

# Experiences of the Common Good



**inSite/Casa Gallina,  
a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood**



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**Editor:** Pablo Lafuente

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**Editorial coordinator:** Josefa Ortega

**Design and Production:** Luis Miguel Leon

**Texts by:** Rosa Elba Camacho (R.C.), Violeta Celis (V.C.), David Hernández (D.H.), Josefa Ortega (J.O.), Osvaldo Sánchez (O.S.), Rodrigo Simancas (R.S.), María Berrios, Jesús Carrillo, Joshua Decter, Pablo Lafuente, Nina Möntmann and Víctor Palacios

**Conversations:** Pablo Lafuente with Carmen Cuenca/Michael Krichman and Josefa Ortega/Osvaldo Sánchez

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**inSite/Casa Gallina A.C.**

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www.insite.org.mx / Facebook Casa Gallina

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Edited by Pablo Lafuente in collaboration  
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inSite

Casa Gallina\_México

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## Telling the Story of inSite/Casa Gallina

Pablo Lafuente

We tell stories based on where we are at the time. We talk about what we did, what we lived, and then, using words or images that we've held on to for a while or even those that we've only just acquired, we remember. What we talk about is part of what we could call "the story." Sometimes we don't say anything at all because others have already, or because nobody asks us to, because we don't have the will to do so, or simply because others don't let us. But, for whatever reason, the absence of that piece of the story, the piece that isn't retold, is always felt.

If we had all the parts in our hands, all of those fragments, maybe we could imagine a complete story, in which "everything" was considered, in which every aspect, every sensation, every event, moment, implication, consequence ... would appear. But if we were to tell it one minute later, from another place, perhaps we'd be able to drag up a different memory, a different thought, a different consequence. And then our contribution would be different. Subsequently, fragment after fragment, the imagined story is revealed as a never-ending task. And, precisely for that reason, it's a fascinating task.

This book is something like that—an attempt to tell the certainly story of the five years of inSite/Casa Gallina. A task to which I was invited, by those who run the house, at a time that now seems so long ago, at the end of 2017, when it was something abstract to me, a place that I had visited two years previously during a brief visit to Mexico City, and that I only knew through the stories that I had been told by one of the team members, Osvaldo Sánchez.

Why I was invited is a story that I could tell (to myself) could tell, and that others could tell better than me. But that is not the story that I want to share here. I am more interested in—and I hope that it will be a more interesting contribution for you who are holding the book in your hands—telling the story of how this printed story has taken the shape that it has; as an explanation, in no way as an apology. Because I feel, and I hope I am right, that the way the book tells the story of inSite/Casa Gallina responds to the way in which the project and the house (really a single entity) were dreamed up and how it has functioned from its beginnings to the present day, in the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood.

Because Casa Gallina, which I visited five times during the process of composing the book, for stays of approximately a week each time, is, like the book was, a collective undertaking. A mild, complex, honest, long-term, dedicated, inclusive, discrete, respectful, uncertain, determined and daring project. It combines innovative elements with a traditional, generous, spirit. It is not for me to evaluate if the book is also all of that—I suspect that it is not—but its role, as I understand it, is to show how all of this happened, and happens, at the house.

The collective process of composing the book involved the neighbors and users (“users,” such an inadequate word I’ve chosen to start with, they are all neighbors), the permanent team (some of whom are also neighbors), the guests contracted by the inSite/Casa Gallina’s team for specific actions (such as workshops, classes and artistic projects), new guests (writers who are neither neighbors nor collaborators and who will be given the task of writing about the project); and, of course, myself. Therefore, this book is, among other things, a collection of names, of individuals who in some moment came into contact with the project and its activities and were willing to relate that experience to someone who, at least at first, was a stranger.

At first, because after all of that time I felt that my presence, my relationships, and even my “status” changed, as I think happened to many of those who have come into contact with inSite/Casa Gallina since its foundation. That is why “users” is a word that is at least in part inadequate, because in the house’s five years, the users became proposers, organizers or hosts; while the organizers are now apprentices, guests, and even neighbors. So the book is also, at least in part, a collection of biographies, of life journeys in which one bout of learning follows another, in which each tool changes hands several times and makes possible multiple constructions, in which one new initiative gives rise to another undertaking, sometimes independently from the inSite/Casa Gallina’s dynamic. (And, of course, there are initiatives, lessons, and undertakings that are the end of a path, as there are users and collaborators who decided not to continue—or perhaps it was life that decided for them.) And so the future of the house remains permanently open to new configurations, actions and presences, new appearances, in the hands of those who decide to contribute to it with their time and their commitment.

Contribution and commitment are appropriate words, to refer to attitudes that can be found everywhere in the house, and that contest, even if they do not eliminate, the logics of capital that normally drive the transactions and exchanges of city life. There is a cost to inSite/Casa Gallina that includes such things as maintenance, materials, salaries—but the commitment that can be appreciated in every aspect of its operations cannot be understood in monetary terms. The dynamics of dedication (of those who work there, of the invited artists, of the neighbors) go beyond just working on a project. And, while this separates inSite/Casa Gallina from battles that can seem urgent, almost obligatory, in other contexts, in practice that distinction shows an example of a life that is articulated according to other parameters. This is how we get to imagine spaces, spaces which are never pure (who can imagine a pure space?), of relative autonomy, in which our contributions take the form that they take, they do not seek direct repayment, but start processes that will continue with other processes and that do not directly revert to their origin.

Perhaps they are beginnings. Because, ultimately, inSite/Casa Gallina did not invent anything, and neither does this book. What Casa Gallina is today already existed, in some way, in the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood and its residents: in their memories, desires, and fears; in the people that make up the team; in their work experience inside and outside of the art world, in their dreams and disappointments; in the guests, and in their interests and professional and life anxieties. Like the trust that was, since the beginning, the guiding attitude of all the relationships at Casa Gallina, such a process started five years ago with its foundation and it will continue into the future. And that is only possible because we have a memory of and a desire for processes like this one, because deep down we believe and we desire (is this not the same thing?) that something like this could be possible.

Therefore, allowing myself something that perhaps I shouldn't do as the editor, I invite everyone who opens this book to consider it, at least in part, as a test that confirms that desire and that belief. I believe that understanding what inSite/Casa Gallina made and makes possible requires an exercise of open listening to those who were part of that story, an exercise that implies trusting the honesty of those fragments of an incomplete story that remains to be made as they recount it. Credit must be given to the affection and commitment that accompany their participation and their act of retelling. Ultimately, what has happened and happens there is based on the attitudes held by all of these people. And they tell us that all of this is possible in other places, beyond Casa Gallina's doors, and beyond the boundaries of Santa María la Ribera, in other projects, in other lives ...

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**Pablo Lafuente** is a writer, editor and art curator. He lives and works in Rio de Janeiro.



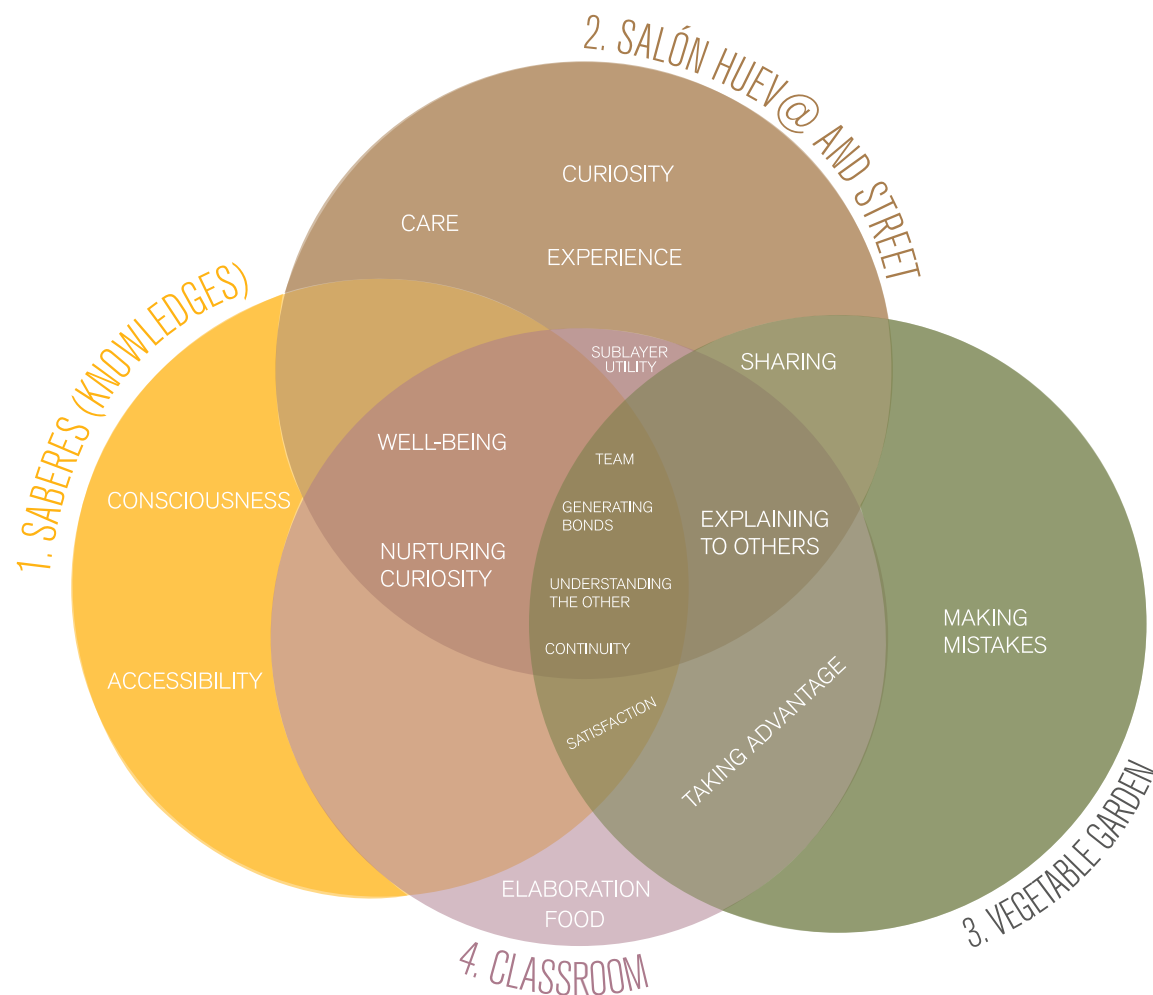




# Hosting Change

## Neighbors' Experiences at Casa Gallina Work Spaces

Evaluations are carried out at the end of every workshop, they are geared toward learning participants' opinions on the working dynamic and also their interests for future workshops or neighborhood gatherings. We took some of the terms used most frequently in the 2015-18 evaluations and presented them to several neighbors. We asked them to pinpoint those words on maps of the house's different work spaces in order to define those places based on their experiences. The participants were: Elsa Pérez, Tere Mendoza, Olivia Solache, Héctor Escobedo, Michelle Aguilar, Marcela Cardoso, Nayeli Lima, Pavel Valdés, Viridiana Gamiño, Teresa Benítez and Socorro Ayala. (R.C. and R.S.)



## 1. SABERES (KNOWLEDGES)

**ACCESSIBILITY.** "This is a pleasant environment, because you get here and you can borrow a book without filling out so much paperwork. It's close to my house; this means you can come and go, and take out and return books. The proximity is very important because if you forget something, you just say 'I'll just go back quickly and get it.'" Elsa Pérez, neighbor and teacher.

**NURTURING CURIOSITY.** "When I have come to consult something, it has always been related to what we're doing, whether in the vegetable garden or in the kitchen. This encourages the nurturing of new interests, because you start by looking for a flower and you leave being interested in how to prepare it; or if they've given us a method for making an ointment in the workshop, suddenly you see in the books that there exist three more." Michelle Aguilar, neighbor and researcher.

**CONSCIOUSNESS.** "We're combining our experience here with our day-to-day lives. In some way, we're putting to work the knowledge we acquire here. Which is also super crazy, because when something isn't difficult for you, you don't acquire knowledge and Casa Gallina has made it so that you do, you acquire knowledge and you use it." Nayeli Lima, neighbor and film curator.

## 2. SALÓN HUEV@ AND STREET

**WELL-BEING.** "I came to the **Clothing Maintenance Workshop** with my children and we were very motivated by the workshop, we left with new ideas about clothing, with the desire to not throw things away, about how it's better give them a second life. If you use a garment that you decorated or that you altered, then you put it on and say 'wow, I was going to throw out these clothes but I fixed them up a bit and made them really cool.' It's satisfying going out in something that you made yourself." Olivia Solache, neighbor and retailer.

**EXPLAINING TO OTHERS.** "When we set up the herbalism exhibition on the doorway, I asked myself why we were doing it, until it hit me, what we were doing. At the moment when you can explain it to others, you say 'ah, yes, I've learned it, I picked it up,' you're sharing it with someone else and they understand you. We had a very cool experience of spending time with the people who passed by and among ourselves, because you would relearn what Elsa had been saying, what Lulú was saying, within the group we interrelated to each other more." Tere Mendoza, neighbor and teacher.

**GENERATING BONDS.** "I was involved in the films, and I liked it a lot because I reflected on something that happens to me a lot and that I imagine happens to everyone: that suddenly it is really easy to isolate yourself. I can watch a movie and maybe discuss it with a friend, but I don't have that space, where suddenly one can meet with the person you least expected. It always creates a very different dynamic when you sit down and chat for a bit. It becomes something else, and we leave feeling really good vibes." Michelle Aguilar, neighbor and researcher.

**CARE.** "There have been many experiences since the signs were put on the trees, it is interesting that they've been taken care of, the signs haven't been taken down or stolen; on the contrary, some neighbors have fixed them on better; there's the

case of one neighbor who added technical information; now the neighbors point out and identify the trees, there has been a really high level of impact on the street.” Pavel Valdés, neighbor and permaculturalist.

**CURIOSITY.** “First, I discovered the posters about how to build a neighborhood, despite the fact that I grew up in a very traditional one, I’d never had the opportunity to ‘build a neighborhood,’ to do what those posters were talking about. I come by here almost every day, I thought something was happening here but I didn’t know what, one day I saw that it was open, there was a workshop on building things [Electronic Arts and Crafts Workshop] and I thought it was wonderful: anyone could sit down and grab the cables.” Nayeli Lima, neighbor and film curator.

**EXPERIENCE.** “Although I can’t participate because of work issues, I’ve been close to what’s going on around here. The day I used the computer in **Salón Huev@** I was really pressed for time and here I had a lightbulb moment and was able to turn in my work straight away.” Socorro Ayala, neighbor and administrator.

**TEAM.** “When I returned to this neighborhood after 35 years being away, I was surprised that when I greeted everyone they looked at me like I was a strange animal. What happens here creates opportunities that perhaps something will be started up elsewhere, and now there are many people who say ‘hi’ to me. The important thing is building a team, I’ve discovered that we’re not alone.” Héctor Escobedo, neighbor and administrator.

### 3. VEGETABLE GARDEN

**TAKING ADVANTAGE.** “I never imagined that I’d have radishes and lettuce in my house. The natural cooking classes also help us change our habits, less meat, less fat, less things that harm us. Ever since I retired, it’s been extremely important for me to find some form of occupational therapy, because after 55 years of working one no longer knows what to do. For me, Casa Gallina was like an island of salvation.” Héctor Escobedo, neighbor and administrator.

**SATISFACTION.** “It was very important to me that my youngest daughter find a space with an idea very close to what she sees at home. She found it very cool that here in the workshops there were guides not teachers, she got to understand new things. The ones she has attended most are the vegetable garden ones, she really liked the direct contact with the earth. We took the cooking workshop together and it created that direct relationship with the product and what could be done with it.” Marcela Cardoso, neighbor and psychologist.

**MAKING MISTAKES.** “Here I learned to make the most of my mistakes. I’m very methodological, I’m like a well-made cube, if I go ‘outside the box’ I no longer function. In the vegetable garden, I learned that going ‘outside the box’ is cool and it helps you learn. So far in my little vegetable garden I continue making mistakes but I no longer have that frustration of ‘Ahhh, I’ll have to do it again.’ No, now I recognize that I started off badly and I’ll just have to do better.” Viridiana Gamiño, neighbor and photographer.

**SHARING.** “I am good friends with Héctor and at his house I’ve been able to see the results of the workshops, his lettuce, that he eats himself and even grows enough to share with friends. There’ll be people who come here who’ll be able to find ways of sustaining themselves, thanks to the training that is provided.” Socorro Ayala, neighbor and administrator.

### 4. CLASSROOM

**SUBLAYER.** “The first workshops I took were given here [in the classroom]. I feel that it was like a flowerpot with a good soil, which helped me nurture my creativity, because they were basically workshops about design and illustration, and also because, based on that knowledge, I could apply the creativity to my life and my work. It was like a complete circle that started from the first workshop that I took.” Viridiana Gamiño, neighbor and photographer.

**CONTINUITY.** “I chat once a week about the process and how to be well with one of the neighbors with whom I started (in the homeopathy talks). She is a person with whom I exchange a very substantial message about emotional health. That out of nowhere you find a person who is seeking the same thing as you is great.” Nayeli Lima, neighbor and film curator.

**FOOD.** “I was given the opportunity to take workshops on topics that interested me but that I had always put off because I didn’t have time or I didn’t have the money. So I really liked having them here for free and nearby. The dynamic, that was fairly open and very relaxed, also really nourished me. I really liked meeting very high-quality professionals, it surprised me because I’ve been in other places that are free and well, no, there’s a lot of cutting corners.” Marcela Cardoso, neighbor and psychologist.

**ELABORATION.** “This is a super interesting place, since the moment that I first saw it, on seeing all the green, I said ‘the plants start to caress you from the moment you enter.’ Crying here [in the classroom] when I took the course on Thanatology was one of the ‘difficult moments,’ and all of this helped me in that process, in dealing with grief. It encouraged me to have hope.” Teresa Benítez, neighbor and secretary.

**UTILITY.** “It is the space for the useful topics, it generates a lot of frameworks for practice and skills that can be transmitted to others. Especially the workshop on graphic narrative, which we used to narrate the story of coffee to other people through comics and it ended up resulting in us making a magazine to spread the story and issues around coffee.” Pavel Valdés, neighbor and permaculturalist.

**UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER.** “In a film workshop, we went out filming and that put me in touch with a neighbor who has a hair salon. I really liked meeting her and understanding the history of the neighborhood, because I’ve only lived here a short time, so I get to understand the neighborhood based on those who’ve been here longer. It is also understanding other very different people with whom I’ve taken a workshop, all of different ages, areas, occupations, education levels, etc. This was very cool: understanding that we can have a common interest even though we’re so different.” Marcela Cardoso, neighbor and psychologist.



# A Vegetable Garden, a Classroom

Vegetable Garden and Earth Technologies Workshops

The **Vegetable Garden** is one of inSite/Casa Gallina's central platforms. Since 2014, it has been an active platform that articulates the project's diverse search fields and lines of action. Through the activities in the **Vegetable Garden**, a sense of belonging and responsibility for everyday actions has been promoted. The practice of horticulture has also managed to encourage, through sustainable activity, the ecological regeneration of certain areas of the neighborhood. Through an ongoing public program, which includes giving courses and workshops and the installation of community vegetable gardens, the **Vegetable Garden** has managed to generate experiences, reflections and dialogues that have had a direct impact on participants' economies and food consumption habits.

The **Vegetable Garden** was designed at the end of 2014 by horticulturalist Mauricio Badillo, who, besides leading several of the courses, has been in charge of its constant maintenance.

The **Vegetable Garden** platform has received generous support from Magda Caranza, who has also actively participated in its weekly maintenance. Magda, Mauricio and a group of women from the neighborhood work toward collecting an abundant weekly harvest. Consequently, herbs, fruits and vegetables are distributed to neighbors every week. (J.O.)





# Cultivated Visions: The Home Vegetable Garden

Illustration: Sonia Pérez, neighbor and illustrator

“For me, growing things is very important, I’m from the country. When I was very little I used to watch my dad plant carrots and onions. When I took the gardening class here it was good to learn that even if you live in a small space you can grow cilantro and tomatoes in pots and be able to eat healthier food.”

*Teresa Benítez, neighbor and secretary*







## A House Is a Neighborhood, a Neighborhood Is a House

Joshua Decter

### Preamble, in conclusion

Perhaps the most significant and unexpected outcome, at least for me, of the inSite/Casa Gallina project, is that what began in the form of a rather complex theoretical and discursive proposal for an unusual curatorial/post-curatorial framework has successfully evolved, perhaps even against the odds, into a platform. Actually, something more than just a platform: a house, even a home, that is the result of an unprecedented process of collaboration and co-production with the residents of the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood and the various people brought in by the organization. And one might even say, in a sense, that whereas Casa Gallina began under the auspices of inSite as an ambitious curatorial project that built in enough self-criticality to rethink what it means to curate locationally, to curate the social, to curate communities, to organize in collaborative and co-participative ways, to curate *trust*, it has grown organically into a place that is increasingly embodied—if not defined—by the neighborhood as what I would call an *uncommon commons*.

In terms of its organizational ethos, inSite/Casa Gallina was conceived as a horizontal, non-hierarchical, egalitarian, quasi-grassroots project, and yet also understanding the complexities of such ambitions, since to cultivate “bottom-up” processes one often needs to begin with “top-down” interventions ... as much as such terms already embody certain notions of power and agency. If inSite/Casa Gallina was conceptualized and built for the communities of Santa María la Ribera, then maybe one destiny for the project is that it will eventually be overseen by the communities that use the house, with increased levels of self-management and self-determination. That the local grassroots, so to speak—i.e., the people who live and

work in the neighborhood—may eventually *re-appropriate* the house that inSite bought in 2012. That the neighborhood begins to do more and more of the programming of the house, rather than the house reprogramming the neighborhood. Of course, this is a dialectic (the dialectic of enlightenment?), part of the DNA of inSite/Casa Gallina from the start. My sense is that the shifting dynamics of knowledge, the fluid relations of soft power between the house and the neighborhood, are an intrinsic aspect of the project as an ongoing process of becoming.

inSite has transformed a private house into a neighborhood commons by creating a place—one might even say a kind of multidisciplinary laboratory wherein interested members of the neighborhood have the primary stake in the project because it is their lives that are at stake. By participating in programs at Casa Gallina, it could be said that members of the community are engaging in individual and collective processes of *re-commoning* the house for themselves. At the very least, inSite/Casa Gallina compels us to reconsider such relations of power, particularly in terms of art organisations (and curators, artists and other cultural actors/agents) that seek to deploy art, culture, social science, environmental science and other forms of knowledge to set into motion the progressive transformation the multiple ecosystems of everyday life, particularly lives made vulnerable within precarious localities of economic, social and political disenfranchisement.

### **Book as locality and meta-locality**

A book can at once represent and re-represent a place, a locality. It is not locality per se, but a re-envisioning of locality. A book can reimagine a neighborhood for and with the people who live and work in that neighborhood. One of the most beautifully designed and illustrated books that I've ever seen happens to be a rigorously researched, gorgeously illustrated botanical atlas titled *Atlas Botánico Mínimo de la Santa María la Ribera*, about a place unknown to most people. Within its pages, one can find what I would characterize as almost magical-realist renderings of local plants and flowers (and some local fauna), along with detailed and extensive information on each species. How did this book come into being? What purposes beyond the aesthetic and the informational does it serve? What/who/where/how does it represent? The book, published in 2017, collates data on 60 different species of plants, trees and other flora identified by residents of Santa María la Ribera, who toured the area with two biologists as well as members

of the neighborhood organization Estanquillo El 32, searching for indigenous and non-indigenous botanical varieties that have adapted to the urban environment. These species are brought remarkably to life through illustrations by the artist Mariana Magadaleno. The publication is a compendium of local information, and a map of a local ecosystem that can be used by anyone to build upon extant knowledge of these environs, to reimagine our relationship to this place, and lead to new ways of navigating locality. The publication is an eloquent embodiment of inSite/Casa Gallina, a reflection of its fundamental operating system and core values: an intersection of information and knowledges garnered from both local residents and outside specialists, and a translation of research data into aesthetic material—all in the service of reimagining the neighborhood with, and for, its residents. The book materializes other intersections between a number of inSite/Casa Gallina's core platforms or "search fields," such as: environmental empathy, ecological regeneration, producing locality, social creativity, and de-hierarchizing knowledge. I would also like to think that the book has become a point-of-pride for some members of the community, celebrating the rich biodiversity of flora within an urban context that may not be typically associated with beautiful plants and flowers. For outsiders like me, the book continues to inform and reshape my understanding of a neighborhood that still remains, even after a few visits, rather elusive. We might say that the book in question is a kind of meta-locality: it is the place, it is about the place, and it redistributes the place beyond its specific locality to other localities.

### **What do we expect from art and its organizational platforms?**

There appears to be a constant desire, if not a growing demand, for art and its organizational platforms to do more than it has been doing. And alongside these desires and demands, perhaps an increasing assumption that art and its organizational platforms can make directly transformative impacts on society and realpolitik, not merely symbolic acts or interventions that eventually evaporate. And so, every call for art to make positive or progressive change in/to the world may also be at the same time an (unacknowledged) acknowledgement that perhaps art has not been doing a particularly good job of being socially or politically useful. I'm not speaking of the broader question of whether art is valuable for education: of course, it is. What I am speaking of is the demand that art function in ways that may, or may not, lie outside the purview or mandate of art. This has been an ongoing debate for a few generations. Perhaps, for the art apparatus to be at its most useful—i.e., if

one believes that art is the best kind of instrument to engender progressive social change, to produce more equality in the world—then maybe that apparatus of art production and exhibition should disappear into the social from whence it came. In other words, art and its systems should *be* the social, not just be about the social.

Needless to say, though, art and its various platforms and systems cannot be anything but social, since art and its systems are made by humans, who are social beings, who comprise a society in one way or another; artists are not outside of society, and therefore art is never outside of society. This is what makes art so complicated: it interprets and critiques the “reality” that it is also a part of. Art embodies this contradiction, this tension. One of the arguments made for art that defines itself as being a more direct form of social engagement or social intervention is that rather than merely offering a commentary on social conditions, it seeks to actively transform these social conditions, that it can be made to be useful, and to be used by people. Art producing the social, so to speak, rather than only a critical reflection about the social.

If one supports the idea that art is useful, that it is a pragmatic tool, that it is utilitarian, that there is an obligation for art and its various systems and platforms to be instrumentalized in the service of social justice and political transformation, this implies that existing (non-art) tools are not functioning very well. In other words, that a lack is identified—whether it is a social, economic, political, racial, ideological lack or any other kind—and art is proposed as a tool to not only analyze the lack, nor to merely compensate for it, but to fix it, so to speak. If realpolitik is lacking, art is introduced as a potential cure for the failure of realpolitik to deal productively with certain problems. In other words, art as a tool that solves our problems; art as a kind of metapolitical instrument that comes to our rescue when our realpolitik seems to be failing us, or when we fail realpolitik. Some believe that art can somehow compensate for the failures of our realpolitik, and that artists can have pragmatic roles to play in the sphere of politics beyond the enclaves of art worlds (which certainly have their own politics and intersect in various ways with spheres of realpolitik); others accept the potential of art as a form of *metapolitics*, but insist that art, artists and the institutional and market systems of art should ultimately step out of the way of realpolitik. When visual artists contribute artworks to a sale that benefits a political party, for example, they are lending themselves to a political cause, engaging in

one aspect of realpolitik (money is political speech in many countries), and being “political.” Art, per se, as a form of political speech.

Artists may be able to register the failures of realpolitik, but maybe the problem, or the contradiction, is that art may not be able to operate as realpolitik—or real political activism—as long as it remains ... art. Now, on a certain fundamental conceptual or philosophical level, of course, an artist can name anything as art, including their activism, or their political activities. Some practitioners even use the expression “artivism” to describe the intersection of art and activism, although I harbor suspicions, because it sounds like just another cute genre brand ready for easy art historical consumption. What I’m proposing, and it is not particularly original, is that maybe ultimately for artivism to be activism, is that its art element needs to recede from the picture; or, likewise, that perhaps ultimately for the metapolitics of art to become the pragmatic politics of realpolitik, the art part of “political art” needs to fade away so that the largely symbolic metapolitics of art can become the more applied, utilitarian politics of realpolitik. Maybe what I’m really suggesting is that artists cannot become the effective replacement of politicians (or activists)—nor art the substitute for politics (or activism)—until they sacrifice art for the sake of realpolitik (or activism).

Some will argue that with the historical development of “socially engaged art practices” and the emergence of examples of “social practice” during the 1990s, art had already begun to transcend any traditional resemblance to itself; it was becoming an activity virtually indistinguishable from non-art practices, such as collaborations with members of communities wherein the processes of social collaboration are just as significant as a resultant event, action or material product. And yet there is always, at the very least, a residual aesthetic within social practice ... it is, after all, social practice *art*.

It was in the late 1980s when I first began to consider what “socially engaged art” might mean, after encountering the *Homeless Vehicle Project*, the artist Krzysztof Wodiczko’s response to the growing homeless crisis in New York City. Wodiczko was interested in commenting on the crisis, analyzing the lives of homeless people, engaging in a symbolic intervention so as to humanize the situation, but also, more significantly, endeavoring to bring about material change to the condition of people’s lives. To design a utilitarian solution. Art as a mode of praxis, in other words. Although a bit skeptical, I was intrigued by such ambitions. The artist collaborated with homeless



people to design, prototype and test the vehicle in the streets of New York City, indicating an unprecedented co-participative process within the official art context. He wanted the vehicle to function as an instrument for the homeless to use for survival purposes, as an alternative to shelters that often proved to be more dangerous than life on the streets, until either the shelters were made into safe spaces or sustainable affordable housing solutions were provided. Wodiczko's ambition was to move beyond the prototype stage, and he approached the city government to embrace the vehicle as a municipal project, and to manufacture it for widespread use by the homeless population—an effort that ultimately did not materialize. As a strategy to raise consciousness regarding homelessness, at least within certain milieus of the art world and perhaps beyond, the *Homeless Vehicle Project* did have some success. But as a work of art in the service of utility, an artwork designed to function as an alternative means of surviving under the most difficult of circumstances, the project was never given a chance to prove itself. To prove itself as something more than just art.

Perhaps art must become something more than art, something other than art, while yet somehow still remaining art, for art to be a metapolitical instrument of verifiable social change. In other words, social change that is experienced and verified by the communities that artists claim to be working with to produce progressive, equitable social change, even if this means that the art part of “social practice art” dissolves away. Truth be told, there are relatively few successful examples of this kind of social practice art that one can cite, although I invariably return to one of the few success stories: Rick Lowe's *Project Row Houses* (PRH) in the Third Ward neighborhood of Houston, Texas. Since its founding in 1993 (just a year after the inaugural inSite exhibition project in 1992, by coincidence), Lowe has continued to consider PRH as an artwork of some kind (perhaps a social sculpture in the expanded field, to use art historical discourse). Yet as a kind of organism, as an alternative ecosystem created within that ward in Houston, in order for it to function, it does not need to be understood as an artwork. PRH leads, at the very least, a double-life: as a redefinition of art, and as a redefinition of a community-based initiative that has helped to bring at least some racial, social and economic justice—and a degree of self-determination—to a neighborhood that sorely needed it. The fact that Lowe has continued to live in the neighborhood, with the community, indicates that it is a fully embodied experience for the artist, and this presence is what has probably sustained it; the lines of distinction (which were always artificial, in a

sense) between art, politics, justice, equitable urban redevelopment, forms of curating, community, daily life and other elements have largely disappeared here. There is what might be described as a poetic convergence, a radical hybridity, wherein these various strands intersect and overlap at different moments. Fundamentally, though, with Project Row Houses, Lowe helped to catalyze new conditions and experiences of locality for/with the communities of the Third Ward; the project has functioned effectively for so long because it has become indistinguishable from its locality, from its communities. It *is* its locality and its communities at this point, probably more so than it is Lowe's art, per se. This is how we might understand certain affinities between PRH and inSite/Casa Gallina, since the latter is not only helping to produce new conditions and experiences of locality for/with the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood as a kind of post-curatorial or meta-curatorial framework of inSite, but the house itself has become a new locality in the neighborhood, a new community within other local communities. In both cases, existing historical houses embedded within their respective neighborhoods were repurposed into places to be repurposed by their respective communities.

### **Hospitalities and inhospitalities**

Perhaps a house is just a house. But is every house a home? And what does it take for a house, a place of human dwelling, to become a home? Is an empty, unoccupied house—bereft of human presence—a home, or merely a built architecture? A house becomes a home, perhaps, when it is activated by human presence, by some form of social inhabitation and/or interaction, whether familial or other. A house becomes a home when it is lived in. A house becomes a home when it establishes borders of privacy for its inhabitants, and also when its borders are dissolved, when those who live in it, or work in it, welcome in strangers. A house becomes a home when it becomes a place of socialization, when the borders that establish privacy and intimacy are dissolved, made porous, opened up to allow for unexpected social flows. When a house opens itself up to various worlds, whether at the local or global level, it has the potential of becoming a home. This requires generosity, a willingness to share one's private space with others, so that publicness filters in, and the private sphere of the home filters out into public realms. A house is a home when it is a space of hospitality for those who don't live there.

Likewise, a nation is a home when hospitality is shown to the outside world. At this very moment, the United States, my “home,” is in the midst of a political and social struggle to determine whether it is first and foremost a nation of hospitality, or a place of inhospitality. If it will welcome strangers into its midst or turn its back on those it deems to be unfit to be residents in the US—which really means turning its back on itself, for the US is nothing other than a collection of strangers brought together in an imperfect democratic union. Many chose to immigrate there, others were brought by force as slaves, and others, who originally inhabited those lands, were decimated, and yet some US citizens still do not want to make some of their fellow citizens feel at home in their own nation. Structural racism is one factor, along with widening economic inequities that have impacted various races and ethnicities, and those of African descent disproportionately. Some people can only think in terms of borders, exclusions, race-based supremacies, imaginary nativisms, hyper-nationalisms, and the hypocritical scapegoating of people who are part of the backbone of the USA, such as Mexican migrants, US citizens of Mexican descent. President Trump has poured gasoline on the brushfires of bigotry, white resentment, all the while scapegoating people too disempowered to fight back. Throughout his 2016 candidacy, he accused Mexico of deliberately sending “bad hombres,” murderers, and rapists to cross illegally into the US. In 2018, in a ridiculous political stunt designed to scare voters into supporting Republicans, he dispatched US troops to secure the southern border. His nativist, neo-populist vow to “make America great again” was really code language for making the US whiter and more intolerant, and a continuation of his often indecent, racist assault on former President Obama, such as the lies about Obama’s Kenyan birthplace. Yes, Mexico has many of its own domestic political, social and economic problems, some of them exacerbated historically by the US (such as the endless cycle of drug trafficking and violence), but Trump’s demonising of Mexicans, US citizens of Mexican descent, and black people has been repulsive. The fact that nearly 63 million US voters opted for Trump is also repulsive, and perhaps ultimately inexplicable as a collective act of sadism and masochism.

And so, prior to my second visit to Casa Gallina in January 2018, I was somewhat apprehensive that this “bad hombre gringo” (i.e., me) would be treated with suspicion and scorn, given the overall political tensions that the US president has stoked between the two nations. I have been experiencing a profound sense of shame regarding the political discourse in the US, a sense of powerlessness. And yet, from the moment I arrived at Casa Gallina, I perceived an authentic hospitality, a manifestation of undeniable humanness,

an effortless attempt to make an outsider feel comfortable in a new situation. Hospitality is never perfect; nothing is. Hospitality will always involve some degree of awkwardness, with the inevitable tensions that emerge when people meet for the first time. But effective hospitality by the host allows the person being hosted to overcome their anxieties, their sense of un-belonging, to become part of a new social milieu. If I could demonstrate half as much hospitality, generosity and selflessness in my own daily life as I was shown by everyone at Casa Gallina, I’d be twice the person I am today.

### **From Casa Gallina/Mexico City to Tijuana/San Diego, and back again**

My first visit to Casa Gallina happened almost by accident while visiting Mexico City in the spring of 2015 for other purposes. Osvaldo Sánchez, its director, invited me to visit the house and the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood, which I hadn’t heard of previously. At that time, it seemed as if things were just getting started there, with renovation work still in process, and the vegetable garden being planted for the first time. Something that Sánchez mentioned that afternoon has stayed with me: Casa Gallina would not house exhibitions of the art produced by artists who would be invited for residencies at the house. The idea was to break with the normative logics of community-based art organizations, wherein art made by/with locals is put on display for various art publics, so as to endeavor to not set into motion the typical processes of *artification*, so to speak, or neighborhoods that supposedly need to be improved through artistic and other cultural interventions. Within inSite/Casa Gallina, there is still the residue of an Enlightenment-based idea of art as an edifying—or at least a critical—force of potential social, economic, urban and psychological transformation. And there are still traditional vertical hierarchies of knowledge and power, even as there are efforts to dissolve aspects of this verticality so as to produce more co-participative horizontalities. From the moment I visited inSite/Casa Gallina, I was immediately intrigued by the fact that although artists, mainly from the Mexican context, would be invited to engage in long-term research residencies and be commissioned to produce new artworks, neither the artists nor their artworks would be the primary focus. Artists and art would comprise only one aspect of a constellation of cultural, research-based, educational, scientific, communal-social and other activities initiated by inSite/Casa Gallina with residents of the Santa María la Ribera. This community would be the focus of the initiative—not the community exploited in the service of some kind of reconceptualized notion of a social artwork, but rather the community given new opportunities to reconceptualize themselves *as a community*. I think that on an organisational

level, inSite/Casa Gallina has been endeavoring to function in a pragmatically transdisciplinary way, so as to change the paradigm of what it means to be a cultural organisation that seeks to establish a different kind of connection with its local constituencies. Particularly in relation to some of the inherent contradictions of socially engaged, community-based and even social practice. In other words, to a certain extent, as a (self-)critical response to inSite's own history, Casa Gallina is the least art-centric inSite project, the edition that does the most to challenge curatorial conventions, and for these reasons perhaps the most poignantly impactful inSite endeavour.

From its beginnings in 1992, and as it has evolved over the past two decades, one of the things that has distinguished inSite from many other periodic art exhibition platforms is that it was always committed to testing various concepts, formats and platforms of art and curation, as well as the production of unusual discursive platforms to frame the art and curatorial processes. inSite comprised commissioned artists' and architects' projects distributed throughout a range of site/context-driven locations within the Tijuana-San Diego border, to engage multiple audiences, publics, constituencies and passers-by. And while the border was understood to be the locus of artistic investigations and practices, by the late 1990s one could begin to discern a gradual shift in focus away from the commissioning of object-based works at the literal site of the border, towards an effort to increasingly think about the border as a distributed condition beyond the local, and towards the regional and the global. In other words, the border as both literal place and fugitive network of economic, political, corporeal, psychological, military, social and other relations. The border as a fugitive site, at once there and not there, at once specific and liminal, fixed and fluidly redistributed through various social, economic, bodily and other networks. inSite challenged pre-conceived notions of the border between the United States and Mexico, and, more specifically, it challenged artists to engage in expanded forms of site-specificity, social engagement, community collaboration and local research to investigate and reimagine the social, political, economic and other complex and conflictual interpenetrations and transactions that occur within the binational *transborder* environs of Tijuana-San Diego. Functioning as a continuously mutating exhibitionary and discursive platform—really, a laboratory—for artists, architects, designers, writers, activists, intellectuals and other cultural producers to test their own relationships to these territories, whether they live and work within this border zone or not. inSite's model of a *binational* periodic exhibition was always key, since producing a binational exhibition demands that we consider the literal border not merely as that which

divides and alienates the two nations, not only as a place of friction, but also as a space of cooperation. Not only of distinct nationalisms but of shared histories, not a place defined by one-way exploitation of labor forces but also mutual economic opportunity. Most significantly, as a fluid territory of social, economic, political, corporeal and psychological interactions, flows and interdependencies. In general terms, it has always seemed to me that one of the main objectives of inSite was not only to provide a platform to expand notions of site-specificity in art (e.g., the border as site), and challenge the normative biennial model by giving artists opportunities to engage in long-term research/residency-based commissions, but more poignantly to refute the endless stereotypes of the Mexico/US border, and the idea that Tijuana was just a playground for drunken US tourists, or a place of drug-related violence. A binational exhibition model signified the deep interpenetration and interdependence of the two nations. If one observes the progression of inSite's exhibition projects from the 1990s through to the early 2000s, it is possible to identify a progression, on curatorial-conceptual terms, from considering the border as a physical site for materialised artistic and architectural interventions, to an increasingly porous zone of social, economic, political and other flows within which artists experimented with various kinds of collaborative processes, dematerialized practices, actions, events, invisibilities, exchanges and transactions. And yet, as I distinctly recall from my engagement with inSite\_05 as a curatorial interlocutor, the question of sustainability was one of the recurrent issues under discussion. In other words, how can an organization that produces periodic interventions, secure a sustained presence, so that communities don't feel, perhaps, as if they have been abandoned after the conclusion of an episode?

On a blazingly hot day in late August 2005, at the inauguration of inSite\_05, I stood on the beach in Playas de Tijuana, watching a human cannonball propel himself over the border fence from the Mexican side of the border to the US. Cannonball Smith was in fact carrying his passport, just to make certain that he wouldn't be detained by border agents waiting for him to land in a net on the California side of the beach, which he did successfully. This was the central moment of Javier Téllez's *One Flew Over The Void* event-project for inSite\_05, which launched the start of what would be the final version of inSite to take place within the environs of the Tijuana-San Diego border. Today, thirteen years later, it is ironic to think that one of the central campaign promises—and continued desires—of the president of the United States was to build a wall on the US-Mexican border to keep out all of the “rapists” and “bad hombres” crossing the border and supposedly destroying his country's



greatness. Ironically, a border *fence*—as opposed to a border *wall*—might be understood, on symbolic and material terms, to preserve a certain kind of humanity: a fence divides, but it also allows people to see each other, to touch one another, to allow communication through and across. It has a kind of permeability. It is the kinder, gentler kind of border device, to spin it in a perversely humorous way. The fence allows for fragmented families to have picnics on the beach with each other, on each side of the border. The fence also suggests, at least to me, the arbitrariness of the border. Perhaps a fence suggests a kind of impermanence, whereas a wall suggest permanence—precisely the kind of divisive, isolationist, ultra-nationalist message that Trump wants to send. And it stands in stark contrast to the message that the defiantly binational inSite project has been sending since the early 1990s: that Mexican and US citizens need to engage with each other, that our current lives and our destinies are interconnected. Téllez’s *One Flew Over The Void* reminded us of the arbitrariness of borders, that they mainly serve to divide and alienate people from each other, that they isolate nations, that they amplify differences rather than promote affinities, that they entrap us within pernicious ideologies of ultra-nationalism.

If there is a project from inSite\_05 that seems to anticipate, at least on broad conceptual terms, aspects of inSite/Casa Gallina, it might be Paul Ramírez-Jonas’s *Mi Casa, Su Casa*, which explored various conditions of trust and distrust within the border communities of Tijuana and San Diego. And more than exploring these conditions, Ramírez-Jonas set out to test just the extent to which members of this binational border territory trusted one another ... with the keys to each other’s homes or personal properties, our private domains. Is my home your home? Is your home my home? What do we mean by community and hospitality when people are divided by a border, regardless of how porous or impermeable that border happens to be? Can we locate the membranes that divide and unite us? Are these just two sides of the same geopolitical, or nation-state coin? If Californians don’t trust Mexicans, why? If Mexicans don’t trust Californians, why? *Mi Casa, Su Casa* sought to explore conditions of trust between the Tijuana and San Diego communities at a time of increasing drug-related violence on the Mexico side of the border, which of course is fed by the drug-consumption habits in the US, leading to an endless vicious cycle. And it could be suggested that one of the reasons that the inSite organisation decided not to continue producing exhibition projects within the border environs of Tijuana-San Diego was due to the escalation of violence in Tijuana in the years following 2005. And if inSite was to continue in some form or matter, how might this be articulated?

To expand beyond the border towards some kind of globalized network of projects exploring other borders, to reinvent itself within another locality, while retaining some of its traditional operating systems (such as commissioning artists to engage in socially driven, research-based projects), or, to cease its operations and exist only as an archive of practices and knowledge?

### **A curatorial platform beyond the curatorial, beyond art**

The conceptual and operational framework for inSite/Casa Gallina is at once curatorial, meta-curatorial and post-curatorial, in the sense that although the house evolved out of the trajectory of inSite’s history of curatorial models and methodologies, the project indicates that there are ways to push the curatorial beyond itself, at the level of both discourse and practice, so that the curatorial is allowed to morph into something as of yet undefinable, or that at least avoiding easy categorization. Terms such as “Agents of change,” “Environmental empathy,” “Social creativity,” “Producing locality” and “Solidarity economies” appear in a section of the inSite/Casa Gallina website that refers to “Search fields.”

Such complex discourse is based upon preliminary research conducted in the neighborhood, the framework extrapolated from material conditions on the ground, and then re-deployed as a kind of flexible operating system that facilitates dynamics of collaboration and co-participation. To visit Casa Gallina and its neighborhood is to witness how complicated concepts have been converted through organic social processes, involving moments of difficult struggle and shared joy, into useful social participations and everyday processes of knowledge-sharing. Maybe we can think of it as a pragmatic utopia that offers a model or template for others to emulate, or to experiment with.

In 2014, three “Contextual Studies” of the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood were commissioned to “engage a group of cultural anthropologists to produce a social map of the sixteen-block radius surrounding the house.”<sup>1</sup> These “multidimensional readings of the local environment” process involved deep collaboration with residents, comprised of a first mapping termed a “Socio-cultural and Human Diagnosis,” and includes extensive historical, social and demographic information on the history and present situation of the neighborhood; the second mapping was “La Dalia Market ethnographic survey,” which provides an analysis of the neighborhood’s main market, and its importance as a site of networked social, economic, spatial and other

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1. [http://insite.org.mx/wp/en/et\\_barrio/first-mapping-socio-cultural-and-human-diagnosis/](http://insite.org.mx/wp/en/et_barrio/first-mapping-socio-cultural-and-human-diagnosis/)

local interrelationships; and “Iconoclastas collective mapping,” which is a publication and a poster that considers the impact of gentrification in the locality, among other things. If we superimpose these three studies we might gain a contextual sense of the neighborhood, on the basis of the local knowledge of local residents. The studies are not only about forming a set of knowledges and new cartographies of place, but also a means of establishing a network of local social connections, and planting the seeds of trust with members of the community—and beyond this, a way of creating methodologies of collaboration with local residents that could be utilized subsequently by artists in residence, as well as by other specialists to experiment with various forms of engagement with local citizens. Planting the seeds of contact and collaboration with neighborhood residents has also taken the form of a **Vegetable Garden**, wherein sustainable practices are used to harvest various vegetables and herbs, and workshops with community members take place on a weekly basis.

In a sense, Casa Gallina is an edifice that operates as a permeable membrane between private space and community space, to the extent that such distinctions begin to dissolve, to slip into each other, so that questions of ownership or control are triggered. If a house, or a home, is the border between the private and the public, between isolation and contact, between the individual/family and the individuals and families that constitute the neighborhood communities, then perhaps inSite/Casa Gallina has endeavored to break down the traditional lines of demarcations that separate us from others. There is a kind of utopianism at work, but one that is underpinned by rigorously pragmatic and relentlessly innovative research, analysis and outreach to the people who constitute the neighborhood. There is a grassroots realpolitik operating here, even if to a certain extent it was set into motion by an organization that does not come from the neighborhood, but has made itself a part of it, as much as any outsiders can. But what is the tipping point when outsiders become insiders ... or increasingly undifferentiated from insiders?

Maybe because there has been a realization that for all of the benefits of art, there is, paradoxically, another side: that even the most progressive, socially embedded forms of art can sometimes become the stumbling block to helping to bring about sustainable forms of economic justice, if we identify contemporary art and its market and institutional systems as contributing, perhaps inadvertently, to the inequitable redevelopment of certain transitional parts of cities. My sense is that inSite/Casa Gallina has been making every effort to avoid such consequences by deciding, from the start, to avoid presenting itself

as just another art hub in the global system of art/cultural tourism, by de-centring itself from the art radars. At Casa Gallina, art and artists have their roles to play, but those roles are not more elevated than the roles played by specialists from other areas. And no one can play their roles without the key role players: the residents of the neighborhood. While there is an institutional structure and hierarchy in the house, and outside patronage funding it, there is also an ethos of social egalitarianism and participatory labor (and leisure time) that seems to pervade the situation. And maybe it also embodies an unusual intersection of—and mutually sustaining partnership between—top-down and grassroots culture. Social and creative interdependence is the operational system. In these important respects, inSite/Casa Gallina therefore represents a significant revision to inSite’s previous model: although artists have residencies in the house and are commissioned to develop projects with members of the community, the resultant artworks/art projects are not displayed at Casa Gallina, but rather displaced or decontextualized, perhaps ironically, from its origin of process and production into traditional art spaces such as museums and galleries. Sánchez explained to me in 2015 that this was to avoid reproducing a very familiar exhibitionary logic, wherein art spaces may inadvertently, or sometimes quite deliberately, set into motion processes of cultural tourism that may lead to unfair urban redevelopment (or, gentrification), potentially displacing the very communities that a socially engaged project seeks to empower, to care for, to protect. I was immediately impressed with this decision, with the fact that there would be no openings, avoiding wealthy art patrons from one neighborhood parachuting in for a party in a transitional neighborhood, and all of the obvious uncomfortable contradictions of such situations. The desire to protect the neighborhood from being overrun by art publics is an ethical, even a moral, decision. It is almost as if inSite wanted to protect Casa Gallina from itself. It seemed to be a smart way to avoid not only the perception but the reality that the whole project was just about using—or exploiting—the cultural labor of the community for the sake of art. Indeed, that normative logic is reversed.

During my visit in January 2018, I met with Mexico City-based artist Erick Meyenberg, who produced the first “co-participative project” commissioned by inSite/Casa Gallina. From 2014 through 2016, Meyenberg collaborated with the Los Lobos Band from the Colegio Hispanoamericano (a school located just a short walk from Casa Gallina in Santa María la Ribera) in a series of public presentations, and eventually produced a multi-channel video installation, entitled *The Wheel Bears No Resemblance To a Leg*. Based upon my conversation with the artist, it seemed as if this was a challenging, complex

project, which Meyenberg embarked upon not having a predetermined idea of where it would lead, or what would result. How could it be otherwise, since the art was as much about what was experienced during the collaborative process as the end-product, so to speak, that was eventually displayed at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, and then the Americas Society in New York? The inSite/Casa Gallina framework asks artists to reconsider where, when, how and why the ‘art’ is actually made, and there is a sense that the ephemeral, social processes of collaboration—or co-participation—with residents of the neighborhood are just as much the art as the tangible artworks. In other words, the process is one dimension, so to speak, of the art, just as the exhibited artwork that results from the process is another dimension of the art(work). And the process is a product of the process too. And, as mentioned earlier, inSite’s decision not to display the resultant artworks within the context of Casa Gallina, but instead displace or recontextualize artworks into formal art institutional settings, indicates an effort to reduce the potential that the house will inadvertently function as an indirect incubator for unfair urban redevelopment.

And while the art residencies/commissions form one strand of inSite/Casa Gallina, for me the heart, soul and maybe even the brain might actually be the constellation of events, classes, interactions and other activities that take place in and around the house on a daily basis, and at various locations around the neighborhood. These have nothing to do with contemporary art per se, even if what has facilitated these events is an art organization, and a curatorial framework that rethinks the curatorial as a methodology that can be enacted, responsibly, far beyond the precincts of contemporary art. For instance, I also met with Elias Cattán, a trained architect and founder of Taller13, which is engaged with ‘regenerative architecture’, a way of thinking about how environmental, urban and architectural design and other activities must relate to the living ecosystems of cities that are at once social, political and environmental. I had a conversation with Cattán just before he conducted one of the sustainable urban design workshops with students, emerging professionals, designers, urbanists and others, focusing on the water basin systems in Mexico City and surrounding environs, and the local repercussions for Santa María la Ribera (a component of the “Living with Water: Getting to Know the Valley of Mexico River Basin” project). Cattán spoke with an urgency about the watershed crisis, and his commitment to helping people in the neighborhood to develop increasingly sustainable strategies for everyday life. Fundamentally, Cattán helps to guide and train younger generations to develop new skill sets to come up with imaginative ways to

protect local ecosystems, and to reimagine how the urban context is interdependent on broader ecosystems, and various man-made ecocrises.

inSite/Casa Gallina hosts a variety of workshops for/with members of the community, including basic computer training for senior citizens, children’s programs, healthy cooking workshops, multiple workshops dealing with a range of collective urban gardening processes, participative journalism, how to make ecologically responsible cleaning products, hydroponics seminars, pasta workshops, graphic design courses, and many others. In all of these activities, outside people are brought in to meet with those living and working in the neighborhood within the context of the house, in order to produce a kind of transversal interpenetration of knowledges and ideas, so that both outsiders and insiders will take what they have experienced back to their respective localities, situations and homes and perhaps apply it. The idea is that inSite/Casa Gallina operates as a platform for these interactions and processes, but that the processes do not end at the house, but rather are redistributed outwards into the social flows of the neighborhood. Everything is archived at the house and on the website: there is a compression of knowledge. But this archive is continuously reanimated through daily use, and therefore the knowledge is also always being decompressed. While walking around Santa María la Ribera with Josefa Ortega (a member of the inSite/Casa Gallina team who is responsible for the general coordination), I was shown a number of small storefront shops that participate in the **Synergies** initiative, wherein local designers and signage experts collaborate with local business owners on the ‘creative regeneration’ of their facades.

With **Synergies**, we see inSite/Casa Gallina operating as instigator, mediator, interlocutor and producer of potentially new networks of collaboration within the extant conditions of the neighborhood, for the sake of the neighborhood, as a way to help guide members of the community to reshape their own urban spaces and places, for themselves. Art and design are elements of these processes, but art and design are put in the service of reinventing conditions of life in the area. In other words, a process of incubating exchanges between various kinds of knowledge (local knowledges and non-local knowledges), creating the possibility of reciprocal transfers of expertise, skill sets, ideas and dreams that seek to trouble traditional hierarchical arrangements of pedagogy and power. It is never easy to dislodge the logic of top-down cultural processes, to work in a more non-hierarchical way wherein the local grassroots are offered a platform. For even the act of attempting to reanimate the local grassroots suggests a disparity of power, since one group

is attempting to empower another that may be deemed deficient in certain power. There is an othering that occurs between one and another.

Perhaps one of the key accomplishments of inSite/Casa Gallina is that through acts of radical hospitality, ingenious community engagement, imaginative pedagogy and unique forms of social collaboration, a restored old house has become a second home to the residents of Santa María la Ribera—who, in turn, are reactivating the life of the house on a daily basis. It might also be useful to think about inSite/Casa Gallina as a kind of meta-grassroots endeavor, wherein the inSite organization, with its ties to Mexico City, planted the seeds in the form of a house which has become a *tool* in the hands of the local community, and has managed the home as an instrument for knowledge-production and hopefully self-empowerment for those residents who have taken advantage of inSite/Casa Gallina's hospitality. This also means that the residents of this neighborhood have also engaged in acts of hospitality by engaging with inSite/Casa Gallina. Hospitality and trust are two-way streets, to say the least.

Yet nothing guaranteed that this project would succeed; it was just as likely that local residents would perceive it as a foreign incursion, an unwelcome intervention into their lives, perhaps even the beginnings of a form of gentrification, and just not engage. This is where the trust becomes essential, and in a sense, I think the story of inSite/Casa Gallina might fundamentally be about establishing and maintaining trust in a world where it is difficult to trust anything or anyone. The house as a tool to be used by the community; the house as an instrument of social engagement that is embedded within the social flows of the neighborhood, endlessly reactivated and reanimated by people using it in a variety of ways, for various purposes. The house as an instrument of remapping the neighborhood, and a tool used by residents to remap themselves within the neighborhood. The only way any of this works is through the establishment of trust. Trust, in a sense, is its own project; trust needs to be worked on; trust must be cultivated between “outsiders” and “insiders,” between strangers and friends, between people separated by borders and walls, and between demographics, classes, races and ideological tribalisms. One of the clearest manifestations of this kind of trust at Casa Gallina is the **Prestaduría vecinal**, an initiative that provides neighborhood residents a resource to borrow tools, household appliances and other utilitarian things. It is essentially a small-scale sharing economy project that builds solidarity within the neighborhood, underpinned by generosity and trust. Furthermore, to extend the bricks-and-mortar site of Casa Gallina

beyond the neighborhood, beyond its local communities and into the internet, there is a social media dimension: the Casa Gallina Facebook page. But this Facebook page is not really an advertisement or promotion of inSite/Casa Gallina's ongoing activities designed to grab our attention, but rather a site for those who utilize Casa Gallina to keep each other informed of events and activities in the house, and to encourage others from the neighborhood to join in. It's a social media platform repurposed into a meeting place of networked localities.

Another way of thinking about inSite/Casa Gallina—as I suggested earlier by citing the example of Project Row Houses—is that it is a rather inspired response to the question of how cultural initiatives within localities might generate authentic sustainability beyond original remits and time frames, perhaps even lead to a certain kind of permanence, as long as those who live and work in the neighborhood and surrounding urban environs can continue to make use of the house-as-home, which is to me the ultimate criterion of evaluation. We might say that Casa Gallina has become a place of and for its neighborhood, its communities, even if it was originally established by people (i.e., the inSite organization) from outside this neighborhood, place and community, even if in certain ways they have become members of the neighborhood, the locality, the community. Just as, in certain ways, the neighborhood has become part of inSite. This is not to say that there will not always be differences, frictions and tensions, because that is just a part of the character of heterogeneous urbanisms ... perhaps even the hallmark of authentic cosmopolitan life that is fast disappearing in our cities, replaced by the smooth surfaces of homogeneity and monoculture. Without the trust of a sufficient number of residents of the Santa María la Ribera, inSite/Casa Gallina would probably have collapsed. If those who live and work in the neighborhood had not come to identify Casa Gallina as their home, as their instrument of potential (self-)transformation, the project would have already failed, and this book would probably not be necessary. And yet, here we are. With a long-term *embedded intervention* such as inSite/Casa Gallina initiated by outsiders who have become insiders/outsideers, there will inevitably be questions such as: Who belongs? What is belonging? Is power being shared? Who benefits? Have normative hierarchies been dissolved in favor of structures that are more equitable? What are the trade-offs? How will inSite/Casa Gallina continue to influence the evolution of Santa María la Ribera? Does inSite/Casa Gallina offer a model that is reproducible elsewhere in Mexico City – or elsewhere in the world? To me, what distinguishes inSite/Casa Gallina is the ethos of human unselfishness that pervades the house, the

home—an ethos that we could all learn from in an era of fragmenting societies, of communities breaking down into atomized enclaves of self-interestedness. inSite/Casa Gallina invites us in to become less selfish, and to find the neighborliness within ourselves.

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**Joshua Decter** is a writer, curator, and art historian. He is on the faculty of the MA Curatorial Practice program at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, where he lives and works.



# Open Table: Creating Bonds

Friends Dining on a Blind Date / From 5 to 7

**Friends Dining on a Blind Date** is a neighborhood get together initiative that seeks to foster a moment of dialogue between neighbors who don't know each other, who, through dinner and after-dinner conversation, establish unpredictable interactions that can stimulate the creation of bonds of friendship and mutual recognition between inhabitants of the same neighborhood.

These dinners have taken place during the first week of every month since October 2017. In February 2018, **From 5 to 7** began, using a similar format. A special guest—from outside the neighborhood and with an alternative way of life related to the environmental concerns, collective effort and other inSite/Casa Gallina interests—is invited to each of these gatherings.

Using the same format, a version of the **From 5 to 7** get togethers was carried out for neighbors between the ages of 16 and 22; it focused on the topics of ecological regeneration and rescuing chinampas as a form of cultivation. (J.O. and R.C.)







“It was undoubtedly a pleasant experience. The possibility of getting to know our neighbors in a relaxed and friendly environment helps to build a healthy, committed, and supportive community, which in the end will result in beneficial actions for our surroundings, such as rescuing common areas, the rearrangement of the social fabric, and the maintenance of the architectural heritage, to name a few.”

*Georgina Navarrete, neighbor and independent journalist*



“To me, it seemed like an enriching experience; neighbors got to know each other a bit more, we spent time together, we learned what each other does and what we like about the neighborhood. It seems a great idea to me for inSite/Casa Gallina to organize and provide neighbors with this type of experience; I like the neighborhood and what’s being done here.”

*Yazmín Cabrera, neighbor and accountant*



“For me it was a wonderful and original way of meeting and spending time with the neighbors. I felt like I was among friends and I’m very grateful to the hosts. The dinner was delicious and the company was excellent.”

*Mar Jasso, neighbor and retired teacher*





# The Trust Route, Circulating Support

Prestaduría vecinal (Neighborhood Lending Program)

The **Prestaduría vecinal** began operating in June 2017, placing tools and domestic appliances in a common fund accessible to neighbors who register as members. They can borrow up to three items for a period of between two and seven days. It is a system based on trust and the notion that sharing is better than consuming. Up until November 2018, there have been about 600 loans processed and 200 registered neighbors, who between them have additionally donated 56 tools to expand the available supply. The **Prestaduría vecinal** space opens three times a week; it has a manager who knows about the general use of tools and can advise the neighbors on their individual projects. The first manager was the neighbor Rafael Maya, who was in charge from June 2017 to June 2018. Currently, Alejandro Maya, also originally from Santa María la Ribera, is in charge of the **Prestaduría vecinal**.

The tools that have been most requested are: electric extension cables, drills, jigsaws, sewing machine, hammer drills, the power washer, sanders, and two- and seven-meter ladders. Two of these were chosen for further study of their use: the jigsaw, which has been borrowed 29 times, and the sewing machine, which has been borrowed 27 times. By speaking with several users about the projects that they undertook with them, a record of the life of these tools over the past year and a half was created. The images that narrate this path were created by the illustrator Gibrán Turón, a Santa María la Ribera resident, who also participated in the **Visual Identities for Neighborhood Businesses** project. (R.C.)



# Prestaduría:

Two Examples of Community Use



**Claudia**, 37 years old. Made sweaters for her dogs.



**Cristina**, 37 years old. Made skirts for her daughters' school festival.

**José Anselmo**, 45 years old. His wife made a skirt for his daughter.



**Guadalupe**, 42 years old. Made curtains for her house.

**Nayeli**, 36 years old. Reused old clothes and she and her children made curtains out of them.



**Juan Carlos**, 34 years old. Made a roll-up tool case.



**Tanya**, 27 years old. Wanted to recycle old pants.

**Marco Antonio**, 38 years old. His wife sewed pants and fixed dresses.



**Teresa**, 68 years old. Wanted to make new bed sheets.

**Leila and Shawn**, 37 years old. Made curtains and pillow cases.



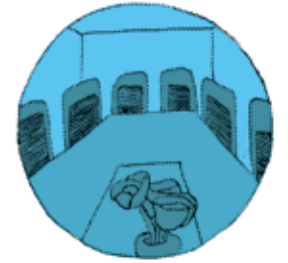
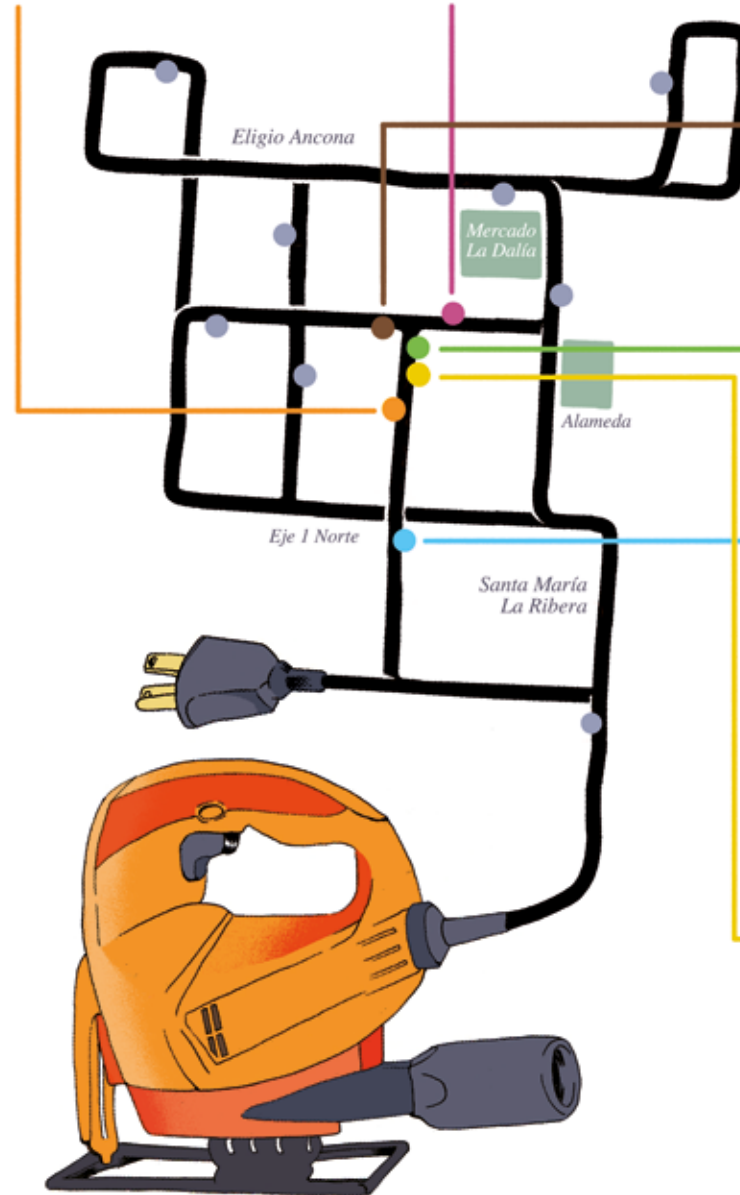
**Omar**, 34 years old. Made a bookcase and shelves for his house.



**Mauricio**, 35 years old. Made bases for wine bottles.



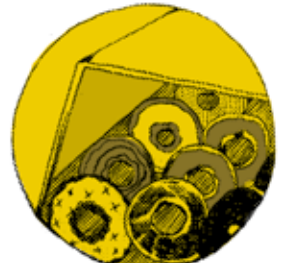
**Abraham**, 22 years old. Made the new bar for his coffee shop.



**Raúl**, 55 years old. Matched a dining room with six chairs.



**Josefina**, 34 years old. Cut and aligned the legs for a garden table.



**Efrém**, 37 years old. Helped a friend make a display case for his business.

Illustration: Gibrán Turón, neighbor and illustrator





Star Dental. Consultorio Dental • Lorena Jáuregui



Pastelería Hidalgo • Miguel Angelo Sánchez



Tortillería y molino La Dalia • Heby Lucas



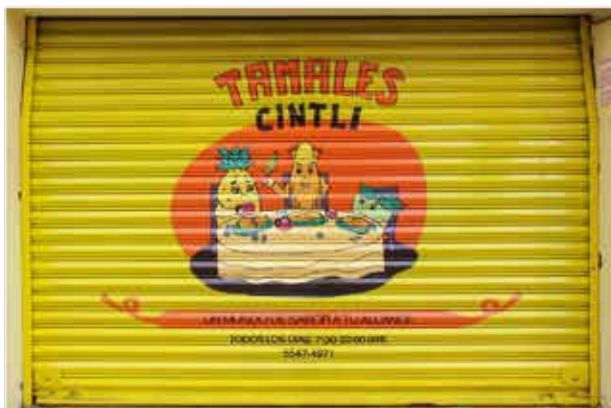
Servicio Morales • Gibrán Turón



Servicios de mantenimiento San José • Cynthia Cerón



Pepe pollos • Karen Vega



Tamales Cintli • Jimena Vidal



Farmacia San Rafael • Larissa Loza

# Business Owners and Designers: The Image as a Point of Conversation

Local Synergies: Visual Identities

Within the **Synergies** platform, the **Visual Identities for Neighborhood Businesses** project consists of creating a graphic identity for the front metal curtains of certain Santa María la Ribera business premises. The project is focused on inviting the participation of those business owners that have been economically active in the area for at least five years. The intention is to generate a network of collaborative work between graphic designers, sign-makers and the business owners themselves for a common good: the regeneration of the neighborhood's public space.

The working dynamic starts from a dialogue between the business owner and a previously assigned designer to share a bit of their life story in relation to the neighborhood, their tastes, and, above all, the ideas that they imagine for their curtain. Once the design is finished, the sign-maker gets involved to transfer it to the curtain. Subsequently, the professionals serve as facilitators of a design that is the product of consensus between both parties, which they share with the sign-makers to discuss the design's feasibility in regards to their experience in the field. Besides visibly impacting the urban landscape, **Visual Identities for Neighborhood Businesses** opens up the possibility of generating empathy and neighborhood bonds through the shared labor of collective and citizen action toward a common interest. (V.C.)



Bello Café • Joze Daniel





Tortas Tío Pepe • León Barrios



Servicios Especializados • Colectivo Zoveck



Nisi. Nail's Clinique • Hugo Mendoza



Anteojería Metropolitana • Ana Laura Hernández



Caxel Estética • Alejandro García



Estética Yoss • Luz Yépez



Top BB • Iván Álvarez



Lonchería La Hidalguense • Cristina García



Sastrería La Esperanza • Juan Pablo Guzmán



Peluquería Fresno • Carmen Camacho



Fonda Las Cazuelas • Lorena Jáuregui



Planchadoría Mirry • Sonia Pérez



Lavandería Express One • Karina Oropeza



Fonda Los sabores del alma • Rocío Espíndola & Ángel Ramón Flores



Distribuidora Gilly. Productos de belleza • Mora Díez



Pan alta fibra. Panadería • Xiadani Calderón





### Mariana Aranda / Designer

- My name is Mariana Aranda Díaz, I have been here in the neighborhood for just over two years. I like Santa María la Ribera a lot, well it's more than just a neighborhood, it has a lot of activity, movement, people, attractions. I came to you guys through a friend who lives around here and she told me, "You need to see [Casa Gallina on Facebook] because they're looking for designers and illustrators." I'm an illustrator, I studied graphic design, but my passion has always been illustrating!
- It was a very enriching experiencing in many ways. As an intervention in public space, but also in the social and in the personal. In conversations with the business owner, I proposed a hand holding some of the Earth's fruits, because she cooks with organic ingredients. I also proposed integrating plants and flowers and the colors that she likes.
- Another part of the project that delighted me was the relationship with the sign-maker. It was very enriching to also preserve those roots, not only to the place where they live, but to the tradespeople who are losing their place in society, and to value them.
- Coming here and going to the house was great, the vibe was incredible.

### Lizbeth Maximino / Owner

- My name is Lizbeth Maximino Lara and my business is called Juliz: Fonda Gourmet.
- It was a very beautiful experience, I liked it a lot because we "clicked." She understood exactly what I wanted, we chatted a lot, I told her my experiences, what I like, and she captured it so well that it wasn't necessary to make big changes in what she had designed. I told her that I had worn my hair long for a long time, that I really like the sun. Orange is one of my favorite colors. She captured it perfectly, she proposed hands that touched the name Juliz, that hold it up because this is a family business.
- My business came down to me from my mother, she had a restaurant. Later I studied gastronomy, specializing in pastry-making and that is how Juliz emerged, also my daughter Julia helps me in the business and it is through her that I met you guys.



### Karen Vega / Designer

- I knew Mr. Rubén, the business owner, by sight, because he's [located] really close to the market.
- His greatest wish or his biggest dream was to have a record shop, but it wasn't profitable. His favorite group is the Beatles, so I proposed to him: "And if we do something with a submarine?"
- He told me that he liked that it was so simple but that at the same time it reflected something that was in his dreams and that he felt strongly about. What I liked about this project was that there was a context. Or rather, that yes it's about a tenant but it's also about the person who lives here: what he wants to say, who he is, in a place where there are so many of us.
- Walking around here has been very important for me, many of the shutters that have been worked on are close to where I live, it has made me recognize the background of the people who work here. Ultimately those who work here are the ones who spend the most time in the neighborhood and who give Santa María la Ribera its identity and I think that is why it's so popular.

### Rubén Núñez / Owner

- I am Rubén Núñez. My connection with inSite/Casa Gallina started when they graciously came to offer to paint my shutter. It seemed like a good idea to me: this is a small business, I don't have many resources and it was a great help, and I also really liked what they did.
- When she came and asked me what I like, looking for something she could use to paint the curtain, I said "Well, I really like the music of the Beatles, why don't we put a submarine and some bubbles?" The business is named "Regis" after the mother of my children and she captured it very well, she captured the idea, it was something that seemed like a complicated and complex moment and she made it seem very simple.
- The shutters look very unpleasant because they are covered in graffiti or the paint is old and damaged; the fact that the curtains are so well designed and painted on all of Sabino Street, from Díaz Mirón to Carpio, makes them look so much better.
- Two or three words to describe you: one is "creativity" and the other is "the desire to help the community" and the other one that comes to me, that should come first, is "thank you."





## A Week at Casa Gallina

Jesús Carrillo

You eat in the kitchen at Casa Gallina, but with the fork in your left hand and the knife in your right. Eating is only one of the things that happen there. The kitchen is a meeting room, educational workshop and passageway between the garden, the chicken coop and the stairs up to the floor, where the resident artists' rooms are located. From the kitchen, one can hear the conversations and the comings and goings of those who visit the house, and to reach the kitchen you have to cross the different rooms, greet and be greeted by those who are carrying out their work. The kitchen is the mouth, stomach, eyes, tongue, ears and circulatory system at the same time. It is, without a doubt, the best place to know what is going on. A good part of my stay at Casa Gallina took place in the kitchen and the beautiful porch that extends toward the garden. The kitchen is a metaphor for the house and the house is a metaphor for the entire project.

Everyone goes through the kitchen and almost everything takes place in the kitchen. Inviting newcomers there, mixing people from the house with strangers, easily summarizes the philosophy of inSite/Casa Gallina. You're not a stranger by the time you've reached the stove. You're served coffee or herbal tea, you chat with whomever is there and get down to work, joining in with the collective tasks. There is always something to do in the kitchen: lunch, a workshop, a talk, a meeting. It is the place for collective work. It is not just any type of work, but that which is related to nourishing and sustaining the body and social life that is the focus of inSite/Casa Gallina. The continuity between the kitchen and the garden and the chicken coop reinforces the principle of necessity that sustains the house and that it seeks to exemplify. Care of life—one's own and of the environment, starting from the nearby and everyday—is proposed as a substrate of resistance and the foundation of an organic growth outside the logics of accumulation and consumption.

The kitchen has customary rules, rooted in memory and in the stomach, that suspend other frameworks and divisions that dislocate the space and rhythm of life outside. Thus, the kitchen is also a refuge and a laboratory, a uterus, and acting hands. The kitchen's rules show the logic of a necessary order, of an authority that operates in a distributed way through the internalized and the tacit, and which is performatively, ritually affirmed in each meeting, workshop or meal, and is aesthetically visible through the order, cleanliness and fresh flowers that adorn the table. The tone and content of the conversations that I had in Casa Gallina during my visit in March 2018 with neighbors, collaborators and artists rarely infringed upon the order and decorum that govern the kitchen. When I noticed, I started to meet my interlocutors outside the house.



When going out the front door, on the way to the market or before entering the neighboring church, or passing by on the way to Abraham Bello's cafe, there is nothing in the façade of the house that indicates that there is a project of vital, cultural and artistic experimentation taking place behind it that defies the most common prejudices and definitions. Unlike any other art space, inSite/Casa Gallina avoids calling attention to itself or imposing itself as a singular landmark in the serene and decadent urban landscape of the neighborhood of Santa María la Ribera. Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega, who have led the project since it began in 2014, recount that there was barely any activity during the first year and they busied themselves with learning the dynamics of the neighborhood, listening to its stories and understanding its logics, from a yet unmarked place, although embedded in a slowly matured project with clearly defined organizational and practical aspects and artistic, political and ethical foundations.

They both come from the art world's overflows into the social, either in its projection toward public space, from the institution of the museum—Osvaldo—or from complicity with sustainable alternatives to consumerism and the exploitation of human and natural resources—Josefa.

The transition from the logic of the event and representation, of the festival and exhibition, to that of a house, is a great challenge. It is not merely about the institutional knot of practices of social vocation, such as those that have been invented at inSite for years. By being conceived of as a house rather than a colony, the rules of the organization are not exclusively deduced from a meditation on artistic practice, but they derive from the continuous negotiation with the *nomos* of the place that it is a part of and to which it seeks to belong.

The door to the street is usually closed, before opening it they loudly ask who is there. In Casa Gallina, as in many zones of Mexico City, there is no buzzer to open the door, indicating a generic prevention in regards to who can come in from the street. This shocks someone like me, who comes from a place (Madrid) with a street sociability that is not too different from that of Mexico, but that has much more relaxed security filters in relation to the outside. Once inside there are no doors and nobody is surprised by your presence. There are a dozen people distributed in rooms aligned like a train, busy with their work or chatting with visitors. Everyone seems to know why you have come. Josefa not only knows, but she has designed and planned my days in the house with such precision that there is no free time, other than to have a water or coffee between conversations and meetings. The others seem to have rhythms that are equally patterned, as individually marked as each of them, that fit together with apparent ease.

This link between personal autonomy and intimate collaboration is far from the hierarchical and stagnate hierarchical division of labor in the institutions that I have come across. Here each person develops a project from start to finish, regardless of whether other team members or external participants are eventually involved. The atmosphere of trust in individual effort and group solidarity may have to do with the fact that, despite the presence of men and masculine codes, the house responds to a “feminine” form of governance, not to use the term “feminist,” that barely came up in our conversations. In the dynamics of the house, inside and outside, production and reproduction, action and care seem to be seamlessly interwoven. Possibly, the intermittent presence of Osvaldo and the more constant present of Josefa contributed to that impression, as did the fact that much of the responsibility for the mediation and care of children, youth and families primarily falls on two men, David Hernández and Rodrigo Simancas, who lovingly carry out their mission—a type of work that traditionally falls on women, at least in some territories. Meanwhile, the person responsible for identifying and contacting the social actors in the neighborhood beyond the doors of the house is a woman, the anthropologist and neighborhood resident, Rosa Elba Camacho.

Shortly before flying to Mexico City, Josefa informed me that I wasn't going to stay at the house together with the two resident artists, but rather in the neighborhood of La Condesa, a well-known part of the city characterized by Amsterdam Street's hippodrome-like shape that rings the beautiful Parque Mexico, in front of which I had green *chilaquiles* for breakfast on the hotel terrace. La Condesa, full of restaurants, trendy bars and athletic neighbors jogging at any



time of day, was, according to my hosts, much safer for me than Santa María la Ribera. The social and racial profile of my neighbors in La Condesa—wealthy and white—and the well-cared-for, beautiful garden surrounded by rhododendron contrasted with the abundant rubble and boarded-up houses that clearly demonstrated the serious effects of the earthquake a few months back in September. My resistance to admitting the reasons for that unexpected change reveals, more than anything, my difficulty interpreting the human landscape and my position within it as a foreigner. The friendly sociability that breathed within Santa María la Ribera did not seem to correspond, from my perspective coming from Madrid, with the terrible stories of kidnappings and murders that I had been told about not only by Josefa and Osvaldo, but systematically by all the members of the community who I interviewed. After confirming the uselessness of my initial protests, I ended up accepting their proposed location, and began to introduce into my daily routine large walks from one neighborhood to another at the beginning and end of the day, which allowed me to physically take into account the dimensions of the center of Mexico City, its zonal structure, and its urban and human particularities. Those daily walks were interwoven with the stories gathered from my interviewees and those told to me by my new friend, Andrés Ramírez, during large nocturnal rounds in which I accompanied him while he waited, bicycle at hand, for home delivery orders. The initial sensation of an immeasurable city traversed by the never-ending Insurgentes Avenue was eventually replaced by one of a series of singular neighborhoods, each with its own personality, whose dimensions became accessible when walking. The cadence of many of the stories, that spoke of successive crises provoked by political or geological instability, contributed to generating the image of a fragile city, conscious of its future extinction, as if the lagoons of its basin were waiting to reconquer their territory.



Casa Gallina has two rooms, beside the front door, that open to the outside world: one called **Salón Huevo@**, a space that is open a few hours a day in which any neighbor can sit to read or talk, and where educational activities take place on the weekend; and the **Prestaduría vecinal**, a loan office or tool bank that separates access to the most common tools from individual property. They are barely distinguishable from any of the other workshops or businesses in the area, and more than being claimed by the house they are defined by their use and the function they perform. It is not a mere tactic of impersonating local customs as camouflage. inSite/Casa Gallina's mission is

to become part of the general landscape, ceasing to be an artificial 'cultural' intrusion, and to organically integrate itself into the complex life of the neighborhood. **Salón Huevo@** and the **Prestaduría vecinal** seek to operate, like the house itself, without imposing on the neighborhood and starting from the relational logics that neighborhood logics recognize as their own, even though they may have been lost or may be in the process of being lost: collective learning and the use of common goods based on mutual trust. Agents from the community itself are incorporated into their management, who introduce the know-hows and logics of the neighborhood with them.

Pavel Valdés, partly responsible for **Salón Huevo@**, is the great-grandson of the owner of a stained-glass business, located in the nearby Chopo Street, and he still remembers the large family residence, similar to Casa Gallina, which his family had to abandon at the end of the 1990s because of the economic crisis and population changes in the neighborhood. His memory of a childhood in which the countryside and the city were interwoven in large domestic gardens permeates his intense adult activity in permaculture in different parts of the country and, consequently, in the contents of the workshops in which he participates in the house. The small modern apartment to which the family had to move after the dismantling of the stained glass industry has turned into a logistical center for the distribution of coffee produced by indigenous communities. With his presence at **Salón Huevo@**, Pavel transmits the continuity as well as the traumatic discontinuity of life in the neighborhood. His account evokes a nostalgia for a lost past and shows a mistrust in regards to the future, these sentiments being mixed with a proud sense of identity based on ethical and political principles of sustainability and care for the environment.

Rafa Maya, a resident of the neighborhood for around twenty years, is in charge of the **Prestaduría vecinal**. He has a very different profile from Pavel. He arrived in Santa María around the time Pavel's family had to leave their home. The memory that Rafa has of the neighborhood is not inherited from a lost childhood, but derived from an intense socialization associated with labor cutting molds in a workshop that satisfied the demand of local businesses; it became the meeting point for a certain group of men and a privileged knoll of the territory and its people. Rafa is without a doubt a renowned character in the community, it is his authority that protects and makes possible the exercise of shared responsibility for the common goods held in the **Prestaduría vecinal**. His initial connection with the house, as in Pavel's case, had to do with his personal interest in ecology and his aspiration that his home be self-sufficient and clean, reducing the harmful impact of unbridled

consumption on the environment. His authority and these principles made him into the ideal candidate for the loan project that the team designed for inSite/Casa Gallina. However, Rafa's suspicion in regards to his neighbors' behavior and his proposal for a system of sanctions for those who abused the process created tension with the **Prestaduría vecinal's** initial commitment to displace a punitive or policing logic based on preventive mistrust. The neighbor-manager's 'realist' criteria, that projects a pessimist's vision onto the community, cannot simply be dismissed for the sake of the project's purity, but nor can it be directly assumed, since it would undermine the pretense of challenging the prejudices that dismantle cooperative action within the community. The management of these tensions and the negotiations and compromises that it gives rise to are what ultimately configure the project and make its operations possible.



Ecology is more than a thematic focus in inSite/Casa Gallina—it is the ethical principle that sustains the house and governs its logic of action within the community. inSite/Casa Gallina attempts to insert itself into the territory in a non-intrusive and non-invasive way; it opens itself up to inputs from its environment, and attempts to organically adjust to its rhythms, its structures and its demands. Despite its agents' previous experience in the fields of mediation, anthropology and social work, it is listening, the rhythmical permeability, and the learning acquired through sustained contact and trial and error that define the operations of the house. This has allowed it to become more open, and to encounter multiple paths of collaboration with other institutions in the neighborhood, such as: the Geology Museum located on one side of the neighboring Alameda (town square); elementary schools, such as the Primaria República de Cuba; and the nearby local market.

However, these and other alliances have mainly been produced at the level of personal contact, recognizing those individuals who, whether representing an institution or not, express an interest in caring for the environment and whose activities are community-based and led. That is the case of the teacher Ari Monroy, who has been running a small, student-tended garden at her school for years. The project has received scarce recognition from the center's leadership. Another case is that of Abraham Bello, owner of the café on the nearest corner, who sells coffee and mezcal from local producers. Alliances have also been woven who have agents with a lot of experience in environmental

projects that impact the community, as is the case of Lourdes Cruz Terán and Iván Pérez Samayoa, who run Estanquillo El 32, an establishment located close to the Chopo Museum, in the eastern region of the neighborhood, that promotes fair trade and ethical consumerism based on respect for biodiversity and contact with indigenous populations. This project, financially sustained by a small shop and café, is the result of a lengthy history of activism that includes many attempts, and almost as many failures, toward the mission to influence public policies based on ecological awareness. As I could confirm during my stay, Lourdes had moved much of her activist and pedagogical work to Casa Gallina. A unique case is that of the Spaniard Javier Chapado, a neighborhood resident and educational psychologist, who had learned the ins and outs of Mexican legislative power and has used neighborhood activism to promote the creation of urban gardens. On my arrival, he was packing his bags to leave the big city with his partner to found a project for early childhood education based on the principles of knowledge and respect for the environment.

inSite/Casa Gallina has succeeded in having these and other active members of the neighborhood recognize it as an appropriate place in which to develop their social vocations, injecting the space with their wisdom and their capacity to create networks. That occurred in a context of systematic mistrust in state structures and the proliferation of the conviction that only community action and self-management are capable of sustaining physical and social life. In this sense, environmentalism goes beyond a conservationist conscience and affirms itself as a mode of assemblage that induces a strive to recover sovereignty over one's own life based on responsible consumption, self-production, cooperation and recuperation of the knowledge expropriated by corporate capitalism.

inSite/Casa Gallina's identification with that radical imagination contrasts, for someone from the outside, with their reticence in aligning, or explicitly forming a common front, with associations and other agents from the neighborhood in acts of making public demands or protesting. That reticence is internally justified by the same low profile and propriety in managing the symbolic value constituted by the house's ecological philosophy and that governs other aspects of its relation with its surroundings. It is inevitable, however, to think that this attitude responds to structural limits, which are internal and external to inSite/Casa Gallina, invisible and unspeakable, derived both from its institutional and economic foundations and from the violence that prevails externally. These limits mark what the house can or cannot do, and



in what spheres it can or cannot be visible. The urgent need for “safe” spaces, for backwaters or meanders from where it’s possible to avoid being taken away by the current, where the value of things can be reconsidered and a plausible image of the world recuperated: can they justify inhibition in regards to the conflict? The project’s connection with the art sphere and its supposed autonomy from the “dirtiness” of politics cannot provide sufficient justification for not intervening and taking a risk. Although the organizers know through experience that playing the game is ultimately doomed to failure, they should also know that it is what would make inSite/Casa Gallina really worthwhile. This *noli me tangere* makes the fine golden thread that sustains the house, which the eager activity of its members tends to make invisible, become evident.



In any house there are fissures, and thanks to the “seismic” context that Casa Gallina finds itself in, those fissures could end up threatening its structural stability. If the foundations are solid, it might allow it to sway and better withstand the next earthquake. In my last activity scheduled by Josefa, I was invited to one of the Casa Gallina snack breaks at which neighborhood members congregate, anonymously, by raffle, to converse around the kitchen table with social actors of different profiles. Among them was Angélica Palma, an indigenous activist in defense of native forms of cultivation who has been attacked by multinational corporations, and the founder of Deportados Unidos ([the] deported united), an association that helps young people who have been repatriated due to the United States’ new immigration laws and who arrive in Mexico as if it were a foreign country. The exquisite friendliness of the hosts and the serene beauty of the framework in which the meal took place were not sufficient to avoid high levels of intensity in the conversation in the form of protest and anger against the injustices of the system. I could sense that this contact with conflict on the discursive and political level was occurring daily in interactions with the social reality of the neighborhood.

The exogenous introduction of the artistic ingredient and, more precisely, the artistic subject and its practices, undoubtedly increases the structural tension in the house. Artists carry social baggage, they manage languages and move in circuits that are a priori distinct and different from those of the neighborhood. It’s not that there isn’t art in the neighborhood, as one can see in the lively afternoons in the Alameda, but it is not of the type created by the artists that are invited to reside at Casa Gallina.

The generic question “What can art do?” to which the tag line “... in spite of everything” could be added, shakes the foundations of the house. It is the way in which this question is asked—which, let’s not forget, originates from artistic discourse itself and its tribulations in recent decades—that the general stability of the project will be supported. It can no longer be believed, patronizingly and naively, that “Art,” with a capital letter, has the magical capacity to redeem a fallen society. Translated into the current terms of urban renewal, that pretension of improvement would only be one more argument within the logic of gentrification that threatens to dissolve the fabric of our cities. Santa María la Ribera does not need more artists, who, by moving there, would probably only accelerate the processes of expulsion of its residents and modes of life, replacing them with new residents and logics of relationship based solely on real estate investment and consumption.

It seems at times that inSite/Casa Gallina’s intention is rather the opposite: to inject a denseness and necessity into artistic practices that the art world could hardly afford in its conventional operations, spaces and times, by means of a continued exposure to and collaboration with the community. This finding could strain inSite/Casa Gallina’s position from the other side, it could be interpreted as a liminal attempt of the art world to extract value from contact with the community that the system in itself is not capable of generating and that once extracted would circulate in that exclusive sphere without giving anything substantial back in return. If, according to the first hypothesis, art would return lost value to the social, according to the second it would be art that comes to the social searching for something that has been lost. Both cases start from a dualist logic that accepts the identification of art with the art world and the general sphere of the social as an entity irremediably separated from the art world by a strict class division. In both the move would be initiated by the impulse within art to either save or be saved.

The instigators of inSite/Casa Gallina would like to dissolve the unresolvable tension of this way of raising the question by generating the conditions for an encounter between the autonomous procedures that motivate art with the heteronomous nature of “real” practices. In achieving this, the former would recognize the common and owner-less vitality of the formulae that it manages; in turn, for their part, community members would recognize that autonomy and agency that exist within themselves as a potential that is obscured by social determinism.



The artist Marianna Dellekamp acquired some experience in collaborative processes when she worked on the collections of the School of Medicine, using social networks to convoke possible participants. In the project that would connect her to inSite/Casa Gallina for more than a year, from January 2017 to February 2018, the frameworks of collaboration designed and directed by the artist's authority would be overflowed. The women brought together by Marianna, who named themselves the "weaving hens," produced relationships, attachments and stories as they met during weekly sessions to weave together. Marianna would simply propose catalytic processes, such as collecting objects contributed by each participant, or she would generate images, such as the video in which the anonymous hands of the weavers appear, without using them to saturate or instrumentalize what would happen within the group—that is, life. The work would end conventionally with the production of a group of small sculptural objects derived from that first collection, but life would continue and the weavers would continue their meetings—except for one who passed away. Nor would it be easy for Marianna to disconnect herself from the network once the process had finished.

What the artist learns and what the community learns is neither predictable nor quantifiable. That unproductive indeterminacy is part of what inSite/Casa Gallina is betting on. Erick Meyenberg, one of the first artists to be invited to the house, already knew the neighborhood as a former resident, and afterwards his art career would be extended within the specific circuits of art. The period of almost three years in which he was connected to the marching band made up of neighborhood youth who rehearsed on the rooftop near the Alameda would lead to a carefully produced audiovisual piece of great complexity, that did not intend to represent the lived process, but that, nevertheless, could not have been carried out without the complicity and familiarity generated by the juvenile "wolf pack" that constituted the group. His powerful essay on the assimilation of power structures by young people through the mechanical incorporation of military choreography reveals both the awkward and entropic nature of the process and its persistence and reduplication generation after generation. According to conversations with Erick and members of the inSite/Casa Gallina team and community, the continued coexistence with the group of teenagers often made the artist's strength waver. However, his later works would continue the practice of immersion in real dynamics that he had learned with the marching band. In some way, once the position of the artist/observer was destabilized, it could no longer be occupied again.

The "pack" dynamics did not seem to be substantially affected by the artist's collaboration, in some way corroborating the pessimistic message of the work. As the young Brenda, a former member of the band would tell me, the power dynamics within the group and the abusive behavior of the director put a violent stop to the project shortly after the conclusion of the collaboration with Erick. However, Brenda confessed to me that her participation in the artist's piece and her later connection to Casa Gallina had provided her with a different perspective about her personal future and her place in the world.

Tere Mendoza demonstrated something similar, this time with the old voice of someone who had fought a lonely battle to get their family through difficult times. When Cadu, the sympathetic Brazilian resident artist in Casa Gallina, arrived to the center where they met to practice ballroom dancing with other retired neighbors, he brought an unexpected twist to a life that seemed condemned to be a monotonous waiting room for death. The choreography and performance created in collaboration with the artist had generated a difference, an enjoyable and unexpected discontinuity in an apparently closed story. Since then, Tere has become an active member of the inSite/Casa Gallina community, attracting, in turn, other friends.

From recounting these processes, pointed to with haste during the dialogues held inside and outside the house over the course of a week, it could be inferred that inSite/Casa Gallina marks a testimonial difference in the dislocated social panorama of Santa María la Ribera and the self-referential world of international art. It could be said that inSite/Casa Gallina is, in itself, its own major artwork, both because of its Utopian core and the virtuosity of those who formalize it and deploy its operation, and, why not, due to the contradictions and ambiguities that are inherent to it. Because of its dimensions, it cannot nor should it be much more in absolute terms. In fact, one of its many virtues is that it does not aspire to be so. The challenge, of course, would be to dare to be something truly different: something not only useful but necessary; not only pertinent but urgent; not simply inspiring but radically autonomous and a generator of autonomy. Perhaps it could start with someone at Casa Gallina who dares override good manners.

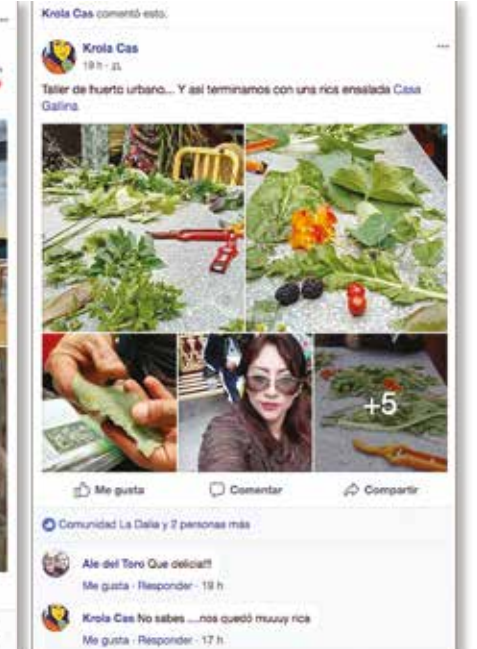
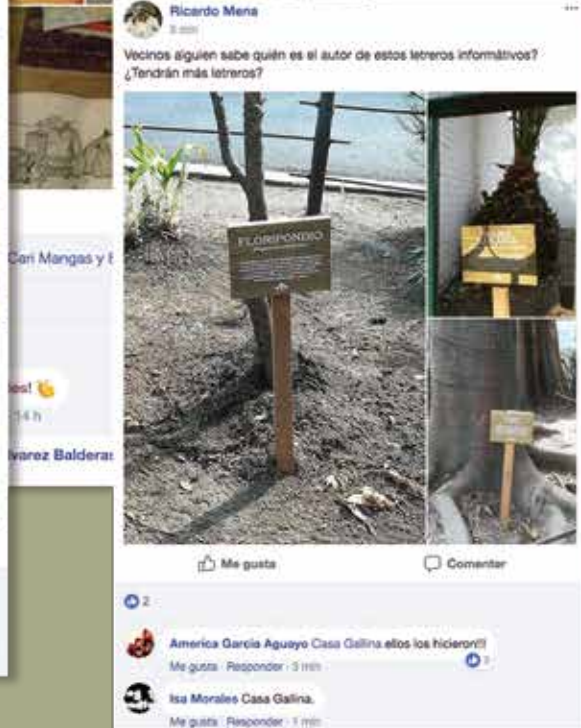
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**Jesús Carrillo** is a professor and researcher at the Autonomous University of Madrid, he previously served as the director of Cultural Programs of the Reina Sofía Museum (2008-2014). He currently works and resides in Madrid.



# Facebook Casa Gallina

We had decided from the beginning that there would be no news or press. Of course, we would have to share something with our colleagues and we were well aware of the usual institutional anxiety about positioning the project and advertising what we were doing—without quite knowing why or who for. Shortly after devoting ourselves to building a slightly rhetorical, bilingual website—in the routine manner in which many professional art projects construct their public facade of a global presence, with specialized consulting and authorial credits—we realized that this website would never function as the living local dialogue that we were seeking. We found that the neighborhood was revealed as a very intense digital and territorial community on Facebook, with countless accounts administered by neighbors, activists and local promoters. So, we created a Casa Gallina Facebook profile, which was aimed solely at the neighbors so we could begin to explore, offer programs, and show the project's possible fields of interest in order to gauge their opinions, receive their questions and concerns. In less than two years, more than 2,500 neighbors have made this account into a very efficient community dialogue. It is from there that we perceive how our vision is panning out, the coming together of collective commitment, feedback, and the most accurate evaluation of what we are trying to do. Every day, through a potent, emotional and highly personalized flow of images and posts. Solely for, and by, the neighbors. (D.S.)





# Vocabulary of Belonging

## A Team Experience

Pablo Lafuente invited those of us who have been involved in implementing the programs to reflect on the process, starting from a list of meaningful terms that were previously agreed upon: **neighbors, healing processes, eating together, affect and networks, learning, cultivation, scales, caring for the other and welcoming, acceptance for communal living, and property and exchange.** This exercise generated the following testimonies. (J.O.)



When I walk around the neighborhood, I love to greet the woman who sells juices, the man selling tacos, the one selling sweets, the one from the sausage place, the man selling *carnitas*, the woman who sells *tlacoyos*: “Good day! Almost ready? I’ll come by in a bit!” I love that the guy from the hardware store questions you about why you haven’t been in lately ...



## Neighbors

Sometimes it is a little difficult to try to explain a conceptual artist’s piece and you end up laughing with them and a bond of friendship emerges, you go from an apprentice to a colleague and more than a client. You occasionally also contribute some advice, you become an accomplice, start creating with a neighbor, going from an idea on paper to something tangible, and when you are already deep in the middle of hammers, screws, sandpaper, wood and more, colloquial and other topics arise and you end up playing soccer in the field around the corner from the Alameda, sweating side by side for victory. *Mariano Arribas*

I’ve lived in the neighborhood for more than 40 years and I’ve met a lot of people. I grew up with the tenants in the stall holders in the Bugambilia Market. I got to know them while I sold desserts. Eventually I got hold of a shop and there I was, living with them for 20 years. They included me in the pilgrimages and other celebrations

at the market and that helped me get to know more of my neighbors. I like to share with the business owners, with all the people around us.

Day to day I meet new people thanks to inSite/Casa Gallina. All the neighbors are very different, you meet all sorts of people, from neighborhood residents to professionals; there are all types of people, children, youth, adults. By all living here together, they become equals, there are no social classes here. Outside they’re all different, but this space unites them because they come here to learn, and we all do the same thing, as equals. *Rosario Hernández*

I arrived in the neighborhood in 2014 without knowing anything about it, but, honestly, it was very easy to become involved and meet people. At first, when I went out to sweep the street and I let people pass, they thanked me and I answered with a “good day.” The next day we’d already be greeting each other, and little by little they would ask me what was going on here and I would answer that it was a house that held workshops, about cooking and so on, and I would invite them to come and visit. It was during that time that the woman who passed away, Bertita, and Catalina, who worked two houses down, approached me. Now I feel like I’m part of the neighborhood, as if I’d been born here. *Eric Álvarez*

The neighbors are the central axis of inSite/Casa Gallina’s operation, one hundred percent. Learning enables these people to not be stuck with the knowledge that they gained in school. The kids come to change their perspective, and the older ones come to learn things, because the fact that they are elderly doesn’t mean that they’re limited. During the time I’ve been here, I’ve seen that quite a few people have taken advantage of what’s on offer. For example, in the garden, the elderly women that came to the first courses, when Mauricio Badillo led the workshops, put together an initiative to make remedies based on what they’d learned about medicinal herbs. It is a micro-business that’s not very common but is accessible to anyone because they do it with things that are very basic, they don’t need any industrial machinery. What is ultimately important is the learning, in this case knowing that they can still make homemade remedies that don’t contain the pharmaceutical chemical processes that we’re used to. *Susana Pineda*

The neighbors are the ones who “put up with” the place; either by chance or by choice they find themselves in the same territory and sometimes they talk about it and sometimes they don’t, but they are always the potential power for building a web of stories, of communal projects, of bonds of attachment, conflicts, but also solutions. The vibrations of the space depend on them. They inhabit the buildings, the streets and the public places, all of which leave a mark on them and they in turn leave their mark. They are boxes full of stories that get strengthened or reconstructed.

*David Hernández*





## Healing Processes

The people involved build ties of empathy that allow them, through creative dynamics and/or group learning, to drain off different emotional levels.

This contributes to rethinking their position when faced with a specific situation that they are going through in that moment or in general, which gives them the incentive to consider other forms of thought and action. It would seem that

this type of collective work, in which a dynamic of listening and enunciation is opened up as a way of relating to the other, enables the possibility of regeneration based on the individual that significantly impacts the people immersed in these processes. *Violeta Celis*

I've really liked how the emotional situations that have emerged in the workshops are handled here. No one has proposed a workshop specifically on these processes, but people have learned to live together and to bring up some of the emotional problems they have and to share them with the rest of the group. They do so because they are in a trusting environment, they feel that they have that possibility, of trusting in people and saying to them, "you know what, this happened to me," letting go emotionally and saying a lot of things that maybe they cannot easily say to others, but here you feel like yes, you can tell your story. They may not be able to resolve your problem, but you know they will listen to you.

Something similar happens at the dinners, the neighbors who come begin to chat and they talk about personal issues, they share experiences and so they start getting to know each other. To me, that is great, that you can trust people and free yourself from all your stress and anxieties. Knowing that you can count on everyone, that they are listening to you. This has helped me with personal issues, to move forward, and to learn that you can trust others. *Rosario Hernández*

The majority of the people who initially attended inSite/Casa Gallina's activities or initiatives were elderly, unemployed, or retired people or housewives that didn't have any other occupation besides their domestic work. I think they found a way to distract themselves here, to have a hobby. Coming here to learn helped them get out of that comfort zone that they were in at home. The majority of those people, because of their age, were more limited in terms of their movement; coming and spending time with other people motivated them. In addition, the workshops are very pleasant, very emotional. Several times I saw Mauricio Badillo giving his classes and the elderly women would suddenly start to bring up family issues, personal problems; they felt free to be able to talk with someone else, not so much because of who they were, but rather because they were at ease, the house and the person inspired their trust.

I feel that it is easier for an older person to trust and let go, us young people are all less trusting, more reserved maybe. An older adult doesn't worry about that, they simply express themselves. However, the young people have found a different perspective: here they are lent computers, there is internet access, books. I think it benefits them to know that not everything in life is a monetary exchange, there can be other types of recompense: I help you but you teach us something in return, like the books in **Salón Huev@**, take one and leave one. And this can shape another mindset for them so they might carry out similar initiatives. *Susana Pineda*

Over the years, I have connected to people who are very different from me and very different among themselves, which has allowed me to see what we all have in common. For example, many of us share the same symptoms of contemporary society: loneliness, anxiety, the relationship between sickness and lack of economic resources, violence, the lack of time for one's self, among others.

In my daily work, I've been able to take part in moments of complicity and mutual aid as a way to alleviate those symptoms. I remember the testimony of a neighbor who has a mobility problem and leaving her house causes her great pain, she mentioned that Casa Gallina had become a place that it was worth walking to. There's also the case of a woman in the neighborhood who is distanced from her family and when she had an accident and spent several months in hospital, the people who took turns taking care of her were the people she had met here only a few months before. Finally, I remember a neighbor with whom I greatly identified. When she died, I attended her funeral and I could not help crying in front of her family who didn't even know me. I realized that through that experience I was able to mourn a family member whose mourning I'd avoided during my childhood. *Rodrigo Simancas*



## Eating Together



Eating as a team helps the relationships, how we all get along, which influences the work. It's really good, because eating is a very different situation from when you're working, you're much more relaxed, more natural.

Celebrating birthdays, too, because it makes you feel like part of the team.

It is also cool at the cooking workshops, because one of the reasons for eating at the end of the workshop is to see how everything turned out, so you reaffirm what you learn but it is also spending time with each other, to make friendship circles.

The dinners and the **From 5 a 7** events mean sitting down to eat is another way of meeting people. I think that everywhere there'll always be neighbors who haven't spoken to one other, new residents. Sometimes, we get trapped in the bubble of our own routines, and spending time with others helps give you another perspective.

Diego Carrasco

I really like eating together, because I have realized how communication in the neighborhood, between residents, has increased; the freedom and confidence that you can go out on the street more and greet neighbors without worrying that they're going to do something to you, that they are going to insult you. Before you couldn't go out onto the street and greet just anyone, they'd give you mean looks. Now I'm not afraid to greet them.

New friendships, even very good friendships, have emerged from eating together. It has become so that people manage to do projects together, or if they are musicians, they have been able to meet for the first time and make a piece of art with their hands. I remember once in a dinner when a man brought his guitar and another one started singing. That spending time together, that friendship, is different than when they only get to talk. I love the kitchen and eating together, it makes us very communicative. Andrés Ramírez

I think about the whole process, from going to buy the things that are going to be cooked, imagining how we are going to make the recipe, and then the process of cooking, seeing how one ingredient is exchanged for another, and how we can improve the food. I hadn't been in the kitchen before, I hadn't had that experience; and here in inSite/Casa Gallina there was the opportunity to enter into that area and to

cook with guidance from Luis and all the other teammates who all do their small part so that everything turns out fine. Later, comes the chance to sit down to enjoy the food we've prepared, with an *agua fresca* we have invented. I think what I enjoy the most is making the *agua fresca*, because of the inventing and tasting of new flavors. Making sure, of course, that they are healthy options. For example, one recipe I invented is blackberry with mint. We harvest the blackberries from our garden, and the mint, too.

Sitting down to eat, listening to various conversations about the work done here in the other areas, I find that to be very relevant. It is also very important for the whole team to be able to be here, and to help cook so that people spend time together at the neighborly dinners. I like that they like what is cooked here in the house. Eric Álvarez

Feeding ourselves goes beyond a biological need, cooking affirms us as humans, we are the only species that processes its food through cooking. I like to think about cooking as having originated with control over fire, the evolution of the human linked to the manipulation of nature for consumption. The warmth of food as a foundation for the social and the cultural, a vestige of inherited collective knowledge. In this manner, sitting down to eat is an act of communion with nature, where the human has transgressed the biological for shared enjoyment. Luis Gómez

Although we do not always realize it, the etymology of the word "community" in Spanish has a tacit link with what happens by eating together, and this hasn't been difficult to suspect at inSite/Casa Gallina. It is symptomatic that the neighborhoods with the most community roots, with more intense community connections and more exposed emotions are those where family food businesses are most abundant. In any context. That always implies a network of diners and vendors in a direct relationship of mutual support. A gastronomical effort that sometimes has the challenge of dignifying simplicity; and, many other times, avoiding increasing social vulnerability.

In Santa María la Ribera, the food businesses also show the presence of a more deeply rooted family-economy initiative. Before knowing the neighborhood well, before the house even existed, one of the first routines of spending time together that we'd proposed for the team's work was the idea of all eating together, at least twice a week. The precept was that there would be no pre-established roles. Decisions about what would be cooked, who would do it, who would go to the market to do the shopping, who would





set the table, who would wash the dishes, and who would clear everything up would become more or less tacit co-responsibilities, negotiated or taken up without care, that, fundamentally, should function as a workflow model for the overflowing roles and the primacy of mutual aid, all within an ideal heuristic dynamic. And that's what it was.

Cooking and eating together, since the beginning, has been our most productive way of learning to become a team. *Oswaldo Sánchez*



## Affect and Networks



Building trust in a social context permeated by the relentless symptomatology of individual and collective fear in Mexico has been one of the results of the community work that inSite/Casa Gallina has carried out within Santa María la Ribera.

That's how residents that had barely run into each other in the neighborhood found a neutral space, a territory, to meet other

neighbors and see them frequently based on some type of specific training or practice, some common interest or some possibility for future collaboration on shared work.

The **Friends Having Dinner on a Blind Date** events are precisely one of those flexible and generous spaces for the people participating, where the bond with the house is merely the pretext to overcome fear, share food and retell life experiences with those who are part of the day-to-day in the neighborhood. *Violeta Celis*

A particular rootedness is experienced in Santa María la Ribera, families have known each other for generations, and new inhabitants are easily incorporated into this dynamic of cohabitation. The willingness to establish relationships among neighbors has enabled a positive acceptance of inSite/Casa Gallina in the neighborhood. We all want the best for our own, and this project is helping an entire community to see that. *Luis Gómez*

## Learning

I grew up in this neighborhood, like most of my family. For me, the knowledge acquired in the neighborhood was equally important in educating me as the university and online tutorials.

I remember Don Octavio very well, he was about to retire and he decided to come take a course in digital photography or something like that, it was an introductory work-

shop. That man, on finishing the course, started coming daily, or at least three times a week, he would take a computer and stay until we closed. He was interested in doing digital retouching, and between YouTube tutorials and what we shared with him, he became an ace at Photoshop. By the end, Don Octavio had handfuls of damaged or old photos that friends and relatives shared with him so that he'd fix them and they could print them again. We ended up learning from Don Octavio, a native of Mazatlán Sinaloa. *Mariano Arribas*

In the **Saberes** space, the main dynamic has been based on facilitating knowledge acquisition to the neighbors in respect to two priority issues: the garden and the kitchen. As in any teaching, the foundations of the topics to be addressed are shown first, and, as time passes, the complexity of the knowledge progresses in such a way that the neighbors begin to be self-taught and critical in respect to what is being taught. Within that same dynamic, the computer and cell phone classes for elderly adults is a program that has a great symbolic value for that specific sector of the community, since it allows them to get to know and interact with new technologies and be able to communicate through these complex apparatuses, with the goal of avoiding greater technological marginalization and generational dependency. *César Morales*



I have realized how people in the neighborhood, especially elderly people, have learned things from our generation that they didn't know before. We've also learned things from them by spending time together here at Casa Gallina. Before working here I didn't know half of what I know now: how to garden, how to design things, how to use a computer. I didn't have the initiative to take up those things, like design, that I learned and I liked, and thanks to that I feel it can serve me in the future, maybe not as a profession, but I do want to open a small business that I can make the most of.



The **Hacer barrio** signs also profoundly changed my perspective. I've learned to communicate with people from my neighborhood in a calmer, friendlier way. I've learned how to treat people, how to live with them, without needing to have previously developed a friendship.

I feel that the people of the neighborhood who come here have learned how to treat each other, to coexist and better value their space. We've learned that if you want something, you have to take care of it. The children in the summer course surprised me because I never imagined that children could learn about things like mining and all of that. They are very young children, I didn't think that they'd be able to learn so much about that issue, which to a certain point is not of interest to them. *Andrés Ramírez*

I didn't know anything at all about art. I had no idea what was going on, but little by little I've started getting involved in that area, and, well, it's cool, it's nice. Everything I've learned about art has come from here, from meeting the artists, seeing the process of their pieces, helping them out however one can. It is such a delicate process that I don't allow myself to do things as I would be able to. I also learn from working with the artists: when they're working or when they're interacting with people to make their pieces. I think everyone learns, the artists also learn from the people with whom they collaborate in the project that they're planning. *Eric Álvarez*

I've always seen that the process of learning happens collectively and this is the only way it's possible to bring out all of our potential and build a more complex reality. I've seen neighbors from Santa María la Ribera talking about their ideas and listening to those of others in Casa Gallina: evoking situations, narrating experiences, arguing, using their reasoning, using their accumulated knowledge, and suddenly I see the emergence of a desire and willingness to be present with one another and to set out differences and agreements. I think that this vital need to emerge in the presence of others is precisely what manages to repair the cracks and holes that we all have. From there we incubate what we could call educating or training ourselves, in other words, going from the personal to the collective and returning the learning to the personal sphere, to understand, assimilate, modify, construct, and improve our surroundings. I have seen it in Casa Gallina. Everyone has something to teach, everyone has something to learn. *David Hernández*

Surprisingly, both for the team and for the residents, something that has been emotionally moving over the years has been that the demands of each topic, or the understanding of certain professional content, is ultimately not what is the most gratifying. They don't only seek to master a specific technology or an established knowledge in the designated field. Beyond every learning process, whether in computers, gastronomy, herbs, design, sewing ... what is really enjoyed, what is taught at

Casa Gallina, is to coexist, to accept, to exchange, to provide, to build a community. This is confirmed in the evaluations and follow-up of each happening at the house. It is this "overflow" from learning something (being community for a time), that founds the political vitality of this project. The group revelation of that network, based on knowledge, is the commitment of each program. *Oswaldo Sánchez*



Since the gardening classes and the garden in general started, I've realized how people in the neighborhood have started having their own gardens in their houses, as well as in some small restaurants. Now it's more common to go to someone's house and see they have a tomato plant or they're growing some other vegetable.

## Harvesting

Having access to their vegetables has had an economic impact on the neighborhood, since it makes it easier for money to circulate here, instead of going to foreign companies or other places. It has also helped the market because people have bartered with what is produced in their

gardens: "I'll exchange the kilo of cherry tomatoes that I grew in my garden for a kilo of beans." That is already happening, it is a fact. Even the **Support and Installation of Community Garden** project greatly benefited the community in the area of communication, because there is already more companionship, in the sense that it is no longer one person but several who are striving to achieve something that in the long term could change this neighborhood's perspective ... *Andrés Ramírez*

The practices of sowing, growing, and harvesting take time, and this requires patience and care over what is cultivated. I think that this reality can be seen as a metaphor that synthesizes several of the project's goals, since it reveals another way of understanding the world and relating to each other.

inSite/Casa Gallina's garden was, since the project's proposal, one of its central axes, and it has been very gratifying to see the process that it has undergone, starting with the demolition of the building that was where the garden is now, to the immense weekly harvest that is obtained from a small cultivation area. Growing isn't only limited to the garden area; I think we've had a similar process in relation to the neighborhood, because through the constant care of the other we have been able to build confidence in the framework that allows us to have an active and expanding relationship with the different communities in the neighborhood. *Josefa Ortega*



One of the most pleasant spaces at Casa Gallina is the **Vegetable Garden**; being there distances you from the chaos of the city and you can concentrate on learning how to grow different types of edible, ornamental and medicinal plants. For me, the **Vegetable Garden** is a metaphor of what we would like to achieve in Santa María la Ribera.

I think about the importance of growing within one's self and toward the outside for our community, I believe that we must be the ones who take responsibility for the material environment and for relationships, starting with simple and everyday actions like caring for the sidewalk and the trees, the park, make sure the exteriors of our houses or businesses are always clean, don't obstruct the sidewalks and respecting the crosswalks. *Sergio Olivares*

For me, the time that it takes to grow vegetables is related to the long-term processes that we do here. Slowness, as a mechanism of resistance against the demands of productivity that are present in the lives of most people, allows for opening up opportunities for patience and the attentive observation of the immediate context, as a prelude for the development of critical thought and the possibility of articulating initiatives for the common good. Along with slowness, another characteristic of the practice of growing food is the particularity of working with what is hidden—during a plant's growth there is a time before its leaves become visible. The idea of inSite/Casa Gallina's work, in contrast to the generalized urgency of social and artistic projects to make processes immediately visible, resembles the time that a seed takes to germinate—despite the fact that at first glance it is not noticed, many things are happening that require organization, intensity, patience and delicacy. *Rodrigo Simancas*

## Scales

There is generally confusion, or at least reluctance, around the political potential of the construction of a vision of change from within community or local environments. We weren't ourselves, as a team, particularly clear about this at the beginning. The idea of acting on and from a locality, understanding this territorial expansion/tension as the activation-regeneration-creation of an affective network, seemed to be essentially endogenous management, the everyday construction of a niche of resistance. And this already presented an enormous challenge. However, one of the fundamental lessons of this five-year process has been verifying the political productivity of all the specific actions (insofar as the local implementation of a group initiative goes) for the secretion of a vision of change. The local scales of implementation soon became exponential. From the modest topics of the local vegetable garden, the neighborhood market, preparing



family dishes, repairing clothes, teaching a neighbor ... comprehension and individual commitment were made more complex in favor of a collective re-evaluation of priorities and decisions. Not only based on a more cosmological critical perception about the model of life and development in which we participate, but in terms of the individual certainty about our responsibility faced with the economic dynamics that we endorse. This overflowing of the scales of action, of alliances and a vision going from the individual to the social, from the local to the global, and from the ethical to the political, has been one of the most effective fields of the group commitment. *Osvaldo Sánchez*

inSite/Casa Gallina's work has stood out and been defined within the quadrant of the neighborhood of Santa María la Ribera. This has meant that the relationships formed within the team have a certain limit, without considering the propagation to neighboring neighborhoods a priority, despite the fact that sometimes the information manages to go beyond the quadrant. This makes it easier to pay more attention to the people who come to the house, which covers one of the project's main objectives: forming bonds of trust between established neighborhood residents and new ones.

Besides strengthening relations between neighbors, the idea of reestablishing public spaces in the neighborhood has been very important, made possible by projects that seek to give it a rejuvenated image beyond the large shopping centers that seek to turn the neighborhood into one of the many involved in the world of globalized consumerism. Change always starts with small groups and Santa María la Ribera can become that example of community development, maintaining each of its aspects in a local way, always seeking to improve the conditions of the neighborhood spaces.

*César Morales*

Here I've learned about the importance of each situation, each thing. Like looking after water. We're not giving it the importance it deserves. The people who come here have learned about the care that we should take, at a scale that should really be general, but we can't do it just like that, therefore what we do is look after it within our environment. But now we know that we can come together and make a neighborhood committee to give this more validity and to do something bigger. In my

surroundings, which is my housing unit, the neighbors talk among ourselves, we try to come to an agreement about looking after the water.

Within Casa Gallina's setup, people arrive already having the idea that they are going to learn about looking after water and other important factors, from planting a little seed and seeing what is going to happen in the future. I feel that it is transmitted, people leave here and they start talking about it, they share the situations they've learned about, both with their families and with their neighbors. One example could be the children's workshop, where they taught them about earthworms. Even I held the idea that they were bad for plants. And here you learn that the earthworm is what gives life, then you leave here with clear ideas about what is nature and what is still left to learn. In my case, I talk to other people about everything I have learned here, they are things that many people do not know. I came without knowing many things that today I now know, and I can say that it has been a beautiful experience. *Rosario Hernández*

I feel that the house has become part of the neighborhood, it has turned into a meeting place, where bonds between neighbors are developed, people who maybe used to see each other in the street but didn't speak to each other are now great friends. The neighbors experiment in the house and they make it part of their routine. The elderly, retired women come to learn new things but also to distract themselves and pass the time. The same goes for the **Salón Huev@**, whose main function is for reading and just hanging out, but it has also served small children, and as a neighbors' meeting place.

If the house has become part of the neighborhood, it is because the residents have accepted it. And I think that the fact that they know that they are the only ones who can participate in the activities creates more identification; it's as if: "Of course, I am from Santa María, and I have this." If this project were to expand to other parts of the city, it would lose its purpose, it could be misunderstood. Because inSite/Casa Gallina is what pushes, but it is the neighbors who have to continue with the process. The gist of the workshops is this: create a bond, and although the sessions have ended, the neighbors continue it. The same thing has happened with the garden, where a month, a month and a half later, the friendships remain in place. *Diego Carrasco*

Extended working hours and distances in big cities erase the possibilities for encounter and exchange. The anonymity and little personal interaction are the result of urban planning policies that do not take into account areas of encounter and exchange between neighbors. The conditions of the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood have kept it in a different situation, its location between four major roads, the survival of family economies and centers of encounter and exchange such as the market and the Alameda are some of the factors that have contributed to the existence of the neighborhood fabric and helped it not become totally undermined. inSite/Casa Gallina's project has sought to contribute to maintaining and strengthening this fabric, through the construction of situations and experiences.

The local focus is one of the fundamental principles of the project and it is what has given consistency and solidity to its affective relations and neighborhood networks. However, the problematics that are worked on and the flow of knowledges and critical reflections that take place in the different platforms refer to broader scales in areas beyond the neighborhood, sometimes related to the reality of the rest of the country or even the world. *Josefa Ortega*

It is gratifying that in four years the intersection of wills and the construction of networks of collaboration have extended beyond the house and the neighborhood itself, without us needing to take up a leadership position. We function strictly as a space of encounter and to stimulate the motivation of autonomous initiatives, which are sustained by the creativity and collaboration among equals and that do not depend on any institutional support.

The domestic vegetable garden network that exists in the neighborhood today includes the gardens of residents who have taken workshops here, those who have learned about urban agriculture practices, and other neighborhood residents who have never even come to Casa Gallina; in turn this network extends to community gardens in other places through the interchange of experiences and products. Similarly, neighbors who participate in activities at Casa Gallina have connected with neighborhood organizations in other neighborhoods and cities, to make a common front against shared problems like gentrification; there are also those who attend workshops and encounters that we disseminate on our Facebook page, programmed by other organizations. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that besides expanding, the scale of Casa Gallina's work is also directed toward the intimate life of the participating local residents, since not all the members of a family can attend Casa

Gallina because of work issues, so that those who can, introduce what they learn here into their domestic lives. *Rodrigo Simancas*



## Caring for the Other and Welcoming

Hospitality requires a structure of fraternity toward the "other" that rehabilitates the zone of trust between people. When a person is welcomed, the place is fundamental for generating a friendly and comfortable space in which that person can open up in different ways. It is a way of caring for their presence. It is thus that the reception of the "other" by Casa Gallina presupposes easing the strangeness or what is not known beforehand, providing a space that is open to multiple diversities of thought and in which the consequence of the binomial "welcome-care" implies the replication of the same gesture for



the neighbors, not for the people who are part of the inSite/Casa team, but for the neighborhood community, those with whom the most immediate future is shared.

Violeta Celis

Being generous and open toward people who in their everyday life and other public spaces are perhaps exposed to impersonal, bureaucratic or discriminatory treatment. The principle of welcoming all the neighborhood residents seeks to distance us from the differential and hierarchical treatment that prevails in our society, in order to create a horizontal environment, in which we are all equal and knowledge circulates in multiple directions.

Caring for the other without having a close or family relation, or without there being an economic exchange, is also a gesture of resistance to the utilitarianism of our time, in which interpersonal relations have become increasingly pragmatic, more focused on what one can obtain and in exchange for what. We have tried to create an environment in which people feel safe to share their interests and their doubts, and also, in one way or another, their need for human contact. Sometimes this is satisfied by something as simple as listening. Sometimes it is enough to merely create the space and people come together and do the rest. Rosa Elba Camacho

## Acceptance for Coexistence

This is a fantastic topic, it is a somewhat personal point for me. I think that working here and coexisting with people from other generations gives me a different vision, it teaches me to do things differently. For the people from the workshops, as well, although each workshop has a very specific age range, there are always variations: of age, class, professions, education. This enriches the workshops and their final products, and creates a cool and varied atmosphere for other encounters, like the film cycles,

where the dialogues are made richer precisely because there is a psychologist with a number of doctorates, and alongside her a retailer with a more solid, simpler vision. Here the youth, from 15 to 25 years old, who don't know what to do with our lives, coexist with professionals between the ages of 30 and 40 who are already super focused.

The case that has caught my attention the most is that of computing; it has truly broken a barrier. Obviously, the purpose of the workshop is for elderly adults to learn to use computers, but there is something deeper, because older people feel rejected and useless in regards to the issue of new technologies. There have even been cases in which they feel rejected by their own children, but here they find themselves with kids who are much more open and who are willing to teach them. And kids also feel rejected by older people, so it is an encounter between generations. Diego Carrasco



I would dare to alter the order of the terms: coexistence for acceptance. We've seen many times that there is a generalized rejection toward a group or age range, profession, class, and so on, while the same number of times it is shown that that rejection primarily results from ignorance. Each person's experiential environment tends to enclose us in a reduced version of the city, of others. Through the daily and intense closeness of coming to take a workshop among neighbors, dining with them, or exchanging impressions after a film or a reading, the participants have the opportunity to truly learn to know one another, and this eliminates one of the main obstacles for creating bonds of friendship, trust, and affect with people that appear to be radically different.

From here, two paths tend to open up: concluding that, deep down, we are not so different and that we have surprisingly similar concerns; or rather, accepting difference as a particular value; that allows us to access new possibilities of being in the city, possibilities that we could not have imagined before getting to know the view from the other side of the street. What is helpful to remember here is that none of these routes, or their hybrids, are possible if empathy is taken out of the equation, and this is only constructed when people coincide in a space and are able to meet one another beyond their prejudices. Rosa Elba Camacho

To achieve a healthy coexistence, I think that first we have to accept that the spaces in our environment are shared and that we all have rights and responsibilities over them, but it is also fundamental to know how to listen and respect the actions and opinions of the other, accepting is joining together to collectively build the spaces of coexistence.

From my perspective, stimulating a healthy coexistence has been one of the fundamental parts of Casa Gallina's work, providing the possibility of accessing an impartial space, that invites and integrates people of different ages, professions, and interests. Casa Gallina encourages neighbors to get to know one another, it helps them to meet and listen to each other, in relation to diverse dynamics and activities that enrich their lives.

I think that it is much easier to accept the others when we meet them and learn something about their lives, thus we can understand why they behave in a certain way, they stop just being "my neighbor" and become "Raquel" or "Felipe." Sergio Olivares

## Property and Exchange

The things that are done in Casa Gallina do not have signatures or institutional logos. While credit is given to the people who participated in publications, dissemination



materials, and projects in public spaces, they have tried to keep the authorial issue out of the logics of work. What is important is the content that is created, how it circulates for free in the neighborhood. Similarly, the tools and household implements available in the **Prestaduría vecinal** do not have a specific owner, since their main purpose is to be fully used by as many neighbors as possible, although for delimited periods of time for each user. These are two of the most noteworthy ways in which Casa Gallina has tried to dismantle the notion that the only way to relate with ideas and things is in terms of property, authorship, possession; all words that limit to the sphere of the individual the use and circulation of what could be beneficial for an entire community. As we have seen during these years, the wager on the collective is not free from risks, losses, or appropriations by other entities that are not interested in escaping from the logic of individualism and authorship. However, the potential remains: sharing ideas and possessions within a community, contrary to what some would suppose, enlarges and improves their useful life. Rosa Elba Camacho

The contemporary world, including the art scene, insists on highlighting subjectivity and individuality as imperative models of social recognition and construction. Through a constant, permanent bombardment, an education that encourages competition, and the supposed individual realization through possessions, profoundly rooted social logics exist that explicitly divide us and create hierarchies. inSite/Casa Gallina's project, since its beginning and during its operation, seeks to dismantle individual recognition and wager on the collective as a model of work and interaction. The dilution of authorship as well as the commitment to "taming the ego" has been a constant task, both within the team and with the professionals who collaborate on the different platforms. The idea of creating an environment of knowledge exchanges—in which each person can contribute according to their interests, experience, and preparation—has generated an atmosphere in which mutual growth has diluted the institutionalized hierarchies of knowledges. There are many examples, from the collective mapping that Iconoclasistas carried out at the beginning of the project to the book, *Tastes of the Neighborhood*, published in 2018, in which Miguel Iwadare gathered a set of recipes from local food stands that show that everyday practices have relevant and important knowledges.

The house is understood, then, as a center of exchange at many levels. The gestures of repayment that are carried out at the end of the workshops allow for expanding affective networks and the dissemination of knowledge. This logic also permeates the relationship with objects; this is how, for example, the model arose for exchanging books in the **Salón Huevo@** and for the **Prestaduría vecinal**. Josefa Ortega





# We Are More Than Just Those Who You See Here

**Boards of Directors:** Eloisa Haudenschild, **President inSite** / Aimée Labarrère, **President inSite/Casa Gallina**. **Members:** Cathe Burnham, Carmen Cuenca, Rosella Fimbres, Randy Robbins and Osvaldo Sánchez.

**Executive Directors:** Michael Krichman and Carmen Cuenca

**inSite/Casa Gallina: Project Director:** Osvaldo Sánchez / **General Coordinator:** Josefá Ortega / **Administration:** Susana Pineda / **Production:** Sergio Olivares / **Production Assistant:** Mariano Arribas / **Cultural Synergies:** Violeta Celis and Josefá Ortega / **Community Liaison:** Rosa Elba Camacho / **Knowledge Platform:** David Hernández and Rodrigo Simancas / **Registration and Diffusion:** Luis Gómez / **General Services:** Eric Álvarez / **Logistics and Operational Support:** Rosario Hernández and Andrés Ramírez

**inSite US: Financial Director inSite:** Danielle Reo / **inSite General Assistance:** Elizabeth Stringer

**Other collaborators:** The following also formed part of the team at different moments: Gabriela Correa, Naomi Rincón Gallardo, Enrique Arriaga, Úrsula Vereá, Marcela Velázquez, Héctor Tapia, Natalia Pollak, Sandra Rodríguez and Eva Hernández. The following students, some of whom live in the neighborhood, carried out their social service, professional internships, or volunteer experiences, over specific time periods in inSite/Casa Gallina: Laura Pacheco, Hugo Rodríguez, Rocío Sánchez, Sixto López, Laura Espinosa, César Morales, Maite Mata, Andrea Rodríguez, Julia Rocha, Isaac Martínez, Gabriela Cruz, Sebastián Navarro, Alejandro Camus, Sacnicté Álvarez and Alejandro Amescua. Temporary assistance in different areas: Emilio Castro, Diego Carrasco, Margarita Morales, Hugo Rodríguez, Erick Mejía, César Morales and Julia Rocha.

**inSitters:** Beverly Adams and John Cossins, Kelli Balistieri and Mark Quint, Mary Beebe and Charles Reilly, Mary and Jim Berglund, Barbara Bloom, Barbara Borden, Fabrizio Bottero, Cathe Burnham, Emilio Cabrero, Magda Carranza de Akle, Alejandro Castro, Andrea Cesarman, Jon Christensen and Ursula Heise, Marco Coello, Renée Comeau and Terry Gulden, Gabriela Correa, Hugh Davies and Faye Hunter, Mary and Hudson Drake, Gerardo Estrada, Enrique Fajardo and Vicki Cantú, Rosella Fimbres, Peter and Elizabeth Goulds, Carol Grossman, CR Hibbs and Luis Álvarez, David Guss and Susanne Lodl, Eloisa Haudenschild, Joyce Krichman, Jim Lennox and Brad Woodford, José Luis Martínez, Akkie Martens, Tonatiuh Martínez, Barbara Metz and Héctor Torres, Lee Miller, Freia Mitarai, Garna Muller, Ron and Lucille Neeley, Danielle Reo and John Polk, Randy Robbins and Helena Stage, Armando Rocha, Leah Roschke, Crista Saffran, Hans Schoepflin, Ana Sokoloff, Ute Stebich, Erika and Fred Torri, Hilda Trujillo, Renéé and Mike Weissenburger.







# Dialogues on Display

Visual Devices and Activations at the Museum

Toward the end of 2015, a collaboration was established with the Geology Museum that is located in front of the Alameda in Santa María la Ribera. The museum has granted inSite/Casa Gallina the use of the temporary exhibition hall five times. On these occasions, museum exhibits were designed to encourage critical reflection about environmental themes that are relevant to everyday life in the neighborhood. Each of the projects was disseminated among pre-school, elementary, high, and preparatory schools (most of which are public), within the Santa María la Ribera area. Those institutions that were interested in participating scheduled school visits for their various classrooms and were received by educators who worked in close collaboration with the museum's host team. Open sessions, in which participants of related workshops at Casa Gallina attended and discussed each exhibition project, were also organized. (J.O. and R.C.)







## Universe 4-Zoo 1

### A Cabinet of the Animal Kingdom / Ulises Figueroa

February–March 2016

The artist Ulises Figueroa carried out a co-participation process with the neighbor and teacher, María Teresa Ferriz, over the course of six months. During the work process, they designed a strategy for activating an apparatus to increase awareness of natural science and reading among the children and young people in the neighborhood. Together they designed a “scientific” cabinet about the animal kingdom that included multiple visual narratives about the ecological footprint and environmental impact on the animal world. The cabinet was displayed in the Geology Museum between February and March 2016. During this period around 800 children from neighborhood elementary schools participated in the didactic activities designed by the mediator, Ketzali Arreola. (J.O. and R.C.)

“After meticulously studying the taxonomy of animals, I came to the conclusion that there are two main varieties of animals: animals that have been classified and unknown animals. So many varieties remain to be discovered, especially at the microscopic level, not even to mention the probable animals on other planets. Another partition that seems important to me is the distinction between living and non-living animals, the living ones do not need any explanation, but the lineage of the non-living ones is much more stimulating; in that lineage we would find not only rotten bodies or extinct species, but also the parallel universe of representations and their visual fables. A plastic elephant is an elephant, of course, a non-living elephant, but an elephant after all ...” Ulises Figueroa





# A Minimal Botanical Atlas of Santa María la Ribera / Mariana Magdaleno

February–May 2017

This exhibition was the result of a walking tours project that identified plant species in the neighborhood. It was coordinated by biologists Iván Pérez and Lourdes Cruz of the Estanquillo El 32 Collective. Based on those records, the artist Mariana Magdaleno was inspired to illustrate and re-create each of the botanical specimens in watercolors, in metaphorical reference to the cultural information that supports their scientific value or medical use in popular botanical traditions. The educational program, managed by Ketzali Arreola, sought to create awareness about the diversity of plant species in the neighborhood, their characteristics, and the benefits of green spaces for everyday life in the city.

Along with the exhibition, the project consisted of a book, which included Mariana Magdaleno's drawings of 60 plant species identified in the neighborhood and their characteristics, which specified their scientific name, their origin, and the principal guidelines for the care and use of each species. As part of the project, wooden signposts that act as fact sheets about each species were made and erected by the neighbors during the guided tours given by the biologists. (J.O. and R.C.)







## Living with Water: Getting to Know the Valley of Mexico River Basin / Alex Dorfsman

November 2017–March 2018

The exhibition was proposed as a platform for reflecting on the importance of water and our responsibility for its care. The display integrated a photo essay by the artist Alex Dorfsman that promotes a visual approach to the different situations and textures in which water is found in our environment today. It also presented part of the research carried out by architect Elías Cattán and the regenerative architecture studio Taller13, condensed in a series of infographics about water and its situation in the world and our most immediate environment. For this exhibit, Cattán made a model of the Valley of Mexico River Basin that reveals the area's topography, as well as the existence of different aquatic elements (lakes and rivers) that have been lost due to the growth of the city. The activation program was led by Angélica Cortés, who was assisted and accompanied throughout the process by the museum's host team. The exhibition was accompanied by the publication of a book. (J.O. and R.C.)





# Dust: A Critical Reflection on the Impact of Mining in Mexico / Miguel Fernández de Castro

April–August 2018

This exhibition was presented as a platform of critical reflection about open-pit mining activity that is being developed in Mexico. It presented the project commissioned to be done by the artist Miguel Fernández de Castro, titled *Geological History of Dust*, which reflects on one of the waste materials of open-pit mining, the so-called “tailings.” Along with the artist’s proposal, infographics and other informative material were displayed that enabled the neighbors to have a critical vision of the extraction of commonly used minerals. The educative program was led by Angélica Cortés. It focused on discussing the everyday use of minerals and the environmental cost of their extraction and uncontrolled consumption with students from high and preparatory schools. During the exhibition period, visiting groups were received during the 6th Encounter with the Earth event and the **Blue Planet: Exploring the House that We Share** summer course organized by inSite/Casa Gallina from July–August 2018 for local elementary school students. (J.O. and R.C.)





Launch of the Apollo 11 Lunar Mission on Saturn V rocket:  
July 16, 1969



## Allende-Apollo xi / Fernando Bryce

December 2018–March 2019

The project was commissioned to be undertaken by the artist Fernando Bryce. It is based on research of the Allende meteorite, one of the space rocks most studied by geologists from around the world; some of fragments of it belong to the Geology Museum's collection. This meteorite is considered part of the material that shaped the Universe and therefore it contains the most ancient information about the birth of the solar system. For Bryce, the material and symbolic value of the Allende meteorite is the solidified memory that relates the origin of an abstract cosmos, a presence of the cosmic world compared to the human footprint on the sediment of the Moon.

The piece presents an arrangement of fifteen screen-prints and twenty meteorites—part of the museum's collection—that impacted at different geographical points around the Earth. As a rocky landscape the piece suggests a metropolis of meteorites. The rocks, in full visual dialogue with the accumulation of images proposed by the artist, reveal, from the perspective of a city formed by celestial vestiges, the oscillation of space matter in relation to the United States' concern for progress and conquest. The screen-prints are an appropriation of images from newspapers about the meteorite impact and others about the Apollo XI lunar landing, in which Bryce recuperates articles from the era, superimposing expanded backgrounds of the Allende meteorite's rocky texture onto some of them. The transposition of this information comes from one of the artist's core interests in fracturing the conditions about the truth behind human evolution, toward shaping new forms of representation of historical memory. The images about the United States' space mission to the Moon do nothing but accentuate the media coverage of that moment aimed on seeking to overemphasize that country's global power. This exhibition seeks to encourage the creative thinking of students and neighbors through a fictional anchor to the events referenced in the project. (V.C.)





# Oh! Marvelous Economy

Victor Palacios

## PRELUDE

### TAKING PART

to adapt, inoculate,

to give something in exchange, shelter, touch the uncertain in the collective

to avoid, mock the persuasive shortcut, in front of your nose ... find sudden pleasures,

to swap,

to cultivate, return reciprocity, co-participate, reciprocate again,

pausing ...  
pausing ...

check ... to ...

listen, encourage, natural economics, scatter,

magnet ... pre-cordial

making, toward, habitude

of imagining

and picturing emotion, enthusiasm, ^reciprocal^ failure

send flying

the



## RECEIVED IDEAS<sup>1</sup>

### PLOT/DRAMA

inSite/Casa Gallina is made up of a vast and heterogeneous set of thalli, attachments, knowledges, organisms with different origins and political inclinations, restless tools, undreamed co-existences, sleepwalking projects, elastic sweats, dance steps, vaporous and lascivious seasonings, ultra secret codes, one, only one coveted bubble, tables, and an infinite number of simultaneously existing things. In a gradual way, and without rushing to save time, it has generated—within a specific urban context—its own ecosystem and has caused friction, contagion, and amazement among that which is its reason for being: the neighborhood fabric that surrounds it. It inhabits this fabric and seeks to incite, to provoke nostalgic arrhythmias, sinistral faults. Despite the different accents that it hosts and emits, it is from there, and in the flimsy boundaries of that breeding ground is generally where it chooses to remain.

Within that aforementioned diversity, a common denominator is emphasized, a feature that powerfully defines its essence: to provoke and raise the flag of collaboration and reciprocity between groups, networks, institutions, businesses, and individuals that endow the territory in question with a wide range of identities, histories, and pulses. Nobody, not one of the different agents involved in its processes—whether the internal team, the temporary guests, or the co-participants—act for mere personal benefit, nor through authorial recognition. Nothing germinates if it does not involve critical reflection or work on the social order, a collective doing directed inward; a constant flow of meaning and a spirit of barter, a coming and going of what is at stake, of what we could intuit as a common goal, and of what, at some point, it is possible to harvest, share, and give back. In its facade, what stands out is the absence of any type of sign indicating the name, the identity, the brand: inSite/Casa Gallina.

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1. By “received ideas,” I am referring to Jean Pruvost’s comments in the preface to the *Dictionary of Received Ideas* written by Gustave Flaubert in 1879. Pruvost writes: “Voltaire, false innocent, also sets the tone for the birth of a new genre, referring to the assault of ideas that are already defined, closed, or even prejudiced, commonplace, clichés, dead ends, banalities, stereotypes ... all of that, said in a more beautiful way ... the received ideas that, after all, designate an original culprit.” Gustave Flaubert, *Le Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (Paris: Éditions Tallandiers, 1913), 14. The English version, translated by Jacques Barzun (New York: New Directions, 1954), does not contain the Pruvost preface.

However, on this architectural element and between its concrescent scars we find a laconic and symptomatic sentence:

### EVERYTHING BREATHES

A curious coincidence or a random whim of fate, but this saying more clearly describes the nature of this initiative than its own lineage: inSite/Casa Gallina. Would it be convenient to hack this institutional-official inheritance and even get rid of the dependence-reference to this type of physical space and its inescapable homely, domestic connotations? Is it not precisely something that the programs, cadences, and synergies of this initiative carry in their ATP?<sup>2</sup> Let’s breathe, let’s borrow a little bit of air.

YES, YES, YES, for mercy ...

### LET’S DESTROY THE IDEA OF THE FRIENDLY HOUSE-INSTITUTION!

Let’s imagine that this sui generis platform of social articulation has been taken over by entities and shapeless forms of inhaling and exhaling, of doing and making, little by little, a neighborhood!

Let’s make a nomadic community, a continuous and eclectic swarm of swarms out of this nourished ecosystem!

Let’s embrace the whole, let’s confuse the parts with always-fragile tricks!

Let’s destroy the pre-established deadlines, let’s give time another opportunity to escape, to hide among the bushes, to arrive deliberately late!

Let’s write a commercial manual, let’s be a prosperous retail center, an enjoyable economy!

Now let’s imagine a semi-nude and deinstitutionalized language!

Let’s think that the hen has committed a sweet parricide and, without hesitating too much, gobbled down the whole house from the foundations to the roof!

Let’s only conserve the warm stuff, the living thing!

Little by little let’s give back the air granted to us, let’s repay without a previous contract!

Let’s question and transform this commandment, let’s bite its ass when it least expects it!

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2. Adenosine triphosphate. A nucleotide that is fundamental in obtaining cellular energy. It is produced during photorespiration and cellular respiration.

Thus detached from its ancestral responsibility and without a fixed address, now the plump bird wanders between two streets, named Carpio and Díaz Mirón, through the halls of the El Pensador Mexicano public primary school and its evocative stained-glass windows,<sup>3</sup> in the flower and plant stands in the La Dalia Market, among the eternal rubble of the property known as Siete y Medio (Seven and a Half),<sup>4</sup> during the sticky music of the Forasteros de la

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3. The stained-glass windows were produced through a co-participation process initiated by Cynthia Gutiérrez, an artist from Guadalajara, in collaboration with a group of children from the school and Claudia Hernández, the owner of a stained-glass workshop in the neighborhood, over the period 2017-2018. It is worth noting that these processes of co-participation included people from different disciplines who shared their opinions and oriented the artist's initial proposals. This included interventions from: the researcher and curator Daniel Garza-Usabiaga, the linguist Etna Pascacio, the architect and artist Christian Castillo, the artist Fernando García Correa, and the philosopher and pedagogue Mónica Amieva. The stained-glass piece titled *Floating Crafts* interweaves kaleidoscopic compositions, forms that mediate between an organic language and a playful geometric seriality. There are no direct references to patriotic heroes or famous people from history or the arts. The stained-glass windows and their thin connecting lines seem to represent the restless neurons of José Joaquín Fernández Lizardi (1776-1828), the splendid writer whose epitaph reads: "Here lies El Pensador Mexicano who did what he could for his homeland." I hope that this piece provokes the creation of new, critical, and sarcastic *Periquillos Sarnientos*. The extensive work that inSite/Casa Gallina has implemented with the children of the neighborhood is an aspect that deserves special attention, since, for many different reasons, it is fundamental for the future of the new and not so new generations ... to inoculate starting from the root.

4. The Seven and a Half is the colloquial name of a neglected property that the artist collective from Monterrey, Tercerunquinto, took as the starting point of their proposal for a co-participation process (2014-18). The project, at first focused on the imminent construction of residential real estate in the space previously occupied by a gas station, had to adapt, adjust to reality: the indefinite postponement of the building, the triumph of the rubble, and the state of ruin of the Seven and a Half, or the reflection of a bureaucratic, administrative, legal conflict that, in our country, can stop time like nothing else. Thus the project turned toward dialogue and collaboration between the art collective and a group of construction workers. The main task was to put in tension the relations between the master and the apprentice involved in all trades and the transmission of knowledge and techniques that comprise it. In itself, the project emphasized how the academic character of the architects and engineers is digested or interpreted in an empirical way by bricklayers, plumbers, carpenters. The co-participation ended with the collective construction of a sculpture based on a small house plan, of 25 square meters, conceived by the architect Jetro Centeno whose plans were intervened by the artists. Matryoshka dolls, houses stacked inside of others. An example of a temporary *artel* whose resonances in the neighborhood would seem greater given the economic and social importance of real estate speculation and the construction industry. I am primarily referring to the possibility of creating meetings or talks that could approach this and other aspects related both to the situation of the trades and professions involved and the economic and commercial strategies that delineate their development or extinction in certain zones of the city.

Salsa,<sup>5</sup> by the gilded and encased ceilings of the Parroquia del Espíritu Santo (Parish of the Holy Spirit), among other neighborhood scenes. There are those who assure that, in reality, its tireless gait obeys its voracious appetite and that it is immersed in a frenzied search for the melodic and elusive Kolobok.<sup>6</sup> It is impossible to know if this is neighborhood gossip or metaphysical certainty, beyond the irrefutable fact that the hen—with or without a home, anonymous or with its identifying documents under its wing—keeps its vocation intact. All of its gestures, exchanges, mundane dreams and fabled adventures imply a commitment to:

## RADICAL RECIPROCITY

Although the word exists, almost nobody pronounces it in this popular neighborhood, nor in other high society neighborhoods: the verb reciprocate, to

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5. Forasteros de la Salsa is the name of a dance club that artist Mauricio Limón collaborated with during his co-participation project titled *Broken Teeth* (2014-15). Within this framework of dialogue and collective creation, Limón elicited the encounter, the clash, between participants in that musical group, a boxing instructor named 'El Tierno,' and Hannia, a member of the Forasteros de la Salsa. Both activities, the dancing —Son montuno and Salsa—and the boxing coincided in the same public space: the Alameda of Santa María la Ribera. Starting from that peculiar coincidence, Limón invited the participants to generate a range of choreographic exercises, knowledge exchanges, and dynamics of improvisation between people of both groups or disciplines. The co-participation was embodied in a two-channel video in which El Tierno and Hannia explore the corporeal and emotional dimensions of both practices. Among the violence, the cadence, the blows, and the desire, the piece draws a portrait, an approximation of an anthropological and metaphoric nature about the different tensions that delineate every neighborhood fabric. A sum of personal stories and collective imaginaries. The fact that a still from this video is the homepage of inSite/Casa Gallina website is noteworthy and I highlight it in relation to the comments in the text about the friendly house-institution. The image is anything but gentle or warm, the first contact with this portal is already a provocation, a sharp question.

6. *Kolobok* is a Slavic children's story whose eponymous main character is represented as a small, spherical, and brilliant being; a cookie, pastry, or small bread typical to Ukrainian cuisine. The plot consists of Kolobok suddenly coming to life and experiencing encounters with different animals that try, at all costs, to devour it, but it always escapes by singing songs about its previous exploits or developing ways of mocking those who have wanted to eat it. The allusion to this character is related to the presence of a Russian restaurant named Kolobok located at Salvador Díaz Mirón Street # 87 in Santa María la Ribera. In the context of this text, that animated thing, its circular and brilliant form, also refers to a kind of currency, of fantastic and coveted treasure or to the improbable Bitcoin and its informal, speculative, and elusive nature.



make two things correspond. To respond to an action with another similar one. One thing corresponding to another. It sounds nice, not the infinite and its clashing sound, but its consequences, the condition of equality, of ethical equilibrium but ... How can we inject reciprocity from the bottom up in the middle of the twenty-first century—with everything that this beautiful epoch contains in terms of competition, accumulation, consumerism, disinterest, individualism, and so on—in a sociopolitical context such as the effervescent, dense, and metamorphic neighborhood of Santa María la Ribera? How can we articulate a laboratory around said reciprocal correspondence that experiments diverse models and rhythms of coexistence, learning, co-production, and critical thought as this organization does? Reciprocreate! A pity that it is still a prototype, a proposal in the making for the distinguished Royal Spanish Academy. At the end of the day, the great discontent and social surfeit that permeates the world is perhaps due to the scarcity of new words, accurate and explosive words capable of slapping us out of our aphasic and complacent desires.

It is not necessary to invent warm water to respond with dignity to previously formulated questions, you only have to relax and call on the right people to another crazy, multitudinous, and revealing session of what in Casa Gallina they call:

#### De 5 A 7 (From 5 to 7) <sup>7</sup>

But, if there is no longer a headquarters, nor wall, nor windows! True, but the garden, the chicken coop, even an open air kitchen have remained. And the work team continues their daily tasks, without fuss. The inertia, the spirit have not changed, thus we continue with the scheduled activities.

Let's invite, let's call upon, for example, the social scientist Mr. Karl Polanyi, the anarcho-communist naturalist Piotr Kropotkin, the neighbors, the rapper Dayra Fyah, the writer Sylvia Plath and the author of the succulent dictionary of RECEIVED IDEAS who prefers to remain incognito and come disguised as a chilling hybrid in which different characters intermittently coincide such as: Mauricio Limón, Anthony Bourdain, Carmen Aristegui, Xavier López Rodríguez, Jennifer González Colón, Salvador Novo, Moon Jae-in, Cujo, Luis Gómez, Ottavio Leoni, Leonardo Boff, and Teresita May.

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7. From 5 to 7 is a platform of conviviality and dialogue whose objective is to bring together a group of neighbors with an external or special guest who has developed valuable initiatives or projects of social, ecological, or community nature.

The first name on the list, author of the visionary book titled *The Great Transformation* (1944) is also the first to break the silence and take the floor to comment that: “the effectiveness of reciprocity, largely falls on the movements between groups, symmetrically designated as fraternal relations.”<sup>8</sup>

—Indeed, Karl and that is precisely what has determined the direction of this bizarre thing-environment where now we find ourselves drinking this delicious *colonche*, Sylvia points out and her intervention continues ... The nodal factor of inSite/Casa Gallina is not simply its collective spirit, co-participation or the exchange of diverse things and knowledges as mentioned by a certain Palacios. No, the key to this field test is the AFFECTIVE and emotional dimension, the project's capacity to generate, almost from nothing, solid and intimate complicities precisely with a wide range of local groups and collectives as you indicate very well. And I am not only talking about bi-univocal links between the mother hen and those free associations, institutions or people of the neighborhood, but of those that, as a certain vein of Cupid, are unleashed, aroused by lived experience and the consequent camaraderie. In this way, estrangement or defamiliarization gives rise to the reflexive act of recognizing one's self as a REACTIVE-PROACTIVE body and then advancing through different and unsuspected paths, now without the shelter or shell of the regulating-mother-residence. Without this particular element, without that act of leaving the door open, of infiltrating and inoculating more, but not thereby controlling a future or dictating a sentence, none of this would make sense in reality. Not even that mouth-to-mouth respiration that we perceive right in that moment in front of the Metropolitan Concierge, between a vagabond fainting on the sidewalk, knocked out, lost in his own meteorite vomiting and the appearance of an elderly woman who, faced with this a situation, deposits at the feet of the bloated indigent a duo of warm-succulent-tender tacos of rice, hard boiled egg, and beans.

What the hell? The analytical sparrows and the corner cop wonder, while they continue in search of tiny crumbs.

—Obviously, Piotr exclaims, with his bearded pre-Soviet quasi hipster look, here is a clear example of:

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8. Karl Polanyi, *La gran transformación: Crítica del liberalismo económico*, trans. Julia Várela and Fernando Álvarez-Uría (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quipu, 2007), 92.

## MUTUAL AID

Do not tell me, please, that you have not read my book about this instinct-practice that is inherent both to the animal kingdom and the human species. I wrote it more than a century ago (1902) and it has been translated into almost all the world's languages ... none of your excuses are valid. A sepulchral silence seized the conviviality ... until the disordered multiple personality hybrid managed to break it with the question that saves the day: does anyone want a little more *colonche* (pre-Hispanic alcoholic beverage made from prickly pear)? But the Russian geographer, like a good Sagittarian anarchist, born into a noble family, is also a hard nut to crack and does not give up the microphone:

—Well, since I see that nobody has read my book, I'll have to quote myself ...

“In the ethical progress of humans, mutual aid and not mutual struggle has been the determining factor.”<sup>9</sup>

Ask yourselves: “Who are the fittest, those who constantly fight among themselves or, to the contrary, those who mutually support one another?”<sup>10</sup>

“If we take an anthill, not only will we see that all types of work—from raising offspring, to provisioning, construction, and so on—are carried out according to the principles of voluntary mutual aid, but we must also recognize that the fundamental element of life of many species of ants is that each ant shares and is obliged to share its already swallowed and partly digested food with each member of the community that demonstrates need of it ...”<sup>11</sup>

In this way, we can affirm that the affective bases, but also the theoretical-practical precepts of this organization are based on research or exploration of what can today, here and now be developed socially, artistically, economically, and cognitively starting from EMBODYING the principle of mutual aid. I myself have not experienced it, but I take my hat off to such an attempt ... search ... leap into the most acute emptiness ...

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9. Piotr Kropotkin, *El apoyo mutuo: Un factor de evolución*, trans. Luis Orsetti (Logroño: Editorial Pepitas de calabaza, 2016), 107.

10. Ibid., 143.

11. Ibid., 87.

In an untimely way, following the mention of these self-promotional quotations and the delicate reverence, a real broken telephone, a deaf dialogue in which the words and thoughts belong to everyone and no one at the same time, breaks out:

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I am vertical. But I would prefer to be HORIZONTAL ... Symmetry and centrality respond, each at fifty percent, to the needs of reciprocity and redistribution ... it is then when the sky and I converse freely and I can feel SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL DEMOCRACY ...

I work professionally as a programmer but here I have learned to cook pretty well, people even tell me that I could be a chef ... in a community like this one, the idea of individual benefit is excluded ... let's follow that idea ...

DOVE: it should not be eaten with peas.

PLANETS: all discovered by Urbain Le Verrier.

POLISH POLITICIAN: if we cut their hair, they bleed.

PRACTICE: superior to theory.

PROGRESS: always misunderstood and accelerated.

PROPERTY: one of the pillars of society. More sacred than religion.

Economic obligations will be duly preformed; and, above all, on the occasion of each public holiday, the material means will be available to make an excess showcase of abundance ... the world is vast and generous ... the complexity of the task ... rests on concentrating ...

We should not confuse, for any reason, the *Cor Unum* style charity with the experiences of reciprocity and co-participation carried out by this enterprise or *artel*. The anecdote, that of the vagabond, the elderly woman, and the tacos is a CHEESY tale ...

... in my long experience in Siberia, I became aware of the absolute impossibility of doing anything really useful for the people through the ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY.



–Has anyone tried invisible Haiku?<sup>12</sup> The originals or the copies?  
–I am slow as the world, I am very patient turning through my time.  
–From one pattern to another in the world of work we find *artels*: both temporary and permanent, for the production and consumption of all possible forms.  
–I am not prejudiced. Everything that I see I immediately swallow exactly as it is ...

Silence! Silence! Let's make a )((((((Parenthesis)))))))( and let's be sensible, objective, let's turn to the infallible encyclopedia ... proposes Señora Irene—one of the neighbors who has been called to participate, chef and owner of the Kitchen *La Torre*. Let's see, pay attention:

Wikipedia: **Reciprocity**, in cultural anthropology, refers to the way of defining people's informal exchange of goods and labor.  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reciprocity>

As the famous Cri-Cri song says, “*it's about to be seven*” ... but this afternoon there is a certain tolerance. So many “buts” in this conversation and so much informality, work, and economy coinciding in this reciprocity thing! La Señora Irene mentions out loud ...

–Economy, yes, BUT I wouldn't be so sure about informality comments Teresita, the successor, in terms of gender to the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher. It's all a question of approaches ... If we see the glass half full, this private in-

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12. *Invisible Haikus* (2015–17) is the name of the co-participation initiative proposed by the Argentine artist Eduardo Navarro in collaboration with Ian Pasarán, flavor specialist and blind masseuse. Long interested in generating cognitive and sensory interaction and exchanges with people who have different ways of perceiving the world, Navarro focuses his attention on the learning processes of a group of blind members of the International Committee for the Blind located in the neighborhood. The co-participation materialized in a sculptural set of five boxes in which sculptures were deposited that the public could touch with their hands but not observe. In addition to this, Eduardo and Ian conceived and prepared five haikus with different flavored candies that were offered to the participants before the tactile experience. Each box, invisible object, and candy corresponded to the following notions: space, time, affect, light, and distance. A central aspect of the piece was that this experience was equally open to blind and non-blind people and the inclusive character generated a space for dialogue and sharing a common experience. The blind guiding the truly blind, the seers who think we know everything because we can see it, the idea of normality put in check. I bet one of those haiku had a light flavor of Kolobok, the temperature of *Mil flores* chicken and inspiration from Basho in a state of intoxication: “Would you light the fire? I'll show you a big snowball.”

stitution is perfectly and completely constituted according to the parameters established by law in respect to non-profit civil associations. Pure and simple formality. In short, it is an organization that subsists with resources that it obtains from grants or support from the public administration as well as from private donations originating in the market economy, the HORRENDOUS HYPERCAPITALISM and the not less deplorable excessive accumulation of goods and wealth by a few FORTUNATE responsible-gentile-oligarchs. So I don't see informality anywhere. Thus, although Sylvia yearns for horizontality, this initiative operates under a labor structure that, even if it distances itself from the traditional hierarchical organizational schema, each member of the group has precise roles according to the requirements of the task they are responsible for and this is what leads to the efficiency of the enterprise, the anthill. Things occur as stipulated, the vegetable harvest takes place on time, goals are met, no excuses are valid, the movies scheduled at the **Salón Huev@** are projected as announced on Facebook, the tools of the **Prestaduría vecinal** roar at first spark, workshops complete their cycles, publications ... are published! and spread throughout the neighborhood, in the sessions of **Amigos cenando a ciegas (Friends Dining on a Blind Date)**, the dishes and drinks are served and shared on time, work is CARRIED OUT in the broadest sense of the term. Recycling, sustainability, and discipline shine in every corner. There is no room for there ... it goes ... both tangible and intangible transactions come and go, the voluntary RETRIBUTIONS are made concrete, fortnights are far from being promises to come. In short, we are faced with an organization as efficient in its operational chain as anti-productivist. Is it possible?

Now well, if we see the glass half empty, inSite/Casa Gallina is an INFORMAL institution in the sense that it does completely fit into the pre-established parameters of what we understand by: house of culture, production center, sect of an ecological nature, alternative space, charity organization, mysterious brotherhood, brothel, organic food restaurant, eighties Dianeticist group, cabinet of curiosities, PIRATE site MUSEUM, congregation of just strangers, society of technology and sciences of religion, etc. No, it is neither one thing nor the other ... It is simply something unknown in these Aztec lands; a riddle and an oasis for anyone who has the will, the desire to perceive it and to enter into it. This lack of division is and has been a fundamental element of the development of this platform-laboratory. The lack of a defined form, of a sclerotic mission which prevents it from reacting quickly, of a recognizable institutional category leads to, both for the inhabitants of the neighborhood and for those who attend a specific event or who venture into

a process of co-participation—which can last up to three years—an unparalleled challenge, an active and unusual involvement, an empowered collective experience whose results are not assured. These have been subject to the traces of an on-going experience ... and in which the previously mentioned informality is also located. This circumstance is something that, among other things, distances the interlocutors from their COMFORT ZONE both in strictly professional, as well as affective and intellectual, terms. How far should I go in? How much time should I dedicate to this project? How to generate interest and complicity with those who co-participate in a given initiative? Where to start? Is it not better to intervene with conceptual subtlety and run off to the next artistic-academic-social commitment? How will all this time and effort I am investing pay off in economic and emotional terms? Are we talking here about public art, activist, engaged art? Who said that the historic Santa María la Ribera needed a strange den of this sort? Why violate or transform its uses and customs?

—All of this seems suspicious to me! Moon Jae-in interrupts.

—It is. And that shouldn't be understood as something negative, Dayra responds. The suspicion might be the bait that leads you to bite the hook, to fall into a trap that, although it carries a strong risk, at least it will WAKE YOU UP, like a good RAP does, it will save you from lethargy and suffocating apathy. Returning to the topic of the comfort zone, we are forgetting about the permanent team, those who work there on a daily basis, whose goal is to start up the mill, activate synergies, consistently follow up on the different processes happening simultaneously, camouflage themselves in moments of haste, get away from the idols in time, show FACE, accept the possibility of failure, disturb the lethargic guest, and continue adding new societies, friendships, exchanges of knowledges. They are the ones with the most complicated mission ... to be double lab rats. They have had to learn to breathe deeply, very deeply without hyperventilating. I don't know if I could work in a space like that, where, in sum, there are no lavish openings, nor media visibility, nor the delivery of important prizes to creative celebrities, nor guided tours, nor glamorous events that coincide with biennials, fairs, robust international colloquia, launches of beautiful magazines or luxury watches ... nor EXHIBITIONS. How boring! Why do all of this then?

—Good question. I think that, undoubtedly, they have a screw loose ... comments the rogue Mexican Oscar Wilde ... the project definitely has neither head nor feet. It is, as one of my poems says: a monosyllable princess. And I'll

end my intervention with another questioning lyrical BOMB: Are they spies or are they airplanes?

—Bullshit, Salvador, pure humbug your words! Exclaims Leoni.

Monsieur Kropotkin returns to the ring to finally close this chaotic session...

—If I remember correctly, someone mentioned, a little while ago, the term *artel*, and I think it is appropriate to briefly correct ideas around these types of organizations since they can shine some light on the dilemma embodied by the dual structure of inSite/Casa Gallina.

I will continue with my egotism and become the central protagonist again:

“In Russia, the *artel* grew naturally; it was a legacy from the Middle Ages and while the officially constituted cooperative society would have had to fight against a myriad of legal difficulties and against the suspicion of the bureaucracy, the non-official cooperative form—the *artel*—constituted the very essence of Russian peasant life.”<sup>13</sup>

In other words, an *artel* is a voluntary association of NEARBY people who come together—temporarily or permanently—to carry out a collective work or action that carries mutual, reciprocal benefits. Usually the most well-known and necessary trades for the community are practiced in these associations: carpentry, masonry, shoe-making, lumberjacks, farmers, hunters, etc. Undoubtedly, the inSite/Casa Gallina is a sophisticated sort of contemporary *artel* and socioeconomic laboratory in which there is a wide variety of artistic, as well as scientific and pedagogical, manifestations, but also those of a handcrafted nature, with practical and general learning, in which the traditional and the newest trades are intermingled. Its vast range of trainings (workshops, courses, support, and tutoring) prove it. Not only in this particular program but also in the so-called CO-PARTICIPATIONS, in which contemporary artists—after a work of investigation and recognition in the neighborhood—propose projects, group experiences of knowledge creation with some local collective, association or institution whose results, which in some cases are intangible, vary according to the forms of collaboration. Let's take a look at the rich and diverse set of trades and professions or 'states' that have coincided in these co-participation projects:

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13. Ibid., 324.



construction workers, ophthalmologists, weavers, glass-makers, beauticians, digital animators, cooks, boxers, flavorists, choreographers, musicians, different retailers, sign-makers, designers, costume designers, urban planners, housewives, DJs, students of all ages, administrators, geologists, nephrologists, former soldiers, activists, curators, blacksmiths, restaurant owners, environmentalists, children, architects, homeopaths, chefs, altruists, programmers, elderly people, coffee growers, body builders, plumbers, sociologists, those who are neither this nor that, visual artists, among many others.

It could not be more clear. The huge bet that this institution is making, starting from an inoculation of the economic-commercial fabric of the neighborhood, is definitive. Hence, from this friction with what symbolically and materially constitute those daily tasks that model and regulate the breathing, the inSite/Casa Gallina shapes the personality and energy of the neighborhood fabric, in order to determine, to some extent, the place that it occupies in the whole of the continent. The agility and effectiveness of its actions rest on the fact that, like the *artels* before it, it mocks the bureaucracy, the public administration, and the mere appearance of social responsibility or commitment that companies or sponsors of private initiatives usually demand. Even if, as we saw earlier, it is a civil association registered according to the law and its Martian criteria, this organization dances to its own rhythm, it escapes the blockages of the system and the vices of antiquated cooperatives, and, instead of complaining about how difficult it is to keep such an initiative afloat, it PRODUCES, MAKES, EXCHANGES, QUESTIONS, GENERATES, EXPERIMENTS. In its continuous action it reminds and obsessively insists to those who live in and make up the neighborhood that:

#### IMPROVING YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON YOU<sup>14</sup>

If we return briefly to reciprocity, it would be necessary to clarify that Casa Gallina is at the expense of the neighborhood itself, it is the neighbors themselves who, to a large extent, have molded its development during these five years of coexistence. Remember, the neighborhood is the raw material and

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14. Another demonstration of this is the initiative titled **Visual Identities for Neighborhood Businesses**. inSite/Casa Gallina initiated this program in 2015 and so far, more than 30 businesses have transformed their external appearance, their face to the neighborhood, during those tedious hours during which businesses and the sound of the cash register stops.

15. It is complicated to measure the consequences of this wise mantra, the positive reactions that it has generated in the neighborhood since the inSite/Casa Gallina initiated its inoculations. However, there are concrete cases that attest to the effects of the mantra.

vice versa. The neighborhood is home and vice versa ... after five years of work, self-recognition and symbolic, practical, and affective co-dependence.

“Criminal, too. It was a robbery. Put your mouth ... I’ll give it back to you.”  
The Edenic fungus? The kiss?<sup>16</sup>

—Although Leonardo, author of the work titled *How to Care for the Common Home* (*Como cuidar la casa común*, 2015), has not opened his mouth even once this evening, I dare to close my intervention with the following question raised by the Brazilian theologian in an article recently published in the newspaper *El País*:<sup>17</sup> what ethics would be able to guide us, as humanity living in the same common house? Until now, and excuse my lack of creativity, the only response that I can envision is: MUTUAL AID, MUTUAL CARE, MUTUAL ASSISTANCE, VOLUNTARY RADICAL RECIPROCITY.

Well, the last one closes the door ...

JUST ONE MOMENT, and ART, what is its role in all of this? Asks the curly redhead Limón.

—Goodness, I don’t think we have time left to approach your question, Mauricio but I think that some points have been made in relation to your line of questioning ... Karl comments. Perhaps, for this organization, ART is far from being the base ingredient, the key to the recipe. In fact, it is clear that much of its identity is rooted in the having DISSOCIATED itself from the art system’s dynamics of production, exhibition, and legitimization. Although in the beginning the conceptual, theoretical and practical framework is radically different between inSite and Casa Gallina, it is understandable that it has given continuity to the inertia of producing pieces of contemporary art that respond to a specific geographic and sociopolitical context. We should ask ourselves ... for an organization like Casa Gallina ... is it necessary to produce artistic objects that justify and/or materialize the experiences generated during the co-participation processes? To me it seems that ... DEFINITELY not. Collaborating with artists, yes, of course, I am only speaking of freeing ourselves from the fetish, from the piece in itself, whatever the format, technique, or discipline that it takes ... and its later exhibition and commercialization in art centers, galleries, fairs, biennials, or museums. Those institutions, those forms of inhaling and exhaling are not what fit here. They aspire to and are very different things that produce ...

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16. Mark Twain, *El diario de Adán y Eva*, trans. Rafael Santervás (Madrid: Editorial Valdemar, 2011), 93.

17. Leonardo Boff, “El eclipse de la ética en la actualidad,” *El País*, September 28, 2018.

## ADRENALINE ANTIPODES.<sup>18</sup>

–Mauricio, close that door already ... we can continue for a few minutes while we walk down Sabino Street.

OK, but there is no door anymore ... I'll do a bit of mime ... I only wanted to add that what you just mentioned reminded me of the title of a book that brought together different writings by Joseph Beuys: *Through This, I No Longer Belong to Art* (1988).

And I was reminded of having read something in that compendium that is fully linked to what this initiative wants to provoke:

“I do not have to criticize. My only task, my only goal is to show, in a positive way, the monstrously unexplored possibilities that are found among us and that, unfortunately, we very rarely use ... but that, undoubtedly, we must use.”<sup>19</sup>

This organization has shown that it is much more than a FRIENDLY-INSTITUTION-HOUSE. It is a strange and dystopian thing, a tremendous and joyous problem, a resilient oracle, a continuously gestating idea that, without a doubt, encourages the ability to act, through CULTURE and from the LOCAL, in a way that is more in keeping with the socioeconomic, environmental, emotional, and political emergencies of our time. Fame can and will have to wait ... to calm its uncontrollable dependency on polite applause.

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<sup>18</sup>. In this regard, I consider it pertinent to mention a concrete example here. I am referring to the presentation of the piece *Soy Mandala (I Am Mandala)* by the Brazilian artist Cadu in the Jumex Museum in 2017. That work, arising from a long and emotional process of co-participation (2014-16) between the artist and a group of elderly women, old friends, who, having been meeting weekly to dance in the Santa María de la Ribera Casa de Cultura (local authority-run cultural center), materialized in a well-made museum-worthy video-installation. There is nothing perverse about that. However, the adrenaline antipodes, the irreparable distance, can be perceived in the following paragraph written by Osvaldo Sánchez, inSite/Casa Gallina Project Director, along with Violeta Celis of this co-participation, in the brochure that accompanied the aforementioned event. “This presentation in the Jumex Museum I hope opens up a useful suspicion around the urgency of re-enunciating the cultural practices that endorse our dynamics of belonging, beyond representation and accumulation. In any case, *Soy Mandala* is presented to us as the avatar of an exogamous practice. Perhaps therefore it will be another paradox in the art scene today. And it is that the true piece *Soy Mandala* is somewhere else. *Mandala* has been and gone.” Osvaldo Sánchez, *Cadu: Soy Mandala*, exhibition catalogue, Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, 2017, 8.

<sup>19</sup>. Joseph Beuys, *Par la présente, je n'appartiens plus à l'art* (Paris: Editorial L'Arche, 1988), 27.

Hopefully this run over SPECIES of a text adds another breath more ... to its buoyant ecosystem. Long live the houses with hens!<sup>20</sup>

## COLOPHON

Eloísa has a fixed idea ... and, therefore, it stops her from advancing ... beyond the limits of the quadrant ...

... meanwhile, the broken play gives rise to any possible outcome and the micro-meteorite breathes deeply for the extinction of OFFICIAL-FORMAL corruption.

Aimée now doubts the truth of the Kolobok, but she rescues what she experienced in those days of insatiable searching in which she swears to having heard, smelled, and almost, almost touched it ... tasted, ideas are lost when we start to count them ...

we would have to crucify the cell phone,

procure solidarity attack

^erotic-random-wind^

or, at least,

astronomical refinement.

Eloísa intuits that neither the heart nor the market stop beating if we sneeze ...

and that the visible form is the

IDEA itself ... better to explore other lighter moors ... let's throw overboard

...

the weight, the original shit ...

And where are we heading now? Eloísa mutters.

Oh, dear!

¿Why do you ask that at the end? Exclaims Aimée.

It'll be through the natural economics, of selling without winning and buying without losing ...

impossible to miss it, the marvelous aircraft ... called ... the ECONOMY ...

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**Víctor Palacios** is a curator and contemporary art writer, he has served as the Head of Visual Arts at Casa del Lago, UNAM, since 2012. He resides and works in Mexico City.

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<sup>20</sup>. Aimée and Eloísa, two prosperous and generous hens, have lived in this form-less house for some years. Their names coincide with those carried by the two presidents of the organization's board of directors. I take this opportunity to thank Josefá Ortega, curator and matriarch of the Casa Gallina, for her invaluable and accurate support to corroborate and obtain this and much of the other information related to the project. Dialogue with her has been fundamental in the creation of this text.



# Green Network: The Power of Seeds

Other Garden Initiatives, Their Neighborhood Implementation

Learning experiences gained at inSite/Casa Gallina's **Vegetable Garden** have motivated some neighbors to establish their own spaces to grow produce. Participants in different workshops and courses, from a diverse range of ages and professions, have found that producing their own food has given them a chance to reconnect with nature and also with what they consume. We visited the gardens of Daniela Luna, Rafael Maya, Guadalupe Martínez and Luis de la Barrera so they could tell us about their experiences of having a vegetable garden at home. (J.O.)



## Daniela Luna

neighbor and producer of natural cosmetics and succulent arrangements

I help with my friend Gaby's garden, who lives here in the neighborhood on Laurel Street; she has an enormous garden, her whole terrace, she even has a tiny greenhouse.

I started with fruit boxes; I planted peas, chilies, tomatoes, strawberries, luffa, among other things. I brought Mexican pepperleaf and manzano chilies from Casa Gallina. Michelle, who I met at the Casa Gallina, gave me a tobacco plant as a gift.

For about a year I've been going to classes on Saturdays. For me it's sacred, I never miss class. It's a safe place where I feel good and I really enjoy going, picking the produce, and working in the garden. It's something that makes me really happy, and I realize that doing it makes me much happier than if I were doing something else.

inSite/Casa Gallina has meant I have met people who are really important in my life now, like Kate, Lulú, Itzel, people who've become my friends. It has been different for me to relate to life in a new way, with people who I share interests with, and with whom I started to collaborate.





## Rafael Maya

neighbor and master swage cutter

At first I wanted to plant vegetables: tomato, onion, cilantro, chili peppers; something that we deal with on a daily basis at home, some staple food items. That was the first reason why I wanted a vegetable garden. When I learned that inSite/ Casa Gallina supported those projects, I came to you and participated as much as I could.

We did the first project that involved planting vegetables in the patio. We planted peas, carrots, cilantro, beans, radishes, lettuce, and other things. We harvested those several times. The only thing that was not successful were the peas; everything else was small, but it produced something. Afterward, I kept going to classes and talks at Casa Gallina and I learned that a small product is better and more nutritious than a large one.

Later I went to a course on herbalism that I really liked and also some talks about homeopathy. That is when I changed my vision. Now I'd like to grow curative or medicinal plants. The same way I learned how to make dyes and ointments, I'd like to make some for my own consumption, for my family.



## Guadalupe Martínez

neighbor and retailer

What I've experienced has been highly gratifying as it's taught me things I didn't know, things that took me outside of myself; I didn't get plants and now I'm very happy with them. I took a course at Casa Gallina and then another one in which we made the community vegetable garden with Armando Volterrani and that's what you can see here, we haven't done that much, but we're working on it. Luis hasn't participated at Casa Gallina, but he has here, in the garden.

We have green beans, lettuce, tomatoes, chilies, strawberries, radishes, and onions. Yes, we have eaten some of it, but only a *petit comité*, that is, six green beans, four strawberries, and some peas. What we have consumed a lot of, is lettuce. I've even given some to my neighbors in the building, because they grow just like that, those that you see right now we didn't even plant, some seeds must have been blown here and the lettuce grew by itself. Look, all these little seeds were given to me by my garden. I have all of this to clean. All of these jars, I went to buy them and I put names on them, and these little jars all have their own history.

## Luis de la Barrera

neighbor and retailer

Yes, I haven't participated within the group in Casa Gallina, but here I have been supporting my wife, yes, I see she's very happy getting her hands dirty in the earth and other things, things that I hadn't seen her do.

The flavor of the food is something else, it's different. Now my grandson says: "I want a strawberry," we cut it, we rinsed it, and he loved it, he says it tasted like strawberry ice cream so it must be sweet. You eat so many things without even knowing how they grow, how it was planted, or that it needed time, it had to go through a process, and all of that is very comforting.





Newsletter/ Boletín agosto 2018  
Santa María la Ribera, México D.F.

En este segundo trimestre de 2018 lanzamos tanto nuevos proyectos con locales, como plataformas de acción generadas por los propios vecinos. Estuvo el inicio de los cursos de verano para niños de escuela pública del barrio; y varias piezas creativas hechas en colaboración.



Visualización de la Mesa El Pezcocho. Septiembre 2018

En el  
Diseño  
colabor  
y fue in



Newsletter/ Boletín junio 2016  
Santa María la Ribera, México D.F.

En estos meses recientes inSite/Casa Gallina ha intensificado el programa de *Somos* en más rubros de actividad y grupos; y la casa ha comenzado a funcionar como una plataforma abierta a iniciativas comunitarias. Además, estamos interesados en la producción de dos proyectos de Coparticipaciones, de Cadu y de Ana María Millán. También iniciamos el proceso de diseño conceptual de una aplicación para dispositivos móviles de utilidad comunitaria y un nuevo libro sobre el Mercado La Dalia dirigido para un público infantil.



Proceso de producción en proceso para la producción comunitaria en colaboración, a cargo de Ana María Millán.

Posterior a su tercera residencia, realizada entre abril y mayo de 2016, Ana María Millán ha comenzado el proceso de producción de su propuesta, a partir de la interacción con un grupo de jóvenes interesados en los videojuegos. Juntos desarrollan la historia, personajes y escenarios para la realización de la pieza final que vinculará novela gráfica, animación, videojuego e ilustración. También Noé Martínez (Morelia, Michoacán, 1986) quien comenzó su proceso de investigación en noviembre de 2015, inició una dinámica concreta de acercamiento con personas migrantes, hablantes de lenguas indígenas en el barrio, como mixteco, zapoteco, náhuatl, mazateco y marahuac; con vistas a desarrollar una propuesta.



Newsletter/ Boletín Noviembre 2015  
Santa María la Ribera, México D.F.



WEE Video instalación. Mauricio Limón. inSite/ Casa Gallina 2015

programación de inSite/Casa Gallina. Durante este proceso de coparticipación, circulación de saberes y vinculación con el proceso de postproducción de las piezas artísticas de yezberg, Mauricio Limón y Omar Gómez.



Integrantes del Taller de Invenio se hacen comiendo.

abierta, impartidos por distintos chefs y nutriólogos en cafeterías y restaurantes familiares del barrio, trazó una dinámica de redistribución solidaria a vecinos del presente año.

# Newsletters

The newsletters, usually quarterly, were the response to the executive requirement to amplify the circulation of news of our activities and their results, and to register this performance on the calendar of a more global community of colleagues and professionals. More than anything, the newsletters allowed us to stay in the minds of sponsors, foundations and support funds. They serve as the active presence of a project that is purposefully distant from the scene of cultural legitimization and that doubts the relevance of its own dissemination. (O.S.)







# New Territories: A Wager without a Spectacle?

A conversation between Pablo Lafuente and Michael Krichman and Carmen Cuenca,  
Executive directors of inSite and of inSite/Casa Gallina

P.L.: What was the motivation for inSite to undertake a version with the form and dynamics of inSite/Casa Gallina? Why the particular site/context of Santa María la Ribera?

M.K.: The short answer to your question is that I (together with the president of inSite, Eloisa Haudenschild, and a small group of long-time inSite patrons) became interested in supporting Osvaldo Sanchez's idea of locating the sixth version of inSite in Mexico City.

The longer explanation involves Osvaldo's connection with inSite since early 1998 when he became a member of the curatorial team for inSite2000. He then served as artistic director of inSite\_05. My initial discussions with Osvaldo began in late 2011, while he was still working as the director of the Museo de Arte Moderno. The name inSite/Casa Gallina started as almost a joke, long before we found the house at 190 Sabino in Santa María la Ribera. During the early stages, when asked about the conceptual/curatorial framework of the next version of inSite, Osvaldo would answer that he needed time to think, read, get back into the contemporary scene a bit, etc.—but that he was certain the project would involve a house, and that that house would have chickens. Besides a house with chickens, I was interested in what I understood as Osvaldo's notion of testing the possibility of impact at the juncture of cultural activity and daily life (*la vida cotidiana*). On some level, this seemed to me a way for inSite to put its money where its mouth had been in terms of honest/meaningful engagement among artists and publics. I was also very much in favor of repositioning inSite away from the various models of exhibition and display that had become prevalent in the contemporary art world—particularly biennials

that were opening almost weekly in some parts of the world. Additionally, I had become somewhat frustrated during inSite\_05 by the lack of time we had to pursue interesting questions presented by completed artist commissions. The format that ultimately emerged for inSite/Casa Gallina allowed, to a certain extent, for more of that sort of inquiry and follow up.

In terms of the particular site/context of Santa María, again I would refer to Osvaldo's vision of the project. We were looking for houses in neighborhoods close to the center of Mexico City that had, for one reason or another, not been overtaken by the forces of gentrification. At one point, we were looking in several neighborhoods, but ultimately only in Santa María. We were hoping to be close to the Kiosco Morisco and La Dalia, the neighborhood's traditional market. Osvaldo also had in mind platforms of activity that would involve an urban garden, a kitchen, space for workshops, and space for education, library, and archives. Although it was something of a ruin when we bought it, the house at 190 Sabino flowed almost perfectly for the uses Osvaldo was thinking about.

C. C.: I approach this question from the perspective of a sort of outsider, as I was not really involved in the early stages of inSite/Casa Gallina. I continued working at the Tamayo Museum through 2015, although I had a pretty good sense of what was going on with inSite/Casa Gallina through Michael and Osvaldo.

I do think it's important to point out several factors that caused inSite to be open to what might be perceived as a radical shift. First, one of the few consistent aspects of inSite is that it has, as an organization, never assumed the requirement



or necessity to continue. So, the decision to undertake a next inSite has always been based on the notion that there is new territory to explore in more interesting and potentially impactful ways. In these terms, each version of inSite has necessitated a fairly dramatic reinvention of the project based on the lessons, easy and difficult, gleaned from previous versions.

Second, on a more practical level, when we finished inSite\_05 (really completed in 2007), the public safety situation in Tijuana had deteriorated substantially. You might remember that this was the time of the Mexican federal government's efforts to "get tough" on the drug cartels. The city was virtually militarized, so the notion of embarking on another version of inSite, inviting artists to "wander" in the border region, seemed untenable.

Additionally, I think there was some sense that although the border had never explicitly been a theme of inSite specifically, we were weary in our association with it. In other words, a change of venue, even if temporary, was not unwelcome by many of us involved.

Finally, as inSite had always been based on close relationships in Mexico City, I think there was a sense that we had the ability to find the networks and resources that artists would need to work. It was not like relocating to a completely unfamiliar place, which would indeed have been out of character for inSite.

**P.L.:** In relation to inSite's history, what changes and continuities does inSite/Casa Gallina imply? Were there particular challenges in making that shift? Logistical, conceptual, financial?

**M.K.:** There were certain aspects of inSite/Casa Gallina that I think we understood and predicted would necessitate shifts in our organization, both institutionally and conceptually. Most of these shifts were welcome. On an administrative level, where inSite had in the past operated through a traditional 501 (c)(3) non-profit in the US, for inSite/Casa Gallina we would need to form a second non-profit, or AC, in Mexico. At first, this may

have seemed to be a mundane distinction; but in the end it meant double work and an overly complicated structure of financial and other record keeping. More significantly, unlike past versions, where artists operated, and their works displayed in locations across a wide geographic zone, the physical center of inSite/Casa Gallina would be the approximately sixteen blocks surrounding a house in a working-class neighborhood of Mexico City that would operate as a platform for production—the center of a variety of programs developed with and for the neighborhood—but never as a site of display or exhibition. The shift away from display and exhibition was not only welcome, but was also the logical next step considering tendencies that had been apparent in inSite2000 and inSite\_05.

**C.C.:** At the same time, we had the expectation that the process of commissioning artists that inSite had developed over the years—allowing artists relatively long periods of residency for research and development of relationships with the groups they choose to work with, privileging process over production, etc., would remain consistent. I think we imagined that these tendencies would be strengthened by having a house where artists would live in the neighborhood where they were working. For several reasons, I think this turned out to be only partially the case: the amount of time that artists spent on their projects for inSite/Casa Gallina was, as a general matter, significantly less than for inSite in 1997, 2000, or 2005. Additionally, more than in our past, there was a greater number of artists who came for initial residencies and did not end up developing a work for inSite/Casa Gallina. This may be, in part, a symptom of the times we live in—where the demands on artists to produce for fairs, exhibitions, etc.—has never been greater. Another factor may be something of a miscalculation on our part about artists' willingness to live for long periods of time as guests in the neighborhood. Finally, the "rules of the game" established by Osvaldo and us for artists working in the project, may have simply been too narrow for certain artists to work within.

**M.K.:** There were also some unintended consequences of the shift to Mexico City and Santa María. inSite had, from its beginning, presented itself as a binational, multilingual project. That allowed us to work with a relatively diverse group of artists, many for whom neither English nor Spanish was a first language. When we began working on inSite/Casa Gallina, the decision was made to work, for the first year, only with artists fluent in Spanish. This may have made sense in terms of our attempt to "land softly" in the neighborhood and gain the trust of our neighbors. In the end, however, the first year stretched into five and we never really attempted to work with an artist not proficient in Spanish. Likewise, all of our publications were intended for the neighborhood, and thus only in Spanish. Unwittingly, I think inSite/Casa Gallina ended up being perceived as not particularly inviting to non-Spanish speakers—from sponsors to our own staff based outside of Mexico to certain artists that we otherwise would have wanted to work with. At the very least, there was no easy point of entry for non-Spanish speakers. In retrospect, this was, for me at least, an unfortunate result that we had not openly considered when we began working in 2012.

**P.L.:** How do you think the nearly seven years of inSite/Casa Gallina have contributed to the narrative of inSite? And how do you imagine this will manifest in the future?

**M.K.:** For me, the legacy of inSite/Casa Gallina within the narrative of inSite is the way in which the platforms and programs were integrated and embraced in the neighborhood. Certain strategies supporting the intersection with the

neighborhood, particularly the early mapping projects and the publishing projects, will undoubtedly be incorporated into future versions of inSite. Likewise, inSite/Casa Gallina will be pivotal to the extent that it marked the end of inSite employing an exhibition format—casting itself instead as a site for production over display.

By the same token, inSite/Casa Gallina underscores the importance of tendencies that have evolved through inSite over time. The most fundamental being that there is a direct relationship between the amount of time that artists are supported to undertake research in the context of residency and the likelihood that their work will have lasting impact.

Finally, I would say that inSite/Casa Gallina has underscored the importance of a strong relationship between artists and experienced curators at nearly every stage of project development. I think that we need to look for mechanisms that better foster those relationships as we consider the curatorial structure for future inSites.

**C.C.:** Several projects undertaken for inSite/Casa Gallina enlisted participation of neighbors who continued to be involved through other projects, or through the variety of programs developed at the house. As we begin thinking about the next version of inSite, I am certain that ways to promote long-term participation, over a number of artist projects or other programs, will be a key question. This will be particularly challenging assuming the base for the next inSite returns to the Tijuana/San Diego—cities that do not have densely populated neighborhoods and a region that is physically fragmented.

# The Wake of Neighborhood Learning

Two Personal Processes in Knowledge Dynamics

Over the years that inSite/Casa Gallina has been operating, we've counted on some people's constant participation; they start by taking a workshop and go on to develop their own learning trajectories, complementing them with individual research and practice, workshops at other institutions, and specific requests about the themes they want to address in further workshops at Casa Gallina. The routes presented here correspond to Teresa Coronado, an older adult, who already has a profession but takes advantage of her connection to the house to advance her professional, personal and family objectives: and to Jessica Gutiérrez, a young neighbor who is only just beginning to define her vocation. (R.C.)

**Teresa Coronado**  
neighbor and Reiki therapist

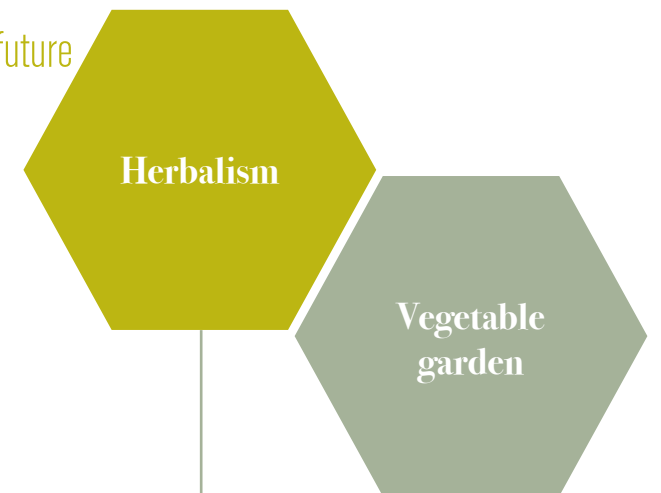
Workshops in Casa Gallina:



Self-taught routes



New interests for the future



"Really good, because I'm diabetic, and I got to see the possibility of eating better, because when you take care of someone, it's like you don't pay much attention to yourself, but when you are on your own, you start to pay a little more attention to your needs."

**Another use:** "To improve communication with patients, and recommend food that would be good for them: it is important to know how to communicate and know what we are going to say. First I experiment and then I pass on the knowledge."



# Jessica Gutiérrez León

neighbor and student

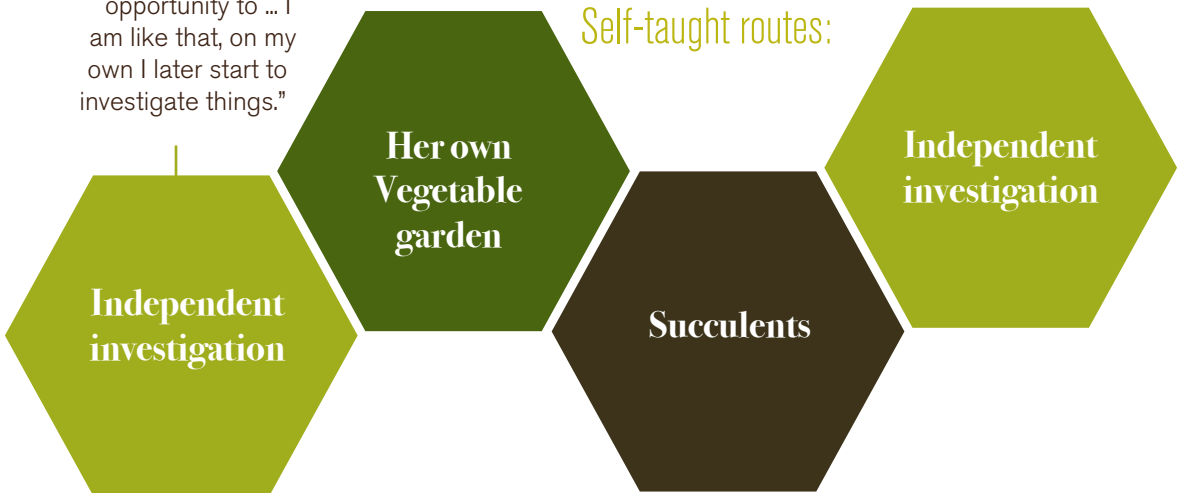
## Workshops in Casa Gallina:



"I don't like cooking, that's why I make this effort to join ... to get a taste for it. Also for economic and health reasons."

"They give you that base so that you can investigate on your own. Knowing the basics gives you the opportunity to ... I am like that, on my own I later start to investigate things."

## Self-taught routes:

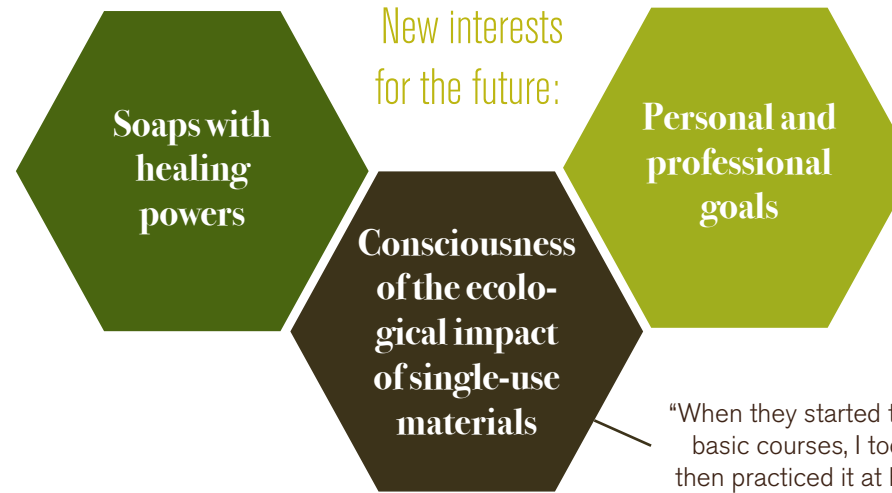


"I started to really like things related to the raw materials of all the organic products, from planting seeds to being able to make creams and ointments from them. Soaps, lip balms, deodorants, all with natural processes, free from chemicals."

She was interested in these but couldn't take them.

"I joined this one because I don't know how to cook, I still haven't learned much about the kitchen; I already know a little about planting, at least I could learn about how to make carrot soup, and other types of things as well."

## New interests for the future:



"When they started to give us the basic courses, I took that and then practiced it at home, where I grew epazote (local herb), strawberries, lavender."



## Mending Holes with Dinosaur Patches: inSite/Casa Gallina and Reverse Extractivism

María Berríos

*When what you need is to make a hole in the wall, not to own a power drill.<sup>1</sup>*

When walking around Colonia Santa María la Ribera with either Sheba or Rodrigo, even getting from one end of the block to the next can be a very slow task. They have small interactions with almost everyone, a friendly exchange, ranging from comments about a workshop or activity, local gossip or information (people's plans for Mother's Day, when the roasted chicken kiosk will reopen, when the next cooking course will be offered, how is so-and-so doing) to many simply, of "hello." Walking around with them involves the normal interactions of neighbors who know and look out for one another. But Sheba and Rodrigo are not historical locals of Santa María la Ribera, as these interactions seem to indicate, but employees of inSite/Casa Gallina. Sheba actually lives in the neighbourhood, but I had to ask Rodrigo what it was like to go home to another area of the city every evening, where it seemed to me it was impossible he could have the same close-knit social relations as he has in this one. His shy but matter-of-fact retort was: "I live here, I only sleep over there."

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1. In reference to inSite/Casa Gallina's Prestaduría vecinal. Josefa Ortega, "Creaciones artísticas y culturales en barrios: Experiencia de inSite/Casa Gallina," (conference presentation at Seminario sobre Arteducación y territorio: Creaciones barriales, Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago de Chile, September 6, 2018). I am indebted to Josefa's own self-reflexive view and assessment of the trajectory of the project, as to the many neighbors, invited artists and staff that I was able to interview in Mexico early in 2018. I feel my own analysis echoes the insights of these conversations and is admittedly tainted by my admiration for what all those who have engaged with inSite/Casa Gallina have achieved together.



Upon arrival in Mexico City—where I am admittedly only a tourist, although I have visited and worked there several times during the last decade—when I would tell friends and colleagues I was there to visit Casa Gallina, the response was almost invariably: “Oh, the *secret* project”. inSite/Casa Gallina seemed to be perceived within the Mexican art world as a site for some kind of covert action. People were notably cautious to clarify their respect for the engaged and careful work the project was developing, while at the same time a timid critique of the project’s supposed exclusivity was somehow put forward.

One circulating rumour involved a prestigious contemporary art board of powerful high-heeled art “señoras” being denied entry when they showed up unannounced at the door, and their bewilderment with the unusual affront of not being allowed in. Nevertheless, in the long history of a highly extractivist and socially exploitative art world, particularly in the realm of “participatory” or “socially engaged” artworks, this seems to be a relatively minuscule exclusion, especially for an art-funded project attempting to develop sustainable relations with the local communities that make up the neighborhood.

In my own brief yet intense few days hanging out in and around the house, and speaking to several neighbors, my impression of the many people—mainly women, children and the elderly—from the area who I saw come in and out of the house had quite a different take. They would ring the bell with the confidence of someone who is coming over to have tea with a neighborhood friend.

What I observed in Casa Gallina is a place for sustainable relations under continuous reconstruction. I say this as an outsider. Which is not at all a negatively felt detail in the case of inSite/Casa Gallina. The immediate consciousness of being—at most—a bystander is, in my opinion, a notable achievement of the project. Being a non-entitled visitor comes not from being mistreated or excluded, but from the strong and immediately palpable sense that Casa Gallina is a space of care first and foremost for the locals who use it; as a cultural worker being there makes you aware that this is not a place that seeks to cater to the art world, or to “cultivate” an art audience.

The fact that Casa Gallina is a continuation of the inSite programme that was until 2005 known for working on public art projects taking place on the border between Mexico and the US by a number of artists, many of whom are now well known, is a safety net that cannot be underestimated. It was precisely because Casa Gallina was born as an initiative of inSite, a prestigious art organization, and due to the recognised solid professional and curatorial trajectory of

the inSite/Casa Gallina team, that it was possible for the project to avoid the usual need to pre-emptively adopt a position in the art scenario. They used this power, that involved access to secure funding, to invert the usual process of making a name for themselves. Instead, the initial impulse was used to investigate and carefully reflect on every movement they made, partially liberated from the draining efforts of demonstrating their social “impact.” They were also able to acknowledge that the balance usually goes in the opposite direction: it is not people who benefit from art, but most often, and pretty much always when working with local communities, the other way around.

This allowed inSite/Casa Gallina to move forward, guided at every step of the way by a basic principle: respect for the lived experience of the local inhabitants in what became their new neighborhood. Despite the conflicts that an initiative project like this inevitably raises, the project is far from a covert operation channelling art funding to run a community center. Art (and art-funding) has not been hijacked. On the contrary, inSite/Casa Gallina is a project that addresses core, relevant, basic issues inherent to art.

Through its practices, inSite/Casa Gallina asks: Who is art for? What is the purpose of art institutions? And more specifically: What does “public” mean in relation to art? What can “participation” mean in the realm of art? In light of the frequent abandonment of the notion of an art public to visitor statistics or the efforts of captivating target audiences through specialized mediation programmes, to rethink what the public realm of art can be, seems a worthy task. inSite/Casa Gallina does this through action: they are not interested in partaking in or contributing to a new thesis within the scholarly debate around participatory art, but rather in learning and raising questions along the way by doing things with care.

inSite/Casa Gallina addresses the fact that the worldly matter of art involves people, the production of art consistently entails many more people than the artist who ultimately signs a piece. And this is not only true for ‘participatory’ work, or work that engages with communities. inSite/Casa Gallina as a project, through its diversified curatorial action, asks what kinds of social relations people actually have with art, particularly people who are a part of the process of art making but that are most often ultimately excluded from the work when it becomes public. Since its inception inSite/Casa Gallina has insisted on creating a safer space for sustainable relations in art. Throughout its five years of existence it has slowly grown into a space of trust and mutual respect within the neighborhood in which they chose to locate themselves,

always with the awareness of the fragility of their own situation as newcomers or guests and the necessary care that everything they do requires.

Posing these issues was not part of the agenda of inSite/Casa Gallina—they did not seek to position themselves as experts in participatory or socially engaged art—but are in a sense an after-effect of their own cautious and careful engagement and familiarization with the neighborhood and people living there. In the process they secured what in an art context seems to be a rare asset: a strongly embedded sense of accountability in every step they have taken, believing and investing in the open learning process of what they are doing. inSite/Casa Gallina is an attempt to create a safer space for people and art. Not what people can do for art, but what and how art can do things with and for people in their everyday lives.

All those neighbors I met valued Casa Gallina as a space of encounter, not with contemporary art, but with each other. The work being done consists of providing shelter for relationships of trust and the sharing of existing knowledges: grandparents learning from teenagers how to use their mobile phones and social media; mothers learning from their children about what herbs and fruits can be used at home; and children learning how to mend and transform their clothing. There are many unexpected side effects coming out of these exchanges: an elderly Photoshop expert helping his friends digitally repair damaged old family pictures for reprinting; a pre-teen tailor creating dinosaur patches to extend the life of favoured garments with a small roster of neighborhood clients; hand-painted storefronts for local businesses.

Rather than claiming these achievements as their own, or in institutionally channelling these exchanges, inSite/Casa Gallina does its best in letting them loose, allowing them to be absorbed back into the social relations they came out of. Many of those who have been meeting regularly in Casa Gallina don't want to leave once the initial timespan of their collective activity is over (be it knitting, working with plants, cooking or simply talking). But this transference or sharing of skills is in a way an alibi, in several cases these activities eventually reappear and continue in other parts of the neighborhood, in people's yards, living-rooms, community centers, or simply live on as new friendships. What inSite/Casa Gallina takes care of is these encounters, the sharing of experiences, and ultimately this is what those participating value about the organisation: the mutual exposure of collective experience.

inSite/Casa Gallina does not describe itself as a pedagogical project, but the one thing that all that pass through and inhabit the house in one way or another seem to acknowledge is that it is a space for learning from each other. This is also the case for the artists, who, distinctly from the neighbors, are very aware of their own position as guests in a space of care. The long-term work they are invited to develop is also an educational realm in the sense that immediately the terms of the co-participation (of neighbors) in the development of artworks is closely followed by the curatorial team. They take care of the entire process, even before the project for the actual artwork exists, focusing on the terms of engagement with the local co-participants. They do not see their work as facilitators and providers of participants for artists and their work, but as caretakers of situations that can operate in a way similar to those encounters already taking place in Casa Gallina—except for the fact that the artist is a guest in the social space that is home to most other participants. They are conscientious in the crafting of the co-participations, and take part in the entire process, making sure there are appropriate non-monetary retributions; this last being a respected constant at all the workshops and activities that inSite/Casa Gallina organizes.

Although in some ways problematic, this could be seen through the lens of precarious labor and carework, such a mode of exchange has assured that in the production processes inSite/Casa Gallina is involved in, it never takes on the role of a participatory art hiring agency. Although more than a closed issue about what is sought and expected through monetary exchange, there is an ongoing reflection and discussion on what kind of value is produced in these relationships and what kinds of proportional retribution are considered proportionate by all parties. For each artist's project, inSite/Casa Gallina has been exhaustive in developing a process of continuous awareness in issues of accountability in artistic practice, a rare asset in the mainstream art world.

inSite/Casa Gallina has also made patent that, particularly in the case of working with local communities in art, visibility does not necessarily imply empowerment. They make a substantial effort to protect the participants from the usual overexposure of the work being done and of the relationships under construction, which is often deemed necessary for a successful dissemination and building an audience. But what relevance does this have when the participants are the audience? When what you are trying to do is develop sustainable relationships of trust, and safer spaces for exchange of experiences?



inSite/Casa Gallina has defended the need for social intimacy, although again the possibility to defend the necessary fragility of human relations came from the privileged position of secured funding. Yet they have used their privilege wisely: despite the basic condition of relative intimacy for trust-building, despite the evident impossibility of creating a relationship or having an actual conversation while under the guise of live streaming, the necessity of this kind of exposure is rarely questioned in the realm of art. inSite/Casa Gallina has been able to create a space of care because of their fierce defence of the power of the unmarked, questioning as feminists did long ago the failed assumption that making things visible would give them agency.

inSite/Casa Gallina, through its actions, produces an unending stream of questions; it dares to ask basic, and sometimes difficult, questions again: Who does this visibility benefit? What does visibility actually mean in an art context? Is exhibition-making a public realm in all social contexts? What does press attention do to people? What does press attention do to art? Where does public debate take place? What are the conditions for having conversations? Where is public? What is public? Who is public and why? Is an art board a public? What does secured funding entitle? Who is entitled to what? Who should be taken care of within the social relations of art? Where should care go first?

The eighteen blocks that inSite/Casa Gallina has focused on, the neighborhood of Santa María la Ribera, boasts some much larger fish: there is a Geology Museum (Museum of the Institute of Geology of National Autonomous University of Mexico), that is mostly visited by specialists, university students and schoolchildren. After an initial reticence to working or collaborating with any local organisations—in the beginning as newcomers they did not want to be perceived as pursuing the agenda of whichever local institution they allied with—they managed to craft a collaboration with the museum where

ecological issues such as extractivism have been addressed. Small-scale exhibitions produced in collaboration with invited artists have been widely visited by local families.

inSite/Casa Gallina has also worked with biologists living in the neighborhood who made a botanical atlas of the neighborhood accompanied by a small-scale signage intervention of the area's trees. They have also made several books, including one on the geological museum and another about the local market, which proudly stand on the shelves of many local families. The privilege of having the money to do these things is not everything, how that wealth is put to use is what matters. Art is not about being allowed to visit beautiful objects owned by a select few, or the supposed knowledge in how to value these precious things.

inSite/Casa Gallina is not concerned with educating people in art, or including more people in the elitist realm of contemporary art: everything the project has done, including giving themselves the space to learn from their mistakes, reveals how aims such as these are part of the problem. There is a long way to go in developing less socially and culturally extractivist relations within artistic practice and institutions; the doings of inSite/Casa Gallina, and the leap forward that inSite has made with them, have posed a relevant starting point. inSite/Casa Gallina conceives art as something that can be a part of people's everyday lives, its practice puts art forward as a critical tool for the development of social relations. Its formula for building collective experiences means inSite/Casa Gallina trusts people to do with their experiences of art whatever they see fit.

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**María Berríos** is an independent curator, researcher, editor, and sociologist. She resides and works in Copenhagen.



# The First Gift

## Marilú's Hen

Doña Marilú González has worked in Santa María la Ribera for 15 years. She studied fashion design and got her first job with a tailor whose business was located on Carpio Street. Later, she opened her own business on Sabino Street, near the corner with Díaz Mirón. Marilú is of Zapoteca descent and from the state of Oaxaca, she is proud of her origins despite having lived in Mexico City for such a long time. She supports her family economically and emotionally and has also involved them in the sewing workshop. She has been a friend and has collaborated with inSite/Casa Gallina since it opened in 2014. Her business was one of the first to collaborate with the **Synergies** Platform, as part of the project **Visual Identities for Neighborhood Businesses**. Her storefront is decorated by an image of some flowers inspired by the textiles from the Istmo de Tehuantepec region: it was created by the designer and neighbor, Joze Daniel.

During the first year of inSite/Casa Gallina's functioning, Marilú gave us a gift that she had commissioned to be made by her family, who are artisans from the town of Tavehua in the in the Sierra Juárez of Oaxaca. This clay hen with the name "Casa Gallina" engraved on it welcomes everyone from its place on the kitchen table. (V.C.)

"Casa Gallina has taught us to share and live together, that's the most important thing; I think there's still a long way to go but it is a good start, it is good that they teach things and that we can all learn from it. It isn't necessary for other people to come and tell us how, but to take the initiative to do it ourselves and support each other. That is why whenever I think of Casa Gallina, I think about the clay hen, with its chicks, sheltering them, and teaching us many things.

Casa Gallina right now has taught us ... at least it has taught me to continue learning, that yes, we are all human beings and we need one another ...

I said to my aunt: 'Casa Gallina is a very pretty place, with lots of plants, with a garden and chickens and beautiful people who teach many things.' One never stops learning; the lessons, the teaching, and the affection that you all contribute to everything stays with me ..."

*Marilú González, neighbor and fashion designer*



# While We're Here ...

## Team Acknowledgments

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# Food and Resilience

## Open Kitchen Workshops

The educational programming of inSite/Casa Gallina's kitchen is focused on getting to know the importance that family decisions about food have on a global level in ecological, social, and political terms, as well as to rethink food habits and value the social rituals of food. The workshops are always led by chefs and cooks, who teach how to prepare economical and nutritious recipes corresponding to the season and local production. During the sessions, the integration that occurs when the neighbors cook together enables an open space for valuing the importance that conscious consumption decisions have in regard to caring for the environment, defending the Earth, and protecting human rights. The cooking classes are enhanced by the presence of specialists in nutrition, ecology, and agriculture. Below, neighbors Dalila Martínez, Emma Zúñiga and Zaida Gómez comment on how they have implemented some recipes that they learned in Casa Gallina's kitchen in their everyday lives. (R.S.)



## Dalila Martínez

neighbor and high school student, took the **Workshop on Cooking and Conscious Consumption for Young People**, specifically designed for students of the Centro Cultural and Capacitación Integral (Cultural and Integrated Training Center). The dish that Dalila chose does not have a recipe, it emerges from the creative combination of ingredients.

"I'm trying to have a healthier diet and the cooking workshop helped me a lot. Especially the class on raw vegan food; it is easy to prepare, very tasty, and economical. I learned how to make toasted tortillas topped with vegetables; I prepare them when I have a party or when I'm watching soccer, because it's so delicious. It has a fresh taste that is perfect to have as a snack and honestly my family loves it."

### Toasted tortillas topped with vegetables

**Ingredients:** 3 carrots ▪ 1 jicama ▪ 1 beet ▪ 1 cucumber ▪ olive oil ▪ spices and salt to taste

**Preparation:** Cut the carrots, the jicama, the beet, and the cucumber into julienne strips. Mix everything in a bowl. Add the spices and olive oil, making sure the vegetables don't go soggy. Serve on top of baked tortillas.





## Emma Zúñiga

neighbor, cook and owner of Fonda Emma (Emma's Place). She took the **Pasta Workshop** where she learned the recipe for vegetable tagliatelle.

"Two pasta recipes that I learned at chef Zahi Téllez's workshop have worked for me: one for spaghetti al pomodoro and one for vegetable tagliatelle. They are recipes that, besides not being complicated, are very tasty and different from how pasta is prepared in Mexico—which tends to be overcooked and with a lot of cream. I have prepared them at my business and for some family parties and people have liked them a lot."

### Vegetable Tagliatelle

**Ingredients:** ▪ 800g flour ▪ 200g semolina ▪ 6 eggs ▪ 150g chopped carrot ▪ 150g chopped pumpkin ▪ 100g chopped onion ▪ 2 cloves of garlic ▪ 150g chopped tomato ▪ olive oil to taste ▪ mint to taste ▪ salt and pepper

**Preparation:** Mix the flour with the semolina and make a volcano shape. Add the beaten eggs to the volcano's spout and knead to form an elastic pasta. Leave it to rest and it is ready to cut. Sauté the garlic and onion in the olive oil, add the carrot and cook until the onion becomes transparent. Later add the pumpkin and tomato and season it with salt and pepper. Cook the pasta and sauté in a little bit of butter and add the vegetables, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.



## Zayda Gómez

neighbor and photographer, took the **Creative Cooking with Unused Vegetables Workshop**, where she learned the recipes for mushroom broth and sherbet with a ripe banana base.

"For my birthday, I prepared vegetarian pozole with mushrooms, based on the mushroom broth that I learned at the **Creative Cooking Workshop**. The dinner was devoured by everyone and received many positive comments. For dessert, I served banana ice cream that I also learned at the workshop. This recipe is surprising because all you have to do is freeze the fruit, mash it and enjoy. Eating deliciously and healthily is not something for the future or for one-off extravagances, but a matter of good taste."

### Mushroom Broth

**Ingredients:** ▪ 7 dry chilies of your preference ▪ 4 tomatoes ▪ 1 onion ▪ 2 heads of garlic ▪ 5 bay leaves ▪ ¼ teaspoon of thyme ▪ 1 tablespoon of oregano ▪ ½ tea spoon of pepper ▪ ¼ teaspoon of ground cumin ▪ 3 tablespoons of vinegar ▪ 3 tablespoons of sea salt ▪ 2 sticks of celery ▪ ½ K of mushrooms ▪ 1 epazote leave

**Preparation:** Sauté the garlic, onion, celery, tomato, and chilies in a pan for about five minutes. Blend with a pinch of sea salt. Cut the stems off of the mushrooms and cook them in a pan with hot oil without stirring and trying to leave space between each one. Add the liquefied mixture and pour into a pot with the mushrooms and the epazote. Taste and add salt and pepper if necessary.





# Network Imaginaries: Neighborhood Affects and the Politics of Locality

A conversation between Pablo Lafuente and Josefa Ortega, curator and general coordinator; and Osvaldo Sánchez, director of the inSite/Casa Gallina project

P.L.: How would you characterize the internal operating dynamics of the Casa Gallina space, in terms of the organization and the dynamics of the divisions of labor?

J.O.: In 2012, Osvaldo Sánchez invited me to think about this new project with him, it was my job to accompany him during the research and conception of what would become inSite/Casa Gallina. The idea of building a project in a neighborhood community in Mexico City—whose practice would question the current models of sociability and exchange, and in which art is understood as enabling collective transformations—was very exciting.

O.S.: We consciously conceived of this version of Casa Gallina as a (self-)critical reversal of the curatorial and patronage models predominant today in context and socially engaged practices, in whose institutionalized inertia the previous effort of inSite\_05 was also encompassed. It was from this intention to dissent that this project was brought together under the pioneering tradition of inSite.

In 2013, with the project already in hand, the directives and sponsors very generously supported the curatorial profile, the same one that challenged the successful 2005 model, but then also rejected the desires of global positioning and authorial gratification of that previous exercise. Even before we decided to start the project in Santa María la Ribera, both Josefa Ortega and I realized that the biggest challenge for this new

version was political in nature. Not only because of the crude community framework in which it sought to root itself, but also for the conservative, and even hegemonic, social environment in which the majority of artistic initiatives and their diverse actors cynically collaborate, another indicator of a country-planet in ruins.

P.L.: Why did you choose this organizational model?

J.O.: Since the first conversations it was clear that if we continued with the inertia that dominates artistic practices, the contradictions would end up destroying the project from within. Therefore, it was considered essential that the house, the use of the spaces, the dynamics of the team, the relationship with the local community, and the definition of the programs be conceived as malleable flows, to be constantly questioned and redefined according to progress and the relationship with neighborhood communities.

O.S.: It required a consistent dynamic, submerged within the neighborhood, but once it got underway we saw that it was not so readily accepted, neither by the executives nor by some of the sponsors and artists nor by many colleagues from the art scene who rejected the project's entrenchment in the neighborhood. It doesn't seem obvious that the search for "social recognition"—constrained by the idea of fame or remuneration—has a well accepted and euphemistic field in the scenarios of "social commitment"; one that allows them to become media-worthy in a





way that is administered unscrupulously from within the global art market. How can one make sure that this initial will to immerse oneself in a “hard reality” is not overcome or reversed by the participating individuals’ anxiety for “social” recognition? How can one implement an honorable commitment without replicating the fictions of social goodness of a largely morose intellectuality, that is politically adrift, but also eager for belonging?

J.O.: The everyday was one of the project’s essential elements: the kitchen and garden as spheres where daily practices allowed for the construction of spaces of resistance and affective connections. The everyday in relation to the local is what enables the space of the house to instigate encounters and exchanges between diverse communities that share a territory, and therefore are able to deepen this fabric beyond what occurs inside Casa Gallina.

The programs are put together through continuous development rooted in the reality of the local context, without preexisting conceptions. We avoided having an initial curatorial statement, wanting for the practices and situations in the house to be what defined the project, based on what was done and not on what was said.

O.S.: We distrusted much of the “revolutionary mimicry” usually displayed by a lot of “socially committed” art. And how that outsourcing of the social by art has turned it into a museified representation of an expectation of change, emptied of its transformative potential. A sort of parodic staging within everyday conflict, without collective energy or personal rootedness in the risks or the socio-political convulsions of what is being referenced. Of course, that outsourcing of the social serves to “energize” that expectation

of transgression that a lot of artistic works or curatorial intentions embody as a simulacrum. A self-promoting, politically correct banner, in these “creative” times. As a team, that was our greatest concern.

How could we initiate another chapter of inSite (with its global artistic halo) without faking a real anchoring in a neighborhood and guaranteeing that this rootedness would not turn into a cultural gentrification of the area? How could we tear it away from the spectacular of the contemporary scene and the statements of “otherness,” without being content with aesthetically enlivening a vulnerable environment or cloning, in museums, the story of a social friction that surpasses us and that perhaps we would never completely belong to? How were we going to be sure that what was achieved by the neighborhood and the team would take off and continue growing as a living social platform, even beyond its original brand, its imposed temporality, and the executives’ expectations for “their” finished product? How could we make the patrons also change their vision of commitment in this process, accepting that the project might not support their potential benefit as collectors or visionaries who are also interested in fame and networking in the global art scene? How were we going to fit into grant and public support funds aimed at “contemporary art” or in the turbid marketing policies that overlap with the reductionist label of a “social interest” business that is common in Mexico?

Of course, the project and the team soon started to feel the resistance and discomfort of those who expected a curatorial effort that measured up to their pretension; that we would produce an event with a global impact, with resulting “masterpieces” that they could legitimize or collect, rubbing elbows with a good number of international

artists with budding fame: something concrete to strut on the art scene, and that would also give them some stature within the field.

J.O.: Little by little, the project was articulated with very clear objectives, one of the first of which was: building shared situations in the public domain, where art and its tools could trigger meaningful experiences among artists, other agents and local energies in a framework of collaboration. Thus, the importance is based on the process, the contact, the exchange, and not the result. So that inSite/Casa Gallina functioned as a platform for artistic production, distanced from the exhibition and the spectacle. This was one of the fundamental reasons for maintaining a strategy of communication focused on the neighborhood, evading media presence and the spotlight that could provoke a straining and exploitation of the relationship with the neighbors.

P.L.: What were the objectives or intentions of these dynamics?

O.S.: We were clear that as a team we should impose restrictions on ourselves and our part in the operation, and that our own routines should themselves work toward developing certain rules for how we related to the project and its participants. Rules and restrictions, of a nature quite uncommon in cultural projects and institutions, that should collapse (or attempt to collapse) those relational dynamics that replicate the machinery of capital in the orders of everyday vital effort, not only in work. And the programs should also have to aim for this.

They forced us to demystify or minimize the cultural weight of much of the inertia that was present even in contextual practices: productivism in the programming; the public dimension as a

spectacle; the artistic community as its own and joyful recipient of this practice; the self-promotional energy; multitudinous consumption; legitimizing elitism; consecrating authorship; the primacy of academic knowledge; the anxiety for high quality display that mummifies the result; prejudices against collective pedagogical platforms; the quantified anonymity of those who participate; the a priori control of the group experience; the always capitalizable *Grand Finale* ...

J.O.: The forms of work and internal relationships would mark the energy of the team and the house. For the project, it was important that they correspond to how the essential elements of the project were proposed. One strategy that Osvaldo Sánchez was clear about from the beginning was having weekly group meals with the team, moments of togetherness and exchange that went beyond the workplace, the organizing of which would take place organically, avoiding pre-established hierarchies. The meals turned into very important moments of sociability, where more, in my case, than learning something about delicious cooking and eating, we’ve learned to develop more profound affective relationships among ourselves and therefore work in an environment of trust, respect, and care.

O.S.: We decided there would be no publicity, not even in the format of news, press releases, interviews or announcements. inSite/Casa Gallina should ignore the art scene, its actors and prominent spokespersons. Reject it not only as the project’s “audience” but also as the tacit legitimizing voice of what we were trying to do. The perimeter of our dialogue was the neighborhood itself and we would respect that perimeter as the safeguarded framework of our own intimacy and the only feedback of our professional verification. There would be no moment of exhibition,

no curated group visits, no social events for the art community, no shows of collective congratulation and no microphone for the directors. All the programs and their possible continuity or variation would depend on the group interest of the neighbors and their evaluations.

Each program would emerge from the very process of immersion in the neighborhood and from the local voices slowly being inserted in the project's development. It took us more than a year. And it was not easy for anyone, not for the team, not for the patrons, not for the rest of the associated professionals (artists included). There were rules—mostly related to personal secretion about these alliances—but we did not lay out themes or models of practice. We were clear that there would not be a pre-determined list of invited individuals, nor a closed program, nor a fixed calendar, nor fixed procedures for weaving together a dialogue. We would avoid the happy cynicism of doing “committed” projects that coalesce aesthetically and socially in a week; and the avalanches of activity, in terms of audience and publicity, that effectively rule out the certainty of a transcendent individual experience or a personal exchange between each and every one of the participants. No process or group in any platform would exceed twenty people. We would prefer five to fifty. At inSite/Casa Gallina, a project could be put together, developed, and happen over one year or over three years, or also not prosper and not happen at all. For the directors, with a strong fixation on the programming and budget, the latter sometimes turned into drama. But we knew that the type of commitment that we aspired to would go through an emotional entanglement, through the complex requirements of an ethics of care, and that this is the proto-political framework sine qua non of any collective intention for change. For the art-

ists, especially, this model was very demanding. None of the previous inSite projects in Tijuana-San Diego ever had a visiting artist for more than four months. The introductory stays and discussion of the project lasted from one week to ten days and the production stays—even in the most complicated projects—never lasted for more than two and a half months. For the co-participation processes at inSite/Casa Gallina, thanks to their temporal demand, many artists could reconnect with a bare necessity of personal truth and emotional focus on shared processes—of communication, of learning, and delivery—processes that the contemporary practice of accelerated studio production simplifies, economizes and otherwise avoids.

**P.L.:** *Were there changes in your approach from the beginning of the project until today? What were they, and why? What were the results?*

**J.O.:** The specific programming profiles were shaped in accordance with the search fields that motivated the project and always in relationship to the everyday energies of the communities in Santa María la Ribera. To do so, tools were continuously designed and applied that enabled constant feedback about the experiences in the house. Consequently, it is the context and its specificity that gives shape to the programs. This has been one of the most important lessons, since the local communities' constant critique has encouraged the development of fluid practices under permanent construction that enunciate resolved problems through dialogue between team members immersed in the dynamics of collaboration and collective work.

**P.L.:** *Do you think you can speak about a specific work ethic in this case? Of a politics?*

**O.S.:** The name Casa Gallina—as the physical space of the work process and the environment of learning and collaboration—and as a house, tacitly predetermined a scale of action, but, above all, it enlisted a field of associations that we tried not to disappoint: niche, hosting, refuge, oasis, leisure, intimacy, resilience, receptacle ... that prefigured certain difficult, much discussed decisions, also related to the finishing touches of the renovation, the setting up of the spaces, and even the furniture selection. It very soon became clear that one of the main tasks of the, supposedly “curatorial,” process would be to produce its own politics of care, within the project and, at the same time, based in the neighborhood. Of course some initial enthusiasts did not want to understand that requirement. This “curating” was not referring to taking care of how certain aesthetic values were displayed to the locality, or how to improve the neighbors' access to a resulting discourse/experience; but literally, we were caring for the human relationships that we sought to generate, complicate, and then make transparent as the development material for each local process. It required a politics of care within the team itself, a “work ethic” that was not exactly that of work, in these times of neoliberal competitiveness.

**J.O.:** The artistic projects had the same principle, to not start from pre-established ideas, to encourage a real process of co-participation, where the exchange with a group and the sharing of a meaningful experience would give shape to the work. The processes were complex and demanding for the artists, who in a very generous way became involved in the dynamics

of interaction, which, in turn, were sustained over long periods of time, none of which lasted less than eight months and some lasted almost three years. The artists who lived in the city invested at least one afternoon a week throughout the process to build a truly meaningful experience, shared with their co-participants. Those who lived outside the city, whether foreigners or from another city in the country, traveled to Mexico City for long stays, sometimes for months at a time. The curatorial accompaniment, carried out by Violeta Celis or by myself, allowed us to verify how the artists not only dedicated time, energy, affect, and truth, but also how they were open to being permeated by the energies of others and generated profound affective relationships with their co-participants.

**O.S.:** Certain structural decisions were important as a starting point: the decision to have a totally horizontal labor dynamic that would involve each individual in the house; collective participation in designing programs and producing narratives; the spontaneous decisions and support of mutual aid by activity or deciding the hours of rest in retribution for overtime; as well as the custom of eating as a team or the conscientious group celebrations ... very quickly generated very particular conditions of collaboration and trust. Many other dynamics of fortuitous association and empathy were tacitly integrated as a politically “productive” model for the management of all the programs. Definitively, the bonds created by each member of the team in the neighborhood would not have been the same if this discipline of closeness, attention, and generosity within Casa Gallina were not the best evidence of an ethics practiced by everyone for their project over these five years. Internally, this long process has led to a development that is also personal: an internalized vision about how this experience of the team and the neighborhood has changed all of us.



# Local Knowledges: Defending the Environment

Summer Courses for Public School Students

Based on the first experience of working with school groups, an interest in learning and practice was detected in elementary school level children that could be addressed in a more intensive series of encounters and workshops. Thus the program of summer courses for public elementary schoolchildren in Santa María la Ribera was developed, each of which lasted one week for each of the three age ranges covered (6 to 8, 8 to 10, and 10 to 12). An additional fourth week, where children of mixed ages within that same general range of 6 to 12 years old could attend, was also organized. The three courses that have taken place have had different themes and exercises but coincide in their attempt to offer a space of direct experimentation with materials, as well as provoking consideration of the environmental effect of various everyday behaviors: from caring for a plant to going to the market, to using a cell phone. (R.C.)



## Getting to Know the Garden

July 25 to August 19, 2016

- Sixty children between the ages of 4 and 12 attended to learn about cultivating the earth.
- Mauricio Badillo and Ketzali Arreola were in charge of designing and implementing the program, with support from neighbors Miriam Mora and Alina Hernández.



- One of the most important activities was the discovery of vermicompost and the equilibrium that animal species bring to plant life in the garden.
- With seeds, leaves, and flowers gathered in the garden, the children created biocities, in which nature would coexist more harmoniously with urban structures
- The children kept a diary of their activities in the classroom and the garden.





## The Land, the Vendor, and the Table

July 24 to August 18, 2017

- Seventy-five children from the ages of 5 to 12 learned about the relationship between the countryside and food, and the role that traditional markets play in that exchange. The program and activities were created by José Camargo and Annette Rivera, assisted by neighbor Óscar Nagore.
- The children tried flowers, sprouts, ginger, and other plant elements that were unknown to them.
- The daily sessions were based on the book *La Dalia. Un mercado con tradición en Santa María la Ribera (La Dalia: A Market with Tradition in Santa María la Ribera)*.



- Every Thursday, the group carried out a barter activity with business owners from La Dalia market, in which the children had the chance to converse with market workers and learn about their professions and their products' origins.
- As a form of giving back, the children and adults decided to make one of the course's recipes: marmalade with seasonal fruit and then gave their preserve to a community soup kitchen in the neighborhood.

## Blue Planet: Exploring the House that We Share

July 23 to August 17, 2018

- Sixty-four children from the age of 6 to 12 attended in order to learn about the environment, minerals, energy, and contamination in a program that emphasized experiments and play. José Camargo designed the program and the activities, he was supported by Annette Rivera and Angelina Martínez.
- The children made a cloud in a bottle, observed the difference between solar energy and the energy derived from burning fossil fuels, and made soap in shapes similar to some minerals.
- The daily sessions were supported by short readings from the book *Geología para terrícolas (Geology for Earthlings)*.



- On Thursdays, the groups were accompanied by some volunteer parents and they would explore the rooms of the Geology Museum, a space where they reflected on minerals and the impact of mining on our country.
- As a form of giving back, a group of children attended and helped harvest Casa Gallina's vegetable garden. They later delivered the plants and products to their neighbors with whom they spoke about the minerals and nutrients present in each of the donated plants.



# Accompaniment: Unfolding Paths as a Work of Art

Co-participation, Artistic Processes as Alternative Models of Sociality

It is during the collaborations when artistic-curatorial practice faces a more radical challenge within the neighborhood environment and the inSite/Casa Gallina project itself. It includes the invitation to artists to immerse themselves in the neighborhood and unleash a two-way process with neighbors in a creative collaboration that lasts between one and three years, with curators accompanying that process.

What we recognize as co-participation is setting up of a collective knowledge experience of—a condition capable of managing itself as a social organ—and experienced as the implementation of a flow. The process in itself is articulated as the proliferation of a community-based situation, insofar as it is the metamorphosis of a node of social energy, activated by the group's self-revelation. Curatorial accompaniment implies inducing a tacit model of a heuristic: a creative predisposition to the production of a situation of empathy. And whose presence, as the dense encryption of a human flow is [continually becomes transparent as] “the piece.”

Thus, these processes of collaborative art and social engagement require the subtle leadership of someone (an artist) capable of instigating a group situation of vulnerable permanence, whose traces of outsidership would point to the creation of a—non-institutionalized—community belonging; capable of becoming the visualization of a face-to-face model of sociality in which we can recognize “the piece” as the result of a network of affections.

The gradual construction of meaning, inherent in artistic discourse—and whose resultant structure is legitimized as an autonomous language—entails, in the development of the co-participation, the filtering of another construction of (existential) meaning in the experience of its participants. And that other construction of meaning, that is non-artistic, is experienced as an empathetic catharsis, of a binding consciousness, underlying the group development of the collaboration. In each person, the collaborative process produces a spiritual revelation, of psychological and ethical re-focusing, within the community experience. The verification of a still possible other-self—not constrained or designed by the dispositions of capital—but now re-seen, empowered, and sheltered in the heart of the group, could perhaps be the clearest characteristic of social “commitment.” The resulting pieces, evolve, after inSite/Casa Gallina, in the art world, to then function as avatars of that extraordinary experience in sociality. (O.S.)

## Erick Meyenberg *The Wheel Bears No Resemblance To a Leg, 2014-16*



“The first encounter with the Lobos marching band. The military music was immersed in the soundscape of Mexico City and the trumpets shone against a uniform and luminous sky.”



“To my surprise, the young band members were very open and willing to try the corporeal and choreographic exploration proposed by Nadia Lartigue and Esthel Vogrig. Those exercises were fundamental for the development of the project.”



“The sound exploration and the spatialization of the sound in the specific context of the school resulted in the sound-architectural interventions that we developed jointly for the different filming locations.”

# The Wheel Bears No Resemblance To a Leg, 2014-16

Comments about the process from the artist's point of view



“One of the essential exercises of the project was the rehearsal at the theater (Centro Cultural del Bosque). In which, after a previous task—with costume designer Adriana Olivera—of selecting uniforms from different military eras in Mexico, the students chose and dressing themselves, recombining at will all those different layers of martial history. Wearing the uniform changed their relationship with the music, the space, and their classmates.”



“For the filming, it was fundamental to explore the flow of bodies through the different architecture that had been selected, and, through the point of view of the camera, exalt the overwhelming vastness of the location as a metaphor of the architecture of power.”



“The bleak space of the Forum Buenavista mall served as a powerful scenographic agent for the project. The image shows one of the rehearsals, in which the times, paths, and trajectories of the escalator functioned as compositional agents on the scene and of the spatialization of the sound by the shopping center.”



“The project was provided from the start with diverse documentary and archival materials, consisting of notes, sketches, recovered images, objects and sculptures. This image shows the preparation of a sculptural work made from the general score that structures and composes the sound and visual edition of the video installation that closes the project.”



“Finally, the celebration ... It was impossible to not be affected by the youthful energy and euphoria. After almost a year and a half of collaboration, celebration was necessary ... ”



“Two and a half years after the beginning of the project, a presentation of the resulting film materials was carried out. This included gifts conceived for the students and a talk explaining these results. It was incredibly gratifying to see the face of delight, surprise, and enthusiasm of the participants, after seeing the filmed material.”





Erick Meyenberg developed a collaborative piece with the members of the Lobos high school marching band, from the Colegio Hispanoamericano, over a total period of two and half years. The artist identified five axes of motivation that allowed the teenagers to belong to the group: space, sound, history, uniform, and the body. Meyenberg put together a program of activities where the artist himself, and an invited composer, two choreographers, and a costume designer carried out exercises with the young people toward the goal of revealing their different potential interests.

The collaboration process culminated in a flash mob activity at the neighborhood mall. Through a deployment of sound and choreography, the intervention posed critical reflections about issues such as consumption, the routines of power, military kinetics, and the gears of the economic and social world that young people of the same age as the participants are inserted into everyday. Through this process, each of their bodies turned into a vehicle of political enunciation, in which individual voices could be recognized, but also as part of a collective capable of reproducing or questioning the mechanical system and its fissures. As a final piece, Meyenberg made a video installation on three screens in which he integrated recordings of the intervention at the mall; it included material from other presentations that were carried out during the process at architectural spaces with important historical or political significance in relation to power, such as the Monument to the Revolution and the site of the Tlatelolco student massacre in 1968. (J.O.)







## Edgardo Aragón

### *Tropical Depression, 2015-17*

This project stems from Edgardo Aragón's work with two young, dissimilar neighbors: Abraham, a biologist barista from the state of Guerrero; and Joel, a former soldier who runs a sound system that plays Colombian music. The artist organized for them to carry out the complete process of sowing, cultivating, harvesting, and preparing coffee, a plant that becomes the central character and subject for the artist who orchestrated a complex mise-en-scène.

Recalling the rites performed on Colombian plantations, Joel accompanied the moment of planting with cumbias and danced for the plants. In other moments, a group of musicians from the neighborhood improvised an experimental concert modeled on the Aztec death whistle and multiple strobe lights panned over the plant before it was harvested. In this way, a very particular show that used multiple strategies to feed the energy and growth of the plant was put together.

In this piece, coffee brings together and links the two young people, who, despite not knowing each other and having parallel stories, share the closeness with violent situations related to drug trafficking and militarization, whether for the call to war against drugs during Felipe Calderón's six-year presidential term, or by the persecution of guerrilla groups beginning in the 1970s in the state of Guerrero. Both young men had constructed fictions that allowed them to cope with an environment of latent, present, and constant violence whose reality directly or indirectly involves and affects us all. (J.O.)





# Marianna Dellekamp

## *Porcelain, 2017-18*

Comments about the process from the artist's point of view



“We started as a group of approximately 20 women, little by little the group grew smaller until it reached a total of 13. Many of the women who stuck with it found our meetings to be an important/neutral space for them.”



“Each woman broke the porcelain replica of her precious object. The pieces symbolize life and their reconstruction points to the scars that each woman carries with her.”



“Over a period of a year we met to chat and weave our stories that would later be turned into the narrative arc of a video.”



“The piece is a prayer, a meditation, a mantra to accommodate past life and return to the present, the here and now.”



“I asked the group to bring an object that was sentimentally important to each one of them. The pieces they shared with the others became the catalysts for conversations. These objects were photographed as they arrived and were arranged in a space in Casa Gallina that we named ‘our gallery,’ which gave the group a sense of belonging.”



“To thank the women for the year we spent together, I reproduced their objects in the form of jewelry for charm bracelets. Each woman left with thirteen charms on a bracelet that symbolizes our table and our conversations.”





Over the course of a year, Marianna Dellekamp met weekly with a group of neighbors interested in weaving. The affective energy of the group was consolidated into a space of trust, in which, besides weaving, the women shared personal stories. Marianna invited them to bring an object that was meaningful to them. The presence of the objects on the work table formed an intimate collection for the group, which triggered conversations where personal stories emerged that became linked to the group and the increasing bonds of trust.

The artist reproduced the objects in the form of a charm bracelet to make a gift that was given to all the members of the group. In it, they can be recognized individually, but also as part of an articulated whole that shapes them as a unit. The collection of pieces was reproduced in life-sized porcelain versions and each participant was asked to destroy their own object in a cathartic process of self-recognition. The broken porcelain pieces were reconstructed using the Japanese technique of *Kintsugi*, which considers scars as a constitutive element that provides history and memory to the restored piece. (J.O.)







## Mauricio Limón

### *Broken Teeth, 2014-15*

Mauricio Limón worked over the course of eleven months with dissimilar neighbors who met in the Alameda park of Santa María la Ribera. One of the groups of neighbors was the Forasteros de la Salsa dance troupe, while the other side was Oscar Jesús Ocaña, alias “El Tierno” (the tender one), a former inmate who dedicates his time to giving boxing classes in the park.

In an eleven-month process, Limón activated dynamics that allowed for the exchange of knowledges between dancing and boxing, in which “El Tierno” and Hannia, a young member of the dance group, carried out improvisations of boxing and choreographic routines, with the goal of empowering the creative possibilities of both types of knowledges. Through the use of these exercises, Limón created an intersection between two distinct practices in which violence and desire coincide in the use of the body as an element of subjectivation containing personal stories and memories.

In the final piece, a video projection on two screens, the bodies of both characters were the protagonists in a dialogue that revealed the environment of everyday violence underlying Mexican urban culture. Accompanied by a chorus of male dancers, the work also deals with the tensions between the contrasting feminine and masculine worlds through Hannia’s active participation in activities that are commonly associated with virility. (J.O.)







## CADU

### *I Am Mandala, 2014-16*

*I Am Mandala* is a piece about the reconstruction of time in old age and the recuperation of the feminine through dance. Cadu and eleven elderly women who attended a ballroom dance class in Santa María la Ribera collaborated for more than two years. During this process, they generated the idea of a large-scale crocheted mandala that would become unwound while dancing a *danzón*. The design and chromatic combinations were agreed upon between the artist and the group, taking the women's most important life experiences as references. For the artist, the mandala represents the fragmented report of the life of each of the women. A statement that positions the time they set aside for dance as a fundamental life dynamic that has given them autonomy and returned their femininity away from established roles of grandmother, mother and wife.

The act of dancing-undoing became a ritual loaded with strong emotions. A performative moment in which the women staged the conclusion of an ever-closing life cycle, a quiet and contemplative goodbye. The piece consists of a video record of the dance and the unraveling of the mandala itself and a single replica, which functions as a vestige of the absence, of what will, within a short time, no longer be. (V.C.)





# Eduardo Navarro *Five Invisible Haiku, 2015-17*

In collaboration with Ian Pasarán Rodríguez

Comments about the process from the artist's point of view



“It is difficult to arrive to a new place with an uncertain mission.”



“Explaining intuitions, sharing ideas with hands, coffee, and sweets.”



“Using the tongue as an eye, Ian Pasarán meets with the flavor team.”



“Exploring the universe of flavors and candies, a new world!”



“The fingers of the eyes and the eyes of the fingers. Synesthesias shared in the darkness of the days.”



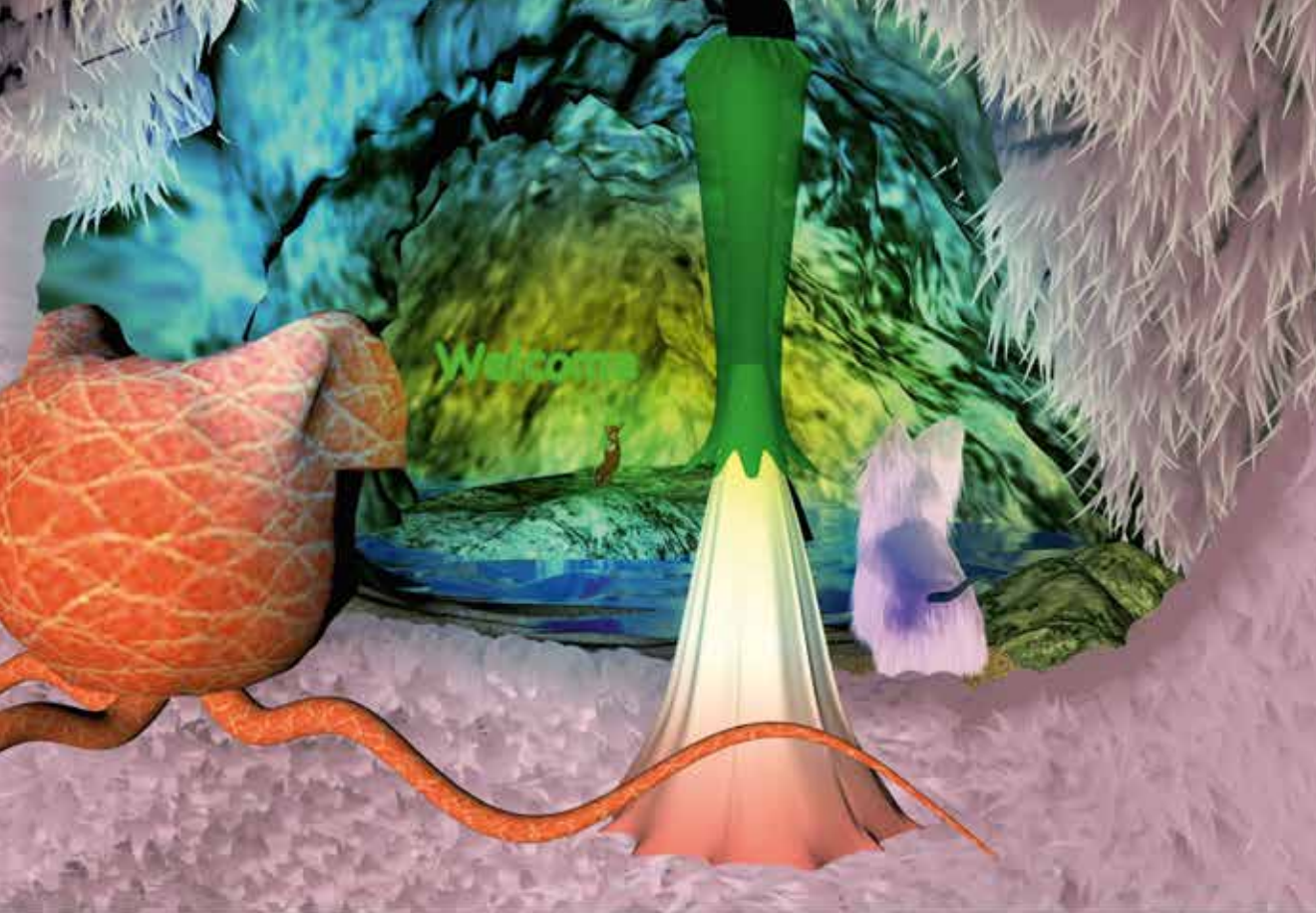


Eduardo Navarro and Ian Pasarán Rodríguez, a former student of the Santa María la Ribera School for the Blind and Deaf-mutes worked on a synesthetic experience for the neighbors. This collaborative process consisted of imagining the tastes of five poems (haiku) that Ian created based on five concepts proposed by the artist: light, distance, affection, time, and space. Ian is a professional flavor evaluator and he conferred a flavor on each haiku that he relates to a memory from his past, memories that in turn, a group of flavorists translated into candy.

The candies guided Navarro and Ian in the production of five sculptural objects, each one related to a haiku-candy. The objects (product of that shared experience), were hidden inside five wooden boxes. The implementation of the piece started with the tasting experience of each haiku-candy while touching the sculpture corresponding to that poem. *Five Invisible Haiku* was experienced by 186 people, students of Ian's former school and neighbors. (V.C.)







## Ana María Millán

### *Wanderlust*, 2015-17

*Wanderlust* by Ana María Millán was created through a collaborative work process that the artist carried out with neighborhood youth over the course of a year. When she first approached the neighborhood context, Ana María Millán identified several locales where young people would meet to play video games. Based on that energy, she brought together neighbors interested in video games, or “gamers,” to meet and propose a project together.

After a joint work process, the youth developed several characters and situations that synthesized everyday conflicts that are important to them. Sexuality, belonging to a world controlled by corporations, the constant use of masks to interact, as well as the lack of solidarity in an individualized and competitive society, were some of the themes that fueled the stories developed by the group. Millán compiled these diverse situations to create a story of a trip in which the characters pass through different universes. The piece was produced in 3D animation and it asks its audience to reflect on contemporary societies and the ways of resisting their constant domination strategies. (J.O.)





# Rafiki Sánchez

## *Vestiges, 2017-18*

Comments about the process from the artist's point of view



“Turning our gaze back on ourselves and speaking of death and our processes of mourning, tends to be something that we do not invest much time on. My insertion in the community of Santa María la Ribera was received with great interest, with support from different specialists, as was the case with Marco Antonio Karam, President of the House of Tibet in Mexico.”



“Approaching intimacy and exchanging life stories with each of the co-participants enabled an energy to flow that allowed me to design a space in which each of them could feel reflected.”



“There were nine co-participants interested in continuing a process of collective creativity after the presentations on issues of Thanatology. The ‘mirroring’ was paramount, realizing that around us a neighbor, friend, or companion from the neighborhood also experiences processes of mourning that can be seen as a reflection of our experiences with death.”



“At the end, I invited each of the co-participants, as way of a ritual, to be introduced to this sculpture-shelter: a layer of reed, ash and water on the outside; with a mantle embroidered with gold inside that emanated a light, in which a series of epitaphs could be read that the co-participants themselves gave me as a future memory.”



“In the process of group bonding, we worked on different activities that have to do with the idea of refuges, such as a space to face a situation of oppression, but also as the refuge of the body, and the reaction when faced with its disappearance.”



“My stay in Santa María la Ribera was temporary, the sculpture-refuge was, too. By way of closure with the co-participants, I decided to take down the interior mantle as a testimony and to make the sculpture disappear in a fire, which turned the structure into ashes, accentuating its absence in order to rethink the absent body.”





The artist Rafiki Sánchez, who is from the Yucatán region, worked collaboratively with nine neighbors from Santa María la Ribera for almost a year. The group formed following a series of public sessions about thanatology that took place at Casa Gallina. This program was designed and coordinated by the artist himself along with professionals in the field. Throughout this co-participation process, Sánchez and his group devised a project related to the absence of the body and how to hide it in an imagined refuge.

The result was an installation that consists of a mantle that refers to a relic or liturgical object with epitaphs embroidered by the neighbors, as well as ash and a panorama of photos that record the burning of the structure-refuge. The ash, part of the final piece, is the result of the pyre of a conical reed structure that symbolizes the place where the body will rest vertically. Before the fire, with the mantle still inside, the group of co-participants approach the structure-refuge in the manner of a farewell to the mourning that each one carries inside them, hiding-veiling their own body as if it were that other that they would no longer see. (V.C.)







## Damián Ontiveros *Unbraiding, 2017-18*

Damián Ontiveros worked on a collaborative process with eight female hair stylists who had learned their craft in a shelter house in Santa María la Ribera. Based on a workshop format, the artist opened a collective reflection about the historical connotations of feminine hair in society and how patriarchy objectifies and establishes relations of power toward women based on a collectivized gaze of “desire.”

*Unbraiding* enunciates the reality of these women, some of them immersed in situations of domestic and workplace violence. Women who perceive the erotic nature of their bodies to be expressed through the abundance and length of their hair. The piece is made up of three shapeless rugs, handwoven with the hair of different women from the neighborhood. Each one holds a phrase-sentence of one of the group members that highlights aspects of domination and gender inequality symbolically linked to their hair.

Ontiveros displayed the three rugs over the walls of a hair salon in the neighborhood, which has traditionally only served men since the 1950s. The artist proposes a performative moment in this emblematic place, in which the neighbors—who wish to do so—could have their hair cut by the group of co-participants. The eight stylists were the protagonists of that usually masculine space, while the hip-hop singer, Dayra Fyah, improvised verses by taking up their life experiences as themes. (V.C.)





**Oswaldo Ruiz**

# ***Mnemonic Matter: The Law of the Similar, 2017-18***

Comments about the process from the artist's point of view



“This was the first talk, by Dr. Fernando Domínguez Vello, and it was very comforting to see the enormous interest that it sparked in the Santa María la Ribera residents.”



“In the individual interviews with the participants. Here with Paula Trejo, one of the most dedicated participants, who was very interested in learning about and exploring the creative and cathartic processes of the project that we developed.”



“Our first meeting after the talks by the homeopathy specialists. They were the ones who were most interested in the process and started becoming increasingly involved, this was a very important moment because here we laid the foundations for the project that we developed.”



“Here in an interview with Rafael Maya, he had an enormous interest in homeopathy, as well as in exploring different creative processes, his stories marked a fundamental presence for the project that we carried out.”



“One of the last work sessions with the participants, with Paula and Lourdes. We all greatly enjoyed the project and developed a deep bond by sharing the life stories that framed it.”

# Mnemonic Matter: The Law of the Similar, 2017-18



“This was the presentation of the piece with the artists and curators invited to give feedback, it was the first time that the idea of the complete piece was presented, the commentaries were very positive and gave us very good feedback that allowed us to enrich the piece.”



“This is one of the photography sessions to shoot the materials, the combination of practical work with the previous discussion meetings and talks was a great balance that created a very fluid feel to the working process.”



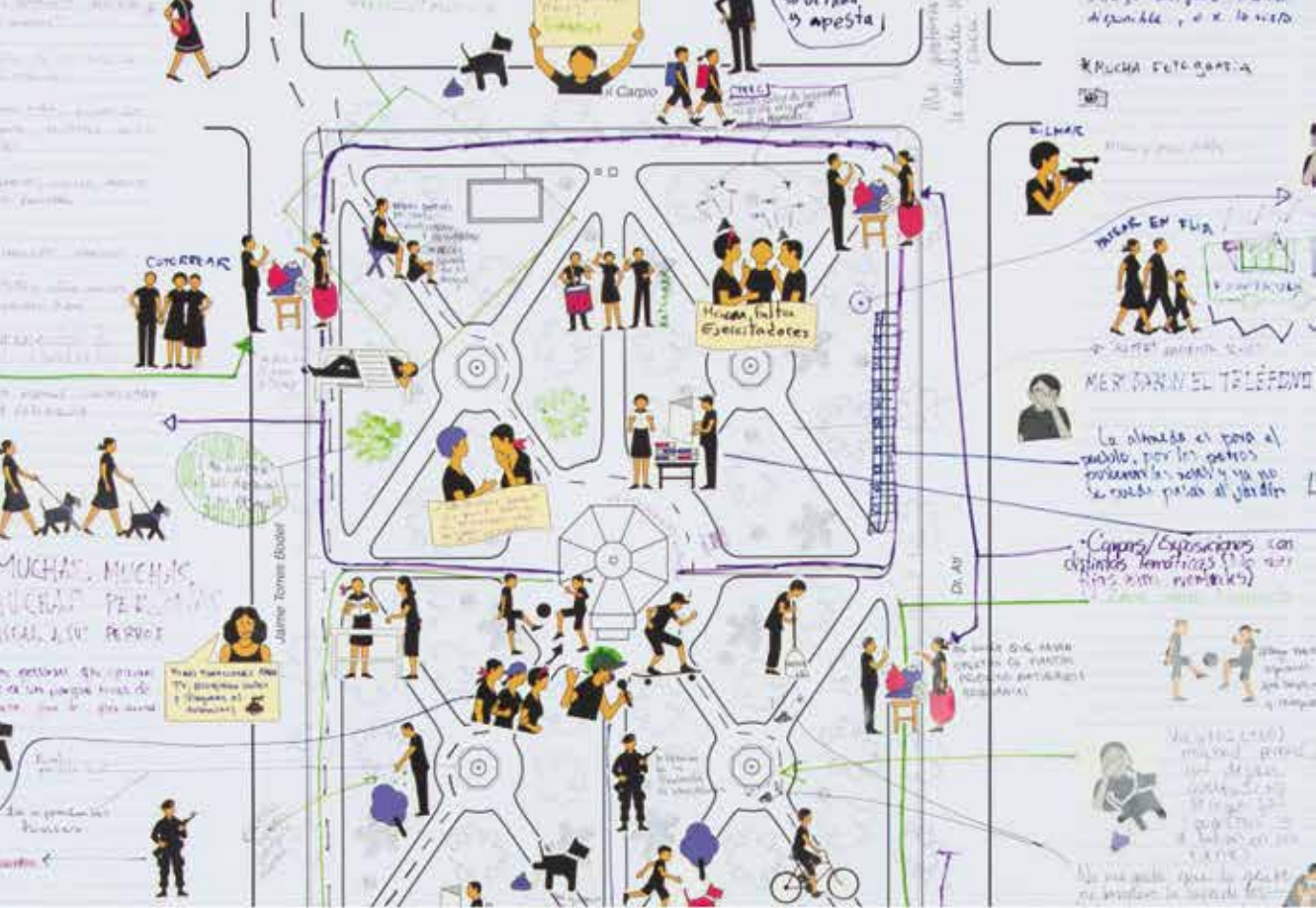
“This was the work session that we had with two of the participants with whom we started to make homeopathic preparations as antidotes. The process was something very similar to alchemy, in which we transformed a material that had caused them harm in their life into a liquid dilution. Along with the physical work, we were accompanied by the rest of the stories that gave life to the process of transforming the material.”

In multiple walks through the neighborhood, Oswaldo Ruiz located several pharmacies and homeopathic clinics with a long history and rootedness among the neighbors. Based on this energy, he initiated conversations with doctors, pharmacists, and patients and made continuous visits to the pharmacies. During those visits, the spaces became important as points of encounter and exchange between neighbors sharing an interest in caring for health, one's own and that of others through homeopathy. It came to light that they were acting as a focal point in an exercise in resisting the dominant dynamics of allopathic medicine and the large pharmaceutical companies.

The artist and the group had different encounters over the course of a year, during which they exchanged personal stories. Based on a shared interest they decided to carry out a metaphorical exercise of the preparation of substances that throughout their lives had caused them harm. With these preparations, they formed a cabinet of mnemonic materials. Each one of the substances was portrayed by Ruiz in analogue photography, creating a parallel with the alchemical spirit that these photographic processes share with homeopathic practices. The images and stories were compiled in a book that was distributed to the neighborhood that reveals the common vulnerabilities and fragilities of a diverse group of people in a shared territory. (J.O.)







# Iconoclasistas

## *Collective Mapping, 2015*

The Argentinian collective Iconoclasistas (Julia Risler and Pablo Ares)—pioneers in the production of collective maps that stimulate the creation of focuses, visions, and perspectives that trigger reflection about a common territory—carried out a collective mapping project with Santa María la Ribera neighbors in 2015. The mapping was focused on distinct aspects related to the quality of life in the neighborhood. Work sessions were focused on debating and exchanging information about issues of infrastructure, green areas, the use of public space, types of transportation, the state of housing, and the presence of real estate developments.

The sessions took place in the spaces at Casa Gallina and in some neighborhood places that are widely used as public space, such as the Alameda park, the market, and in front of the church. For the exercises, Iconoclasistas designed different tools, such as maps, icons, and surveys with the goal of collecting information from both the workshops participants and the neighbors who passed through the public space. After three weeks of sessions, more than 200 participants shared data to form a contextual imprint of collective reflection from the neighborhood.

This exercise shaped many of the subsequent projects included in inSite/Casa Gallina’s programming, since it enabled an approximation of the interests and concerns that were brewing within the communities that inhabited the neighborhood. (J.O.)







## Omar Gámez

### *Mestizo*, 2014-16

*Mestizo* proposes a critical emphasis in relation to the prevailing prototypes of masculine beauty in the contemporary moment. Based on work with four neighbors from Santa María la Ribera, photographer Omar Gámez proposed a series of four large format photographs of each one of them for public display within the neighborhood. Gámez proposed these neighbors as bearers of a mestizo beauty that is the product of a multicultural complexity that corresponds to our Latin American geographies. Far from reaffirming a discourse about ethnic pride, the project makes visible the stories of struggle embodied by each one of the participating men and their perception about their physicality in a context of Anglo-Saxon phenotypes, wherein models imposed by the apparatus of consumption promote the same genealogies of disposable objects as alienating typologies of people and forms of being.

The costumes worn by each neighbor were inspired by their important life experiences, which gave rise to a phrase that invited us to rethink male autonomy related to the possibility of men's self-determination in regards to identity formation and the exhibition of their bodies.

The piece's central point was in the neighborhood's commercial center, as well as in a circuit of gymnasiums in the area, where the photos, mounted like any other advertising, marked a vivid contrast with the landscape overwhelmed with dominant male archetypes. Part of the piece is a device that uses the same images but in the form of a postcard, that contains the stories of each one of the co-participants. The shared subjectivities of these men function as a way of counteracting the system of colonialist domination through the conditions of beauty of gender and "race." (V.C.)





My parents came from Oaxaca to Santa María when I was a baby ... but later, my dad got involved in bad things and they put him in prison. We've lived in Santa María la Ribera since the beginning. Later I lived 12 years over there in Los Angeles. I was hanging around with bad kids here, who steal, who commit assault, and all of that; I wasn't studying or working, so my sister spoke to my mom on the phone and told her that I was joining a gang, and my mom told me that she didn't want me at home, that I should go to Los Angeles, so I crossed illegally. I went with a cousin, my first job was in a restaurant, washing dishes, a dish washer, ha ha! ... And later cutting vegetables; and so on, little by little I rose up the ranks, and also started cooking. Then I was a waiter, a cashier, almost all the positions. Later I returned to Mexico and when I tried to go back to Los Angeles they put me in jail in San Diego; well, they sent me back again. They took my fingerprints, photo ... therefore I can't, if I try it right now they'd put me back in jail.

I've had big problems, that's why I got this tattoo of a phoenix on my back, I don't know if you know the legend of the phoenix. It's a mythological bird, that more or less means imagining that one never dies, or rather that you never fall, as if you were immortal, no matter what happens, you are reborn, you are reborn over and over. So even though I had big problems and everything, I kept going, I didn't give up. The truth is that I don't consider myself either handsome or ugly, nothing, just "X", hahaha. I think that the only thing that helps me through is that I exercise. I try to make my diet more alkaline, to make everything fresher, no processed food, no refined flours. Also lifting weights, but what activates me more is when I go running, I feel great when I do it. I think that my favorite moment, waking up early, yes. Boxing is my passion, too, I'd like to box on television. It's an art, it doesn't matter how strong you are, but rather how intelligent you are ... It requires a lot of discipline, it's too much discipline. You really have to be super weird to like discipline, it's not common, but we'd all look at each other in a better light, right? Mastering a discipline is much more difficult.

**Marco Antonio**

Testimonial text by Marco Antonio, neighbor and participant in *Mestizo*



**Tu deseo es tu mayor poder.**  
Imponer patrones de belleza es una táctica de sometimiento.





## Tercerunquinto. *Collaborative Sculpture: An Essay on Construction, 2017-18*

*Collaborative Sculpture: An Essay on Construction* proposed an exercise of co-participation between the Tercerunquinto collective and nine construction workers from Santa María la Ribera. This working process makes visible the points of tension between the hierarchies of architectural and engineering knowledge, compared to the experience of knowledge that workers acquire in their mastery of the trade. For the collective, the architectural blueprint and its interpretation by workers are the places where this tension occurs.

At first, the artists intervened on the original blueprint fitted to the measurements available on a terrain belonging to a neighbor. Later the nine workers deciphered that first blueprint subverting the functionality of the spaces based on their practice. The result was a construction in which the sculptural qualities of the construction are clearly emphasized over the real conditions of habitability. The workers overflowed the spatial limits of the blueprint proposing columns and flattened places in the spaces adjacent to the construction. Decisions that along with the details of paint, floor, lighting, and plumbing, generated the idea along the lines of radical and subversive constructs.

The piece is made up of a photographic record of the work experience and a printed glossary for neighborhood dissemination that contains terms belonging to each trade involved in the project: masonry, plumbing, cabinetmaking, electricity, and blacksmithing. The glossary uses language to vindicate the scales of specialized knowledges against the more traditional forms of learning a skill, and disseminating the codes of working that operate within each trade as forms of exercising a position that is necessary for the functioning of large metropolises. (V.C.)







## Cynthia Gutiérrez *Floating Grafts, 2017-18*

Cynthia Gutiérrez detected the constant presence of stained-glass windows in the neighborhood's old buildings. Among those is the building of the El Pensador Mexicano public elementary school. The artist approached the school community and proposed that it create a design that could be translated into a stained-glass piece to be installed in the school.

Gutiérrez worked with Claudia Hernández, the owner of a small stained-glass workshop in the neighborhood, on the design of educative practices to work with groups of schoolchildren. Over the course of a year, the group carried out exercises about identity, memory, belonging, and language, thus developing a series of abstract forms that shaped the codification of a common language, only understandable to the members of the group. With this language they created a design in which they integrated the narration of their most important experiences in the school space.

The stained glass was installed in a window that measured 30 square meters, in a common area of the school. As a way of closing the project, the children and the artist shared the process of creating the window with the rest of the students. Over one week, they carried out educational exercises in which all the students could imagine their own stained-glass pieces. (J.O.)







## Itzel Martínez

### *Child Heroes, 2017-18*

*Child Heroes* is a 2D animated work that the artist Itzel Martínez carried out through a co-participation process with nine children from Santa María la Ribera and José Daniel Morales (Joze Daniel), a young illustrator who is also from the neighborhood. The story and characters were created based on emotional maps of each of the participating children, significant trajectories that are closely linked to their subjectivities and their perception of the adult world. The home, the school, friends, the neighborhood, moments of solitude, the constant questions and fears that powerfully filter the reality of childhood experience were framed in contexts of precariousness, gender inequality, and overwhelming violence as a daily norm.

Tara, the protagonist, is inspired by a day-dreaming child who identifies adults as senseless automatons who are part of a malevolent system that destroys any possibility of well-being. Tara recognizes that the system is a beast named Samsara who inhabits the bowels of the city. Samsara feeds on violence at different levels and provokes allergic reactions in the children that make them sick, absorbing their colors and spontaneity, thereby turning them into small gray replicas of the adults.

For both the artist and for José Daniel Morales, in charge of the project's art, it was important to highlight the strategies that children create using their imaginaries to counteract an era that is strongly anchored in an adult-centric perspective. The work refers critically to historical characters that embody "heroism" in State discourse, the same ones who are disseminated through the regulatory structure imposed by the school system. (V.C.)





# The Thinking Machine

Animation Workshops

Itzel Martínez del Cañizo's relationship with inSite/Casa Gallina started with **The Thinking-Feeling Machine: Animation Workshop for Children and Teenagers**. Running parallel with this Saturday workshop, the artist also designed a program to project short films for children that was open to the whole community.

In the workshop sessions, one of the key reflections was the importance of recognizing the value of one's own life stories and the special value of the ordinary. It was discovered that it was worth being taught in conjunction with the experiences, lessons, and curiosity about kids' surroundings that the young showed naturally. With this in mind, Martínez worked with them to learn the phases of production of a motion picture, specifically for a pair of stop-motion short films: pre-production, production, and post-production. In each session, the children learned to create a personal script, first outlining their desires about their everyday environment and later narrating a history where the extraordinary would mix with the ordinary. They also learned to create a running order and storyboard to plan the time and dynamics of filming. Finally, the children decided by consensus and at a formal assembly to animate, film and edit two of their stories. (D.H.)





**157**

ELDERLY ADULTS IN THE DIGITAL MIGRANTS PROGRAM

**33** LOCAL BUSINESSES DESIGNED

PROJECTS WITH ARTISTS **20**

**196** NEIGHBOR GUESTS FOR DINNERS AND FROM 5 TO 7

COOKING WORKSHOP ATTENDEES: **937**

URBAN GARDEN :

**19** workshop cycles at Casa Gallina  
**4** neighborhood implementations

**11** COMMUNITY FILM CYCLES

Facebook: **2,348** neighbor friends

PARTICIPANTS IN ACTIVATIONS AT THE GEOLOGY MUSEUM

**3,653** students and neighbors

**152** CO-PARTICIPANT NEIGHBORS IN CREATIVE PROCESSES

LOANS FROM PRESTADURÍA: **588** **34,500** BOOKS; NEWSLETTERS; POSTERS

Average length of co-participation processes: **19.8** months

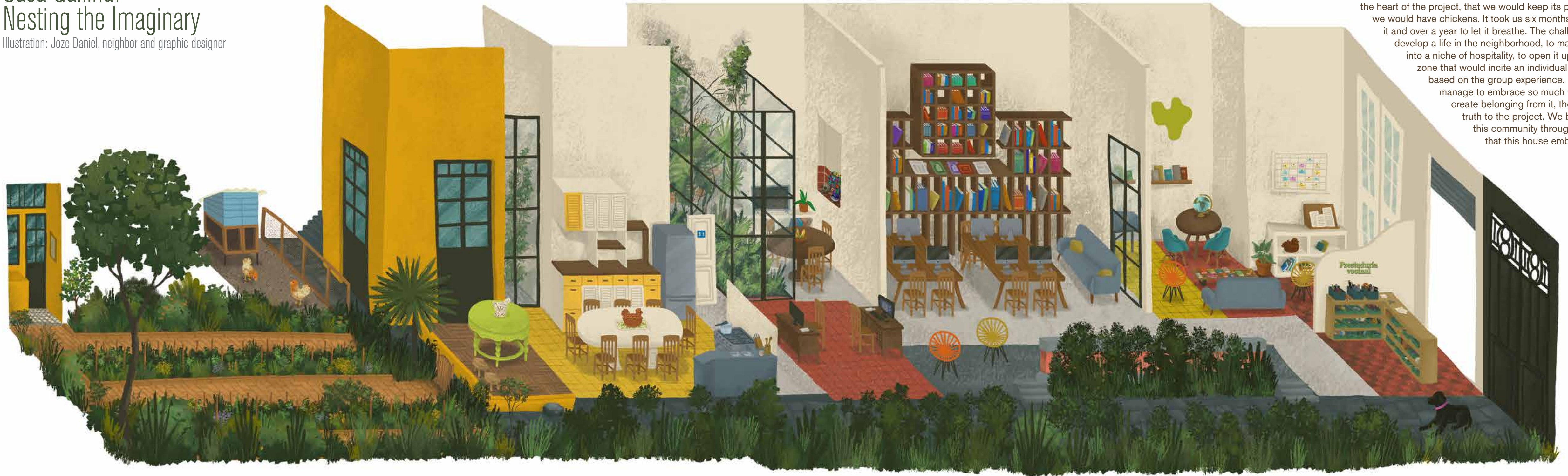
**33** schools and local initiatives in direct collaboration

**ONE** DOG | **CHICKENS IN THE GARDEN** **2**



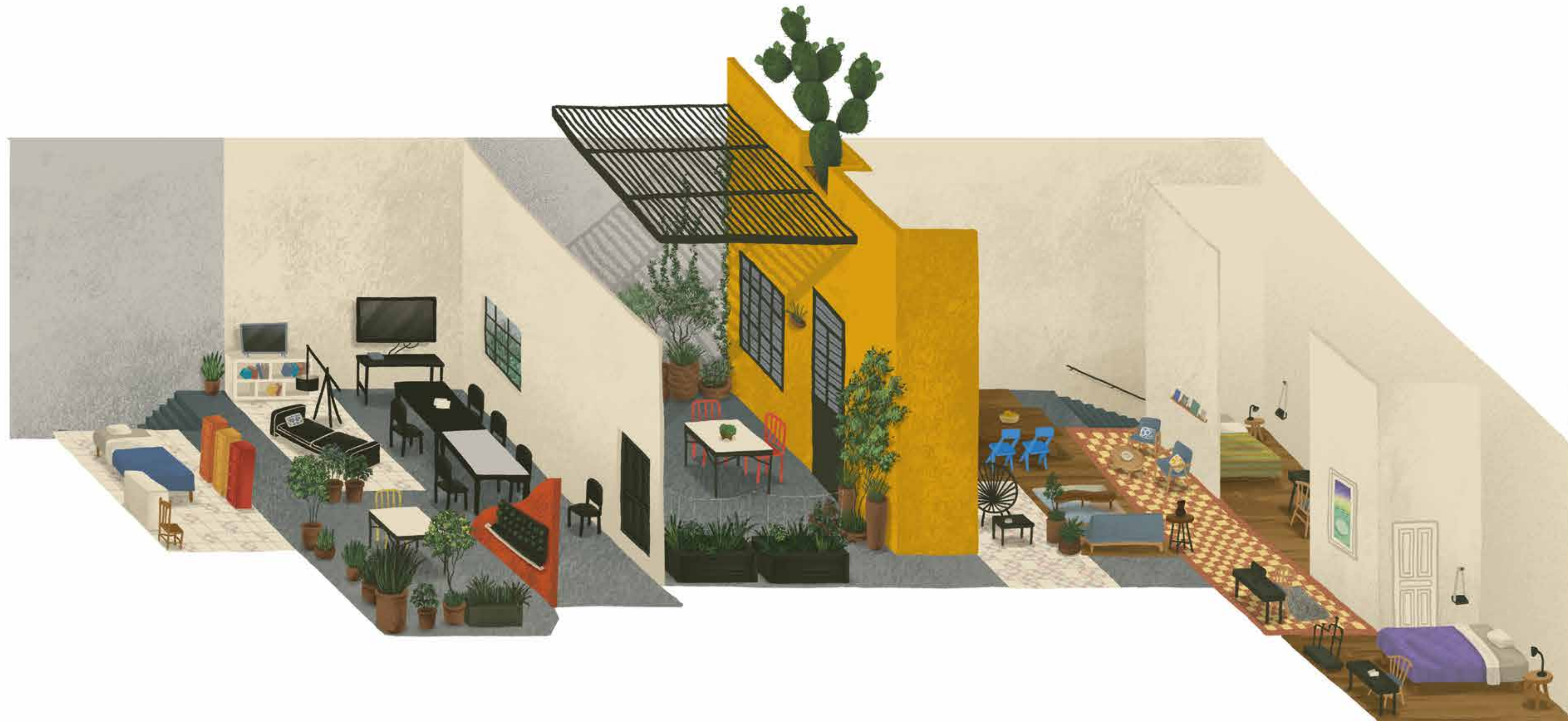
# Casa Gallina: Nesting the Imaginary

Illustration: Joze Daniel, neighbor and graphic designer



In November 2013, after eight months of searching in the neighborhood, we found a house for sale. We knew it would be the heart of the project, that we would keep its patina and that we would have chickens. It took us six months to renovate it and over a year to let it breathe. The challenge was to develop a life in the neighborhood, to make each space into a niche of hospitality, to open it up as a special zone that would incite an individual transformation based on the group experience. If we could not manage to embrace so much vulnerability, and create belonging from it, there would be no truth to the project. We became part of this community through the generosity that this house embodies. (0.8)





“When I arrived, Mexico was experiencing a situation similar to the city where I was born and grew up: Cali, Colombia. The drug-trafficking economy backed by the legacy of the colonial structure and its bloody foundations permeated the different layers of society in different ways. Many initiatives in Mexico City, including inSite/Casa Gallina proposed collaborative models of resisting that situation. For me, going to Casa Gallina, was like entering an episode of *The Twilight Zone*, it was to enter into a house, that has another house, that has another house. I walked from stage to stage, I jumped from screen to screen (like Mario Bros on the Nintendo), each one with different traveling companions. I remembered that my parents practically had a casino at home during those bloody 1980s, I remember I had an animation studio in the 1990s and that to animate is to bring to life what is supposedly dead, that all the stages are painted, that ‘every collective act is an act of magic’ (*Lyubov*, 2017). I let go everything I had bottled up, and when I left [Casa Gallina] that ‘everything’ (and more) was instilled into the piece. I’d made an animation through co-participation with six gamers from the neighborhood.”

Ana María Millán, Co-participation artist

“We’re generating a common well-being in the community, not only personally. We also have this space for talks. We make use of the computers and the team work. Here, I worked on the Experimenta projects.”

Teresa Mendoza, neighbor and professor

“One of inSite/Casa Gallina’s basic objectives is co-existence among neighbors. What we’ve heard, seen, read; what we’ve been able to capture in this place also prepares us for helping others.”

Héctor Escobedo, neighbor and administrator

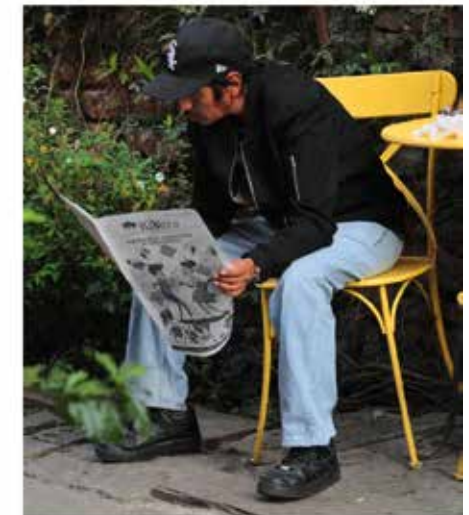
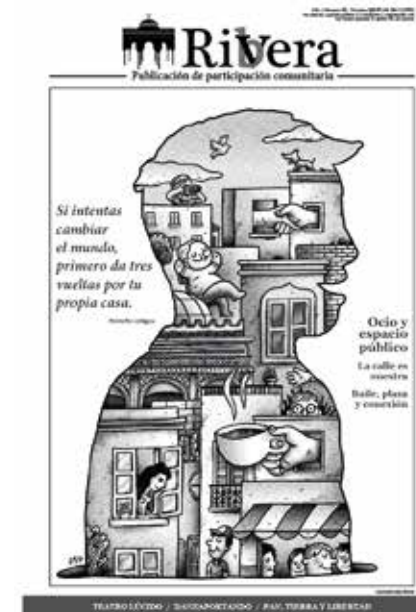




# Forged Words, Neighborhood Dialogues

Participatory Journalism Workshops and *Rivera Ribera* Newspaper

*Rivera Ribera*, a bimonthly newspaper, was published from August 2016 to March 2018. It was edited by neighborhood residents Raúl Aníbal Sánchez and Rodrigo Castillo, who invited the community to write news articles, opinion pieces, profiles and different kinds of texts related to the neighborhood interests and its current inhabitants. Building on this experience, **Participatory Journalism Workshops** were carried out between March and June 2017. The following exercise reproduces some of what the neighbors worked on in the “cooperative writing” module: four of the participants re-created a text or graphic message based on fragments from the newspaper’s ten issues, which they then used to describe, according to their own perspectives, the neighborhood that exists now and, conversely, the neighborhood that is missing or that needs to be created. The residents who participated in this process were Denisse Martínez, Diego Carrasco, Morgane Bellion and Viridiana Gamiño. (R.C. and D.H.)





# Santa María

## ES UN NOMBRE DE SEÑORA

por las calles que ella pisó se conformaron las más bellas poesías

De una forma nada convencional decidió que, al nacer, ella no iba a aislarse del mundo

Por aquí y por allá, iglesias y vecindades, en procesiones profanas, pulquerías y cantinas, vecindades y casonas.

“Les hacen sentir, pero depende de ti volver a abrir

el local. pasar por un helado a la esquina de Díaz Mirón y Doctor Atl, y luego, perder el tiempo en alguna banca del parque.

como la modificación que sufre un objeto, Ésa es la diferencia ente un círculo vicioso y un círculo virtuoso.”



algo aquí me gusta mucho es un barrio extraño porque precisamente nos hace preguntarnos cómo es posible

## LA FUERZA QUE NOS MUEVE QUE SE EXPANDE

La comunidad se entiende que es una entidad social con mayor significado que el número de personas localizadas en un territorio. Santa María somos los salvajes en resistencia, rebeldes, nos vemos a diario aunque no nos hablemos. Creo que somos muchos en la calle, pero nos reconocemos

sin gracia...no pasa nada.

Si te interesa colaborar Bien, gracias.

## El Barrio: afectos y efectos

ese noble sentimiento de sentirse cercano: efectos de afectos;

vínculos participativos; diálogo; empatía solidaria; encuentro comunitario

beneficio común de la vida barrial

Un beneficio que en primera instancia se manifiesta como vivir en un barrio amigable, reverberante, generoso; que sentimos nuestro.

Regresar a casa y Sentirse cercano



BARRIO COOPERATIVO

## LA CALLE SE EXPANDE

La calle no sólo es calle, la calle es escenario, pista de baile, salón de xv años, sala para ver el futbol y cantina la más de las veces.

La calle es democrática,

la calle ayuda a hacer las conexiones

la calle recibe el regocijo de los vecinos.

En la calle se comparten saberes, hay una transmisión oral

las banquetas son una posibilidad para que la gente establezca vínculos

## quehaceres para disfrutar el barrio

El gesto es muy simple:

compartir nos ayuda a hacer un mejor uso de los recursos y ahorrar dinero, y es además una manera de conectarnos con nuestros vecinos y otras personas de nuestro entorno.

a la gente le agrada poder contar con este tipo de gestos, pues el compartir refuerza los lazos entre las personas.

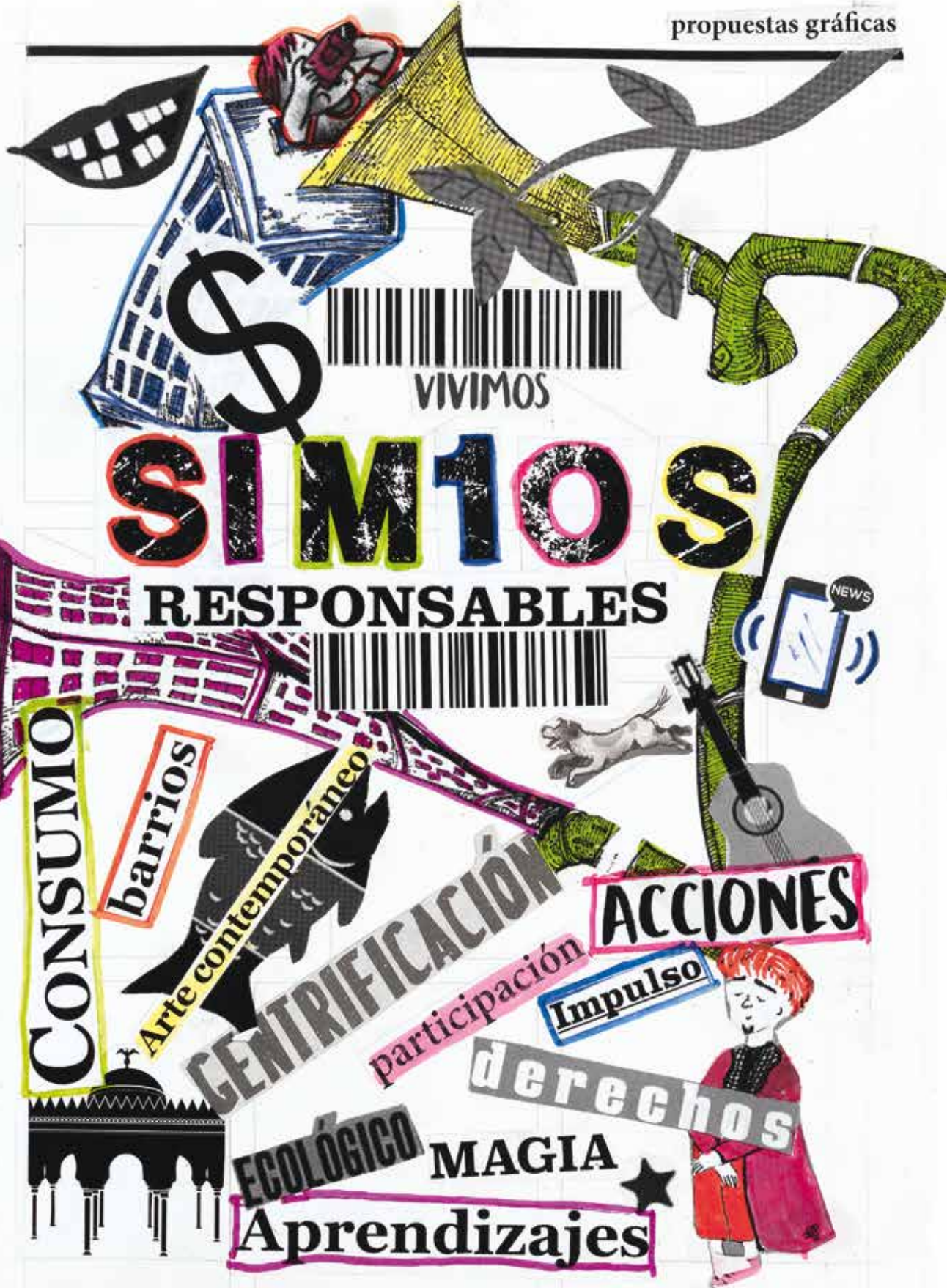
La base de esta actividad es la confianza y el deseo de tener un gesto de apoyo para con alguna persona

Los miembros de comunidades con lazos de comunicación y cooperación sólidos tienen otra alternativa:

hacen amigos y se celebran, pero también se ayudan, se defienden, se organizan.

CON VIVE  
disfruta  
Celebra  
EN Un





# Rivera

## en Movimiento

! "Por alguna razón que desconozco Santa María la Ribera es un

### Lugar

vivo, dinámico.



como una miscelanea donde

Cada semana y cada temporada buscamos moverle algo a nuestros ingredientes, aunque la mitad de las ideas vienen aquí, junto a los hornos, al levantarse temprano y trabajar las masas, componer los insumos".

"La gente sabe de donde viene

porque

"Aquí se hornea el producto diariamente y se espera con los dedos cruzados a que se termine"







# Expanding the Network

Mutant Vegetable Gardens and Shared Knowledges

Michelle Aguilar, Delia Alcaraz, Javier Chapado, Gabriela García, Viridiana Gamiño, Claudio Gómez, Heby Lucas, Oscar Palomino, Tayde Manilla, Rafael Maya, Josefina Ramírez, Andrea Ruiz and Tere Mendoza are neighbors who took the **Annual Garden Workshop** and concluded the activity with the harvesting of a cornfield inside Casa Gallina. From this initial learning experience, and the related experiences they faced in their own gardens, they came together in July 2017 to discuss the possibility of creating a network for the exchange of garden products. They wrote an operating document with the intention of formalizing an agreement that emerged from their conversations and that also defined the ethical character of the network. More neighbors joined the initial network and thus they got involved in the Governmental Participatory Budget Initiatives scheme in 2017. They used the grant to reinforce their hard work and then went looking for more local residents and created more new gardens in the neighborhood. (D.H.)





## Javier Chapado

neighbor and teacher

In regards to starting the network, I took charge of putting up the documents. Four or five of us created information for the network that was uploaded to a shared gmail account.

We brought together 16 or 18 spaces, some from the network and some new. I knew almost all of them through Casa Gallina. I did several exchanges with them.



We held several meetings in the Casa de la Cultura for people to get to know the program and that was the meeting point for the larger network.

We have installed gardens in 30 or 40 homes in the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood.



We are still in the initial step of making the gardens productive before going back to the network stage.

There is a WhatsApp group that has some information, about 90% of it is on the topic. People share information about courses, the environment and news related to the garden.



We are a group of neighbors who want to be able to exchange what we produce.



## Citly Amezcua

neighbor and lawyer

I was looking for a group in which to learn about how to make a garden on my rooftop terrace. I had the intuition that there should be something in the neighborhood.

We started having a workshop every Monday afternoon, it was cool that they helped neighborhood residents set up their garden.

Granting certificates at the beginning of 2018, there were about 20 neighbors who I knew personally. That was when I found out about the network, with people trying to tend their gardens.



Through the garden project, I discovered that I can meet many neighbors and that many people want to get out of their bubble.

## Teresa Mendoza

neighbor and teacher

In the case of Santa María la Ribera (Zone 1), the thematic of food security won in the Government Participatory Budget process. Javi and I went to a meeting with them.

It was very difficult, firstly to restart with the original network's members who had space, time or even the will to participate in a government project.



While interest was expanding among the neighbors, Javi and I tried to maintain the network and its principles.

The original network mutated and was opened up to new neighborhood residents.





El habitat no es la casa, es el techo y el alimento que son inseparables.

Yona Friedman

Totalplay\_DD4 18B0DD44

Todo lo que s  
es que el arr

# Niches for Temporary Get Togethers

Salón Huev@

In August 2017, **Salón Huev@** was opened in one of Casa Gallina's entrance halls as a reading and leisure space in which neighbors can consult and exchange books, listen to music, work on the computers, or simply rest and talk. The room is open to all those who pass by on Sabino Street and it was initially designed as a space open to different uses related to leisure. Over time, and due to the specific use of the space by the neighbors, since 2018, the space has been used to present displays with specific thematic profiles. Over the summer, it was focused on critical reflection about the responsible consumption of textiles and clothing; in October it integrated activities, talks, and film cycles connecting food to its cultural practices and traditions in a program coordinated by Miguel Iwadare. For the closing months of 2018, the artist Edith Medina occupied the space with a display on reflections about bioplastics, in which different activities, workshops, and projections related to the theme were undertaken. (J.O.)







# Shared Futures

Technical Support for Senior Citizens

Since 2016, a program of basic technical support has been implemented in the various work spaces of Casa Gallina in which neighborhood youth share their knowledge about the use of computers and cell phones with elderly people. The following paragraphs include extracts of conversations that took place between two of the youngest tutors—Emiliano Mendoza and Miguel Sierra—and their students: Adán Belio, María Salazar y Ana Bertha Azpeitia Jurado. (R.S.)





Neighbors: Mr. Adán Belio Rangel and Emiliano Mendoza Saucedo  
with Rodrigo Simancas, from inSite/Casa Gallina

**Rodrigo:** What motivated you?



**Adán:**

I have worked in statistics my whole life, I worked at the National Institute of Statistics and Geography until 1988, at that moment, computers weren't used very much. Later, during the 1990s, I worked for the Iztapalapa local council, following up on the vehicle fleet logbooks. Today I no longer work but my restlessness led me to continue practicing tabulation and sports statistics like I did before: by hand. However, I think that today not knowing how to use a computer is a step backward equivalent to not knowing how to read and write.

**Emiliano:**

He's the one I work with the most because he's the most complicated. There are others who want to learn to use browsers, Facebook, but Adán wants to learn Excel formulas and before I met him I didn't know how to use them at that level, so I had to study on my own: go over tutorials and manuals that I have also brought to show him.

Before coming here, I had gone almost seven months without turning on a computer because mine was broken; I did my schoolwork on my cell-phone. Working with Adán and the other students has helped me learn more about computing and understand things that were difficult for me.

**Rodrigo:** What is the most complicated thing about working together?



**Adán:**

It is difficult for me to have continuity at home because the computer is shared: my son and daughter use it. Young Emiliano has pushed me that a day will come when I will have to do it alone.

**Emiliano:**

I've seen that what's hardest for him is controlling the mouse, especially when he right clicks without meaning to and a lot of options appear, we are working on him learning how to use them. I think that nobody will learn anything if I despair, I try to find a way to talk to each individual and to explain things simply.



Neighbors: Ana Bertha Azpeitia Jurado and Emiliano Mendoza Saucedo  
with Rodrigo Simancas, from inSite/Casa Gallina

**Rodrigo:** Do you remember when or why you started to come to the technical support sessions?



**Ana Bertha:**

I started to come when we were still upstairs in the classroom. My sister Lidia came first and she told me that she saw a piece of paper on the corner of Sabino and San Cosme about a Casa Gallina, where they had free computer classes.

Before I'd thought, "and why would I want to learn to use a computer?" But because I have a grocery store, suddenly the suppliers started asking me to issue electronic invoices and for me to send them by email. Therefore I started to look for classes but they were all very expensive and so when my sister told me about this place, I was motivated to come, but I had to ask her to help by being in the store because I couldn't close it.

The first person who assisted me was Andrés Ramírez, he was very nice, he told me that the only requirement was that I lived in Santa María but they didn't even ask for proof –that seemed weird, to me, but good...

**Rodrigo:** What have you learned?



**Ana Bertha:**

At first it was a lot of work for me, when I arrived I didn't even know how to turn it on, I couldn't get it in my head how a blank piece of paper could be on the screen. But I started to learn little by little. The girls taught me how to open my email and later Facebook, but what I have learned the most about is using Excel, because I practice it more for work. Now I have even bought a laptop.

**Emiliano:**

When I met Ana Bertha, she wanted to go over things on Facebook because she said she'd seen them before but since she almost never uses it she'd forgotten. She stopped coming and later returned with specific questions about Excel and together we've been learning, because I didn't know how to use Excel, and, like Ana Bertha, other students have come because they're interested in that, so I've had to study.

I also learned about tax declarations and how to do them online; I had never filed before but now it's necessary.



**Ana Bertha:**

Using Excel has made life much easier, before I kept a notebook with the information for the Tax Administration Services (SAT) of what was bought and sold, it was very tedious. Dian Juárez who also gave classes here and used to work for the SAT, so that helped me a lot.







**Rodrigo:** What are you working on now?

**Ana Bertha:**

New things keep coming up. For example, I have a group of friends who know each other from college and suddenly they all bought good cell-phones and they spend all day talking about WhatsApp and I said: what are they talking about? I felt isolated. But since it was only for chatting I was not that interested. But now it turns out that the store's suppliers say they will send a budget or a corrected price list, etc. over WhatsApp.

So I asked the teachers that were here before Emiliano to help me put Whatsapp on my phone but they said they couldn't do it.

But I thought: "If everyone has Whatsapp and I don't, but I have a computer and a cellphone, then the best thing to do would be to put Whatsapp on my computer," that was my logic. I told Emiliano that, and he said: "Hmm, I'm going to investigate."

**Emiliano:**

The problem is that Ana Bertha doesn't have a smartphone, therefore you can't install Whatsapp, so I researched alternatives and there I found out that you can install an Android emulator on her computer, the truth is that it is the most difficult thing we have done so far, I spent an entire Tuesday installing it, but finally in the following class she could start to learn how to use Whatsapp on her computer.



### Neighbors: Doña María Salazar and Miguel Sierra



**Doña Mari:**

I started coming when the computers were still upstairs, I used to come with Lorena Jáuregui, and at home I used to grab my son's computer, so much so that he told me off because I deleted some of his files. That's why he bought me a tablet, but after what happened with this computer I was afraid of breaking it.

After that I used to come with the girl with the nose ring [Viridiana Gamiño]. She encouraged me to use the tablet, we started with photos, because I like taking photos and I used to see my son taking a lot of photos with his cell phone, so I got interested in learning how to.

**Miguel:**

When I met her she was interested in looking up the news on her tablet, she also asked me to help her use WhatsApp but her cell phone was really old so I offered her the option of using the tablet as a phone for WhatsApp.



**Mari:**

I'd like to learn how to take a photo and send it by WhatsApp. Even though I'm really old, like eighty, I've still got a lot of will to learn.



**Miguel:**

Before that she'd only seen text messages on a normal cell phone. Now she knows how to share messages, forward images and videos.



**Mari:**

Before Miguel arrived I just used to come to check the news on my tablet. Dian Juárez was the teacher then, but I didn't learn anything with her because she used to just come and run around and didn't pay us much attention. So I left for a month to go to Acapulco with my family. When I came back Miguel was here.



**Miguel:**

At first I noticed that Doña Mari just used to ask me to help her with the news but I could see she was bored. So I started to talk to her and I realized that she was interested in other things. We started with WhatsApp but she was still a bit worried about breaking the tablet, I insisted and I promised her that she'd learn how to use it in just a few weeks.



**Mari:**

Now I chat with my son's partner, with my son, with my family and friends. I started with just one contact: my son. Now I have a bunch, we send each other images, we tell each other we love each other, even though it's not always true ...

What's a little bit hard for me is when I'm writing and I make a mistake, instead of just deleting the mistake I prefer to delete the whole thing. Miguel's showing me how to delete one mistake at a time.



**Miguel:**

The coolest thing is she has new interests now, she's always smiling and asking questions. Over a couple of months I realized how much she'd learned about WhatsApp: an application that she didn't know at all before.



**Mari:**

Miguel uses various terms so we understand better:  
The world (Internet)  
The little bird (the cursor)  
The green button (send button)  
The three dots (settings), etc.



**Miguel**

First we do the theory: we write everything down in the notebooks and then we do an example. That way they get to learn it. What I always say is if it doesn't work, then it doesn't work, but it's always worth trying.





## Withdrawal into the Public Sphere: inSite/Casa Gallina as a Model of Hospitality and Alternative Infrastructures

Nina Möntmann

### The Founding Narrative of inSite/Casa Gallina

Casa Gallina was created in the context of inSite, a binational festival of visual art founded in 1992 in response to the closed border between the United States and Mexico. In its five editions to date,<sup>1</sup> the festival has realized many pioneering public art projects. The original reference to the controversial border placed inSite in a political context, setting the tone for the projects in all subsequent editions.

In such major exhibitions held at regular intervals (biennials, triennials, quinquennials), a decisive role is always played by the founding narrative: the initial guiding principle that is then, ideally, updated for each further edition.<sup>2</sup> This process allows the current moment to be interpreted or defined from a specific viewpoint. Even if such links back to the original profile are not always made, and even if some editions fail to live up to expectations, the guiding ideas on

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1. 1992, 1994, 1997, 2000–1, and 2005, held at various sites in Tijuana, Mexico, and San Diego, California.

2. In their presentation at the Bergen Biennial Conference in 2009, Per Gunnar Ecg-Tverbakk and Jonas Ekeberg stress the relevance of founding narratives for biennials and the accompanying responsibility for maintaining and fostering the orientation linked to this narrative. In their view, it is therefore essential for newly founded biennials and triennials to plan the concept for their inaugural edition carefully and responsibly. See Monika Szewczyk's review of the conference's chapter on "How to Run a Biennial? (with an Eye to Critical Regionalism)," in *The Biennial Reader: The Bergen Biennial Conference*, eds. Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Øvstebø (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall and Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 30.



which the event in question was founded, shaped by local conditions and by the international position of the founders, exert an ongoing influence on each event's history.

The founding narrative for inSite draws on the specific contexts and problems of the Tijuana/San Diego border area, as reflected, for example, in Javier Téllez's iconic work *One Flew Over the Void* (2005), consisting of a live performance by David "Human Cannonball" Smith being fired over the border from Mexico into the USA; Andrea Fraser's performance *Inaugural Speech* (1997), in which she turned the gaze of public art onto the interests and strategies of various actors in institutional positions of power within the art world in the United States and Mexico (sponsors, patrons, curators, local politicians and makers of cultural policy), embodying them with bitter humor, or Måns Wrangé's *Good Rumor Project* (2004–2016), about the stigmatizing function of rumors that spread on either side about those living across the border.

For inSite/Casa Gallina, this updating of the founding narrative of inSite consists in developing an innovative and progressive idea of public art and reexamining its potential for social relevance. To this end, the project's director, Osvaldo Sánchez, took the radical step of abandoning the spectacle of the festival format in favor of a more discrete local initiative. The decision to combine the resources of an international festival with a focus on public, socially committed art in a longer-term local project signals an interest in discovering potential for the future, as explored in the sustained cooperation with a local public, in the institution's structures, and in its artistic and organizational working processes.

Furthermore, the step of withdrawing from the economy of visibility of an international festival can also be viewed in terms of institutional critique: the intended local radius of inSite/Casa Gallina, taking place almost beyond the reach of the art world, and the slowed-down timescale of the projects can be seen as a gesture of distancing, both from the commercialized and often instrumentalized running of a major festival and from the extremely commercial art scene in Mexico City.

The fact that no curatorial statement was published before the project got underway placed the emphasis clearly on the process of collaborating with the inhabitants of the barrio, on their interests, needs and willingness to participate. Communication with local residents soon led to the articulation of

topics and serious problems that shape their everyday life and on which the activities of inSite/Casa Gallina would focus: lack of trust between people, loneliness, lack of resources, neglected public structures and the poor economic situation of local businesses.

### **The Barrio**

At first glance, Santa María la Ribera seems to have all the qualities that encourage gentrification: proximity to the city center, a lively market, the shady Alameda Park with the Morisco kiosk that hosts various cultural activities, the popular Geological Museum with which inSite/Casa Gallina collaborates on many educational and artistic projects, the Chopo University Museum with its glass and iron Art Nouveau architecture, many restaurants and coffee shops, and a certain amount of older buildings. As shown by Mapeo Colectivo by the Argentinian collective Iconoclasistas, an early project at Casa Gallina, processes of gentrification have been noticeable in the barrio since the mid-1990s.<sup>3</sup> In their map, Iconoclasistas highlight indicators such as speculation with residential and commercial real estate. During their residency at Casa Gallina in 2015, they worked with local residents to create the map with a focus on factors that directly influence quality of life in the neighborhood: infrastructure such as public transport, green spaces, food shops and the market; the state of the roads; the state of the buildings, the development of the real estate market; and the use of public spaces.<sup>4</sup> The obvious dilapidation of many buildings, as well as many units of unattractive, run-down box architecture that had been erected quickly as social housing after the 1985 earthquake, may partly explain why gentrification has yet to make itself more strongly felt. Although the area has become more attractive in recent years, the atmosphere of a quiet, green neighborhood is deceptive. The barrio still has problems with safety, violence and waste disposal, problems Mexico's government does not seem to be getting under control.

The barrio is home to low-income families, many impoverished pensioners and a small number of middle-class people. There are many family-run restaurants and other small businesses. The inSite/Casa Gallina team commu-

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<sup>3</sup>. Communications specialist and educator Julia Risler and graphic artist Pablo Ares have been working together since 2006 under the name Iconoclasistas, realizing collective projects to strengthen the cohesion and collaborative resources of communities.

<sup>4</sup>. For more details, see: [http://insite.org.mx/wp/en/ct\\_casa/collective-mapping-iconoclasistas/](http://insite.org.mx/wp/en/ct_casa/collective-mapping-iconoclasistas/)



nicates with the neighbors in the barrio primarily via Facebook. Luis Gómez, who also looks after the inSite/Casa Gallina website and the archiving of photographs after every event, sits at his computer in the library and checks whether all of the friend requests from neighbors really do come from the barrio. To make sure the Facebook platform remains a safe space for exchange between neighbors he does not accept requests from outside the barrio or from members of the art world.

### The Building

The nucleus of the inSite/Casa Gallina initiative is the building, the physical space of the Casa and its garden. The immediate impression on entering the garden courtyard with spaces opening off it, with its bright warm colors and its chickens, is that of an inviting oasis of peace and quiet, a refuge.

On the inconspicuous facade, all that can be seen is a small flag with a Russian doll style image of a chicken in an egg in a chicken in an egg, etc., and the words **Salón Huev@**. From the street, then, Casa Gallina cannot be identified, it is not marked as a public place, and certainly not as an art institution, but as a space shielded from the art world and from passersby, reserved for specific activities and accessible to inhabitants of the barrio on the condition of active engagement. In this spirit, no press release was published to mark the foundation of inSite/Casa Gallina and no news is passed on to the art press. These rules of access, constantly evolving in discussion between the team and local residents, not only allow the people of the barrio to help shape inSite/Casa Gallina, but also ensure the opacity needed to try out a new quasi-institutional model of social innovation and to allow socially committed art projects to operate without being immediately usurped by the art scene.<sup>5</sup>

Between my two visits to Casa Gallina, in the spring of 2016 and the spring of 2018, the atmosphere of the space changed considerably. Although the furniture and equipment remained mainly the same, the specific use of the rooms was reflected in details that made a key impact: having been relatively empty, the library was livened up with several freely usable computers, and the range of books was expanded to include many publications published by

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5. On strategic opacity in the art world, see Nina Möntmann, "Opacity," in *Abstraction*, ed. Maria Lind (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 182–85.

Casa Gallina or used in projects. Many volumes are in use, have bookmarks and lie around in piles. The knowledge in the correspondingly named zone of the house **Saberes** (Knowledges) now appears to be lived knowledge, be it the neighbor who sits at one of the computers almost every day conducting research or the communication and exchange between the groups of children who meet regularly with supervisors to do their homework. The project groups on various courses sit in the meeting rooms, those attending the neighborhood dinners sit in the kitchen and on the terrace, neighbors borrow tools from the **Prestaduría vecinal**, and those taking part in art projects meet at the Casa for discussions before setting off for research at other places in the barrio.

The garden at the end of the site has been further cultivated during Urban Farm Advanced Group Sessions, while the **Salón Huev@** with its participatory film program, has established itself as a weekly meeting place for film fans; for the screenings, it becomes the only room at the Casa to be temporarily opened onto the street. The once conspicuous inSite branding on the doors and walls has been largely removed, and the family tree of sponsors has been taken down from the wall. As a result of its use by neighbors, from the barrio, the Casa has taken on a lived and functional character, while representative details have been toned down.

Instead of an underlying curatorial concept, a specific functional layout was planned for the building, dividing it up into zones: **Knowledges** is the space with the library, computers and meetings. Together with the kitchen, it forms the core of the Casa. Moving around the building, one necessarily passes through this brightly lit, open space. This means that, encounters between people, collective learning, and the sharing and exchanging of knowledge are already inscribed on the level of the physical space. Leaving the Knowledges zone, one automatically enters the kitchen, opening onto the terrace with a big table and the garden beyond. The kitchen is where the weekly neighborhood suppers take place for which people register in advance and are put together in cross-generational groups. As well as being the venue for the **Kitchen Lessons** (workshops on cooking and nutrition), it is also where the team eats together every day, where birthdays are celebrated, and where every new visitor is welcomed with a cup of coffee. Neighbors who visit regularly may also use the kitchen.

The physical rooms on the ground floor, as the base of the building, contain a range of social spaces, connected by infrastructures. The rooms where artists reside on the upper floor also correspond with the functional layout



of the Casa: the art projects act as a “superstructure” for the inSite/Casa Gallina project as a whole, reflecting on the values and parameters of the Casa’s activities in the neighborhood (trust, micro-economy, belonging and communication, solidarity, local action, preservation of the environment and one’s own body) in experimental form.

### Alternative Infrastructures

The characteristic quality of inSite/Casa Gallina is that it operates in parallel with three sometimes interlocking activities or curatorial strategies. The **Synergies** platform brings together projects organized by the team and often carried out in cooperation with other barrio-based organizations or experts. The **Knowledges** platform aims to “promote and distribute shared knowledge and topics of interest to the community. The courses and workshops, events and activities in spaces and/or local areas are focused on making an impact on the economic and social condition of the group.” And finally **Co-participations** participatory projects by artists who, if they are not from Mexico City, stay at the Casa for a residency of between several months and a year.<sup>6</sup>

Supervised by curators Josefa Ortega and Violeta Celis, one objective of the **Synergies** platform is to “promote local economies in a spirit of mutual collaboration, support and solidarity in existing family businesses located in the barrio or to add quality or expertise to services and businesses. Thus, this platform seeks to energize the neighborhood’s social life and its efficiency and benefits.”<sup>7</sup>

In this spirit, the Casa invited renowned chef and restaurant consultant, Ivan Iera Salicrú, after it became clear from conversations with neighbors that the many family restaurants in the barrio often operated under poor economic conditions. As well as insufficient business planning, Salicrú also identified disturbed social relations (such as widespread mistrust towards neighboring restaurant owners) as a cause of these economic disadvantages. He suggested reducing the size of menus, even if nearby restaurants were offering more dishes, and bulk ordering ingredients together with other restaurants to reduce costs. Step by step, the message was conveyed that cooperation is better for everyone while rivalry is ultimately bad for the majority. Such

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6. [http://insite.org.mx/wp/en/ct\\_proyecto/casagallina/](http://insite.org.mx/wp/en/ct_proyecto/casagallina/)

7. Ibid.

rivalry as a symptom of the neoliberalism that has brought major changes to local economic conditions in Mexico since the 1990s was already highlighted as a social poison by Foucault: subjects of exchange become subjects of competition.

Another example is the decoration of the ubiquitous shutters on local shops and restaurants by designers in collaboration with the owners. In close contact with the Casa’s neighbors, the curators’ role is to find out which needs exist in the barrio and to then bring experts, designers, architects or artists together with neighbors to find a solution and to apply it to the situation with a view to the long term.

Examples from the **Knowledges** platform, supervised by education curator David Hernández and artist Rodrigo Simancas Mercado, include computer courses for older people, research projects and publications, and the **Open Kitchen** and **Vegetable Garden** workshops. Knowledge is treated here as non-hierarchically shared research and practice and as relevant to the improvement of coexistence and economic conditions in the barrio. Accordingly, the events and the information center at the Casa focus “on sustainability, architecture and urban planning, housing, city and territory, popular culture, urban visibility, food, sociology and defense of leisure.”

I refer to the medium-like functioning of inSite/Casa Gallina as “alternative infrastructures” because, as Irit Rogoff has correctly pointed out, the infrastructures widely praised in our time (especially in the West) such as “functioning institutions, systems of classification and categorization, archives and traditions ...funding and educational pathways, excellence criteria ... and properly air-conditioned auditoria” may be achievements that regulate our coexistence and facilitate working processes, but they also “become protocols that bind and confine us in their demand to be conserved or in their demand to be resisted.”<sup>8</sup>

In the current period of political upheaval, Rogoff argues, key functioning infrastructures should be preserved, while establishing spaces that give scope to participate in shaping social change. Such access is provided above all by projects on a local level. Rogoff speaks of “re-occupying infrastructure,” a process she sees, for example, in activist projects, including those carried

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8. Irit Rogoff, “Infrastructure,” in *Former West: Documents, Constellations, Projects* (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2013), 31.

out in the art field, and in the work of NGOs. This re-occupying also implies a calling into question of the dominant infrastructures that reproduce Western values. Alternative infrastructures, by contrast, respond flexibly to specific local contexts and permit informal approaches and organizational processes that allow a maximum of participation.

Within inSite/Casa Gallina's alternative infrastructure, management is integrated to a large extent into programming processes, following the same philosophy: the structure of teamwork is non-hierarchical, and there are no assistants; one third of the team comes from the barrio and as many services as possible are sourced in the neighborhood so as to use and support the local economy. Here again, the building is activated as a nexus in an expanding and many-layering local network.

Twice a week, the team is responsible for preparing a shared midday meal, with no fixed roles for organizing, shopping or cooking. There should always be flowers in the building, as well as fruit, coffee and tea for the team and for guests. Everyone is responsible for this, giving rise to a natural flow of attention, of taking care and looking after one another. At Casa Gallina, the "care of the self" is extended to the communal "we."

## Hospitality

This principle of hospitality animates the building. On this fundamental issue—who welcomes whom in their space under which conditions—the inSite/Casa Gallina team has a clear philosophy: visitors are always openly welcomed and given something to drink, support for their specific project is signaled and the necessary space and social infrastructures are made available. There is one key principle however: inSite/Casa Gallina does not wish to offer a service (a topic in the participatory art of the 1990s) or bring about a "healing" (something that characterized many community-based art projects in the 1980s).<sup>9</sup> Instead, the Casa picks up suggestions from the barrio, develops strategies together with the local population, and launches projects capable of making a lasting improvement to their neighbors' quality of life.

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9. Suzi Gablik, for example, states that what she identifies as "connective aesthetics... makes art into a model for connectedness and healing by opening up being to its full dimensionality—not just the disembodied eye." See Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism," in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle and Washington: Bay Press, 1995), 80.

One example of this is the above mentioned assistance provided to restaurants by the consultant Ivan Iera Salicrú. Another example of attempts to build trust in the neighborhood is the **Prestaduría vecinal** that opens three times a week for local residents to borrow tools. Without leaving a deposit, the tools are lent out on the basis of trust. And this really works, with all tools being returned to date. This means that on the basis of trust—the lack of which is a problem in the neighborhood—an operation was launched that can serve as a model for other local sharing programs and cooperations. The experiences of local residents with the Prestaduría vecinal may thus make an educational impact that could improve coexistence in the barrio in the longer term.

In recent times, many curators and museum directors have referred to Jacques Derrida's concept of hospitality, applying it to their own institutions, at least temporarily in the context of an exhibition.<sup>10</sup> Derrida distinguishes between the Christian concept of unlimited hospitality, which implies that one opens up one's home "without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition," and conditional hospitality, which implies, for example, that guests are asked about their identity and expected to adapt to specific rules, even if these remain unspoken.<sup>11</sup> Derrida is interested in the possibility of unlimited hospitality, but he does admit that, on account of "those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional, as they are defined by the Greco-Roman tradition and even the Judeo-Christian one, by all of law and all philosophy of law up to Kant and Hegel in particular, across the family, civil society, and the State,"<sup>12</sup> such absolute hospitality does not actually exist.

An example of an institutional experiment with the notion of hospitality that applies to all, but that also refers to a specific ethical code of conduct, was developed in 2013 by the artist Tania Bruguera when she transformed the Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven into the *Museo de Arte Útil*, the director Charles Esche literally gave her "the keys to the museum." This project took the decisive further step of asking not only how individual art projects can improve the quality of life, but also how the museum as an institution can be harnessed to a social function, as a platform or tool.<sup>13</sup>

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10. See, for example, Beatrice von Bismarck and Benjamin Meyer-Kramer, *Hospitality: Hosting Relations in Exhibitions* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016).

11. Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 77.

12. *Ibid.*

13. <http://museumarteutil.net/about/>



Even in this temporary project, however, it was mostly artistic projects that were invited into the institutional context. The dependencies and categories involved in the running of both public and private institutions (the distinction between exhibition and educational program, the focus on objects, the safety regulations, the need to insure works on loan, the need to maximize visitor numbers and deliver a profit) are diametrically opposed to the practice of hospitality and the possibilities of using an institution as a tool in civil society.

The unique absence of precisely these institutional categories allows in Site/Casa Gallina to develop as a platform for civil society that can operate with an alternative infrastructure and without the pressure of running art projects within the framework of an exhibition.

### The Role of the Art Projects

In view of the situation in the barrio, and in the context of the **Synergies** and **Knowledges** platforms, it is no surprise that many of the art projects at Casa Gallina deal with communication and with the body as a resource. Problems frequently raised in the barrio, as in other neighborhoods inhabited by the lowest income working classes, are the lack of education, of economic resources, and of social networks. Silvia Federici, who studies the working class body and its role in the capitalist system, argues that the body is the sole resource of the working class, a resource that is sold to the capitalist class: “Capitalism has created more brutal and insidious forms of enslavement, as it has planted into the body of the proletariat deep divisions that have served to intensify and conceal exploitation. It is in great part because of these imposed divisions—especially those between women and men—that capitalist accumulation continues to devastate life in every corner of the planet.”<sup>14</sup> In the barrio, with its strong low-income working-class presence, one therefore often sees trained bodies as status symbols, be it on the street or during sporting activities at the gym or in public places.

For his project *Mestizo* (2014–16), Omar Gámez asked men who trained at a gym in Santa María la Ribera, and who had a mix of European and

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14. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2004), 64.

Mexican roots referred to in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking former colonies as “mestizo,” to develop their own poses for a series of large-format photographs. Coupled with their machismo-informed view of their own bodies, this resulted in proud portraits in ethnic costumes and bold poses that also express the men’s passions and spirituality. As Federici writes, the mechanization of the body under capitalism paradoxically makes spiritual or occult forces appear less of a threat: “The revival of magical beliefs is possible today because it no longer represents a social threat. The mechanization of the body is so constitutive of the individual that, at least in industrialized countries, giving space to the belief in occult forces does not jeopardize the regularity of social behavior.”<sup>15</sup> As a result, the photographs’ deliberate deployment of ethnic costumes, often associated with ritual functions, is entirely compatible with pride in the working class norm of the muscle-bound body.

With a special eye for gender relations, Mauricio Limón worked with boxers and dancers from the barrio on his project *Broken Teeth* (2014–15), developing choreographies in which dance and boxing influence each other. The result of this cooperation is a two-channel video. In one shot, a boxer undergoes extreme training, pumping his muscular body in push-ups and sit-ups and throwing fast punches in the air. He learned this in prison, where he also got his nickname, “El Tierno” (the tender one). Outside the world of the prison, he certainly doesn’t appear tender. In the other shot, we see “El Tierno” training with the amateur dance group Los Forasteros de la Salsa, who are practicing son, one of the roots of salsa. Their faces are rarely seen, their sweating bodies emerging from the near total darkness as they move—bulging muscles, tattoos, dancing feet. One woman moves through both scenes, Hannia, a young dancer from the neighborhood who also used to box. Here again, her muscular body is almost all we see. In the film she is a phantasmatic figure who penetrates the men’s world thanks to her power of seduction.

Rather than showing the body solely as a resource, these projects by Gámez and Limón combine this impression with a self-determined portrayal of the subject’s body with all its passions and talents.

Another existential issue dealt with in many art projects is physical and mental welfare, as in Rafiki Sánchez’s work on the subject of loss and how people

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

deal with it, or Oswaldo Ruiz's cooperation with a group of neighbors interested in homeopathy, launched after Ruiz noticed the number of pharmacies and doctors in the barrio with this specialty.

There are a number of intersections between the art projects and the themes of inSite/Casa Gallina's **Knowledges** and **Synergies** platforms, for example on environmental issues or support for communications between the people of the barrio. Edith Medina, a pioneer of BioArt in Mexico, is currently working with a group of teenagers in the covered market where they collect organic waste and turn it into biomaterial. Over a period of many months, Marianna Dellekamp met regularly with a group of women aged between sixteen and eighty-two with a shared interest in knitting. Through the personal objects the participants were asked to bring to the meetings, she stimulated conversations about their life stories. Dellekamp herself says that the activities in her projects are really just an occasion for communication and that as activities they are interchangeable.<sup>16</sup> What matters is the group dynamics that take shape around these activities. In contrast to earlier participatory projects by Dellekamp, inSite/Casa Gallina offered a safe space for the participants, who were always warmly welcomed and given support by the team. In this way, the project developed a particular intimacy on the basis of which lasting contacts were established between neighbors.

As described above, this hospitality of inSite/Casa Gallina also functions in many projects as a catalyst for open exchanges. Feedback obtained by the Casa from those participating in all projects (via personal conversations and questionnaires) often mentions the positive atmosphere at the Casa, which leads to motivation (in the art projects) and a greater learning effect (in the workshops) and by consequence to a high degree of applicability to everyday life.

In the sustained processes during which a relationship with participants is built up over many months, the personality of the artists in question is put to the test, tending to play a greater role than it does in their other projects. With a very personal approach, Limón managed to establish contacts with usually less accessible people from troubled backgrounds, Dellekamp offered a group of people of very different ages a routine and structure that suited them all, and other artists showed great patience in building trust over long periods and conveying not only their expertise but also their own curiosity,

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16. In conversation with the author on April 5, 2018.

thus creating a safe space for participants to channel their fascinations and passions into the project, but also their concerns and anxieties.

On the one hand, then, it is an exceptional situation on account of the specific time scale and intensity of inSite/Casa Gallina projects. On the other hand, the works later become part of the artists' oeuvre and are exhibited in art world contexts. This is different to many "community art" projects that take place locally and may subsequently be shown in the form of documentation, but which do not produce an artwork that has a life of its own outside of its original context. The influence of these projects thus takes place not only on the level of local cooperation, but also in the international art world, where the works provide insights into the special conditions of production at Casa Gallina.

## Conclusion

Over the five years of its existence to date, inSite/Casa Gallina has established a space beyond the art world that facilitates ongoing social and civic commitment via educational projects and art.<sup>17</sup> The constitutive invisibility of the Casa is an essential part of this work. The alternative infrastructures set up by the initiative have been a key factor contributing to the project's success. The importance of infrastructures for long-term initiatives is huge, since "infrastructure emerges as the invisible force of manifest culture today: subversive possibilities of working with infrastructures as sites of affect and contradiction."<sup>18</sup> In order to bring about change in society—even in a limited local setting—it is necessary to uncover subversive potential, redefine infrastructures, and redraw the map of their functions. As one example, inSite/Casa Gallina uses a form of critical management that does not follow the politics of art institutions shaped by neoliberal constraints: hierarchies within the team are flat, everyone enters into contact with the neighbors in the

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17. This sets inSite/Casa Gallina apart from projects in the art field that also play with the participatory engagement of a neighborhood, such as Rick Lowe's *Victoria Square Project*, made as part of documenta 14 in Athens in 2017. Large-scale exhibitions like documenta, where large numbers of visitors continue to visit long after the opening, do not offer a suitable framework for such projects—unless, that is, the exhibition is willing to provide "alternative infrastructures," that give the project a protected space so that local residents can engage with the project without being exposed to a "zoo effect."

18. As it was formulated in the announcement of the Bergen Assembly 2016, curated by freethought, on the notion of infrastructure.



barrio to an equal extent; a festival budget is used, but without submitting to the economy of obligatory visibility; at least one third of team members are from the barrio and as many services as possible are sourced in the neighborhood; ethical principles like trust form the basis of projects like the **Prestaduría vecinal**. At the same time, the specific design and usage of the building is not only meaningful in terms of practicality and hospitality, but it also favors the flow of this new infrastructure.

As a consequence, inSite/Casa Gallina can be viewed as an example of social innovation that can act as a model both for socially committed art and for the creation of alternative infrastructures in public institutions. Leonardo Avritzer considers the integration of social projects into the practice of state institutions to be essential for the process of democratization in Latin America: “the most sensible way to further democratize state-society relations is to transfer democratic processes that emerge at the societal level of the political arena through participatory designs. Without this ... step through which informal publics become deliberative, problem-solving publics, democratization in Latin America will not be able to bridge the gap between democratic societal practices and a hybrid political society that resists its full democratization.”<sup>19</sup> This is precisely the context in which inSite/Casa Gallina must be viewed. inSite/Casa Gallina operates in the local milieu of a neighborhood in Mexico City and has neither the range nor the ambition to generate direct change, but it does demonstrate mechanisms by which participatory processes and alternative infrastructures can inform broader contexts of political democratization. If one also takes into consideration the weakness of civil society in Mexico, this represents a huge step that has been achieved by a leap of faith in the local people.

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19. Leonardo Avritzer, *Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 9.

When viewed in terms of the founding narrative of the inSite festival, out of which Casa Gallina emerged, the claim to offer progressive public art is updated with a view to the future: the mechanisms of art are transferred, in parallel and in connection with educational projects, into people’s everyday lives, where they strengthen civic commitment and open up a long-term prospect of participation in society. In this context, inSite/Casa Gallina’s “alternative infrastructures” act as a “medium” whose functions can be described using a definition proposed by Keller Easterling: “interlocking ecologies of effects, affects, protocols, groups, individuals and so on.”<sup>20</sup>

For this to work across distinct fields, Casa Gallina’s constitutive invisibility is fundamental: it enables the emergence of precisely these functions as interlocking ecologies in a new combination, creating a resonance chamber for public art and civic engagement in equal measure.

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Nina Möntmann is an art historian and curator, she is currently Professor of Art Theory at the University of Cologne. She lives and works between Hamburg and Cologne.

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20. Keller Easterling, *Medium Design* (Moscow: Strelka Press, 2017).



# Registering Localities

## Publications and Printed Materials

Casa Gallina/inSite's publications for neighborhood circulation include five books, a newspaper that ran for ten issues, and a self-organization manual. Each of the publications had a print run of 1,000–2,000 copies that were freely distributed to the neighborhood residents, individually and in local meeting places and information centers such as schools and libraries. These materials focus on a critical perspective of issues and problematics related to sustainability, consumption and local identity in distinct everyday situations specific to Santa María la Ribera. (R.C. and J.O.)

## Atlas botánico mínimo de la Santa María la Ribera

May 2017



*A Minimal Botanical Atlas of Santa María la Ribera* was presented to the neighbors at the closing ceremony of the exhibit of the same name at the Geology Museum. The presentation was attended by about 40 people, who were able to dialogue with the biologists who coordinated the project that discussed the importance and care needed to keep trees in urban areas. The print run was primarily distributed in elementary and high schools in the area, in numbers proportional to the number of groups and teachers in each institution. The local residents who participated at Casa Gallina, especially in the **Vegetable Garden**, received copies, as did vendors at the market, civil society collectives and organizations in the neighborhood, such as Yolia, niñas de la calle A.C. (A.C.

Street Girls), Comité Pro-Ciegos (Committee for the Blind), Mi Verde Morada (My Green Sidewalk) and Libros contra la Violencia (Books against Violence), among others. The collective that Iván Pérez and Lourdes Cruz belong to, Estanquillo El 32, received a packet of copies, which they distributed to residents in the south of the neighborhood for free. (J.O. and R.C.)



## El libro de las mascotas

2015



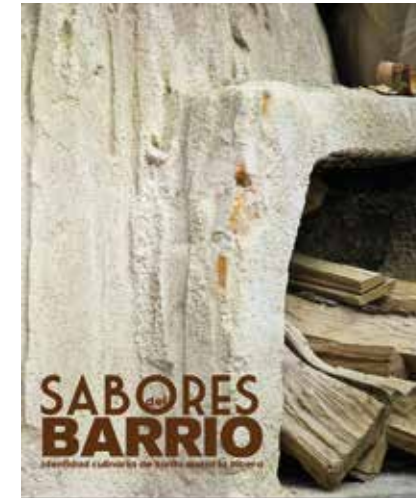
inSite/Casa Gallina's first editorial project was *The Pet Book*, a compilation of personal stories and emotional photographs about the affective role that pets play in the neighborhood, with their surroundings, their stories, and the imaginaries of empathy related to them. After a period of detecting and contacting pet owners in Santa María la Ribera—with campaigns in veterinary clinics, pet grooming salons, and pet food and accessory shops, as well as through social

networks linked to organized groups promoting civic responsibility in regards to pet ownership—writer Bernardo Esquinca and photographer Eunice Adorno, a neighborhood resident, were invited to collectively collaborate in the project. Over the course of several months, they carried out interviews and portraits of pet owners in their homes to listen to and record their narratives about the lives of animals, often linked to emotional family losses, which the pets helped to heal.

The book was presented in Casa Gallina in December 2015, in an event that the participants attended with their pets. It served as a detonator of affective relationships between those involved. During the encounter, participants received copies of the book and talked about the projects that they could engage in as a collective. The remaining copies were distributed to neighbors who were attending activities at Casa Gallina, to community libraries, vets and pet supply shops, coffee shops, and other spaces where neighbors spend time, as well as to the area's public schools and libraries to support fundraising activities with the goal of improving their facilities, as in the case of the República de Cuba Elementary School. (J.O. and R.C.)

## Sabores de barrio: una identidad culinaria de la Santa María la Ribera

June 2018



*Neighborhood Flavors: The Culinary Identity of Santa María la Ribera* is a book that integrates the stories of 25 cooks and owners of different food businesses in Santa María la Ribera. It was commissioned to be written by Miguel Iwaware, a researcher who specializes in popular, traditional, and ethnic cooking. Iwaware had already given cooking workshops at Casa Gallina, and meticulously carried out a series of visits, conversations, and tastings with neighborhood residents involved in local gastronomy to gather their life stories and their relationship with the kitchen and the neighborhood. Neighbors also shared

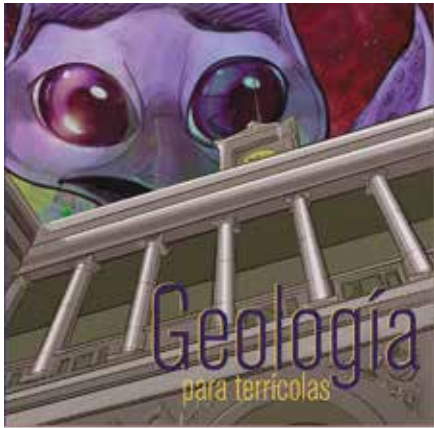
some of the recipes preferred by their clients and that they prepare in their businesses. Many of them come from the culinary traditions of their places of origin: Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Guerrero and San Luis Potosí, among other regions, whose diversity of flavors and ingredients compose a multicultural gastronomical offering rooted in the everyday life of the neighborhood.

This book also seeks to enjoy and reevaluate the neighborhood's culinary offerings whose plurality reflects the diversity of its inhabitants and the cultural reserves that shape neighborhood life in Santa María la Ribera. The publication was presented in July 2018 during a meeting of participating food business owners organized by inSite/Casa Gallina. Copies were given to each of the locales; their clients and other neighbors who came to hear about the book came to ask for a copy. As with the previous publications, packets of copies were sent to the neighborhood's elementary and high schools, preparatory schools, to neighborhood collectives and local action institutions, coffee shops, community libraries, and other spaces of encounter between neighbors. (J.O. and R.C.)



## Geología para terrícolas

February 2018



*Geology for Earthlings* is a book that seeks to promote a critical vision about the relationship we have with planet Earth and its non-renewable resources, such as the soil, the water, and minerals. This publication speaks to children and young people through stories imagined by Roxanna Erdman and illustrated by Ulises Mora. The narrative is based on the surprise of an extraterrestrial being who gets to know human habits and is shocked by the decisions we've made as a species and their consequences.

Her approach emphasizes the possibilities for changing our habits and defending Earth's resources and conserving our nearby environment.

The book insists on divulging why natural geological resources are a key theme in the regeneration and defense of the environment and proposes rethinking the notion of extraction that has guided the traditional understanding of the use of vital resources. Natural resources, energy sources, and biotic factors that should be under highly controlled standards of exploitation, and only for the common good. The book also addresses the geological wealth hosted in the Geology Museum's collection, whose architectural environment is where the narrative takes place.

The publication was distributed to neighbors with young or teenage children, and to elementary, high and preparatory schools, coffee shops, community libraries, and in other neighborhood meeting places. It was also given to the attendees of the summer workshop, **Blue Planet: Exploring the House that We Share**, which took place at Casa Gallina in the summer of 2018; the workshop used the book as didactic material that accompanied each morning's activities. (J.O. and R.C.)





## Habitar el agua: un acercamiento a la cuenca del Valle de México

May 2017



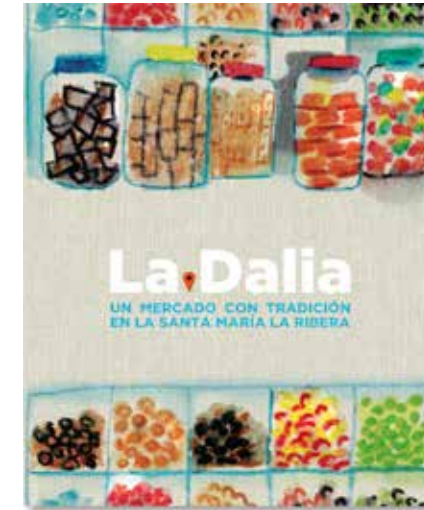
*Living with Water: Getting to Know the Valley of Mexico River Basin* accompanied an exhibit by the same name shown at the Geology Museum, which was open between November 2017 and March 2018. The publication's aim was to reflect on the transformation of the natural landscape of the Valley of Mexico River Basin; previously a lake region that has been drying up, it is now mostly an urban area with complex hydrological problems.

The book includes a text by the architect Elías Cattán that presents a general approach to the problematic of water and our relationship with it. It also includes a series of infographics about the topic, developed during years of research by Cattán and his regenerative architecture studio, Tallerr3, which allow for understanding the situation of hydrological resources on the planet, in our country, and our city. The book includes a photo essay by the artist Alex Dorfsman that contributes a visual perspective to the different textures and states of water in different contexts in the current moment. The publication also contains useful advice about the care and responsible use of water.

This publication was distributed for free to the teachers and parents who attended the exhibition. Once the activity in the museum had ended, packets of copies were sent to the libraries of the neighborhood's 14 public schools, as well as coffee shops, local collectives, and projects promoting reading and ecological regeneration. (J.O. and R.C.)

## La Dalia: Un mercado con tradición en la Santa María la Ribera

March 2017



*La Dalia: A Market with Tradition in Santa María la Ribera* speaks to children, based on notes and stories created by Roxanna Erdman and Manuel Monroy, drawing from direct observations in the La Dalia local market. The book's stories seek to emphasize and value the ethical decisions endorsed by our consumption—what we buy and who we buy it from—as well as highlight the wealth of our food patrimony, its nutritional quality, along with the human values that underlie and are created in each economic exchange.

This book tells us why neighborhood markets are a key theme in the cultural discussion on how we forge the human fabric of our environment. The defense of the countryside, of nature, of justice, and the quality of all citizens, greatly depend on the economic vitality of the local markets and the small producers who make them possible. They also wholly depend on our individual decisions as consumers.

The stallholders at La Dalia Market each received a copy, as well as nearby fruit and vegetable vendors. The book was also given to the neighborhood's elementary schools, community libraries, residents with small children, and attendees to the 5th Encounter with the Earth; it also served as material for the summer workshop, **The Land, the Vendor, and the Table**, which took place in 2017. (J.O. and R.C.)



# Designing Prototypes with Collaborative Tools

Santa María Experimenta

This project responded to the concerns of a mixed group of neighbors who were looking for a platform from which to convert their worries about the neighborhood into concrete projects and actions.

The project was designed at the beginning of 2018 based on the initiative of an interdisciplinary collective made up of people with different experiences of laboratories of citizenship innovation, prototypes, and collective intelligences. This group included: David Gómez from Medialab-Prado; Montserrat Núñez from Medialab-MX; Paola Ricarte; and Lesly Cardoso and Violeta Chéret from Ciudades que aprenden. They, along with the **Saberes** team from inSite/Casa Gallina, adapted several of their own formats and methodologies, intertwining them with other strategies linked to inSite/Casa Gallina. The format included an open invitation to neighbors that had an idea, a project in the making, or some concern about the neighborhood that was a problem they wished to resolve collectively. Twenty-two projects were registered, they were then filtered through a process of assemblies and consultations with the promoters and other external observers until five finalists were chosen to move on to the experimental prototype laboratory phase. These five initiatives were opened up for discussion at a meeting of the entire community in Santa María la Ribera. Over the course of a month, a group of fifty neighbors, promoters, collaborators, and specialized mentors met at Casa Gallina to design the five prototypes to be implemented. (D.H.)







# Raising Awareness about the Flow

Printed Posters

As part of the circulation platform of **Saber**es six posters were produced with information about important issues related to everyday life in the neighborhood. The posters were distributed and displayed in local businesses, buildings, and public spaces in the area. Their presence at these locations encouraged conversations and debates between neighbors. The posters presented concise information on important everyday themes in the neighborhood, such as buying from local businesses, citizen participation, communal living as neighbors, green spaces, and a reflection about the deeply rooted and hidden presence of racism in everyday life. (J.O.)







Todo respira

NO ESTACIONARSE

190

Sabino 190, Santa María la Ribera



# Actions and Programs: A Chronology

Here we list all the programs implemented by inSite/Casa Gallina between 2014 and 2018. They are grouped according to the three programmatic platforms: **Saberes (Knowledges)**, **Synergies**, and **Co-participations**. The list includes the name of the workshop or activity, date, coordinator or facilitator, and the number of participant neighbors. In the case of the **Co-participations**, a brief description of the process as well as its complete fact sheet are included. (J.O.)

## SABERES (Knowledges)

**Saberes** is an educational platform, which includes both a multimedia and bibliographic reference collection, as well as a training program—including courses and workshops—focused on education or professional motivations that is targeted toward specific groups. The contents of **Saberes** seek to take advantage of the already existing circuits and movements of information in the neighborhood, with the goal of circulating shared knowledges and thematic bodies that are of interest to the community. The courses and workshops, as well as other events and activities in spaces and/or locales in the area, are focused on their impact on the group's economic and social performance. **Saberes** seeks to influence the community's everyday critical consciousness, as well as to stimulate alternative economic models, whether through the Casa Gallina's garden and/or kitchen, or through La Dalia Market or family businesses in the neighborhood.

## Vegetable Garden

The **Vegetable Garden** is one of the programs that defines inSite/Casa Gallina's general profile, due to the fact that it brings together many of the project's research fields and lines of action, such as promoting a sense of belonging and responsibility for everyday

actions; and encouraging, through a sustainable activity, ecological regeneration and making a contribution to food sovereignty. Through an ongoing public program, the vegetable garden seeks to generate experiences, reflections, and dialogues that can influence participants' economies and food consumption habits.

## 2015

### Vegetable Garden workshop: Urban Agriculture

April–July

Instructor: Mauricio Badillo

Participants: 12 neighbors

Herbalist Workshop

September–December

Instructors: Dante Aguilar, Mauricio Badillo,

Mariana Luján, Miriam Mora, and Reyna Osuna

Participants: 20 neighbors

## 2016

### Natural Cosmetics Workshop

January 11–March 17

Instructors: Marisol Torres

Participants: 18 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the participants agreed to produce 18 liters of sanitizing gel to be distributed free of charge among street food vendors.

## Introduction to Gardening with Hydroponics (3 workshops)

April–September

Instructors: Mauricio Badillo and Mariana Luján

Participants: 40 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the participants organized the distribution of crops in the neighborhood, which consisted of handing out lettuce shoots, which had been germinated, transplanted, and cultivated by participants, in the Alameda park.

## Getting to Know the Garden (Children's Summer Workshop)

Date: Group 1. Ages 4–7. July 25–29

Group 2. Ages 8–10. August 1–5

Group 3. Ages 10–12. August 8–12

Group 4. Mixed ages. August 15–19

Instructors: Ketzali Arreola and Mauricio Badillo with support from Miriam Mora and Alina Hernández

Participants: 60 girls and boys from neighborhood public schools

## Urban Agriculture Workshop: Growing Winter Vegetable

October 22–December 3

Instructor: Mauricio Badillo

Participants: 20 neighbors

## 2017

### Urban Gardening Workshop: Spring season Garden products exchange network

February–June

Instructor: Mauricio Badillo in collaboration with Francisco Ibáñez

Participants: 24 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the participants met to create a network for exchanging garden produce. Each participant agreed to give the group germinated seeds, compost, or space in their homes to grow various plants.

## Ecological Cleaning Products Workshop

March–April

Instructor: Javier Chapado

Participants: 18 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the participants produced disinfectant capsules for bathrooms which were distributed to food preparation establishments in the area.

## Hydroponics Workshop

July–September

Instructor: Mariana Luján

Participants: 16 neighbors

## Urban Gardening Workshop: Winter Season

August–September

Instructor: Lourdes Cruz Terán

Participants: 16 neighbors

## Planting and Harvesting: Workshop on Gardens in Community Spaces

November–December

Instructor: Armando Volterrani

Participants: 12 neighbors

Participants adapted collective spaces for growing food, facilitating local residents' access to public and neighborhood spaces.

## 2018

### Advanced Urban Gardening Workshop

January–to date

Instructor: Lourdes Cruz Terán

Participants: 24 neighbors to date

As a form of giving back, the participants rehabilitated the planters on Santa María la Ribera Street, between the Eje 1 Salvador Díaz Mirón and planted marigold seeds. They prepared several herbal and hygiene products that they gave away at Salón Huev@.

## Clean Water: Ecological Cleaning Products Workshop

February–April

Instructor: Javier Chapado

Participants: 16 neighbors

As a form of giving back, liquid soap was exchanged for burnt oil with neighboring food-business owners.

## Kitchen Herbalist Workshop

February–May

Instructor: Sami Esfahani

Participants: 19 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the participants created a card holder with technical cards about medicinal ingredients and their uses that they distributed and explained at Salón Huev@.

## Learning from Vegetable Garden 1

May–June

Instructor: Mauricio Badillo

Participants: 17 neighbors

## Learning from Vegetable Garden 2

July–August

Instructor: Armando Volterrani

Participants: 11 neighbors

## The School is the Garden: Workshop about agriculture and the environment at the República de Cuba elementary school

September–December

Instructors: Fernanda Poblete and Huitzil A.C.

Participants: 90 students from the República de Cuba elementary school

The workshops' act of giving back to the community: the girls and boys who participated in the workshops on agriculture and resilience during the last quarter of 2018, along with their family members, developed and threw seed bombs in neighborhood garden boxes to promote urban reforestation.

## Open Kitchen

The **Open Kitchen** is understood as an essential platform for creating dynamics of integration among the groups that frequent Casa Gallina. It offers an optimal location for critical reflection and collective action about everyday practices that are linked not only to the culture and creativity inscribed in culinary art, but that principally focus on the importance of rethinking habits of food consumption, as well as valuing the social rituals and forms of political and economic participation that are established around food.

## 2014

### Open Kitchen Session 1 / Handmade salsa workshop

November 17

Instructor: Elena Reygadas

Participants: 30 food business proprietors

### Open Kitchen Session 2 / Salad Workshop

December 6

Instructor: Alvaro Ramos

Participants: 10 food business proprietors

## 2015

### Open Kitchen Session 3 / Workshop on Soups and Broths

January 25

Instructors: Niki Nakasawa and nutritionist Katia García

Participants: 12 food business proprietors

### Open Kitchen Session 4 / Lenten Menu Workshop

February 28

Instructors: Álvaro Ramos and Mauricio Badillo

Participants: 13 food business proprietors



## Open Kitchen Session 5 / Workshop on Side Dishes

April 25  
Instructors: Álvaro Ramos y Mauricio Badillo  
Participants: 14 food business proprietors

## Open Kitchen Session 6 / Pasta Workshop

May 30  
Instructors: Chef Zahie Telléz and nutritionist Fiorella Espinosa  
Participants: 12 food business proprietors

## Open Kitchen Session 7 / Pastry Workshop

July 4  
Instructors: Chef Ilse, Ezra Aguilar and María del Rocío Flores Torres  
Participants: 14 food business proprietors

## Open Kitchen Session 8 / Summer Menu Workshop

July 25  
Instructors: Diego Insunza Kahlo  
Participants: 13 food business proprietors

## Open Kitchen Session 9 / Workshop on unusual dishes with beans

August 25  
Instructor: Ailyn Sánchez  
Participants: 12 food business proprietors

## Open Kitchen Session 10 / Workshop on dishes with chilies

September 26  
Instructor: Álvaro Ramos  
Participants: 13 food business proprietors

As a form of giving back for the entire Open Kitchen cycle, the participants catered a shared meal in the Casa Yolia.

## 2016

### Business Management Support Program

April 12–November 15  
Coordinators: Iván Icara Salicrú and Elena Reygadas

## Open conversations

From April 12 to September 27

Session 1. Planning and anticipation or food businesses  
April 12

Instructor: Iván Icara Salicrú  
Participants: 23 food business proprietors

Session 2. Identity and image in a food business  
May 3  
Instructors: Jorge Lestrade and Rogelio Vázquez  
Participants: 21 food business proprietors

Session 3. Menu pricing and standardization  
May 17  
Instructors: Lula Martín del Campo  
Participants: 19 food business proprietors

Session 4. Work habits in food businesses  
May 31  
Instructors: Ilse and Ezra Aguilar (Bo Pasticería)  
Participants: 17 food business proprietors

Session 5. Calculation for the cost of recipes  
June 14  
Instructor: Iván Icara Salicrú  
Participants: 14 food business proprietors

Session 6. The neighborhood food business and culinary heritage  
August 30  
Instructor: Álvaro Ramos  
Participants: 13 food business proprietors

Session 7. Solidarity gastronomy  
September 12  
Instructor: Alejandro Souza  
Participants: 16 food business proprietors

Session 8. Eating like a mule-driver: Selling food without a fixed locale  
September 27  
Instructors: Mariana Blanco and Jorge Linares  
Participants: 16 food business proprietors

## Direct advising on the premises

April 12–November 15  
Led by: Iván Icara Salicrú  
Participants: 6 food businesses: Bello Café, Bodet Bookstore and coffee shop, Zukeros, Estanquillo el 32, El rincón de Ray, La Focachería

## Cooking and Nutrition for Parents and Children

October 29–November 26  
Instructors: Tania Hidalgo and students from the College of Gastronomy  
Participants: 18 parents and children

## 2017

### Healthy Food Workshop

February–March  
Instructor: Álvaro Andrade  
Collaborator: Fiorella Espinosa  
Participants: 15 neighbors

### Workshop on Cooking with Plants from the Market

May 9–June 13  
Instructor: Raúl Armando Gómez  
Participants: 16 neighbors

### The Land, the Vendor, and the Table (Summer Workshop for Children)

July–August, 2017  
Group 1 Children from 5 to 7 years old  
July 24–28  
Group 2 Children from 8 to 9 years old  
July 31–August 4  
Group 3 Children from 10 to 12 years old  
August 7–11  
Group 4 Mixed ages  
August 14–18  
Instructors: José Camargo and Annette Rivera with support from Óscar Nagore  
Participants: 75 children from neighborhood public elementary schools.

As a form of giving back, parents and children collectively prepared marmalade following one of the recipes created during the course, and they gave it to the Alis community soup kitchen, which serves people from the neighborhood with low economic resources.

### Preserves Workshop

July–November  
Instructors: Armando Gómez, Álvaro Andrade, Ailyn Sánchez, Miguel Iwadare and Miguel Ramos.  
Participants: 45 tenants from the neighborhood

## Cooking in Times of Austerity

September 30  
Instructor: Álvaro Andrade  
Participants: 12 neighbors

## Healthy Cooking Workshops I and II

September–November  
Instructor: Armando Gómez  
Collaborator: Fiorella Espinosa  
Participants: 32 neighbors

## 2018

### Creative Cooking with Unusual Vegetables Workshop

January–April  
Instructor: Armando Gómez  
Participants: 16 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the participants invented recipes and distributed cookbooks in the Dalia Market.

### Workshop on Cooking with Ingredients from the Milpa, Quelites and Proteins

June–July  
Instructor: Andrés Chávez  
Participants: 15 neighbors

### Workshop on Conscious Cooking and Eating for Teenagers

July–August  
Instructors: Andrés Chávez, Armando Gómez and Sami Esfahani  
Participants: 19 youth between the ages of 15 and 25, students at the Centro Cultural y Capacitación Integral A.C.

### Workshop on Traditional Cooking from Milpa Alta

August  
Instructors: Calpulli Tecalco A.C. (Angélica Palma, Rosalba Rodríguez and Carmen Rodríguez)  
Participants: 15 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the participants distributed a cookbook with information about ingredients from the cornfield to close neighbors.

## Cooking Workshop for Young People: Cooking with Neighbors

August–September

Instructor: Horacio Aragón (from the Los sabores del alma restaurant)

Participants: 17 neighbors between the ages of 15 and 25

## Offering Quelites at the Table Every Day: Cooking with Neighbors

October–November

Instructor: Jorge Álvarez (from the La casona del sabor restaurant)

Participants: 18 neighbors

The cooking with neighbors workshops and the conversation and workshop program “Eating Close, Eating Together,” resulted in a group of neighbors who came together to think about a form of giving back. They decided to prepare food for the children of the evening shift of the school Ezequiel A. Chavez. Angélica Palma directed the activity to prepare a recipe for doughless tamales, made up mostly of nopales.

## Training Program

The training program consists of the design and implementation of technical and theoretical training courses and workshops, whose contents are determined through a process of evaluating participants’ needs, motivations, and professions. Tools to collect qualitative and quantitative data are used and these help discover those fields of interest that have the potential to become consistent learning processes. This content is defined and updated through an uninterrupted process of conversation with the community. The program’s objective is to facilitate a training platform for specific groups and to provide useful tools that are able to improve the economy, as well as the everyday environment and quality of life, of the participants. By being implemented in everyday lives, the knowledges and skills acquired by the groups also have an exponential effect within the neighborhood fabric.

## 2015

### Audio Production and Editing Course

July–August

Instructor: Félix Blume

Collaborators: Doppler Servicios/ Estudio 30/10 and Arte Sónico

Participants: 15 youth between the ages of 15 and 20 years old. The course was taught due to the interest expressed by co-participants in the group that worked with Erick Meyenberg, after the process of working with the artist had ended.

### Video Documentary Production and Editing Course

August

Instructor: Manuel Trujillo “Morris”

Collaborators: Ricardo Nicolayevsky and Michael Ramos-Araizaga

Participants: 13 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the attendees made a short documentary about the neighborhood and some of its characters.

### Graphic Design Course I

September–October

Instructor: Santiago Solís

Collaborators: Jorge Garnica and editorial illustrator David Nieto

Participants: 13 neighbors

As a form of giving back, the attendees made posters to raise awareness about shared problems in the neighborhood.

### Graphic Design Course II

November–December

Instructors: David Nieto and Jorge Mendoza

Collaborators: Francisco Mateos, Luis Miguel Leon and Ricardo Salas

Participants: 12 neighbors

## 2016

### Graphic Identity Design Workshop

May–July

Instructor: Francisco Mateos

Participants: 9 designers from the neighborhood and 9 local businesses owners

As a form of giving back, the attendees designed graphic advertising materials for several neighborhood food businesses, working closely with them to define content that would respect the business owners’ sensibilities and identities.

### Technical Support for Senior Citizens (3 workshops)

May–December

Taught by neighbors:

Alejandro Camus, Margarita Morales, Eduardo Rojano, Alejandra Hernández

Participants: 18 senior citizens

### The Thinking and Feeling Machine: Children’s Film and Animation Workshop

September 24–November 12

Instructor: Itzel Martínez

Collaborators: Ketzali Arreola and Liz Meville

Participants: 16 children between the ages of 8 and 12

### Introduction to Audiovisual Production Workshop

September 25–December 5

Instructor: Isabel Muñoz

Participants: 12 neighbors

### Videogames Workshop

October 4–November 29

Instructor: Eurídice Cabañes

Participants: 17 neighbors

### Electronic Arts and Crafts Workshop

October 29–November 19

Instructor: Constanza Piña

Participants: 22 neighbors

### The Dignified Gaze: Visual Composition and Harmony Workshop

November 9–December 7

Instructor: Ricardo Salas

Participants: 14 neighbors between 17 and 30 years

## 2017

### Participatory Journalism Workshop

March–July

Participants: 35 neighbors

Module 1: Introduction to Journalistic Language

Instructor: Raúl Anibal Sánchez

Module 2: Heroes and Common Events

Instructor: Carlos Acuña

Module 3: Graphic Narrative

Instructor: Iván Mayorquín

Module 4: Cooperative Writing

Instructor: Vivian Abenshushan

Module 5: Writings and Images

Instructor: Verónica Gerber

In return, several neighbors published their texts in the community newspaper *Ribera/Rivera*.

### Craft your Neighborhood: Video Game Workshop for Children and Teenagers

March 4

Instructors: Mercedes Torres, Eurídice Cabañes and Ars Games

Participants: 14 neighbors between the ages of 7 and 14

### Craft your Neighborhood: Video Game Workshop for Parents and Children

September 30–November 25

Instructors: Paola Flores and Silvére Jarrot

Participants: 34 parents and children

As a form of giving back, the children put up informative posters about some of the tree species in the Kiosco Morisco square.

### Graphic Narrative and Self-Publication Workshop

October 11–December 6



Instructors: Berenice Medina and Santiago Grijalva  
Participants: 13 neighbors

In return, participants produced an anthology that collected comics, essays, photographs, infographics, and illustrated texts that was presented to the group in January 2018.

### Digital Migrants: Technical Support for Senior Citizens

October–December

Instructors: young neighbors: Oscar Nagore, Viridiana Gamiño, Lorena Jáuregui, Diana Luna, Yazzint Pantoja, and Alejandro Amezcua  
Participants: 63 elderly neighbors

## 2018

### Designing Life: Sustainable Urban Design Workshop

January 17-18

Instructor: Elías Cattán

Participants: 12 neighbors, architects, and urban planners

This workshop was held as part of the exhibition Living With Water: Getting to Know the Valley of Mexico River Basin, that took place in the Geology Museum.

### Digital Migrants: Technical Support from Youth Neighborhood

Due to the high demand, this was turned into an on-going activity within the programming and a larger call was generated both for participants and for young facilitators.

Instructors: Dian Juárez, Yazzint Pantoja, Mónica Marentes, Alejandra Godínez, Emiliano Mendoza and Miguel Sierra  
Participants: 76 elderly neighbors

### Creative Tutoring for Elementary School Students: Homework ... what's behind it?

March–May

Taught by: Anette Rivera, Tracy Cheveroni and Angelina Martínez

Participants: 31 children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades from neighborhood schools

### Blue planet. Exploring the House that We Share (Summer Workshop for Children)

July–August, 2018

Group 1. Ages 5–8. July 23–27

Group 2. Ages 8–10. July 30–August 3

Group 3. Ages 10–12. August 6–10

Group 4. Mixed ages. August 13–17

Taught by: José Camargo, Annette Rivera, Angelina Martínez

Participants: 64 children from neighborhood public schools

As a form of giving back, the children and their families took care of harvesting the garden, they classified the plants and their nutritional benefits, and they gave them to their neighbors in nearby stores and locales.

### Boys and Girls' Writing School

April

Designed by: Roxanna Erdman

Participants: 12 children

### Clothing Maintenance Workshop

May–June

Instructors: Fernanda Cué and Mariana Villeda

Participants: 36 neighbors

### Santa María Experimenta

April–July

Given by: Colectivo Experimenta Mexico

Participants: 53 neighbors

### Spread the Word! Sound Engineering Workshop

October–November

Given by: Andres Vargas "Ruzo"

and the Puentes team

Participants: 15 neighbors

### Neighborhood Explorers: Disaster Response Training for Parents and Children

November

Given by: Aisa Serrano, Andrea Muñoz and Stephanie García

Participants: 12 parents and their children

## Encounters

This series of activities serves to formulate, present, and discuss common concerns among neighbors. The program is proposed by the community itself and seeks to create a space for collective reflection, recreational experiences, and neighborhood integration. The encounter programs include neighborhood conversations, film festivals and commentary, matinees and short workshops proposed by the community.

## 2015

### Internet Radio Transmission: Actions for Regenerating Green Areas in Santa María la Ribera

Radio broadcast over the Internet (Digital Culture Center) for Earth Day. With participation from several local agents related to practices of ecological regeneration.

March 21

Facilitated by: Diego Aguirre, Abraham Bello, Sergio Corona, Miriam Caraveo and Mauricio Badillo

Participants: 15 neighbors

### Introductory Talk on the Techniques of Growing and Preparing Edible Mushrooms, Herbal Medicine, and Natural Cosmetics

Date: July 22

Instructor: Biologist Gabriela Romero

Participants: 18 neighbors

### Projection of the Documentary Bones Brigade. An Autobiography.

Date: March 19

Participants: 18 youth who practice skateboarding in the Kiosco Morisco square

## 2016

### Film Cycles and Projections with Commentary

The film cycles are proposed by neighbors who take responsibility for programming movies that speak to their interests that could generate collective reflection over some common concern due to their theme.

### Film Cycle: Ripe Fruits are the Sweetest

March 9–April 6

Coordinated by: Margarita Morales

Participants: 15 neighbors

### Film Cycle: Common Hero, Cinematographic Reflections on Everyday Life

April 13–May 4

Facilitators: Isabel Muñoz and Gibrán Ramírez Portela

Collaborators: Alejandro Guzmán, Itzel Lara, Alejandro Gerber, Claudia Sainte-Luce and Sonia Franco

Participants: 40 neighbors

### Ways of Seeing: Projection of Short Films

August 31

Facilitator: Isabel Muñoz

Participants: 13 neighbors

### Neighborhood Conversations

This series of dialogues was launched by neighbors working on projects aimed at creating communal benefits for the neighborhood. They were invited to Casa Gallina to voice their concerns and the motivation behind their initiatives in order to see how their impact could be bolstered by an input of help from yet more neighbors.

### From the Bush to the Cup: The Present and Future of Coffee in Mexico

February 25

Coordinator: Abraham Bello

Participants: 21 neighbors, including owners of local coffee shops

## Multi-barter Networks Generating Social Value through Exchange

April 23

Facilitators: Emma Villanueva and Edith Caballero de Multitrucke Mixhuca

Participants: 18 neighbors

## Reading, what for? The Importance of Neighborhood Reading Groups for the Community

May 28

Facilitators: Perla Espinola, Marta Garrido, María Teresa Ferriz and Bernardo Plascencia

Participants: 14 neighbors

## Stories for Enjoying the Neighborhood

July 16–August 6

Coordinated by: Perla Espinola

Participants: 10 neighbors

## Imagining the City: Role-Playing

September 1

Coordinated by: Jorge Armando Ibarra

Participants: 14 neighbors

## Projection: *Everything is a Remix*

September 6

Participants: 14 neighbors

## Mapping Nature: Santa María la Ribera. Guided Tours on Recognizing Urban Trees

September 24 and October 1

Coordinated by: Lourdes Cruz Terán and Iván Pérez Samayoa

Participants: 19 neighbors

## 2017

### From the Plant to the Cup: Adopting Coffee Trees

May 11

Taught by: Abraham Bello and Jocelyn Ramos Salas

Participants: 25 owners of local coffee shops, who each adopted one of the plants cultivated for the co-participation project organized by Edgardo Aragón

## Mapping Nature: Walks Placing Signs about Local Trees

Date: May 23

Coordinated by: Estanquillo el 32: Lourdes Terán Cruz and Iván Pérez Samayoa

Participants: 12 neighbors

## 2018

### Film Cycle: The Community Is All of Us

June–July

Programmed by: Pavel Valdez

Participants: 43 neighbors

### Cycle: Film and the City

July–August

Programming: Silverio Jarrot and Paola Flores

Participants: 32 neighbors

### Conversations about Vegetable Gardens and the Environment

June–August

Rafael Mier “Mexican Corn”

Dante Aguilar “Harvesting Seeds: Rescuing Mexican Agri-food Diversity”

Lourdes Cruz Terán “Restoration of Urban Natural Spaces”

Javier Chapado “Forest schools”

Participants: 53 neighbors

### Matinee to Imagine a City with Abundant Clean Water

July 5

Instructor: Anette Rivera

Participants: 23 parents and children

### Raising Ecological Awareness Workshops for Parents and Children

June–August

Instructor: Huitzil, for a sustainable future A.C.

Participants: 34 parents and children

## SYNERGIES

**Synergies** groups a countless number of specific actions in the neighborhood web to create alliances and creative acts that have an impact

on the community's imagination, or that act as detonators for generating citizen consensus for local benefit. Likewise, **Synergies** promotes mutual aid initiatives and networks of economic and professional collaboration.

The mutual aid initiatives can encompass dissimilar fields of action or frameworks of collaboration, as well as processes of differing durations and forms of support, such as graphical interventions for local businesses' shutters, exhibitions at the Geology Museum, and the installation of community gardens, among others. The fundamental objective of **Synergies** is to encourage local economies to engage in a spirit of collaboration, mutual aid, and solidarity. This platform seeks to energize the neighborhood's social life, and the social efficiency and benefits that are provided as services within the neighborhood.

## 2015

### Neighborhood Bonding Experience

Coordinator: Fernando García Dory

Participants: Rafael Maya, Alfonso Badillo, Mario Cordero (+), Felipe Solís, Fernando Sandoval, Ing. Humberto Yosef, Lic. Arturo Vera, Miguel Soto, Porfirio Rodríguez (Pillo), Gaspar Miranda, Fortino García, Carlos Paz (el Yuca), Gregorio (el Güero) and David Contreras

Fernando García Dory worked with a group of neighbors and friends who had solid affective bonds to collaboratively design and produce a short pop-up book; the final product integrated the life narratives of the people who made up the group and their dynamics of mutual support and internal cooperation.

## 2016

### Support and Installation of Community Vegetable Garden

September–October 2016

Instructor: Lourdes Cruz

Location: In the neighborhood

Participants: 10 people. Residents of the Torres Bodet 233 property, as well as residents of surrounding streets

## 2017

### Support and Installation of School Vegetable Garden

From February 7 to March 14

Coordination: Lourdes Cruz Terán

Location: Elementary school República de Cuba  
Participants: 36 Second-grade students from the school. 2 professors

### Imagining Biocities (Booth at the 5th Encounter with the Land)

Date: April 2

Instructors: Ketzali Arreola, Iván Pérez Samayoa and Lourdes Cruz

Participants: 800 adults, 90 children assisted in tree placement tours and children's workshops in the booth

### Support and Installation of Community Gardens in Neighborhood Domestic Spaces

November–December

Coordinated by: Armando Volterrani

Participants: 12 neighbors

Collective spaces were made suitable for growing food, facilitating access to public and neighborhood spaces for local residents in three different spaces in the neighborhood: el Reloj Bakery, the Edificio Naranja on the corner of Carpio Street and at one participant's home.

## Prestaduría vecinal

### A Solidarity Initiative for Sharing Tools and More

Date: Since June 2017

Hours: Tuesday 3–6 pm, Thursday 10am–1pm, Saturdays 11am–2pm

Participants: 201 people enrolled, 588 tools and utensils loaned

## Salón Huev@

Date: Starting in July 2017

Hours: Monday–Thursday from 3pm to 6pm, Fridays and Saturdays 11am–2pm

In 2018, the **Salón Huev@** focused on specific themes related to certain activities:



# 2018

## Responsible Clothing Consumption

From July to August, the Salón Huev@ space was used to think about the importance of conscious consumption and the clothing industry. Several neighbors participated in a program of workshops, film cycles, and talks.

## Open Sessions on Patching and Darning by Hand

July–August  
Instructors: Fernanda Cué and Mariana Villeda  
Participants: 19 neighbors

## Open Sessions on Making Bags from Recycled Clothing

July–August  
Instructor: Mariana Villeda  
Participants: 23 neighbors

## Film Cycle “Clothing, Industry, and Us”

August  
Instructor: Emiliano Villalba  
Participants: 17 neighbors

## You're Dressing Yourself Already?

August  
Instructor: Tracy Cheveroni  
Participants: 20 parents and their children

## Film Cycle “What We Wear, What We Say”

Date: August–September  
Instructor: Georgina Navarrete  
Participants: 23 neighbors

## Will You Let me Take a Photo?

September  
Led by: Dorian Ulises López (@mexicano\_mx)  
Participants: 18 neighbors

## Eating Close, Eating Together Program of Cooking Workshops and Talks

Between October and November, Miguel Iwadare coordinated a program of talks, film projections, and cooking classes in which people reflected on the social rituals related to food and the sustainable exercise of culinary traditions in the

Valley of Mexico, such as cultivation in milpas and chinampas.

October–November  
Led by: Miguel Iwadare, Calpulli Tecalco A.C., Fernando Chiapa  
Participants: 22 neighbors

## Eating Together: Film Cycle about Food and Affect

October–November  
Coordinators: Miguel Iwadare, Horacio Aragón, Gibrán Ramírez Portela  
Participants: 32 neighbors

## Salón Huev@/Poxco

The artist Edith Medina designed and led a program focused on critical reflections about the excessive use of plastics and the alternative of bioplastics that could help counteract contamination.

## Film Projection: *Oceans: The Mystery of Disappeared Plastic*

November  
Coordinator: Edith Medina  
Participants: 23 neighbors

## Workshop on the Production of Starches, Flours, and Bioplastics

November  
Instructor: Edith Medina  
Participants: 15 neighbors

## Matinee of Short Films for Children

November  
Led by: María Cristina Torres  
Participants: 5 parents and children

## Natural Cosmetics Workshop

November  
Instructors: Edith Medina and María Cristina Torres  
Participants: 19 neighbors

## Workshop on Making Natural Glues for Use at Home and School

November  
Instructor: Andrea Arias  
Participants: 18 neighbors

## Friends Dining on a Blind Date

Ongoing program that occurs the first Tuesday of every month. Started in October 2017. 12 neighbors attend each dinner

## From 5 to 7

An ongoing program that occurs once every two months. Started in February 2018. 12 neighbors and one guest from outside the neighborhood attend every event  
Guests: Luis Lopezlera, Angélica Palma, Oscar Hagerman, Martha Turok and Enrique Ortiz; and in the 16 to 22 age-range category, Gabriela Morales

# 2018

## Water and Soil: Resources for the Life and Benefit of All (Booth at the 6th Encounter with the Earth)

Date: April 22  
Instructors: José Camargo Ángeles and Angélica Cortés  
Participants: Approximately 1,000 attendees to the workshops and guided visits to the Geology Museum

## Visual Identities for Neighborhood Businesses

# 2014–2015 (Stage 1)

Coordinated by: Clarisa Moura  
November 2014–October 2015  
4 businesses + (2 light boxes) Bello Café/ José Daniel Morales, Family sewing workshop. Sastrería Marilú/ Joze Daniel Morales, Distribuidora Gilly. Beauty products/ Mora Díez, Specialized services. Repair and maintenance of domestic appliances/ Colectivo Zoveck, Nisi. Nail's Clinique/ Hugo Mendoza, Anteojería Metropolitana/ Ana Laura Hernández

# 2016 (Stage 2)

Starting with this stage, the project was coordinated by inSite/Casa Gallina team.  
May 2016, 8 businesses: Cleaning products Regis / Karen Vega, Hairdresser Fresno / Carmen Camacho, PC Guru. Your computational guide / Ana Laura Hernández, Pepe Pollos. Roasted chicken/ Karen Vega, Gaxel Estética/ Alejandro García, GDE Publicity. Printing and digital printing/ Andrés Ramírez, ORG. Specialists in repairing household appliances / Heby Lucas, Tamalería Cintli/ Jimena Vidal

## October (Stage 3)

8 businesses: High Fiber Bread. Bakery/ Xiadani Calderón, Pastry Shop Hidalgo/ Miguel Angelo Sánchez, Star Dental. Dentist Office/ Lorena Jáuregui, Tailor Shop La Esperanza/ Juan Pablo Guzmán, Top BB. A whole world of items for clowns and costumes for children and adults/ Iván Álvarez, Grinders and Tortillas Shops La Dalia/ Heby Lucas, Snack Bar La Hidalguense/ Cristina García, Pharmacy Morisko/ Alejandra Torales

## 2017 (Stage 4)

July 2017, 6 businesses + 1 stand within La Dalia Market: Servicio Morales/ Gibrán Turón, Laundry Service Express One/ Karina Oropeza, Maintenance service San José/ Cynthia Cerón, Stand Las Cazuelas/ Lorena Jáuregui, Estética Yoss/ Luz Yépiz, Golden Spa y Golden Salón. Unisex Nails and Beauty Salon/ José Daniel Morales, Economical kitchen Esta es mi tierra/ Gibrán Turón

## 2018 (Stage 5)

April 2018, 5 businesses: Fonda Gourmet Juliz/ Mariana Aranda, Planchaduría Mirry/ Sonia Pérez, Tortas Tío Pepe/ León Barrios, Farmacia San Rafael/ Larissa Loza, Fonda Los sabores del alma/ Rocio Ameyali & Ángel Ramón Flores

## Exhibitions at the Geology Museum

### 2016

Universe 4 - Zoo 1: A Cabinet of the Animal Kingdom (exhibition)

From February 2–April 3, 2016

Creative co-participation: Ulises Figueroa and María Teresa Ferriz

Educational dynamics: Ketzali Arreola and the museum's host team.

Location: Geology Museum

Participants: 800 attendees. 7 public schools.

### 2017

A Minimal Botanical Atlas of Santa María la Ribera (Exhibition)

From February 15–May 14 2017

Research: Estanquillo el 32 Collective (Lourdes Cruz Terán and Iván Pérez Samayoa)

Illustrations: Mariana Magdaleno

Educational dynamics: Ketzali Arreola and the museum's host team.

Location: Geology Museum

888 attendees: 702 students, 60 teachers, 126 adults. 5 public schools.

Living with Water: Getting to Know the Valley of Mexico River Basin (exhibition)

November 2017–March 2018

Research: Elías Cattán

Photo essay: Alex Dorfsman

Activation: Angélica Cortés, Geology Museum's host team

Location: Geology Museum

Participants: 1342 attendees (students, parents, and teachers). 6 public schools.

### 2018

Dust: A Critical Reflection on the Impact of Mining in Mexico (exhibition)

From April 16–August 18, 2018

A Miguel Fernández de Castro project

Activations: Angélica Cortés, José Camargo

Ángeles, host team, Geology Museum

Location: Geology Museum

Participants: 623 attendees. 4 public schools.

### Allende-Apollo XI

From December 4–March 10, 2018

A Fernando Bryce project

Activations: Cecilia Pompa

Location: Geology Museum

Screen-printing: Arturo Negrete (Taller 75°

Grados Color)

## Publications

### 2015

The Book of Pets

Texts: Bernardo Esquinca

Photographs: Eunice Adorno

Print run: 2,000 copies. Distributed free of cost to participants in the book, neighborhood public schools, attendees at Casa Gallina's workshops, coffee shops, offices, and local collectives.

Iconoclastas, Chronicle and Tools for Collective Mapping

November 2015

Print run: 2,000 copies. Distributed free of cost among participants in the mapping project, 12 public schools in the neighborhood, attendees at Casa Gallina's workshops, local collectives, coffee shops and offices, neighbors interested in the issue of real estate speculation.

### 2016-18

Rivera Ribera. Periodic Publication with Community Participation

August 2016–March 2018 (10 issues)

Editors: Raúl Anibal Sánchez Vargas and Rodrigo Castillo

Print run: 2,000 copies per issue (20,000 total)

Participants: 87 collaborators, distributed free of cost in 52 sites in the neighborhood.

### 2017

La Dalia. A Market with Tradition in Santa María la Ribera

Text: Roxanna Erdman

Illustrations: Manuel Monroy

Print run: 1,000 copies

Distributed free of cost in 6 public schools, to summer school attendees in 2017, in 300 sites in La Dalia market, and to residents with children under 12 years of age.

A Minimal Botanical Atlas of Santa María la Ribera

Research: Estanquillo el 32 Collective (Lourdes Cruz Terán and Iván Pérez Samayoa)

Illustrations: Mariana Magdaleno

Print run: 1,000 copies

Distributed free of charge in 15 public schools (6 elementary schools, and 9 high schools and preparatory schools), 100 locations in La Dalia Market, to attendees of the garden workshops, to 7 local organizations and collectives.

Living with Water: Getting to Know the Valley of Mexico River Basin

Research: Elías Cattán

Photo essay: Alex Dorfsman

Print run: 1,000 copies

Distributed free of charge in 15 public schools (6 elementary schools, and 9 high schools and preparatory schools), attendees at workshops about ecological products, 12 local organizations and collectives.

### 2018

Geology for Earthlings

Texts: Roxanna Erdman

Illustrations: Ulises Mora

Print run: 1,000 copies

Distributed free of charge in 20 schools (9 elementary schools, 7 high schools and 4 preparatory schools); 12 local organizations and collectives; 60 attendees to the 2018 summer courses; neighbors in general.

Neighborhood Flavors: Culinary Identity in Santa María la Ribera

Text: Miguel Iwadare

Photography: Natalia Gaia

Print run: 1,000 copies

Distributed free of charge in 25 food businesses and stands; 20 schools (9 elementary schools, 7 high schools, 4 preparatory schools); 12 local organizations and collectives; neighbors in general.

Disaster Self-Organization Manual

Print run: 1000 copies

The copies were distributed for free at ten elementary, high, and preparatory schools in the area, as well as to the neighbors in general, who received five to ten copies per person for them to distribute among their close friends and family. The Workshop for Children: Organization in the Face of Disaster was designed based on this manual.



# CO-PARTICIPATIONS

This platform includes contextual interventions commissioned to artists and agents in residence. They were aimed at developing works of creative collaboration with specific groups in the neighborhood that were based on procedural dynamics of collective interest. The **Co-participations** are the result of research residencies and are materialized as processes of group dialogue, with the goal of creating an artistic piece or a cultural device in the medium or long term.

## The Wheel Bears No Resemblance To a Leg

*The Wheel Bears No Resemblance To a Leg*, **Erick Meyenberg** in collaboration with the Lobos marching band from the Colegio Hispanoamericano high school. The process took place between February 2014 and June 2016 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega.

During the co-participation process, training activities were carried out with the aim of expanding the abilities, creative faculties, and the aesthetic and cultural experiences of the members of the marching band. As the final act of that process, the group performed a type of flash mob in the Forum Buenavista shopping mall. A complex display of sound and choreography clearly represents the analogy between routines of power, military corporeal language, and the gears of the economic and social machine. For the resulting piece, Meyenberg made a video installation on three screens that contains the edited version of the different moments in which he worked with the group; it included the intervention in the mall and is a record of a series of actions that the marching band carried out in places such as the Monument to the Revolution, Tlatelolco, and the Colegio Hispanoamericano.

### Complete fact sheet for the piece:

*The Wheel Bears No Resemblance To a Leg*, 2014–16  
Video installation  
3-channel projection  
Length: 16' 8"  
**Artist:** Erick Meyenberg

Piece commissioned and produced by: inSite/ Casa Gallina, México, 2014–16.

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega/  
**Production coordinator:** Sergio Olivares/  
**Photography:** Julien Devaux, Katri Walker and Erick Meyenberg/  
**Editing:** Martha Uc and Erick Meyenberg/  
**Live sound recording:** Félix Blume and Raúl Locatelli/  
**Musical composition:** Alejandro Castañón/  
**Sound Design:** Félix Blume and Erick Meyenberg/  
**Choreographic design:** Nadia Lartigue and Esthel Vogrig/  
**Color correction:** Jorge Romo/  
**Costumes:** Adriana Olivera/  
**Production assistant:** Mariano Arribas/  
**Co-participants:** Antonio Tapia (Director of the Banda de Guerra Lobos), Ernesto Berumen Herrera, Abigail Díaz Gómez, Cassandra Itzel Gaona Hernández, Jaqueline Michelle Gutiérrez García, Julio César Hernández, Amanda Martínez Bordona, Leslie Mejía Ramos, Mauricio Morales Nolasco, Moises Morales Nolasco, Mariana Mudrow Bernal Ramírez, Axel Ortiz Moreno, Carolina Ortiz Ramírez, Karla Pech Sotelo, Natali Rodríguez, José Antonio Rodríguez Delgado, Diego Rodríguez Hernández, Luz Montserrat Rodríguez Ornelas, Alan Job Rubio González, Elisa Pilar Salazar Gaitan, Brenda Strempler Alcibar, Jassina Torres Kassab, Sebastián Varguez López, Gerardo Gabriel Victorino Gómez, Samanta Zagal Aquino, Arantza Zamora Esquivel (members of the Lobos marching band of the Colegio Hispanoamericano).  
**Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:** Alexander Apóstol, Héctor Bourges and Gerardo Suter

**We are grateful for support from:** Alexander Apóstol, Ander Azpiri, Héctor Bourges, Abraham Cababie, Lidia Camacho, Muna Cann, Graciela de la Torre, Arturo Delgado Fuentes, Daniel Garza Usabiaga, Gabriel Heads, Gerardo Hernández, Pamela Horita, Jorge Jiménez Rentería, Héctor López, Juan Meliá, José Luis Paredes, Horacio Peña Flores, Francisco Javier Rivas Mesa, Gerardo Suter, Jorge Vargas, Karina Vargas, the Costume Warehouse of the National Theater Coordination of National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA), Centro Cultural del Bosque, Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco, Colegio Hispanoamericano, Digital Dreams, Fonoteca Nacional, Grupo GICSA/ Plaza FORUM, University Contemporary Art Museum and the Chopo University Museum. This project was made possible thanks to support from the Jumex Contemporary Art Foundation.

## I Am Mandala

*I Am Mandala*. **Cadu** in collaboration with Las chicas de ayer, hoy y siempre dance club. The process was carried out between March 2014 and November 2016 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis.

*I Am Mandala* became an intimate ritual in which women from the dance club Las chicas de ayer, hoy y siempre unwound a large crocheted mandala while they danced to a choreography that was inspired by their favorite *danzones*. This co-participation process, which lasted for more than two years, saw the artist work with a group of elderly dancers. The resulting work was highly charged with strong emotions that significantly impacted each of the participants, causing them to reconsider the way they perceive themselves, as the construction of identities other than the established roles of grandmother, mother, wife. The resulting piece is a video installation that consists of 8'02" video and a second mandala crocheted as a remnant of the first.

### Complete information sheet for the piece:

*I Am Mandala*, 2014–16  
Video installation  
Length: 8'02"  
**Artist:** Cadu  
Piece commissioned and produced by: inSite/ Casa Gallina, México, 2014–16.  
**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis/  
**Production coordinators:** Sergio Olivares and Mariano Arribas/  
**Social service:** Rocío Sánchez/  
**Production of the woven mandala:** Tejiendo otro mundo Collective: Ana Karen San Emeterio, Claudia Isela Jaloma, María Margarita Bustos, Alma Origel, Andrea Anaya, Paola Orejarena, Sandra Iv. Porras, Edith Luján, Claudia Cruz and Esperanza Palomino/  
**Choreographic design:** Esthel Vogrig/  
**Main camera:** Katri Walker.  
Secondary camera: Paulina del Paso/  
**Live sound recording:** Félix Blume/  
**Photography:** Hardy Martínez/  
**Location:** Julio Castillo Theater (INBA)/  
**Musical improvisation for audio editing:** Darío Bernal Villegas (Percussions) and Ramón del Buey (Clarinet)/  
**Sound production and audio editing:** Demián Lara/  
**Additional sound material:** Félix Blume/  
Video editing: Martha Uc/  
**Co-participants:** Dance club Las chicas de ayer, hoy y siempre: teacher Juana María Urbina Esparza, Teresa Mendoza Hernández,

Gloria Hernández Moreno, María del Carmen Muñoz Lavalle, María Elena Rivera Sil (+), Rosario Rodríguez Moreno, Gloria Guadalupe Rangel Basurto, Delia Alcaraz Martínez, María Elena García Bedolla, Estela Ramírez Flores and Francisca Santamaría Sánchez.  
**Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:** Magali Lara, Galia Eibenschutz and Carlos Arias

**We are grateful for support from:** Marta Turok, Lydia Lavin, Magali Lara, Galia Eibenschutz, Carlos Arias, Juan Meliá (National Theater Coordination of INBA), Alfredo Castillo (Theater Coordination Julio Castillo) and María de la Luz González (Sastrería Marilú)

## Broken Teeth

*Broken Teeth*, **Mauricio Limón** in collaboration with Hannia Fernanda Colín Melo, Oscar Jesús Ocaña García, and Los Forasteros de la salsa dance group. The process was carried out between July 2014 and November 2015 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega.

The co-participation process included sessions for exchanging knowledge and learning between the co-participants in which they practiced improvisation and the creation of choreographic routines. These dynamics sought to provoke exchanges between dance and boxing, with the goal of enhancing the creative possibilities of both types of knowledge. As the culmination of this co-participation process, Limón invited the group members to film a series of improvisation sessions among the participants. The filmed material was edited to become the final piece that is shown as a two-screen video installation. As a closing event, the group was invited to the same theater where the filming occurred to see the final result of the piece.

### Complete fact sheet for the piece:

*Broken Teeth*, 2014–15  
Video HD/2K  
Two-channel projection  
Length: 17'26"  
**Artist:** Mauricio Limón  
Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/ Casa Gallina, Mexico, 2014–15  
**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega/  
**Production coordinator:** Sergio Olivares/  
**Lighting:** Diego García/  
**Photography:** Diego García, Marco

Casado/ **Editing:** Mauricio Limón/ **Live sound recording:** Axel Muñoz/ **Sound design:** Félix Blume/ **Fixed photography:** Fernando Etulain/ Color correction: Lisa Tillinger/ **Musical band:** Pascualex Contreras M./ **Production assistance:** Mariano Arribas/ **Costume Assistance:** Ilián Castañeda and Nancy Brown/ **Co-participants:** Hannia Fernanda Colín Melo, Oscar Jesús Ocaña García, Dance troupe Los forasteros de la salsa, made up of: Heberto García Novelo, José Montolla García, Angel Alejandro Pérez Oramas and Rafael Zúñiga Rivera. **Special thanks to:** Luis Mdáhuar, Nancy Brown and Sofía Lara. **Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:** Magali Lara, Ricardo Nicolayevsky y Vicente Rojo Cama

**This project would not have been possible without support from:** the Cuauhtémoc Delegation, American Apparel and the Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum. And the collaboration of: Magali Lara, Ricardo Nicolayevsky and Vicente Rojo Cama.

## Mestizo

*Mestizo*, **Omar Gámez** in collaboration with Marco Antonio García Cruz, Emmanuel Barbosa Bernal, Christian Hernández Hernández and Juan Carlos Pérez Hernández (neighborhood models). Alejandra Guevara, Carlos Martínez, Oscar Suárez, Humberto Yépez, Jorge Alderete (Committee made up of cultural agents and neighbors from Santa María la Ribera in the first phase of the project). The process was carried out between September 2014 and April 2016 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis.

This co-participation process lasted for two years and began with the artist's initial proposal to design a neighborhood male beauty contest. During this first stage, he worked with a group of five neighbors and cultural agents from Santa María la Ribera. Later, the project was restructured and concentrated on carrying out photography sessions with four neighborhood men of different phenotypes. The selection of the neighborhood models sought to generate a critical focus in relation to how the predominate prototypes of male beauty are perpetuated. The construction of the photographic images was carried out in correspondence with the subjectivities of the

participating models and in collaboration with different neighborhood agents: a seamstress and a fashion design student from the CECATI in the neighborhood. Their costumes were inspired by their own stories of resistance and everyday struggle and they served as a source to integrate a phrase into each image that referred to a less stereotyped and more multicultural perception of masculinity. Printed postcards of the photographs were produced on the back of which the life story of the neighborhood models was told. The final piece concluded with a series of four large-format photographs displayed in the Forum Buenavista shopping mall and some gyms in the area, where the postcards were also distributed.

### Complete fact sheet for the piece:

*Mestizo*, 2014-16

Series of 4 large-scale photographs printed on vinyl with postcards.

**Artist:** Omar Gámez

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/ Casa Gallina, México, 2014–16.

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis/

**Production coordinator:** Sergio Olivares and Mariano Arribas/ **Photography:** Omar Gámez/ Photographic Production: Benjamín Alcántara and David Reyes/ **Costumes and accessories:** Gustavo

García-Villa and Rafiki Sánchez/ **Costume design**

**assistant:** María de la Luz González (Sastrería Marilú)/ **Make-Up:** Ana Gutiérrez/ **Hair cuts:**

Mayra Jazmín (Estética d'Marco)/ **Catering:** Los sabores del alma (Economic fund)/ **Location:**

Felipe Mérida/ **Vinyl photo printing:** Imágenes vanguardistas/ **Paper printing (postcards):** Offset

Santiago/ **Co-participants:** Marco Antonio García

Cruz, Emmanuel Barbosa Bernal, Christian Hernández Hernández and Juan Carlos Pérez

Hernández (neighborhood models). Alejandra Guevara, Carlos Martínez, Oscar Suárez,

Humberto Yépez, Jorge Alderete (Committee made-up of cultural agents and neighbors from

Santa María in the first phase of the project).

**Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:**

Itala Schmelz and Luis Vargas Santiago

**We are grateful for support from:** Luis Vargas-Santiago, Itala Schmelz, Luis Miguel Leon, Plaza FORUM Buenavista, Coloso Gym (Benjamín Vanegas) and Performance Fitness Gym/ Sucursales Jaime Torres Bodet, Plaza Morisko (Elmer Torres) and Cristal and Acero

## Universe 4 - Zoo 1: A Cabinet of the Animal Kingdom

*Universe 4 – Zoo 1: A Cabinet of the Animal Kingdom*, **Ulises Figueroa** in collaboration with María Teresa Ferriz, a neighbor who runs a book exchange project outside her house and worked for many years as a librarian at the Natural History Museum. The process was carried out between April 2015 and March 2016 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega.

Ulises Figueroa, in collaboration with neighbor María Teresa Ferriz, designed a device for disseminating natural science and reading to children and youth in the neighborhood of Santa María la Ribera. The project consisted of activating a museum space between February and March 2016 at the UNAM's Geology Museum, an emblematic institution in the area. The device was conceived as a cabinet with content focused on the animal world and ecological devastation. The activation of the device in the museum included the implementation of educational dynamics, in which 800 schoolchildren, as well as groups of neighbors of different ages interested in ecological issues, participated. These activities stimulated attendees' imagination and creativity, reinforcing a critical perspective of the ecological footprint generated by human beings. The dynamics were rooted in a museum exhibit through a playful approach to scientific knowledge.

### Complete fact sheet for the piece:

*Universe 4 – Zoo 1: A Cabinet of the Animal Kingdom*, 2015–16

Museum exhibit for educational activations.

**Artist:** Ulises Figueroa

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/ Casa Gallina, México 2015–16

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega/

**Production coordinator:**

Sergio Olivares/ **Production assistants:** Mariano Arribas y Salomón Mendoza/

**Design and implementation of educational**

**dynamics:** Ketzali Arreola in collaboration with

the hosts from the Geology Museum/ **Co-**

**participants:** María Teresa Ferriz. 800 participants

in the museum activities. **Interlocutors in**

**the presentation of the proposal:** Marianna

Dellekamp, Victor Palacios and Felipe Zúñiga

**Thanks to:** Luis Espinosa Arrubarrena, Guadalupe Frago, Severiano López, Geology Museum, Natural History Museum, Córdova Plaza, Déjate Querer, Marianna Dellekamp, Victor Palacios and Felipe Zúñiga

## Collective Mapping

**Iconoclasistas** (Julia Risler and Pablo Ares)

Participants in the workshops and mappings: Gabriela Galván, Elena Ibáñez Bravo, Irene Andrade, Gabriela Amor, Paloma Rivera Uribe, María de los Ángeles Hernández, Luis Miguel Barro, Guadalupe Cristóbal, Sergio Corona, Carlos Atl, Daniela Fontaine, Brenda Raya, Uriel Arteaga, Brenda Strempler, Diego Carrasco, and almost 200 participants in the street mapping exercises.

From May to September 2015, the Argentinian collective Iconoclasistas coordinated a number of collective mapping exercises with local neighbors. After a period of researching the territory, the collective called on neighbors to jointly carry out critical maps of the neighborhood related to different aspects of the quality of life, such as: infrastructure, green areas, the use of public space, types of transportation, the state of housing, real estate development, among others. During a period of almost a month, Iconoclasistas led different practices of collective mapping, some at Casa Gallina and others in distinct emblematic points around the neighborhood: the Alameda park, La Dalia Market, and the Church of the Holy Spirit. As a result of this process, an interactive print was produced, as well as a publication summarizing the process and the tools designed to carry out the mapping. Both publications were distributed free of charge to neighbors, schools, libraries, coffee shops, and other meeting places around the neighborhood.

## Tropical Depression

*Tropical Depression*, **Edgardo Aragón** in collaboration with Abraham Bello and Joel García and a musical band made up of Barush Fernández, Israel Rosales, Diego Sánchez and Adriana Santiago. The process was carried out between June 2015 and April 2017 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega.



During the co-participation process, Edgardo Aragón invited two neighborhood youths: Abraham Bello, coffee shop owner and Joel García, a sound system DJ who plays Colombian music, to carry out the complete process of sowing, cultivating, harvesting, and preparing coffee on a piece of land in the neighborhood. During this period, Joel accompanied the moment of sowing with cumbias and he danced for the plants, inspired by ritual cultivation practices from Colombia. A short time later, while the plants were growing, a musical group made up of different neighbors improvised an experimental concert guided by the Aztec death whistle; multiple strobe lights covered the plants before they were harvested and consumed during an intimate encounter between Joel and Abraham. The resulting final piece was a two-channel video installation. As a closing event for the process, Abraham invited neighbors with coffee shops to a talk about the implications of producing coffee locally.

**Complete fact sheet for the piece:**

*Tropical Depression*, 2015–17

Video HD/2K

Two-channel Projection

Length: 23'

**Artist:** Edgardo Aragón

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/ Casa Gallina, México, 2015–17.

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega/

**Production coordinator:**

Sergio Olivares / **Lighting, photography,**

**editing, and color correction:** Edgardo Aragón/

**Live sound recording:** Isabel Muñoz and Axel

Muñoz/ **Sound editing:** Demián Lara/ **Production**

**assistants:** Mariano Arribas and Alfredo Mora/

**Co-participants:** Abraham Bello and Joel

García and a musical group made up of Barush

Fernández, Israel Rosales, Diego Sánchez

and Adriana Santiago. **Interlocutors in the**

**presentation of the proposal:** Ale de la Puente,

Fernanda Mejía and David Miranda.

## Five Invisible Haiku

*Five Invisible Haiku.* **Eduardo Navarro** in collaboration with Ian Pasarán Rodríguez. The process was carried out between July 2015 and December 2017 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis.

The co-participation process between Eduardo Navarro and Ian Pasarán Rodríguez, a former student of the neighborhood's School for the Blind and the Deaf-Mute, lasted for two and a half years. The project consisted of jointly generating a synesthetic public experience based on the creation of five flavors. Each flavor was related to a haiku that Ian proposed based on a memory or personal experience. In turn, the five haiku were related to five concepts that the artist proposed to Ian: affect, distance, time, light, and space. After creating the haiku, five flavors were produced in candy form by professional flavorists.

The candies functioned to catalyze the flavor of the experience and were the guide that Navarro and Ian used to produce a series of five sculptural objects, each one related to one of the flavor-haiku. The resulting final piece presented the objects (a product of the experience between the artist and his co-participant) hidden within five wooden boxes. These were set up in the patio of the school for the blind, inviting students and neighbors to taste the candy-haiku while they touched the objects. The piece was experienced by 186 people in Santa María la Ribera.

**Complete fact sheet for the piece:**

*Five Invisible Haiku*, 2015-17

A public sensory experience.

**Artist:** Eduardo Navarro in collaboration with Ian

Pasarán Rodríguez

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/

Casa Gallina, México, 2015-17

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis/

**Production coordinators:**

Sergio Olivares and Mariano Arribas/ **Activations:**

**Social Service inSite/Casa Gallina:** César

Morales Martínez and Mayté Mata Ramírez. **Social**

**Service CIPC:** Allan Yered Soberanes Sánchez,

Dulce Janeth Marín Mejía, Rubi Alejandra Peralta

and Jazmín Gutiérrez Juárez/ **inSite/Casa Gallina**

**Volunteers:** Jazzint Pantoja Gutiérrez/ **Blind and/**

**or seeing-impaired student volunteers CIPC:**

Luz María Valero Ramírez, Carina Lázaro López

and Guadalupe del Carmen Ortiz Sánchez/

**Flavor Production:** Bell Flavors & Fragrances/

**Candy production:** Sugarox. **Interlocutors in the**

**presentation of the proposal:** Paola Santoscoy

and Mariana David

**We are grateful to support from:** Dr. Fernando Rueda and the allergist Dr. David Mendoza; as

well as the engineer Estela Medina, and Maricruz Cabrera Padilla and Rosa María Pérez Godínez from the International Committee for the Blind (IAP).

## Wanderlust

*Wanderlust*, **Ana María Millán** in collaboration with Axel Alberto Guerrero Marín, Mayumi Aline Hidalgo Servín, Iván Tonatiuh Ramírez García, Axel Antón García, Brenda Yeliztli Ramírez García and Diana Cristina Rosas Trillo. The process was carried out between October 2015 and May 2017 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega.

Ana María Millán worked with neighborhood youth interested in video games. The artist organized different educational activities around the production and narrative of video games. During the process, the co-participants developed creative exercises that allowed them to expand the possibilities and potential of their interest in video games. They collectively developed a series of characters that represented them, as well as a story that narrated processes of transformation and resistance in the face of the demands of the contemporary world. The resulting final piece was a 3D animation. The participants were invited to see the animation projected at Casa Gallina, during which they could share their impressions of the result of the collective process with the artist.

**Complete fact sheet for the piece:**

*Wanderlust*, 2015-17

3D Animation

**Artist:** Ana María Millán

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/ Casa Gallina, México, 2015-17.

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega/

**Production coordination:** Sergio Olivares/

**Co-participants:** Axel Alberto Guerrero Marín,

Mayumi Aline Hidalgo Servín, Iván Tonatiuh

Ramírez García, Axel Antón García, Brenda Yeliztli

Ramírez García and Diana Cristina Rosas Trillo/

**Storyboard:** Edmundo Mata/ **Technical Script:**

Gibrán Morgado and Luis Nava/ **Animation:**

Atotonilco Studio/ Sound production and design:

Demián Lara/ **Voices:** René Alvarado, Paola

Medina, Iraida Noriega, Adriana Olivera and

Sergio Rogalto/ **Production assistance:** Mariano

Arribas/ **Fixed image assistance:** Hugo Cuervo

**Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:**

Eurídice Cabañes, Ricardo García Fuentes “Micro” and Ana Bell Chino. This project was made possible thanks to support from Goethe Institute in the Año Dual México-Alemania 2016-2017.

## Unbraiding

*Unbraiding*, **Damián Ontiveros** in collaboration with Grecia Fabiola Trejo Palacios, Diana Hernández Castañeda, Beatriz Eugenia Hernández García, Dayana Luciano Cruz, Diana Bernal Hernández, Iliana Arias Antonio, Rubid Hernández Vargas and Florencia Mejía Ramírez. The process was developed between April 2017 and August 2018 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis.

Damián Ontiveros sustained a co-participation process for a year with a group of women from Santa María la Ribera. The artist worked with eight female hair-stylists who learned their trade in a shelter for homeless mothers. Based on the workshop dynamic directed by the artist, the group reflected on the symbolic power of feminine hair and the patriarchy's social strategies for dominating women through hair.

The resulting final piece comprised three rugs produced with the hair of women in the neighborhood collected through collaboration with local hair salons. A phrase can be read on the rugs that refers to an experience of violence or a concern about gender related to hair that the group of co-participants shared with the artist during the process. As an activation and final closure with the group, the rugs were mounted in an emblematic barber shop in the neighborhood, known for being a male bastion since the 1950s. The group of women cut people's hair for free while the rapper Dayra Fyah improvised verses with phrases recounting moments from the lives of each of the women.

**Complete fact sheet for the piece:**

*Unbraiding*, 2017-18

**Artist:** Damián Ontiveros

3 rugs made of human hair

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/

Casa Gallina, México 2017-18

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis/

**Production:** Sergio Olivares, Mariano Arribas

and César Morales/ **Production of the rugs:** Pastora Martínez Sansores and Raquel Sandoval González/ **Hair donation:** Gaxel Estética, Peluquería Fresno, Golden Nails Salon/ **Activation of the close:** Adriana Flores Gutiérrez (Peluquería Boston) and Dayra Fyah/ **Co-participants:** Grecia Fabiola Trejo Palacios, Diana Hernández Castañeda, Beatriz Eugenia Hernández García, Dayana Luciano Cruz, Diana Bernal Hernández, Iliana Arias Antonio, Rubid Hernández Vargas and Florencia Mejía Ramírez. **Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:** Lorena Wolffer, Mauro Giaconi and Roberto de la Torre

## Porcelain

*Porcelain*, **Marianna Dellekamp** in collaboration with Bibiana Pérez Toscano, María Juana Vela Barrios, Gloria Hinojosa, Celia Sánchez de Zelonka, María Lilia Valdez Santiago, Gabriela García Sevilla, Elsa Pérez Islas, Berta Sánchez Rosas(+), Michel Zurita Reyes, Brenda Strempler, Irina Morales Palomares, Rosa María Meraz and Viridiana Gamiño. The process was carried out between January 2017 and February 2018 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega.

Marianna Dellekamp invited people interested in weaving to meet and collaborate on a project. A group of women of different ages was formed and then met weekly over the course of a year. Dellekamp asked them to share a meaningful object with the group and so a shared collection of important objects was created. All the objects were also turned into life-size porcelain replicas. Each woman was summoned to break her porcelain object for it to then later be reconstructed using the Japanese Kintsugi technique which places importance on respecting the scars as significant parts of an object's memory. These objects were reproduced as jewelry to make a charm bracelet that was given to each group member as closure for the process. The resulting final piece is an installation that includes the porcelains and a video with close-ups of the women's hands as they are weaving accompanied by edited audio of conversations during the sessions.

### Complete fact sheet for the piece:

*Porcelain*, 2017-18  
Video-installation with porcelain and bracelet  
**Artist:** Marianna Dellekamp  
Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/  
Casa Gallina, México, 2017-18.  
**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega/  
**Production coordinator:** Sergio Olivares/ **Jewelry:** Juan Francisco Nava Ramos and Juan Rosas  
**Porcelains:** Arta Cerámica/ **Reconstruction of the pieces (Kintsugi):** Rodolfo Morales, Ana Lizeth Mata and Claudia Coronado/ **Video editing:** Marta Uc/ **Audio editing:** Damián Lara/ **Audio post-production:** Lucca Necoechea/ **Production assistance:** Mariano Arribas/ **Co-participants:** Bibiana Pérez Toscano, María Juana Vela Barrios, Gloria Hinojosa, Celia Sánchez de Zelonka, María Lilia Valdez Santiago, Gabriela García Sevilla, Elsa Pérez Islas, Berta Sánchez Rosas, Michel Zurita Reyes, Brenda Strempler, Irina Morales Palomares, Rosa María Meraz and Viridiana Gamiño. **Partners in the presentation of the proposal:** Ana Elena Mallet, Mónica Mayer and Esteban King

## Floating Grafts

*Floating Grafts*, **Cynthia Gutiérrez** in collaboration with students from El Pensador Mexicano elementary school and Claudia Hernández, from Vitrolero Vitrales Artesanales (handmade stained glass windows business). The process was carried out between February 2017 and September 2018 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega.

Over the course of a year, Cynthia Gutiérrez worked with a group of students from the elementary school El Pensador Mexicano. The artist led a series of workshops in which she sought to strengthen and support the students' creative concerns. In the sessions, they developed exercises in which the children reflected about identity, belonging, codification and language, light and shadow, and the making of stained-glass windows. During the process, they jointly designed ways that allowed them to construct a language of abstract forms through which the group expressed their experiences at school. The final piece is a stained-glass window that was installed in the El Pensador Mexicano elementary school in the summer of 2018. At the process's

closing event, in September 2018, several educational activities were carried out in which 200 students from the school actively participated in exercises that connected them to the recently installed stained-glass window.

### Complete fact sheet for the piece:

*Floating Grafts*, 2017-18  
Stained-glass window installed in the El Pensador Mexicano elementary school  
**Artist:** Cynthia Gutiérrez  
Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/  
Casa Gallina, México, 2017-18.  
**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Josefa Ortega/  
**Production coordinator:** Sergio Olivares/  
**Educational activities:** Cynthia Gutiérrez and Claudia Hernández with support from Alejandra Godínez and Óscar Nagore/ **Production and installation of the stained glass:** Mario Corona, Abanico vitrales/ **Production assistance:** Mariano Arribas and César Morales/ **Co-participants:** Juan Leonardo Almaguer Cabrera, Sofy Shanty Castillo Chávez, Diego Chavira Paz, Ámbar Lee Figueroa, André Emiliano González Alvarado, Leonardo Arturo Guzmán Rodríguez, Victoria Samantha Guzmán Rodríguez, Luis Alejandro Madrigal Sánchez, Samara Ortiz Rivera, Fátima Kinari Piedra Arroyo, Karla Alisson Ramírez Valladares, Gerardo Guillermo San Lázaro Rivera, Khalya Melissa Téllez Hernández and Iann Yeshua Vargas Martínez: students from the El Pensador Mexicano school; and Claudia Hernández from Vitrolero Vitrales Artesanales. **Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:** Mónica Amieva, Fernando García Correa and Christian del Castillo

### This project was made possible thanks to:

Buenaventura Fundación through the National Production of Visual Arts made with the financial stimulus of article 190 of the LISR (EFIARTES) and Fundación BBVA/ Bancomer Proyecto Bi.

## Child Heroes

*Child Heroes*, **Itzel Martínez del Cañizo** in collaboration with Joze Daniel and nine neighborhood children: Ángel Eduardo Ulloa Nolasco, César Aguilar Farfán, Diego Chavira Paz, Evelin Renata Fernández de Blas, Karla Acosta Martínez, Leonardo Kaleb Ulloa Nolasco, Melany Paola Maldonado Villanueva, Oscar Alberto Torres Cordero and Roberta Yamileth García Hernández.

The process was carried out between May 2017 and August 2018 with curatorial accompaniment by Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis.

Itzel Martínez's co-participation process with illustrator Joze Daniel and nine neighborhood children lasted for about a year. Throughout this time, the artist worked with the children in developing their relationship to their emotional imaginaries and how those are connected with the adult world and their own neighborhood. A fictional narrative was created collectively, in which the children, based on their zones of conflict and security, generated diverse characters and scenes that the illustrator then translated into images. The resulting final piece is a 2D animation that makes visible the strategies that children create to resist and confront the adult world and its alienating dynamics. The animation was projected in a closing event for the group of co-participating children and their families in Casa Gallina. Later, projections of the animation were held for 400 students from the two public schools in the neighborhood: El Pensador Mexicano and República de Cuba.

### Complete fact sheet for the piece:

*Child Heroes*, 2017-18  
2D Animation  
**Artists:** Itzel Martínez del Cañizo, Joze Daniel and 9 children from Santa María la Ribera: Ángel Eduardo Ulloa Nolasco, César Aguilar Farfán, Diego Chavira Paz, Evelin Renata Fernández de Blas, Karla Acosta Martínez, Leonardo Kaleb Ulloa Nolasco, Melany Paola Maldonado Villanueva, Oscar Alberto Torres Cordero and Roberta Yamileth García Hernández, México. Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/Casa Gallina, México  
**The process that accompanied this piece was curated by:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis/ **Production coordinator:** Mariano Arribas/ **Directing:** Itzel Martínez del Cañizo/ **Characters and art direction:** Joze Daniel/ **Story and script:** Itzel Martínez del Cañizo and nine children from Santa María la Ribera/ **Storyboard and technical script:** Itzel Martínez del Cañizo and Joze Daniel/ **Animation:** Llamarada/ **Dubbing studio:** Taller Acústico, S.C./ **Dubbing Production:** Erika Sánchez Santarelli/ **Dialogue director:** Luis C. Cortez/ **Recording Engineer:** Marco Antonio Gutiérrez/ **Voice actors:** Tara: Regina Tiscareño Orihuela, Padme: Pamela Mendoza Ortiz, Bully +



**Secondary characters:** Jorge Medina Newman, Hermano Tashi + Various: Miguel Ángel Ruiz, Hermanito Padme: Leo Garduza, Abuelo Sila: Ernesto Casillas, Mamá Padme: Gabriela Guzmán, Maestra + Mamá Sila: Magdalena Tenorio, Mamá Tara: Berenice Vega, Samsara + Vendedor: Mauricio Pérez Castillo, Amigo 1: Franco Balzanny, Amigo 2 + Drogadicto: Iván Bastidas; Secondary characters: Diego Chavira Paz, Oscar Alberto Torres Cordero, Karla Acosta Martínez, Leonardo Kaleb Ulloa Nolasco and César Aguilar Farfán/ **Sound production and audio editing:** Demián Lara/ **Co-participants:** Ángel Eduardo Ulloa Nolasco, César Aguilar Farfán, Diego Chavira Paz, Evelin Renata Fernández de Blas, Karla Acosta Martínez, Leonardo Kaleb Ulloa Nolasco, Melany Paola Maldonado Villanueva, Óscar Alberto Torres Cordero and Roberta Yamileth García Hernández

## Vestiges

*Vestiges*, **Rafiki Sánchez** in collaboration with Luz María Coronado Morán, Arturo Meneses García, Irina Morales Palomares, Teresa Benítez Romero, Victoria Rosas Jiménez, Alexa Varela Mejía, Olga Haydeé Refugio Sosa García, Gabriela García Sevilla and Guadalupe Malvárez Moreno. The process was carried out between September 2017 and April 2018 and was curated by Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis.

Through a public program on thanatology, Rafiki Sánchez brought together residents from Santa María la Ribera who were interested in the theme. A group of nine people was formed that would continue a collaboration process working on issues related to loss, over a nine-month period. The work was focused on reflections about the veiling of the body, refuge, and imagined absence.

The resulting piece is an installation made up of a precious mantle that is embroidered with epitaphs proposed by the neighbors; the ash of a refuge-structure (produced with reed and ash paste, inside of which the mantle was mounted), and a panorama of photos that record the burning of that structure. Before setting it on fire, and with the mantle still inside, the co-participant entered the refuge as a form of farewell to their own mourning, hiding-veiling their body in that space for a few moments.

**Complete information sheet for the piece:**  
*Vestiges*, 2017–18

**Artist:** Rafiki Sánchez

Installation

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/ Casa Gallina, México, 2017-18

**Curators:** Osvaldo Sánchez and Violeta Celis/

**Production coordinators:** Sergio Olivares and

Mariano Arribas/ **Production of the mantle:**

Francisco Eduardo López Martínez, Juan Carlos

Hernández García and Jorge Martínez Marcelo/

**Photography:** Ramiro Chaves/ **Location:** Patricia

Carrasco/ **Co-participants:** Luz María Coronado

Morán, Arturo Meneses García, Irina Morales

Palomares, Teresa Benítez Romero, Victoria

Rosas Jiménez, Alexa Varela Mejía, Olga Haydeé,

Refugio Sosa García, Gabriela García Sevilla and

Guadalupe Malvárez Moreno

**Interlocutors in the presentation of the proposal:**

María José de la Macorra, Miguel Rodríguez

Sepúlveda and Julio García Murillo

## Collaborative Sculpture: An Essay on Construction

*Collaborative Sculpture: An Essay on Construction.*

**Tererunquinto** in collaboration with Enrique García Arenas, gas technician and plumber; José Felipe Mérida Portillo, blacksmith; Librado Cázares, carpenter; Luis Antonio Regalado Sánchez and Francisco Pérez Ugalde, electricians; and construction workers Venancio Alejo Martínez, Giovanni Alejo Macario, Abimael Alejo Macario and Juan Rivera Mendoza. The process took place between October 2017 and November 2018 and was curated by Violeta Celis.

Over a three-year period, the **Tererunquinto** collective focused on an emblematic property on Santa María la Ribera known as the 7 and ½ in which a housing complex would be built. The intention was to generate a rapprochement with the workers involved in that project for a possible co-participation process. Due to real estate speculation and decisions of the construction company in charge of the project, the members of the collective had to rethink their investigation.

Based on a broader mapping of construction workers in the area, the collective finally convened nine of them with different trades and who work mainly in the neighborhood. Thus, they proposed, in conjunction with this group, a collaborative

exercise based on intervening in a blueprint of a tiny house. The resulting piece was the erection of an anti-functional building, with an ephemeral character—on a property in the neighborhood—that each of the workers proposed based on their territories of experiences and daily tasks. During the process, they highlighted the sculptural qualities of construction, as well as the tension that emerges between empirical types of knowledge (of workers) and scholarly knowledge (of architects or construction engineers). As part of the piece, the collective created a printed glossary of each of the trade's terms for circulation in the neighborhood. The glossary was the product of conversations that took place throughout the work process.

**Complete fact sheet for the piece:**

*Collaborative Sculpture: An Essay on Construction*, 2017-18

**Artist:** Tercerunquinto

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/ Casa Gallina, México, 2017-18

**Curator:** Violeta Celis/ **Production coordination:**

Sergio Olivares, Mariano Arribas and César

Morales/ **Main camera:** Katri Walker/ Land: José

Felipe Mérida Portillo/ **Co-participants:** Enrique

García Arenas, gassist and plumber; José Felipe

Mérida Portillo, blacksmith; Librado Cázares,

carpenter; Luis Antonio Regalado Sánchez and

Francisco Pérez Ugalde, electricians; and the

construction workers Venancio Alejo Martínez,

Giovanni Alejo Macario, Abimael Alejo Macario

and Juan Rivera Mendoza. **Interlocutors in the**

**presentation of the proposal:** María Minera,

Sebastián Romo and Diego Flores Magón

## Mnemonic Matter: The Law of the Similar

*Mnemonic Matter. The Law of the Similar*, **Oswaldo Ruiz** in collaboration with Lourdes Álvarez, Nayeli Lima, Rafael Maya, Angelita Palillero and Paula Trejo. The process took place between January 2018 and November 2018 and was curated by Josefa Ortega.

At the beginning of 2018, Oswaldo Ruiz located several pharmacies and homeopathy clinics with long traditions and roots in the neighborhood. Ruiz invited neighbors interested in the topic

to meet and participate in conversations led by specialists, in which homeopathic doctors such as Dr. Fernando Domínguez Vello and Dr. María de Lourdes Cruz, as well as Fernando González and Rafael Mejía from Similia, a laboratory producing homeopathic products, shared the history of the discipline and the processes involved in making homeopathic preparations. Based on those encounters, Oswaldo Ruiz invited five neighbors to carry out a metaphorical exercise in which, starting from their personal stories, they would determine substances that had damaged them and from which they would make homeopathic preparations. The resulting piece is a “medicine” cabinet that contains the preparations made from the substances, a series of analogue photos of those substances, and a publication that was distributed in the neighborhood with the images and stories that fueled the project. As a closing act, a neighborhood event brought the local residents back together to exchange their experiences of the process and each one left with his or her copy of the publication and one of the chosen substances.

**Complete fact sheet for the piece:**

*Mnemonic Matter: The Law of the Similar*, 2017-18

**Artist:** Oswaldo Ruiz in collaboration with Lourdes Álvarez, Nayeli Lima, Rafael Maya, Angelita

Palillero and Paula Trejo

Piece commissioned and produced by inSite/

Casa Gallina, 2017-18

**Curator:** Josefa Ortega/ **Production coordination:**

Sergio Olivares and Mariano Arribas/

**Construction of the cabinet:** Estudio Caribe-

Rodolfo Morales/ **Homeopathic preparations:**

Mtra. Azucena Silva Norman/ **Photographic**

**prints:** Araceli Cortés/ **Book:** **Design:** Deborah

Guzmán/ **Copy editor:** Brenda J. Caro Cocotle/

**Digitization of negatives:** Bindu/ **Map:** Liz Mevill/

**Production:** Luis Miguel Leon. **Interlocutors in**

**the presentation of the proposal:** Silvia Gruner,

Andres Torreblanca and Fabiola Torres-Alzaga

**Acknowledgments:** Xtabay Alderete, Dra.

María de Lourdes Cruz, Alejandro Cruz Atienza,

Marianna Dellekamp, Dr. Fernando Domínguez

Vello, Fernando González, Silvia Gruner, Rafael

Mejía, Claudia Olmedo, Guadalupe Padrón,

Andrea Torreblanca and Fabiola Torres-Alzaga

# Experiences of the Common Good

**inSite/Casa Gallina,  
a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood**



This book was printed in December of 2018,  
at Offset Santiago, S.A. de C.V. Parque Industrial  
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The print run consists of 1,000 copies.

inSite

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Casa Gallina\_México



*Experiences of the Common Good: inSite/Casa Gallina, a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood* proposes a means of reflection on community action through platforms and strategies related to art. It is based on the experiences lived in and through inSite/Casa Gallina, the sixth version of inSite, which was undertaken over the last five years in the Santa María la Ribera neighborhood in Mexico City. The book includes commissioned texts from: María Berríos, Jesús Carrillo, Joshua Decter, Nina Möntmann and Víctor Palacios; the inSite/Casa Gallina team; and neighbors and participants at the house and its activities. This set of essays, images and materials seeks to stimulate deliberation on strategies and approaches to community dynamics and situations induced by institutional platforms; it uses inSite/Casa Gallina as an example of local working practices.



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Casa Gallina\_México



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Experiences of the Common Good: inSite/Casa Gallina, a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood