

VOCES & TINTAS

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OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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iBbY
LATINOAMERICA
Y EL CARIBE

Book and Reading Ecosystems





The magazine **VOCES & TINTAS** is an initiative of the sixteen countries that make up **IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean**.

Voces & Tintas seeks to be a dissemination channel from and for the region, based on our mission to **promote** the international understanding of **children's and youth's literature**.

Four key ideas and goals guide the content development: the construction and representation of childhood, adolescence and youth; the exercise of **mediation** practices; the transformation and projections of the book ecosystem and the cultural industry; and the visibility of the organizations that support and promote literature for children in the region.

We believe that spaces for **interaction** are enriched with the voices of all our region's countries and by the oral, artistic, graphic, audiovisual, academic and literary expressions that come from them.

Due to the possibility of articulating all these **expressions** in a bilingual publication, we hope to reach different countries, contexts, and views to understand our cultural ecosystem better.

CREDITS

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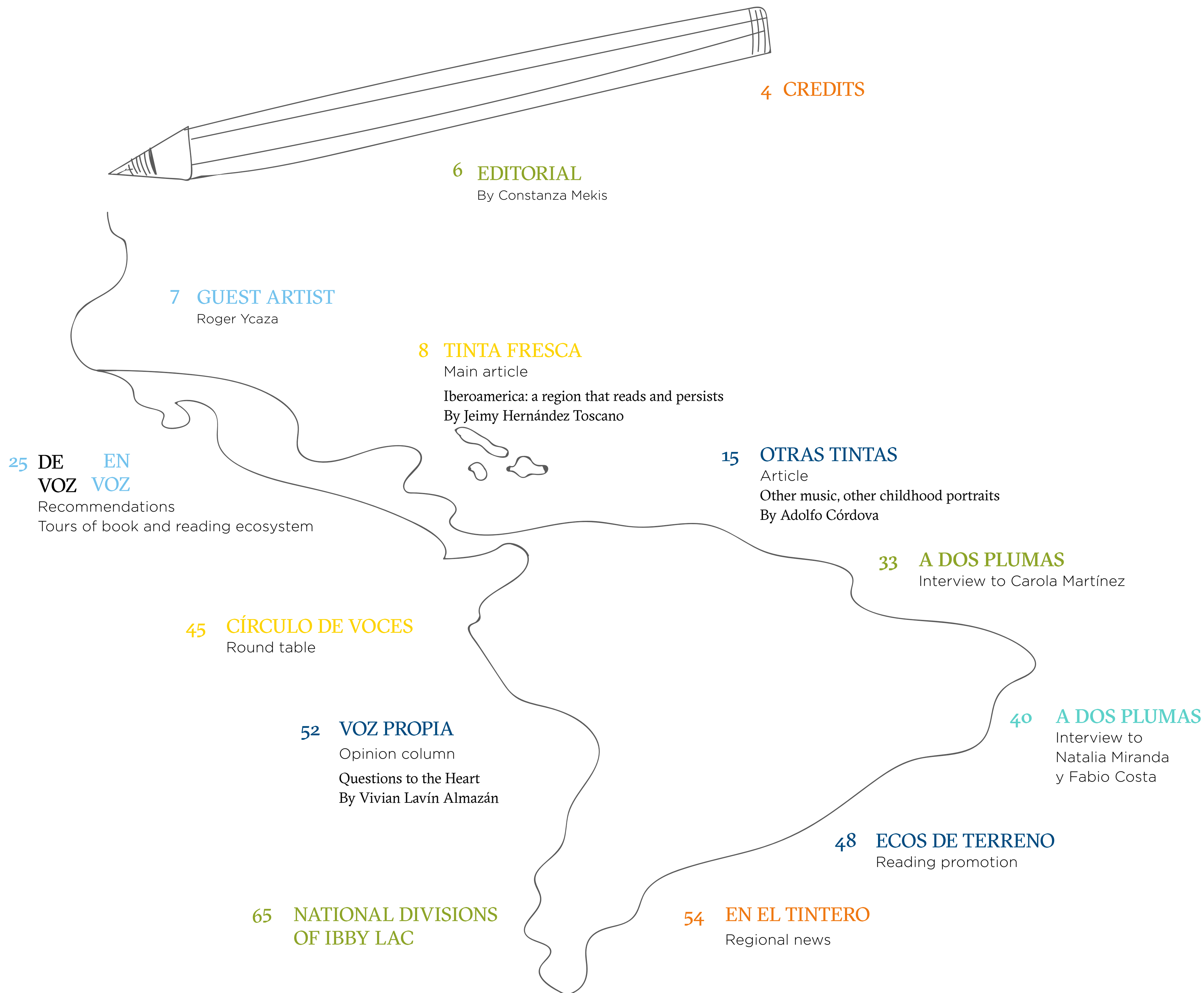
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EDITORIAL

By Constanza Mekis

Director of IBBY Latin-America and the Caribbean



In the first issue of *Voces & Tintas* we came together with the Latin American and the Caribbean cultures through reading, which accompanies and safeguards. There, the reflections, initiatives, recommendations and novelties of each of the sections on IBBY LAC, together with those of other collaborators, revealed to us the intricacy of threads, colours, textures, and shapes that make up our Latin American and Caribbean identity, and also the great diversity of children's and youth's literature of the region.

This second issue invites us to wander and understand this multiplicity of agents and infinite creative and disciplinary crossovers that are emerging searching for the gaze of the 21st century readers. Authors, editors, bookkeepers, librarians, mediators, illustrators, literary agents, bloggers, cultural managers, among many others, come together to nurture and empower this great loom of different threads that are always being created, which, as the name of this issue suggests, is composed by not one, but many book and reading ecosystems around children's and youth's literature.

The cover illustration, created specially by Roger Ycaza for *Voces & Tintas*, illuminates us like the sun, and suggests in its delicate and sensitive lines this rich diversity that characterizes us. The variety of landscapes, cultures, and colours come together in the same canvas under a common experience and conviction: the power of reading and the importance of the reader. Yes, so I think that now, more than ever, we must open our senses to see and hear this city reader, these children and youth, that are present, showing us the new ways of reading and understanding the world. I am happy and hopeful to



ROGER YCAZA

see that from different countries we are working together to give voice to our diversity and to understand this great ecosystem. An example of this is the Anthology of the oral tradition for children of Latin America and the Caribbean, lead by IBBY Costa Rica; the Mediation seminar of reading and identities for early childhood SELAC; the degree of Expert in Latin American and Caribbean children's and youth's Literature, organized by the University of Zaragoza and IBBY Chile; the II CERLALC-IBBY Catalogue about Children's books for sustainable development; as well as the commitment of different book and reading agents that inspire and refresh our duty.

These initiatives talk to us about a collaborative work, of parallel alliances that are sewn and are concatenated to look at us, strengthen us, and make us raise the voice and ink of this ecosystem that moves, gets richer and illuminates thanks to the synergies we have cultivated and that we keep on cultivating day after day. For everyone in the *Voces & Tintas* of IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean team, and all the people and institutions collaborating in this second issue, receive the testimony of my special gratitude.

GUEST ARTIST

Roger Ycaza

Roger Icaza is an Ecuadorian illustrator and musician and has illustrated short stories and novels for different publishers. Among his own works are: *Clic* (FCE, 2021); *Diez canciones infinitas* [*Ten Infinite Songs*] (Panamericana, 2020); *Quito* (Pato Lógico, 2019); *Los temerarios* [*The Reckless*] (GatoMalo, 2018); *Los días raros* [*The Rare Days*] (FCE, 2016); and *Sueños* [*Dreams*] (Loqueleo, 2009). With books published in more than 15 countries, Ycaza has received numerous awards such as the Image of the Book, Category Illustration for Children and Youth 2021; the Cuatrogatos Foundation 2021 Award; The White Ravens 2019 and 2016. In addition, he released several albums with his previous bands Mamá Vudú and Mundos and is currently working on his new musical project, *Frailejones*.

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ROGER YCAZA >

Selfportrait



Iberoamerica: a region that reads and persists ¹

By Jeimy Hernández Toscano

CERLALC, Reading and Libraries Coordinator



Jeimy Hernández is a library, reading and public policies specialist. She has been working for over 20 years in project management and State policies in the cultural and educational fields in Colombia. She was the coordinator of Red Nacional de Bibliotecas Públicas [National Network of Public Libraries] and she also coordinated the national reading plans for both the Ministry of Education and Culture, she worked as general manager of the Theatre Roberto Arias Pérez in Bogotá, she was the manager of the Department of Culture of Colsubsidio and general manager of BiblioRed. Currently she is the general manager of Reading, Writing and Libraries of Cerlac-UNESCO, where she consults Latin-American countries and Spain in topics regarding reading and libraries, she coordinates the Latin-American and Spanish Policies and Reading Plans Network (Redplanes) and the Latin-American and Spanish National Libraries Network. She has been author and editorial coordinator for different technical documents about libraries and reading.

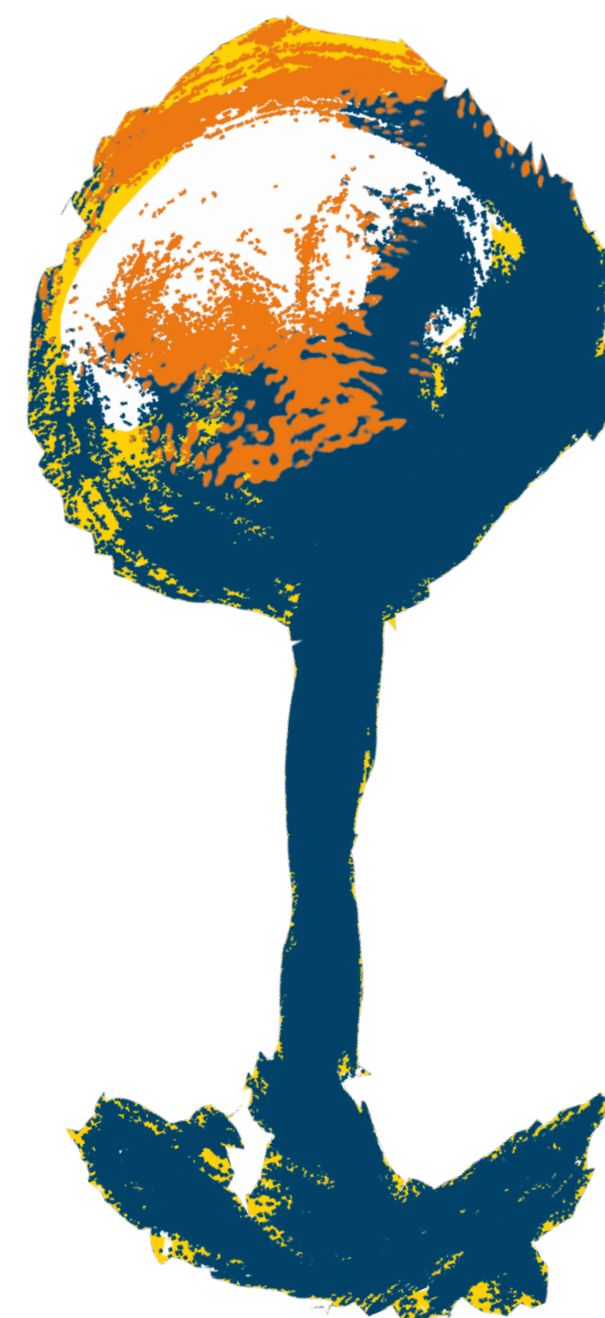
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The development of reading and books public policies in Iberoamerica is marked by many historical events that have opened the way so today we can see the great progress that this field has experienced in recent years and affirm that the region has upheld the task of promoting reading habits, not as a privilege or a duty, but as a civil right, that, as such, must be guaranteed by the State.

This notion of civil rights is explicit in the 1948 Human Rights Act, which determined that “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits” (UN, 2015, p.56.) This idea was ratified by the UN in the 1966 International Pact for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in which it is stated that it is the duty of the State to guarantee the exercise of those rights. This was a first and very meaningful step toward the action of governments globally to guarantee educational and cultural rights.

The transformation that happened in the international sphere in the middle of the twentieth century, related to demographic growth, urbanization, educational system expansion, among others, gave way to big challenges in education and culture. Analphabetism, the growth of access to school, and the difference between developed and developing countries,

¹ The current text was part of a conference made by the author during the 26th International Forum for the Promotion of Books and Reading in Argentina, in August 2021.



have caught the attention of UNESCO since it was created (CERLALC, 2011). Since then, this organization started to promote the creation of policies to face one of the biggest problems in the field of education and culture: the availability of educational materials for people that were starting to massively go to school. In 1966, UNESCO made official a work plan in this field and defined several actions to propose to governments. Similarly, 1972 was declared as the International Year of Books, which “turned the attention of the world to the book and the readers and created multiple actions through the book chain, which were used as a model to the following development of national policies”² (CERLALC, 2011, p. 32).

At a regional level, at the first international meeting of national reading policies for Latin-America and the Caribbean (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the need for policies about books and reading was established, under the motto “Reading: responsibility of all”. The Document of Rio, the result of that meeting, proposes four basic principles to formulate national policies for reading: the value of reading, the democratization of reading, cultural diversity, and productivity. Later in 1998, the International Meeting for Book and Reading policies was held in Caracas, in which the importance of reading regarding general understanding and democracy is emphasized, and it is indicated that, even though the presence of books is necessary, we must invest and un-school public libraries, create school libraries, develop books and reading laws, and move forward in research that supports the governmental decisions in this matter.

These two meetings represent a very important steppingstone of the movement that has been developing non-stop

² Translation by Voces y Tintas



until today in Iberoamerica to turn reading into a public policy matter. Answering to the importance of reading as “a real instrument for social inclusion and a basic social, cultural and economic development factor for our countries”³ (XIII Ibero-American Summit, 2003), country leaders gathered at the XIII Ibero-American Summit (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 2003), promoted the creation of the Ibero-American Reading Plan – ILÍMITA –, and its implementation was lead by the Ibero-American States Organization for Education, Science and Culture – OEI – and the CERLALC.

One of the main programs of ILÍMITA is Redplanes, the Ibero-American Network of the Responsibles for Policies and National Reading Plans. This program marks a point in history for the region and has as a starting point the celebration, in 2004, of the meeting for the creation of a reading public policies agenda, which gave as a result the document “*Por una agenda de políticas públicas de lectura*” [“*For a Reading Public Policies Agenda*”,] in which 10 priorities for the creation of reading policies in Iberoamerica are proposed (CERLALC-OEI, 2004).

One of the immediate effects of this work was the request of some governments to have a consultancy to create national reading policies, based on the recommendations done. Thus, between 2003 and 2004, nine of the 21⁴ countries in the region created a plan, which represented the expression of a growing political will. As shown in the analysis of these plans, they all coincide in the conviction that reading is key to “fight

³ Translation by Voces y Tintas

⁴ We are talking about Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, España, Mexico and Venezuela.

against marginalization, to achieve better educational levels, the better use of scientific and technological advances, and, in general, the improvement of life and the community”⁵ (CERLALC-OEI, 2005, p. 16).

In this first generation of reading plans, we could already see strategic and integral focuses. However, at this moment, in most of the plans, reading equals reading books. An aspect to highlight is that the nine plans gave room to reading in school, making the school population the biggest beneficiary. Few actions were directed to early childhood or the adult population. Among their main difficulties was also the lack of funding, the poor training of reading mediators and librarians, and the lack of articulation between institutions. Even with these limitations, this decade was crucial for the region, since a determinant step was taken: the development of reading public policies, which were projected as bets that transcended current governments.

The movement continued growing and in 2013 the analysis in which *Una región de lectores que crece* [A region of readers that grows] was based on, allowed CERLALC to say that reading was in fact very healthy in the region (CERLALC, 2014). From the nine existing plans in 2005, the region grew to 20 active plans in execution, and several significant efforts were added to the ones already mentioned, this time from the educational sector, with the creation of the Program of School Libraries CRA, by the Chilean Ministry of Education; the National Reading Plan of Colombia, also by the Ministry of Education; the Reading Corners in Mexican schools; the contest Reading Martí in Cuba; or the Contest for the Renovation of School Libraries in Spain.

⁵ Translation by Voces y Tintas

The policies and reading plans were developed in the best way possible. There is an expansion of meaningful experiences that are mutually beneficial. Focuses marked by an aesthetic vision of reading, reading for pleasure, as a free act, spontaneous, reading as a game and in relation to other aesthetic languages. The progress that countries made when understanding reading as a civil right and as a factor of economic development is also remarkable. Among some highlighted examples, we can find Brazil's reading plan, which understood reading as a *sine qua non* condition to build a new nation's project, a fairer one. Mexico, on the other side, had a plan that expressed that reading was necessary to consolidate the democracy. Another example is Venezuela, which, through their plan, looked to eradicate poverty, achieve collective well-being and political and economic justice.

The approach of some countries such as Chile, Brazil and Colombia, not only regarding their broad and current conceptual ideas, but also in the management and implementation, started to create the guideline regarding these aspects that had been little owned in the region, such as the inter-institutional and inter-sectoral work, the development of studies and surveys of reading behaviors, the attention to the early childhood and hospital-bound population, the installation of mobile spaces for reading such as bibliometros and bibliobuses [*subway-libraries and bus-libraries*], and the creation of regional reading plans. The encouragement of reading as a State policy, the participation, sustainability, follow-up, and evaluation, are some of the aspects that, on the road to construct public policies, are completely necessary; and they are not the constant

in other Latin-American or Caribbean countries. I especially highlight the move to the decentralization or territorialization of the reading plans.

In Argentina, for example:

the planning and development of a specific reading policy and its lines of action countrywide supposes the necessary articulation with which is presented as specific development in each jurisdiction. A rich starting point exists, which must be reason for knowledge, reflection, and analysis in a shared table among the regional representatives and the national management team (Argentina's National Reading Plan, quoted by CERLALC-OEI, 2005, p.115).⁶

⁶ Translation by Voces y Tintas



In Colombia, on the other hand, the plan will be executed respecting and strengthening the decentralized model of the country, involving the departments and municipalities through an articulated and focused work. In Spain, the autonomous communities started their own plans autonomously or together with the Ministry.

The matter of decentralization starts to be a fundamental part of the agendas of reading plans. In fact, the articulation between the regional and the national reading plans was a main topic of the Redplanes meeting held in Valparaíso in 2017, when CERLALC convened the countries to check the objectives, achievements, and difficulties of the plans, after 14 years of the appearance of ILÍMITA. As a result of this meeting, the Declaration of Valparaíso for the Strengthening of the Reading Plans was signed. In it, despite recognizing the accomplishments, the need to continue to boost reading as a public policy matter was stated, given the evident asymmetry among the countries.

Four years after the promulgation of the Valparaíso Declaration, we can affirm that reading continues to be a priority for most Ibero-American countries, but, evidently, and in view of all the difficulties of some countries that years ago were leaders in the matter, it is also necessary to recognize that without political will it is not possible to guarantee the complete access to the written culture for all. The work done over the years has also been affected by political conflicts, government changes and the situations that these bring along, which undoubtedly affect the continuity of the actions. Postures that instrumentalize reading too much, others that don't

even recognize it among the priorities to the development of a country, and, in other cases, the difficult task of articulation and the institutionality of the topic, that make the governance of the plans, is today one of the biggest challenges.

The current panoramic of Reading policies in Iberoamerica allows one to have an optimistic vision. But in the midst of the convulsed world we are living in, priorities regarding health, economy, political conflicts, and the migration phenomenon which is rapidly growing in the region, are alerting us about the urgency of insisting that reading continues to be that freeing practice, which is able to give people possibilities to think, act and decide in favor of their own life.

The analysis done by CERLALC between 2019 and 2021, through two surveys completed by the official agents responsible of the national reading strategies, allows us to share some reflections⁷. According to the information collected, 14 countries⁸ have today an active reading plan, and 5 of these⁹ have, in addition, a reading plan. To these, we have to add the current efforts of countries such as Peru and Costa Rica to create reading policies or national strategies that allow the sustainability of the actions and intersectoral work. Although in various countries there is not yet a national reading plan, in all of them strategies to foment practices regarding the written and spoken word for the population are being developed.

⁷ A first survey, about the situation of the plans in technical, political, institutional and management terms, took place in August 2019, and the second survey, about the impact of the pandemic and the actions of the plans and libraries to respond to the emergency, was discussed in an online regional forum about this topic done by CERLALC in May 2020.

⁸ These are the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Spain, Mexico, Panama, Portugal, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁹ Countries which have a national Reading policy: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Portugal.



The main axis of policies and active reading plans are not too far from the ones developed in the last 10 years. But what is happening regarding the population groups served is also very important. We have moved forward in the development of actions directed to the groups with more risk of exclusion or with difficulties to access and participate in the written culture, such as the rural population and people in geographically secluded places, indigenous people, people with disabilities, and people deprived of liberty. It is registered that Afro-descendants, members of the LGTBI community, and migrants have a lower progress; the same for activities or strategies with a gender focus¹⁰.

The results of these regional studies show some of the biggest challenges related as well with the global crisis because of the pandemic:

1. The urgency to broaden the concepts and focus on inclusion is evident. It is a debt and a duty to contribute to the understanding of neuroscience and neurodiversity in language, and reading with reading policies. Also in this line, it is required to have strategies that make participation of indigenous people, Afro-descendant, and rural population possible, not only as beneficiaries, but also as policy- and service-makers, directed to their own communities.

2. In response to the regional situation about the increasing number of migrant people, it is necessary that the plans generate effective actions for training and social life involvement of people in mobility conditions.

3. Different focuses must be implemented, and they must be coherent with the new tendencies of the information, science, and knowledge fields, related to different issues such as artificial intelligence, gamification, creation of reading spaces; renewed and closer to the notion of social creative- and meeting-laboratories than to the notion of stages thought for only reading and cultural activities.

4. Finally, it is important that movements such as Redplanes, or the newborn Ibero-American System of National Public and School Libraries Network, boosted by CERLALC, continue to expand even

¹⁰ According to the results of the survey done in 2019, only 25% of the plans had activities or programs for migrants and for Afro-descending people, while 33% offered strategies directed to women. None of the plans registered actions focused on the LGBTI population.

stronger as a mechanism to insist in the political commitment translated into resources, visibility, institutionalization, and action sustainability to achieve the promotion of reading.

Even though these are areas in which we need to advance, I would like to finish by emphasizing that we are doing it correctly, that this conviction from which we all work from so families can read to children from early childhood, will make them grow up with better levels of confidence and empathy, and it will be key so future generations have a better understanding of their world and work for the transformations required. We need to continue to reach the most marginalized population, to integrate countries; to fight so women understand their rights better and we can achieve more equality; to create libraries that offer tools for innovation and social creativity; and lastly, to give people the knowledge and the words so they can be able to participate in the democratic life, in the core of the reading plans that are being developed today in Iberoamerica.

I come to the words of Michèle Petit (2009) to think once more about the place that reading, literature and policies that enhance them, have in the world that we are living in:

In crisis contexts, literature gives us another place, another time, another tongue, a breath. It is about opening a space that allows dreams, thoughts, and that illation to experiences. A crisis is like a break, a time that reactivates all

the separation and abandonment anxiety and produces the loss of that feeling of continuity that is so important for the human being. The narrations, among others, reactivate that feeling, not only because they have a beginning, middle and end, but also because of the secret order that emanates from good literature. It is like the internal chaos calming down, taking shape¹¹. **V&T**

¹¹ Translation by Voces y Tintas

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Article

OTRAS TINTAS

Other music, other childhood portraits

Perspectives on poetry for children
in Latin America

By Adolfo Córdova

Illustrations by Juan Palomino



*En una cajita de fósforos /
se pueden guardar muchas cosas.*

[Inside a tiny matchbox / many things can be kept.]

*Un rayo de sol, por ejemplo. / (Pero hay que encerrarlo muy rápido,
si no, se lo come la sombra.) / Un poco de copo de nieve, / quizá
una moneda de luna, / botones del traje del viento, / y mucho, mu-
chísimo más. // Les voy a contar un secreto / en una cajita de fós-
foros yo tengo guardada una lágrima.*

*[A ray of sun, for instance. / (But it needs to be caught
quickly, / if not, it'll be swallowed by shade.) / A bit of
snowflake, / perhaps a coin of moon, / buttons from the
wind's suit, / and more, so much more. / I'm going to tell
you a secret: / Inside a tiny matchbox / I have kept a tear-
drop.]*

María Elena Walsh saved infinity of treasures in this poem and offered them to children, side by side, in 1965. From there, “among children” and not “for children”, as she liked to clarify, the author seemed to whisper that she understood their pains and joys. Hence it did not matter that the “older people” judged them. Like them,

she would continue to collect “sticks, fluff, buttons, / tacks, pencil shavings, / stone, caps, papers...” And they could believe her, because Walsh spoke with a new voice, one that sounded different, intimate. A voice free of metrics and rhymes prepared to expand ways to read, write and inhabit childhood.

Achilles Nazoa did the same more than two decades earlier, in 1943, when he published his poem without rhyme “Método práctico para aprender a leer en VII lecciones musicales con acompañamientos de gotas de lluvia” [“Practical Method for Learning to Read in VII Musical Lessons with Accompaniment of Raindrops”]. Although it was not published in a book addressed to

children, it is clear that he wanted to speak to them. In his voice, confidant and intimate, we witness a father as heroic as Sinbad the Sailor, a fairy who enchants a



silver thimble with her magic wand, canaries wearing “glass slippers and a bit of a heel” and gazelles and linen fawns.

Mi papá era Simbad el Marino. / Mi papá tiene un barco de vela y un tren. Y un caballo blanco / de general. Y un cinturón de hebilla de plata. / Mi papá es cazador y el tuyo no. / Mi papá me trajo del bosque una mariposa verdeazulmar y un arcoíris chiquito que encontró desnudo en el fondo del río. / La voz de mi papá es como el viento entre los pinos.

[My dad was Sinbad the Sailor. / My dad has a sailboat and a train. And a white horse / as a general. And a silver buckle belt. / My dad is a hunter, and yours is not. / My dad brought me a blue-green butterfly and a small rainbow from the forest that he found naked at the river's bottom. / My dad's voice is like the wind through the pines].

Walsh and Nazoa are two heralds in the aesthetic and ideological independence's history of Latin American children's poetry. They contributed to the liberation of poetry for children from school chores, moral instrumentalisation, a European-only imaginary, and adult pigeonholing and arbitration. These two poets looked critically at the classical forms of traditional children's lyrics to expand them into new thematic and stylistic territories, closer to any child's inner world.

Where once there was a lesson or rhyme to learn, they proposed parody, humour, nonsense, doubt and pleasure for experimentation, rejuvenating words or giving them new meanings, as Gaston Bachelard wanted, and diversifying the tones and rhythm. Their poetic sensitivity emulates that of nineteenth-century founders such as José Martí, Rubén Darío, Carmen Lyra, Amado Nervo,

Gabriela Mistral, Rafael Pombo and Juana de Ibarbourou; and is contemporary with that of poets such as Javier Villafañe, Dora Alonso, Óscar Alfaro, Jairo Aníbal Niño, Manuel Agustín Aguirre, Laura Devetach and Alicia Morel. In line with this tradition, Walsh and Nazoa broadened the concept of poetry for childhood, the idea of childhood itself and a type of writing that reproduces a child's syntax.

In 2017 I began researching who had been the first to move away from tradition formally and continued exploring new forms and updating childhood portraits. Two scholarships supported my research: one from the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany, and another from the Center for Reading Promotion and Children's Literature Studies (CEPLI) in Cuenca, Spain. After two years of research, I concluded a poems' selection published by Ediciones Ekaré in early 2021, edited by María Francisca Mayobre and Ana Palmero, and illustrated by Juan Palomino.

Walsh's poem, which launches the modern history of Latin American children's literature, is also first in the anthology and inspired, at the suggestion of María Francisca, a very justified title for the book: *Cajita de fósforos [Tiny Box of Matches]*.

This article shares the research findings and previous readings from 2016, when I presented a panorama of poetry published between 2013 and 2016 at the Ibero-American Congress of Language and Literature for Children and Young People (CILELIJ) supported by SM Foundation and the IBBY Mexico Library. In these pages, for the most part, I present poems that are not collected in the anthology, with the aim of showing, through examples, the

thematic diversity and political commitment of contemporary poetry. The small sample includes authors from Mexico, Argentina and Chile.

Towards new political territories

All the lessons of Nazoa's "Método práctico para aprender a leer en VII lecciones musicales con acompañamientos de gotas de lluvia" show a deep understanding of children. The poem's title already proposes a pedagogical revolution, transitioning from a literacy-based education to an artistic one, followed by a more significant rupture: poetic play. The shift is radical: from the normative, scholarly, instrumental text (and the poem is often at the service of pedagogy) to the poem that re-signifies from a playful perspective to liberate, reorder or expand the world—an attribute of children's knowhow.



JUAN PALOMINO

This type of understanding is refined with Walsh's "Cajita de fósforos", from 1965, and continues with poets such as Mercedes Calvo, Gloria Cecilia Díaz, Antonio Orlando Rodríguez, María Baranda, Clarisa Ruiz, Jorge Luján, Aramis Quintero, María Cristina Ramos, Marina Colasanti, Jacqueline Goldberg, María García Esperón, Cecilia Pisos, Micaela Chirif, Germán Machado, Laura Escudero and María José Ferrada. All of them, like Walsh, keep tears in the boxes that they offer to childhood, respect the psychological complexity of this stage and agree to accompany doubts and fears.

Chilean María José Ferrada is one of the most prolific and recognised Latin American poets of recent years. Her work has been translated into fourteen languages and only since 2017 she has published 21 poetry books in which free versification, prose poems, short and poetic narratives and even informative texts with haikús are mixed, always free of rhyme and exploring hybrid genres.

In *El lenguaje de las cosas* [The Language of Things] or *Escondido* [Hidden,] she reveals the secrets of household objects, such as balls of wool, the fireplace (where a ghost of smoke is hidden), the closet or the matches.

Los fósforos son las semillas alargadas del fuego que viven en el interior de su caja. / Las personas los sacan, los encienden y ellos brotan. / Su luz dura solo un par de segundos. Lo suficiente para iluminar la primavera minúscula de la cena.

[The matches are the elongated seeds of fire that live inside their box. / People take them out, light them up, and they sprout. / Their

light lasts only a couple of seconds. Enough to light up the tiny spring of dinner].

In Ferrada's *El interior de los colores* [*The Interior of Colours*,] the tunnel towards a semantic remake is deeper because, in addition to being a lexicon, it is graphic. The poem proposes imagining a brief moment in a colour's private life, looking at a simple solid colour circle, a bet by visual artist Rodrigo Marín. The book recalls other artistic experiments, such as the French monochrome canvases of the late 20th century or the conceptual and minimalist art of Sol LeWitt. The voice in the second person guides readers to a game with an instructional tone, and children always welcome this type of instruction.

Mira el brote / Imagina lo que sueña / la flor que duerme en su interior.

[Look at the bud / Imagine what it dreams of / the flower that sleeps inside].

Ferrada's socio-political commitment stands out in books for children and adolescents, such as *Niños* [*Children*] or *Notas al Margen* [*Notes to the Margin*,] in which she rehearses, from poetry, ways of inhabiting childhood that do not deny violence. *Niños* is made up of short narrative poems where Ferrada recovers the intimacy and, at the same time, the universality of childhood syntax: a way of responding to wishes and rearranging children's reality. Jaime, Héctor, Alicia.

Alicia.

De todos los regalos que le han dado este cumpleaños, / prefiere los globos / con los que han adornado la casa para la fiesta. // Por-

que si vuelan, si abre la ventana y los echa a volar, / será como hacerle un regalo al viento. // Porque el viento también debe tener un día de cumpleaños. / Aunque no lo sepamos, debe tener.

[Alicia.

Of all the gifts she's been given this birthday / her favourites are balloons / with which the house was decorated for the party. / Because if they fly, if she opens the window and lets them fly, / it will be like giving a gift to the wind. / Because the wind must also have a birthday. / Even if we don't know it, it must have one.]

However, as we found out in the epilogue, the children evoked in this collection of poems were executed during the Chilean military dictatorship.

Ferrada's poems materialise the dialectical tension between life and death because she imagines them alive in this work. She makes them live in the present tense in the verses, as in small textual rooms. Yet, she does not hide the crime of which they are victims. Although the poems and the epilogue could be read independently, Ferrada propels their dialogue to activate the political dimension of the proposal: to remember the children and name the injustice. A face often hidden from childhood. And despite the horror and sadness evoked at the end of the book, the act of naming the children's makes hope remain. We are also informed that one of the 34 kidnapped children survived.

Notas al Margen is another striking proposal in which the poet takes up the headlines and paragraphs of journalistic notes such as "Thousands of people displaced once more by the Three Gorges Dam", "We cannot return to Romania, it is hell" or "Protest for the disappearance of their daughters with hundreds of red

shoes". Ferrada writes a poem that recovers the stories' emotionality, so often normalised by impunity, and awakens the reader's affect and empathy.

Familiar landscapes, searches and migrations

Making a specific context visible is also crucial for Mexican author María Baranda, who speaks to children who have never seen elephants, giraffes and zebras in their backyard. In *Un ajolote me dijo* [An Axolotl Told Me,] she writes about landscapes that are familiar to Mexican children.

Vienes de la Cueva del Tecolote. / Tienes los ojos negros y la piel / como tambor en la cálida selva / de la lluvia (...). Perro mío, perro único, / perro monstruo, monstruo mío. // Dame tus ojos abiertos / para mirar adentro de la noche.
[You come from the owl's cave / You have black eyes and skin / Like a drum in the warm jungle / of the rain (...). My dog, unique dog, / monster dog, my monster. // Give me your open eyes / to look into the night.]

The *xoloitzcuintle* (the Mexican dog), the jaguar, the white-tailed deer, the teporingo, the grey wolf, the iguana and even the vulture say their names to prevent readers from fearing them. Baranda explores and plays with various tones and pauses made with howls, flaps, glides, and splashes. Armando Fonseca's extraordinary poetic illustrations add to the wonder, beauty, and time we spend changing skin every double page.

In *Diente de León* [Dandelion,] a long narrative poem loaded with lyricism, Baranda is more particular when she testifies the preca-

rious life of a girl who cannot invite all her friends to her birthday party because "the food is not enough". Between villages occupied by soldiers, dry landscapes and a lot of loneliness, the girl has to deal with the pain of losing loved ones and travel in search of her mother, who still lives.

Mañana cumpla once años. / Mamá dice que podrán / venir Felu y Maki. / Ella hará un pastel grande, / inmenso, enorme, de ciruela. / Once es mi número de la suerte. / "¿Podrían venir once amigos?" / "No", dice mamá, "no alcanzará la comida. / Y las fiestas son para celebrar, / No para padecer". / Padecer es una palabra que / se cae / lenta / de la boca de todos. / "Se padece", susurra la abuela, "ahora / todo se padece". / "¿Y cómo era antes?", quiero saber. / "Diferente", contesta mamá. / Y sus ojos se llenan de aire.
[Tomorrow I turn eleven, / Mama says, / Felu and Maki can come. / She'll bake a big, hefty, enormous / plum cake. / Eleven is my lucky number. / "Can I invite eleven friends?" / "No", Mama says, "there won't be enough food. / And parties are for having fun, / not suffering". / Suffering is a word that / falls / slowly / out of everybody's mouths / "We suffer", whispers Grandma, / "suffering / is all there is now" / "And what did it use to be like?" I want to know. / "Different", replies Mama. / And air fill up her eyes.]

This harsh reality of exiles and involuntary migrations, which so many children go through in Mexico and Central and South America, is the axis of *Los hermanos Zapata. Una ópera del desierto mexicano* [The Zapata Brothers. A Mexican Desert Opera,] by Torgeir Rebolledo Pedersen and Lilian Brogger. It is a breath of fresh air for the epic poem: the feats here narrated are those of a couple of cats that sing Mexican corridos and end up be-

ing persecuted by organised crime because they do not want to compose a corrido for a narco municipal president. Fulfilling the American dream will be the escape and survival plan, for one of the cats, in the company of other threatened characters. But his journey in the desert while crossing the border will not be easy either.

A commendable feature of this risky proposal lies in giving visibility to an almost unprecedented topic in children's books published in Mexico: government and drug traffickers' complicity, public executions and exile. The poem's crude and comic tone corresponds nicely with the hyperbolic comic-shaped illustrations. The book makes monstrosity a parody and allows children and adolescents to experience a brutal reality through humour.

Towards more hospitable interiors and to the stars

From a cold and uncertain night in the desert to a night that is finally well-sheltered. In *La casa de mis abuelos* [My Grandparents' House,] the oral narrator Germán Argueta makes readers enjoy the company of their grandparents in a homely, cosy and rural atmosphere. He does not purify adult nostalgia, he tells in verse as if they were his childhood memories, but he is eloquent and persuades us to inhabit that memory. *Yo jugaba con el lodo / y hacía pacientemente / animalitos de barro. // Mis manos eran de barro; / yo era de barro.*

[I played with the mud / and patiently made / clay animals. // My hands were made of clay; / I was made of clay.]

Rosi Aragón's illustrations explore memories in different layers of cut paper textures, photography and digital images.



And from the memory of that familiar night, we move to another that conjures up the common fear of the dark in *Esto que brilla en el aire* [*This That Shines in the Air*,] by Argentinean Cecilia Pisos. Here, a boy reinvents the relationship with nighttime fears.

La noche es / un animal oscuro / que llega cada día / a la hora del sueño. // Algunos niños temen / su color profundo / y dejan / una lucecita / para tenerlo a raya. // Yo en cambio / me acurruco / entre sus blandas patas / que me protegen del resplandor del mundo. [The night is / a dark animal / that arrives every day / at sleep time. // Some children fear / its deep color / and leave / a little light / to keep it at bay. // I instead / curl up / between the soft paws of the night / that protect me from the world's glare.]

Cecilia Pisos places children at the centre using a classic poetic motif: the fascination with nature. The snow, a spider's web, a school of fish like stars, a flock of verses like birds in the sky, lots of games between puddles of night and some questions lying on the grass are approached from a perspective that made her win the Hispanicamerican Children's Poetry Prize in 2016. The book, illustrated by Ana Pez, wants children to gain territory. It quenches a universal thirst for play and expedition, regardless of context.

And that desire for an expedition reaches the moon with two more poetry books. *Pequeño elefante transneptuniano* [*Little Trans-Neptunian Elephant*,] by Martha Riva Palacio Obón, is a strange stellar ride, full of calligrams, in which a girl, Ana, jumps, balances and explores stars, planets and satellites with an imaginary elephant.

Pequeño / elefante: / tus colmillos / en cuarto creciente / brillan / en el cielo. / Si me deslizo / por ellos, / ¿Llegaré hasta Neptuno? // Lluvia / de estrellas: / Desde su nave en cuarto / menguante / Ana pesca meteoritos / con su red de uranio. / Perlas-sideritas / para una niña / fantasma.

[Little / elephant: / your tusks / in crescent quarter / shine / in the sky. / If I slide / through them, / Will I get to Neptune? // Rain / of stars: / From her space ship / in waning quarter / Ana catches meteorites / with her uranium net. / Pearl-siderites / for a ghost/ girl.]

In *Astronomía poética* [*Poetic Astronomy*,] written and illustrated by Juan Lima, readers are invited to prepare to be astronauts, create their own spacesuits, take off in a Latin American spacecraft, conquer unknown galaxies and write unpublished poems.

Dibujo / en el cuaderno / una nave con forma de flecha / apuntando al cielo / enciendo los motores / remonta vuelo / parece pájaro / oriento la antena / y mando señales bip bip/ le saco una pluma / y escribo este / poema.

[I draw / in the notebook / an arrow-shaped spaceship / pointing to the sky / I turn on the engines / soar / as a bird / I aim the antenna / and send signals beep beep / I remove a feather / and write this / poem.]

Lima himself wrote, in a similar previous book, *Botánica poética* [*Poetic Botany*,] a poem that synthesizes the concern of this article: Si la poesía / no se fuera alguna vez / para el lado de los tomates / sólo probaríamos / ensalada de / frutas // (el poeta / cuando no sueña / vuela). [If poetry / did not go / to the side of tomatoes / we would only try / fruit salad / / (the poet / when he does not dream / flies).]

What is about to happen

The examples above break with the idea that rhymed poetry would be the appropriate way to address children, as free verse would be for youth. By doing this, they also multiply our ideas about childhood and draw more diverse portraits of children.

As Antonio Orlando Rodríguez had already published in 1993 in a book whose form diversity is pioneering, *Mi bicicleta es un hada y otros secretos por el estilo* [*My Bicycle is a Fairy and Other Secrets Alike*]:

Mi verso es libre de volar a donde quiera. Viene y se posa en la rama de algún árbol, en un alero, en la tendedera de la vecina, en cualquier página en blanco de mis cuadernos.
[My verse is free to fly wherever it wants. It comes and perches on a tree branch, on eaves, on the neighbour's clothesline, on any of my notebooks' blank page.]

Although a poetic style that recycles and wears out the formal and thematic lexical poetry's repertoire written in Spanish since the beginning of the 20th century is still composed, a considerable part of current creation in Latin America seeks a different musicality. May this be in free verse, prose and visual poetry, usually without rhyme or mixed tones, incorporating variations in indentation, spacing and punctuation. These innovations question and reject stereotypes and preconceptions generally associated with children's poetry and Latin American cultures.

In today's Walsh's box of matches, there is room for heroes and heroines who undertake symbolic journeys and immerse themselves affectively in complex and rich personal landscapes. Or everyday objects and colours that reveal secrets, ways of naming

and resisting migration, state terrorism and organised crime, returning to the wild and even expanding space in spaceships.

In addition, this poetry is usually published in illustrated editions that problematise the relationship between text and image with rules different from those of the picture book, and they are limited to the illustrated book's logic. They create a hybrid zone with its own rules and powers.

To finish, I quote the poem "La presa" ["The Prey"] by Jorge Lu-ján, included in *Palabras manzana* [*Apple Words*], an emblematic book from 2003:

*Vi un lobo / pero en realidad / ¿cómo saber si estaba allí?
/ Su aliento azul, / no provocaba menos mareas que la
luna / De sus patas sobre mi pecho / no puedo hablar /
porque yo aún dormía / Todo lo demás / está por suce-
der. [I saw a wolf / but actually / how can I know if it was
there? / Its blue breath, / didn't cause fewer tides than
the moon. / Of its paws on my chest / I cannot speak /
since I was still asleep. / Everything else / is yet to ha-
ppen.]*

This is what Latin American children's poetry tells us: a whole path of singularities, sounds and childhoods are yet to be listened to and written. **V&T**



JUAN PALOMINO

NOTE

This article is based on a presentation originally written in English for the IBBY International Congress in Athens in 2018, the IBBY United States Regional Conference in Austin and the Sharjah International Book Fair in 2019. Luz Santa María did the translation into Spanish. Adolfo Córdova rewrote and adjusted this translation for the second issue of the magazine Voces y Tintas, which was lightly edited by the Translation committee.

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Recommendations

DE VOZ EN VOZ

Ecosystem tours of the book and reading

GUATEMALA



CENTRO CULTURAL
DE ESPAÑA
EN GUATEMALA

CULTURAL CENTER

The Spanish Cultural Center in Guatemala, which belongs to the Network of Cultural Centers of the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID), seeks to respond to Guatemalan cultural demands. By generating permanent programming of actions involving children, young people, women, indigenous people and Afro-descendants, the space promotes inclusive and participatory cultural dynamics with all civil society actors. Special attention is given to human capital formation that can strengthen the cultural sector in Guatemala.

› <https://cceguatemala.org/>

CHILE



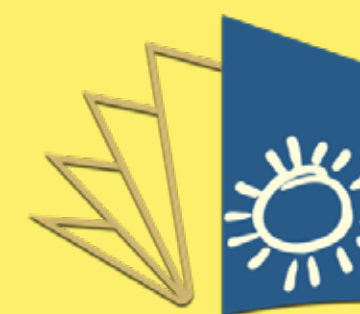
ILLUSTRATOR

Elisa María Monsalve is an engraver and illustrator from the University of Chile. Her work explores and discusses topics such as the observation of nature, the recovery of family memory spaces, and the subjectivities of the feminine representation in culture. She has published in Quilombo Ediciones, Santillana, Penguin Random House, Grafito Ediciones and, currently, she works with Ekaré Sur. Her work has been exhibited at MAC Quinta Normal and in Buenos Aires, Mexico and the United States.

› <https://elisamariamonsalve.com/>



CUBA



SALA
INFANTIL Y JUVENIL
Eliseo Diego

LIBRARY

The Eliseo Diego Children's and Youth's Room was founded in 1959 as the Youth Department of the José Martí National Library of Cuba. It specialises in promoting literature for children and young people through book loans, workshops, and courses. During the pandemic period, librarians have continued working virtually, writing children's and youth books reviews, classifying reading materials and making them available online to the library users.

› <http://www.bnjm.cu/salas/11/sala-juvenil>

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA



FOUNDATION

The Support for the Development of Dominican Libraries Foundation (Fundebido) is a non-profit institution founded by librarians in 2010. Its main objective is to contribute to the formation of readers and the creation of libraries where diverse cultural agents work inter-disciplinarily. To do this, the foundation has developed three intervention axes to date: library sciences and reading promotion training; creation of libraries and circle of readers; and activities related to reading motivation and book donation.

› <https://www.facebook.com/fundacion.fundebido>

BOLIVIA



ILLUSTRATOR

Nicaela León, known as Phuyu, is a Bolivian illustrator and linguist from the city of Cochabamba, who tells, through her drawings, daily visual stories. She also translates and interprets from Spanish to Quechua and vice versa. Using colored pencils and paper, her illustration dialogues with the traditional as she draws boys, girls, women, and other characters, with typical clothes and expressions that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of her community. Likewise, she has developed a project through social media to spread the native language to the world. Instagram: @phuyu.no

› <https://msha.ke/phuyu/>

EL SALVADOR



AUTHOR

Alberto Pocasangre is a renowned Salvadoran storyteller, who has received several national and international awards. Some of his books are *Donde nacen las sirenas* [Where Sirens Are Born], *De sustos, amores y otras cosas aterradoras* [Of Frights, Loves and Other Terrifying Things] and *Kauki, el devorador de insectos* [Kauki, the Insect Eater].

› <https://www.loqueleo.com/gt/autores/alberto-pocasangre>

URUGUAY



BLOG

Garabatos y Ringorrangos [Doodles and Scribblings] is a blog by Uruguayan writer, cultural manager and librarian Germán Machado, who proposes that this initiative “might have something of a newspaper, something of bookshelf, and something of a travel diary”. The page presents in a very attractive manner its different sections, as well as the connection with the author, and it also brings different possibilities to immerse ourselves in children’s and youth’s literature.

› <https://machadolens.wordpress.com/>

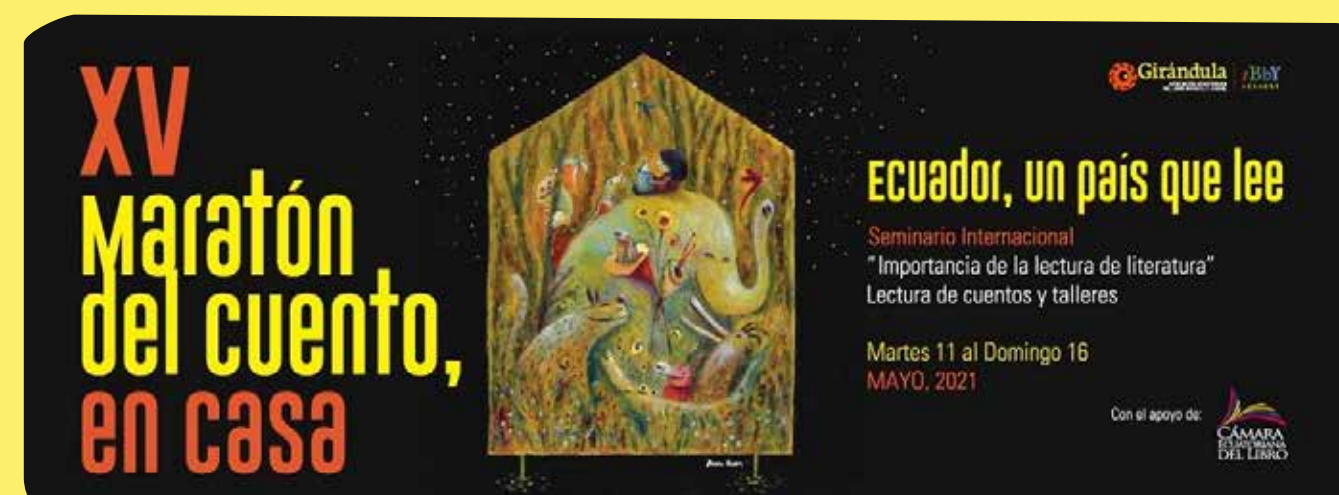
ARGENTINA



PUBLISHING HOUSE

IMAIQUÉ Publishers was founded by two scientists, Ileana Lotersztain, Biology Major, and Clara Baredes, Physics Major, who run it up to this day. The publishing house has published more than 65 informative books for children and teenagers about different topics. Its titles have been translated to English, Portuguese, Chinese, Korean, Italian, Turkish, Romanian, Chezk, among others. Its texts in Spanish are distributed in Latin America and also, for the hispanic community, in the United States of America. For this reason, it has earned a prestigious place in all the Americas, in which the originality and excellence in the contents are highlighted. Some of its most acclaimed titles are: *iQué ojos tan curiosos tienes!* [What Curious Eyes You Have!] by Romina Carnevale and Paola Vetere and illustrated by Martina Trach and *Las mediciones no fueron siempre así* [Measures Were not Always Like This] by Juan Sabia and illustrated by Javier Basile.

ECUADOR



PROGRAMME

In 2021, the Story Marathon turned 15 years old, and we celebrated it with the participation of 43 countries in a six day-programme. This year, the event was called Ecuador, un país que lee [Ecuador, a Country That Reads], tagged under the current context as #MaratónDelCuentoEnCasa. The initiative seeks to promote the love of reading in Ecuadorian children, the youth and families. Through talks and workshops, we hope to strengthen and enrich the readers of Latin America and the Caribbean. IBBY Ecuador organises this event.

› Facebook: @girandulaecuador

BOLIVIA



FESTIVAL

One of the most important goals of the Kolibrí Festival is to educate Bolivian children and adolescents in audiovisual language. Specifically, during the festival, the foundation Semillas de Cultura develops audiovisual training workshops in both rural and urban areas throughout the country. This initiative seeks to provide the necessary bases for children to approach this language, using broad criteria of selection, judgment and manipulation. This year the festival will take place between October 11 and 17, 2021.

› <http://www.festivalkolibri.com/>

BRAZIL



ILLUSTRATOR

Roger Mello is an illustrator born in Brasilia in 1965. He has illustrated more than 100 titles and written 25 of them. He won the Hans Christian Andersen award in 2014, being the only Latin American artist to have won it. His illustrations have been shown all over the world and his books have been published in even 15 languages.

› <https://www.instagram.com/ilustradorrogermello/?hl=es/>

- **DE VOZ EN VOZ** Recommendations

ECUADOR



PUBLISHING HOUSE

Elé! is an Ecuadorian publishing house that produces books, magazines, games, videos, among others, aimed at boys and girls from 5 to 12 years of age. The editorial team focuses on respecting children's rights, promoting their voice, valuing their tastes, stimulating their wittiness with high-quality publications and audiovisual and digital products.

› <https://ele.com.ec/>

BRAZIL



BOOK STORE

The Saraiva Bookstore in Rio de Janeiro is a space where books and new media share the shelves. It is conceived as a hybrid space that is both a public square and a giant public library. Books and objects are distributed on four floors. There are several multimedia spaces in the basement, a cafeteria, an auditorium, and a children's room. Outstanding authors such as Ana María Machado, Lygia Bojunga, Marina Colasanti and illustrators such as Roger Mello, Angela Lago and Roberto Moriconi have participated in its activities.

› <https://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/734259/libreria-saraiva-studio-arthur-casas>

ARGENTINA



PROGRAMME

In the year 2001 the Foundation Mempo Giardinelli created the program *Abuelas Cuentacuentos* [Storytelling Grandmothers] with the intention of transmitting the interest of reading and the love for books. This initiative wants to reproduce that exact moment of beauty and intimacy experienced by grandparents and their grandchildren when they read together. It is currently known as the Programa de abuelas y abuelos leecuentos [Story-readers Grandmothers and Grandfathers Program] and the Ministry of Education of the Nation is in charge of it.

› <http://www.fundamgiardinelli.org/abuelascuentacuentos/programa.html>

MEXICO



ILUSTRATOR

Cuauhtémoc Wetzka is a Mexican illustrator who has exhibited in Argentina, Spain, the United States and China. He obtained first prize in the XXV Catalog of Illustrators of Children's and Youth Publications of the General Directorate of Publications of CONACULTA. He illustrated Ave Barrera's *Rolando, el colibrí* [Rolando, the Hummingbird].

› <https://www.behance.net/wetzka>

COSTA RICA



LIBRARY

The Miriam Álvarez Brenes Children's Library (BIMAB) was created in 1994 and is the first library in Costa Rica specialized in providing literary spaces, resources and activities to boys and girls. BIMAB is attached to the School of Librarianship, Documentation and Information of the National University of Costa Rica. This connection allows more robust research in children's and youth literature and promotes outreach and teaching activities with an interdisciplinary focus.

› <https://www.trencito.una.ac.cr/index.php>

PERÚ



ILUSTRATOR

Issa Watanabe studied Literature, Fine Arts and Illustration. She has developed projects to promote social integration through art. Among her publications stands out *¡Más vale, mastodonte! [You Better, Mastodon!,]* a work written by Peruvian author Micaela Chirif and winner of the A la Orilla del Viento award for Best Illustrated Album. Issa Watanabe is internationally recognized for *Migrantes [Migrants,]* a silent picture book edited by Libros del Zorro Rojo.

› Instagram: @issawatanabe

COLOMBIA



BOOK STORE

Nido de Libros is an independent Colombian bookstore specialized in literature for children and young people. They offer a broad catalogue of books, privileging illustrated editions in Spanish and English. They also provide library services, BiblioNido, where users can take home books for loan.

› nidodelibros.com/

CUBA



Editorial Gente Nueva

PUBLISHING HOUSE

Editorial Gente Nueva was founded in 1967 and is among the publishing houses with the longer trajectory in Cuba, with twenty collections of books aimed at children and adolescents. In line with its cultural and critical dissemination purposes, Gente Nueva founded the Golden Age Award in 1972; in 1985, the Magazine In July as in January, with the support of the Cuban IBBY Committee; and since 2000, coordinates the Children's Pavilion Tesoro de Papel, of the International Book Fair of Havana.

› <http://www.gentenueva.cult.cu/>

PERÚ



LIBRARY

The San Isidro Children's Library is a space for children up to 11 years of age to enjoy in a warm environment, with a variety of bibliographic resources simply organized to facilitate the encounter of books and readers. It has home book loans, print and digital collections, workshops, programs and services for children.

› <http://msi.gob.pe/portal/cultura/biblioteca-infantil/>

MEXICO



LIBRARY

Bunko Roma Condesa is a small community library for girls, boys and young people to enjoy art and activities around the written word. Its objective is to bring books and literature to vulnerable communities that have limited access to them.

› Instagram: @bunkoroma

Twitter: @BunkoRomaC

EL SALVADOR



PUBLISHING HOUSE

Barrilete is a publisher of Salvadoran children's and youth literature, which aims to promote creativity, the development of thought, and quality reading. Its mission is to bring reading visually and topically to all girls and boys in the country. It also seeks to strengthen reading promotion through various activities, such as workshops and book fairs, among others. Several young illustrators make up the publishing team.

› <https://literaturaelsalvador.com/>

GUATEMALA



ILLUSTRATOR

Jazmín Elena Villagrán is a Guatemalan illustrator, specialised in children's books. A Graphic Design graduate from Instituto Superior de Diseño [Superior Institute of Design] (ISDI), Cuba. She has been included in the *Diccionario de Ilustradores Iberoamericanos* [Ibero-American Illustrators Dictionary] (SM, 2013); in the 25th Catalogue Bienále Ilustracií Bratislava (2015), which commemorates BIB's 50th anniversary; and the Catálogo Iberoamérica Ilustra [Ibero-America Illustrates Catalogue,] 10th edition (SM, 2019). In 2017 she published her book as a integral author *¿Qué está pasando allá arriba?* [What is Happening Up There?], under the seal of Ekaré publishers.

› https://www.behance.net/Jazmin_Villagran

COLOMBIA



PUBLISHING HOUSE

Lua books is a Colombian transmedia publisher specialised in children's and youth literature. It was founded in 2011 to offer books of literary and graphic quality that could meet the expectations of current readers. Its catalogue provides books in different animated, narrated or musicalised formats that combine new technologies with reading.

› <https://www.luabooks.com/>

DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC



LIBRARY

The Dominican Republic Children's and Youth Library (BIJRD) was founded in 2009 in Santo Domingo. It offers reading clubs aimed at 1 to 12-year-old boys and girls and 12 to 18-year-old adolescents year-round. The programme also seeks to promote the participation of families within a cultural and technological environment.

› <https://bijrd.gob.do/>

CHILE



LIBRARY

Pez Volador Libros opened its physical space in Coronel, Bío Bío region, becoming the first bookstore for children and young people in this city. Among illustrated books and children's and youth literature, Camila Mellado, its founder, has carefully selected each book since the store focuses on gender, diversity, environment, and human rights.

› <https://www.instagram.com/pezvoladorlibros/>

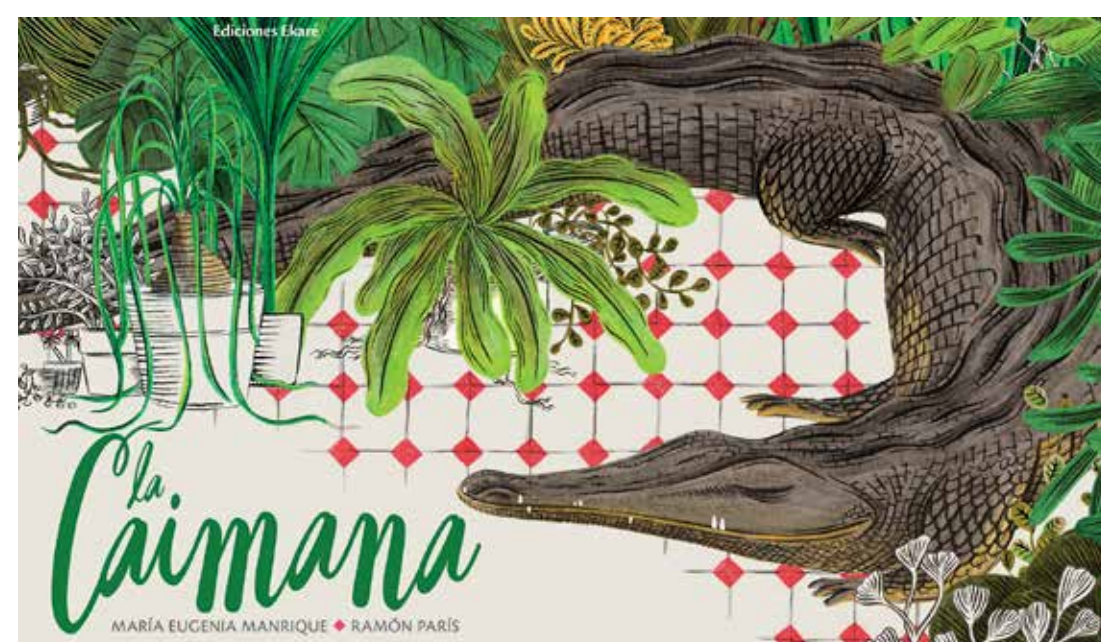
VENEZUELA



AUTHOR

Mayi Eloísa Martínez is a Venezuelan writer (27 years old). She won the Colibrí Medal award in 2020 in the Children Fiction category of IBBY Chile, for her novel *Apartamento 11* [*Apartment 11*] (Barco de Vapor SM publishers). This book tells the story of a boy and his sister during a social conflict situation. The author declares that what was told does not happen in Venezuela, but it does represent what she and her family, as well as many Venezuelans, went through. She now lives in Chile, while she works on her new book.

› <https://mayielo.com/>



BOOK

La Caimana. [The Female Alligator] 2019.

María Eugenia Manrique. Illustrated by Ramón París. Ekaré publishing house.

The day Faoro found that baby alligator that could fit in his hand, he caressed it softly and, without even thinking about it, he put it in his shirt pocket. Since its skin was somehow dark, he named it Black. This is how this story starts, which is one of great friendship, based on real events, and that it is still remembered until today on the shore of the river Apure. This book was awarded with the White Ravens award in 2019; the Fundación Cuatrogatos 2020 award; Editorial success runner up, the Best of the Book Bank in 2020; and IBBY's Honour List in 2020.

› <https://www.ekare.com/ekare/la-caimana/>



PUBLISHING HOUSE

La Jirafa y yo [The Giraffe and I] is a Costa Rican publishing house linked to the San Pablo de Heredia European School. Its main objective is to create attractive and quality books that enhance the culture and costOms of the country, as well as provide tools for the teaching and learning of reading. Its publications are aimed at boys, girls and young people, as well as teachers. The books are developed collaboratively between writers, teachers, illustrators, and editors.

› <https://www.lajirafayyo.com/>



A DOS PLUMAS

Conversation with Carola Martínez, author and book manager

By the V&T Editorial Committee

“There is an incredible strength in the infancies, I am writing to these strong and brave beings.”





The ample knowledge of the book and reading ecosystem held by Carola Martínez -writer, publisher, librarian and readers' trainer- is displayed in this conversation, to nurture our understanding of childhood and to open up to the region's challenges and opportunities.

Carola Martínez Arroyo runs the web page *Donde viven los libros* [Where the Books Are], winner of the Pregonero award in 2021 for Digital Publication and the library of the same name, specialised in literature for children and youth. Her first novel, *Matilde*, was published in 2016 and it is part of the catalogue White Ravens of 2017, she also received the award *Hormiguita Viajera* [Traveller Little Ant] in 2018 for Best Novel, and the Medalla Colibrí [Hummingbird medal] (IBBY Chile) in 2019. Her second novel *Nunca Jamás* [Never ever] (2019) is also part of the White Ravens catalogue. She is working in the creation of reading and writing public policies directing the Reading Plan of Buenos Aires city.

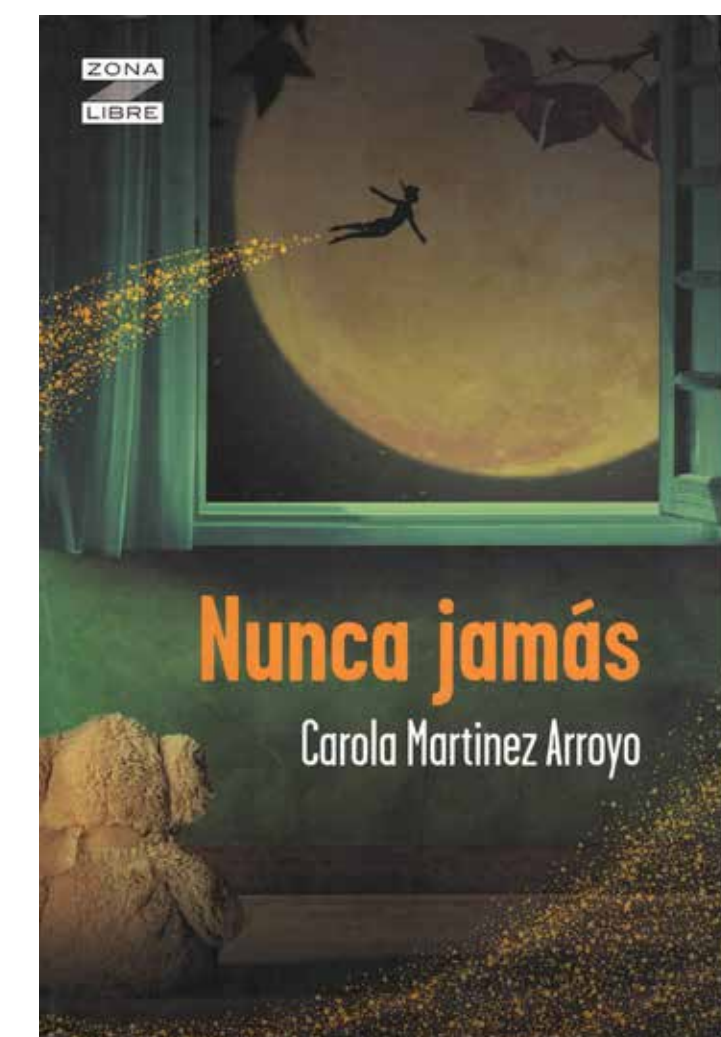
Tell us about your experience as an editor, a writer and a reading advocate. Which one of these roles is the most comfortable for you and which one is the most unsettling?

I have spent many years editing and working to train readers. From my work on my web page *Donde viven los libros* [Where the Books Are], the online bookshop with a showroom, the workshops I facilitate, up to my job in public policies about reading on the Reading Plan in Buenos Aires city. I have been writing for a long time as well, but not so much time showing and publishing what I do.

I have two novels I love: *Matilde*, which won a Colibrí Medal award and I am so proud of, and *Nunca Jamás* [Never Ever], a novel that came out in 2019 and that has been meeting the readers in the midst of the pandemic. I had the honor that both of them were chosen for the White Ravens catalogue. I dedicate my whole life to this, all day, every day. The truth is that it gives me a lot of joy.



MATILDE
Carola Martínez Arroyo
Norma
2020



NUNCA JAMÁS
Carola Martínez Arroyo
Norma
2019

I love that you use the word unsettle to think about the roles. The truth is that in the three roles I feel very comfortable, or better said, I used to feel like that. I must say I used to feel this way because the pandemic changed everything. And not only because I had to stay in the house for months without going out, but because I think everything changed and also the way I wrote and thought about children's books. In this sense, my role of mentor of readers or promoter of reading, however we want to call it, is very unsettling.

The world has shifted. Children have experienced dozens of losses. Many are living traumatic, stressful or painful situations nowadays. Can I keep on facilitating books in the same way? I don't know what will be the new way of doing it, but I do know that what I was doing until February 2020 I can no longer do. So yes, I am unsettled in that role.

The same about writing, I don't want to be labeled with only one type of novels, one type of books, so I am experimenting. But now I am thinking, maybe I like it, to be unsettled, because it forces me to get out of my comfort zone, it forces me to be alert. I don't want comfort, that these things I love doing become a sofa to rest on. On the contrary, I want them to be a zit on the tip of the nose that no makeup can cover, well, now with the masks you can cover them... maybe like a zit on the centre of the forehead.

That is what I think, I don't want comfort. For comfort, a sofa.

“There is an incredible strength in the infancies, I am writing to these strong and brave beings.”

How would you describe the infancy represented in your work? Who are you writing to? How do you imagine those readers?

I think I talk to my 12-year-old self, to a young Carola. I wonder what I would have wanted to read. My ideal reader is a boy or a girl who understands, who sees, who knows, who searches.

I think I try to represent real boys and girls, who live in real houses with real adults who have problems, who make mistakes, who die, suffer and laugh.

Infancy and adolescence are stages in life that are so complex, so lonely; the boys and the girls are such brave beings, they are able to cope with everything. We become more cowardly, too careful with what we do or say, as time passes. But when we are young we are pure strength. Our teeth fall and nothing, nothing is wrong, we don't complain. There is an incredible strength in the infancies, I am writing to these strong and brave beings.

We can see that you now have many roles within the book and reading ecosystem, not only in Argentina but in all Latin America. Do you think there is a book ecosystem for children and youth in the region? What opportunities do you see in this relationship or which ones do you think we are missing?

There is one, of course there is one. Now it has a wound that it is up to us to prevent it from being deadly, and we have to be sharp, smart, so this moment transforms itself in our favour. What do I see? I see that the publishers that work with textbooks saw their sales greatly diminished because of the pande-



Foto: Javiera Astorga

mic. Schools stopped asking for textbooks and many of them also stopped asking for literature books. And this deeply affected an important part of the market. But it doesn't have to be deadly for the ecosystem. It is necessary to adapt ourselves, to think about other ways to do business, in a transformation of the market, of the segment, of the way books reach children. I think it is a perfect moment to bet on bookshops, on bookshops that have bookkeepers that know, that read, that study, and bet on them.

We are in a one of a kind moment, it is no longer possible to keep doing things as usual. There are many opportunities in this sense: digital narratives, audiobooks, among others. But on the other hand, we also need to think about everything that will be happening in the region, the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic, jobs lost, impoverished populations. We have to think about the libraries as one of the most important agents, to strongly bet on libraries. To demand from every government a big investment in books for children's libraries, so the field gets even.

We are missing also, only because of a school-selling vision of publishers, the in person visits of authors, the circulation of foreign books. We are missing authors that would make children so happy with their books only because the publishers think that one title will not circulate well in their market. It becomes a vicious circle, because they are not known, they are not considered, and so on and so forth.

We have a big task ahead of us. In this sense, this magazine for example, could be an excellent window to make new authors known and make them circulate.

Within this ecosystem, who do you think needs more attention to enhance their work?

I think the attention should be focused on trainers, facilitators, and mediators. In rethinking their work, offering training, updates, work with skills that allow teachers to choose without fearing, because we can't just turn a blind eye to the fact that most of the decisions they make are based on what the fathers, the mothers or the guardians would say: what are they going to think, what are they going to find in that book to complain about. And that narrows your choice, it forces you to choose a "clean" literature. If we work on giving them tools, that could be reversed. And as we are reversing it, authors are going to dare as well. It is terrible how self-censor operates when writing. I unhear it a lot, but it is there.

I would also work especially with librarians when they are studying. They are going to be (and they were during the whole pandemic) one of the agents that will help us sort what is coming. We must work in their literary training, and train them as children's books' specialists.

"The production is broad and very interesting. We are the spotlight of renovation, novelties are going to be made in the margins and we are the margin."

What is your opinion about the current production of children's and youth's literature in Latin America and the Caribbean? What authors, illustrators, and/or publishers have been your main referents?

The production is broad and very interesting. We are the spotlight of renovation, novelties are going to be made in the margins and we are the margin. All authors, myself included, keep on experimenting, looking for new things to write about, observing what is happening in our countries and writing about it. It would be so beautiful if we could access the current production of children's and youth's literature, creating bonds among countries so it can come and go. And with this, the pandemic has been good - crazy to say that -, it has allowed us to participate in online congresses, meetings, talks, and to get to know creators from all Latin America.

When writing, I have models, friends who I read and I say: I would love to write like them, because there are books that I would have liked to have written myself. *Space Invaders* written by Nona Fernandez, for example; Antonio Malpica and his book *Los mil años de Pepe Corcueña* [*The Thousand Years of Pepe Corcueña*]; Gato Quezadas and *3934*; Ana Romero with *Los rojos camaradas* [*The Red Comrades*]; María Fernanda Heredia and *La lluvia no sabe por qué* [*The Rain Doesn't Know Why*]; Ema Wolf and *La casa bajo el teclado* [*The House Under The Keyboard*]; Sandra Siemens and *Lucía no tardes* [*Lucía Don't Be Late*]; *Los agujeros negros* [*The Black Holes*] of Yolanda Reyes; Martín Blasco and *La Oscuridad de los colores* [*The Darkness of the Colours*]; or *Una muchacha muy bella* [*A Very Beautiful Girl*] by Julián López; and I would have loved to be Antonio Santa Ana and to write *Los ojos del perro siberiano*



Foto: Javiera Astorga

[*The Eyes of the Siberian Dog*] when he got the idea of writing it. I am forgetting many, but now that I am listing them I realize that all of them are very daring books, where you can see the work, and the view of the infancies.

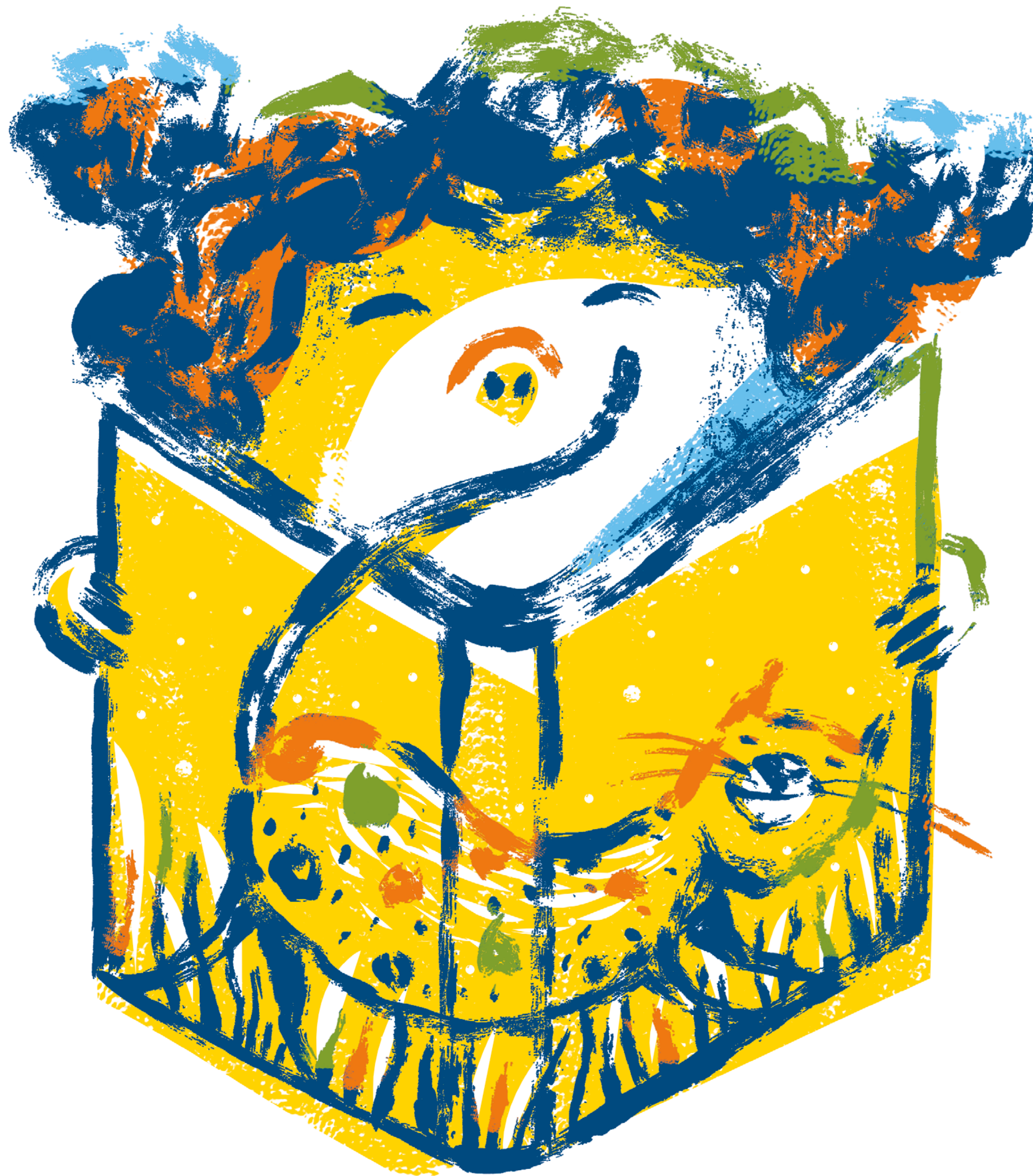
What are you reading now?

I am reading a lot of poetry and also writing hand in hand with a beautiful poet, Laura Forchetti. And I'm reading theory for a project. Literature, I read what comes to the library. The production of this year, except for a few cases, has been books the publishers bet will sell in school. I don't like it too much, but I am reading from publishers that publish for a non-school public. I read an amazing book that teenagers would love if they could access it. It is called *El verano que mi madre tuvo los ojos verdes* [*The Summer My Mother Had Green Eyes*], by Tatiana Tibleac, and another one, *Panza de burro* [*Donkey's Tummy*], by Andrea Abreu.

I read in a very disorganised way, and now it's worse.

What future projects do you have in mind?

In every hat I wear I have many projects. We are trying to edit a theory books collection with the library, and to continue with the reading meetings. And as for my writing, during the pandemic I finished a novel that I really liked and I presented it to a publisher. I am rechecking one and starting a new one, and looking for an illustrator for an album book. I also have a class in Domestika called *Writing novels for youth*. A project that I really liked facing and that allowed me to stop thinking that everything was falling apart. **V&T**



Interview

A DOS PLUMAS

**Interview with Natalia Miranda
and Fabio Costa, independent
librarians**

By the V&T Editorial Committee

**“Children’s and young
people’s literature was
transformed, and therefore,
it modified bookstores and
their ways of exhibiting
books.”**

Natalia Miranda



For this book and reading ecosystem issue, we interviewed Natalia Miranda (NM), director of the Libros del Arrabal Bookstore in Argentina, and Fabio Costa (FC), founding partner of BrosLibrerías in Chile. Both are members of the Latin American Independent Bookstore Network (RELLI). Here, they tell us about their experiences in the field and what it means to be a bookseller in Latin America.



What does it mean to be an independent bookseller in Latin America? And what do you consider to be the main challenges facing the sector?

Natalia Miranda (NM): Being a bookseller in Latin America is a great challenge. It seems that we are in a moment in which the digital takes over the analogue. There we are, the booksellers, resisting.

In the context of the pandemic, one of the main challenges is to promote reading and sustain sales by learning new ways of marketing. Another significant challenge is communication. Booksellers communicate directly with readers: we recommend, show, talk and suggest. The pandemic forced us to communicate digitally via emails or social networks.

In this sense, I consider it essential to speak to those who dream of becoming booksellers and convey to them that our work is somewhat complex. You have to read, manage, order, advise, plan the space, listen to the readers. However, despite the difficulties, it is a job full of satisfaction, for books are a great refuge.

Fabio Costa (FC): I like to see an independent bookseller as a highly challenging and relevant profession because, without significant resources –and facing more difficulties than ease, but full of passion and conviction–, they work for disseminating culture, generating networks, facilitating access to books, and bringing readings closer to the people.

Being a bookseller makes me feel very proud, and I recognise this pride in many of my colleagues. Now that we have bonded within the Association of Interdependent Libraries of Chile (LINC), I rea-

lise that we all share mutual support and the common feeling and passion for carrying out something much more cultural than commercial.

The main challenges we are currently facing are adapting to the current times, especially regarding the solid digital breakthrough in the last two years and how to stay competitive and relevant in our role. We are concerned with not losing space against large retails or online corporations (such as Amazon) and continue promoting our libraries as spaces for culture, debate, community creation, and recreation.

Bookstores mean many things to different readers. How do you as a bookseller relate to your readers?

FC: The relationship between the bookstore and the readers is probably one of the most important in our work. Bookstores create the most significant value around this relationship because books can be found in many places, but readers choose one to buy them. This preference results from the relationships built through contact and getting to know each other, as it is to understand what the reader/client is looking for. This value is generated in the library through the “real” experience, and no algorithm can achieve it, at least not yet.

We interact with readers on a human level through an experience that starts with the bookstore’s architecture and design and continues with our service and communication with the community.

“This preference [the book store], results from the relationships built through contact and getting to know each other,[...]”

Fabio Costa

How did the idea of joining through RELLI originate? What unites and summons all members? What countries make up this network?

NM: The idea arises from addressing the problems that bookstores and booksellers face in our countries. RELLI is a space for reflection on bookstore practice. We talk a lot about the role of booksellers, how we disseminate and improve this craft. We are summoned by our love for what we do and by knowing that we can work together.

RELLI is made up by people from Colombia, Mexico, Chile and Argentina and its main objectives are:

- To participate in and influence public policies on books and reading.
- To promote the participation of bookstore networks in each country’s cultural policies.
- To invite booksellers to participate and contribute to the public policies of their countries for reading promotion and respect the plurality of voices throughout the continent.
- To strengthen the role and importance of the bookstore in the book ecosystem.
- To promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge among our countries to strengthen and sustain biodiversity.

- To insist on the need to create alliances between bookstores, associations of bookstores, independent publishers, authors, other actors in the book chain, academia and other professionals.
- To highlight and value the role that bookstores have in their communities.
- To professionalise bookstore activity, valuing the book-selling trade in cultural management and its contribution to reading promotion.
- To disseminate and give visibility to the actions carried out in the bookstore.
- To disseminate our actions and publish catalogues that inspire and respect bibliodiversity.
- To bet on joint work to solve common problems throughout the continent.
- To support the initiatives of each network in particular.

We extend the invitation to other countries in the region.

What have been the main difficulties and opportunities since the network was created?

FC: The greatest difficulties have to do with logistical issues, time and resources, since both at the local and Latin American level, any association's initiative is propelled by people who fully dedicate themselves to their bookstore's administration. At the moment, there are no resources to hire people to manage our associations. Nevertheless, thanks to the normalisation of virtual meetings since the pandemic, we have made some progress by getting together from Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico.

Despite the obstacles, we have organised talks and met regularly to dream and plan together. Something that a little more than a year ago we would have never imagined.

What space do books and readings for children and youth occupy in independent bookstores?

NM: It is crucial to value reading for children and youth as a serious matter. It is so serious that there are specialised children's bookstores today, something unthinkable a few years ago. Nowadays, children's and youth's sections occupy a central place in almost all bookstores. We can say that children's and young people's literature was transformed, and therefore, it modified bookstores and their ways of exhibiting books. It also demanded booksellers to know more about the subject.

In Libros del Arrabal, both sections have grown. We celebrate children's and young people's literature not only because of the sales but also because of the satisfaction of seeing children interested in books. It is lovely to see readers grow, looking for new authors and allow us to propose titles to them. Children and young people read all the time and even produce texts in various formats. The book is a medium, but a especial one that exerts the magic of disconnecting them from the screen.

“...I believe that printed books and bookstores will not die, but they will continue to evolve and reinvent themselves to continue with their purpose.”

Fabio Costa

Where do you think the future of books and bookstores is heading?

I think that the future of bookstores at this time is uncertain. It is experiencing a process of adaptation as a result of the tremendous impact that the pandemic had concerning what makes us unique: serving the public, opening the doors to people, share our spaces, give access to the book, let people touch them, look at them, smell them.

Contrarily, the pandemic has given a massive boost to the digital world, which is not necessarily adverse to me but rather something we must learn to accept. Taking advantage of the digital and making it part of our reality is the only way forward.

I believe that printed books and bookstores will not die, but they will continue to evolve and reinvent themselves to continue with their purpose. The small neighbourhood bookstores are becoming stronger every day. Today people value the bookstore rather as a personal space than as something big, massive and cold (such as the internet). But I would not rule out that large bookstores can take up again tomorrow or bookstores that share space with other types of social and cultural activities.

I am convinced that the printed book will continue to be strong, that other formats will grow, and although the interaction may change, with some channels increasing and others decreasing, the bookstore will continue to find a way to remain relevant in the cultural world. **V&T**



Round Table

CÍRCULO DE VOCES

Children talk about books and reading

Listen to audios [here](#)

Children reply...

Alejandro Morales, 14 years old
Cuba

From all of those books, there is one I was given as a present, and it is the one I have liked the most: **La vuelta al mundo en 80 días [Around the World in 80 days]**. That was the first book I read by myself. I loved it a lot, the adventures were very crazy. I always liked **Chamaquili**, a Cuban book. The creator of *Chamaquili* is Alexis Díaz Pimienta and all his adventures are told in verse.

Leonor Isabel Medina de los Salas, 7 years old
Chile

I like books and I like to read and read. It is good to read, have fun and like what you read, and also be in a comfortable place to look at them.

Roque Rivero Dulcic, 5 years old
Chile

I prefer that you read me stories, because with your help I learned to read. I like books because they tell good stories. I like a lot **La tortilla corredora [The Running Omelette]**, by Laura Herrera and Scarlet Narciso, because it is a running omelette and I like omelette.

Tomás Orellana Fuentes, 8 years old
Chile

I like to watch TV and sometimes play with legos and plasticine. I don't like books so much, only at night when they read me stories. I have one about **Los Compas**, a group of Youtubers, that one is my favorite, even though I haven't read it.

Children reply...

Joaquín Díaz Jardón, 7 years old
Argentina

My name is Joti, what I like the most about books are problematic situations. I would choose **Escuela de monstruos [Monsters' School]**, by El Bruno, **Petit, el monstruo [Petit, the Monster]**, by Isol, and **No somos angelitos [We Are Not Angels]**, by Gusti.

Gabriel Pérez, 10 years old
Venezuela

I like books because they always take you to a fantasy adventure. I recommend **Ratón y vampiro [Mouse and Vampire]**, by Yolanda Pantin and Jefferson Quintana, because it is one of the best books I have ever read. I like very much dinosaur books. I am happy to finally have told someone about my tastes.

Gabriela Sindeaux, 9 years old
Brasil

I like [reading] a lot, mainly a book that is **Diario de una muchacha impopular [Diary of An Unpopular Girl]**. Each book tells a different story, it tells a story about a girl when she was younger and I really like that experience.

María Paz Triana Pérez, 7 years old
Colombia

I like books very much because I can share them with everyone and I can have fun. The stories I like the most are about Geraldo and **Cerdita [Elephant & Piggie]**, by Mo Willems, and **Willy [Willy the Wimp]**, by Anthony Browne.

Fátima Mariana González Cendeja, 8 years old
Mexico

What I like the most about books is that there are many characters and many costumes.

Mariana del Águila, 11 years old
Perú

Hello. My name is Mariana. When I was 5 years old, my mom took me to a bookshop and that moment was amazing.

Mirca Solanch Flores Sales, 11 years old
Perú

I would be the character of Paco Fariña [from **Los gallinazos sin plumas**, by Julio Ramón Ribeyro] a very brave boy that doesn't like other to be mistreated.

María-Angela Hernández Ferrada, 9 years old
Costa Rica

I like books because they transport you to many stories, fables and characters. I identify myself with the character of the seed, because it grows, and I am also growing.

Melanie Gómez Claudio, 9 years old
Costa Rica

I like to read and I like books. I like books because they take me to magic worlds. I recommend the book **The Little Prince** [by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry], because it is beautiful.

Santiago Lorenzo, 13 years old
Uruguay

If I could be a character I would be **The Little Prince**, because of all the adventures he lives.

Children reply...

Manuela Villarreal Páez, 10 years old
Ecuador

I love books, because when you read a book you can get into different worlds and in realities you didn't know before. The first book I remember having read, it was with my dad, it is called **Las crónicas de Spiderwick [The Spiderwick Chronicles]**, by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black].

Matías Pangol, 10 years old
Ecuador

I like books because they open a giant to the world of magic for you, of the characters. If could be one of them [a character], I would be all characters in one.

Matías Díaz Jardón, 12 years old
Argentina

I like books because you can go to a substitute universe with them. What I like the most is that you can read whatever you want in them.

Children reply...

Eva Anselmi, 10 years old
Venezuela

I recommend **Olivia**, the first one [by Ian Falconer]. I usually don't find many characters in books that fit my personality, introvert. I would like to find adventure, maybe some action, a bit of magic and sorcery, history, and maybe mystery, in a book.

Renata Marte, 9 years old
Dominican Republic

To active and playful children that like to go out to play, I recommend the books by **David Walliams** because they are very funny.

Valentina Sánchez López, 9 years old
Guatemala

I like books because they free my mind, they are a way of having fun without devices. I remember having read **¡Qué dientes! [What teeth!]**, by Agustín García and Mariví Frías] and **¡Qué patas! [What legs!]**, by Rafael Rodríguez Calcaño and Mariví Frías.



ECOS DE TERRENO

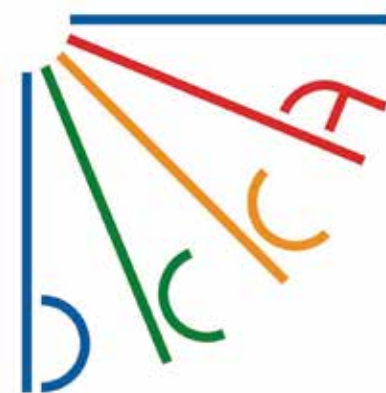
Reading, books, bookstores, blogs, cultural centres, publishing offices, libraries

BRAZIL

BIBLIOTECA COMUNITARIA CASA AZUL

The Casa Azul Community Library has been in operation since 2005. Based in Ilha das Cobras, a highly vulnerable neighbourhood in the municipality of Paraty, the library carries out educational, artistic and literary activities throughout the year. Casa Azul is anchored in a network with other community libraries, which aims at expanding the exchange with the different communities of the region.

› <https://www.flip.org.br/verbete/biblioteca-comunitaria-casa-azul/>



CUBA

CUENTOS PARA FEDERICO

Cuentos para Federico is a radio program broadcasted by Radio Progreso from Monday to Friday, created by Maikel Chávez García, from Caibarién, in Santiago de Cuba. The space is dedicated to a tiny mouse named Federico Maldemar, who weaves both classic and Cuban stories. Narrated with Maikel Chávez's grace and charisma, it knocks on children's doors to allow them to dream amid the health crisis.

› <https://www.facebook.com/cuentosparafederico>



HAITI

BIBLIOTAPTAP: MOBILE LIBRARIES IN SEARCH OF READERS

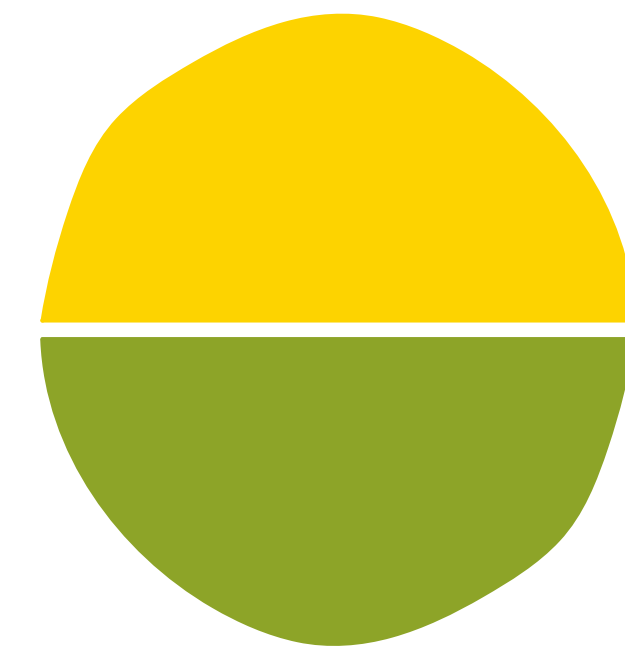
These mobile libraries take books to different corners of the country, especially vulnerable areas where it is more challenging to access books and readings.

Thanks to the joint work of institutions such as FOKAL (Foundation for Knowledge and Liberty), Bibliothèques sans Frontières and the National Directorate of Books of Haiti, these mobile libraries, managed by the same community, reaffirm reading as a right and not as a privilege.

The pillars of this project are reading promotion and bringing the written culture closer to the people. These mobile libraries are also a support to the schools. In 2016, three of these mobiles were in operation, painted with lively colours and wrapped with letters and words, seeking those who can give life to books through reading. You can learn more about this initiative at:

› <https://www.fokal.org/index.php/houvel-fokal/31-nos-programmes/655-bibliotaptap-une-bibliotheque-qui-va-a-la-rencontre-de-ses-lecteurs>





GUATEMALA

TINTA Y COLIBRÍ

This initiative was created by Guatemalan storytellers Mariela Estrada and Edgar Molina from Compañía Cuentos y Talentos in June 2017, in the department of Sacatepéquez, in the beautiful colonial city of Antigua Guatemala. It arose with the desire to promote reading in children and young people differently from a traditional book fair. They called this festival Tinta y Colibrí, inspired by the ink in books and the beautiful hummingbird that, according to Mayan mythology, is the one in charge of carrying our dreams and thoughts from one place to another.

The festival originated from the need to create outdoor public spaces to promote art around children's literature and reading. This space provides experiences that come out of the conventional didactic structure. Free creative writing, illustration, bookbinding, and storytelling workshops are held and run by volunteers for a full day. Children's books are selected for sale, and publishers and artists are invited to present their products at a flea market.

The festival has had an uninterrupted frequency since its foundation, every 3 or 6 months, mainly in Antigua Guatemala (but not exclusively), because it works with the municipalities where the public spaces are located. The audience includes diverse communities and families, and the festivals' reach has benefi-

ted communities in Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala City (capital) and Santiago Atitlán in the department of Sololá, a Tz'utujil community on the shores of a beautiful lake.

The contribution of this initiative is to strengthen social and cultural capital through art. Many families and artists have expressed the positive impact Tinta y Colibrí has had on their lives. The project that began as a storytelling festival has now also become an itinerant and virtual children's bookstore and a library for those who require it. They aim to have a fixed space in Antigua Guatemala, for permanent training workshops and a publishing house for children's books.

› <https://www.instagram.com/tintaycolibri/?hl=en>



URUGUAY

READING PROMOTION PROJECT WITH FREEDOM-DEPRIVED MOTHERS: “READING WITH MOM: LITERATURE AS A POSSIBLE LIFE EXPERIENCE.”

In March 2014, IBBY Uruguay, together with the Information Institute (FIC, Universidad de la República), implemented the reading promotion project Read Together with children of the INAU's (Institute for Children and Adolescents of Uruguay) Children's Center “Pájaros Pintados”.

This initiative aimed to enrich children's cognitive and emotional experiences through books and reading as a means for social inclusion. Librarians and specialised mediators from IBBY Uruguay and the Universidad de la República guided the project. In concrete, the children attended fortnightly the Library of the Faculty of Information and Communication, where they participated in different reading activities. Since 2018 the project was transferred to the CAPI “Maino'i” Centre, also from INAU.

In 2019 IBBY Uruguay proposed a two-year cycle of workshops on reading promotion aimed at freedom-deprived mothers who live with their babies and toddlers in Unit 9 of the National Rehabilitation Institute (INR). These children attend the CAPI “Maino'i” Centre of the INAU from Monday to Friday, where IBBY Uruguay implements, together with the University, another reading promotion project financed by the IBBY Netherlands National Section.

The Reading with mom workshops was created with the conviction that, by making mothers aware of the importance of

reading and telling stories to their young children, a better relationship is possible. The project promoters also believe that reading properly selected children's books impacts strengthening this emotional attachment. Additionally, the initiative seeks to encourage future reading habits in mothers and their children.

The action plan began with workshops with mothers but had to be suspended due to the pandemic. It is expected to resume it when sanitary control is achieved.



REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

BIBLIOTECA INFANTIL Y JUVENIL DE REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA [CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH'S LIBRARY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC]

My Space Room
Ink Heart Reading Club

The Ink Heart Reading Club is a free activity in which a group of 13 to 18 year-olds share their love for literature. This initiative arises from the Children's and Youth Library of the Dominican Republic and invites adolescents to awaken their curiosity and interest in a range of literary expressions.

How does the Reading Club work? There is no reading aloud during the meetings, it is not necessary to intervene in the reading debates, and participants can attend the meetings even if they did not finish the book. Also, readers do not need to purchase the book, as they can find it in the library room. The Reading Club is an activity free of charge, and the library can carry out complementary activities simultaneously.



ROGER YCAZA

VOZ PROPIA

Opinion column

Questions to the Heart

By Vivian Lavín Almazán



Vivian Lavín Almazán is a journalist, writer, editor and literary agent with extensive experience in the field of culture. She has published a book of interviews with authors and a book on human rights. She is also the co-author of the botanic book *Viaje Natural*. She has been recognized by the Society of Writers of Chile (2005), The Chilean Chamber of the Book (2009), and received the Award for Journalistic Excellence (2009), the N'Aitun Award, (2015) and the Chilean Academy of Language Award (2017).

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“Why are the authors published in Peru not in Argentine bookstores or those from Mexico in Uruguayan or Chilean bookstores, if you in Latin America all speak the same language?”

The authors published in Peru not in Argentinian bookstores. The authors published in Mexico are not found in bookstores in Uruguay or Chile. Why is that so, considering that you all speak the same language in Latin America?

Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese editors, among others, have asked this question to me with multiple national variables. And I have had to answer it in varying degrees of depth, depending on the interlocutor, the time available, and this article's author's patience. Because my enthusiasm when speaking of the children's literature of our region, and the incredible talent of its authors and editors, dilutes in the face of a question that nails the heart. It reminds us that we do not read each other, that our books do not circulate as they should and that our national industries function more as isolated compartments than as a great ecosystem of books and reading in Latin America and the Caribbean. And that hurts.

Anyone who reads this opinion column in *Voces & Tintas*, a magazine that we salute and wish long life to, knows the answer to the initial question. The book and reading ecosystem in Latin America and the Caribbean has sensitive and critical knots that we must correct. I will therefore talk about the areas in which I have to work daily: journalism and the literary agency.

Radio journalism

Twenty years ago, the literary program *Vuelan las Plumas*, conducted by myself, was only broadcast through the frequency of Radio Universidad de Chile. Its auditors listened to it in their homes or cars only at the appointed time. New technologies have made it possible for auditors to be informed through their social media accounts, such as Instagram, Facebook or Twitter, and visit the website that contains the entire historical record.

This way, it is possible at any time to listen through their devices to what we used to call “recordings”, and today we know as “podcasts”. I apologize for this self-reference; it allows a quick explanation of the enormous technological change and the possibilities it offers.

Audio and video material, which grew explosively due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is an excellent opportunity for our region’s ecosystem of children’s and youth’s literature to produce quality content for diverse audiences.

What do we need? To produce, organize, and promote new and varied content, strategically and with a broad vision of our regional community for those who mediate, educate, consume, and enjoy these contents.

One of the consequences of this work, I am convinced, will be a larger book circulation when this varied and broad audience is informed and enthusiastic.

Literary agency

Again I speak from my experience: as a literary agent, I have been able to verify the obstacles that separate the national publishing industries of Latin America and the Caribbean and that are not precisely land distances. But, on the other hand, I see with great enthusiasm how certain milestones unite and summon them, such as book fairs and awards, as well as seminars and other specialized events, which are more limited and for specific audiences, though.

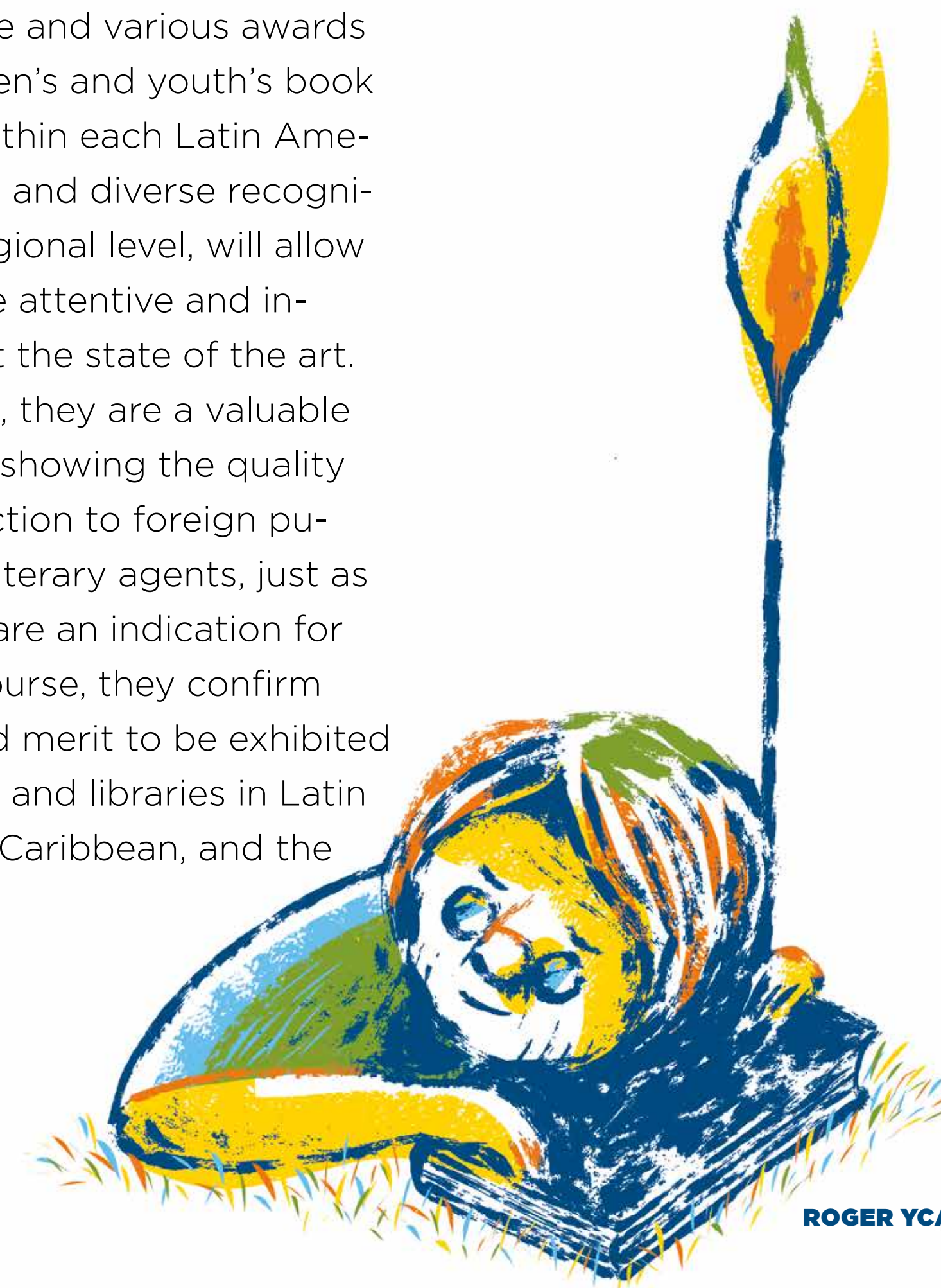
Book fairs will be reformulated in many ways after this pande-

mic. The virtual meeting through Zoom and the new platforms under development will become the primary way of interacting between actors in the book chain. Face to face encounters will happen whenever it is possible.

But the literary awards are, in my opinion, one of the most dynamic articulators of our ecosystem of books and reading: they are massive convenors, arouse great interest, are widely disseminated, deliver valuable information and produce important movements on a commercial level. The big problem is that they are scarce both within our countries and at the regional level.

Creating more and various awards for our children’s and youth’s book ecosystem within each Latin American country, and diverse recognition at the regional level, will allow us to be more attentive and informed about the state of the art. But, above all, they are a valuable reference for showing the quality of our production to foreign publishers and literary agents, just as their awards are an indication for us. And, of course, they confirm our talent and merit to be exhibited in bookstores and libraries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the world.

V&T

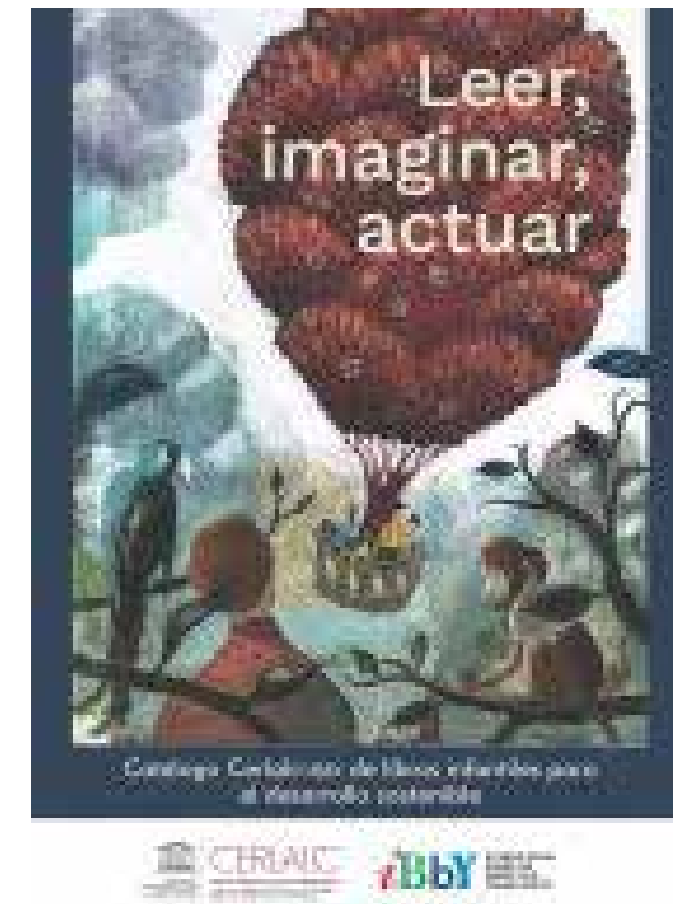


ROGER YCAZA



II CERLALC and IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean Catalogue

The Regional Centre for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLALC) and IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean will soon publish the II Catalogue of Children's Books for Sustainable Development. The catalogue includes a selection of fiction and non-fiction children's titles published in the past decade in the region, whose content is related to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 and 4 -Good Health and Wellbeing, and Quality Education. Both institutions believe that children's books have a central role in the formation of young readers with a curious, reflective and proactive attitude towards reality.



The catalogue aims to display the publishing quality and diversity of children's books in Latin America and the Caribbean, support teachers' and mediators' reading promotion tasks, contribute to the global goals on sustainable development, and educate critical readers with tools to interpret and transform the world.

The catalogue will be available on the CERLALC website very soon: [https:// CERLALC.org/publicaciones/](https://CERLALC.org/publicaciones/)

An answer to the libraries' and classrooms' silence

By Gaby Vallejo Canedo

IBBY Bolivia President

Thuruchapitas Library is a children's library dependent on IBBY Bolivia in which its participants are volunteer teachers. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the library had a totally creative reaction to the closing of schools, libraries and cultural centres and museums, places from where books were not going to move. This situation meant a prison to ideas, to words, to personal and group vibrations, that lasted and lasted, accompanied by the uncertainty of humanity of not knowing until when this prison called pandemic was going to last. Thus, the Thuruchapitas Library decided to pay for the virtual platform Zoom to communicate with writers, parents and teachers, about books and reading. As IBBY Bolivia has been working for years together with the International Reading Association, it included its members as promoters of the project and it was thus open to the citizens.

Initially, the most renowned Bolivian writers of children's and youth's literature were invited to be interviewed by the teachers and hosts of the library. This team became the platform's management group, because they did interviews and prepared presentations about the authors with biographical and bibliographic data and images that were shared via Zoom.

The sessions were growing in the number of participants, often reaching 100 people (the limit accepted by the platform). Some of the participants were students in teaching training institutes and their own teachers made up for the most permanent public of the sessions. Also the regular readers of the library, a group called Fuego Lector [*Fire Reader*,] were participating and they had a biennial newsletter that was made by them exclusively. The members of IBBY that reside in different cities in Bolivia were also included, coming from cities like La Paz, Oruro, and El Palmar. Also people that belong to book clubs and Bolivian authors that live in other countries joined, and unexpectedly the platform became international. Then, we decided to invite IBBY from other countries, the CERLALC (Regional Book Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, for its initials in Spanish) and the Latin American Reading Association.

The guest writers came always with a lot of enthusiasm to the sessions, because it was not only an opportunity to appear on the promoting flyers broadcasted through Facebook, Whatsapp, web pages and other social media. It represented an excellent opportunity to be heard, known and interviewed during the conversations.

In this context, someone got the idea to call the most important local newspaper in the city to agree on the mission to publish a weekly review about Bolivian childrens' and youth's books. Suddenly, the volunteer teachers became columnists and the writers saw themselves being commented, many for the first time, on a newspaper review. This is why it was recommended to the teachers to buy the newspaper every Friday to

create an album for the book reviews, both printed or the online posts from the same newspaper on their Facebook page. Another idea that was born was to invite writers of native languages of Bolivia, which has 3 predominant indigenous languages: Aimara, Quechua and Guarani. These writers surprised with different presentations of publications in indigenous languages such as poems, stories, riddles, idioms, compilation of folk tales, among others. These were broadcasted in various regions of the country. Even a child writer participated, whose book has been translated into Quechua and English.

The surprises have been many, always nice. Different generations of writers came, children's magazines responsables, creators of craft area books, city people, rural people, from the North and the South, from the Andes and the Orient, the famous and the unknown.

The final purpose of this management is to publish a book with the name of the Zoom sessions Los Nuestros, Literatura infantil-juvenil boliviana [The ours, Children's and Youth Bolivian literature], in which we will include the opinions, answers and comments made in every one of them. There have been 36 writers so far and the sessions are running for one more week. Meanwhile, we are in the process of talking to local publishers. It will be a book that will undoubtedly reach the students of teacher training institutes, the data searchers about children's and youth's Bolivian literature, teachers and parents. This publication will include the biography, writing process, anecdotes and reasons why these writers wrote children's and youth's books. It will also have some recommendations about books, both Bolivian and foreigners.

What started with the goal of stimulating the reading of Bolivian children's and youth's books, reached unthought achievements. Mission accomplished. Different tendencies of writing were also discovered: compilers of folk tales, thriller writers, magical, realistic, humoristic, others didactic, fantastic or science fiction.

It was proven by the participation of the attendants and through the same writers, that Bolivian authors are little read, and that universal classics have a strong presence, the same with didactic and moral tendencies books. Besides, we can conclude that the same authors read little of each other, that a strong state policy is needed, to include Bolivian authors in school syllabus and that there is no broadcasting policy, maybe because of a lack of pride in what is written in the country. The good thing is that many books are being written and published, and with excellent execution, a sign of good health. And that the pandemic, paradoxically, taught the visitors of the sessions to defend books and reading from the silence that threatens them.

Illuminating the voice IBBY Mexico and Fundación Ilumina [Illuminate Foundation]

The enjoyment of reading leads to personal, social and emotional development. To access knowledge and the sensibilities embodied in books is an act of democratic participation that is not accessible to all in the same way. To make this possible, we need promotion and mediation to bring the book closer through accompaniment, empowering dialogue, active listening and inclusion.

Derived from the above, the workshop Illuminating the voice was born, which will address in general terms the main tools for reading mediation for people with visual disabilities. Through the promotion and training of the adapted technology as a means for educational, work and social inclusion.

This workshop is directed to reading mediators and professionals, as well as any person with the interest to learn about reading promotion for people with visual disabilities. In the sessions, the topics addressed will be: out loud story telling, adapting literary resources, and possible exercises to enrich group sessions.

Illuminating the voice will be held from Monday to Friday, from the 27th of September until the 8th of October. It will be alternated between Moodle platform and Zoom sessions, Monday and Thursday from 5pm to 7pm (GTM-5).

For more information and registration, write to the following e-mail addresses:

pmoreno@ibbymexico.org.mx o a inclusión@ilumina.mx.



Anthology of the oral tradition from children of Latin America and the Caribbean IBBY LAC

By Hazel Hernández Astorga

Fundación Leer/IBBY Costa Rica Director



FLAVIO QUIROS

Venezuela

All throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, generations of female narrators, teachers, families and whole communities have transmitted an ample repertoire of oral tradition directed to early childhood. This way, a countless number of poems, circles, lullabies, stories, among others oral manifestations, keep children company on their first contact with the cultural legacy of the region. Not to mention that oral tradition is a key element to allow childhood to come closer to reading, constituting, thus, a fundamental aspect to childhood development.

Even though oral tradition for children holds an essential place in Latin American and Caribbean culture, more research and texts are still missing, in which those oral samples can be compiled in a systematic manner. Together with this, and with the goal of highlighting the role that oral tradition has had in the region, the national sections of IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean have come together to create an anthology of oral tradition for children that live in the different countries. Thus, we want the rest of the world to know a stroke of our cultural heritage.

On the other hand, it is a goal that the sections of IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean, through the team working on this project, strengthen the regional identity inside the institution. It is an effort to create a precedent for the development of future initiatives to value children's and youth's literature within Latin America and the Caribbean. Also, as institutions concerned with promoting reading habits in children, it is precise to recognize how orality has contributed to the consolidation of these habits.

Finally, IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean has the purpose of celebrating the work of those who keep oral narration alive and work for a public made of children. Many of those people that work in favour of oral tradition, even if they are not conscious about it, have transformed their strategies with the passing of the years, so fantasy, entertainment and the teachings of oral tradition continue to reach boys and girls.

In April of this year the national sections were called to research about oral manifestations for children in their own countries and to choose ten texts to represent their country in the anthology. After this research effort, each national section sent their texts to the IBBY section in Costa Rica, which was in charge of unifying and editing the whole anthology, as well as to coordinate the illustrations and the text diagramation.

In all, the anthology of Latin American and the Caribbean oral tradition for children includes the selected texts by 12 sections of IBBY: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Also, the selection methodology used by each IBBY section is explained.

Seminar on the Mediation of Readings and Identities in Early Childhood SELAC 2021

Organising Team SELAC 2021 IBBY Chile



SELAC 2021 is a significant occasion for the sixteen countries that make up IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean. It is the first seminar that summons us at a regional level.

Orality in early childhood is the central theme of the seminar, articulated explicitly by poetic folklore. We share the same oral tradition, appropriated and adapted by each of our cultures. SELAC is a valuable opportunity to meet, reflect, and discuss identity and the world of words in childhood.

Prominent speakers from different countries address topics related to storytelling, poetry, music and singing. Specialised publishers also convey the development of early childhood books. Likewise, reading promoters in Latin America and the Caribbean can share their successful experiences in early childhood and public policies' initiatives. Narrators from all ages accompany the occasion throughout, telling typical stories and poems of their countries.

The Seminar on the Mediation of Readings and Identities in Early Childhood, taking place digitally on September 28, brings together reflective, practical and playful experiences. Therefore, we invite mediators, parents, librarians, academics, teachers and anyone interested in early childhood artistic and poetic expressions to explore SELAC 2021.

All seminar's activities are available on our YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_USevHg-BtnWoWnL-B1fiGg

BookTube and Bookstagram in Latin America, new spaces for (virtual) promotion of reading among the youth

By **María Fernanda Rincón**

Editorial committee



Screenshot: "Leosolomujeres"

Social networks such as YouTube and Instagram have become a space in which youth share videos or pictures together with texts about their experiences and interests, such as reading. The booktubers, from the YouTube platform, and the bookstagrammers, from Instagram, are mostly readers who recommend books from their home bookshelves and, to a lesser extent, borrowed from libraries, recently acquired books or sent by publishing houses.

These recommendations have as main destinataries the followers and subscribers of their Instagram accounts or YouTube

channels, who comment on their publications, share them, and look up many of the referred titles in bookshops or book fairs, and they can even buy them, thus making the booktuber and the bookstagrammer part of the current book ecosystem, specifically as virtual reading promoters.

The booktubers and the bookstagrammers are characterized by a constant reinvention of their contents, together with the periodicity of the sections, such as: the Unboxing, that consists in recording the reaction of the user as soon as they open the boxes with the new products from the publishers; the Wrap-up, quick reviews of many books, monthly; the Book Haul, which shows the acquired books; and the Unhaul, where they give away part of their books, previously read or not, resource that allows to win more followers or also allows this virtual promoter to empty part of their bookshelf to make room for new books.

At the same time it is important to highlight the announcements of "Joined readings" - similar to a short reading club,- interviews to writers, books give-aways, vouchers to buy in bookshops, and the Book tags or challenges, that add dynamism to these loyal virtual communities. They also document in writing the progress of the readings on the Goodreads webpage so their followers do the same or for them to know which book will be discussed soon.

The communities of BookTube and Bookstagram work as a reading promotion cycle, based on the broadcasting of publishers' news -in English and in Spanish,- both for physical and digital formats, re-editions, retellings or literary adaptations, and the reviews of their film, television or marketing versions related to pop culture.

As a reading promotion strategy, the booktubers and the bookstagrammers mix their literary opinions with life anecdotes and with the exploration of different topics, creating an experimental space in which the youth feel confident enough to express their own opinions, while they support the opinions of others with great enthusiasm.

Another social network that is added to this space of reading promotion is TikTok. Its booktokers recommend books in few-seconds-length videos, specially about uncatalogued or little known books. The briefness of the duration maximizes the emotional experience that was produced in the reviewer by the selected readings.

Although the use of TikTok, compared to YouTube or Instagram, is recent, the three platforms unveil the high adaptation capacity that literary influencers have in technological platforms, in which passion for books and spontaneity can be combined and, in many cases, also self-taught skills to learn how to handle editing and producing.

Technological skills that are part of our day to day, such as mobile phones, cameras or computers, are transformed through these young people's creativity into new spaces of reading promotion, worth exploring and accessible to all.

We are sharing the information of some Latin American booktubers and bookstagrammers below, all ranging from 18 to 40 years old, highschool and universities students, and professionals.

BOOKSTAGRAMMERS

Olivia Regis (@oliregis) is a Science of Communication student. You will find reviews of youth and adults' literature, movies, and series.

Country: Argentina.

Greta Ramos (@greta_in_blues) reviews youth's and children's literature. Her account is characterized by using photoshop to present book critiques, influenced by the cosplayers' practice - fans that dress up like their favorite characters.

Country: Mexico.

Leo solo mujeres + disidencias [I Read Only Women and Dissidents] (@leosolomujeres) posts children's, youth's, adults' and fanzine -independent magazines- reviews; podcasts and reading club.

Country: Chile.

BOOKTUBERS

Crónicas de una merodeadora [Chronicles of a Wanderer], managed by Isabela Cantos, editor, checker, and translator. She makes recommendations about youth's literature, critiques and interviews with authors.

Country: Colombia.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CronicasMerodeadora>

El librero de Valentina [Valentina's Bookshelf], managed by Valentina Trava Osorio, graduate of Letters and Mexican Literature professor. In her channel you will find children's, youth's, and adults' literature reviews; reading clubs and videos made with the support of her family.

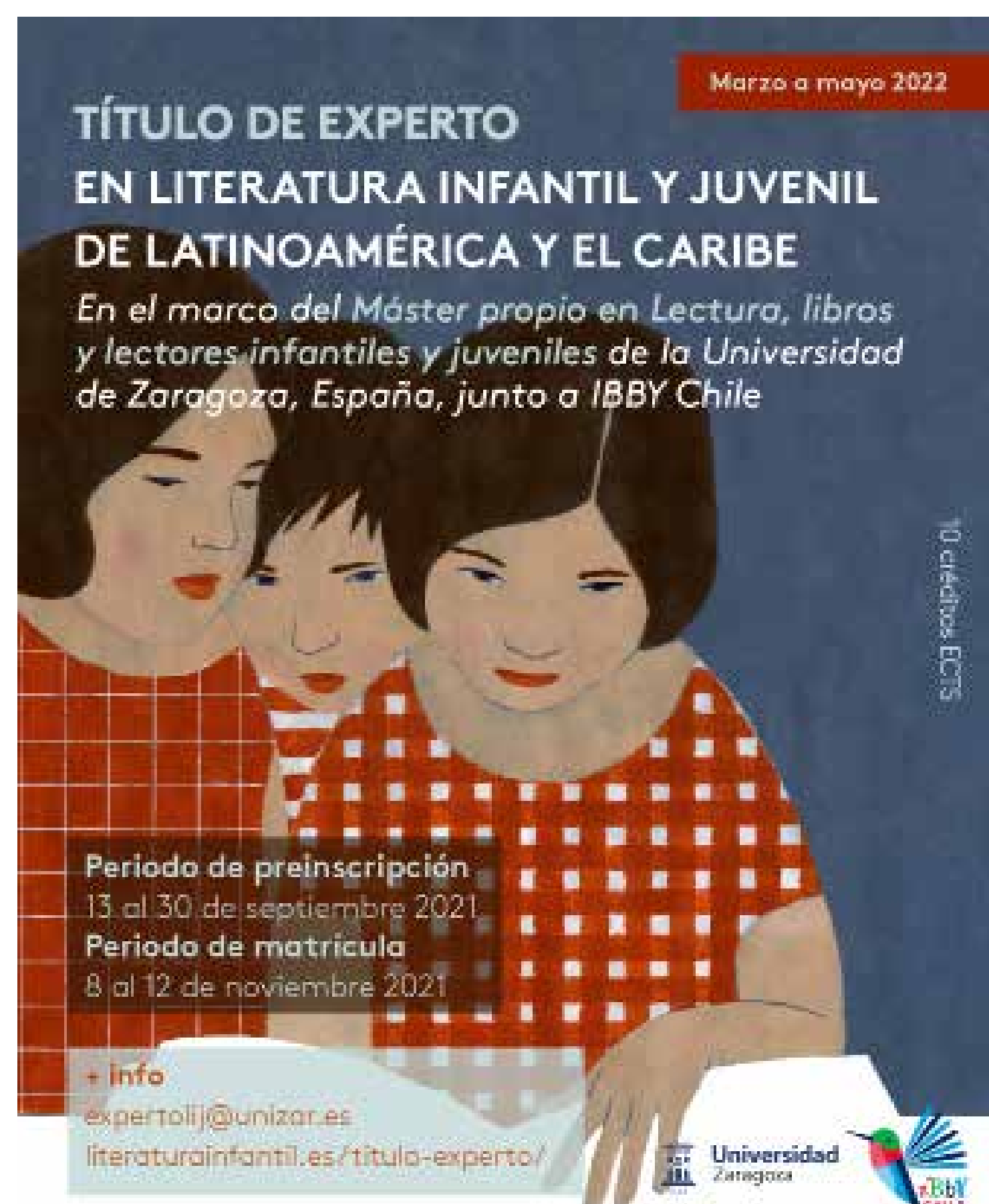
Country: Mexico.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTcQSIaQ8Vx3G9t-D3Uu6UbQ>

Expert Degree in Children's and Youth Literature from Latin America and the Caribbean

IBBY Chile - University of Zaragoza

IBBY Chile training team



In 2022 IBBY Chile and the University of Zaragoza will offer an Expert Degree in Children's and Youth Literature from Latin America and the Caribbean, which is also part of the University's Master's Degree in Reading, Books and Young Readers.

The title aims at giving visibility to children's and youth literature production in Latin America and the Caribbean and invite Spanish-speaking students to reflect on the nuances, diversities and complexities of the region's literature imaginary. Also, the programme seeks to critically analyse these works from different theoretical perspectives and identify commonalities and differences among them. Latin American authors will be invited to expand the literary corpus.

The Expert Degree's lectures will be led by outstanding writers, editors and researchers from different countries in the region, including María Rosa Lojo (Argentina), Camila Valenzuela (Chile), Elaine Vilar Madruga (Cuba), María Baranda (Mexico) and Pilar Gutiérrez (Colombia). This voice diversity will display the nuances, varieties and complexities of the Latin American and Caribbean's children's and youth literature.

You can find more information at the following link:

<https://www.literaturainfantil.es/titulo-experto/>

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NATIONAL DIVISIONS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN 2021

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