

The Mischievous Minds Behind Traviesa

by Guest | Mar 20, 2013 | Guest Posts | 0 comments

Guest Posts

I recently asked the mischievous minds behind the new online and ebook publication, *Traviesa*, writers Rodrigo Fuentes and Rodrigo Hasbún, to tell us a little about their venture.

Up front disclaimer: I have translated one short story (by Hernán Vanoli) for their first anthology and am busy with another (by Giovanna Rivero) for the next, so my enthusiasm is not entirely unbiased...

That said, this is a fabulous publication for many reasons, as you'll discover below, and worthy of all the attention it's getting. Do leave a comment or a question. I know both Rodrigos would love to hear from you!

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What is *Traviesa*, and how did it begin?

Traviesa is an online literary magazine and digital publishing house focused on contemporary Spanish-language fiction. The magazine offers a glimpse of authors' lives and desires: we feature video interviews, correspondence by email and Facebook, a day in the life section, and recommendations of writers' favorite books, places, TV shows, and so on.

We also publish themed anthologies curated by guest writers. The curator selects a theme, writes a prologue, and chooses four texts by authors from different Spanish-speaking countries. Our first anthology was *Knockoff*, curated by Argentinian writer Federico Falco, chosen as one of *Granta* magazine's Best of Young Spanish Language Novelists. All

content on our site and in our anthologies is available in English and Spanish. I met Rodrigo Hasbún in upstate New York, where we were both studying Latin American literature at Cornell. We were part of an informal writers' workshop and got to talking about the dearth of Spanish-language fiction available in the U.S., especially by contemporary writers. At the same time, we were struck by the limited rights and royalties these authors received when they did publish. We decided to create a project that would expose the work of contemporary writers and compensate them in a fair manner.

How does *Traviesa* differ from other literary projects in Spanish?

Rodrigo Hasbún is from Bolivia and I'm from Guatemala, two countries already on the periphery of the publishing industry in Spanish, which to this day remains centered in Spain, and to a lesser degree in Argentina and Mexico. We saw *Traviesa* as an opportunity to showcase excellent writers from all over the Spanish-speaking world, whether or not their work had reached Spain's major publishing houses. Established publishing houses typically give up to 25% of e-book royalties to their authors, despite the fact that the costs of producing an e-book are relatively low. We give 80% of royalties to the writers, translators, and curators who contribute to our anthologies.

Tell me more about the concept of curator.

We see writers as the people with the best grasp of the contemporary fiction scene in Spanish, yet they rarely have the chance to select texts for publication. By appointing curators, we give writers a more central role in the publishing process—and because we're drawn to our curators for their fiction writing, we're especially interested to see what texts they'll choose.

Our curators have already exceeded our expectations, beginning with their choice of themes — Federico Falco picked "the knockoff," Liliana Colanzi is putting together an anthology on messianic narratives, and Yuri Herrera is compiling stories on bad luck.

Where can we read more about *Traviesa*?

You can find us in the following places:

- The online magazine is [here](#).
- We're also on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- The ebooks can be purchased [there](#), too.
- There's a trailer video for the first anthology, *Knockoff*, on [Vimeo](#).
- And the Argentine publication *Página 12* recently published a longer article [here](#).

You're off to a great start and I wish you ever more success!



Rodrigo Fuentes (Guatemala, 1984) won the prize *Juegos Florales Hispanoamericanos de Quetzaltenango* (2008) with the story "Cámara oscura." His stories have appeared in the anthologies *Asamblea Portátil: Muestrario de narradores iberoamericanos* (Casatomada: Perú, 2009), *Sólo Cuento III* (UNAM: México, 2011), and *Ni hermosa ni maldita* (Alfaguara: Guatemala, 2012). He's the Literary Editor for [suelta](#) and is currently working on his first book of stories.



Born in Cochabamba, Bolivia, Rodrigo Hasbún has published two books of short stories, *Cinco* (2006) and *Los días más felices* (2011), and the novel *El lugar del cuerpo* (2007). He was awarded the Latin Union Prize in 2008 and was part of *Zoetrope: All-Story* issue dedicated to emerging Latin American fiction. Two of his stories have been adapted into the films *Rojo* and *Los viejos*, for which he co-wrote the screenplays. In 2010 he was selected as one of *The Best of Young Spanish Language Novelists* by *Granta* magazine.