

CROSSROADS

LA VIDA CREATIVA EN SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE



JUDY COLLINS • NAOMI KLEIN • BILLY COLLINS • MARY KARR
DAVID EBERSHOFF • LISA MOORE • PEDRO ANGEL PALOU • ROBERT MOOR



SMWC 2017

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The concept for the design on the cover was the collaborative effort of Crossroads designer, Lander Rodriguez and Editor-At-Large, Philip Alvaré and is loosely based upon Mayan codices and symbols using a type font called "Mayaruler 1" to suggest a contemporary interpretation of an ancient concept. The lively and diversely colorful characters corresponding to the Roman alphabet set in a grid evoke the CROSSROADS concept of cultural intersections and exchanges.

El concepto para el diseño de la portada era el fruto de la colaboración del diseñador de Crossroads, Lander Rodríguez y el Editor-General, Philip Alvaré, vagamente basada en códices mayas y símbolos utilizando el tipo de letra llamado "Mayaruler 1" para sugerir una interpretación contemporánea de un concepto antiguo. Los coloridos caracteres animados y variados corresponden con el alfabeto romano instalado en una cuadricula evoca el concepto Crossroads como las intersecciones e intercambios culturales.

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LA VIDA CREATIVA EN SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE



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DAVID ECKERHOP, USA HOOD, RICARDO ANGEL NAJERA, ROBERT HOOD



CROSSROADS

Publisher & Editor
MAIA WILLIAMS

Editor-At-Large / Editorial Design
PHILIP ALVARE

Art Direction, Design & Photography
LANDER RODRIGUEZ

Contributing Editors
ARMIDA ZEPEDA
ALICIA QUIÑONES

Translation
CONCEPCIÓN ELVIRA PROVENZAL
VIRIDIANA GUTIÉRREZ
GEOFF HARGRAVES
ROSEMARIE SCHILD

Editorial Assistance
PATRICIA GARCÍA

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
JAVIER BARRAS
CHARLOTTE BELL
TED DAVIS
SUSAN FELDMAN
ELSMARIE NORBY
ALISTAIR PALMER
MARIAN SOBERA
BARRY WEISS

Photographic Assistance
MARIANA RODRIGUEZ

Proofreaders
LYNETTE GANNON
SUSAN PAGE
ALICIA QUIÑONES
WYMAN ROUSSEAU
ROSEMARIE SCHILD
ARMIDA ZEPEDA

San Miguel Literary Sala, Asociación Civil
San Miguel Writers' Conference
& Literary Festival

Executive Director
SUSAN PAGE

Co-Director
MAIA WILLIAMS

Directora, Festival de Escritores
ARMIDA ZEPEDA

Coordinador General
ALICIA QUIÑONES

Treasurer
DORIT ARAZI

Registration and New Media
NATHAN FEUERBERG

Executive Associate & SMWC Site Director
PAULETTE SHANKLIN



SMWC 2017

CROSSROADS magazine of culture and arts is published annually by the San Miguel Literary Sala, A.C., a registered nonprofit organization dedicated to literary and educational purposes. San Miguel Literary Sala is the proud producer of the annual international San Miguel Writers' Conference and Literary Festival.

Printed in México

www.crossroadsmag.com
www.crossroadsrevista.com



Why a Writers' Conference in Mexico?

By Susan Page

There is a reason that the San Miguel Writers' Conference and Literaray Festival grew in twelve years from a weekend for twenty-six writers to an international event that draws some 3,000 writers and readers from Mexico, the U.S., and Canada.

It's because in this age of digital sound bites and messages aimed at three-second attention spans, the world of literature has grown in importance and popularity. Writers have greater access to their public than ever before. Readers have instant access to books and multiple delivery methods to choose from. The current guide to Books in Print lists over 2,000,000 books classified under 81,000 headings, from Actors and Actresses to Zebras and Zoo Animals.

Holding the Conference in Mexico gives reading and writing visibility in a location that can use the inspiration. For even though Mexico has an excellent literacy rate, Mexicans only read an average of 2.94 books a year, which puts Mexico second to last on a list of 107 countries, according to UNESCO. Last year, 54% of Mexicans did not buy even one book, and this includes a large number of college graduates. Ironically, Mexico hosts the second largest Book Fair in the world every year in November and has turned out some of the most celebrated writers in the world, like Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, and Elena Poniatowska. But many Mexicans have yet to discover the joys of reading.

So in Mexico, those of us who love to read have a special challenge to convey this passion to others. The San Miguel Writers' Conference was born out of this passion. As we say in our mission statement, "we believe that reading and writing are essential, that great literature enriches our lives, feeds our souls, and facilitates greater understanding of ourselves and others."

Why is reading so important?

For starters, books entertain us. They are a wonderful way to pass otherwise idle times like standing in line, riding on a bus or subway, or waiting for an appointment. Books broaden our world by giving us experiences we will never have on our own. They educate us, build our curiosity, exercise our brains, give us topics for conversation, increase our vocabularies and our ability to communicate. Books can give us the experience of being in "the zone," being so fully absorbed that we feel in flow with the universe. Reading boosts our imagination and creativity and improves our ability to focus and concentrate. Reading is proven to reduce stress and to improve memory. Books give us endless ways to connect with other people. Through books, we can enter other worlds, other minds, other schools of thought. If we are open to it, books have the ability to transform us, to ignite epiphanies, and to deepen our understanding of our world and ourselves.

Carl Sagan put it this way: "What an astonishing thing a book is. One glance at it and you're inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic."

How can we convey our passion for reading to those who have not yet discovered it?

One obvious answer is to start early. At the Literary Sala in San Miguel, we are doing what we can. The literature appreciation and writing skills projects we have created for children and youth are described in an article in this magazine, including introducing books to young children, bringing distinguished authors to rural communities where the youth have all read that author's book, teaching writing skills to teens, and offering classes and workshops in our Sala Literaria.

And the Conference itself helps to convey excitement about books. We are a gathering of people who are passionate about reading and writing, excited about the opportunity for self-expression and for sharing ideas. And, perhaps most important, the Conference gives us the opportunity to make our love of reading highly visible, here in Mexico, where we hope that visibility will excite and intrigue more and more people, until one day, Mexico will be at the top of that list of countries who love to read!

Festival de Escritores de San Miguel

Hay una razón por la que la San Miguel Festival de Escritores de San Miguel creció en doce años de un fin de semana para veintiseis escritores a un evento internacional que atrae algo como 3,000 escritores y lectores de México, los Estados Unidos y Canadá.

Es por que en esta era de "sound bites" digitales y mensajes dirigidos en intervalos de atención de tres segundos, el mundo de la literatura ha crecido en importancia y popularidad. Los escritores tienen más

acceso a su público como nunca antes. Los lectores tienen acceso instantáneo a libros y a multiples y diversos métodos de entrega para elegir. La guía más reciente de Books in Print lista más de 2,000,000 de libros clasificados bajo 81,000 encabezados, de Actores y Actrices a Zebras y Zoológicos.

Nuestra ubicación en México da a la lectura y escritura visibilidad en un sitio que puede usar la inspiración. Por que aun cuando México tiene una excelente tasa de alfabetización, los mexicanos leen un promedio de 2.94 libros al año, lo que pone a México en el penúltimo lugar en la lista de 107 países, de acuerdo a la UNESCO. El año pasado, 54% de los mexicanos no compraron siquiera un libro, y esto incluye un gran número de graduados universitarios. Irónicamente, México es el anfitrión de la segunda Feria del Libro más grande del mundo cada año en Noviembre y a la cual han acudido algunos de los más celebrados escritores en el mundo, como Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, y Elena Poniatowska. Pero muchos mexicanos no han descubierto aún las alegrías de la lectura.

Así es que en México, a aquellos que nos encanta leer tenemos el reto especial de transmitir esta pasión a otros. El Festival de Escritores de San Miguel nació de esta pasión. Como decimos en nuestra declaración de objetivos fundamentales, "creemos que leer y escribir son esenciales, que la gran literatura enriquece nuestras vidas, alimenta nuestras almas, y facilita un mayor entendimiento de nosotros y de los otros."

¿Por qué es leer tan importante?

Para empezar, los libros nos entretienen. Son maravillosas maneras de pasar lo que de otra manera son momentos de ocio como esperar en formado, viajar en el metro, o esperar en una cita. Los libros amplían nuestro mundo dándonos experiencias que nunca tendremos por nosotros mismos. Nos educan, construyen nuestra curiosidad, ejercitan nuestro cerebro, nos ofrecen temas de conversación, aumentan nuestro vocabulario y nuestra habilidad de comunicación. Los libros nos dan la experiencia de estar en "la zona," de estar completamente absortos y sentir el fluir con el universo. Leer estimula nuestra imaginación y creatividad y mejora nuestra habilidad

de enfocarnos y concentrarnos. Esté probado que leer reduce el estrés y aumenta la memoria. Los libros nos brindan innumerables formas de conectar con otras personas. A través de los libros, podemos entrar a otros mundos, otras mentes, otras escuelas de pensamiento. Si estamos abiertos a ello, los libros tienen la habilidad de transformarnos, de encender epifanías, y de profundizar nuestro entendimiento del mundo y de nosotros mismos.

Carl Sagan lo dijo de esta manera: "Qué cosa tan extraordinaria es un libro. Una ojeada y estás metido en la mente de otra persona, quizás alguien muerto por miles de años. A través de los siglos, un autor está hablando clara y silenciosamente adentro de tu cabeza, directamente a ti. Escribir es quizás la más grande de las invenciones humanas, uniendo a la gente que no se conoce, ciudadanos de distintas épocas. Los libros rompen las cadenas del tiempo. Un libro es la prueba de que los humanos son capaces de hacer magia."

¿Cómo podemos transmitir nuestra pasión por la lectura a aquellos que no la han descubierto todavía?

Una respuesta obvia es empezar temprano. En la Sala Literaria en San Miguel, hacemos lo que podemos. La apreciación de la literatura y los proyectos de los talleres que hemos creado para los niños y la jóvenes están son descritas en un artículo en esta revista, incluyendo introducir la donación de libros para niños pequeños, trayendo a distinguidos autores a las comunidades rurales implementar círculos de expresión literaria para los adolescentes, y ofrecer clases y talleres en nuestra Sala Literaria.

La Conferencia en sí ayuda a transmitir el entusiasmo acerca de los libros. Estamos reuniendo gente que es apasionada de la lectura y escritura, entusiasmada acerca de la oportunidad de expresarse y de compartir ideas. Y, quizás más importante, el Festival nos da la oportunidad de hacer nuestro amor por la lectura altamente visible, aquí en México, donde esperamos que la esto provoque e intrigue a más y más gente, hasta que un día, México esté a la cabeza de la lista de países que aman la lectura.

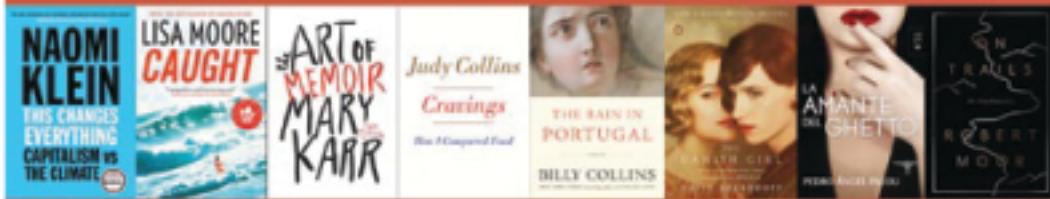
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Crossroads:

La Vida Creativa en San Miguel de Allende

Por Philip Alvaré



La Cañada de La Virgen

Simply put, a crossroad is an intersection of two or more roads, but the word implies so much more. Intersections suggest a coming together- exchanges and interchanges- ideas that aptly characterized *Crossroads*, the magazine of the San Miguel Writers' Conference when it was first developed. The Conference has been dubbed "one of the most important literary events in the Americas" and Creative Crossroads of the Americas seemed a suitable subtitle.

Now in its third year, the magazine has changed. *Crossroads: La Vida Creativa En San Miguel de Allende* has a whole new look and expanded content about the arts, literature, culture and creative life in San Miguel. It's a turning point as well. This first bilingual edition represents a commitment to deepening cross-cultural understanding and enriching the exchange between the Mexican community and the world.

In truth, San Miguel has been a crossroads for centuries, a juncture of exchanges and interchanges. In pre-Hispanic times, its central geographic location was undoubtedly a crossroads among indigenous peoples. The ancient archeological site, La Cañada de la Virgen, just outside town, established as early as 350AD represents a confluence of Otomi, Toltec and Chichimec cultures. Over a thousand years later, during the Spanish Colonial period, San Miguel was a crossroads along the silver route between the

northern mines and Mexico City. An exemplary inventory of 17th and 18th century architecture- especially notable around the main square, or Jardin- documents this convergence of riches. And San Miguel figured large at the turning point, or crossroads of the Mexican War of Independence when "El Grito," or war cry rose from the town on the eve of the revolution 16 September 1810.

The little city seems to have always had a knack for attracting and incubating artists, writers, intellectuals and bohemians, it has long been a crossroads of extraordinary characters. The Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramirez El Nigromante Bellas Artes bears the name of a 19th century native son who led the march towards modernism with his incisive intellect and prodigious literary output advocating atheism and public education. In 1937, Peruvian artist and writer, Felipe Cossío del Pomar opened the art school where famed Mexican muralist, David Alfred Siqueiros- implicated in Communist intrigues



Felipe Cossío del Pomar

involving Diego Rivera and Frieda Kahlo- taught. And in the late 1940s, a US Citizen, Stirling Dickinson, was the artistic director of the Instituto Allende ushering in an era of cultural exchange between Mexico and the US, as well as a sizeable expatriate community that thrives to this day- so much so you hear Mexicans say, "San Miguel is a good place to learn English." Beat icon, Neal Cassady, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, W.D. Snodgrass, and MacArthur Foundation Fellowship recipient, Sandra Cisneros, are among the many notable denizens considered part of San Miguel's cultural crossroads.

Today's San Miguel is a vibrant place, a multicultural hub populated by citizens of the world. You're as likely to meet Mexicans, as you are US citizens, Canadians, Europeans and Asians. And thankfully, the pueblo still retains much of its traditional Mexican way of life especially evident in the hamlets and villages in the surrounding countryside. San Miguel has a remarkably cosmopolitan pulse for a town of its size with festivals, cultural programs, arts events as well as film and musical series rarely found outside major metropolitan centers. Its burgeoning gastronomic scene has made it an international



Waiting for the bride and groom by the Parroquia

culinary destination. Legendary galleries, exceptional artisan markets, boutiques, cutting edge architecture, innovative home design and fine hotels- to say nothing of the profound natural beauty of the high desert with its sublime climate- further renders the portrait of San Miguel as a crossroads of the very best things in life.

San Miguel is an intersection of so many things at once- as cutting-edge as it is ancient. We live in an era, thanks in large part to the Internet, when the whole world has become a crossroads and intersection of all cultures at once. But Mexico in general and San Miguel in particular, seem to vividly epitomize this



Museo Casa Allende, en el Jardín, San Miguel de Allende



María Sánchez and Band in MuvArte Gallery

concept of a universal crossroads of people, time and place with an almost magical force of convergence and a continuous cultural thread running through the millennia and layer upon layer of influences creating “the now” and maybe what Octavio Paz was getting at in his Nobel Lecture titled: “In Search Of The Present.” In many ways San Miguel is an eternal present, an eternal crossroads.

¿Qué Hay En Un Nombre? Crossroads: La Vida Creativa en San Miguel de Allende

Dicho simplemente, un cruce es una intersección de dos o más caminos, pero la palabra implica tanto más. Intersecciones sugieren una reunión — intercambios, permutes— ideas que caracterizan acertadamente a Crossroads, la revista de la Conferencia de Escritores de San Miguel de Allende, cuando ésta se desarrolla primero. La Conferencia ha sido reconocida como “uno de los más importantes eventos literarios en el continente” y Creative Crossroads of the Americas parecía un título apropiado.

Ahora, en su tercer año, la revista ha cambiado. Crossroads: La Vida Creativa en San Miguel de Allende tiene un nuevo aspecto y amplio contenido acerca de las artes, literatura, cultura y vida creativa en San Miguel. También es un punto de partida. Esta primera edición bilingüe representa un compromiso para ahondar en el entendimiento intercultural y enriquecer la reciprocidad entre la comunidad Mexicana, Anglo y mundial.

“Reflecting on the now does not imply relinquishing the future or forgetting the past: the present is the meeting place for the three directions of time.”

—Octavio Paz

víspera de la llamada Revolución mexicana, el 16 de septiembre de 1810.

La pequeña ciudad parece haber tenido siempre el don para atraer e incubar artistas, escritores, intelectuales y bohemios y ser la bifurcación para personajes extraordinarios. El Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez “El Nigromante” Bellas Artes lleva el nombre del hijo nativo del siglo XIX, quien condujo la marcha hacia el modernismo con su intelecto incisivo y su prodigiosa producción literaria, propugnando el ateísmo y la educación pública. En 1937, el artista y escritor peruano Felipe Cossío del Pomar abrió la escuela de arte donde el afamado muralista mexicano David Alfred Siqueiros —implicado en las intrigas comunistas junto con Diego Rivera y Frieda Kahlo— enseñó. Al fin de la década de los cuarenta, un ciudadano estadounidense llamado Stirling Dickinson, quien se convirtió en el director artístico del Instituto Allende, marcó el inicio de una era de intercambio cultural entre México y los Estados Unidos, así como de una considerable comunidad de expatriados quienes prosperan hasta nuestros días —tanto que ustedes pueden escuchar mexicanos que dicen: “San Miguel es un buen lugar para aprender inglés”. El símbolo del movimiento Beat, Neal Cassady, poeta ganador del premio Pulitzer, W.D. Snodgrass y la ganadora del MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, Sandra Cisneros, están entre algunos de los muchos talentos considerados parte de las corrientes culturales de esta ciudad.

El San Miguel de hoy es un lugar vibrante, un núcleo multicultural poblado por ciudadanos del mundo. Es probable que encuentre mexicanos, como estadounidenses, canadienses, europeos o asiáticos. Y, por suerte, el pueblo todavía conserva sus tradiciones mexicanas, especialmente evidenciada en las aldeas y casas de las campañas circundantes.

“Reflexionar en el ahora no implica renunciar al futuro u olvidar el pasado: el presente es el lugar donde se encuentran las tres direcciones del tiempo.”

—Octavio Paz

San Miguel tiene un pulso marcadamente cosmopolita para ser un pueblo de su tamaño, con festivales, programas culturales, eventos de arte, así como películas y musicales raramente encontrados fuera de grandes centros metropolitanos. Su floreciente escena gastronómica lo ha convertido en un destino culinario internacional. Las galerías legendarias, excepcionales mercados artesanales, boutiques, arquitectura de vanguardia, innovadores diseños del hogar y atractivos hoteles —por no mencionar la profunda belleza natural del alto desierto con su sublime clima— dibuja más a fondo el retrato de San Miguel como un cruce de caminos de las mejores cosas de la vida.

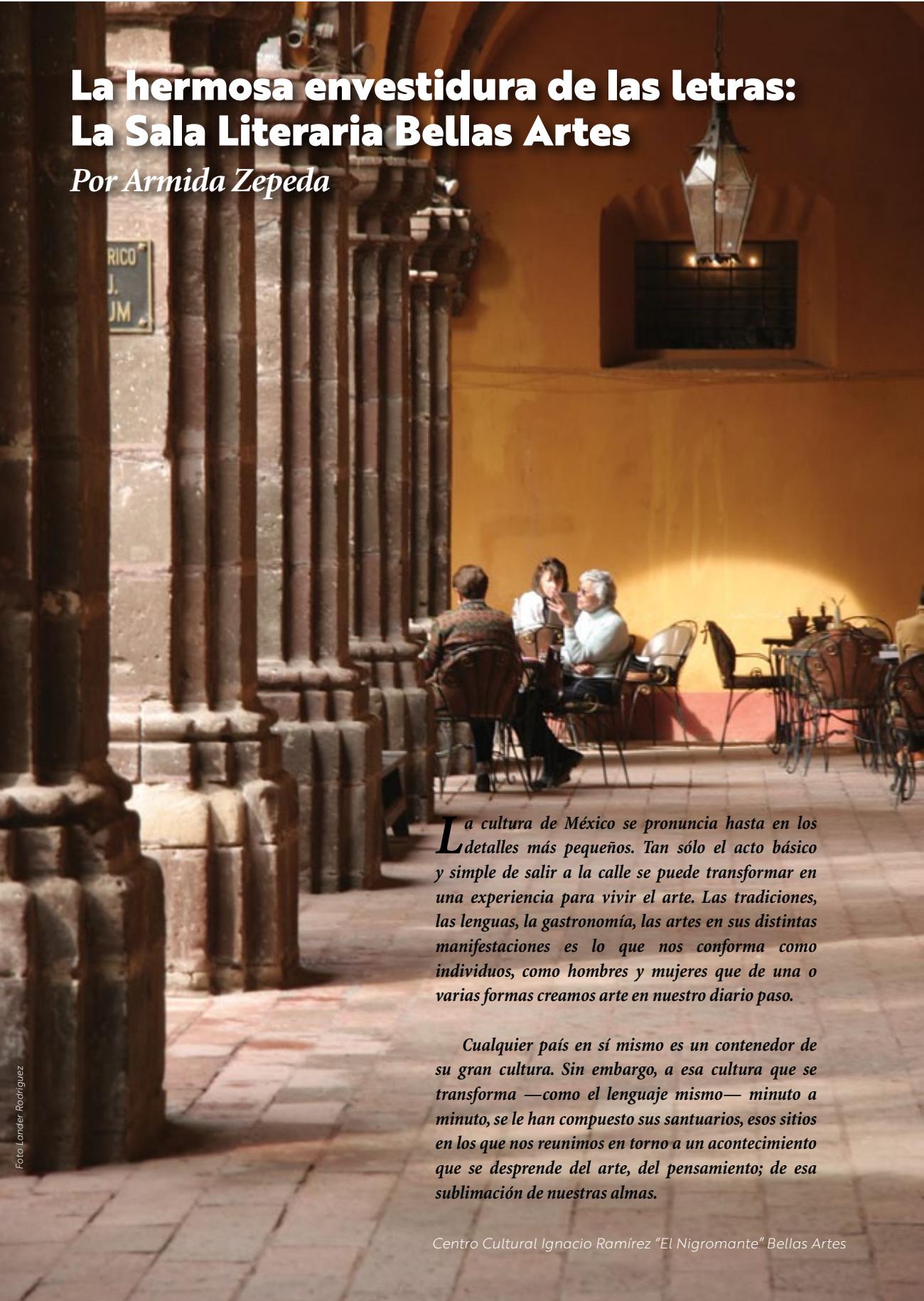
San Miguel es una intersección de tantas cosas a la vez, tan vanguardista como antigua que resulta atemporal. Vivimos en una era, gracias en gran medida al internet, en la que el mundo entero se ha convertido en cruces e intersecciones de todas las culturas a la vez; pero México en general, y San Miguel en particular, parecen encarnar este concepto de coyunturas universales de gente, tiempo y lugar con una fuerza casi mágica de convergencia y un hilo cultural que va a través de milenarios y de capa en capa de influencias creando “el ahora” y quizás a lo que Octavio Paz quería llegar en su discurso al recibir el Premio Nobel titulado: “En busca del presente”. De muchas maneras San Miguel es un eterno presente, un eterno cruce.

Calendario Azteca



La hermosa envestidura de las letras: La Sala Literaria Bellas Artes

Por Armida Zepeda



La cultura de México se pronuncia hasta en los detalles más pequeños. Tan sólo el acto básico y simple de salir a la calle se puede transformar en una experiencia para vivir el arte. Las tradiciones, las lenguas, la gastronomía, las artes en sus distintas manifestaciones es lo que nos conforma como individuos, como hombres y mujeres que de una o varias formas creamos arte en nuestro diario paso.

Cualquier país en sí mismo es un contenedor de su gran cultura. Sin embargo, a esa cultura que se transforma —como el lenguaje mismo— minuto a minuto, se le han compuesto sus santuarios, esos sitios en los que nos reunimos en torno a un acontecimiento que se desprende del arte, del pensamiento; de esa sublimación de nuestras almas.

Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez "El Nigromante" Bellas Artes

Éste es el caso de la Sala Literaria Bellas Artes y el Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez "El Nigromante", del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, que en colaboración han conformado un lugar que enaltece las artes, y en especial han trabajado en pro de la lectura y lo que la rodea: los libros, los autores, los lectores; promueve el amor por la literatura.

Situada en la ciudad de San Miguel de Allende —una ciudad con una característica única en nuestro país: atraer a creadores de todo el mundo—, la casona que alberga al centro cultural data del siglo XVII, y originalmente formaba parte del Convento de la Concepción.

Este sitio, cuyo nombre homenajea al célebre escritor decimonónico y sanmiguelense, se ha convertido en una hermosa envestidura de las letras mexicanas y extranjeras.

Es, por demás, un punto de encuentro, en un cruce de culturas y expresiones literarias. ¿Por qué? La colaboración entre la Sala Literaria Bellas Artes y el centro cultural han unido sus esfuerzos para promover la lectura y la escritura entre todos sus asistentes, en especial entre niños y jóvenes en idiomas como el inglés y español.

Para ello se crean diversos programas y actividades que animan a tener encuentros diferentes y creativos con la literatura. La Sala Literaria Bellas Artes impulsa estas actividades con el objetivo de que el público encuentre en la literatura nuevas herramientas de comunicación, entendimiento, de expresión y creación, que promuevan el diálogo, la reflexión, pero también de estudio y conocimiento entre autores de trayectoria y noveles. Dado el carácter cosmopolita de una ciudad como San Miguel de Allende, estos espacios resultan fundamentales, ya que cada uno de los sitios destinados para la creación se tornan interculturales.

Un poco de la historia y su oferta

En mayo de 2015, la Sala Literaria Bellas Artes en coordinación con el Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez "El Nigromante" comenzó a trabajar, en un principio, ofreciendo al público actividades conectadas con



Poetry Slam, Sala Literaria Bellas Artes

la literatura. Con el paso del tiempo, también ha colaborado con programas y eventos como el Festival Literario de Verano, Talleres de Verano, Festival Internacional de Cuenta Cuentos y Libros para Todos, logrando una integración cada vez más bicultural, con un mayor número de mexicanos participando y, sobre todo, más jóvenes interesados. Poco a poco, se comenzaron a crear programas permanentes, como diplomados en Literatura, cursos de Literatura Mexicana, círculos de lectura bilingüe, talleres de expresión literaria para jóvenes y niños, lecturas de poesía en inglés y español, así como talleres de creación literaria en ambos idiomas.

Dada la naturaleza de las actividades, la Sala Literaria Bellas Artes se ha dado a la tarea de crear una colección de libros en español e inglés; una selección tan diversa que la hace interesante y fuera de lo común, ya que cada título proviene de muchos donadores interesados en este proyecto, entre ellos: la escritora Sandra Cisneros.

Todo este esfuerzo no sería nada sin sus participantes. Por lo mismo, invito a todos los lectores que viven en San Miguel de Allende y a los lectores visitantes, a que entren a la Sala Literaria, busquen un libro y lo lean en este maravilloso recinto del siglo XVII. También invitamos a nuestros colaboradores a que compartan sus libros donándolos a nuestro acervo, para que juntos crezcamos la oferta para que los adultos, jóvenes y niños disfruten el gran viaje de la lectura.



Mural de David Alfaro Siqueiros, Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez "El Nigromante" Bellas Artes

A Place of Letters: Sala Literaria Bellas Artes

Mexico's culture is articulated even in the smallest details. The simple and basic act of going out on the street can be transformed into an experience of live art. Traditions, languages, gastronomy, arts in its different manifestations is what defines us as individuals, as men and women who in one way or another create art in our daily lives.

Any country is a container of the wider culture. However, this culture which transforms itself – like language – minute by minute, creates sanctuaries, places where we gather around an event that comes from art, thought, and emerges from the sublimation of our souls.

In this case the Literary Sala Bellas Artes, and the Cultural Center Ignacio Ramírez "El Nigromante," from the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, have cooperatively formed a place to elevate art, and espe-

cially to promote reading and that which surrounds it: books, authors, readers, and a love of literature.

Located in San Miguel de Allende — a city with unique characteristics of Mexico — El Nigromante (Bellas Artes) attracts creators from all over the world. The home to the cultural center dates back to the seventeenth century, and originally was part of the Convent of the Concepción. Its name is an homage to the celebrated nineteenth century writer from San Miguel.

It is, above all, a meeting point, in a cross of cultures and literary expressions. Why? The collaboration between the Literary Sala of Bellas Artes and the cultural center has brought together their efforts to promote reading and writing among its participants, especially among children and youngsters in English and Spanish.

For this, year after year, diverse programs and activities are created which encourage residents and visitors to have creative encounters with literature. The Literary Sala of Bellas Artes propels these activites so the public will discover new tools of communication, understanding, of expression and creation, to promote dialogue, reflection, but also of evaluation and knowledge among established authors and newcomers. Given the cosmopolitan nature of a city like San Miguel de Allende, these spaces turn out to be essential, since each of the designated sites for creation become intercultural.

History and Activities

In May 2015, the Literary Sala of Bellas Artes, A.C. in collaboration with the Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez "El Nigromante" started working, in the beginning, offering activities to the public connected

with literature. Over time, it has also cooperated with programs and events such as the Summer Literary Festival, Summer Workshops, International Storytelling Festival and Books for All (Libros para Todos), accomplishing a progressively bilingual integration, with a higher number of participating Mexicans and, above all, more interest from young people. Little by little, permanent activities programs have been created, such as certification programs in Literature, Mexican Literature courses, bilingual reading circles, literary expression workshops for young people and children, poetry readings and creative literature workshops in English and Spanish. Sala Literaria is home to Poetry Café Bellas Artes, founded and hosted by Writers' Conference Co-Director, Maia Williams, and supported by a dedicated advisory board.

Given the nature of these activities, the Literary Sala of Bellas Artes has and continues to curate a collection of books dedicated to Literature and Art, in Spanish and English. Each title comes from different donors interested in this project, among them: the internationally recognized and notable writer Sandra Cisneros.

All this effort would not amount to much without participants. Therefore, I invite all readers who live in San Miguel de Allende and the ones who visit, to visit Sala Literaria, to look for a book and read it in this marvelous seventeenth century sanctuary. We also invite our collaborators to share their books by donating them. Together, we will grow the collection so that adults, youngsters and children will continue to enjoy the pleasures of reading.



Alberto Lenz, Director del Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez "El Nigromante"



All Sala Literaria photos by Javier Barros

Armida Zepeda, Juan Villoro, Ricardo Villarreal, Susan Page, Alberto Lenz y Carmen Rioja

Nuestra Sala Literaria

Armida Zepeda, Directora Festival de Escritores

Hace un año y medio nuestra Sala Literaria Bellas Artes fue inaugurada por el reconocido escritor mexicano **Juan Villoro**, quien felicitó y alentó a San Miguel Literary Sala por el esfuerzo y la gran iniciativa de crear un espacio permanente de difusión y promoción de la lectura y la escritura para todos los habitantes de la cosmopolita San Miguel de Allende. En un inicio no fue fácil conjugar la iniciativa. ¿Hay lectores en la ciudad? ¿Dónde están los escritores en San Miguel de Allende? Había que buscarlos e incitarlos a apropiarse del nuevo espacio. Que los vecinos de San Miguel de Allende –niños, jóvenes, adultos, tercera edad–, vecinos todos de la ciudad –mexicanos y extranjeros– conocieran la Sala Literaria fue nuestro objetivo fundamental en los primeros meses. Crear nuevos público no es tarea fácil. Después intentaríamos homologar múltiples públicos en un mismo espacio.

La Sala Literaria ofrece en la actualidad talleres de creación literaria, seminarios de reflexión e investigación, diplomados en narrativa, talleres de dramaturgia, cursos de literatura, clubs de lectura, tertulias literarias, eslams poéticos, ciclos y presentaciones de libros y revistas.

Taller de Creación Literaria “Palabra Vivas”, coordinado por el músico y escritor Óscar Plazola, trabaja con escritores jóvenes y adultos, algunos de ellos se inscriben en el programa de becas de San Miguel Festival de Escritores.

Diplomado en Narrativa Contemporánea, en coordinación con el Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez El Nigromante, escritores del FONCA impartieron en San Miguel sus conocimientos: Julián Herbert, Joel Flores, Alberto Chimal y Hernán Lara Zavala.

Círculo de Expresión Literaria para Jóvenes

Taller de fomento a la lectura y escritura para adolescentes de Secundaria y Preparatoria, impartido por Armida Zepeda, directora de la Sala Literaria.

Ciclo Conversando con los Escritores: Maricruz Patiño, Fernando Macotela, Jaime Panqueva, Alain Derbez, John P. Davidson, Tanya Huntington...

Poetry Café

Reuniones mensuales de lectura de poesía en la voz de sus autores: poetas angloparlantes y habitantes de San Miguel, con su anfitriona Maia Williams.

Slam Poético

Nuestra sala ha sido “tomada” por la banda de jóvenes poetas, raperos, visuales, músicos y artistas gráficos del

Colectivo Poético San Miguel, quienes han realizado tres poetry slams, invitando a otros colectivos de Celaya, Guanajuato, Querétaro y CDMX. El colectivo, coordinado por Mike Vidargas, es anfitrión del Circuito Nacional de Poetry Slam 2017.

El Club de la Gran Lectura

En vísperas del San Miguel Festival de Escritores, la Sala Literaria es anfitriona de un grupo de lectores multiculturales y bilingües. El libro: La amante del ghetto, del escritor mexicano Pedro Ángel Palou, Conferencista Magistral 2017.

Sede para reuniones de San Miguel Festival de Escritores/Writers Conference, Festival de Cuentacuentos/Storytellers Festival, Libros para Todos/Creating Reader, El Tequio de San Miguel y otros.



Sala Literaria

Our Literary Sala

Sala Literaria Bellas Artes was inaugurated in November of 2015 by the renowned Mexican writer Juan Villoro who congratulated Mayor Villareal for his initiative in creating a permanent reading room dedicated to literature and art (Spanish and English books). This invitation and honor was extended to the San Miguel Literary Sala, A.C. in recognition of the literacy and literary programs the nonprofit organization makes available for residents of San Miguel de Allende and the indigenous villages nearby.

As director of Sala Literaria, my first challenge was to find readers and writers in San Miguel de Allende who would enjoy and benefit from the programs we were now able to offer. I began meeting with and encouraging members of the community to visit the



Sala Literaria

beautiful new space, to introduce our Sala Literaria to the Mexican and expatriate community—to children and adults of all ages.

Over time, we experienced great success by offering a variety of programs and events: creative writing workshops, reading and discussion groups, debates and research seminars, workshops presented by professionals in narrative, playwriting, poetry and literature, informal and public gatherings for writers and poets, presentations of books and magazines by authors and editors.

Literary Creation “Palabras Vivas” Workshop

Coordinated by the musician and writer Oscar Plazola, focuses on young and adult writers, some of them are former recipients of San Miguel Writers’ Conference’s scholarships for the annual teen creative writing workshops and writing competition.

Contemporary Narrative Diploma

In coordination with the Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramírez El Nigromante, writers from FONCA shared their knowledge in San Miguel: Julián Herbert, Joel Flores, Alberto Chimal, and Hernán Lara Zavala.

Young Adults Literary Expression Circle

Workshop for promoting reading and writing for adolescents in middle school and high school, taught by Armida Zepeda, Sala Literaria Director .

Conversing with Writers Series

Maricruz Patiño, Fernando Macotela, Jaime Panqueva, Alain Derbez, John P. Davidson, Tanya Huntington.

Poetry Café Bellas Artes

Meeting monthly September through April, local and visiting poets gather to share their original work



Alistair Palmer, Maia Williams, John Wolff

in a casual setting. Poetry Cafés are hosted by Maia Williams and Libbe Dennard. Community Open Mics are held in December and July.

Poetry Slam

Sala Literaria has been taken over by a group of young poets, rappers, visual and graphic artists, and musicians from “Colectivo Poético San Miguel.” These artists have hosted three regional and national poetry slams, inviting other groups from Celaya, Guanajuato, Queretaro and Mexico City. The collective, coordinated by Mike Vidargas, will be host to the Circuito Nacional de Poetry Slam 2017.

The Great Read Club (Spanish)

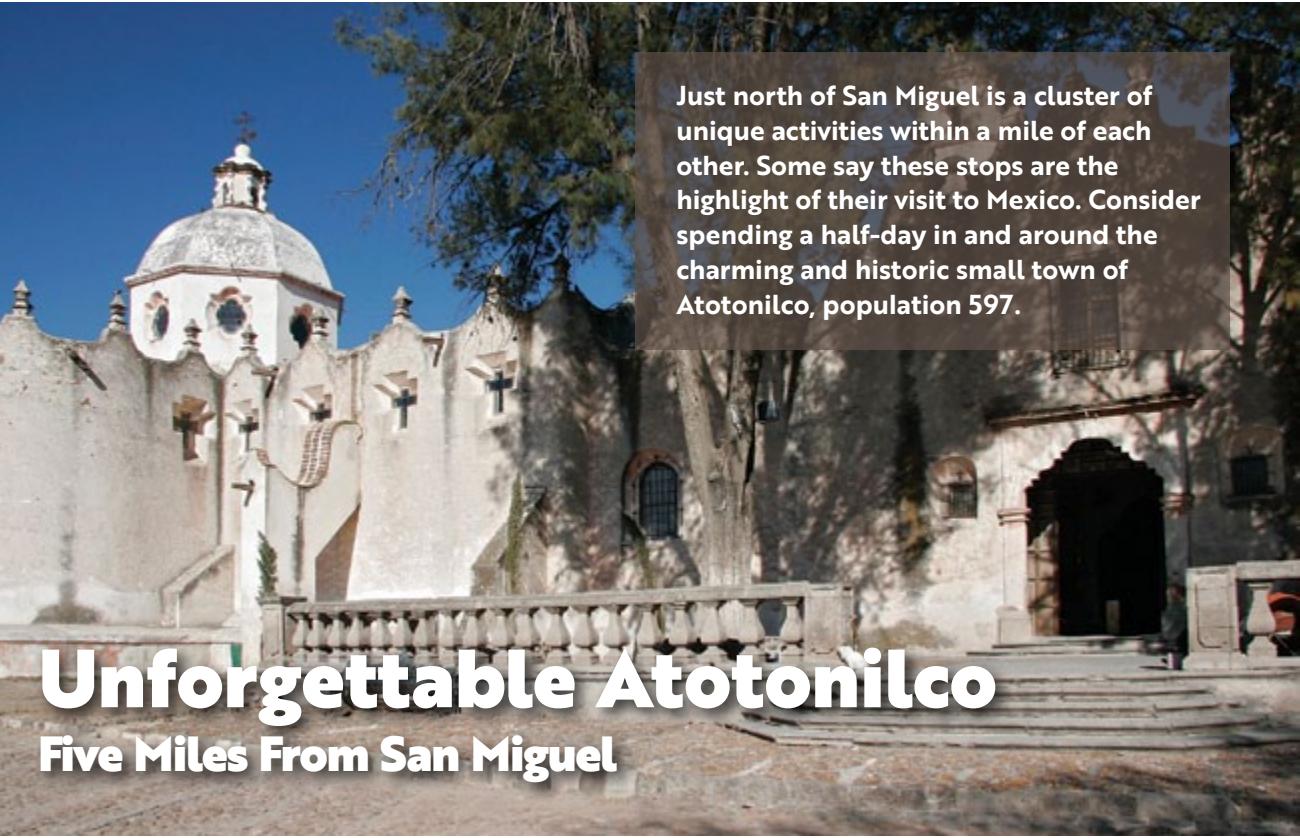
This year, Sala Literaria is hosting a group of multicultural and bilingual readers as they tackle *La Amante del Ghetto* by Mexican author Pedro Angel Palou, who will present a keynote address at the 2017 San Miguel Writers’ Conference and Literary Festival.

Sala Literaria also serves as the headquarters for meetings of the San Miguel Writers’ Conference & Literary Festival (Festival de Escritores & Literature) planning committees, of the San Miguel International Storytelling Festival, and of Libros para Todos (Books for All), Creating Readers, the Tequio of San Miguel, and others.

Sala Literaria Bellas Artes was made possible by generous donations from the following individuals:

Kahren & Michael Arbitman
Rosa Beltrán-Dirección de Literatura UNAM
Sandra Cisneros
Jackie & Patrick Donnelly
Skot Foreman
Alfred Garcia-Lucio & Jim McKeever
— Camino Silvestre
Lisa Garmon
Linda Hampton
Deborah Kanarek
Marty Kimmel Interior and Furniture Design
Mary Lattimore
Beverly Moor
Susan Page & Mayer Shacter
Alistair Palmer
Hope Palmer
Barbara Porter
Laura & Woody Rea
Alberto Ruy Sánchez & Margarita de Orellana
— Artes de México
Adrian Toscano & Larry Stebbins
— Agave Sotheby's International Realty
Margarita & Carlos Villalba
Maia Williams & Wyman Rousseau
Helle Szkelob-Wolff & John Wolff
Rosi Zorrilla — Sisal





Unforgettable Atotonilco

Five Miles From San Miguel



Detail Fresco

Just north of San Miguel is a cluster of unique activities within a mile of each other. Some say these stops are the highlight of their visit to Mexico. Consider spending a half-day in and around the charming and historic small town of Atotonilco, population 597.

SANCTUARY OF ATOTONILCO

An Architectural Poem

In 1750, the penitent, self-flagellating priest, Luis Felipe Néri, observed Otomi families bathing together in natural hot springs. Feeling called to end this sinful habit, he built a country church on the site, and hired the artist Miguel Antonio Martínez de Pocasangre to cover the walls and ceilings with paintings of Bible stories and with poems he (Néri) had written. Pocasangre worked for thirty years. The paintings have all been expertly restored with a combination of locally raised funds and grants from UNESCO.

Just inside the entrance, on the ceiling, you can see Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss. The devil is sitting smack on his shoulder in the form of a monkey, a traditional Christian symbol for vanity and luxury. A little further in, there is Judas receiving his thirty pieces of silver, and the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garment. The artist didn't know what Roman soldiers looked like, so they all curiously resemble Spanish conquistadors.

The Revolution of 1810 began in nearby Dolores Hidalgo. Atotonilco was the first stop of the angry insurgents as they marched south and where they seized the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which became the symbol of the revolution and of a free Mexico.

The church remains a sacred site of Mexican Catholicism, hosting large cleansing retreats several times each year. It is the second most visited pilgrimage site in all of Mexico.

GALERIA ATOTONILCO

A Gallery of Mexican Folk Art

A mile south of the church is a gallery of Mexican folk art, widely recognized as the most comprehensive collection of quality folk art in all of Mexico. In 6000 square feet of exhibition space in a much-published, architecturally interesting building and a beautiful country setting, you will see a stunning variety of ceramics, wood carvings, paper maché, textiles, bead works, copper, historic photographs, jewelry, country antiques and more.



Nave Principal del Santuario de Atotonilco



Fotos Atotonilco y Nirvana Larrea Rodriguez

OTHER ACTIVITIES

A two-minute walk from the Folk Art gallery is the charming country restaurant Nirvana, featuring a varied menu, delicious food, and beautiful grounds. A fifteen-minute walk the other direction from the church is La Gruta Hot Springs with its famous hot water tunnel and cave, therapeutic waterfall, several pools of differing temperatures, and a casual lunch-only restaurant.



Detail Vault

ATOTONILCO INOLVIDABLE A 8 km de San Miguel

Al norte de San Miguel hay una serie de actividades únicas cerca una de la otra. Algunos dicen que estas paradas son la parte más memorable de su visita a México. Consideré pasar medio día en y alrededor del encantador e histórico pueblito de Atotonilco (población 597).

SANTUARIO DE ATOTONILCO Un Poema Arquitectónico

En 1750, el sacerdote Luis Felipe Néri observó familias otomíes bañándose juntas en las aguas termales. Sintiendo la llamada a terminar este hábito pecaminoso, construyó una iglesia en el campo en el lugar, y contrató a Miguel Antonio Martínez de Pocasangre para cubrir los muros y techos con pinturas de la historia de la Biblia y poemas que él (Néri) había escrito. Pocasangre trabajó por treinta años. Todas las pinturas han sido expertamente restauradas con una combinación de fondos recaudados localmente y de la UNESCO.

Justo adentro de la entrada, en el techo, puede verse a Judas traicionando a Jesús con un beso. El



Detail Doors

diablo está sentado directamente en su hombro en forma de chango, un símbolo cristiano tradicional de vanidad y lujuria. Un poco más adentro, hay un Judas recibiendo sus treinta piezas de plata, y los soldados romanos haciendo apuestas por las prendas de Jesús. El artista no sabía cómo fueron los soldados romanos, así es que curiosamente se parecen a los conquistadores españoles.

La Revolución de 1810 empezó en el cercano Dolores Hidalgo. Atotonilco fue la primera parada de los enfurecidos insurgentes cuando marcharon al sur y donde se apoderaron del estandarte de la Virgen de Guadalupe, el cual se convirtió en el símbolo de la revolución de un México libre.



Detail Altar

La iglesia permanece como un sitio sagrado para el catolicismo mexicano, siendo anfitrión de retiros de purificación varias veces al año. Es el segundo lugar de peregrinación más visitado en todo México.

GALERIA ATOTONILCO Una Galería de Arte Folklórico Mexicano

A un kilómetro y medio al sur de la iglesia existe una galería de arte folklórico mexicano, ampliamente reconocida por la más extensa colección de arte folklórico de calidad en todo México. En 6,000 pies cuadrados de espacio de exhibición, en un muy publicitado y arquitectónicamente interesante edificio, en un hermoso lugar campirano, usted verá una imponente variedad de cerámicas, tallas en madera, papel maché, textiles, trabajos con cuentas, cobre, fotografías históricas, joyería, antigüedades rurales y más.



Galería Atotonilco



Camino Antiguo Ferrocarril # 14 | Colonia El Cortijo, Atotonilco, San Miguel de Allende
By Appointment: www.folkartsanmiguel.com
415 185-2225 - mshacter@mac.com

OTRAS ACTIVIDADES

Una caminata de dos minutos desde la galería de arte folklórico lo lleva al encantador restaurante campirano Nirvana, que le ofrece un variado menú, comida deliciosa y hermosos jardines. Un paseo de quince minutos en la dirección opuesta de la iglesia lo lleva a las aguas termales La Gruta con su famoso túnel y cueva, caída de agua terapéutica, varias albercas de diferentes temperaturas, y un restaurante informal que sirve almuerzos solamente. cueva, caída de agua terapéutica, varias albercas de diferentes temperaturas, y un restaurante informal que sirve almuerzo solamente.



Nirvana
Camino Antigua Vía del Ferrocarril 11, Cortijo, 37750 San Miguel de Allende, Gto.
Reservations Necessary: hotelnirvana.mx – (415) 185-2194 – ventas@hotelnirvana.mx

SKOT FOREMAN



Language Based Art: A Contemporary Point of View

Widely regarded as one of San Miguel's very best, Skot Foreman Fine Art Gallery reflects Foreman's incisive curatorial eye by way of NY and Miami. His roster of blue-chip works in various mediums (think: Basquiat, Indiana, Lichtenstein, Picasso, Rauschenberg, and Warhol, just to name a few) reads like a Modernist canon. And his indefatigable pursuit and identification of important new contemporary work may prove to be tomorrow's lexicon of art stars. Philip Alvaré was lucky to catch Skot Foreman on his way out the door.

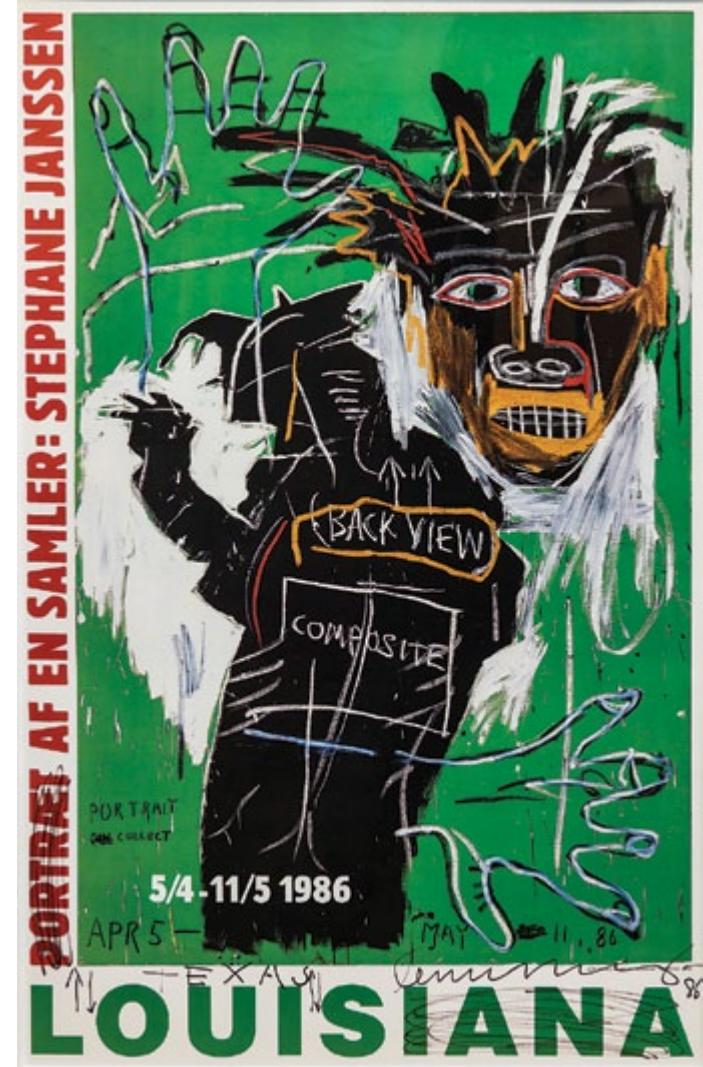
Jean-Michel Basquiat
Portrait of a Collector (with original drawing), 1986

Offset lithograph, with marker
39.4 x 29.6 in
99 x 76 cm
UNIQUE

Signed, and dated "86" in marker,
lower right on recto

Foundry/Publisher Louisiana
Museum of Modern Art,

Copenhagen, Denmark



P.A.

Skot, if you have a moment, we'd love to get your read on Language Based Art. You certainly have some fine examples in your gallery. We're especially interested in intersections, junctures and the interdependency between language and art.

S.F.

Well, for example, Basquiat's use of text (words, letters, text boxes and cross-outs) was a crucial element in his work and functioned as key compositional elements in his paintings. He often referred to his text as "brush-strokes," indicating that he considered language to be vital on a formal level as well as conceptual.

Lenguaje Basado en Arte: Un Punto de Vista Contemporáneo

Ampliamente considerada como una de las mejores y de gran calidad en San Miguel, la Galería Skot Foreman refleja el incisivo ojo curatorial de Foreman vía Nueva York y Miami. Su lista de obras de primera línea (pensemos en Basquiat, Indiana, Lichtenstein, Picasso, Rauschenberg y Warhol, por mencionar algunos) se lee como un catálogo modernista. Y su incansable búsqueda e identificación del nuevo arte contemporáneo, quizás es la prueba de que ha conformado un diccionario de las estrellas del arte. Philip Alvaré tuvo suerte en sorprender a Skot Foreman saliendo de su galería.



*James Havard
No Words, 2004*

*Mixed media collage
29 x 22 in
74 x 55 cm
Hand-signed and
dated "Havard 04"
top center*

P.A.

And in the case of abstract artist James Havard turned primitif...

S.E.

What's interesting here is if you look at that piece it's actually entitled "No Words" but the whole background is stylized, cursive writing that doesn't necessarily make sense but the illegibility makes you want to look at the painting because you want to investigate what he's trying to say. Or perhaps, he's just trying to get you to look at the picture in a different manner. The text is further reinforced with a random NY Times front-page, over-painted with a figure in profile spewing words.

P.A.

Scott, si tiene un momento, nos encantaría que nos hablaras sobre tu impresión en el Arte Basado en el Lenguaje. Ciertamente tienes varios ejemplos finos en tu galería. Estamos especialmente interesados en las intersecciones, conexiones e interdependencia entre el lenguaje y el arte...

S.F.

Bueno, Basquiat es un ejemplo. Él usa texto (palabras, letras, cajas de texto y cruces) como un elemento crucial en su trabajo y funcionó como elementos claves de su composición pictórica. Él a menudo se refería a los textos como "pinceladas", lo que indica que él consideraba que el lenguaje era vital tanto en el nivel formal como en el conceptual.

PA:

This Howard Finster piece follows a format often found in traditional Mexican folk art or a retablo where language is used to describe an event, often the visitation of a saint, or a genre scene.

SF:

I personally knew the Reverend Finster and he was convinced through divine intervention that by adding text to his imagery, his sermons or streaming thoughts of consciousness would be further amplified and last in perpetuity, be immortalized.

P.A.

Y en el caso de James Havard ...

S.F.

Lo que es interesante aquí es que si ves la pieza, que de hecho está titulada "Sin Palabras", pero todo el fondo está estilizado, tiene una escritura cursiva que no necesariamente tiene sentido, pero te hace querer ver a la pieza porque quieras investigar lo que está tratando de decir. Quizá está tratando de que veas a la pintura de una manera diferente. El texto está reforzado más allá de la primera plana del New York Times sobreimpresa con una figura en perfil escupiendo palabras.

PA:

Esta pieza de Howard Finster sigue el formato encontrado frecuentemente en el arte folklórico tradicional mexicano o en un retablo, donde el lenguaje es usado para describir un evento, a menudo la aparición de un santo o una escena del género.

Howard Finster, Oblin, 1993

*Paint and marker on wood
6 x 8 in
15 x 20 cm*



PA:

And finally, the Purvis Young sketchbook mixed media collaged into a magazine and literally in the format of a publication...

SF:

And remarkably enough he referred to this practice as sheet music intersecting another art form like Mozart practicing at the piano that somehow transcends individual media categories.

PA

Ultimately, I guess it's about the projection of an idea, the transmission of a feeling, of an emotion that in the best examples transcends cultural differences—becomes a universal language.

SF

Yes! Exactly.



Purvis Young, Sketchbook, 1992

Mixed media on found magazine pages
14 x 11 x 2 in
36 x 27 x 5 cm
Hand-signed "Young" in multiple locations
Provenance: acquired directly from the artist

SF:

Conocí personalmente al Reverendo Finster y él estaba convencido, a través de la intervención divina, que al añadir texto a sus imágenes sus sermones o el torrente de pensamientos de conciencia sería amplificado, iría más allá y duraría perpetuamente, se inmortalizaría.

PA:

Y, finalmente, la pieza de Purvis Young, técnica mixta en collage en una revista y literalmente en el formato de una publicación.

SF:

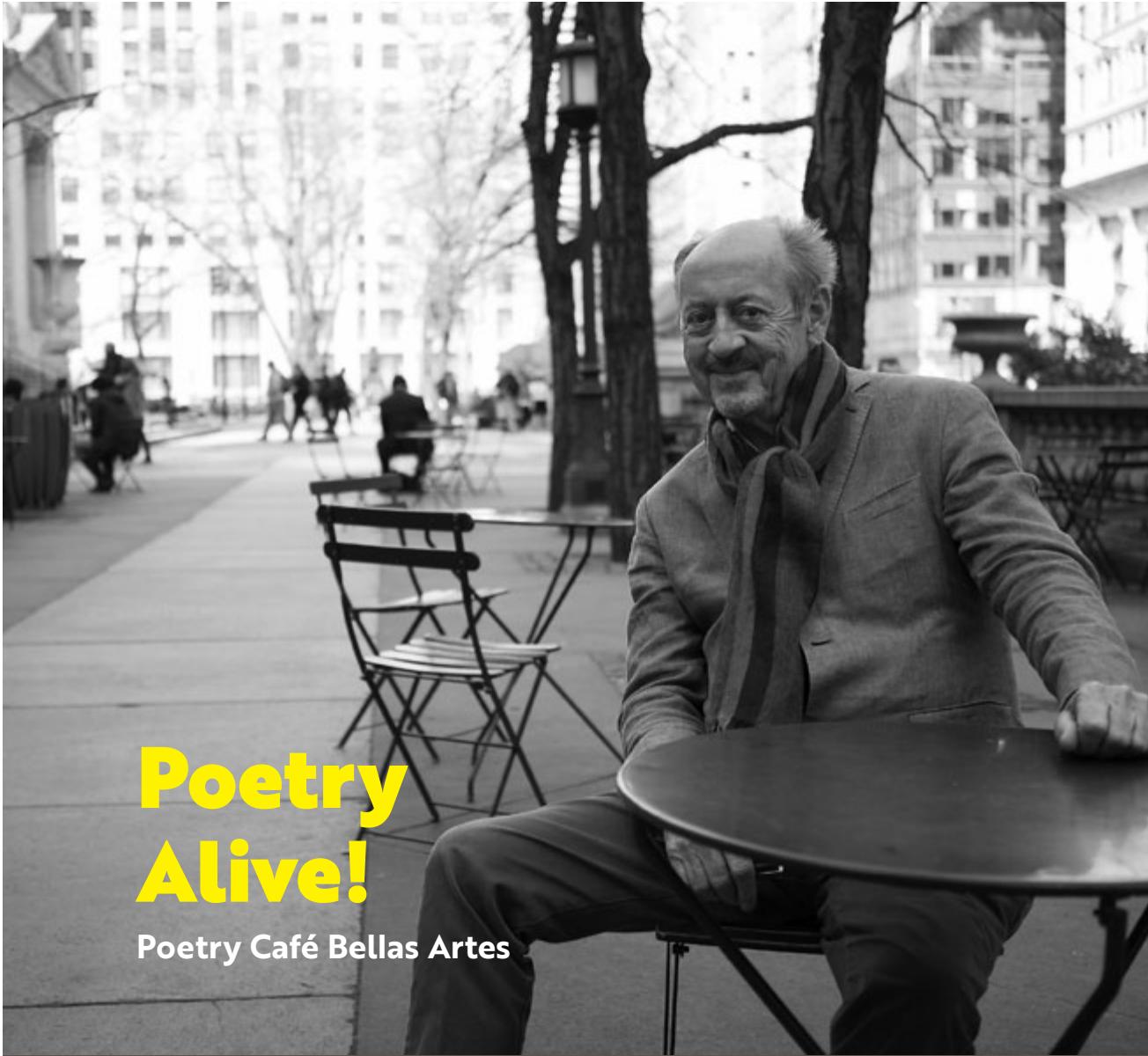
Notablemente él se refería a su trabajo como a una partitura, intersectando otra forma de arte como Mozart practicando el piano, que de alguna manera trasciende a las categorías del medio individual.

PA

Finalmente es sobre la proyección de una idea, la transmisión de un sentimiento, de una emoción que en el mejor de los ejemplos trasciende las diferencias culturales —se convierte en un lenguaje universal. el mejor de los ejemplos trasciende diferencias culturales – se convierte en un lenguaje universal.

SF

S!



Poetry Alive!

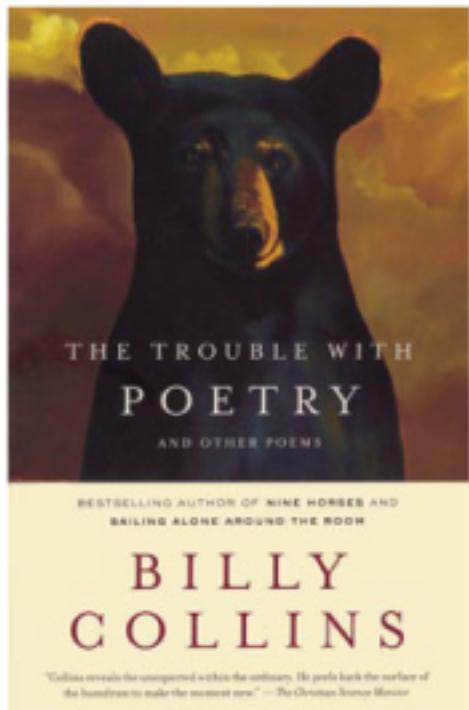
Poetry Café Bellas Artes

Video Montage, Monday, Feb. 6, 5:00 PM – Auditorium, Bellas Artes

Reading Billy Collins, Thursday, Feb. 9, 5:00 PM – Sala Literaria, Bellas Artes

Maybe you've heard someone mutter, "I hate poetry." Or, maybe it was you who said it? But Poetry is alive and kicking—practically doing a jig—at the Poetry Café Bellas Artes. It's much more than moribund musings and stuffy sonnets. In fact, the demand for a venue was so great that in 2016, SMWC Co-Director, Maia Williams, founded Poetry Café Bellas Artes. It's a place where poets, aficionados and the curious gather monthly, September through April, to share original work in a casual setting.

This year, a community-wide reading of poetry called, "Poetry Alive Celebrates Billy Collins," has been added to further celebrate the former U.S. Poet Laureate's appearance at the SMWC. Bruce Weber of the New York Times dubbed him "the most popular poet in America." Renowned for his honed humor—Collins was selected as the inaugural recipient of the Poetry Foundation's Mark Twain Award for Humor in Poetry—and vibrant, accessible work, the beloved poet embodies the concept of Poetry Alive!



Introducción a la Poesía

*Les pido que tomen un poema
y lo sostengan a contraluz
como a una diapositiva de colores*

o que pongan una oreja sobre su columna.

*Digo que sujeten un náuton en el poema
y lo vean intentar su camino de salida,
o que caminen dentro del cuarto del poema
y toquen las paredes buscando el interruptor de la luz.*

*Quiero que practiquen esquí aquático
a través de la superficie de un poema
saludando al nombre del autor en la orilla.*

*Pero todo lo que quieren hacer
es atar al poema a una silla
y torturarlo hasta que confiese,*

*Lo empiezan a golpear con una manguera
para descubrir lo que quiere decir realmente.*

— Billy Collins

Introduction to Poetry

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,
or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

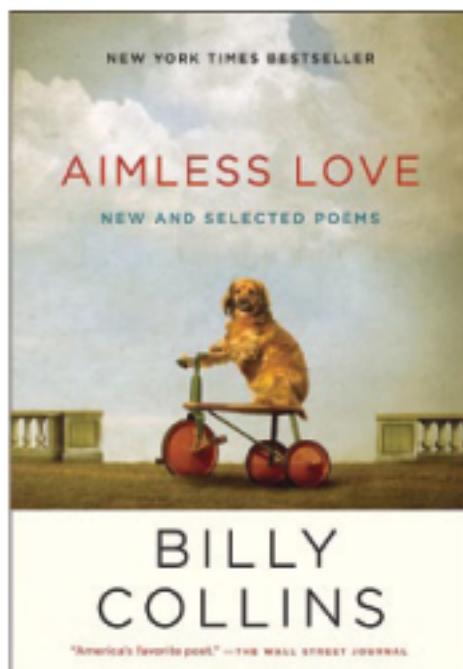
I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

—Billy Collins

Apple that Astonished Paris. Copyright - 1988, 1996
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ISBN 0-385-47520-2



THE BIG READ



Courtesy Robert Moor

The Big Read With Robert Moor's *On Trails: An Exploration*

Established in 2011, The Big Read is an annual, community-wide event sponsored by the San Miguel Literary Sala / SMWC. Participants join Big Read book groups and attend special events before the author arrives to present at the Writers' Conference. This year, Robert Moor's, *On Trails: An Exploration*, was selected for the 2017 Conference.

In the prologue to his widely acclaimed book, Moor cites the Tao that "literally means the path," as well as other philosophic and spiritual traditions, striking a thoughtful note that resonates throughout the book. It's not for nothing he's been compared to Montaigne for his ability to write upon one subject and touch upon hundreds of others and *Trails* is no mindless amble.

In 2009, while thru-hiking the 2,200 mile Appalachian Trail between Georgia and Maine, he began to wonder about the paths that lie beneath our feet, then spent the next seven years travelling the globe exploring tracks of all kinds. From traces of organisms of the Ediacaran biota, extinct about 541 million years ago, to the International Appalachian Trail in Taroudant, Morocco (a global and internet phenomenon connecting paths around the world), Moor maps his geographic, intellectual and temporal odyssey in the tradition of the best nature writers.

Philip Alvaré chatted with the roving author exploring themes related to CROSSROADS—intersecting cultures, languages and literacy as well as San Miguel's unique confluence of Mexican, Anglo and European traditions.

La Gran Lectura Con la Obra de Robert Moor On Trails: An Exploration

Establecida en 2011, The Big Read es un evento anual, que incluye a toda la comunidad patrocinado por la Sala Literaria de San Miguel / SMWC. Los participantes se unen al grupo de lectura con un único título y asisten a eventos especiales antes de que el autor llegue a presentarse a la Conferencia de Escritores. Este año, la obra de Robert Moor, *On Trails: An Exploration*, fue elegida para la Conferencia del 2017.

En el prólogo de este libro ampliamente aclamado, Moor cita el Tao que "literalmente significa el sendero," así como otras tradiciones filosóficas y espirituales, tañendo una agradable nota que resuena a través de *On Trails*. No es por nada que él ha sido comparado con Montaigne por su habilidad de escribir sobre un tema y tocar en cientos de otros y *On Trails* no es un paseo sin sentido.

Thanks for agreeing to speak with CROSSROADS, Robert. How are your feet?

They're great right now. I haven't been on a hike for a month or two—because of all the hoopla surrounding the book launch, I've only been able to do some trail runs and day hikes recently. I'm looking forward to getting back out there and abusing them again some time soon.

On Trails is an extraordinary journey on every level, at times almost daunting in its erudition. Your word "ouroborosian" summons the snake eating its tail and the tendency for human beings and ants, when lost, to wander in circles. Do you think we're destined to repeat the same mistakes, again and again?

Not quite, thankfully. One of the things I discuss in the book is that any animal that relies heavily on trails to navigate the world is prone to accidentally walking in circles—at some point, the trail closes on itself, and the walker unwittingly continues "circussing round and round" (to borrow Twain's memorable phrase). Ants and tent caterpillars have both been documented as doing this, for example. And that's a disturbing thought, on a kind of deep existential level.

En 2009, cuando hizo senderismo por las 220 millas de la vereda de los Apalaches entre Georgia y Maine, el empezó a preguntarse acerca de los senderos que yacen bajo nuestros pies, entonces él pasó los siguientes siete años viajando por el globo explorando toda clase de caminos. Desde rastros de organismos del período biológico conocido como Ediacaran, extinto hace aproximadamente 541 millones de años, al Sendero Internacional de los Apalaches en Taroudant, Marruecos (un fenómeno global de la internet conectando veredas alrededor del mundo), Moor levanta mapas de esta odisea geográfica, intelectual y temporal en la tradición de los mejores escritores de la naturaleza.

Philip Alvaré charló con el errante autor explorando temas relacionados con CROSSROADS – culturas que se intersectan, lenguajes y habilidades de lectura y escritura así como la única confluencia de tradiciones mexicanas, anglosajonas y europeas.

But here's the thing we tend to forget: eventually, those caterpillars (and ants, and humans) almost always manage to break away from the circle. Sometimes it takes a little while, but they do. And the reason why they do is because caterpillars and ants and humans each have a little speck of chaos built into them. That's what prevents circular trails, and it's also what allows unnecessarily curvy trails to straight out. Rebelliousness is our saving grace.

You suggest that human beings make and shape trails and trails shape human beings. How would you say the Internet— not exactly a trail, but certainly a connector— is shaping us and what might be its impact on literacy?

Well, the question of how the Internet is shaping us is too vast to tackle here in this interview. But, as it pertains to trails, one of the most interesting things about the Internet is how it is connecting far-flung places into a kind of collective (but glitchy) consciousness. If you rewind to the time when we all traveled trails, if you wanted to connect to a far-off community, you had to either travel there or, if you were very wealthy, you might send a messenger. And if you traveled there, you would have passed through that person's surrounding lands and seen the context

in which they live. What you see, as technology has allowed us to speed up our connection, from roads to rails to telephone lines to fiber optic cables, is an ever greater and ever faster connection but a subsequent collapsing of context. The faster you go, the blurrier the surrounding countryside looks, until you go so fast that it vanishes altogether. In some sense, this speeding up is great! When I needed to fact-check my book, I was able to email and call my friend Latifa in the Berber highlands of Morocco, using Skype. That is truly a technological miracle. But if I had only met Latifa online, I would have missed the context of her life—her house, her neighborhood, the surrounding mountains, even just the little things (the way she smiles when she's embarrassed, and on and on), which the speed and thinness of a digital connection leaves out.

Now, as it relates to literacy, I suspect that computers and the Internet will give birth to whole new forms of literature. Right now, reading online is not a great experience, in part because most writers (myself included) are still writing for the paper page. We aren't taking advantage of all the incredible things that ebooks can do and paper books can't. Fifty years in the future, I predict that there will still be paper books and the ebook will have gradually evolved into its own artform.

Similarly, you touch upon the notion that geography and place shapes cognition and language, and that culture might arise from that—an ecology of mind if you will. What is the contour of a high tech, virtual, consumerist reality and how might that be shaping the way we think?

The relationship is cyclical, I think we shape our physical landscape to suit our objectives, and then that environment shapes our thinking (and, especially, our kids' thinking), which in turn shapes the landscape, ad infinitum. That's one of the lessons that trails have to teach us: from moment to moment we are, each of us, engaged in a very real, non-metaphorical, non-magical process of shaping reality. I see our increasingly virtual world as an extension of certain neoliberal ethics that have been growing for at least a century—the belief that each of us is entitled to max-

imum comfort, maximum convenience, and, perhaps most of all, our own private reality. Interestingly, this relates back to literature. If you take a step back and look at the truly phenomenal explosion of literature that has resulted since the invention of the printing press, and growing ever more so with the invention of the Internet, what you see is certain people (writers) creating virtual worlds that other people (readers) can access. An enormous portion of my life has been spent with my eyes glued to a piece of technology (a book, we must not forget, is technology too), experiencing structured hallucinations. That has allowed me to expand my mental landscape, but it has also allowed me, at certain points, to escape the physical landscape. (One of the things I love about nonfiction literature, I should add, is that it somewhat paradoxically creates a virtual world that matches—and *allows us to better navigate*—the world we live in. It is, in that sense, an act of map-making.) I'm not wise enough to predict how this process of pulling-away-from-the-world will all play out, but it strikes me that certain movements premised upon bringing us back to the physical world, like the back-to-nature movement and the mindfulness movement, will only grow more relevant in the decades to come.

San Miguel is possibly unique in its confluence of Mexican, Anglo and European cultures and has been a magnet for artists, writers, thinkers and citizens of the world for generations. It's about integration. Care to speculate on why that may be?

As you probably know, my mom, Beverly, has been living in San Miguel for more than a decade. I don't have to tell you how beautiful this place is, the architecture and the high desert sunsets and all of that. But it is also, as you say, the unique mix of people that make the place what it is. Too often, when Europeans or North Americans move abroad, they attempt to forcefully impose their value systems upon the local culture. One of the things I value about San Miguel is that the ex-pats who move here tend to be—not always, of course, but surprisingly often—a bit more conscious of their place as newcomers, and a bit more cautious in their attempts to change the local culture to suit their needs. They allow the place and its people to imprint upon themselves, instead of always trying

to imprint themselves upon the place. Add to that the rich artistic and literary history—going back to Rivera and Cuellar and Ferlinghetti and Snodgrass and the rest—and the result is an almost surreally creative atmosphere.

You mention human beings and other species tend to diverge, find shortcuts from the best-laid paths and rectilinear certainty of urban planning. With that tendency in mind, how do you think a wall segregating the Mexican and US frontiers might play out?

Oh, please don't get me started on that stupid f'ing wall.

Regarding cultural integration: you cite the German word, *unheimlich*, “a peculiar comingling of the familiar and unfamiliar” a somewhat dystopian perspective from which arises “the experience of oneself as a foreign body” and something every citizen of the world can relate to. Is there an antidote for this condition?

The thing about the *unheimlich* (literally: un-home-like) is that it is an in-between-state. It's that feeling you get when you see a Tibetan monk talking on a cellphone, or hear a ranchero cover of a Nancy Sinatra song, or find yourself dancing poorly in some Masaai marriage ritual wearing a pair of (suddenly stupid-looking) cargo shorts. If something is purely familiar, we're cool with it. And if something is wholly unfamiliar, it's exotic, and so we know how to deal with it. But it's those weird minglings of the familiar and the unfamiliar where our understanding of the world starts to get destabilized. And in those unstable moments, we can learn a lot about ourselves and our culture. With that being said, it is uncomfortable, that uncanny feeling. You obviously wouldn't want to be stuck in that feeling all the time. And one way to get out of it, I've learned, is simply to remain aggressively open-minded—to not pass judgement, but instead allow the experience to normalize itself in your mind. If you can make yourself at home in the uncanny, it will cease to look so un-home-like.

In your epilogue, you suggest the notion of wisdom is no longer fashionable in philosophic circles. Despite that, could you venture a recommendation—some-

thing to bear in mind—to help navigate the increasingly complex global terrain of forking paths, maybe a trail towards a harmonious crossroads?

This a very big question to address in such a small space, and for me to be answering at such a relatively young age. (I'm only 32, after all.) But one thing that studying trails has taught me is that whatever choices you make in life, and whatever values and goals you attune your life's compass to (whether it be happiness or wealth or knowledge or pleasure or fame), your life will streamline to those ends. At the same time, it's important to keep in mind that our individual actions always have collective effects: every step you take on your own life's path will alter the paths of others. So at some point in your life, no matter what age you are, it's good to set aside some time to examine your own values and think hard about what kind of person you really want to be and what kind of society you want to live in. Not coincidentally, a good long walk is a great time for exactly this kind of introspection.

Have we come full circle?

I hope not!



ROBERT MOOR

Big Read Discussion Groups – How to participate

As in past years, the Big Read invites everyone in town to read *On Trails: An Exploration* and then to join a discussion group about the book. Big Read Discussion Groups will meet during the week of January 23, 2017. (Some groups may elect to meet earlier and to meet several times, at their own discretion.) The Big Read committee is preparing discussion questions to spur lively conversations. If you would like to join a discussion group, e-mail Jo Curtis at jocurtis44@hotmail.com. mention your preference to meet in the morning, afternoon, or evening; your neighborhood; and if you would like to host a group.

DIARIO DE UNA CIUDAD

Por Alicia Quiñones

La palabra “intersección” es un sinónimo de vida.

Desde que nacemos, cada acontecimiento es un punto de encuentro, un punto que modifica los destinos. Encontramos a nuestros padres, descubrimos la risa, la tristeza..., pero sobre todo hallamos el lenguaje: una manera sutil y necesaria de expresar el todo. Esa forma tan simple que se integra a nuestro pensamiento como el acto de respirar, la conocían muy bien los antiguos griegos. “En la filosofía y en la retórica griegas —recuerda el pensador George Steiner—, los peripatéticos son, literalmente, los que viajan a pie de una polis a otra, aquellos cuyas enseñanzas son itinerantes”. Los escritores contemporáneos aún conservan y recrean en cada texto —conscientes o no— esta idea. La literatura es la representación de esas intersecciones.

Las ciudades modernas son un ejemplo de esos cruces, y los cronistas y novelistas se han dado a la tarea de retratar los grandes encuentros culturales, sociales, políticos, íntimos, de épocas que conforman a una ciudad. Y no sólo eso, grandes escritores han sido el propio cruce entre dos o más naciones, uno de ellos es David Lida, quien además de ser una de las voces contemporáneas más interesantes, su literatura aporta una comprensión entre las grandes urbes mexicanas y estadounidenses.

Lida nació y creció en Nueva York, y desde hace más de veinte años vive en la Ciudad de México: “Si yo tuviera que definir qué es lo que más me gusta de este lugar, es que es una megalópolis inentendible. Me gustaría decir que, a través de los años, yo he estado constantemente sorprendido y no he tenido dos días iguales”, comenta el cronista. Esa realidad de una ciudad cambiante es la que Lida refleja en el periodismo que transforma en literatura. Entre sus libros, se encuentran *First Stop in the New World*, una crónica a nivel de piso, del caminante de los diversos barrios de una Ciudad de México contemporánea, donde contempla la visión de un visitante en este país con el descubrimiento de la gastronomía, la industria del sexo, la religión, la política y las historias de cómo muchos mexicanos sobreviven ante brutales obstáculos. Con este libro, en *San Francisco Chronicle* se escribió: “Como Joseph Mitchell capturó la vida de los marginados a mediados del siglo en Nueva York, Orhan Pamuk la melancolía del siglo XX en Estambul (...), Lida con maestría detalla la lucha de una ciudad reprimida...”. David Lida es una de las voces contemporáneas más sólidas de la literatura de no ficción actual que imprime la visión de dos ciudades, dos países, dos culturas.

Por otro lado, en nuestro país tenemos a una de las escritoras más internacionales, y es, sin duda, Laura Esquivel, quien nació en la Ciudad de México, en 1950. “Cocinera, alquimista, bruja de negros cabellos largos y ensortijados —ha dicho Elena Poniatowska—, amante del hombre y de la vida...”. Esquivel no sólo ha legado al mundo la visión de un México costumbrista a través de su novela —ya un clásico— *Como agua para chocolate*, traducida a 33 idiomas; en esa historia también se recuerda la educación de la mujer de principios del siglo XX, educación donde se incluye la comida, las atenciones en casa y la forma de percibir el amor.

Lo mismo sucedió con su novela *Tan veloz como el deseo*, inspirada en su padre, telegrafista. ¿Cómo concebir la intersección desde un mundo costumbrista, como el que Esquivel ha retratado en su literatura? Es sólo a través de las costumbres y de los detalles más pequeños —como Alice Munro, Premio Nobel de Literatura 2013 lo hace desde los pequeños condados canadienses— es como se logra crear la conexión con otros mundos.

David Lida. Cortesía del Autor



Los escritores que han creado un intercambio literario y cultural entre los países de América del Norte son incontables. Dos grandes fronteras y dos idiomas separan a tres diversas culturas que, pese a la modernidad, no terminan de conocerse.

México ha sido un país que disfruta de ser un gran anfitrión; el siglo XX, a lo largo de sus gestiones diplomáticas dio muestra de ello, desde tiempos del gran escritor Alfonso Reyes. En estos años, San Miguel de Allende se ha convertido en una de las grandes intersecciones del país para explotar y florecer las relaciones de las culturas y los países norteamericanos desde uno de los grandes patrimonios intangibles que día con día alimentamos: el arte y el pensamiento.

Esta idea es la que lleva a fortalecer tan importantes puntos de encuentro, intersecciones a través de eventos como el Festival Internacional de Escritores y Literatura en San Miguel de Allende, acontecimiento anual que nos lleva por las veredas para formar parte de un encuentro multicultural que culmina como un diario de la ciudad que representa cada escritor.

The word ‘intersection’ is a synonym for ‘life’

From the moment we are born, every event is a meeting point, a point that modifies destinies. We meet our parents, discover laughter, sadness . . . but more than anything, we find language: a subtle and necessary way to express everything. Such a simple way fits into our thinking the way the act of breathing



does. This truth was well known to the ancient Greeks. In Greek philosophy and rhetoric—the critic George Steiner reminds us—the Peripatetics, Aristotle's followers, were the ones who supposedly wandered about the Lyceum and may have eventually traveled from city to city as itinerate teachers. Contemporary writers still honor this idea and recreate it every text, consciously or not. Literature is the symbol of these intersections.

Modern cities are an example of these junctions, and historians and novelists have taken it upon themselves to portray the cultural, social, political, and intimate encounters of time-periods that define a city. And not only that. Certain great writers have been the intersection itself between two or more nations. One such is David Lida, who in addition to being among most compelling of contemporary voices, reveals the sympathy between the major Mexican and American cities.

Born and raised in New York, Lida has lived for more than twenty years in Mexico City: "If I had to define what I like most about this place," he writes, "I'd say that it is a supercity impossible to understand. I would like to add that, over the years, I have been constantly surprised and have not had two days alike." The reality of a changing city is what Lida reflects in his journalism and transforms into literature. "His First Stop in the New World" is a story told at ground level, with the walker passing through different neighborhoods of present-day Mexico City, discovering the cuisine, the sex industry, religion, politics, and the personal stories of how many Mexicans survive the brutal obstacles urban life sets in their way. The San Francisco Chronicle commented: "As Joseph Mitchell captured the life of the outcasts in mid-century New York, Orhan Pamuk the melancholy of the twentieth-century Istanbul, Lida masterfully details the struggle of a repressed city." *David Lida* is one of the most solid contemporary voices of current non-fiction, bringing together the vision of two cities, two countries, two cultures.

Here in Mexico, we have the internationally known writer, Laura Esquivel, born in Mexico City in 1950. "Cook, alchemist, with long, curly, black hair, a lover of men and life"—as Elena Poniatowska has described her—she has given us a vision of local habits in her now classic novel, *Like Water for Chocolate*, translated to 33 languages. In this story, she vividly portrayed women's upbringing at the beginning of the twentieth century, an education based largely on the preparation of food, housekeeping, and a restricted way of perceiving love.

Similarly, her novel, *Tan veloz como el deseo*, inspired by the life of her father, a telegraph operator, focused on the habits of a particular time and place. It is only through the description of costumes and other minute details—as Alice Munro, winner of Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013, proves in her stories about small Canadian communities—that the connection is made with other worlds.

The writers who have created a literary and cultural exchange between the three countries of North America are countless. Two great borders and three languages separate these diverse cultures, which, in spite of modern communications, often fail to know each other.

Mexico is a country that enjoys playing the welcoming host, as the diplomatic affairs of the twentieth century have made clear, since the time of the great writer Alfonso Reyes. Nowadays, San Miguel de Allende has become one of the major crossroads of the country, eager to expand and nourish the relationships of the cultures of North America through the grand heritage of art and thought.

This idea leads us to strengthen such important meeting points through events like the International San Miguel Writers' Conference and Literary Festival in San Miguel de Allende, an annual occasion that makes us part of a multicultural encounter, culminating as the journal of the city, witnessed through the eyes of different writers.

San Miguel Literary Sala, A.C.

Programas y Proyectos Comunitarios



It's easy to be dazzled by all the light and brilliant sparks thrown off from the San Miguel Writers' Conference and Festival de Escritores. Fiestas and a dizzying array of attractions seem to beckon from every corner of our little town with the big cosmopolitan pulse. But we never lose sight of our core mission to promote literacy and increase the awareness and appreciation of literature in San Miguel de Allende and neighboring villages.

Es fácil deslumbrarse por toda la luz y brillantes chispas que emana del Festival Internacional de Escritores y Literatura de San Miguel de Allende. Fiestas y una variedad de atracciones salen de todos los rincones de nuestra pequeña ciudad cosmopolita. Pero nunca perdemos de vista nuestra principal misión: promover el conocimiento y la apreciación por la literatura en San Miguel y sus comunidades vecinas.

-Philip Alvaré

Foto Lander Rodriguez

From its inception as a nonprofit organization in 2004, the San Miguel Literary Sala, has been supported by hundreds of generous members, sponsors, and donors like you. Your generosity has enabled us to launch and sustain a variety of programs and unique initiatives. Teen Creative Writing Workshops, San Miguel Storytellers, Sala Literaria Bellas Artes, Libros Para Todos, The Big Read, and of course, the annual bilingual Writers' Conference & Literary Festival are among the many programs and events designed to foster a love of reading and writing. We hope what follows will help you grasp the depth and breadth of what we do.

Monthly Author Presentations

This popular series features two authors each month followed by a "Meet the Authors" wine reception and book signing. Est. 2004

San Miguel Writers' Conference & Literary Festival

Each February, prominent literary figures, industry insiders and instructors from Mexico, the U.S., and Canada gather in San Miguel for five days of lectures, workshops and special events for readers and writers. Est. 2005

Tienda Bookstore

Located at the Biblioteca, the Tienda showcases works by Literary Sala members and offers an array of books and gifts. Est. 2005



Sala Literaria poetry event

Desde sus inicios en 2004 como una organización sin fines de lucro, la Sala Literaria ha sido apoyada por cientos de generosos miembros, patrocinadores y donantes como tú. Gracias a su generosidad nos han permitido iniciar y mantener distintos programas e iniciativas. El Taller de Escritura Creativa para Adolescentes, Festival de Cuenta Cuentos, Sala Literaria Bellas Artes, Libros para Todos, La Gran Lectura y por supuesto el Festival de Escritores y Literatura, son algunos de los programas y eventos diseñados para fomentar el amor por la lectura y la escritura. Espereamos que la siguiente información les ayude a comprender la profundidad y amplitud de nuestra asociación.

Presentación de Autores

Esta popular serie cuenta con la presencia de dos autores cada mes, seguida de una recepción y firma de libros llamada "Conversando con los Escritores". (Desde 2004)

Festival Internacional de Escritores y Literatura

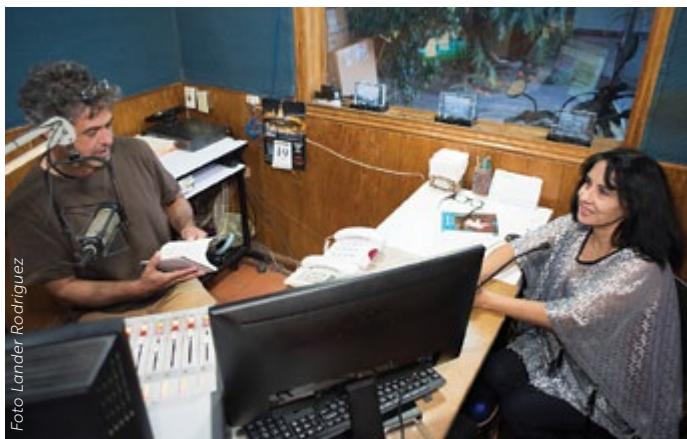
Cada febrero, prominentes figuras literarias, expertos de la industria e instructores de México, Estados Unidos y Canadá se reúnen durante cinco días de conferencias, talleres y eventos especiales dirigidos a escritores y lectores. (Desde 2005)

Librería "Tienda"

Ubicada en la Biblioteca, esta librería cuenta con los trabajos de los miembros de la Sala Literaria y ofrece una variedad de libros y regalos. (Desde 2005)

Programa de Radio semanal en español

Cada miércoles a las 7 pm en Radio San Miguel (1280 AM) se emite el programa "Sancho Panza de Cabeza" presentando un tema o autor con lecturas,



Programa de radio "Sancho Panza de Cabeza"
Yolanda Lacarier y Jorge Coro

Weekly Spanish-Language Literary Radio Program

Wednesdays 7 p.m. Radio San Miguel (1280 AM) our program, "Sancho Panza de Cabeza" presents a literary theme or author, with readings, discussion, call-ins and book give-aways. Est. 2007

Solamente en San Miguel

A multi-volume anthology of fiction, essays, memoir, and poetry about life in San Miguel, compiled and published by the Literary Sala. Est. 2007

Annual Writers' Conference Adult Scholarship Program

The Literary Sala provides 30± scholarships annually to Mexican writers and teachers, and underwrites much of the cost of producing the Spanish language track. Est. 2009

Summer Literary Festival

One or more distinguished authors explore a theme through lectures, workshops, field trips, art, and culinary events. Est. 2011

Annual Teen Creative Writing Workshop Scholarships

In 2017, 115 local teens will participate in one of three writing workshops. Winners present their work at the Writers' Conference and take home a new computer. Est. 2008



Team Creative Writing Workshop: Rosi Zorrilla & Duncan Tonatiuh



llamadas del público y libros de regalo. (Desde 2007)

Solamente en San Miguel

Antologías de ficción, ensayos, memorias y diversos poemas sobre la vida en San Miguel, recopiladas y publicadas por la Sala Literaria. (Desde 2007)

Taller de Escritura para Adolescentes

En 2017, 115 jóvenes locales participarán en uno de tres talleres de escritura. Los ganadores presentarán su trabajo durante el Festival de Escritores y recibirán una computadora. (Desde 2008)

Programa de Becas del Festival de Escritores

La Sala Literaria provee 30 becas anuales a escritores y maestros mexicanos, apoyándolos para que asistan al Festival de Escritores y sus actividades. (Desde 2009)

La Gran Lectura

Evento comunitario en el que toda la gente están invitados a leer el mismo libro y a asistir a eventos especiales antes de la presentación del autor durante el Festival. (Desde 2011). Nos complace anunciar que este año, los autores y libro seleccionados son Robert Moor's con On Trails: An Exploration y Pedro Ángel Palou con La Amante del Ghetto. Ver los artículos en las páginas 50 y 54

Festival Literario de Verano

Uno o más distinguidos autores exploran un tema a través de lecturas, talleres, visitas relacionadas con arte y eventos culinarios. (Desde 2011)

Libros Para Todos

Durante el año llevamos cientos de libros de un autor en especial a niños en comunidades rurales. El autor personalmente los visita en su comunidad. (Desde 2012)

Programa de lectura "Mi primer libro"

Durante todo el año un maestro se reúne con niños en comunidades rurales para acercarlos a los libros y al amor por la lectura. (Desde 2013)..

Festival Internacional de Cuenta Cuentos

Narradores de México, Estados Unidos y Canadá se reúnen para una semana de historias, clases, actuaciones y premiaciones. (Desde 2014).

Sala Literaria Bellas Artes

Dedicada a la literatura y el arte, es una sala abierta al público para la lectura y la escritura, que ofrece libros en español e inglés para jóvenes y adultos locales. (Desde 2015)

"Poetry Café" Bellas Artes

Poetas, aficionados y curiosos se reúnen mensualmente, de septiembre a abril en la Sala Literaria Bellas Artes, para compartir su trabajo original en un ambiente casual. (Desde 2016). Este año, se integra la comunidad de lectores de poesía, "Poesía Viva celebra a Billy Collins". Para mayor información véase artículo en la página 55.

i3: Ideas que informan e inspiran

Este grupo trae distinguidos líderes mundiales en una variedad de disciplinas a San Miguel para presentaciones y conversaciones.



My First Book / Ojalá Niños



Team Creative Writing Scholarships Recipients

The Big Read

A community event in which everyone is invited to read the same book and attend special events before the author arrives to present at the Writers' Conference. Est. 2011

We're pleased to announce that this year, Robert Moor's, *On Trails: An Exploration*, has been selected for the Big Read. Please see article on page 50 for a complete listing.

Libros Para Todos

Each year we distribute hundreds of books by the same author to youth in rural communities before the author visits these communities to meet the youth. Est. 2012

"My First Book" Reading Program

Year-round, a teacher meets with children in a rural community to introduce them to books and the love of reading. Est. 2013

International Storytelling Festival

Storytellers from Mexico, the U.S., and Canada gather for a week of storytelling, including classes, performances, and prizes. Est. 2014

Sala Literaria Bellas Artes

A public reading, writing, and meeting room dedicated to Literature and Art offering programming and books in Spanish and English for local youth and adults. Est. 2015

Poetry Café Bellas Artes

Poets, aficionados, and the curious gather monthly, September through April, at Sala Literaria Bellas Artes, for the sharing of original work in a casual setting. Est. 2016

This year, we've added a community-wide reading of poetry called, "Poetry Alive Celebrates Billy Collins." Please see article on page 45 for a complete listing.

i3: Ideas that Inform and Inspire

This group brings distinguished world leaders in a variety of disciplines to San Miguel to give a presentation and encourage conversation. Est. 2016