

CASA GALLINA

CULTURA · COMUNIDAD · MEDIO AMBIENTE

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Casa Gallina Culture · Community · Environment

In December 2018, a phase of Casa Gallina came to a close as the sixth edition of inSite, initiated in September 2013 and directed by Osvaldo Sánchez. The work of a professional team enabled the completion of diverse projects, including both curatorial projects as well as processes of community insertion and activation. Over those five years, more than twenty processes were carried out with national and international artists, curated by Josefa Ortega and Violeta Celis, and produced by Sergio Olivares and Mariano Arribas. All of the pieces were the result of long-term coparticipation dynamics with communities in Santa María la Ribera. Likewise, five books of local-interest contents were published and five exhibitions took place in the Geology Museum about issues related to science and the environment. Countless workshops, learning processes, network activities, trainings, and neighborhood implementations were carried out under the leadership of David Hernández, Rodrigo Simancas, and Rosa Elba Camacho, with constant support from those who make it

possible for the space and programs to function: Susana Pineda, Eric Álvarez, Rosario Hernández and Andrés Ramírez. A solid framework based in the community's social networks, under the care of Luis Gómez, has drawn the neighborhood together around Casa Gallina's platforms. In way of closure for these five years, the Casa Gallina team, in collaboration with invited editor Pablo Lafuente and under the general coordination of Josefa Ortega published the book *Experiences of the Common Good: inSite/Casa Gallina, a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood*. This first stage of Casa Gallina was also made possible thanks to the support of inSite's patrons and executives and to the patronage of national companies and institutions such as: the BBVA-Bancomer Foundation, the Jumex Foundation, the Ministry of Culture, and the Chamber of Deputies.

Thanks to the work of its team for over five years, and the generosity of its two most important patrons – Aimée Labarrère and Hans Schöpflin –, since last January, Casa Gallina has been able to continue as a community platform, reinforcing its transdisciplinary creative profile and consolidating its spirit of social commitment. Today Casa Gallina is a creative project, focused on community work and concentrated on strengthening the participatory fabric and defense of the environment through cultural platforms, in alliance with other national initiatives. Casa Gallina operates as a non-profit civil association, with a board that keeps on Aimée Labarrère as president, and under the direction of curator Josefa Ortega.



Exhibition *Maize, Biodiversity and Culture. An Approach from its Daily Consumption* at the Geology Museum.

Casa Gallina seeks to articulate new platforms and networks of collaboration related to culture, community, and the environment. It works to connect local networks in Santa María la Ribera with other creative platforms of similar interests around the country with the goal of producing collaborations and sharing strategies, actions, resources, and critical narratives. New collaborations will take place in the following months between Casa Gallina and initiatives from Guadalajara, Yucatan, and Oaxaca. These will work on activating processes to implement actions and to elaborate and circulate critical narratives in diverse formats, such as books in Indigenous languages, exhibitions, artistic commissions, educational material, trainings and courses, among others.

Very soon a new website (www.casagallina.org.mx) will give access to the contents of our work and the details of the collaborations being implemented with our allies. Additionally, an intense network of neighborhood exchanges nourishes our social platforms of dialogue and feedback through Casa Gallina's Facebook profile.

January–May 2019 Program

During these first months, our program has focused on reflections about maize, its cultural, biological, and social implications, as well as its consumption in everyday life. At the beginning of April the exhibition **Maize, Biodiversity and Culture. An Approach from its Daily Consumption** opened in the Geology Museum with works commissioned for this display by artist Demián Flores (Juchitán, 1971); accompanied by research carried out by activist Rafael Mier (Mexico City, 1975), a specialist who has dedicated the last fifteen years to the defense of native maize and quality tortillas throughout the Mexican territory.



Serigraphs by the artist Demián Flores for the exhibition *Maize, Biodiversity and Culture. An Approach from its Daily Consumption.*

Casa Gallina participated in the **7th Encounter with the Earth** organized in the Alameda of Santa María on April 7. We focused on the issue of maize consumption in everyday life in the neighborhood, and we served more than five hundred neighborhood residents on that day.

In the first trimester, Casa Gallina's vegetable garden hosted the workshop **A Milpa in my Neighborhood: Agriculture Workshop for Children**; in which the participants cultivated a *milpa*: a pre-Hispanic agricultural system, conceived as a complete ecosystem in which different species co-exist, such as maize, beans, pumpkins, and peppers. During this period, a "hotel for insects" was also constructed as part of the **Workshop on Edible Gardens, Plants, and Pollinating Insects**, in which the neighborhood participants built an inhabitable structure to host different pollinating insects and cultivated flowers that served as their food.

The **Creative Cooking with Plants Workshop**, designed for teenagers, has strengthened Casa Gallina's relation with a group of students from the local school, Center for Culture and Comprehensive Training. Other workshops were also offered on local cuisines around Mexico City, such as Carlota Pacheco's workshop on the traditional cuisine of Xochimilco.



The neighbor encounters, **Friends Dining on a Blind Date** and **From 5 to 7**, have been periodically organized in the kitchen of Casa Gallina. We are now implementing vegetarian menus and provide contextual information about the ingredients. This year, **From 5 to 7** has had Jaime Martínez Luna and the Mayan activist Pedro Uc as special guests. Each of them shared their experiences on resistance and defense of their indigenous culture and territories in Oaxaca and Yucatan. We also incorporated dancing parties for senior citizens. The first one happened in March as a Spring Dance and the rest will occur each change of season (Summer, Autumn and Winter).

One platform that we are greatly prioritizing this year is the neighborhood initiative laboratories. The learning processes being implemented seek to promote discussion and consensus for action among neighbors. The first trimester developed the laboratory **Our School Is Also Our Neighborhood: Prototypes Laboratory**, focused on discussing and designing the implementation of educational initiatives and/or infrastructure projects in Santa María la Ribera's public schools. Over the course of one month, a group of twenty neighbors met to design prototypes of four ideas agreed upon in the group. The projects are in the process of being outlined and discussed, with the goal of presenting them to the school community for their implementation starting in August 2019.



Working session of *Our School Is Also Our Neighborhood: Prototypes Laboratory*.

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