



Salsa Invertebraxa

Mozchops (Illustrator)

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Winner at the AICN Comics 9th ANNUAL @\$\$IE AWARDS, for Best Art, and shortlisted for Best Graphic Novel 2012 by the Aurealis Awards, Salsa Invertebraxa is a storybook unlike any other, an Alice in Wonderland for insects, set in an imaginary world as two tiny companions set out on an odyssey of discovery. With one antenna listening out for vast armies competing for dominance on the forest floor, the two friends encounter strange new species of insect among surreal gardens of terrestrial delights. At nightfall, their mischief takes on a mysterious and foreboding turn as they attempt to steal eggs from monstrous super-predators, disturbing the fragile tranquillity of this bizarre Eden.

(Images from the book at <http://www.pecksniffpress.com/titles....>)

After an incubation of 15 years, Mozchops has exquisitely crafted over 200 paintings to tell this story of a beautiful and dangerous world.

Salsa Invertebraxa Details

Date : Published October 31st 2011 by Pecksniff Press

ISBN :

Author : Mozchops (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 104 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Fiction

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From Reader Review Salsa Invertebraxa for online ebook

Nicky says

I recieved this copy for review via goodreads.

This graphic novel is a truly beautiful book. The illustrations are breathtaking, of nature at it's smallest and wildest. It is a true work of art.

Lee Salve says

first of all.. the cover of the book was beautifully done.. i will really recommend this book to my friends.. XD

The author did so good on the book.. i like the how he draw the details every page.. i like how it ends.. i will not spoil the story here ofcourse.. so it was so good.. this book will also make you interested on the activities and life of insects and invertebrates. the texts of the books is also very interesting.. i like it since i've been hook up to poetry but i think the young readers will not read the text but instead just view the pages since the photos can explain the plot of the story so its also educational and earn interest of the kids on this things. i'm happy that i was able to review this book. thanks!

Lizzi Heaney says

I would never have bought this book (I got this in a giveaway) - I don't usually read comics/graphic novels, nor am I a great lover of poetry, and most of all, I really kind of hate bugs. They really creep me out.

But I love this book! I described it to my mum as a work of art with a poem on top of it. I ended up reading it a few times with the poem, and then just flicking through and gazing in awe at the art, because (and this is my main takeaway), the art is just absolutely stunning. The colours and shading are incredible, the way he captures iridescence, and motion are gorgeous. The style is one that I love as well, kind of evocative of someone using a palette knife, but digital.

Like, I hate bugs! There's this one page that depicts this swarm of creatures falling on top of one another and eating each other; things are squirting, legs are flailing. It's gross, and vile, and disgusting - yet I find myself just staring at it and admiring it because it's all those things while also being supremely beautiful! It's so obviously been drawn by someone who adores insects, and thinks they're fascinating and beautiful, and seeing something I dislike through those eyes is so interesting, and I'm able to see why someone would spend (what has to have been) forever illustrating this - because they love it.

The poem is a bit obtuse to me, I'm clearly still not much of a poetry person. I don't really know what it's saying. But even that, though I can't penetrate the deeper meaning really (something something, circle of life), is really damned satisfying to say out loud. Think, Jabberwocky, Lewis Carroll - kind of meaningless (to me! as not a poetry person), but the way the words roll off the tongue is quite delightful.

So five stars, the art alone is worth the price of admission. Like I say, I probably would never have thought to buy this, but I am so glad to have it now!

Alexis says

Oh my lord. This book is beautiful, chilling, eerie and quite simply amazing. The illustration and writing is thought-provoking and unique. I read this book the moment it was delivered and already I want to read it again. I can see myself going back to this many times and never getting tired of it.

I won a signed hardback copy of this in a Goodreads Giveaway. I'd never heard of it before but it is now one of my most prized possessions. Thank you so much for this Mozchops!

Graham Vingoe says

Won a signed copy of this in a Goodreads giveaway(Thanks Mozchops) but this has not influenced this review. As everyone else pretty much agrees, this is visually stunning but what surprised me slightly was the quality of the narrative which is essentially in verse form. Now, I have a real problem reading poetry so its not something that comes naturally to me at all but there was a rhythm to Salsa that really worked. can't say I fully followed it but it does work a lot better than I would have imagined so definitely 4 stars

Kat (Kindred Dreamheart) says

The art in this graphic novel was phenomenal!

Deborah Biancotti says

Deborah was the convenor of the Graphic Novel/Illustrated Works category for the Aurealis Awards in 2011. This review/rating is the personal opinion of Deborah herself, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of any judging panel, the judging coordinator or the Aurealis Awards management team.

From the Aurealis Awards Judges' Report 2011:

Visually stunning storytelling 'from the ground up' marked this awe-inspiring entry that blew 'a bug's life' stories out of the sky. This labour of love deserves a wide audience and pride of place on every graphic geek's coffee table.

Clark Carlton says

I am intoxicated with Salsa Invertebraxa, written and illustrated by Mozchops aka Paul Phippen. It will be loved by those who embrace the eerie beauty of bugs as well those who admire great painting. The hard cover book is a high quality, ecologically conscious printing that is one of the best coffee table books you may ever encounter as well as a graphic novel laced together by an unconventional narrative poem. The written text is one part Dr. Seuss, one part Lewis Carroll, and other parts Walt Whitman and William Blake.

The images are illustrations in a sequence but can stand alone as works of art by a master of digital painting. Mozchops has a mind as original as Dali or Hieronymous Bosch so his canvasses radiate with unexpected imagery.

The "Salsa" of the title likely refers to the Latin dance. "Invertebraxa" seems to be a combining of 'invertebrates' (insects, spiders and other arthropods) and possibly to 'Abraxas' the deity Jung described as a "God higher than the Christian God and Devil, that combines all opposites into one Being." That would make sense in this depiction of a sun-drenched, flower-filled rain forest that is rich with beauty but also with predators caught up in the victimizing work of survival. Under the bright, prismatic plants and flowers is the dark mulch of death and decay. Many of these images are shadowy depictions of the creatures we fear because of their venom, their fangs and their cunning traps. Others are colorful confections of imaginary creatures we'd welcome at our picnics and might pick up to eat. Of course, there are some dazzling butterflies - the go-to bug of beauty - but one of these has transparent wings.

As elaborate as these images are, the story is a simple one. It's a day in the life of two insect-like creatures who are "scurrilous schemers." One has a sometimes metallic looking shell and a jet-like construction with the flared legs of a Japanese robot and an almost human, scowling face. He or she has antennae that also seem to be wings/rockets. His or her partner is a mosquito-like creature with a long proboscis. For their first prank, they gather up strands of what looks like electrically charged spider webbing and use it to dangle a puppet of a dead caterpillar in order to lure and kill a trap door spider. After they succeed, the spider is seized on by an army of ants, ready to shear it to pieces for a feast.

The schemers return to a porous tree trunk where they store some mysterious booty in a cranny before heading out on their next mission, the theft of insect eggs. They soar through a carnival of hanging flowers, fruit and forest creatures including beetles with antennae that tie into heart shapes as they mate. Below on the ground is a crowded, throbbing parade of termites marching towards a clash with an ant parade. These paintings of the social insects are my favorite and recall Flemish Baroque fruit paintings with their dark backgrounds, play of light and exquisite craftsmanship. The mandibles of the flesh-pink ants are large and dramatic and could easily belong to a Pacific walrus while the termites resemble a rushing army of rhinos. Spectacular, as in fabulous spectacle.

Throughout the book are other strange, unexpected syntheses of creatures engaging in human behavior. The cover image is one example, from a sequence where the two schemers subdue fat, candy-colored caterpillars which seem to float or fly. One of the schemers dons the empty shell of a dead insect and transforms himself into a jousting knight in armor. His mount is one of these caterpillars, clothed in something like horse fittings, and on its head is the elongated helmet of a samurai warrior. Attached to the caterpillar are random, ribbon-like appendages that recall the camouflage of a leafy sea horse. At the book's end, a clump of grass rises up to reveal itself as a bug version of Swamp Thing and riding on its back is someone like Stitch (the other half of Lilo) who has sprouted two pairs of the external lungs of an axolotl.

What does it all mean?

I'm not sure. I'd like to know but I don't really care. What does a Scottish Jig mean or a Spanish Flamenco or in this case, a Salsa Invertebraxa? This book strikes me as a very pure work, the uncompromised vision of a single mind. I don't see in it either the meddlesome intrusions or the helpful suggestions of an editor. It is not an easy narrative to follow and one that takes some re-reading, some study and some careful scrutiny of the images and even then it's all up for interpretation. Salsa Invertebraxa may be one of humanities most elaborate whimsies and it is certainly one of its most beautiful.

Tanya says

I received this book as part of a goodreads giveaway. The opinions in this review are my own and not influenced in any way.

Firstly, thank you Mozchops. This is the first book of this kind that I have read, and I honestly wasn't sure it would be "my thing", but I loved it.

Secondly, The artwork is absolutely stunning!!! I thought I was looking at photos to start with. I had intended just to sneak a peak and then read in full later, but once I opened it, I had to read the whole thing! The narrative weaves throughout, telling the reader the truth of mother nature's predator v prey and I found myself utterly captivated by the strange beauty of the dance between the two. Mozchops has delved into the lives of arachnids, insects and bugs, and has shown that they deserve our respect, not fear or disgust.

Matt says

Tangential view of Planet Earth. Or some other plane yet undisturbed.

Nicola Mansfield says

Reason for Reading: The book looked beautiful and sounded interesting.

First off, let me say that I was not going to give this book a rating as I was flummoxed as to what I should rate it. This has never happened to me before but then when I thought about it, not giving the book a rating was copping out. My rating is like giving the book a 50%; I kind of feel like the right person would enjoy this book much more than I did and could deservedly give it a higher rating.

The illustration is absolutely fantastic, stunning and what I appreciated about this book. On illustration alone I would rate it a 5/5. Each page is awesome and the book is printed in an over sized horizontal format to really emphasize the panoramic views. Even though we are looking at insects here, they are up close and take on the aspects of an almost alien species. If these were photographs, I'd be freaked out by the insects but these CG paintings are incredibly beautiful.

As to the book's story. It is in verse and to tell the truth I was utterly confused. Here my rating would be a 0/5. You can read the publisher's summary but from reading the words I had no idea what was going on. Certain phrases and groups of words appealed to my sense of literature, but I am not a poetry person and could not find a story within the verse. All I could tell was the beginning was happy, then the story turned very dark in the middle and finally became exhilarating at the end. However, I do not read a book to receive random emotions. I think the right person for this book must first be someone who appreciates unorthodox verse, then secondly will appreciate the illustration of that verse. This was not my kind of book. (2.5/5)

Rose Cimarron says

[2012-04-12] My book has arrived :o) Thank you Mozchops for choosing me to win one of your books on

First Reads.

[21012-04-12 1900] Thought I'd have a quick look - read the whole book! The artwork is amazing; beautifully detailed and excellently imagined and executed. Close enough to real life to be recognisable, different enough to be magical. The story is simple in outline, but amazingly detailed and complex in execution - just like life.

A definite "must read" for all ages.

I am so pleased I won this book, it's not something I would normally pick-up - now I know what I've been missing!

[2012-07-30] After an appalling delay... my

Ross says

Never seen anything like if before.
Amazing!!

Paddy O'callaghan says

Exquisite. Mon Dieu, Amazing

Evgeny says

3.5 stars.

It is a graphic novel about the world of insects. The world is a nasty one with parasites, predators, etc. I am actually very happy that we - the humans - only see a small tip of the iceberg of this. To be more specific, the story is told in verse and is about a day of life of two insects, or creatures in all the gory details.

As far as illustrations, this book is easily rated 5+ stars: they are that good, even gorgeous. I thought about using a couple of them as a background on my desktop. I can name quite a few well-known graphic novels which look really pale and forgettable when it comes to the art drawings compared to this book. As far as the story goes, it is fairly simplistic, but good enough and serves its purpose.

A final verdict: read this book for illustrations if nothing else.
