and the profound La Suerte de Ozu (Ozu's Luck). The latter inspired by a Taoist tale following her interest in the thoughtfulness and open endings of Eastern stories. Claudia Rueda's two daughters have prompted her fascination with childhood. From them she has learned not to repeat herself, to readjust to the different stages of life and to keep her eyes open.

When did you discover that you liked to draw?
Every child likes to draw. It's just that at the age when they ask you to put your box of colors away I decided not to do it and to keep drawing.

What does it mean to write and illustrate for children?
It means to allow playfulness, curiosity and an exploration spirit to build the stories that follow you.

Do you agree with people who say that children are the toughest audience?
I have a great respect for young readers and I've never felt like looking down when I talk to a child. It's a challenge that makes us better as human beings.
What do you keep from your childhood?
The curiosity and the playfulness.

Which are the children qualities you admire the most?
I admire the freedom of their imagination and their capacity for wonder. The possibility of making an airplane out of a card box.

What do you need in order to create?
I need to be alone and to have a pencil in my hand.

Where do you look for inspiration?
In Greek mythology the muses are the daughters of Memory and their guide is Apollo, the god of Truth. What I do is the result of the things I discover and the ones I remember.

Are you interested in delivering a moral in your stories?
I want my stories to be meaningful for the people who read them. But I also wish this meaning to be different for each individual and not a monolithic answer.

Which is your favorite fable?
I have many favorites, but maybe the one about three frogs who fall into a pit. All the other frogs gather around the hole and discourage them from trying to jump out because the pit is too deep. Two of the frogs finally give up following the advice. The third one keeps jumping and trying until it jumps out of the deep pit. Why did you keep leaping even though we yelled at you to stop? ask the other frogs. It was then that the frog explained to them that he was deaf. It’s a fable that applies to creative people and to those who think different.

Which of your childhood stories you remember the most?
I had very limited access to children’s literature as a child. I can remember reading the collections of stories by Oscar Wilde, the Brothers Grimm and H.C. Andersen.

What is the most precious thing you’ve learned from your parents?
I’ve learned from my mother the enthusiasm towards life. My father passed away when I was just beginning to understand.
Awards

A N D  D I S T I N C T I O N S
- 2016 New York Public Library Best Books for Kids Selection (Bunny Slopes)
- 2016 Amazon Little Bookworms Selection (Bunny Slopes)
- 2016 Junior Library Guild Selection (Bunny Slopes)
- 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Nomination
- 2016 Astrid Lindgren Award Nomination
- 2016 Bank Street College Best Children’s Books (Here Comes The Easter Cat & Here Comes Santa Cat)
- 2015 The WSRA “Picture This” Selection (Here Comes The Easter Cat & Here Comes Santa Cat)
- 2014 Kirkus Best Books of 2014 (Here Comes the Easter Cat)
- 2014 Goodreads Choice Awards 2014 (Here Comes the Easter Cat)
- 2014 The New York Times Bestseller (Here Comes the Easter Cat)
- 2014 XIX Premio Internacional del Libro Ilustrado de Mexico (Letras Robadas)
- 2014 Los Mejores Álbumes Ilustrados de 2013 diario EL PAIS (Letras Robadas)
- 2014 Amazon Book of the Month (Here Comes the Easter Cat)
- 2014 Fundación Cuatrogatos Award (Letras Robadas)
- 2012 Nati Per Leggere Award (No – Italian edition)
- 2012 Prix Sorcières Selection (No – French edition)
- 2012 UK Coventry Inspiration Book Award shortlist (Huff & Puff)
- 2011 University of Wisconsin CCBC choice selection (No, USA edition)
- 2009 Oppenheim Platinum Award (My Little Polar Bear)
- 2009 NYC Society of Illustrators Original Art Show selection (My Little Polar Bear)
- 2009 CANIEM Design Award (Formas)
- 2008 IBBY Honor List Nomination – Colombian Chapter (Let’s Play in the Forest)
- 2006 National Parenting Publications Gold Award (Let’s Play in the Forest)
- 2005 NYC Society of Illustrators Original Art Show selection (Nacho and Lolita)
- 2005 CHILD magazine Best Children’s Books (Nacho and Lolita)
- 2003 A La Orilla del Viento Award (La Suerte de Ozu)
Books
BIBLIOGRAPHY
As writer & illustrator

2016
¿Qué será lo que lleva ahí?
(What's he carrying there?)
Colombia · Ed. Planeta

Oto (Oto)
Colombia · Mineducación

Bunny Slopes
USA · Chronicle Books

La Línea  (The Line)
Mexico · Ed. Oceano

2015
¿De donde salió esa cosa roja?
(Where does this red thing comes from?)
¿De donde salió esa cosa verde?
(Where does this green thing comes from?)
¿De donde salió esa cosa amarilla?
(Where does this yellow thing comes from?)
¿De donde salió esa cosa azul?
(Where does this blue thing comes from?)
Spain · Ed Oceano

2014
Ahí Estabas
(You Were There)
Spain · Ed Oceano

Jugar con Letras
(Word Play)
Spain · Ed SM

2013
La Paca y El Escarabajo
(The Paca and The Beetle)
Colombia · Ed. Norma

Letras Robadas
(Stolen Letters)
Spain · Ed Oceano
BIBLIOGRAPHY

As writer & illustrator

**2006**

*Vaya apetito tiene el zorrito*  
(What a Hungry Little Fox)  
Spain · Ed Serres

*Let’s Play in the Forest*  
(While the Wolf Is Not Around)  
USA · Scholastic Press

**2005**

*Mientras se enfria el pastel*  
(While The Cake Cools Down)  
Spain · Ed Serres

**2004**

*La suerte de Ozu*  
(Ozu’s Luck)  
Mexico · Ed Fondo de Cultura Economica

**2002**

*Tres ciegos y un elefante*  
(Three Blind Men and an Elephant)  
Spain · Ed Imaginarium
As illustrator

2015

Here Comes The Tooth Fairy Cat
Text by Deborah Underwood
USA · Dial Penguin

Here Comes Valentine Cat
Text by Deborah Underwood
USA · Dial Penguin

2014

Here Comes The Easter Cat
Text by Deborah Underwood
USA · Dial Penguin

2013

Bosque Adentro: Cuentos de Grimm (Into The Forest: Grimms Tales)
Colombia · Ed Ministerio de Cultura

La Amistad Bate la Cola (Friendship Wags its Tail)
Text by Marina Colasanti
Colombia · Ed Alfaguara

2011

Los Arrullos del Jáamo (Jaamos Lullabies)
Text by Jesus Mario Girón
Colombia · Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar & Fundalectura
As illustrator

2007

*El Valle de los Cocuyos*
(The Valley of the Fireflies)
Text by Gloria Cecilia Díaz
Colombia · Ediciones SM

2005

*Nacho and Lolita*
Text by Pam Muñoz
USA · Scholastic Press

2004

*I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*
USA · Intervisual Books

2003

*Going to Grandma's Farm*
Text by Betsy Franco
USA · Childrens Press
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Language 1</th>
<th>Language 2</th>
<th>Language 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bunny Slopes</strong> (Chronicle)</td>
<td>French (Bayard Editions)</td>
<td>Chinese (Beijing Poplar Culture Project Co., Ltd.)</td>
<td>Korean (Boisforet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italian (Lapis Edizioni)</td>
<td>Japanese (Froebel-kan Co., Ltd.)</td>
<td>Taiwan (Children's Publications Co., Ltd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turkish (SEV publishing)</td>
<td>German (Gerstenberg Verlag)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Here Comes the Easter Cat</strong> (Penguin)</td>
<td>German (Loewe Verlag Gmbh)</td>
<td>Chinese (Beijing Poplar Culture Project Co., Ltd.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Here Comes the Santa Cat</strong> (Penguin)</td>
<td>French (Editions Circonflexe)</td>
<td>German (Loewe Verlag Gmbh)</td>
<td>Chinese (Beijing Poplar Culture Project Co., Ltd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Here Comes the Tooth Fairy Cat</strong> (Penguin)</td>
<td>Chinese (Beijing Poplar Culture Project Co., Ltd.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Here Comes Valentine Cat</strong> (Penguin)</td>
<td>Chinese (Beijing Poplar Culture Project Co., Ltd.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Here Comes Teacher Cat</strong> (Penguin)</td>
<td>Chinese (Beijing Poplar Culture Project Co., Ltd.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Todo es Relativo</strong> (Oceano)</td>
<td>French (Kaléidoscope)</td>
<td>Chinese (Shanghai Century Publishing)</td>
<td>Korean (Luk Books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>German (Gerstenberg Verlag)</td>
<td>English (Aardman)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Veces</strong> (Oceano)</td>
<td>Portuguese (Pensarte)</td>
<td>Chinese (Beijing Zhengqing Culture &amp; Art Co.)</td>
<td>Korean (Luk Books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>La Suerte de Ozu</strong> (Fondo de Cultura Económica)</td>
<td>French (Les 400 coups)</td>
<td>Portuguese (Fondo de Cultura Economica)</td>
<td>Chinese Taiwan (Ollin Publishing Co.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italian (Lapis Edizioni)</td>
<td>Chinese (Shanghai Century Publishing)</td>
<td>Chinese Taiwan (Ollin Publishing Co.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese (Nishimura)</td>
<td>English (Groundwood)</td>
<td>Portuguese (Pensarte)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong> (Oceano)</td>
<td>French (Rue Du Monde)</td>
<td>Italian (Lapis Edizioni)</td>
<td>Chinese (Shanghai Century Publishing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese (Shanghai Century Publishing)</td>
<td>Japanese (Nishimura)</td>
<td>English (Groundwood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portuguese (Pensarte)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formas</strong> (Oceano)</td>
<td>Korean (Damphus)</td>
<td>French (Alice)</td>
<td>Portuguese (Hedra Educaçao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese (Shanghai Century Publishing)</td>
<td>Japanese (Nishimura)</td>
<td>Chinese (Phei Publishing House)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portuguese (Pensarte)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>La Vida Salvaje</strong> (Oceano)</td>
<td>Korean (Bookstory)</td>
<td>French (Alice)</td>
<td>Portuguese (Hedra Educaçao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portuguese (Pensarte)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dos Ratones, Una Rata y Un Queso</strong> (Oceano)</td>
<td>Danish (Turbine)</td>
<td>Chinese (168 Books)</td>
<td>Korean (Bookstory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Korean (Bookstory)</td>
<td>Chinese (Shanghai Century Publishing)</td>
<td>Portuguese (Pensarte)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Un Día de Lluvia</strong> (Oceano)</td>
<td>Portuguese (Pensarte)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mientras se Enfría el Pastel</strong> (Serres)</td>
<td>Catalan (Serres)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five

OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TITLES BY THE CANDIDATE

1- No
Translated to seven different languages
Winner of the 2012 Nati per Leggere Award in Italy
A 2012 Prix Sorcière selection in France
More than 20 reviews published in English, Spanish and French
The Cooperative Children’s Book Center Choice selection in the USA

2 - Here Comes The Easter Cat
2014 New York Times Best Seller
Four Starred Reviews in the USA
Kirkus selection as One of the Best Picturebooks of 2014
Amazon Book of the Month
2015 Bank Street College Best Children’s Books selection

3- Letras Robadas
Winner of the Fundación Cuatro Gatos 2014 Award
Winner of the Mexican National Council for Culture and Arts 2014 Best Picture Book Award
El Pais (Spain) Ten Best Picture Books of 2013 list
Nominated by the Colombian IBBY chapter for the Italian IBBY list of multilingual books

4 - Huff & Puff
2012 UK Coventry Inspiration Book Award shortlist
Important because of the innovative metafictional character of the book.
The reader blows into a hole and moves the story forward

5- Bunny Slopes
Translated to eight different languages
New York Public Library Best Books for Kids Selection
Junior Library Guild Selection
List

OF THE BOOKS SENT TO THE JURORS

1- La Línea
2 -Bunny Slopes
3- ¿Qué será lo que lleva ahí?
4 - A Veces
5- Todo es Relativo
Credits

Unless noted otherwise, images and texts are by Claudia Rueda. Illustrations are from the following books by Claudia Rueda:

p1. Letras Robadas
p2. La Paca y el Escarabajo
p3. Huff & Puff
p4. Tres Ciegos y un Elefante
p5. Photograph by Oceano Travesía
p6. La Suerte de Ozu
p8. Nacho & Lolita
p10. No
p12. No
p14. Here Comes the Easter Cat
p16. Dos Ratones Una Rata y Un Queso
p17. Anaconda
p18. Bunny Slopes
p19. Bunny Slopes plush by Merry Makers
p20. Un Día de Lluvia
p30. Qué Será lo que Lleva Ahí?
p32. Vaya Apetito Tiene el Zorrito
p36. Mientras se Enfría el Pastel
p37. Jugar con Letras
p38. ¿Qué será lo que lleva Ahí?
p40. A Veces
Contact

Claudia wants to say

Thanks!

To my dear editors:
Isabel Martinez at Imaginarius
Daniel Goldin at Oceano Travesía
Tracy Mack at Scholastic Press
Chad Beckerman at Abrams
Maria Fernanda Paz at Ediciones SM
Jessica Garrison at Dial Penguin
Ariel Richardson at Chronicle Books

To Fundallectura (Colombian Section of IBBY)
for their support and encouragement.

And to Jorge, Catalina and Camila
for making of my life a better place.

Contact Information

FUNDALLECTURA
IBBY Colombia Section
Dg. 40A Bis N°16-46
Bogotá D.C., Colombia
Tel: (57-1) 3201511
Fax: (57-1) 2877071
mail: contactenos@fundallectura.org.co
www.fundallectura.org

CLAUDIA RUEDA
Cra.19 N° 88-27 ap.906
Bogotá D.C., Colombia
Tel: (57-3) 153262333
mail: clau@claudiarueda.com
www.claudiarueda.com