Spanish Candidate
for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2024

Elena Odriozola
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- Gustavo Puerta Leisse
  Peripatetic School of Children’s and Young Adults’ Literature.

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

For each project Odriozola creates her own fictional universe. She gives the impression that the characters which inhabit it have a life outside the book: they already exist before the first page and will undoubtedly continue to exist when we have closed it. Through the narrative sequence we readers are witness to a particular moment in their biographies. It is almost as though we have poked our head out of a window only to suddenly see how the life of the protagonist is undergoing a moment of inflection that will change their story. But what makes us fix our attention on them and makes them stay in our memory or our imagination is not what happens to them but the way in which they look at the world. What Elena Odriozola brings to the text does not consist of transporting the argument of the word into the picture. What this illustrator offers is her highly personal interpretation of the literary work. Thus, the reader has the chance to read what the text says, to read what the image says and to find a third reading: their own.

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

Elena offers each child an intimate space in which to find themselves. This space might be warm and tender, or sometimes playful and carefree; it might be marked by a nostalgic luminosity, or it might even show anxiety and the sense of fragility. The chiaroscuros of childhood reside in her illustrations and, like the children for whom she illustrates, Elena Odriozola has the curiosity and the need to understand things that many adults no longer worry about.
Elena Odriozola San Sebastián 1967

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

Highlights in her career include the following:

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

Included in the IBBY Honour’s List 2006 for the book *Atxiki sekretua* (*Keep the Secret*).

Second prize for Best Children’s and Young Adults’ Illustrations 2006 for her work in the book *La princesa que bostezaba a todas horas* (*The Princess Who Yawned at All Hours; OQO*).

Finalist for the Kate Greenaway Award 2004.

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

Selected for the Bologna Book Fair exhibition in 2010.

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

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


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

National Award for Illustration 2015.

BIB Golden Apple 2015 for FRANKENSTEIN.

BIB Grand Prix 2021 for SENTIMIENTOS ENCONTRADOS.
Elena Odriozola Bibliography
Oda a una estrella

(Ode to a Star)
AGURE JAKAGORRIA  
*THE OLD LADY IN THE RED JACKET*
Txiliku
Elkar, 1995

ZERGATIK EZ DU KANTATZEN TXANTXANGORRIAK?  
*WHY DOESN‘T THE ROBIN SING?*
Xabier Mendiguren
Elkar 1997
ISBN 84-7917-692-X

AHATETXOA ETA SAHATS NEGARTIA  
*THE DUCKLING AND THEweepING WILLOW*
Mariasun Landa
Elkar 1997
ISBN 84-7917-683-0

TXOKO TXIKI TXUKUNA  
*TIDY LITTLE CORNER*
Joxantonio Ormazabal
Elkar 1998
ISBN 84-8331-382-0

“BOTOI BAT BEZALA”/COMO UN BOTÓN  
*LIKE A BUTTON*
Juan Kruz Igerabide
Anaya 1999
ISBN 84-207-9251-9

ORTZADARRAREN KANTUA  
*THE RAINBOW’S SONG*
Jon Suarez
Aizkorri 1999
ISBN 84-8263-320-1
LA HISTORIA DE UN HOMBRECILLO DE PAPEL
THE STORY OF A LITTLE PAPER MAN
José Cañas
Everest 1999
ISBN 84-241-7711-7

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ZACH THE STORK
Joxemari Iturralde
Elkar 2000
ISBN 84-8331-621-8

AXA MIXA ZILARRA
(THE TITLE IS A PLAY ON WORDS IN BASQUE FOR THIS BOOK OF RIDDLES.)
Txiliku
Elkar 2000
ISBN 84-8331-657-9

GORRITXO ETA BELTXIKO
THE RED ANT AND THE BLACK ANT
Joxantonio Ormazabal
Elkar 2000
ISBN 84-8331-631-5

MAGALIK BADAKI
MAGALI KNOWS AT LAST
Patxi Zubizarreta
Anaya 2000
ISBN 84-207-4152-3

KOFI ITSASORA BIDEAN
KOFI IS DRAWN TO THE SEA
Javier Cillero
Aizkorri 2001
ISBN 84-8263-328-7

DINDIRRI=FLICK
DINDIRRI=FLICK
Anjel Lertxundi
Baigorri 2001
ISBN 84-925663-12-0

BIHOTZA ZUBI
THE HEART IS A BRIDGE
Joxantonio Ormazabal
Elkar 2001
ISBN 84-8331-738-9

IZAR EURIA
SHOWER OF STARS
Felipe Juaristi
Elkar 2001
ISBN 84-8331-737-0

CUENTOS DE LAS 1001 NOCHES
TALES FROM 1001 NIGHTS
Juan Tébar
Anaya 2001
ISBN 84-667-0654-2

MARLENE ETA TAXIZAPATA
MARLENE AND THE TAXISHOE
Mariasun Landa
SM 2002
ISBN 84-348-8627-6

SIETE NOCHES CON PAULA
SEVEN NIGHTS WITH PAULA
Patxi Zubizarreta / Juan Kruz Igerabide
Edebé 2002
ISBN 84-236-6209-8
ADUSKIDE MEXIKARRA
THE MEXICAN FRIEND
Joxemari Iturralde
Baigorri 2002
ISBN 84-95663-28-7

DIEZ AMIGOS
TEN FRIENDS
Inés Rosales
Imaginariium 2002
ISBN 84-95824-31-0
Translated into Italian, French and Portuguese

HIztegi JolastiA
Alphabet Fun
Joxantoni Ormazabal
Elkar 2002
ISBN 84-8331-916-1

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Horatio and the Jaguar
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Elkar 2002
ISBN 84-8331-870-9

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Red Leaf, Green Leaf
Juan Kruz Igerabide
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Usoa. Lehen Kanpamendua
Usoa. The First Camping Trip
Patxi Zubizarreta
Erein 2002
ISBN 84-9746-014-9

Usoa. Zelatan
Usoa. Spying
Patxi Zubizarreta
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ISBN 84-9783-065-2

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Matthew’s Forgetfulness
Marjaleena Lembcke
Edelvives 2003
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Hans Christian Andersen
Anaya 2003

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Y LOS MINUTOS
Poems for the Minutes and the Hours
Juan Kruz Igerabide
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LOS MOAIS DE PASCUA
The Statues of Easter Island
Jordi Sierra y Fabra
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Poeta Hegalatiak
Singing Birds
Flying Poets
Ruben Ruiz
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Elena Odriozola Bibliography

Egubertia (Christmas)
Elena Odriozola Bibliography

**ETA TXORIMALOA MINTZATU ZEN**
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Ruben Ruiz
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Rubén Darío
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ISBN 84-96034-34-8

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*Nora Wants to Be a Firefighter*
Arantxa Iturbe
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*The Witch on the Third Floor*
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Malika Ferdjoukh
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Juan Kruz Igerabide
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Same Old Rain Again
Yolanda Larreategui
Gero 2006

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FIN
THE END
Alejandro Fernández
2006
SS-1076/06

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Stephanie Rosenheim
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Daniel Nesquens
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FROM THE BREAST TO BOOKS
Itziar Zubizarreta / Aurélio Edler
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ISBN 978-84-9871-038-0

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Elena Odriozola Bibliography
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Javier Sobrino
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The Story Blanket
Ferida Wolff / Harriet May Savitz
Andersen Press 2009
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ODA A UNA ESTRELLA
Ode to a Star
Pablo Neruda
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Galtzagorri 2010

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The Farmer and his Rice Paddy
Itziar Zubizarreta / Zuriñe Fernández
Galtzagorri 2010

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How Much Land Does a Man Need?
Lev Tolstói
Nórdica 2011

HAIZEELAMI
Haizelami
Joxan Ormazabal / Mitxel Murua
Elkar 2011

TROPECISTA
Tumbler
Jorge Gonzalvo
Barbara Fiore Editora 2012
ISBN 978-84-15208-30-3

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Saturday
Alfonsina Storni
Taller de comunicación gráfica 2012

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EGUBERRIA
Christmas
Juan Kruz Igerabide
Nerea 2012
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LA CELESTINA
La Celestina: Tragicomedy of Calisto and Melibea
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Mary Shelley
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ELSA ETA PARADISUA
Elsa and Paradise
Mariasun Landa
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UR: EURIAREN LIBURUA
UR: BOOK OF RAIN
Juan Kruz Igerabide
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EUSKAL HERRIETAKO IPUINAK
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Juan Kruz Igerabide
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In the Forest
Ana María Matute
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Euskal Herrietako ipuinak (Tales of the country of the Basques)
EUSKAL HERRIETAKO IPUIN GAIZTOOA
CUENTOS CRUELES
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Juan Kruz Igerabide
Denonartean 2018
ISBN 978-84-16791-86-6

EUSKAL HERRIETAKO IPUIN HARRIGARRIAK
CUENTOS MARAVILLOSOS
DEL PAÍS DE LOS VASCOS
Juan Kruz Igerabide
Denonartean 2019

YA SÉ VESTIRME SOLA
I ALREADY KNOW HOW
TO DRESS MYSELFS
Elena Odriozola
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2019
ISBN 978-84-120418-1-1

YO TENGO UN MOCO
I HAVE A SNOT
Elena Odriozola
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2019
ISBN 978-84-120418-2-8

DE NATURA FLORUM
Clarice Lispector
Nórdica libros 2020

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

EUSKAL HERRIETAKO LAMINEN IPUINAK
CUENTOS DE LAMIAS
DEL PAÍS DE LOS VASCOS
Juan Kruz Igerabide
Denonartean 20120

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

UR: Libro de lluvia
Elena Odriozola Bibliography

CU CU CANTABA LA RANA
CU CU, SANG THE FROG
Elena Odriozola
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2021
ISBN 978-84-122475-4-1

EL MANISERO &
UN ELEFANTE SE BALANCEABA
THE PEANUT VENDOR &
AN ELEPHANT SWAYED
Elena Odriozola
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2021
ISBN 978-84-122475-5-8

YA SÉ CULTIVAR EL HUERTO
I CAN WORK THE GARDEN
Elena Odriozola
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2022
ISBN 978-84-122475-6-5

HERENSUGE
DRAGON
Juan Kruz Igerabide
Denonartean 2022
ISBN 978-84-195290-3-9

ASÍ ME LO CONTARON,
ASÍ TE LO CUENTO
THIS IS HOW IT WAS TOLD TO ME,
THIS IS HOW I TELL YOU
Charles Perrault, Madame Leprince de Beaumont, Hermanos Grimm
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2022
ISBN 978-84-126206-1-0

Ya sé vestirme sola (I already know how to dress myself)
Elena Odriozola Works in Process

LECCIONES THE COSAS
LESSONS OF THINGS
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2023

HAGAMOS TÍTERES DE CAHIPORRA
LET’S MAKE PUPPETS OF CAHIPORRA
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2023
LECCIONES DE COSAS
LESSONS OF THINGS
The starting point of these lessons is tearing off the daily veil that makes things anodyne and to makes us aware of the wonder in them. A book to play with and surely the most appropriate one to take with you to a desert island.

Technique: marker pen
Los mejores botones son los redondos. Los cuadrados son más difíciles de poner y los triangulares se salen siempre. En cambio, los botones redondos requieren mucho menos esfuerzo para abotonarlos o desabotonarlos. Además que en sus extremos son estrechos (y así podemos meterlos en el ojal o sacarlos sin dificultad), en el centro son lo suficientemente anchos para que se queden quietos ahí, hasta que decidamos desabotonarlos.

Los botones están unidos a la tela por una náyade. El hilo pasa una y otra vez por dos dos, tres, cuatro... siempre creando hileras que se enroscan o forman figuras geométricas. Gracias al hilo se nos cuelga la tapa; especialmente, las faldas y pañuelos. Y aunque es cierto que hay camisetas y pe-

los que no necesitan de botones, si no sujetas bien las prendas que cubren la mitad inferior de tu cuerpo te ries de bajarse y lidiar con ellas se dejan con el cuelo al aire.

Lo habitual es que los botones se ven de dos en dos. Los hilos de algunos casos es nutritivo con un solo botón para sujetar la prenda y en otros hacen falta hilos triples de ellos. Los botones de las camisetas de chico están a la derecha, los de chicas a la izquierda y a su vez se ha ocurrido alternarlos para las camisetas unisex.

Para que puedas ponerlos sin problemas, este tiene que ser más grande que tu cabeza y muñecas (aunque no, no te asustes). Pero una vez puesto debe ajustarse bien para que puedas caminar, correr e incluso saltar. Así pues, una prenda puede ser al mismo tiempo holgada y agradable gracias a los botones. Y también, abierta o cerrada. De tal modo que, si hace frío, te abran el botón y si tienes calor, lo desabrochas.

A todo botón le corresponde su ojal. El uno está hecho para el otro. Sin embargo, pocos se ven juntos en el prenda ojal. Si se ignora lo consideramos objeto. El ojal no es algo, sino la ausencia de algo. Es un agujero. Cuando hay mucho y con bordes cuidadosamente cosidos, no es más que un orificio. En cambio, el botón soseleado, interactuamos con él, si está descubierto nos preocupa y cuando se cue, lo buscamos debido a las manos o intentamos dar con aquel que sea lo más parecido posible al que se ha perdido.
En el botón todo cuenta: su tamaño, grosor, el material con el que está hecho, color, el tamaño de agujeros que tiene, si es plano o no, incluso sus bordaduras. En los botones de las camisas el centro se encuentra más hundido que los bordes. Esto es así para proteger los hilos del color del acero mientras se plazca la camisa.

A la mayoría de los botones les gusta parar despensibados y no llamar la atención. Pero hay unos que son más decorativos que útiles. Por ejemplo, los de los uniformes militares. Tienen espejos y de formas dibujadas y hay quienes los coleccionan. Los botones de los pantalones vaqueros también suelen estar dibujados y, en vez de estar cosidos, se clavan a la tela y sobresalen como una estrella.

Entre los botones que han revolucionado el acto de abrocharse, los botones de poncho han supuesto un verdadero cambio y le han quitado el trabajo al pobre (gal).
EL FRESCBEE

Si lo tienes en la mano y lo lanzas, caerá al suelo como cualquier otro objeto. Pero si lo sujetas correctamente, giro impulsivo, dobla la mancha hacia atrás, aportas, lanzándolo al aire hasta que de vuelta muy rápido y lo recibes, el frisbee, volará con elegancia y determinación. Finalmente, no se parece en nada a una pelota de papel y con forma de plato. Pero con el frisbee también jugaremos a pedirlo, a poner en apuros a quien tenga que atajarlo, y cuando nos tocamos, a intentar por todos los medios cogerlo en el aire. Para lograrlo, a veces saltarás, saltarás, saltarás, saltarás, saltarás... y al final, se quedará el frisbee volando... en un arco. Pero el frisbee comparte con el boomerang el enigma de sus misterios, el que gira sobre sí mismo mientras se desplaza, sin forma aerodinámica y el fascinante secreto que nos permite volar y arrebatar.

Aprender a lanzar un frisbee es fácil. Sin embargo, tiene su técnica. No se trata de tirarlo o arrojarlo de cualquier forma. Una buena lanzada realiza una bella coreografía de pies, cabeza, brazos, codo, muslo y hombro que le dan empuje y dirección al vuelo.

Así, puedes hacer veinte veces y más, y después retravesar. Si un cincuenta de vuelta, hasta que llegue el frisbee volando, consejería impresionantes movimientos curvos en el aire y además ser capaz de recogerlo con delicadeza golpeándolo ligeramente en su interior y que se eleve ante de atraparlo y agarrarlo. Con el frisbee, el frisbee y el frisbee...

Si quieres aprender a hacer esto y otros trucos, solo hay que ponerse a ello: tirar muchos frisbee y recogerlos del suelo. Eso sí, es importante tener cuidado con las ventanas, los muebles, las personas que se acerquen y especialmente con los perros. A más de un chico le agotaron demostrarlo buenos que es atropello frisbee el arrebatar.
A ciertas personas no les gusta que se usen palabras que provengan de otro idioma. Aunque no llegan a la extrema de decir: desalojar en lugar de "llevarte", se miran con mala cara cuando dicen "frisbee". Proposición llamada "disco volante", que sonaría. Algunos están dispuestos a aceptar la adaptación del término inglés y que se escriba "frisbee", Proponen que así se ajuste mejor a la pronunciación española. Pero, ¿por qué tenían que escribir frisbee?, ¿eso es más misteriosa escrita así, que se parece más al objeto que nosotros?

Por cierto, es muy bonito la historia de la palabra. Se cuenta que el frisbee se llama así porque un grupo de chavales norteamericanos en 1954 jugaban a tirarle los marcos a los otros los platos hechos por la empresa Frisbee Pie Company. Han pasado más de cien años y el frisbee ya viaja por los cinco continentes. Con suerte algún día lo recogerá nuestro verdadero diccionario de la lengua.
LA CESTA
The basket

Si se dice: «imagina una bicicleta, te imaginarás una bicicleta.» Todas tenemos una imagen general de la bicicleta, más o menos parecida con dos ruedas del mismo tamaño, un asiento y un manillar con frenos. Sin embargo, la bicicleta que viene a la cabeza es muy distinta a la que imagina otra persona. Puede que recuerdes esa de tu infancia o pienses en aquella que te gustaría tener, que sea de cierto color, con o sin trompo... Igual sucede con las sillitas, los juguetes o las aspiradoras. En todos estos casos, tenemos una idea del objeto que es, al mismo tiempo, muy general y muy concreta.

Con las cosas no es así. Si se dice: «imagina una cesta», aquello que aparece en tu cabeza será totalmente diferente de la imagen que tiene otra persona. No hay algo así como una idea general de la cesta. Ni siquiera la de Capronici, con su su o mantelito a cuadros rojas, gana de mucha popularidad. ¿Oos pensarís en la cesta del país; otros, en la de la compra; los pescadores desde metros lo pescado y los jugadores de baloncesto hacia donde lanzan el balón.

Y es que, si nos detenemos a pensarlo, la cesta es un recipiente, pero también es producto de una técnica de construcción y, además, del empleo de cierto material: las fibras vegetales. En teoría, cualquier objeto que cumpla con esas tres condiciones es una cesta. Pero la realidad hace de las suyas y no siempre es así. Llamamos cesta al frutero, canasto plástico con redes y mango extensible que hay en los supermercados, y también, al carrito de las compras de los niños. En cambio, aunque cumple con todos los requisitos para serlo, un mazo no es nada (y no una cesta).

Pregúntanos un poco de orden. Una cesta es una estructura. Es una estructura como lo es un edificio, un poema, una telarana, una sinfonía o una carta mil hojas. Lo importante de las estructuras es el modo como sus partes se entrelazan y relacionan entre sí, formando un todo. Al igual que el edificio, el poema, la telarana, la sinfonía o la carta, las cestas pueden responder a distintas necesidades, albergar diferentes contenidos, variar en sus formas... y, además, ser mucho cesta. Por cierto, si te dicen: «imagina una estructura», quizá te viene a la cabeza?
Te aspiro a que me conoces ninguna de las siguientes palabras: escritos, gigante, ciclismo, saco, esposita, araña, galleta, vecino, agricultura, zarza, calabazas, asa... Creo o no, hace no mucho tiempo eran términos bastante comunes, pues hablaban cosas que se utilizaban en el día a día. Y si estas palabras han desaparecido, es porque dejaron de usarse esos conceptos. Y si esas cosas han desaparecido, es porque...


ya los oficios donde se empleaban dejaron de existir o, en caso como la pesca, la escuelita o el postre, cambiaron radicalmente de forma. Desaparecen los oficios, desaparecen las formas, desaparecen los nombres. ¿Pensar? ¿Qué palabras y cosas que usamos hay cosas que dejaron de existir en el futuro?
HAGAMOS TÍTERES DE CACHIPORRA
LET’S MAKE PUPPETS OF CACHIPORRA

The starting point of these lessons is tearing off the daily veil that makes things anodyne and to makes us aware of the wonder in them. A book to play with and surely the most appropriate one to take with you to a desert island.

Technique: colour pencils and marker pen
LA FAMILIA DE DON CRISTÓBAL

Punch, Cristóbal, Don Roberto es Potestas son algunos de los múltiples personajes que poblaron innumerables ciudades de Europa. Todos estos títeres pueden considerarse una gran familia. Por debajo de su máscara, vestimenta o rasgos físicos fluye una misma sustancia que es lo que llama por su antecesor napoleónico: Pulcindra. El es el origen de donde surgen todas las tradiciones de títeres de escambray como la de nuestro Don Cristóbal. Pulcinella dicen que nació de un buey, pero también lo encontraron comiendo de carne y hueso en la Comedia del Arte, un tipo de comedia de cruces en la que participan enamorados, sirvientes y señores y donde aparece Pulcindra al lado de personajes como Adeodato, Colombina o el Bucceo. Famoso, y convertido en títere, el Pulcindra comenzaba un largo viaje escalambray en compañías de títeres que lo llevaba por toda Europa, donde se iría acercando a las particularidades de los países que visitó. Se adapta y se transforma. Punch, en Inglaterra, todavía conserva algo de su nombre. En todos los lugares sigue manteniendo su espíritu libre, burlón, violento y descarado. También conserva su escambray y esa característica voracidad que nos hace la boca del títere gracias a un objeto tan sencillo y prodigioso como le es la lengua.

Aquí os mostramos algunos parámetros de los múltiples que tiene Don Cristóbal.

PULCINELLA

Material: Algunos supone que nació de una doncella llamada "La Comedia del Arte"
García: Engranar sin palabras.
Elena Odriozola Works in Process

MR. PUNCH

Nacionalidad: Inglés.

Características: Pintura en su rostro, vestimenta de payaso, bastón en mano, corona en la cabeza.

Personaje: Tiene una gran presencia en las pantomimas.

Miméticos: Violento, no respetar a la familia ni a la autoridad.

Guión: Aparece en la puesta en escena de versión.

PETRUSHKA

Nacionalidad: Ruso.

Características: Cara pintada de rojo, blanco y negro.

Cuerpo: Joven, pleno, vigoroso, vitalidad y valentía.

Personaje: Se mueve con agilidad y fuerza.

Miméticos: Representa la fuerza y la audacia.

DON ROBERTO

Nacionalidad: Portugueses.

Características: Cabeza geométrica, nariz redonda.

Personaje: Representa la autoridad y la autoridad.

Miméticos: Representa la fuerza y la audacia.

Guía: Se mueve con agilidad y fuerza.

EVA LEÓN

Nacionalidad: Colombiana.

Características: Vestimenta clásica, antojo.

Personaje: Se muestra ante el público.

Miméticos: Representa la fuerza y la audacia.

Guía: Se mueve con agilidad y fuerza.

CARTAS DE AMOR

Nacionalidad: Varón.

Características: Cabeza geométrica, nariz redonda.

Personaje: Representa la autoridad y la autoridad.

Miméticos: Representa la fuerza y la audacia.

Guía: Se mueve con agilidad y fuerza.
Elena Odriozola “Bularretik Mintzora”
The Program 'Bularretik Mintzora' aims to make the parents sensitive to the importance of reading. The Program tries to guarantee the euskera’s knowledge and its use among younger generations and promote the family transmission.

With that purpose, the parents of the newborn babies will receive in the hospital didactic material in euskera (songs, plays, tales and poems). The parents with children under 4 years will be presented with another CD-BOOK containing different poems, songs and tales, adapted to their age.

The objective is to give reading material in euskera to the newborn parents to aware them of the importance of stimulating the children’s intellectual, emotional, social and linguist development.

With the aim of developing a systematic campaign to encourage reading, “BULARRETIK MINTZORA” (FROM THE BREAST TO THE WORD, www.bularretikmintzora.org) was founded in 2007 as a result of a collaboration between the Basque Government’s Department of Culture and Galtzagorri Elkartea (Association for the Promotion of Children’s and Young Adults’ Literature in the Basque Language), of which Elena Odriozola has been a member since it was established. This campaign was held in 21 locations in the Basque Autonomous Community and involved 56 schools, 542 teachers and 8,819 children.

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

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

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

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

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

**Bularretik mintzora**
Elena Odriozola “Bularretik Mintzora”

HAURRAREN GARAPENA ETA KOMUNIKAZIO ILDOAK

0 - 6 hilabete

Finkatzen du harkilotuan.

6 - 18 hilabete
Harran berezian da, egokia ezalduta dezakeen garapen bat.

Gurasoek

Etxeari harraren garapenak.

18 urte
Harraren garapen dorreak.

Gurasoek

Etxean garapen dorreak.

3 - 6 urte
Harraren garapen dorreak.

Gurasoek

Etxean garapen dorreak.

Information and poster.
Elena Odriozola “Bularretik Mintzora”

Sasi guztien gainetik
Books guide and information about the programme.
Elena Odriozola Some Poster

ADIORIK GABE
SIN ADIÓS
(NO GOODBYE)

Hitzak eta horak obrolloko Maita y letras para recordar

When the Book Was a Forest

Elena Odriozola Some Poster

CUANDO EL LIBRO ERA UN BOSQUE
WHEN THE BOOK WAS A FOREST
Elena Odriozola Some Poster

**DÍA DE LA BIBLIOTECA**
Library Day

**POESÍA ILUSTRADA**
Illustrated Poetry

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**DÍA DE LA BIBLIOTECA**

**POESÍA ILUSTRADA**

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

ACTIVIDADES

- MASTERCLASS ADULTOS / Taller de ELENA ODRIKOZLA para ilustradores (profesionales y aficionados) / 10 de abril, de 17 a 21 horas / 15 plazas. Inscripción de forma personal en el mostrador de información desde el día 6 de abril
- TALLER INFANTIL con ADUFO SERRA / 11 de abril, de 11:30 a 13:30 horas / A partir de 6 años / 12 plazas. Inscripción previa desde el 6 de abril en Sala Infantil.
77 QUINCENA MUSICAL DE DONOSTIA
77th MUSICAL FORTNIGHT OF DONOSTIA

View on line
**ILUMINA**

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

View online
Gau Zuria
White Night

Gau Zuria
2018
Bilbao
Ekainak 15-16 Junio

Gau Zuria
2018
Bilbao
Ekainak 15-16 Junio
CUÉNTALO (FESTIVAL DE NARATIVAS)
TELL IT (FESTIVAL OF NARATIVES)
55 Fira del Llibre de València
Del 30 d'abril al 10 de maig de 2020
Jardí de Viveres

56 Fira del Llibre de València
Del 14 al 24 d'octubre de 2021
Jardí de Viveres
CAMPAÑA ESKERRIKASKO DONOSTIA
Thank you donostia
FESTIVAL MUAIK MÚSICA
MUSIKA MÚSICA FESTIVAL

Elena Odriozola Some Poster
SERIGRAFÍAS PARA EDICIONES MODERNAS EL EMBUDO
SCREEN PRINTINGS FOR EDICIONES MODERNAS EL EMBUDO

Elena Odriozola Some Poster
TXORITXOAK
Elena has taken part in some individual and collective exhibitions. In 2009 she did an individual one named ‘txoritxoak’ (little birds in Basque language), in San Sebastián.

The sculptor Javier Malavia made the birds and Juanjo Elola the woodwork. All designed and painted by her.

The writer Alejandro Fernández gave them a history.

The birds were exactly like she thought.

View on line

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

Elena Odriozola Exhibitions
LAS MUJERES Y EL MAR
WOMEN AND THE SEA
January to November, 2016

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

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

Mujeres y barcos.
(Women and ships).
El trabajo portuario: bateletas, cargueras y sirgueras.
(Work in the Port: Boatwomen and Female Stevedores and Barge-Pullers)

En torno a la pesca.
(Around fishing)
Las Mujeres y el Mar
Women And The Sea

Piratas y corsarias.
(Pirates and corsairs).

Sirenas, vírgenes y brujas.
(Mermaids, virgins and witches).
Las Mujeres y el Mar
Women and the Sea

Deportes acuáticos.
(Water sports).

Baños de Ola.
(Wave Baths).
**EL BAZAR**  
**THE BAZAAR**

Bookshop “Panta Rhei”, 2015

Presents a series of illustrations under the title “BAZAR - Catalog of toys”.
Elena Odriozola Exhibitions

El Bazar
The Bazaar
El Bazar
The Bazaar - Catalog of Toys
EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR
El Bazar
The Bazaar
EL BAZAR
THE BAZAAR
Capas, manchas, teatrillos, movimientos, siluetas, tiras y demás trastos
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
Valladolid 2016.
A journey through her entire career.
Capas, manchas, teatrillos, movimientos, siluetas, tiras y demás trastos
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
Capas, manchas, teatrillos, movimientos, siluetas, tiras y demás trastos
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
Capas, manchas, teatrillos, movimientos, siluetas, tiras y demás trastos
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
Capas, manchas, teatrillos, movimientos, siluetas, tiras y demás trastos
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
Capas, manchas, teatrillos, movimientos, siluetas, tiras y demás trastos
Layers, smudges, puppet theatres, movements, silhouettes, strips and paraphernalia.
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
Capas, manchas, teatrillos, movimientos, siluetas, tiras y demás trastos
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
Layers, Smudges, Puppet Theatres, Movements, Silhouettes, Strips and Paraphernalia.
1. **SENTIMIENTOS ENCONTRADOS**  
*(DISCOVERED FEELINGS)*

*SENTIMIENTOS ENCONTRADOS (DISCOVERED FEELINGS)* is a book that talks about feelings and emotions, and for that it uses a house and its inhabitants. It consists of sixteen full-page illustrations in which the longitudinal section of a house is represented. In each one of them we can observe the activities carried out by its seven human inhabitants (there are also animals), in the four floors that make it up. In this way, when we see a page individually, we participate in the story that is narrated in it. But we can also turn the pages and follow the story of a character and its evolution throughout the book. In addition to reading the page and the sequence, the book enables combinatorial reading since each page is divided into five strips (four dedicated to the illustration and one to the text) individually punched in such a way that the sixteen illustrations that make up the first floor can be combined with any of the sixteen illustrations that make up the second floor and with any of the sixteen illustrations that make up the third floor and with any of the sixteen illustrations that make up the fourth floor and with any of the sixteen texts. Allowing a total of 1,048,576 possible combinations.

**Publishing Details:**  
“Discovered feelings”  
Gustavo Puerta Leisse and Elena Odriozola  
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo

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*Book in Spanish*
2. **EN EL BOSQUE**  
*(IN THE FOREST)*

**Publishing Details:**  
"In the forest"  
Ana María Matute and Elena Odriozola  
Zorro Rojo 2018  
ISBN-10: 8494773437

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

Publishing details:
“This is how it was told to me, this is how I tell you”
Charles Perrault, Madame Leprince de Beaumont, Brothers Grimm.
Ediciones Modernas El Embudo 2022
ISBN 978-84-126206-1-0

We all think we know Little Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, Bluebeard, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Snow White... but do we really? Censored versions, sappy adaptations, politically correct rewritings and other reformulations distort the original meaning of fairytales and spread biased adaptations.

Book in Spanish
Notice a nasty one in your nostril. Pick at it. Get it out. Shape it. Contemplate the result. Put it in your mouth. You want more. Start from the beginning. And so goes the ritual followed by a boy and a girl, a young man and a young woman, a mother and a father, a grandmother and a grandfather, as they sing along to a well-known Spanish nursery rhyme. You can read the book slowly, stopping at each illustration. Or you can pass the pages quickly and create a brilliant feeling of movement. Either way, this is a book to be savoured intimately or shared repulsively.
6. TROPECISTA
(TUMBLER)

PUBLISHING DETAILS:
“Tropecista”
Jorge Gonzalvo
Barbara Fiore Editora 2012
ISBN 978-84-15208-30-3

SYNOPSIS:
TROPECISTA (TUMBLER) is above all a love story. The book narrates the meeting between a man and a woman who fall in love with the peculiar, a feeling nourished by the little things. It is a charming story of a couple who live happily, a book in which the poetic travels between pages charged with beautiful, delicate words.

Book in Spanish
Elena Odriozola Other Books
Christmas

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

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

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

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

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

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

Book in Spanish
2. **UR: LIBRO DE LLUVIA**  
(Ur: Book of rain)

**Publishing Details:**
“Ur: Euriaren liburua”  
Juan Kruz Igerabide  
Denonartean 2014  
ISBN 978-84-15756-48-4

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

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

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

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

**Publishing Details:**
“Frankenstein”
Mary Shelley
 Nórdica libros 2013
ISBN 978-84-15717-60-7

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

[Watch video]
4. APLASTAMIENTO DE LAS GOTAS
(The Smashing Of The Rain Drops)

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

THE SMASHING OF THE RAINDROPS

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

Book in Spanish  Book in English
5. SÁBADO
(SATURDAY)

SATURDAY

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

Publishing details:
“Prinsessen paa Ærten”
Hans Christian Andersen
Anaya 2003

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

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

Book in Spanish
Elena Odriozola Interviews
Elena Odriozola is undoubtedly one of the most individual illustrators in the field of children’s book illustration. In this study of her work, Pep Molist reveals the key aspects of her style: the characters’ bodies and faces as the essential elements of telling any story; the lack of superfluous details; the ability to exploit the relationship between the figures and their backgrounds; the restricted use or sometimes complete lack of exteriors and landscapes; and her skill in creating an atmosphere....
Ever since I first saw her illustrated books, I have been captivated by the work of Elena Odriozola and enchanted by her capacity for suggestion, her balanced compositions and her ability to create spaces by using the smallest features. Sometimes an article is the best excuse to delve into a subject that has aroused your curiosity.

After reviewing her bibliography and choosing the most important works, and having captured the overall vision of her work, I decided to contact her to find out more about how she creates the protagonists of her illustrations: the characters.

Childhood, the Beginnings of an Illustrator

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

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

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

Education as an Illustrator

When she was 13 years old her father signed her up for drawing classes in the studio of sculptor José Zugasti. While she was at secondary school, Elena spent several years studying with the sculptor, from whom she learned a great deal. When she finished her final exams she wanted to study architecture, but left the course after finding it too challenging. She also abandoned her studies in Fine Arts as she disliked the teaching style, and ended up studying Art and Decoration by a process of elimination. In June 1989 she finished her university studies and in September she began working at an advertising agency, first as a layout artist and later as an art director in the agencies Publis and MAR. Meanwhile, a colleague introduced her to the publishing house Elkar, for whom she illustrated textbooks.

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

Her Work as an Illustrator

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

Elena Odriozola draws what she likes the most, drawing for herself rather than thinking about the reader. When she sees her illustrations, she always thinks she could do better. She doesn’t overthink things. She does her research, although not too much, and works as she goes. She walks around, travels and lives without a sketchbook at hand. While she has many, she does not dare to show them. Elena keeps everything in her head. Her work in advertising has helped her to interpret the text, to see what it suggests. When she has a structure in mind she starts to draw and she is not fond of repeating herself. She uses pencil, watercolours and inks in flat colours. Her computer is only used for scanning and formatting. She has no desire to use it for illustration.
Playing with the white space on the paper is increasingly appealing: “Adding anything else is too much.” When she reads a text, she immediately sees the character in her head, but she finds it difficult to talk about them, although many critics often use the same adjectives when talking about her illustrating style.

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

Six Characters in Search of an Illustrator

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


(From Six Characters in Search of an Author by Luigi Pirandello)

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

“Yet if the characters are alive, really alive, for their author, he does nothing but observe the words and gestures they suggest to him; he needs to accept them as they want themselves to be.”

(From Six Characters in Search of an Author.)

• Animals

From Ahatetxoa eta sahats negartia (The Duckling and the Weeping Willow) to The Story of Noah by way of Diez amigos (Ten Friends) and Dindiri.

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

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

The title alone (The Duckling and the Weeping Willow) gives the reader a clear idea of where the story is going through the drawings, as should be the case in any illustrated book, even though in this type of the story this is not necessary or usual: a duckling who wants to be a diver is observed and offered advice by a weeping willow, while his companions are against his dream. An incident with a couple changes their mind and reaffirms the main character’s decision.

The book offers a good example of the illustrator’s work on composition on a blank page. Without the need to specify details and while using minimal elements, such as a line of grass or a wavy line that marks the surface of the water, the illustrations perfectly outline the spaces in which the action takes place, and the movement of the characters gives information about where they are.
The weeping willow is defined by its drooping branches and serious, haughty face, the most enigmatic in the story. Here, the human characters drawn by Odriozola are thin with spindly legs, they wear dresses that have a hint of a pattern and have faces with slight dots to symbolise the eyes and sometimes a smile. These dots, this minimal gaze, among other things, start to define her style.

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

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

The Story of Noah

Odriozola has twice illustrated the story of Noah: in El arca y yo (The Ark and I) by Vicente Muñoz Puelles and again in the book by Stephanie Rosenheim. In both works there is an emphasis on the power of the sky in the background landscape, painted in watercolour, with different shades that conjure up either the coming storm or the subsequent calm. Both versions manage to communicate the grandeur of nature in contrast to the smallness of the characters. People and animals appear with the same degree of protagonism, and in the second book they can be admired in all their splendour.

In both works, the animals are approached in the same way: they are not the main characters, but they do play a decisive role. In the book, printed in a landscape format, there is a notable double page spread showing several pairs of animals of different species (elephants, giraffes, etc.) on their way to the ark. They are drawn realistically, with their essential features and an expressionless face, and in this case it would be difficult to guess the illustrator in question, which is not the case with her other characters.

For the majority of the book the illustrator plays with the double page format, giving her landscapes a vast scope; on other occasions she uses two separate pages with the intention of narrating different scenes. She also plays with colour, both in
the background to describe the forces of nature, and in the protagonists, managing to transmit strength and fragility at the same time. The reader can see that not only does the illustrator not fear the white background, which she uses to situate and give emphasis to her characters, but also that she uses it as an integral part of the landscape, action, and illustration, as we will see in other works.

• Girls

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

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

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

This category of her work can be divided into two types of books: narrative stories and collections of poetry or short stories. The books are written by some of the authors she has worked with most often: Mariasun Landa, Juan Kruz Igerabide and especially Patxi Zubizarreta. They are connected by a similar sensibility and style when it comes to telling a story, transmitting ideas and awakening the reader’s emotions. This is a notable aspect in Zubizarreta’s work; the author is known for her poetic, concise prose, which has a unique sensitivity and shows a great admiration for the power of the written and oral tradition.

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

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

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

After a while, these stories developed into a series of four books that told her story from childhood to adolescence. They are very personal books, ones in which the illustrations focus on human figures on a white background, figures like the one on the cover of the first edition. Some wear clothes with stripes, checks or lively colours, and the protagonists’ necks are surprisingly thick or they simply have no neck at all. The proportions are peculiar and they have disturbing expressions, which are not at all clear or gentle like the expressions shown by Magali. They have been called “enigmatic” and this description is even more apt for the characters that represent evil and in the works aimed at young people and adults.
As for the anthologies, this is where we can capture the essence of Odriozola’s illustrations, characterised by a minimal use of pictures to express as much meaning as possible, and they show her extraordinary ability to make use of the relationship between figures and the background. At certain points the scenes are depicted using just a line or a smile. The lack of superfluous details stands out: the illustration is reduced to the bare essentials, placing the main focus on the character – a figure who is usually stylised and given great expressiveness – or on the idea expressed in the poem. This is where, more than anywhere else, her statement from the conversation we had before writing this article really holds true: “I want to express feelings and emotions with the absolute minimum. With a look, with gestures, with postures...”.

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

To give yet another example, there is a story entitled Qué cal fer quan es té por? (What Should You Do when You’re Scared?) in which Landa compares fear with a toad. The illustration shows a frightened girl, however, upon closer inspection we see that her skirt is in the shape of a toad. Minimal elements shown with the maximum expression and precision.

• Witches and Fairies

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

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

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

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

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

“The two protagonists, Graziana and Joana, could belong to books about real people, both for their traits and for the characteristics of their clothes and..."
movements. The only difference is that their faces have a greyish, sombre background, in keeping with the stories about witches and with the dark backgrounds the illustrator uses to envelop some of the landscapes and characters in the book.

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

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

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

As for the landscape, the illustrator again uses logs and branches with a forest or house as a backdrop to evoke the atmosphere of the stories. They are landscapes that are unidentifiable and could therefore be described as “non-places”. But the important thing is that the characters float on a white background. The illustrator focuses on defining the figures with a precise and very fine line, weaving in the floral prints of their clothes in a fantastical way that is increasingly subtle and delicate. The figures are scattered throughout the book, in the outdoor scenes as well, and Odriozola defines the absence of expression on their faces, suggesting a rich, hidden inner world, and plays with the fine lines of their hair.

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

• Princesses

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

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

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

In La princesa y el guisante (The Princess and the Pea), the illustrator once again shows her serene use of empty space. You only have to look at the drawing of the pea, proof of the princess’s authenticity, on the last double page. A very thin
thread holds it in place under the curious gaze of some children at a museum. The characters in the story, who are almost all royalty, are shown in the foreground wearing tight-fitting dresses in muted colours and discreet prints. They are shown moving among external objects, such as the staircase railing, which allows the illustrator to play with a Gothic stamp, or the bed where the princess will spend the night. Almost all of these characters have an expressionless face, with thick necks that give them a noble look or without any neck at all, emphasizing their faces. Their eyes and mouths are closed and their faces have a shade somewhere between white and grey with pink cheeks. The only one who shows a flicker of expression or emotion is the princess, although she does so in a contained way. The royalty examine her with a sad air that transmits the melancholic air of Hans Christian Andersen’s tales.

In *La bella mandarina* (The Beautiful Mandarin Lady) the characters become tiny, like those of an ancient Chinese miniature, and the colours are reduced to just two – orange and brown – or three if you count the sepia tone of the paper, which represents antiquity and, as with the habitual white page, also becomes a part of the illustration. The illustrator clearly wants to measure up to a story that relates events from time immemorial. It really looks like a story from ancient China and conveys the atmosphere of the country. It is a very distinctive book, alternating between very different formats and layouts on the pages, and the aim of capturing the story is applied coherently. Evidently, some of her recurring features appear, but in this book the characters lose the personality the illustrator normally confers upon their faces. She uses characters and objects in small sizes, except for a particular moment that changes the course of the story, when the powerful lord’s wife decides not to give an orange to the poor man. Her anger and selfishness is so strong that the illustrator makes her grow in size. In fact, in this book, Odriozola does something that we have only seen in books of poetry or short stories: she creates a metaphor through a picture. When the text states that the lord’s heart is large enough to shelter many people, the illustrator draws a tree with branches extending across a double page spread in which all of these people sit.

*La bella mandarina* (The Beautiful Mandarin Lady) becomes an exercise in which Odriozola shows us that, when the story requires it, she knows how to set aside her usual style and provide different results. In the picture book, the illustrator is dealing with a format that she can use to try out new possibilities, something that does not happen in the narrative works.

One of the most highly regarded works by the artist is *La princesa que bostezaba a todas horas* (The Princess Who Yawned at All Hours), which has earned Odriozola many awards. In this book she employs another resource that is unusual in her work, using a colour background on the pages to differentiate between the action that occurs indoors and outdoors. The intense colours, such
as fuchsia and blue, are sometimes mixed with those of the main characters, giving each of the double pages a certain intensity. The characters here are large and often shown in the foreground. The expression on their faces is softened (except for the adults, who maintain their coarseness), which makes them seem more appealing and closer to the age of potential readers. The illustrator focuses on the details, mostly floral prints, which are shown both on the clothes and in the landscapes.

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

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

• The Classics

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

When republishing classic books, the publisher wants to offer a new vision or reading of the work and often entrusts it to an illustrator with an established career and unique style, looking for the work of a true artist. “Style is in no way a decoration as some people believe; it is not even a matter of technique. It is a quality of vision, the revelation of a particular universe,” said Marcel Proust in a quote that appears in La materia de l’esperit (The Matter of Spirit; Proa, 2005) by Jaume Cabré. Through this subjective means, the illustrator tells us how he or she reads and understands the text. “In literature everything leads to style. The style is the writer [in this case the illustrator]. It is the place that shows a glimpse of their soul and it is illuminated not so much by the things that are explained, but by the way in which they are told,” said Cabré.

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

Over the last few years, in which Elena Odriozola’s career has really taken off, she has received requests to illustrate a number of classics in which we can see this subjective means of communication, expressing what the artist sees and how they see it. In chronological order, she has illustrated editions of La sirena y otros cuentos (The Little Mermaid and Other Stories) by Hans Christian Andersen, Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie and El viento en los sauces (The Wind in the Willows) by K. Grahame. Although in all of these works we can see her interpretation as well as the features shown in many of her works, it is in Peter Pan where Odriozola takes more risks and works more freely, breaking with existing stereotypes. In the other two works it is clear that her work is determined by the type of book and the layout of the pages. Peter Pan was published in 1911. Over nearly one hundred years it has been read by countless readers and illustrated by artists such as Arthur Rackham, M. L. Atwell and Mercé Llimona. It has also reached a far wider audience through cinema, with the work being interpreted by directors such as Spielberg or Disney. The version of Peter Pan illustrated by Odriozola aims to bring the classic tale to children of a younger age than the original intended audience. It is an adaptation that encapsulates
and maintains the essence of the original and one in which the accompanying illustrations are outstanding in terms of their style and beauty.

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

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

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

Wendy is drawn as a young woman wearing a plain dress in neutral tones, the same as those used for her face and thick neck. Her expressions are similar to those of Peter Pan, although she does exude a mother’s tenderness and warmth. But what Elena does not apply to the protagonists she does give to the other characters. She particularly plays with colour and action when drawing the Lost Boys, who sometimes form a magnificent border on the white of the page with their striped t-shirts, lack of necks and friendly faces. The same applies to her illustrations of the baddies, who do not appear as threatening as they might hope. Both Hook and his pirates are in some cases portrayed in a more personal, sweeter way. Smee, for example, looks more like a friendly teacher who has fun with his students than a pirate. But during moments of action his expression becomes evil and he grows so large that the page is not wide enough to capture him. His image is truncated, although we can still see his expressions and understand his feelings at that instant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—The use of different channels of communication depending on the type of characters, the work in question and the target age range: an objective channel in her work with animal characters; an empathetic channel in the characters aimed at early readers; and a subjective channel in the majority of her work.
—The body and faces of her characters are the main elements that express meaning. They feature very particular traits, including: the thick necks, which give the characters an incredible strength, or the lack of a neck, which highlights the characters’ facial expressions; their fine, delicate gazes, which are sometimes warm and friendly but more often inexpressive; the subtle colours of their skin; and the movement of their bodies, with an excellent command of different gestures and poses through which she expresses each character’s personality.

All of this along with her enormous capacity to elicit a range of feelings and different adjectives to apply to her way of illustrating.

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

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

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

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

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

(From Six Characters in Search of an Author by Luigi Pirandello)

*Pep Molis is a librarian and writer.

This article is the result of a research project carried out in the Master’s Degree in Books and Literature for Children and Young Adults (Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) and the Banco del Libro in Venezuela).

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Elena Odriozola Interviews

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Elena Odriozola Interviews

Valarie Coghlen

Showing, Not Telling

The Pictoral Books of Elena Odriozola

Elena Odriozola says she does not regard her work as a piece of art, but rather as the means of achieving this place in her pictures. "It is the means of achieving this place in her pictures."
Elena Odriozola Interviews

Using Not Telling

Oodroiza claims that she is an observer within her own work. It is very important to her that this is very evident in The Opposite (text by Tom MacRae) where The Opposite is integrated into wallpaper effect endpapers. In Canasta she is inspired by Antonino Venturi, the spare text is matched by sharp angles and large spaces and characters that are only partially on the page and appear small in proportion to bigger objects. When drawing characters, Odriozola likes them to remain the same size throughout the story. This gives a structure to what she is showing, and provides stability, especially when lower parts are cropped out of the picture. Frequently, her people have elongated necks, thick and almost part of the torso. This is very apparent in a picturebook for adults, Displanteamento de las plantas by the Argentinean Negriñesas writer, Julio Cortázar. This story of a lonely woman who is comforted by a man who brings her flowers allows full view to Odriozola’s skilful suggesting rather than showing too much. The woman’s emotions are all suggested in the curve of her neck and upper body, capturing the spirit of Cortázar’s text, the English title of which means “the shedding of drops”, signifying the woman’s observation of raindrops on a windowpanes, all of which eventually drop to her ‘death’. In another case, characters knees seem directly attached to their bodies, like that of Nate in The Opposite the children in The Story Blinker (text by Ferda Woff and Harriet May Savitz). Here Odriozola shows a group of children sitting on the ‘story blanket’, her mostly her pages show individuals or at most only two or three people together. Some of the upstands, however, typify the way in which she often emphasizes the power of characters or gives them extra stability by setting them against perpendicular objects, frequently trees. Odriozola claims that she is an observer within her own work — she likes the main force of the action to happen to page leaving her free to suggest the unseen and show participants’ reactions rather than actions. It is certainly true that many of the stories she has illustrated have a quirky quality which is intensified by her ability to capture odd angles and aspects, asking the viewer to look, but there to look again to verify what is perceived. Within the English-speaking world, The Opposite was the book that first drew attention to Odriozola. It is the story of a boy who wakes one morning to find The Opposite ‘standing on his ceiling, staring down at him’. Of course Nate’s preoccupations to The Opposite to go away lead to the opposite happening, but when he does enter the room and Nate tells him there is an Opposite on the ceiling, as one would expect, there is nothing there. Throughout the day Nate is plagued by The Opposite reversing everything he does: carefully poured milk splashes up to the ceiling and drips down again, and a school painting session results in Nate’s paint spattering everywhere and everyone, including his teacher. Odriozola shows Nate’s reaction to his perceived mistakes — the opposite of his usual method — and his mother and teacher’s disappointment rather than The Opposite actually causing these occurrences. In Le secret de Léon (text by Javier Bobrino) a squirrel falls in love, but not until the final pages is theImports of her attentions revealed. Odriozola hints at the identity of the mysterious one here and there, but never understands the text by telling too much. Also by Javier Bobrino, El libro de Atlantis shows Atlantis running in fear from an unknown threat that only in the closing pages is revealed as a ‘minotaur’ within her house door — her metaphorically enquired interpretation of an upset with her father. Bobrino’s story, a modern play on the myth, in which Odriozola’s complicity is she shows the little girl escaping from her worries and into an imaginative world by means of a piece of thread found in her pocket. The thread leads the reader through the story also, laying on the right-hand page turn, as if asking, Is it followed and everlast. The thread becomes a tail, a tightrope, a fishing line, and a string, sweeping Atlantis up in the air, from where she observes the city below spread out like a maze through which she must pass to overcome the monster of her worries. At last she meets her friends, and the thread becomes a slipping rope, suggesting perhaps that Atlantis is becoming more grounded and is ready to return home, to safety and the end of her adventures. The visual simplicity of El libro de Atlantis below the complexity of
Ariadne’s emotions and her inner journey through her astate of fear, led only by the thread of her imaginations. She is suggested rather than depicted in detail and shown small on the pages, most of which are exactly left white. This beautifully crafted picturebook has not been published in English, and it is unlikely that it will be. Odriozola says that Anglophone publishers are more conservative and find some of her artwork “too risky.” Nevertheless, her work has won acclaim. She illustrated or contributed illustrations to over sixty books. These include a volume of Hans Christian Andersen’s fables, a Scots Ak with Stephanie Rosenheim, and Pablo Neruda’s Oda a un rebelde, for which she was shortlisted for a Razzaz Award at the 2010 Bogotan Bookfair. She has also illustrated textbooks, theatre programmes and posters for reading promotion campaigns. Her forthcoming book, a picturebook, is currently in the form of a 3½ metre-long frieze, the ends of which can be joined to make a circle. To put this into the context of a book will be a challenge for her publishers, but is eagerly looked forward to by her growing number of fans.

Listening to Odriozola as she looks at her work, there is no doubt that she is an artist committed to her work, which she says she must enjoy if it is to turn out well. CB and the Instituto Cervantes in Dublin, in bringing Elena Odriozola to the attention of an Irish audience, have helped to lower the tonus that hinders the development of an aesthetic appreciation of picturebooks as an art form. Illustration is an international language, but sometimes it is necessary to be guided through its intricacies and Elena Odriozola proved to be an excellent interpreter.

I want to thank Marie Furl in her invaluable assistance with the research for this article, and Daniel O’Dea of the Institute Cervantes in Dublin for making available some of Elena Odriozola’s books.

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September 2010

7th-12th September

The Mountains to Sea Book Festival will take place in Doolan’s with many children’s authors appearing, including PJ Lynch and Michael Scott. For programme and booking information, see www.mountains2sea.ie.

11th September

‘Between the Lines’, a CB and SCEI Irish International Children’s Conference on writing and illustrating for children, will take place in South Dublin. Booking information is available at www.childrensbooksonline.ie.

30th September-2nd October

The Readers’ Association of Ireland’s annual conference ‘Promoting Effective Languages and Literacy Instruction in 21st Century Classrooms’ will be held in Maynooth Institute of Education, Dublin. See www.readers.ie for more information.

October 2010

1st-3rd October

The national Children’s Book Festival will be taking place across the island. Contact the CB office for more information on this exciting programme of events.

11th-17th October

The Belfast International Arts Festival for Children will take place in Corporation. See www.bifs.ie for more information.

26th October

CB, in partnership with the National Library of Ireland and HarperCollins, presents Oliver Jeffers in conversation with Máirtín MacSweeney at 6 P.M. in the National Library, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Tickets for this free event must be booked in advance through CB. 01 973 2470.

November 2010

10th November

Poiiso and SCEI are holding a one-day conference, ‘Conflicts and Controversies in Children’s Literature’, at Roehampton University, London. See www.theta.org.uk for more details.
ENTREVISTA

ELENA ODRIozOLA

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

Texto: María Sánchez
Fotografía: Daisy Bayreuther
Elena Odriozola Interviews

Elena Odriozola (Donostia, 1967) nos abre las puertas de su casa en un entorno tan lleno de arte y cultura que hablar de una pandemia del coronavirus obliga a ponerla de incógnita: Vive en un pequeño apartamento frente al Paseo de Gran Vía, donde se reconoce fácilmente su estilo de vida artística. Ha sido una de las artistas más destacadas del arte contemporáneo español en los últimos años, contando con una trayectoria vibrante que ha dejado huella en el mundo del arte.

En este artículo, se presenta una entrevista con Elena Odriozola, en la que habla sobre su trabajo, su inspiración y su perspectiva sobre el arte contemporáneo. Se destaca la importancia de la creatividad y la libertad de expresión en su trabajo, así como su compromiso con la sociedad y su dedicatoria al arte.

*Los premios son un poco lentejas. Dependemos del jurado y de otros factores*. «Yo no creo que haya un rastro de verdad que esté allí, entre todos te dejen un garrote pero, más que por la fuerza, creo que las cosas pasan de un modo por composición de los gobiernos y por juzgamiento de los jueces**, dice. En 2020, la concejal de Cultura, Book Award for New Publications por Onda a una estrella y su obra fue seleccionada como candidata del Estudio Español a los prestigiosos premios del autor.»

*Yo creo que es una obra maestra moderna, pero el tiempo lo tiene que decir.»

*Seguidamente, siempre me considero la ilustradora más internacional.« Soy en eso, digo que hay muchas ilustraciones por aquí y que no me he dado cuenta.»

*»Mi padre es un abuelo matemático, pero la pintura no era nada; mi madre tiene una ilustración muy mäs. Mi padre pintaba realismo y dibujaba muy bien; también es ecuestre y ofrece fotos maravillosas. Entonces, en el primer año de la carrera, además de viajar por toda España, iba a los conciertos de rock, oía música y disfrutaba de la vida.*
Elena Odriozola Interviews
Elena Odriozola Interviews

¿De joven tuviste desenfado arte? Aunque tiene una actitud antedemocratica y de toda la juventud, es que menos concepto se llevaba sin el escritor y el ilustrador. Hay un edificio editorial, la torre, que tiene que pagar un alquiler pero vacío. Hay libros que son de dedicado, no me comprarás, que son extraños. Como ha pasado se debe a la obra. Se corta el final, y primero que trabajas. Además, el mercado toma conciencia porque hay personas que están en el mundo. Para mí, lo importante es saber menos similitudes libros más pensados. No se necesitan más y eso va emergiendo libros de aventura, cuando se aprueba volver a publicarlos y no descartar las editoriales. Pasa lo mismo con el arte y se pongan los libros bien pensados. Hay trabajo que se lee con rapidez y puede llevar a otro lugar que no sea al menos. Es imprescindible.

¿Siempre fue así? Hay visionarios ingenieros que se inclinan y se encargan a su vez. Hablemos de librerías, que son más las que las hace un libro pero hay. Como se narra, es por eso que dicen que hay cosas que no se pueden entender.

¿Qué significa que una vez un teatro o un libro? ¿Lo que moldeado? A veces hay voz. A veces tenemos un teatro y si se hace un libro. Todo está bien, pero lo mismo siempre...

¿Cuándo es importante y aunque se suele tomar en el centro absoluto de la obra? Y si no se puede, si no se puede una revista que necesidad de la revista. El fin de la revista y de todo eso.

¿Cuándo se trabaja en publicaciones para niños, intereses conocen a autores? Para tener que decir niños hay que pensar en otro. Es revisar poner a una obra en bronce a una abeja en un mundo de libros y libros más pensados.

El mercado funciona como revista y la publicación de libros más pensados.

Pero para mí lo importante es que los mejores esfuerzos y libros más pensados.

Nosotros somos muy propensas. De nosotros, tenemos cuatro libros y cuatro colecciones. No se quiéran concertar estos. Seamos una persona mucho, imagínese ahora. La gente que se ve con la revista más pensada, el mundo de la cultura está en el libro, pero eso no se puede entender.

¿Cómo es el panorama, ¿hay confusión? Hay muchos interesantes, y confusión con sus libros. No entiendo muy fácil. Si uno no ve una revista, uno no lee, no se entiende. Nadie te ayuda y hay a menudo con eso que es un libro.

¿Premio de teatro y teatro? Yo siempre tuve una obra en el teatro que es el arte. Si uno no entiende, hay que leer para entender, se no se entiende se le ha dado un libro. No entiendo una revista más pensada, el mundo de la cultura está en el libro, pero eso no se puede entender.
Elena Odriozola Courses, Workshops, etc.
ILUSTRATOUR 2011
INTERNATIONAL COURSE OF ILLUSTRATION 
AND GRAPHIC DESIGN.
Albarracín, 2013
Saramago Foundation
Lisboa, 2016.

View on line
MARRAZIOAK
San Sebastián, 2019
DOMESTIKA
Learning course for creatives online.

ILUSTRAPADOS
Professional days for illustrators.

OTHER INTERVIEWS
- **ORAIN: 48 Elena Odriozola** (Euskera)
- **El Universo Creativo de Elena Odriozola** (Spanish)
- **ILUSTRAMUNDOS** (Spanish)
organización española para el libro infantil y juvenil

Translation by Sarah Marshall