



»»»» AREPAS IN POST- CARDS

XIMENA MONTILLA ARREAZA

VISIONS **47**

FLAVORS **16**

IRA LEÓN

SUSANA BENKO
IVANOVA
DECÁN GAMBÚS



»»»»» AREPAS IN POST— CARDS

VISIONS
47

FLAVORS
16



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47 VISIONES Y 16 SABORES**

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AREPAS IN POSTCARDS:

47 VISIONS AND 16 FLAVORS

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ÍNDICE

EDITORIAL

• XIMENA MONTILLA **P 3**

PREFACE

• SUSANA BENKO **P 7**

47 VISIONS

GERALD ESPINOZA **P 13**

LUIS ROMERO **P 15**

MARIÚ **P 17**

NORMA MORALES **P 19**

CAMILA OTERO **P 21**

CORINA BRICEÑO **P 23**

NAYARÍ CASTILLO **P 25**

ENRIQUETA AHRENSBURG **P 27**

TOÑA VEGAS **P 29**

IRA LEÓN **P 31**

ANITA REYNA **P 33**

JESÚS MATHEUS **P 35**

ALEJANDRA MANDELBLUM **P 37**

RICARDO BENAİM **P 39**

LAURA STAGNO **P 41**

LEONARDO RODRÍGUEZ **P 43**

OAYA **P 45**

KARLA MOLINA **P 47**

ONOFRE FRÍAS **P 49**

ANDREÍNA ACERO **P 51**

JOANNA VEGAS SÁNCHEZ **P 53**

MUU BLANCO **P 55**

ALEXANDRA DE YAVORSKY **P 57**

KALI MARTÍNEZ DÁVILA **P 59**

CARLOS SALAZAR-LERMONT **P 61**

BERNARDITA RAKOS **P 63**

PEDRO TINEO **P 65**

APAMAIRE **P 67**

SANTIAGO POL **P 69**

ARMANDO VELUTINI **P 71**

LOS MOROCHOS TWINS **P 73**

RAFA MUCI **P 75**

PATRICIO AGÜERO **P 77**

HELWING VILLAMIZAR **P 79**

GOLDEN 305 **P 81**

EDUARDO MOLINA **P 83**

EDUARDO AZUAJE **P 85**

HÉCTOR ROMERO **P 87**

EDO **P 89**

ELLIOTT ORTIZ **P 91**

MERY DEL CARMEN **P 93**

GUERRERO RODRÍGUEZ **P 95**

JORGE «EL NIÑO» **P 97**

TORREALBA **P 99**

MARI CARMEN **P 99**

«NANE » CARRILLO **P 101**

CONSUELO MÉNDEZ **P 103**

PENÉLOPE DÍAZ **P 105**

MARÍA EUGENIA MANRIQUE **P 105**

ROSANA FARÍA **P 105**

ART AND GASTRONOMY:

ENCOUNTERS AND MISENCOUNTERS

• IVANOVA DECÁN GAMBÚS **P 109**

THE VALUE OF AN AREPA • RECIPE BOOK

SUSTAINABILITY

• PILAR CABRERA **P 117**

SOLIDARITY

• JOEL A. TARFF ALCALÁ **P 121**

RESILIENCE

• ARGENIS RAMÍREZ **P 125**

ROOTEDNESS

• CHUCHO ROJAS **P 129**

IDENTITY

• FEDERICO TISCHLER **P 133**

RESPECT

• ELIA NORA RODRÍGUEZ **P 137**

EDUCATION

• ZORAIDA BARRIOS **P 141**

CREATIVITY

• MIGUEL GUERRA Y TATIANA MORA **P 145**

ENDURANCE

• ISSAM KOTEICH **P 149**

EMPATHY

• SUMITO ESTÉVEZ **P 153**

MULTICULTURALITY

• GABRIEL CASTAÑEDA **P 157**

INTEGRITY

• KARIN REQUENA **P 161**

FLAVOUR WITHOUT SHORTCUTS

• KARIN REQUENA **P 165**

WILLINGNESS

• DANIEL TORREALBA **P 167**

JUSTICE

• VICTORIA VALLENILLA **P 171**

PERSEVERANCE

• FRANCISCO ABENANTE **P 175**

HOPE

• HÉCTOR ROMERO **P 179**

PORK CRACKLING BOMB

• HÉCTOR ROMERO **P 182**

LIST OF WORKS

P 184

FROM THE HISTORY OF

THE AREPA COLLECTION

P 188

● AREPAS IN POSTCARDS

This year, from *History of the Arepa*, we celebrate World Arepa Day with a very special edition. It's not just a book—it's a box. A book-object that holds 63 postcards – 47 works by artists and 16 creations by chefs – that together form a plural portrait of Venezuela. Each piece is the voice and vision of an individual, but when brought together, they become a collective imaginary that expresses our shared identity. These are not just images and recipes: they are traces of what each person contributes, and at the same time, imprints of what we dream and build together.

In a time when everything seems to move faster and slip away, we wanted to offer you a ritual. The ritual of holding a postcard, turning it between your fingers and contemplating it slowly, of keeping it in a book; or writing a few lines in your own handwriting and sending it to a loved one. Like placing a needle on a vinyl record and waiting for the first note. Like opening a book for the first time and breathing in its scent. Like waking up to the aroma of freshly made arepas for breakfast.

The box is meant to be opened slowly, like one opens a treasured memory. Each artist's postcard offers a distinct view of Venezuela. Each author's arepa recipe represents a value of our national identity and a flavor that tells a story.

Yes, this edition was born from a moment of questions and nostalgia. A time when friends, both inside and outside the country, felt distant, disheartened. I asked myself: How do you heal heartbreak from afar? How do we embrace each other without being in the same place? How do you send, in a letter, a night of boleros, a good book, a glass of wine with dear friends, a warm soup made by grandma, a sunset, a dip in the sea, a piece of writing that lays your soul bare, a poem, a home...? Would that be enough to soothe their hearts?

I looked inward... deep inside, where life pulses to the rhythm of Aquiles Báez and Nella Rojas, and that is where the first idea emerged: art and gastronomy—two languages capable of transforming everything, regardless of age, time, or language. Universal languages that have always been with us.

I knew I wanted to bring together artists and chefs in a book to create, through art and gastronomy, a bridge that could connect us. Where each artwork would offer a positive vision of Venezuela, and each author's arepa would represent a value of Venezuelan identity, helping to build an imaginary of the Venezuela we long for.

A creative dialogue began with my dear friend and designer Ira León. Week by week, we conceptualized how this book could come to life. I believe her idea to use mail art was brilliant. That is how this box was born – containing 63 postcards, a book with texts on art and gastronomy, and a recipe collection that today brings together diverse memories, flavors, and visions of our country. I realized we weren't just combining talents – we were giving each creation the chance to travel in the form of a postcard, to reach other hands and other places, carrying a piece of Venezuela wherever it was needed.

The most important values associated with our Venezuelan identity were an essential ingredient: the value of rootedness, for Chucho Rojas, who keeps Venezuela alive in his projects despite the distance; the value of resilience, for Argenis, who brings the flavors of Falcón to Caracas through a labor-intensive artisanal arepa that had nearly been forgotten; the value of sustainability, for Pilar Cabrera, who on Margarita Island has built her culinary proposal around artisanal fishing and local products that were once endangered or discarded. I assigned each person the value I felt they best represented.

In this way, the project continued to grow, becoming a tapestry of attributes that reflect the richness of our idiosyncrasy: identity, for Federico Tischler; empathy, for Sumito Estévez; justice, for Victoria Vallenilla; multiculturalism, for Gabriel Castañeda; creativity, for Tatiana Mora and Miguel Guerra; solidarity, for Joel Tarff; respect, for Elia Nora Rodríguez; education, for Mamazory; endurance, for Issam Koteich; willpower, for Daniel Torrealba; hope, for Héctor Romero; integrity, for Karin Requena; and constancy, for Francisco Abenante. Each name and each value became interwoven like pieces of the same cultural fabric.

Like the arepa, our country is made by all of us, and these languages—art and gastronomy—unite and sustain us. That is why, when you open this box, you will not just find images, texts, and recipes. You will find a piece of the country that you can touch, read, view, cook, share, and rewrite. Like a freshly made arepa, it is meant to be enjoyed and shared with loved ones. It is a reminder that, even when we are far apart, there are simple rituals that bring us back home.

And although the box is undoubtedly a magnificent and heartfelt edition, we also thought about how this work could reach many more people. That is why, as we do every year, we have prepared a free digital edition for all who wish to connect with these stories and flavors. We have also created a printed edition available on Amazon, which, while it does not replicate the book-object experience, allows readers to appreciate the artworks, cook the recipes, and learn more about our gastronomy and culture. In this way, the project opens itself to different forms of encounter, always with the intention that no one is left out of this celebration.

This project is made possible thanks to the support of the publishing group Arraigo Group, under whose imprint a new gastro-literary work is born each year within *History of The Arepa*, and thanks to the ongoing support of the Arraigo Foundation, which throughout the year gives us the momentum to continue creating, sharing, and celebrating the best of our culture.



• **Ximena Montilla Arreaza**

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Educational psychologist and neurogastronomist; holds an M.Sc. in Educational Management and Leadership from the University of Barcelona (UB), Spain. She is the CEO of Arraigo Group Publishing and Arraigo Foundation, and director of the Historia de la Arepa Project (Armando Scannone Award 2023). Speaker at TEDx Talk "Spanish as an Affective Language" and at the Latin American Women Leaders Congress at Harvard. Author of the children's book Soy la Arepa, and of four additional titles in the Historia de la Arepa collection. Her books have received five ILBA 2023 awards (International Latino Book Awards) and eight Gourmand Awards in 2022, 2023, and 2024. She represented Venezuela at the International Gastronomy Symposium in Umeå, Sweden, in 2023, and is a member of the WEF. (Woman Economic Forum).



● PREFACE

"The world is vast and no longer foreign"; these words, which in their original meaning recall the dispossession of lands and the fragmentation of the Indigenous world in *Ciro Alegría's* renowned novel, now sketch a challenging reality in the lives of Venezuelans. Dispersed? Disunited? Forgotten? Diverse questions with equally diverse answers.

Today, some Venezuelans remain in their homeland, while many others are scattered across the globe. All carry with them their personal histories, their array of traditions, their unique arguments against oblivion. Wherever they may be, it is impossible to forget the scents, the colors, the flavors... the expressions. Venezuelans stand out in any context—whether through their speech, regardless of regional accent, or through their typically playful or humorous way of facing even the harshest situations.

It is no surprise that we still speak of identity, even amid great personal diversity. But for identity to exist, something fundamental is required: memory. Without it, borders blur, references vanish, and one ceases to "stand on solid ground." Thanks to memory, traditions are preserved—and among them, culinary traditions, especially those of the arepa, one of our foods that today evokes nationality, unity, and home...

● THE BOOK

"Arepas Turned Into Postcards" is not just another book about arepas—it's a multidimensional publication, much like the diversity of its objectives. Let us begin by exploring its various formats. It is a printed book that we can enjoy—savor, even—as we flip through its pages. It also has a digital version, making its content accessible to any reader, cook, or art lover, wherever they may be. But beyond that, it is a box of postcards containing images, recipes, and reflections on the meaning of this food—and, by extension, the essence of Venezuelan identity—from each of the participating contributors: visual artists, designers, chefs, and gastronomes. In any of these formats, it serves as a vital record of sensory experiences, where we see, taste, and smell with our eyes.

To bring this to life, forty-eight Venezuelan artists were invited to create their own image of the arepa using their unique languages and techniques—or rather, to express what the arepa evokes for them as a symbol of identity. "The arepa," reads the invitation sent to each artist, "has a unique story, etched in the brown patterns left by the *budare* as it cooks. These imprints tell a tale of tradition, of origin, of who we are. In this project, we invite each artist to imagine the arepa as Venezuela—a canvas that can be transformed and strengthened by the attributes and values each creator brings from their inner world." This "exercise" in personal remembrance resulted in a remarkable collection of visual works, rich in inventiveness and diversity.

The same occurred with the chefs and gastronomes. For all of them, the arepa is more than just food. It is also a symbol—and an excuse—for affection, remembrance, togetherness, and undoubtedly, for creativity, as it is a great challenge to turn the everyday into something exceptional—a dish, an event. However, the exercise proposed to the chefs introduced another value into the reflection on Venezuelan identity: the "multicultural" condition that defines us. This notion of multiplicity in shaping our national character was translated into the concept of the *mestizo arepa*—in other words, unity and coexistence through a diversity of flavors.

To understand this fascinating interplay between two distinct cultural realms—art and gastronomy—it will be enriching for the reader to explore the reflections offered by Ivanova Decán Gambús, president of the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy, in her essay “*Art and Gastronomy: Encounters and Disencounters*.” With her vast professional experience in both fields, she is the ideal guide for the multisensory journey this book proposes.

● CORN IS MORE THAN NOURISHMENT

We have spoken of the arepa as a symbol of identity, of belonging to a land, of a Venezuelan sensibility. But it is worth remembering that the arepa has a starting point: corn—an ancestral food, inherited from our Indigenous peoples across the Americas. Its value is so profound that it far surpasses mere sustenance: the ancient Maya and Quiché civilizations gave it a mythical significance, for it was through corn that the perfect human could be created [*built*].

Then the yellow corn was ground, the white corn too [...] The food was placed into the flesh; it gave rise to fatness, to grease, it became the essence of the arms, of the muscles of man. Thus did the Procreators, the Begetters, the Dominators, the Powerful Ones of the Sky, as they are called. Immediately, the Word of Construction, of Formation of our first mothers and our first fathers, was spoken [...] Such were our first ancestors, the four men who were formed: that single food entered their flesh. (*Popol Vuh*, s. XVI)

From its very origin, then, corn—as a fruit born of the earth—is a symbol of life, of creation, and undoubtedly, of transcendence.

Thus, the novelty begins in the dough...

● SIGNATURE AREPAS

The reader will appreciate, as they browse through the recipes, that the dough lends itself to fascinating variations: depending on the type of corn, the kind of flour—whether pre-cooked or made from pounded kernels—and preparation methods such as *nixtamalization*, a unique process involving the cooking of dried corn, grinding, kneading, and more. There are also intriguing combinations, like the sweet flour used for *cachapas* blended with the savory flour for *arepas*. In the end, we discover an immense richness of textures and flavors—just in reference to the dough alone. Next, we must turn to the fillings...

The sixteen recipes featured here offer a wide array of filling proposals, each accompanied by photographs that reflect elegance in presentation. Every image reveals the boundless creativity behind their preparation: some include various types of meat (tenderloin, roast, roast beef, pork); others showcase a variety of fish and seafood (catfish, sardines, sea urchin, mussels); and of course, they are paired with cheeses and other ingredients that, in their own way, “speak” or “express” the flavors of particular regions of the country. For some cooks, these flavors are rooted in the seasoning of their home; for others, they are the result of personal invention. In both cases, it is a journey into taste—one that seeks, as its ultimate goal, delight and a deepened sense of belonging to a dish that feels so familiar.

● ART TO LOOK AT AND TASTE

Artists, chefs, and gastronomes undertook a meaningful exercise in participating in this project: they were asked to answer what the arepa means to each of them, and what it represents in the collective imagination of our national identity. It can be said that, for all, this food embodies a desire to preserve memory—whether familial, geographic, traditional, or even tied to local humor. This becomes especially poignant in the context of migration, and explains why many responses pointed to the preservation of this culinary tradition as an act of resilience, commitment, and unity. Sharing an arepa at the table implies coexistence and honesty in relating to others.

The artists here featured reaffirmed these values both in word and in work. The roundness of the arepa, as a symbolic and identity-bearing form, appears in many of their images. It is expressed as “shelter,” as love in its maternal sense, and even, in some cases, with a sacredness of Christian connotation.

On the other hand, the “warmth of home” that the arepa evokes, reminds us why we speak of “Mother Earth.” The germinal essence of corn—its artistic representation tied to vegetal imagery—appears repeatedly: as fibers (linear), as form (bulbs, circles of kernels, of cobs), as color; all elements intrinsic to the visual language. In the end, it inevitably points back to nature, to its original meaning.

It is worth noting that this particular “germinal” connotation can also be viewed from another angle: through language. To name the arepa is another way of giving it form. *Erepá*, the Indigenous peoples called it. In this way, many of the artworks presented here do more than visualize it—they name it, “fill” it with ideas, narrate it, design it, construct it typographically, or associate it with elements of childhood, of the kitchen, of the table. In some cases, it is even seen as the bearer of a myth or fable. As we can see, it sparks multiple narrative possibilities.

Humor is also deeply present throughout. It is, without a doubt, a form of expression intrinsic to the Venezuelan spirit. We see it here in both thought and image. Some of the invited illustrators and cartoonists present a “humanized” arepa, giving it a life of its own in comic-book style. Others photograph it playfully alongside various objects, appealing to the wit and complicity of the viewer-reader. And sometimes, the arepa itself isn’t even depicted—only the evocation of a landscape that calls to us because we recognize it, and we know it as ours.

There is no doubt, then, about the communicative power the arepa holds in our collective imagination—especially because it touches the most sensitive fibers of the diner, whether Venezuelan or from other countries and cultures. Ultimately, this is possible because the arepa is a pleasure that has become universal.





• **Susana Benko**

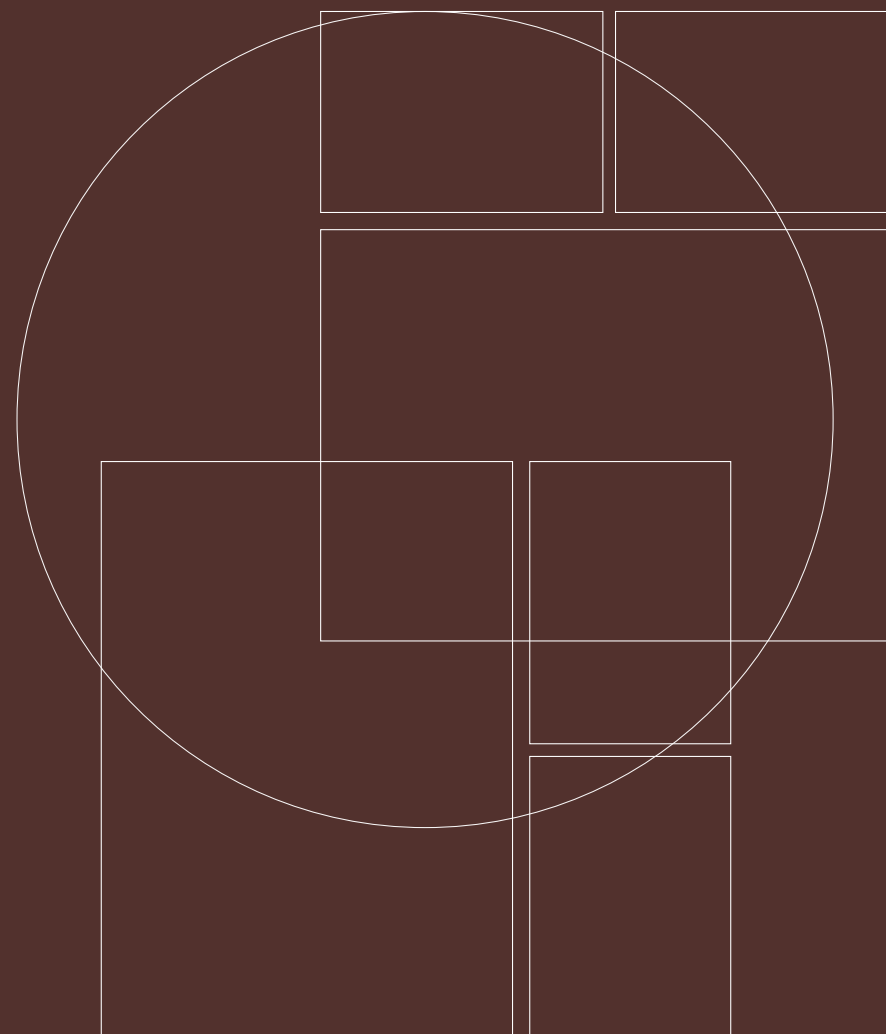
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Art critic, researcher, museologist, and educator. She holds a degree in Literature from the Central University of Venezuela and a Master's in Contemporary Latin American Literature from Simón Bolívar University. Since 1990, she has been a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA-Venezuela Chapter) and serves as editorial advisor in Venezuela for the international magazine *ArtNexus*.

She has curated exhibitions at institutions such as the Museum of Fine Arts, the National Art Gallery, the Carlos Cruz-Diez Museum of Print and Design, and the Alejandro Otero Museum. She teaches European and Venezuelan Modern Art at the Metropolitan University and co-hosts the radio program *Un minuto con las artes*, which was awarded the AICA Prize in 2022 for its contribution to the dissemination of Venezuelan art.

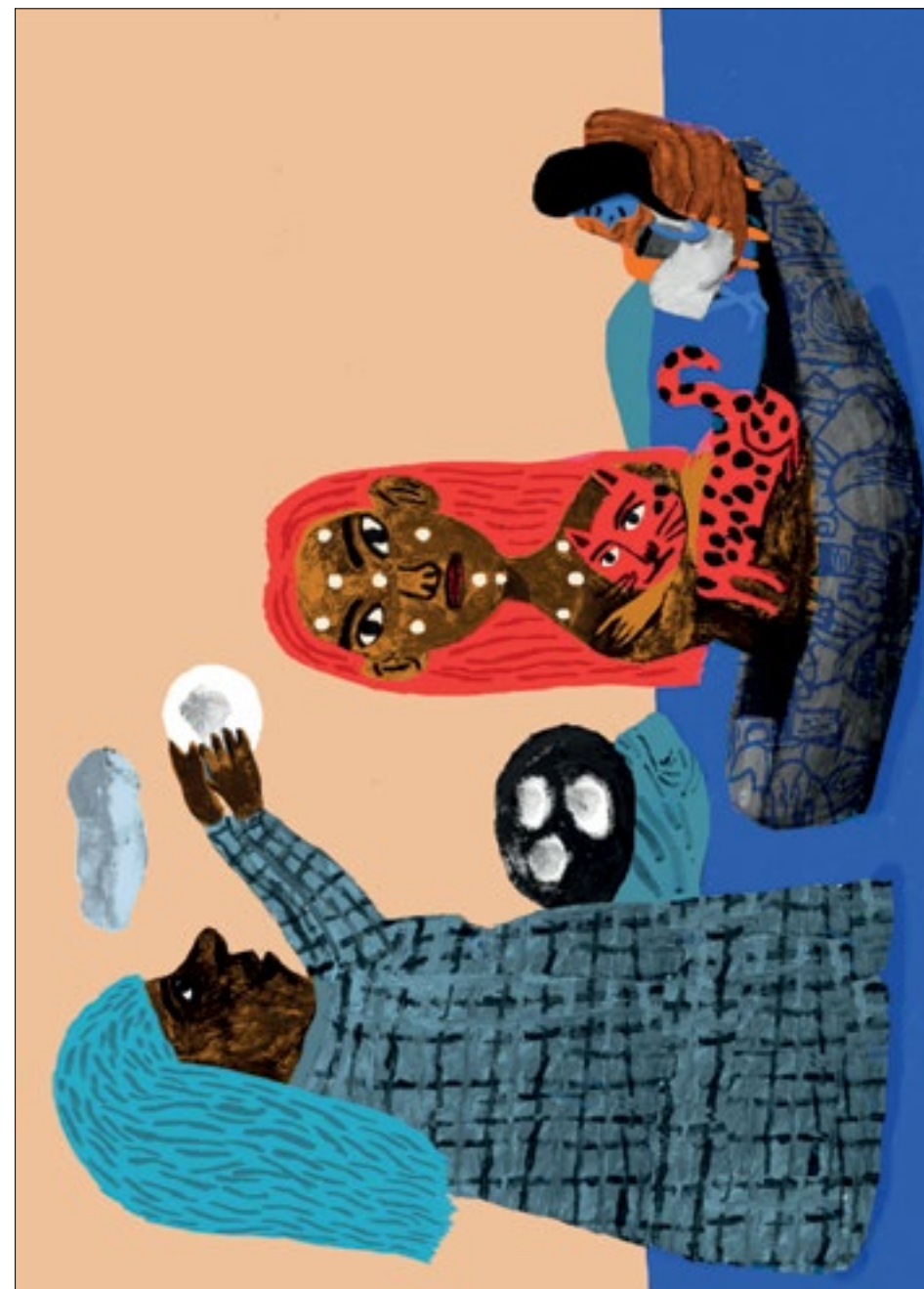
Author of several books on art criticism and research, she has received numerous accolades, including the Municipal Prize for Literary Research in 1990 for her book *Vicente Huidobro y el cubismo*; the National Book Award of Venezuela in 2006 for *Carteles del Museo de Bellas Artes*; and the CIANE Prize in 2022, among others.

47 VISIONS



GERALD ESPINOZA
 LUIS ROMERO
 MARIÚ
 NORMA MORALES
 CAMILA OTERO
 CORINA BRICEÑO
 NAYARÍ CASTILLO
 ENRIQUETA AHRENSBURG
 TOÑA VEGAS
 IRA LEÓN
 ANITA REYNA
 JESÚS MATHEUS
 ALEJANDRA MANDELBLUM
 RICARDO BENAİM
 LAURA STAGNO
 LEONARDO RODRÍGUEZ
 OAYA
 KARLA MOLINA
 ONOFRE FRÍAS
 ANDREÍNA ACERO
 JOANNA VEGAS SÁNCHEZ
 MUU BLANCO
 ALEXANDRA DE YAVORSKY
 KALI MARTÍNEZ DÁVILA
 CARLOS SALAZAR-LERMONT
 BERNARDITA RAKOS
 PEDRO TINEO
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 ARMANDO VELUTINI
 LOS MOROCHOS TWINS
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 PATRICIO AGÜERO
 HELWING VILLAMIZAR
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 EDUARDO MOLINA
 EDUARDO AZUAJE
 HÉCTOR ROMERO
 EDO
 ELLIOTT ORTIZ
 MERY DEL CARMEN GUERRERO
 RODRÍGUEZ
 JORGE «EL NIÑO» TORREALBA
 MARI CARMEN «NANE» CARRILLO
 CONSUELO MÉNDEZ
 PENÉLOPE DÍAZ
 MARÍA EUGENIA MANRIQUE
 ROSANA FARÍA



GERALD ESPINOZA

Visual artist and illustrator born in Caracas in 1974 and based in Quito. Dedicated to the development of children's and young adult books. His work combines visual narrative with a playful and dreamlike style. His picture book *Gallo Galo* won an honorable mention for illustration in Banco del Libro's Best Books of the Year; it was nominated for the Bratislava International Illustration Exhibition, was on the IBBY Honor List, and was selected by the annual catalog *The White Ravens* as one of the most beautiful books in the world. In 2023, he won the Iberoamérica Ilustra Award. He has given lectures at international fairs and illustration conferences, and teaches art workshops. He has exhibited his paintings both inside and outside Venezuela.

In his postcard *Asavke y el origen de la arepa* (Asavke and the Origin of the Arepa), Espinoza creates a story inspired by indigenous creation myths: A mother sees her daughter, Princess Asavke, overcome with sadness, and brings down the full moon to cook it on a stone *budare*. The young woman shares it with her community, and thus the arepa is born, as a sacred and everyday food. A visual tribute to invention and a sense of community.



ASAVKE Y EL ORIGEN DE LA AREPA (ASAVKE AND THE ORIGIN OF THE AREPA)

2025

OIL PAINT ON PAPER AND DIGITAL FINISHING

15 x 21 cm

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AREPA

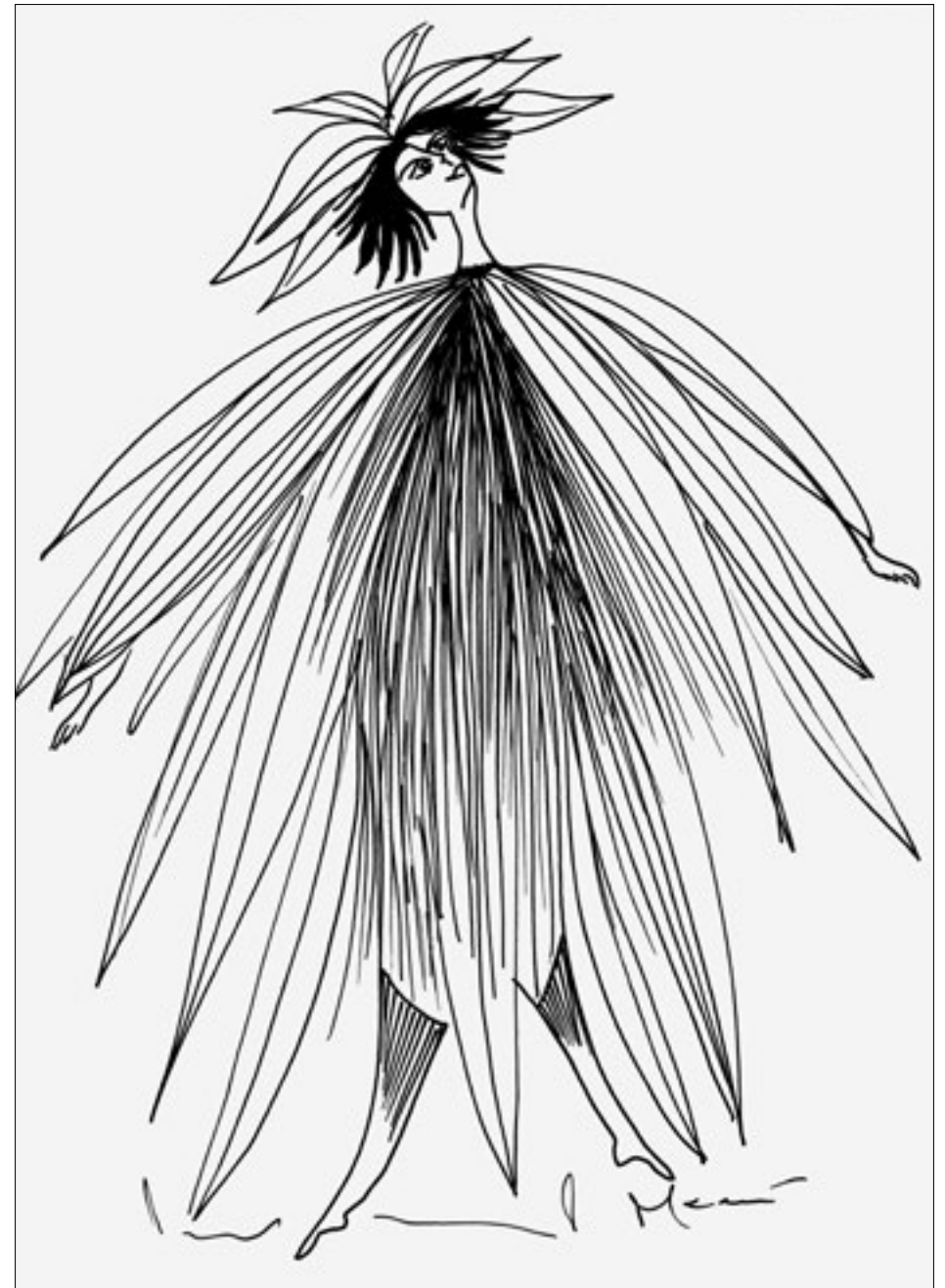
2016
RUBBER STAMPS
ON GRAPH PAPER
20.8 x 16.5 cm

LUIS ROMERO

Born in Caracas in 1967, he is an artist, curator, editor, and cultural manager. He has held 15 solo exhibitions in Venezuela, as well as in cities such as Amsterdam, Miami, London, León, Oaxaca, and Panama. He has participated in more than 60 group exhibitions, including Documenta 12 (Kassel), the 8th Mercosur Biennial (Brazil), "El Dorado: Myth of Gold" (New York), the Trienal Poligráfica (Puerto Rico), and others in the Dominican Republic, Australia, Peru, and Chile. He is the founder of Oficina#1 and ABRA, contemporary art spaces in Caracas, as well as editor of Pulgar magazine. His work has been recognized on multiple occasions and is part of important collections inside and outside the country.

In his postcard *Arepa*, created in 2016 as part of a series for the postal art format, Romero uses rubber stamps on graph paper to address the formal and symbolic imagery of the arepa. The figure is constructed through the repetition of corn, its fundamental ingredient, thus revealing a conceptual reflection on food as form, territory, and memory.

@callmeelromero
<https://abracaracas.com/artista/luis-romero/>
<https://www.oficina1.com/luis-romero/>





HOMBRE DE MAÍZ (MAN OF CORN)

2023

INK ON PAPER

27,5 x 21,5 cm

MARIÚ

Born in Caracas in 1952, Mariú is an artist and illustrator. From a very young age, she began her journey into the world of visual arts, drawing, puppet theater, shadow puppetry, and participatory research. Her teachers include Mercedes Pardo, Luis Luksic, and children, to whom she dedicates a large part of her work in successful art and recycling workshops that she runs alongside Wolfgang Vegas – CADAFE, BIGOTT, 123 *este sábado es* (Banco del Libro) – which is part of her creative research.

A member of the Tákiti puppet group as a set designer and puppeteer, she made three videos for Ventana Mágica in the 1980s, the most renowned being *Coplas absurdas: El Calvo* (animation) and *La sirenita*; as an illustrator in the books *Bolívar una historia que debe ser contada* by Erika Shatch, *Historia de la Música* by Aquiles Nazoa; and *Laboratorio de la Naturaleza II* by Lutecia Adam.

Mariú draws inspiration from the joy embodied by the corn cob – a sacred symbol of life gifted to the peoples of the Americas by this ancient Mesoamerican plant. “I am corn. My joyful voice dignifies. I am sown with love, nurtured with patience, and shared with joy. I am America. I am indigenous root. I am living identity.”





OFRENDAS (DE LA SERIE *EREPA*)
(OFFERING) (FROM THE SERIES *EREPA*)

2025
 ILLUMINATED TRANSFER
 22 x 15 cm

NORMA MORALES

Born in Caracas in 1960. She graduated as an Arts Teacher from the I.U Pedagógico de Caracas and as a Graphic Artist from the Centro de Enseñanza Gráfica (CEGRA) in 1987. She has been working as a master printmaker for three decades at the Taller de Artistas Gráficos Asociados Luisa Palacios (TAGA). In her work, Morales consolidates a refined and expressive graphic language, where the central theme is the human figure and the interrelation of the body with the surrounding space. Since 1985, she has participated in artistic projects and national and international exhibitions, both individually and collectively. Among the awards she has received, the 2003 National Book Award stands out for her engravings in Rafael Cadenas's poetry collection *Amante*.

Regarding her postcard *Ofrenda* (Offering), the artist tells us:

Each bead on the necklace bears the random texture produced by the hand, and (...) the dark mark engraved when they were roasted. That tiny circle, joined by others alike in an endless round, speaks to us of unity and harmony. May its continuous form serve as a tribute to mothers, grandmothers – especially my paternal grandmother, Juanita – and all the women who raised families driven by their gestures and dedication, offering food whose primordial seed is corn.

@normamoralessart | www.instagram.com/normamoralessart/



CAMILA OTERO

A Venezuelan designer, Camila studied fashion design at BAU, Barcelona (2013), and completed a postgraduate degree in textile design at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York (2016). She currently resides in Barcelona, Spain, where her career has flourished in the field of textile design, creating print collections for children and collaborating with various Spanish brands. Passionate about functional beauty, Camila explores ceramics and illustration as forms of artistic expression. Her style is defined by delicacy and attention to detail, blending graphic elements with a playful sensibility.

In her postcard *Arepa Sagrada* (Holy Arepa), she uses digital illustration to depict the arepa as an object of devotion, highlighting its significance in Venezuelan identity and culture.



AREPA SAGRADA (HOLY AREPA)
2025
DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION
15 x 21 cm

@camilab_illustration



CORINA BRICEÑO

Born in Caracas in 1943. Visual artist graduated from CEGRA (1979) and a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Graphics from UNEARTE. She completed postgraduate studies and research at IUESAP Armando Reverón, where she was a professor of Graphics until her retirement in 2017. She is co-founder of Taller Huella (1980), a leading art space in Venezuela, which she currently directs. She has held more than 20 solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions in Caracas, Mérida, Miami, New York, Havana, Madrid, and Baltimore. She has received the AICA Venezuela Award (2021), the Grand Prize for Graphic Arts at the Barquisimeto Biennial (1992), the 1st Prize at the 11th San Juan Printmaking Biennial in Puerto Rico (1995), and the Gego Painting Award (2024), among others. Her work can be found in public collections such as the Museum of Fine Arts, the GAN (National Art Gallery in Caracas), the Alejandro Otero Museum, the Polar Foundation, the Casa de las Américas (Cuba), and the Museo de la Estampa in Mexico.

Referring to her postcard *Oro Mar Oro*, Corina Briceño says:

The fragmentation of the work points to human greed, which, regardless of the impact it has on nature and life, changes our perception of what was. Today's fragmentation lies in how we perceive life, in the constant information we receive at the same time from different places. Events that invade us and change the way we see, feel, and interpret.

@cbricenoart



ORO MAR ORO (GOLD SEA GOLD)

2024

DIGITAL WORK, PHOTOGRAPHY

15 x 21 cm





**AREPA LIQUEN, AREPA PRIMORDIAL
("PRIMORDIAL AREPA, MOSSBOUND AREPA")**

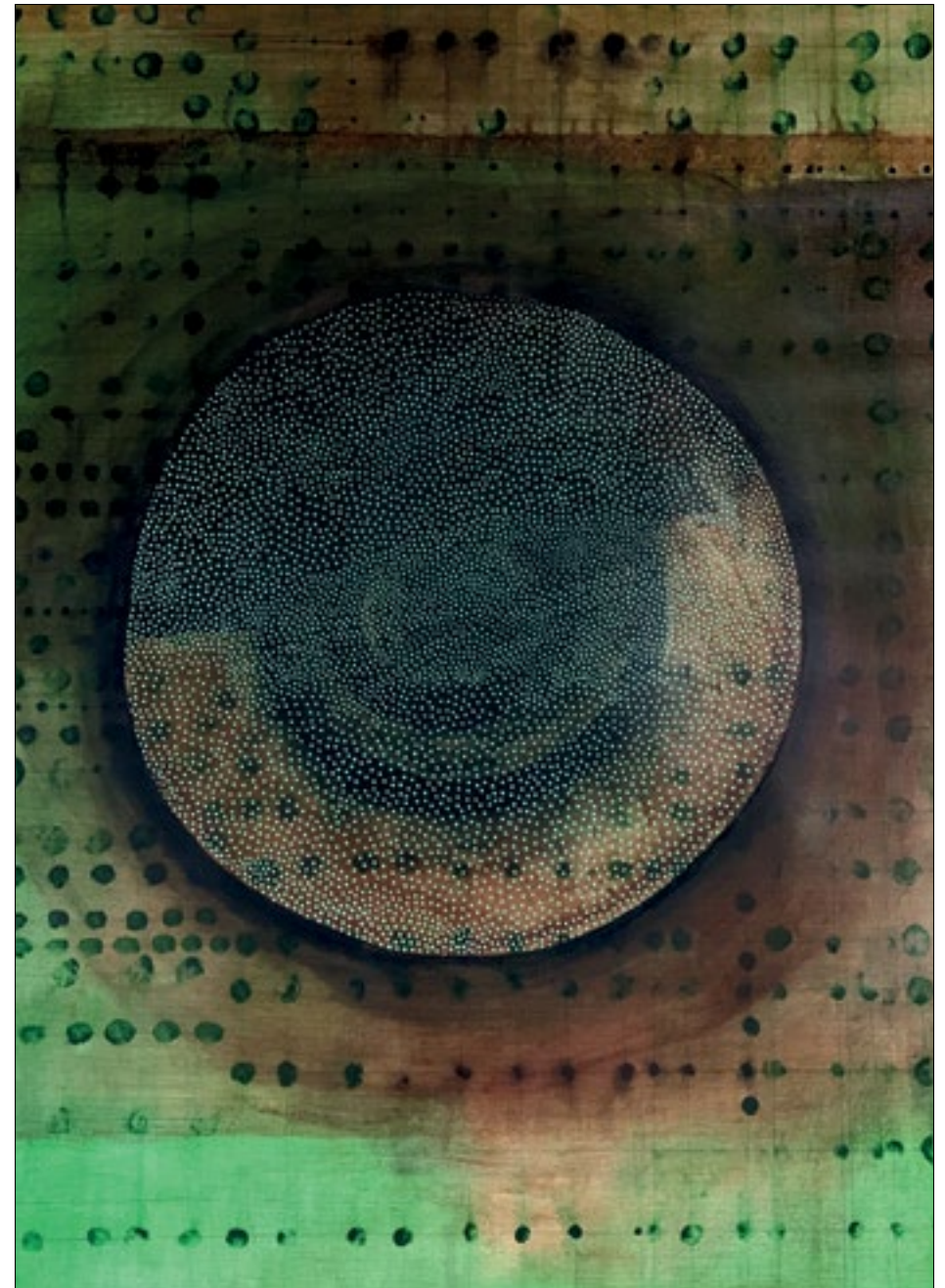
2024
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
VARYING DIMENSIONS

NAYARÍ CASTILLO

Born in Caracas in 1977. Molecular biologist and installation artist specializing in public space and project management. She approaches experimental constructions and constellations that transform space into a conceptual medium and works with a focus on revitalizing community spaces and collaborative art. Her research projects include Simultaneous Arrivals (2022) and Encuentros de Bosques (2023), in which she explores new forms of post-human collaboration. She is currently conducting research at the Institute of Spatial Design in Graz, Austria, where she resides. She has been a university professor for more than ten years and has published on coexistence and the resizing of public space.

In *Arepa líquen, arepa primordial* (Primordial Arepa, Mossbound Arepa), the artist recreates through photography a sensory map woven by rain:

"Among the sensations I miss most about Venezuela is the one given to me by petrichor: that special smell after the storm, that infinite and deep wet soil after the downpour. (...) That natural silence that comes after the rain: first the cicadas, then the downpour, and then the emptiness. For me, that is the primordial arepa, filled with natural nostalgia, the scents of the tropics."





DESPRENDIMIENTO (DETALLE)
(DETACHMENT) (DETAIL)

2024
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
21 x 15 cm

ENRIQUETA AHRENSBURG

Born in Paris in 1973, from an early age she was marked by a split identity between Venezuela and “a German forest she has not yet traveled to.” At age 16, she returned to France to study at the Académie de Port-Royal, driven by an “ancient thirst that cannot be quenched,” and continued her artistic training at the IUESAP Armando Reverón in Caracas. Her thesis, *Pictorial Constructions in Situ*, was presented at the Arturo Michelena Salon, where she won the Harry Liepins Prize.

Ahrensburg conceives her work as the creation of a worldview: “My work is an attempt, a discontinuous writing with that which has no name; a travel diary through worlds that are not on the maps.” She works with symbols and pigments, and considers her studio a “threshold,” a space of inquiry where the visible and the invisible engage in dialogue

Beyond the artistic object, her practice proposes an intimate reading of the world, and in reference to her postcard, she tells us:

From exile, “detachment” is not forgetting: it is also a metamorphosis of memory, a floating root that persists and reconfigures itself. What seemed to be moving away always returns in the form of shared symbols that bring us together in the distance and remind us that we are still part of the same origin, and our traditions thus achieve in exile.

@ahrensburgart | @juanademonch | www.ahrensburgart.com



TOÑÁ VEGAS

Born in Caracas in 1952. Visual artist based in Miami. She studied psychology at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB) in 1974; studied at the Foundation Course at Hornsey College of Art (London, 1976) and graduated in Graphic Arts at CEGRA in Caracas in 1981.

Inspired by quantum physics and the notion that all creation is energy in constant motion, Vegas explores the patterns and transformations of energy through media such as collage, painting, perforated paper and metal, printing, photography, and digital techniques. She has held solo exhibitions such as "Reflexiones sobre la visibilidad (Reflections on Visibility)" (MACZUL, 2020), "Energy Matters" (Imago Art in Action, Miami, 2019), and "Inventory/takes" (The Clemente Center, New York, 2016), in collaboration with Tony Vázquez. Her large-scale works can be seen in buildings and private collections in Caracas and Miami.

In her work, *Los amantes de la arepa. Nueva constelación en el cielo* (The Arepa Lovers. A New Constellation in the Sky), Vegas creates an image that elevates this traditional Venezuelan food to the astronomical plane. It is a tribute to its loving, collective, and transcendent symbolism in a new constellation that unites bodies, homes, and territories scattered across the sky of memory.

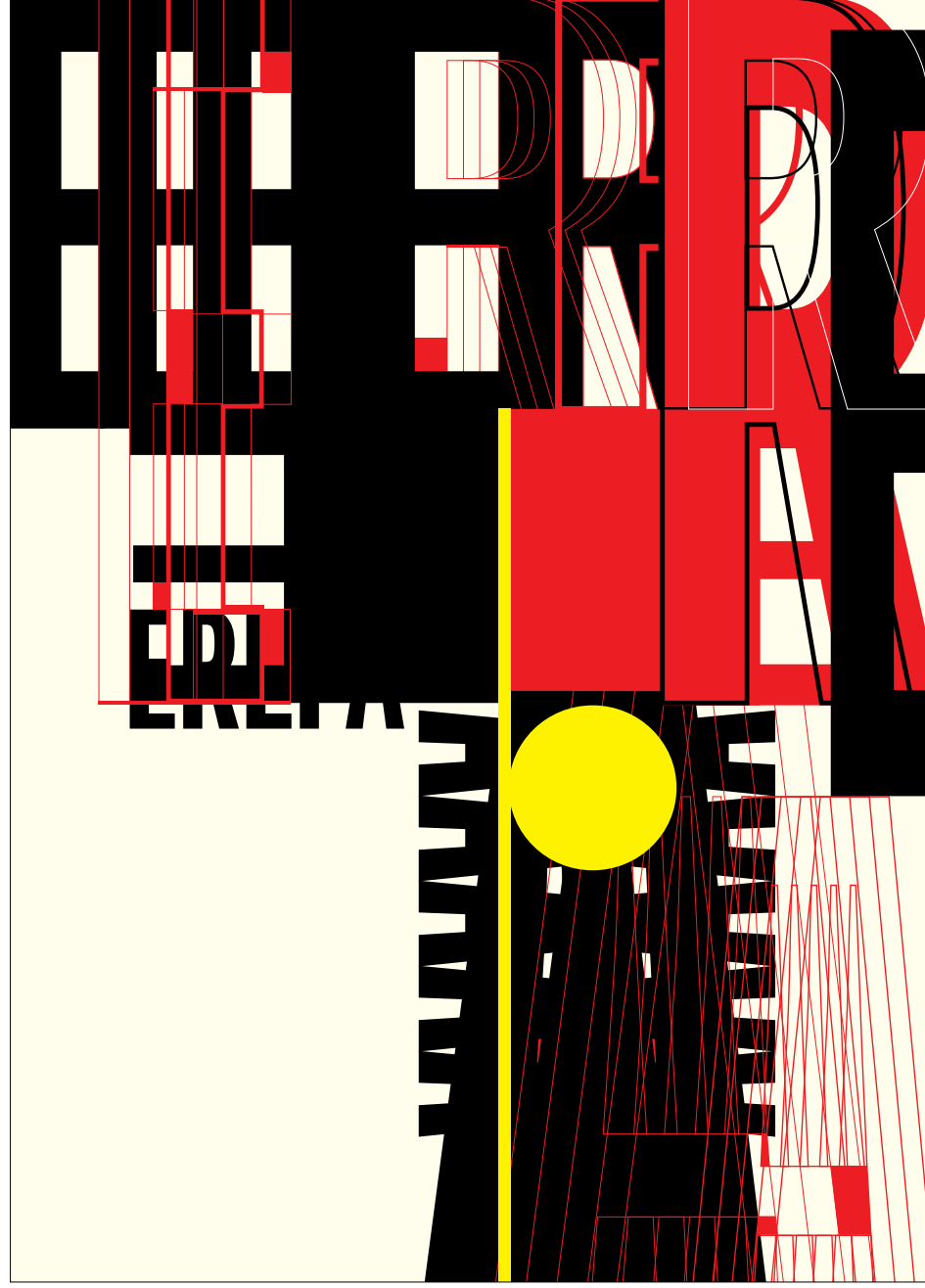
@tonyavegasofficial
www.tonyavegasofficial.com

**LOS AMANTES DE LA AREPA.
NUEVA CONSTELACIÓN EN EL CIELO
(THE AREPA LOVERS.
A NEW CONSTELLATION IN THE SKY)**

2025

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL EDITION

15 x 21 cm





EREPA

2025

DIGITAL GRAPHIC MATRIX

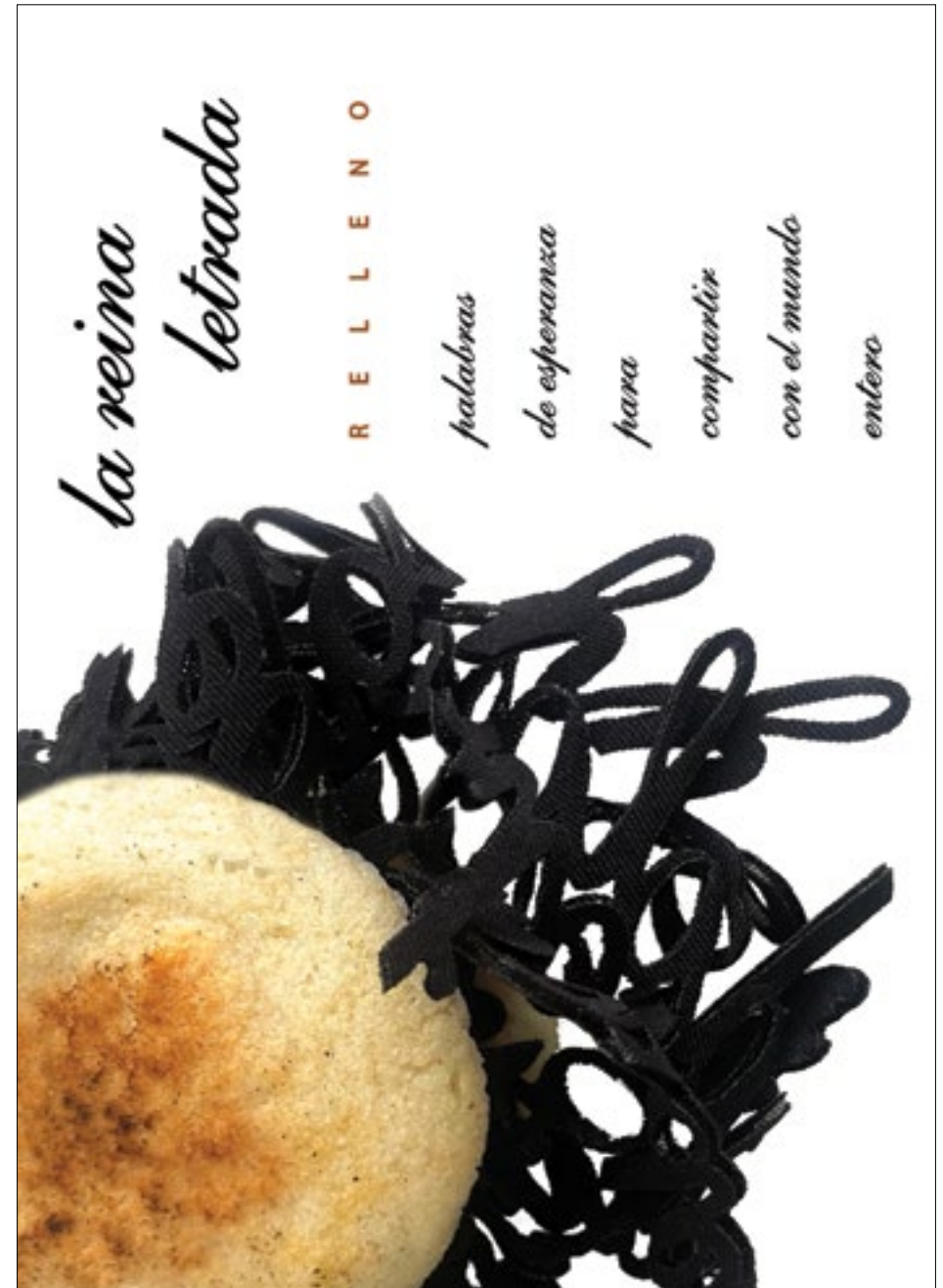
70 x 50 cm

IRA LEÓN

Born in London in 1970, Ira is a designer and visual communicator who graduated from the Caracas Institute of Design in 1991. Her work focuses on editorial design, with a special emphasis on artistic, literary, and scientific publications, as well as brand creation. She explores typography as a fundamental expression of visual language.

She is the founder of the organization Ccs-Flash, with which she carries out electronic art and videography projects. She has been recognized with awards such as the Gourmand Award, International Latino Book Awards, and the AVG's Tenedor de Oro. Among her notable projects are *Nuestra cocina a la manera de Caracas* and *Harry Abend escultor* (AICA Award). She currently resides in Caracas.

In *Erepa*, Ira León constructs a digital graphic matrix where typography becomes a contemporary visual tribute to the linguistic origin of corn. The word "erepa," which comes from Cumanagoto – a Caribbean language – is the protagonist of a composition where design and ancestral memory merge, reclaiming its indigenous roots as a cultural and linguistic symbol.



ANITA REYNA

A Venezuelan artist born in London, Anita trained as a Graphic Designer at the European Institute of Design in Rome. Alongside her professional design practice, she has developed a body of visual work where elements of graphic language converge with an artistic vision nourished by icons of contemporary life.

Her style incorporates photography, video, kinetic pieces, and overprints, generating visual tensions that challenge traditional representation. Her recent explorations focus on gesture through mixed media techniques such as painting, collage, and embroidery, also integrating language (the written word) as a visual element.

She has participated in international art fairs, salons, and both solo and group exhibitions in Venezuela, Bogotá, Panama, Miami, New York, Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul. Anita is a frequent contributor to philanthropic art auctions.

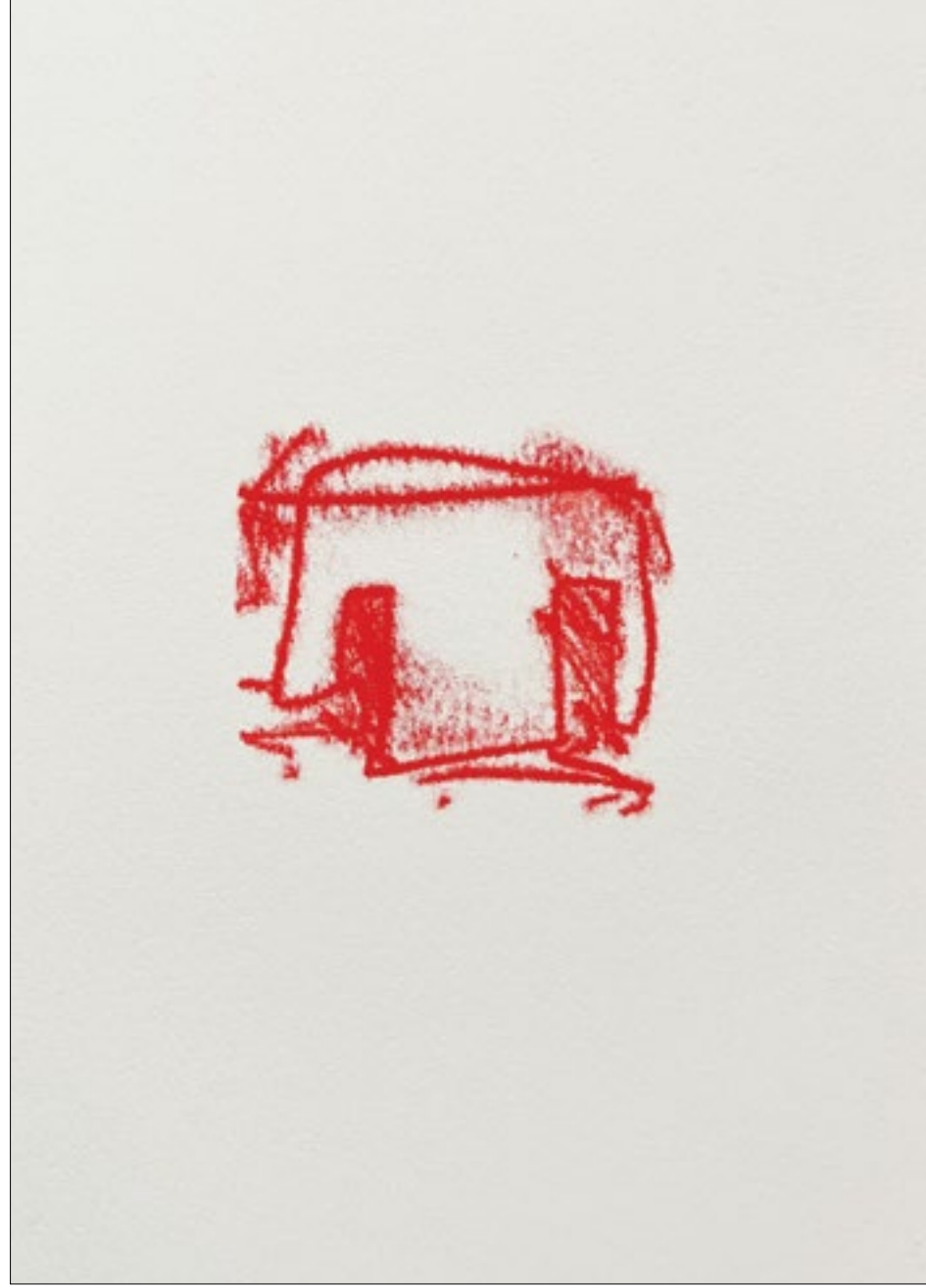
In her postcard, Anita presents a piece that intertwines color, form, and word in a composition of striking visual rigor and restrained poetry.



@air_dgrafico
@air_arte

Worded Queen
Filling: Words of hope to share with the whole world

REINA LETRADA (WORDED QUEEN)
2025
VARIOUS MATERIALS
15 x 21 cm





eMeTe AREPA (eMeYou AREPA)

2025

MONOTYPE ON PAPER

21 x 15 cm

JESÚS MATHEUS

Born in Caracas in 1957. Draftsman and engraver, master printer, painter, and sculptor with extensive teaching experience. Since 2005, he has lived and worked in Boston, Massachusetts, developing a body of work marked by abstract and symbolic exploration. He has exhibited individually at venues such as Galería Odalys (Madrid), Galería Manuel Ojeda (Gran Canaria), Ranivilu Gallery (Miami), and Sala TAC (Caracas). In 2024, he participated in group exhibitions such as "COLOR" at Cecilia de Torres LTD in New York; "Antes de América" at the Juan March Foundation in Madrid; "Esprit Tournette" at Galerie Tournette (Paris), and "Secret Affinities, Aesthetics of Two Words" at the Juan Carlos Maldonado Collection (Miami, FL). In 2018, he was awarded the Artist Fellowship in Painting by the Massachusetts Cultural Council; and in 2023, he received an honorable mention at the Luisa Palacios Graphic Miniatures Biennial. Since 2005, he has lived and worked in Boston, MA, USA

His eMeTe arepa postcard is presented as "a memorial form, an image of free evocation: house - letter - chalice - cup." In this monotype, the arepa moves away from its literal meaning and becomes a sign, a symbolic surface that condenses the ritual, the everyday, and the essential. A minimal gesture that suggests, with an economy of form, an expanded memory.

@jesusmatheusg

P • 36



P • 37



ALEJANDRA MANDELBLUM

Born in Margarita in 1973. Venezuelan-American artist, muralist, and educator based in New York. She studied Fashion Design at the Brivl Center in Caracas, and then devoted herself to painting and muralism as a self-taught artist: "... more than anything else, it was practice, work, and my relationships and visits to the studios of visual artists." After almost two decades as a fashion designer in the United States and South America, she began to devote herself to art and its environment. She teaches at the Pratt Institute and Creative Art Works, and has developed art and mindfulness programs for children in underserved communities. Alejandra is a founding member of Pachanga, a collective of Venezuelan artists, and led El Consulado, a temporary art center in New York dedicated to showcasing immigrant artists. She has exhibited in New York, Mexico City, Los Angeles, and other cities.

In her works *Plexus Cardiac* (Cardiac Plexus), Mandelblum "built in layers, the piece begins by writing koans in a mantric form, which were then blurred," leaving traces of that meditation. On that basis, she intertwines organic, symbolic, and geometric fragments in an expansive composition. Each stroke oxygenates cycles, displacements, and encounters, proposing a reading of identity as a body in constant respiration, "creating an internal landscape that pulsates between the spiritual and the organic."

@alejandramandelblum
www.alejandramandelblum.com

PLEXUS CARDIACO (CARDIAC PLEXUS)

2018

ACRYLIC, ENAMEL AND CHARCOAL ON FABRIC
200,66 x 251,46



RICARDO BENAIM

Born in Caracas in 1949, Ricardo is a visual artist graduated from the Neumann Foundation Design Institute in 1972; he also studied engraving techniques at Atelier 63 in Paris. In the 1980s, he enrolled at the Pratt Institute in New York, where he also worked as a teacher. With more than twenty solo exhibitions and multiple group shows, he has represented Venezuela at important biennials in Latin America, such as the First Mercosur Biennial; the Fourth and Sixth Havana Biennials; the Fourth and Seventh Caribbean Biennials in Santo Domingo; the Fourth Cuenca Biennial; the First and Second Ibero-American Biennials in Lima; and the Third and Fourth Barro de América Biennials in Caracas and São Paulo.

He has created and directed several collective projects in which he has brought together visual artists from diverse backgrounds: Caracas Utópica - Orinoco Utópico (1996-97); Proyecto MAPA (since 1994); Banco Central del Cóndor (since 1999); and Proyecto MAPA América del Sur (since 2009). Benaim is known for promoting art as a tool for identity, memory, and social action. He is currently promoting the project *A Bordar la VOZ*.

In *Arepandala*, "our arepa transcends its status as food: it becomes one of the most powerful symbols of our identity."

@ricardobenaim
ricardo.benaim@gmail.com

AREPANDALA
2025
DIGITAL ART
DIMENSIÓN VARIABLE



LAURA STAGNO

Born in Maracay in 1973, she is a Venezuelan artist trained in Painting and Graphic Arts at the Armando Reverón University Institute in Caracas; and holds a master's degree in Animation from Musashino Art University (Tokyo). She lived in Japan for ten years, where she worked as an exclusive illustrator for a design studio and deepened her love for paper, patterns, gastronomy, and Japanese culture.

She has illustrated more than a dozen children's books, including *Soy la Arepa*, written by Ximena Montilla. For the past three years, she has focused on publishing projects related to multiculturalism and cultural identity, collaborating with social and educational events. She also teaches Japanese cooking workshops in Barcelona, where she lives with her daughter Iroma.

The postcard *El mantelito de los sabores* (A Tablecloth of Flavours) comes from the children's book *Soy la Arepa* (I am the Arepa), illustrated by Laura. "Far from Venezuela, the aroma of corn takes the girl back home, where the colors and texture of the woven tablecloth from Tintorero gave her little arepa with cream that special taste that still accompanies her in her memory." Stagno creates an intimate and sensory image woven with paper, fabrics, and drawing. The aroma of corn connects territories and affections: a bridge between memory and belonging.

@laurastagnoilustra
www.laurastagno.com

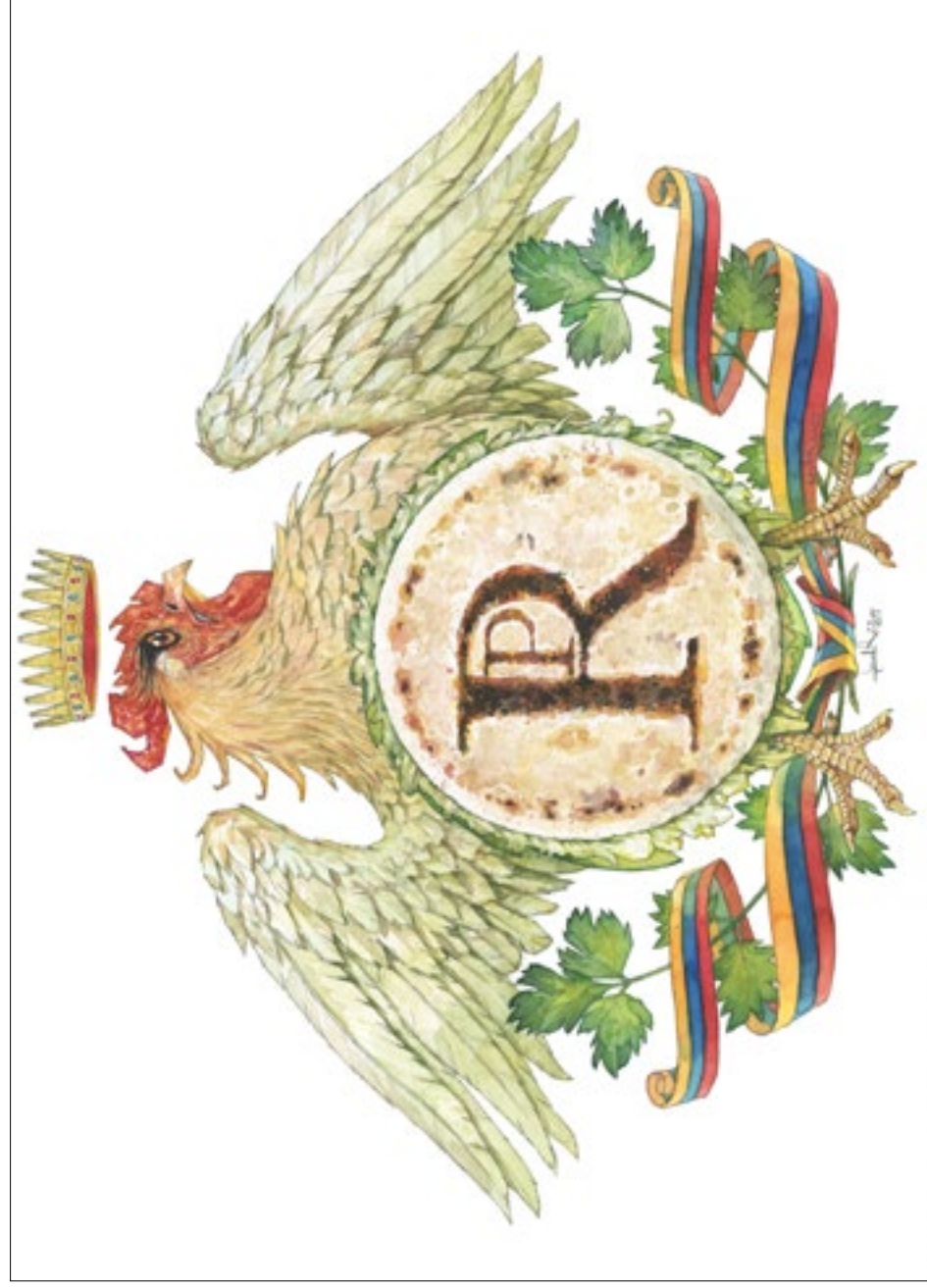


EL MANTELITO DE LOS SABORES (A TABLECLOTH OF FLAVOURS)

2025

DIGITAL COLLAGE ON PAPER, KNITTED FABRIC,
AND DRAWING WITH CRAYONS

15 x 21 cm



LEONARDO RODRÍGUEZ

Venezuelan illustrator trained at the Caracas Design Institute (1992), and with an outstanding international career. In 2001, he received the Zapata Award for his work at *El Nacional*, and since 2004 he has been a regular contributor to *MAD Magazine*. He has worked on campaigns for the Bronx Zoo, Ralph Lauren, and publishers such as Barcanova. He participated in the special *Pocoyo's Christmas Carol* (Zinkia, 2017), and his cover for *Homefield Advantage* (Simon & Schuster, 2011) was exhibited at the Museum of American Illustration. He has been a jury member for World Press Cartoon (Portugal, 2021) and a speaker at Euroculture 2023 in Vienna. He currently contributes to the Swiss magazine *Azione* and has lived in Barcelona since 2007.

In his *Reina Pepeada* postcard, he develops his narrative synthesis in a graphic nod that combines history, flavor, and humor with visual identity:

Inspired by the Venezuelan coat of arms, it includes typical ingredients such as coriander in the form of a heraldic ornament. The arepa with its classic "*quemadito*" (slightly burned face) occupies the center as a symbol of identity. "The initials RP (*Reina Pepeada*) are inspired by the Napoleonic Parisian initials, one of my many references. To complete the piece, I wanted to play with the idea of our stuffed bird and the Phoenix that appears on the Queen's band's coat of arms."

@leonardo_rodriguez_artist
www.leonardorodriguez.net



REINA PEPEADA

2025

WATERCOLOR ON SATIN, FABRIANO PAPER

42 x 30 cm





ÓSCAR ALEJANDRO YANES ADAM

Painter. Born in Caracas in 1965. He is the son of renowned Venezuelan journalist Óscar Yanes and writer Lutecia Adam. He studied at the Oakland Art Institute in California. He trained in art history, painting, drawing, sculpture, and ceramics at UNAVID (1986-1988) and at the Federico Brandt Academy of Art (1988-1990), where he was a student of prominent artists such as Samuel Baroni, Mercedes Pardo, Juan Calzadilla, Diego Barboza, and María Eugenia Manrique. He uses mixed media: oil, acrylic, watercolor, collage, photography, on canvas, cardboard, and paper. In 1990, he participated in the First Mérida Biennial with the painting *La deformación de la torera*. His first solo exhibition, "Abstracción en la arena", was held at Galería 5 in 1992. That same year, he was recognized as Artist of the State of Yaracuy and presented "OAYA: 2016," his last solo exhibition in Caracas. He has participated in group exhibitions in San Felipe and Carabobo. He currently lives in Colombia, where he continues to create.

In the work, we see a woman riding a bull, symbolizing impetus and struggle. The nature of Yaracuy and the nudity that refers to the virginal, to the indigenous. This image of the woman and the bull comes from "las toreras" (female bullfighters), a recurring theme in OAYA's work. At this stage, the female bullfighter is not wearing her costume, nor is she in the bullring or in the bullfight, and she is completely free, paying homage to the intrinsic strength of Venezuelan women, who live with courage. The ash gray present in the work gives way to other colors reflecting the territory and its inner fire.

@yanes_oscaralejandro

VIAJANDO HACIA LA LIBERTAD (TRAVELING TOWARDS FREEDOM)

1995

WATERCOLOR AND CRAYON

30 x 40 cm



KARLA MOLINA

Visual artist born in Caracas in 1973 and based in Germany since 2006. She studied at the Armando Reverón School of Plastic Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Her work, closely connected to her experience as an immigrant, unfolds as a constant exercise in reflection on identity, grief, memory, and belonging.

In her postcard *Agustín y Juana* (Agustin and Juana), made with acrylic and oil on canvas, she depicts a symbolic scene where two icons converge: *Juana*, the embodiment of the arepa tradition, and Agustín, the monk associated with Augustiner Bavarian beer. She cries and he offers her a beer in a gesture of consolation and encounter. The work is part of a series of paintings made with the colors of the German flag and serves as a biographical testimony to her experience in that country.



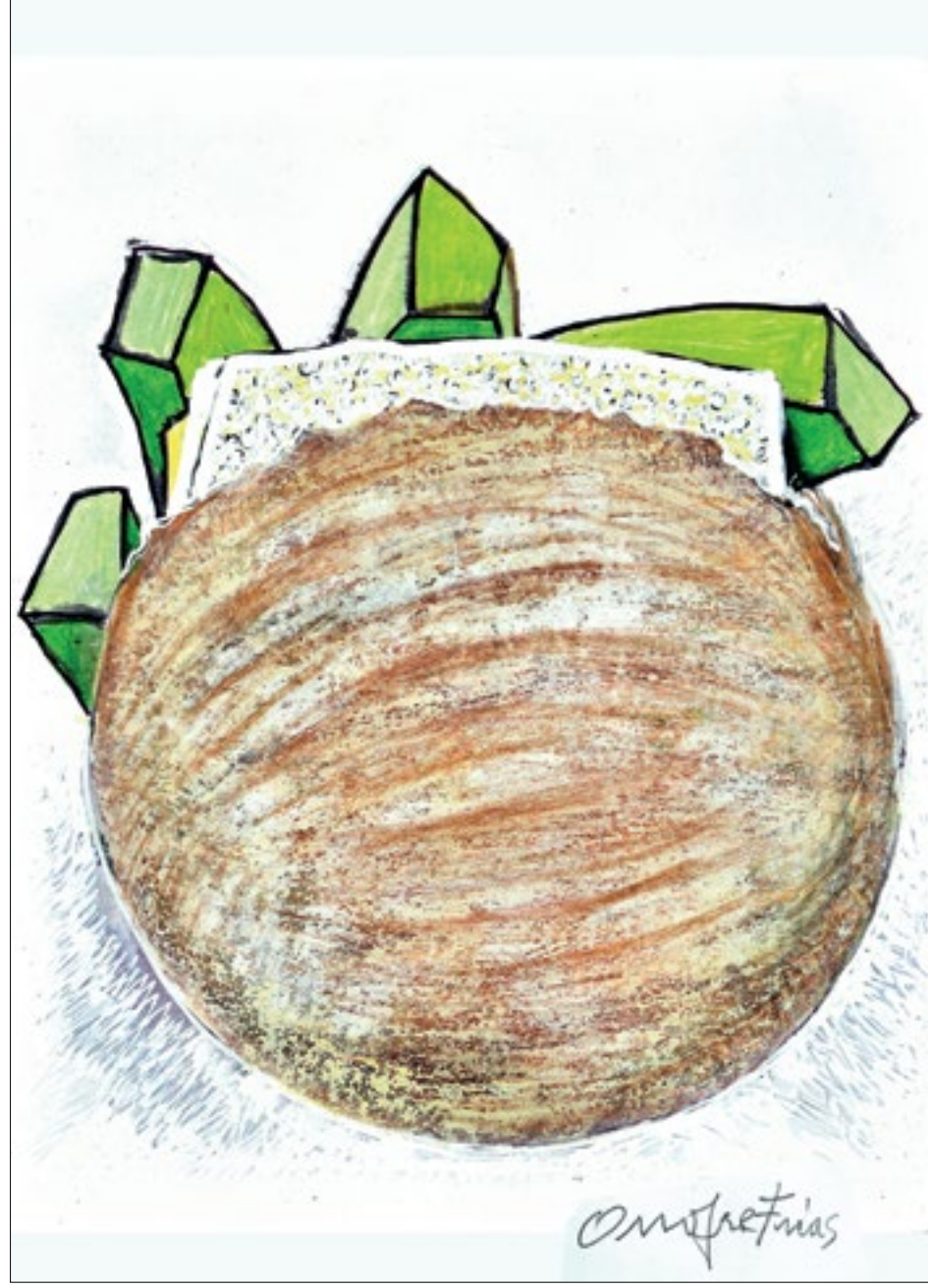
@karlamolina94

AGUSTÍN Y JUANA (AGUSTIN AND JUANA)

2025

ACRYLIC AND OIL PAINT ON CANVAS

60 x 80 cm





Avocado Arepa with Guayanés Cheese

Oh, avocado arepa with Guayanés cheese... you tasted like familiar skin, like secrets shared between laughter and shadows, like a dawn unwilling to say goodbye. You held the flavor of glory with the untouched desire to keep the night alive, but walking through it, savoring it step by step, like someone who doesn't want the taste to end, nor the memory, nor the trembling. How delicious you were, avocado arepa with Guayanés cheese!

I'll return.

O.F.

AREPA DE AGUACATE CON GUAYANÉS (AVOCADO AREPA WITH GUAYANÉS CHEESE)

2025

COLOR MARKERS AND WATERCOLOR CRAYONS
DIGITAL REPRODUCTION ON OPALINE CARDBOARD
21 x 15 cm

ONOFRE FRÍAS

Born in 1953 in Miranda state, where he resides. With more than thirty years dedicated to visual creation and art education, he has masterfully explored media such as painting, drawing, sculpture, engraving, installation, and performance. He studied at fundamental institutions of Venezuelan art such as the Centro de Enseñanza Gráfica (CEGRA) and the Escuela de Artes Visuales Cristóbal Rojas, and has been invited as an expert by the University of Huelva in Spain. He has held more than 100 solo exhibitions and participated in more than 200 group exhibitions in Venezuela, Europe, America, and Asia. He has received the Pedro Ángel González International Caribbean Award and honorable mentions at the Malta Biennial, among others, and has given lectures at cultural and academic institutions nationally and internationally. His work is part of the collections of institutions such as MOLAA in Los Angeles, the OAS in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Modern Art in Bogotá, the Martin Luther King Center in Miami, MACSI, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Caracas.

In his postcard *Arepa de aguacate con guayanés* (Avocado arepa with guayanés cheese), using markers and crayons, Frías traces a memory of flavors that speaks of desire, laughter, complicity, and affection.





AREPITA PARA LLEVAR (AREPITA TO GO)

2025

DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION

21 x 15 cm

ANDREÍNA ACERO

Born in Caracas in 1977. Illustrator and visual artist with extensive experience in painting, sculpture, muralism, urban art, and object intervention. She trained at the López & Acosta School of Comics (1998) and obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree, with a major in Painting, from the IUESAP Armando Reverón (2004), both schools located in Caracas. She develops her artistic language from an intercultural and symbolic perspective. Animals are constant protagonists in her work: figures that embody magical imaginaries inspired by cosmogonies that the artist transforms through form and color, always seeking grace, dynamism, and innovation.

The postcard *Arepita para llevar (Arepita to Go)* is an illustration that conveys “the joy of receiving a tasty and unexpected arepa.” With three eyes and small fangs, it evokes tenderness, magic, and fantasy. It invites us to imagine and dream, bringing happiness on its journey around the world.



JOANNA VEGAS SÁNCHEZ

AVenezuelan artist and chef, born in Caracas in 1974, she has been living in Mexico City for ten years. With a multifaceted background that encompasses cooking, graphic design, and singing, she studied architecture at the Central University of Venezuela and cooking at the Argentine Institute of Gastronomy. As a chef, she is the founder of *Glam Foods*, a brand specializing in gourmet products such as sea salts and infused oils. She has also been a book editor and designer.

In her postcard *Con mi arepa no se metan* (Don't mess with my arepa), Vegas uses collage and digital photomontage techniques to fuse two symbols deeply rooted in her memory of Venezuela: the macaw and the arepa. It expresses not only an act of cultural defense but also a gesture of affection and belonging; an image that combines the graphic with the emotional, the symbolic with the personal.



CON MI AREPA NO SE METAN (DON'T MESS WITH MY AREPA)

2025

COLLAGE AND DIGITAL PHOTOMONTAGE

15 x 21 cm

@jouvegas
www.about.me/jvegas





**AAA. ELLA-ABSTRACCIONES PAISAJÍSTICAS
(AAA. SHE - LANDSCAPE ABSTRACTIONS)**

2007

PHOTOGRAPHY

120 x 80 cm

MUU BLANCO

José Antonio Blanco Angulo was born in Caracas in 1966. He is a multidisciplinary artist. In 2002, he completed a theoretical and practical master's degree on the System of Representation of Contemporary Art at the Armando Reverón University Institute of Higher Studies in Plastic Arts. His visual work encompasses painting, sculpture, video art, and photography, with a conceptual approach and a strong social critique.

As a musician, he has been part of various projects that fuse electronic, rock, pop, and sound experimentation. He has participated in exhibitions in the Americas and Europe, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Caracas, the Museum of Modern Art in Bogotá, the Lowe Art Museum, and the Venice Biennale. Known for his constant innovation, Muu Blanco explores new languages and media to interact with the public and question the conventions of art.

In his piece *AAA. Ella - Abstracciones Paisajísticas (AAA. She Landscape Abstractions)* the artist transforms the silhouette of El Ávila hill. As curator María Elena Ramos explains, "Muu Blanco transforms its representation by turning it vertically, challenging what is natural and revealing how art, through playfulness and creativity, can deepen our understanding of nature and human sensitivity."

@muublanco | www.linktr.ee/muublanco

P • 56



P • 57

ALEXANDRA DE YAVORSKY

sed in Miami whose work explores color as an emotional and sensory language. With over forty years of visual experience and a background in Graphic Design, her practice moves away from representation to evoke internal states through installations that integrate light, shadow, and structure.

Curator Félix Suazo has described her visual language as *Estereochromy*: "a choral composition of independent chromatic units that together create an emotional symphony." Since 2018, she has exhibited her work in renowned Miami venues such as Pinecrest Gardens, Dot Fifty-one Gallery, and ID Art Lab.

In her series *Pinpoint_color*, she arranges over a thousand stickers according to her personal perception of color, accompanied by tinted shadows and dozens of pins that symbolize Venezuelan migration and the emotional weight of memory—a kind of soul arepa, filled with nostalgia and belonging.

@color_is_served
www.alexandradeyavorsky.com

SERIE *PINPOINT_COLOR* (DETALLE)
SERIE *PINPOINT_COLOR* (DETALLE)
2022

VARIOUS MATERIALS
96.5 x 25.9 cm





LA AREPA DE ORO (GOLD AREPA)

2025

WATER AND ACRYLIC ON PAPER

22,86 x 15,24 cm

KALI MARTÍNEZ DÁVILA

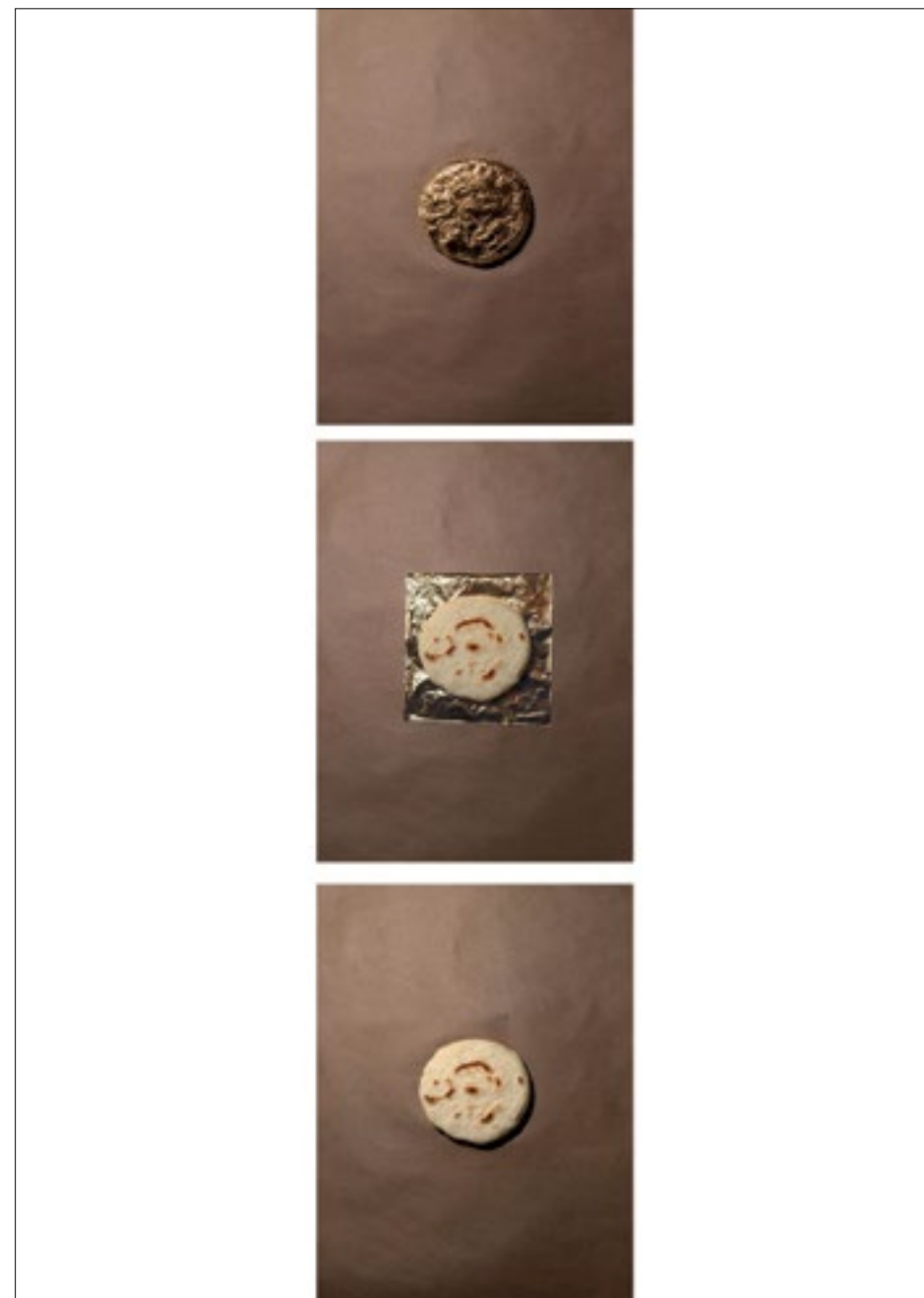
Born in Caracas 1976, she is a self-taught artist, and has lived in the United States since 2006. She grew up in a deeply artistic environment, alongside her mother Carmencita "Pelusa" Dávila, an interior designer, and her father, Ángel Martínez, known as Lobo-Grillo, a visual artist. After overcoming breast cancer, Kali holds a deeply human view of art as a therapeutic and transformative tool. Her work on paper is characterized by the use of abstract black acrylic frames containing vibrant and soft watercolors, a dynamism that expresses her love of dance, integrating fluidity, movement, and emotion into each stroke; this technique has been key to her personal healing process. She is currently certifying as an Art Therapist Practitioner in New York, strengthening her vocation to accompany processes of emotional well-being through artistic creation.

She participated recently in the group exhibition "Reimagining Pain Through Art," organized by the West Orange Arts Council in New Jersey (April-May 2025), where she presented her work, always in dialogue with art as a vehicle for resilience.

In her postcard *La Arepa de Oro* (Gold Arepa) she honors her Venezuelan roots, the emotional and cultural value that every Venezuelan carries with them as an intimate treasure that travels, is shared, and remains.

@kalipopings

P • 60



P • 61

CARLOS SALAZAR-LERMONT

Born in Caracas in 1987, he is a Venezuelan artist focused on performativity and socially engaged art. He graduated in Visual Arts from the University Institute of Higher Studies in Plastic Arts Armando Reverón, in Caracas. In 2016, he emigrated to the United States amid a wave of migration triggered by the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. In 2022, with the Danforth Scholarship, he earned his MFA in Visual Arts from the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis; and a dual master's degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), thanks to the full New Artists Society scholarship.

His work has been exhibited in museums and galleries across countries in the Americas and Europe. He currently lives and works between Chicago and St. Louis.

In his postcard *Luke 22:19*, Salazar-Lermont documents the golden browning of an arepa in three steps. This symbolic act initiates a reflection on the possibilities of collective transformation. The golden arepa alludes to the Catholic host, evoking a gesture of cultural consecration that invites rebirth.

@csalazarlermont
www.carlossalazarlermont.com

LUCAS 22:19 (LUKE 22:19)

2025
PERFORMANCE FOR THE CAMERA, DIGITAL
PHOTOGRAPHY, THE AREPA, AND A GOLD LEAF
15 x 21 cm



BERNARDITA RAKOS

Born in Chile in 1977, she earned a degree in Fine Arts from the Armando Reverón University Institute of Higher Studies in Fine Arts and the Federico Brandt Art Institute, both located in Caracas. Rakos has received international recognition, with her work exhibited in institutions and museums across various countries, including Italy, France, England, Israel, Egypt, Cuba, and Ecuador. She represented Venezuela at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009) and participated in the Cairo Biennale of Contemporary Art (2010). She currently resides in Chile.

In this postcard, the word “arepa” is spelled out in sign language, transforming the gesture into a symbol of inclusion. The floral nails evoke the Caribbean and celebrate Venezuelan identity. The choice of hands—a recurring element in the artist’s work—continues her exploration of the body as a medium of expression and memory.

@brakos
www.bernarditarakos.com

AREPA
2025
PHOTO COLLAGE
15 x 21 cm





UNA AREPA DENTRO DE OTRA AREPA (AN AREPA INSIDE ANOTHER AREPA)

2025

PENCIL, INK, FIXER, ON MDF

BACKGROUND DIGITALLY MODIFIED

21 x 15 cm

PEDRO TINEO

Born in 1966 in Caripito, Monagas State, where he currently lives and works. Trained at the Cristóbal Rojas School of Visual Arts, the Federico Brandt Art Institute, and the Armando Reverón IUESAP, he has developed a language that combines drawing, embroidery, installation, and recycled materials. His connection with the lush nature of Monagas permeates each piece: pigments, wires, gourds, and paper give shape to reinvented nature. His work has been presented in various exhibitions, including: "Reinvenciones de la naturaleza" (2017), "Gran Enui" (cultural night owl), and "Fritanga, tentación y relleno" (2013), where he has explored his fascination with the organic, the feminine, and the vegetal.

In his postcard *Una arepa dentro de otra arepa* (An Arepa Inside Another Arepa), the artist draws on a personal anecdote: the first time he heard the name "La Pelúa" in Caracas. The feminine, suggestive, and physical sound of the phrase "triggered a powerful visual image, before he knew that it was an arepa with shredded beef and yellow cheese." From that experience, and with subtle humor and lyricism, Tineo constructs a visual reflection on identity and corn, paying homage to the arepa as a matrix image: feminine, nutritious, and powerful.

@experienciasdelordendivino
www.pedrotineo.com





CAYENA (CAYENNE)

2023
ASSEMBLAGE OF MIXED MEDIA
21 x 15 cm

APAMAIRE

Born in Caracas on January 9, 1984. Interdisciplinary artist. Bachelor of Fine Arts, specializing in Sculpture, from the Armando Reverón Higher Education Institute. Studied Architecture at the Central University of Venezuela. Lives and works in Caracas.

Apamaire embraces transdisciplinary readings, between science and art, to consolidate a contemporary language that sensitively reveals the concept of "biodiversity" and the importance of its conservation. "I recognize in art my awareness of humanity and living beings," thus approaching the field of Bioart, as a new ecological-aesthetic theme.

She held her first solo exhibition, "*Metáforas del paisaje*" (Metaphors of the Landscape), at the Alliance Française in 2018. She has participated in the following group exhibitions and salons: "Otros Nombres", curated by Alberto Asprino, at Casa 22 (2024); the 23rd Salón Jóvenes con Fía "Somos muchos la llamada" (ULA, 2024); Proyecto de Mujeres Creadoras at the GAN (CAF Bank, 2023); "De vuelta al oficio. III edición" (CELARG, 2022), among many others.

In Cayena (Cayenne), the resource used is the assembly of different media, materializing the balance of the apparently diverse, where the natural and the human converge. The work represents her vision of art as vital consciousness and a bridge between species.

@apamaire_pixel



SANTIAGO POL

Born in Cardedeu, Spain, in 1946. A key figure in graphic design and visual art in Venezuela. He trained at the Cristóbal Rojas School of Plastic Arts in Caracas and at the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Since 1968, he has had a prolific career in poster design, with more than 500 internationally recognized works. He lives in Barcelona, Spain. His career is marked by a deeply symbolic, critical, and aesthetic vision of posters, images, and communication. He has exhibited in group and solo shows in Venezuela, Poland, the United States, Bolivia, Finland, South Africa, Portugal, Brazil, Cuba, and Italy, among other countries. He has been recognized with two National Art Awards in Venezuela, the Gold Medal in Germany, the Bronze Medal in Japan, and the José Guadalupe Posada Award in Mexico. He represented Venezuela at the 2005 Venice Biennale and had a solo exhibition at the Advertising Museum in Paris. He is a member of the International Graphic Alliance (Switzerland), Iberoamérica Diseña, and the Official Association of Graphic Designers of Catalonia (#889). His work is part of collections at MoMA, the Poster Museum in Warsaw, the Casa de las Américas in Cuba, and the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, among others.

In his piece *La arepa no tiene fronteras* (*The Arepa Has No Borders*), Pol constructs a direct and powerful visual metaphor: an arepa filled with a passport. The work condenses the migratory drama of Venezuelans, while exalting the symbolic and cultural power of the arepa as a food that crosses oceans, borders, and identities.

@bcnpol



LA AREPA NO TIENE FRONTERAS (THE AREPA HAS NO BORDERS)

2025

REAL AREPA AND PASSPORT
(PHOTOGRAPHED SCULPTURE)

15 x 21 cm





AREPA SOMOS TODOS (AREPA IS ALL OF US)

2025

MIXED MEDIA

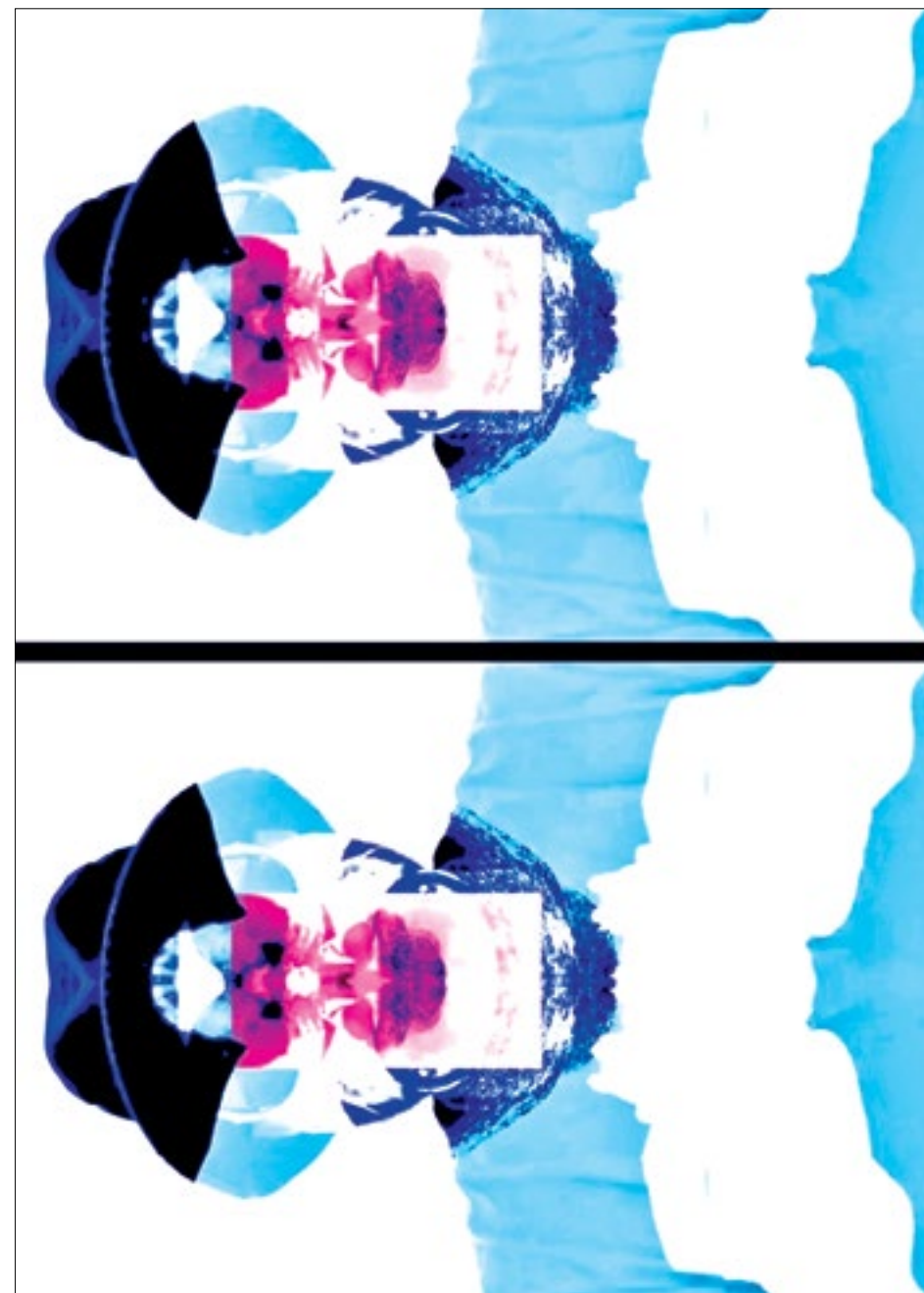
21 x 15 cm

ARMANDO VELUTINI

Born in Caracas in 1985, Velutini is a Venezuelan visual artist and collector. His artistic practice centers on the intersection of pop art, design, and popular culture, using mixed media to create works that engage with Venezuelan identity through references to contemporary cultural and artistic icons.

From a young age, his fascination with LEGO led him to develop the project Brick Canvas: "Through appropriation, I redesigned the Lego Man and turned him into a canvas for my intersectional works—hence the name." In 2016, committed to promoting art and culture as tools for social transformation, Velutini founded @oespaciogalería and the creative studio *To Take Out*.

In his postcard, Velutini highlights the versatility of the arepa: "as a gastronomic pillar deeply rooted in the essence of Venezuelan identity."



LOS MOROCHOS TWINS

This video production and electronic art duo is made up of Carlos Quintana and Lisandro Castro. Since the early 2000s, they have released a body of work consisting of more than 20 pieces of video art, digital installations, and multimedia formats. They have exhibited at open-air events such as the Organización CaracasFlash, which promoted their work in 2003, 2005, and 2014, alongside other prominent artists of this genre in Venezuela.

Regarding their postcard, they explain that *Doble bolo alimenticio* (Twin Bolus) emerged as a video project in 2021, the first year of the pandemic: "It was produced remotely, using video and sound files recorded while we were having a delicious Reina Pepiada for breakfast at our respective tables. For us, this arepa is the highest distinction ever created in honor of female beauty, represented by an authentic Caracas queen."

@los.morochos.twins
www.youtube.com/@losmorochostwins31

DOBLE BOLO ALIMENTICIO (STILL FRAME)
(TWIN BOLUS) (STILL FRAME)

2021
HD VIDEO
03'14"



RAFA MUCI

Visual artist born in Caracas in 1966, living and working in Miami. An architect from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the Central University of Venezuela (UCV), he obtained a Master's Degree in Digital Arts from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in New York. His artistic practice encompasses multiple media: painting, drawing, photography, assemblage, and printing.

Muci defines himself as a "collective man," someone who embodies and channels the deep layers of the psychic unconscious. In search of an intimate narrative that traverses location, content, color, and materials, each work proposes an experience where the material and the symbolic merge to reveal the hidden.

In Arepa de mi corazón (Arepa of my heart) – through photography and digital photomontage – he transforms the arepa into an intimate and symbolic figure: a heart that beats with memory, affection, and belonging.

@rafamuci
www.rafamuci.com

AREPA DE MI CORAZÓN (AREPA OF MY HEART)

2025

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL
PHOTOMONTAGE ON PAPER

15 x 21 cm





REINA PEPIADA

2025

DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION

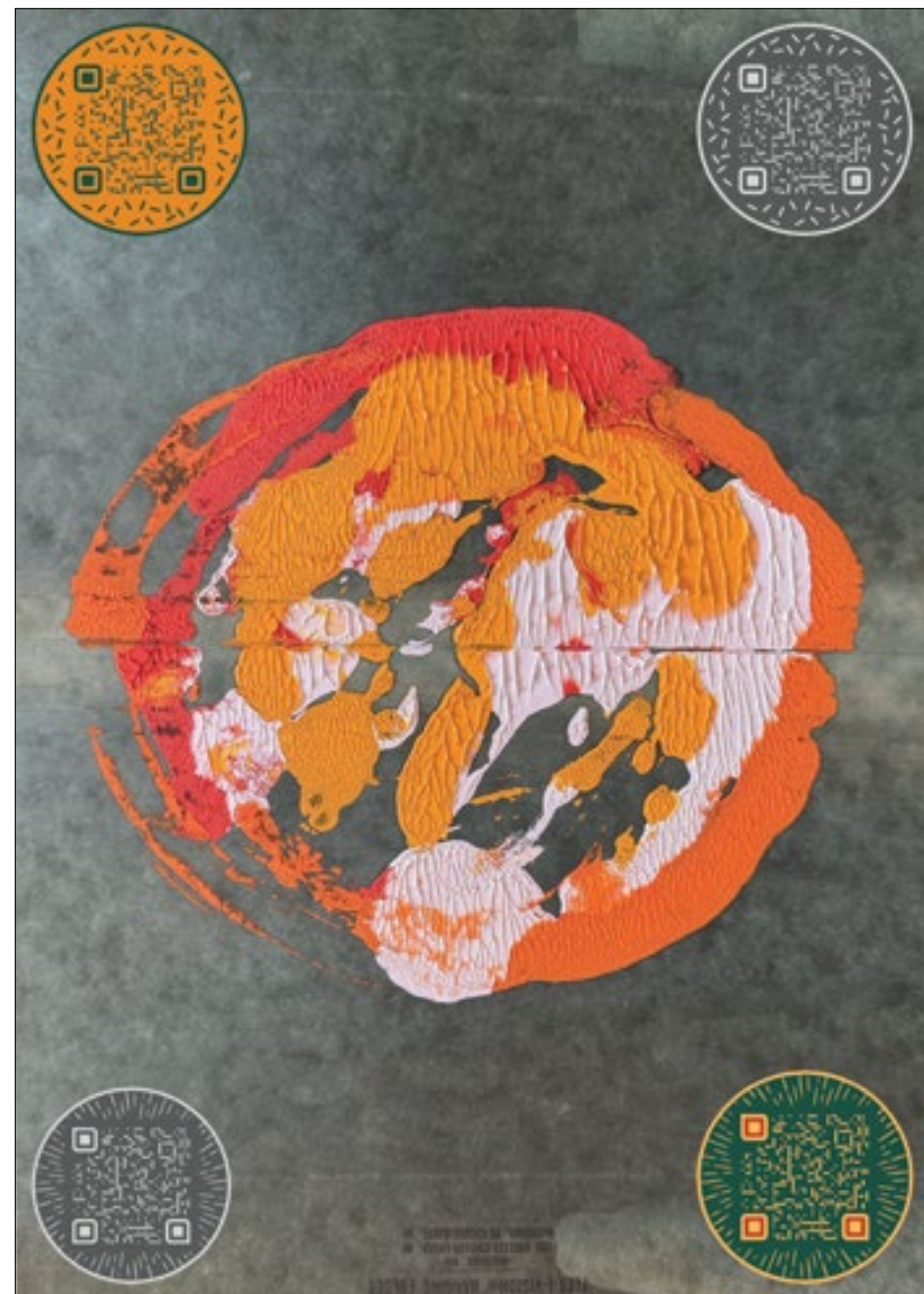
21 x 15 cm

PATRICIO AGÜERO

Born in Mérida in 1976, Patricio Agüero is a Venezuelan visual artist, set designer, and illustrator who trained at the Cristóbal Rojas School of Visual Arts and the Armando Reverón University Institute of Higher Studies in Visual Arts. His artistic work combines painting, sculpture, installation, and the performing arts. He has illustrated children's books and developed a series of "haute couture dolls" that have had a strong impact on the cultural and fashion scene in Croatia, where he currently resides.

He has participated in important exhibitions such as Jóvenes con FIA, Barro de América, and the Juan Lovera Salon, earning recognition for his visual expressiveness. As a set designer, costume designer, and puppeteer, he has worked with theater companies in Venezuela and Europe, notably the Zagreb Puppet Theater and the ITD Theater. He was awarded at the Naj Naj Festival for the artistic design of the play *Svarozic*, directed by Dinka Jeričević.

In his postcard *Reina Pepiada*, Agüero turns the arepa into a beauty queen, whose theatrical and fantastic portrait exalts – through glamour – the cultural and aesthetic richness of an identity that is known to be unique and dazzling.



HELWING VILLAMIZAR

Born in Caracas in 1974, he is a visual artist based in New York whose work explores the intersections between personal history, geopolitical forces, and systems of knowledge through palimpsest drawings, painting, abstract decalomania, and "objects of resistance." His practice, which blends digital and traditional processes, investigates identity as a mutable structure – shaped by, and at times challenging, ideological frameworks. He is also the founder of TalkApps.dev, a laboratory that merges art, storytelling, and technology to develop creative solutions.

In *Decalomanía de la Arepa*, (Arepa's Decalomania) Villamizar uses the surrealist technique of decalomania to transform the image of the arepa into an abstract and symbolic form – connecting the everyday with the universal to reflect critically on identity. The piece is accompanied by a QR code linking to a website that explores the migratory and cultural routes of the arepa as a symbolic object in constant transit.

@helwingv
www.helwingvillamizar.com

DECALCOMANÍA DE LA AREPA (AREPA'S DECALCOMANIA)

2025

OIL PAINT ON RECYCLED PAPER

38 x 47 cm



GOLDEN305

Cristhian Saravia was born in Caracas and currently resides in Wynwood, Florida. His career began in 1986 in the world of graffiti and tattooing, and since then he has developed a unique style, full of color and vibrant characters.

Since arriving in the United States in 1996, he has become a leading figure in urban art in Florida and the official representative of Kobra spray paint in the country. In addition to his visual work, he is a passionate educator and organizer of urban art festivals worldwide. He has participated in events such as Wynwood Walls, The Bushwick Collective, Ultra Music Festival, and Sea Walls, and has collaborated with leading figures in international urban art.

In his postcard Las Súper Arepas (Super-Arepas), Golden305 presents a playful and powerful vision of arepas as heroines of the Venezuelan home: guardians of flavor, tradition, and family unity. With this image, he celebrates arepas as a cultural symbol that nourishes collective identity.

@theartofgolden



LAS SÚPER AREPAS (SUPER-AREPAS)

2025

DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION

15 x 21 cm





I LOVE YOU

2025

PENCIL, DIGITAL COLORING

21 x 15 cm

EDUARDO MOLINA

A visual artist born in Caracas in 1967, he earned a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Salamanca, Spain. Using drawing and painting as his primary media, he has developed a visual universe that extends into video, happenings, and installations.

He has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions. His discourse combines the power of urban graphic language with the emotion that arises from inner journeys. He currently resides in Miami, where he develops his work both collectively and individually.

In his postcard *I love you*, he combines urban and spiritual elements in an intimate and symbolic proposal.





CARNE MIXTA (MIXED MEAT)

2025

ASSEMBLAGE WITH BONE, IRON, AND GLUE

24 x 24 x 13 cm

EDUARDO AZUAJE

Born in Pariaguán, Anzoátegui state in 1968, where he resides. He graduated in Fine Arts from the Cristóbal Rojas School of Visual Arts (1988-1992) and is a founding member of collectives such as Crea 10 and Caracas Flash Video-Espacio.

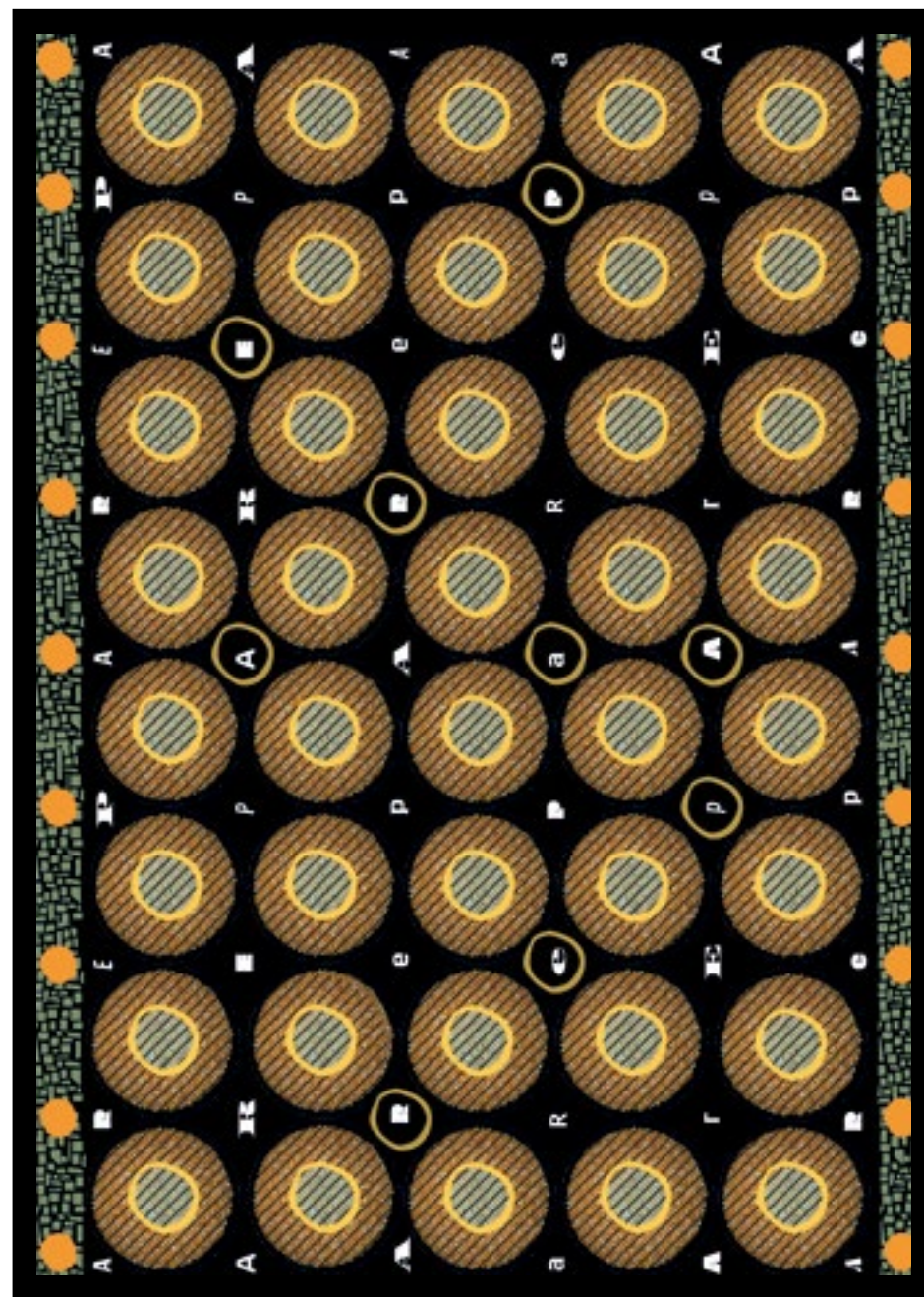
His work – which encompasses assemblage, installation, and video art – has been presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Caracas and the Museum of Fine Arts. Recent solo exhibitions include *Articular* (2023-2024) at the Blasini Morrison Gallery, and *Sin Cordero de Dios* (2017) at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Caracas. He has participated in biennials and group exhibitions throughout Latin America, and his work has been recognized with the Armando Reverón Prize for a Young Artist (1995) and the Spain Prize at the Siart International Biennial of Bolivia (2001). He currently directs the Eduardo Azuaje Arts Center in Pariaguán.

In his postcard, *Carne mixta* (Mixed Meat), Azuaje presents a piece with strong symbolic meaning, in which he turns the arepa into an object of reflection on fertility, life, collective memory, and the cultural resistance of the Venezuelan people. A material affirmation of identity and everyday spirituality.

@eduardo_azuaje

P • 86

foto: Julio Osorio



P • 87

HÉCTOR ROMERO

Born in Caracas in 1968, he lives in Baltimore, USA. A visual artist who graduated from the Armando Reverón University Institute of Higher Studies in Visual Arts, he is a chef, a teacher, and a researcher who has dedicated his life to honoring Venezuela's culinary heritage. Founder and director of the Caracas Culinary Institute, current executive chef at Alma Cocina Latina (Baltimore), and founding member of Venezuela Gastronómica, he has been honored with the highest awards from the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy.

In *Mosaico ancestral* (Ancestral Mosaic), Romero channels his artistic and culinary experience into an image constructed from food:

corn as the original ingredient that provides texture and tone; the arepa, as an ancestral practice that gives shape and graphic form.

"The construction of the image occurs through the serial repetition of elements, arranged on the plane in an organized and reticular manner. The circle: the form and the graphic, the signifier and the signified. This is how the image is formed (the mosaic) in postcard format, which, as a concept, defines the function or usefulness of the piece, as an element that carries identity and has the possibility of traveling and thus being present in different places."

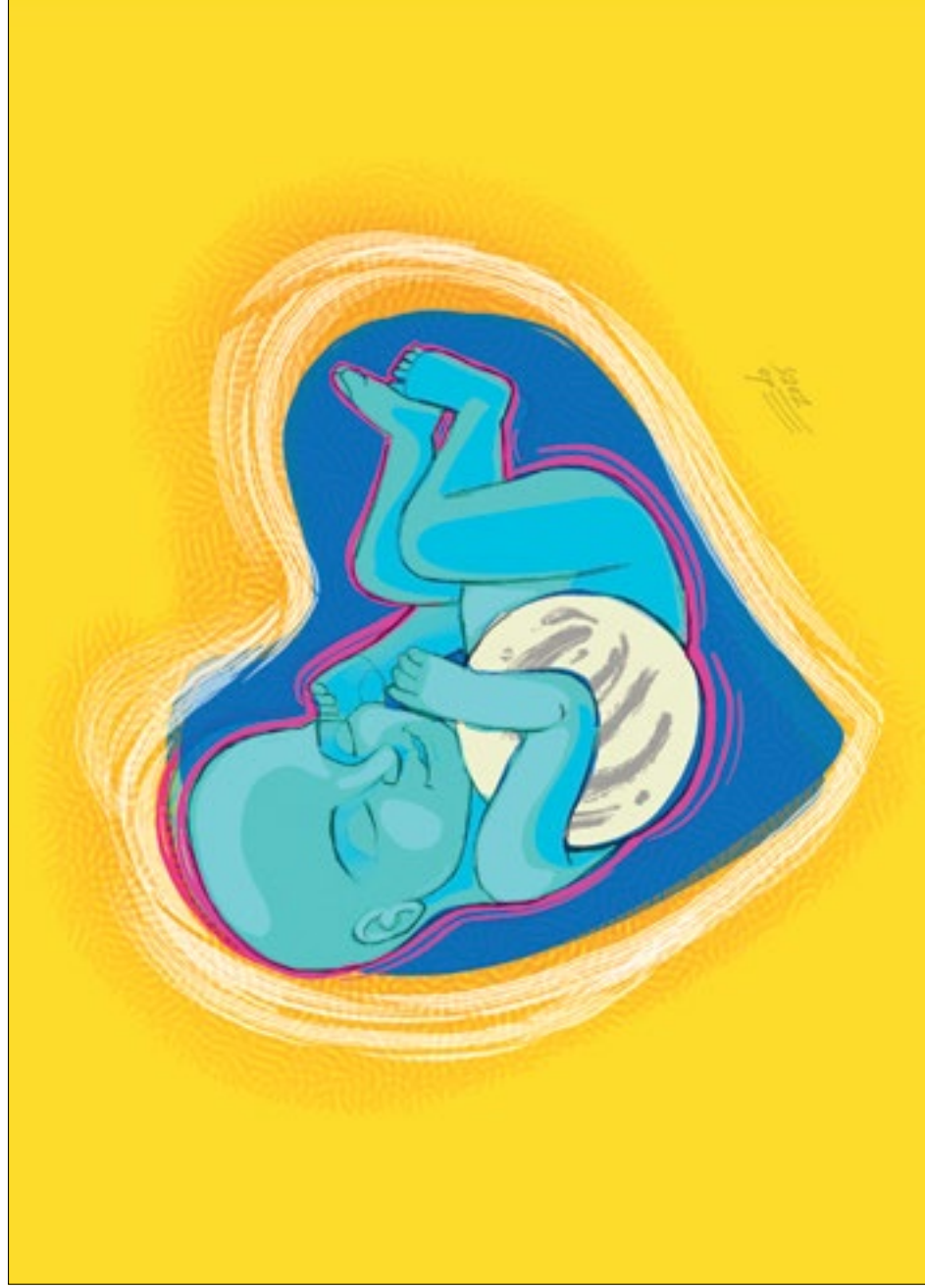
MOSAICO ANCESTRAL (ANCESTRAL MOSAIC)

2025

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL MEDIA

15 x 21 cm

@hector_romero_cocinero
@H_R_Cocinero | www.romerohector.com



EDO

Stage name of Eduardo Sanabria, EDO was born in Caracas in 1970. He studied Graphic Design at the Perera Design Institute and studied Illustration at the López y Acosta School of Comics, where he worked as a professor of Humorous Drawing. He began his career in the genre of graphic humor in national newspapers and magazines, which would propel his career. Since 2008, he has been intensely productive in the field of pop art, integrating elements of Latin American popular culture with a contemporary visual language. He has exhibited his work in cities such as Caracas, Milan, Seoul, Shanghai, Tokyo, Chicago, New York, and Las Vegas. He was invited to create four murals in Wynwood, Miami, one of the epicenters of global urban art and the annual venue for Art Basel Miami Beach. He has a permanent exhibition in the lobby of the Wingate by Wyndham Miami Airport boutique hotel in Florida, where he currently resides.

In his postcard, *Mi arepa bajo el brazo* (My Arepa under the Arm), EDO draws on his characteristic style to create a pop image loaded with humor, which reinterprets the symbol of the arepa in terms of belonging and tenderness.

@edoilustrado

MI AREPA BAJO EL BRAZO (MY AREPA UNDER THE ARM)

2025

PENCIL DRAWING, DIGITAL COLORING

15 x 21 cm



ELLIOTT ORTIZ

Born in Táchira in 1962, Elliott is choreographer, producer, and artistic director. He trained at the National Theater Company (1986-1990) and the Gustavo Franklin Dance School, and graduated in Theater Production Management from IUDET in Caracas in 1998. He trained in ballet, jazz, modern dance, and theater. In 1992, he founded the Dance10 Project, of which he is the director. He has been awarded the International Art Prize for his career, and in 2023, he was awarded the Talía Prize to the *Arepa Coalition Project* for Best Musical Production. In 2025, his piece *Babel* received two awards at the Latin Alternative Theater Awards, for Best Performer and Best Dance Production 2025.

In his postcard, *Arepa Coalition Project*, Ortiz leaves a record of a dance-theater work about stories of life, work, and love in Venezuelan and Colombian communities, where the arepa becomes the centerpiece of the show: food, ritual, shared cultural thread. The *Arepa Coalition Project* was developed in collaboration with choreographer Julieta Valero and playwright Lupe Gehrenbeck, both Venezuelan.



AREPA COALITION PROJECT

2025
PHOTOGRAPHY
15 x 21 cm

@elliottortizd10



MERY GUERRERO RODRÍGUEZ

Born in Táchira in 1981, she grew up in Punto Fijo, Falcón, where she earned degrees in Law and in Customs Technology. However, her artistic vocation prevailed, and she began her journey in the arts as a member of the Bariquía collective, where she has remained for over 15 years. She describes her artistic rebirth within the group as akin to the blooming of the water lily – a flower that symbolizes her identity. She also trained in workshops with artists such as Jesús “Chucho” Rodríguez, Bruno García, Yovanny Saracual, Orlando Salero, Darwin Romero, Daniel García, Iván Romero, and Daniel Zárraga, among others.

She currently resides in Miami, where she develops her artistic work and promotes emerging artists through a digital platform and an art magazine.

In her postcard *La Arepa: Un Viaje de Unión y Tradición* (The Arepa: A Journey of Union and Tradition), Mery constructs a visual narrative in which the arepa’s “burnt edge,” migration maps and routes, and cultural and emotional details give shape to a piece that celebrates the transformation of nostalgia into connection: the arepa as a seed that germinates in new lands.

@laspinceladasdemery
www.laspinceladasdemery.com

LA AREPA: UN VIAJE DE UNIÓN Y TRADICIÓN (THE AREPA: A JOURNEY OF UNION AND TRADITION)

2025

VARIOUS MATERIALS ON CANVAS

15 x 21 cm





JORGE «EL NIÑO» TORREALBA

Jorge was born on November 9, 1990, in Punto Fijo, Venezuela, and he currently resides in New York. He is a self-taught cartoonist and visual artist. From a young age, he developed a unique style characterized by the vibrant use of color and a fusion of humor and social criticism. He emigrated to the United States in 2016, where his talent allowed him to distinguish himself and receive multiple awards from the International Society of Cartoon Artists (ISCA), notably in 2020: First Place in Exceptional Technique. In addition, his life as an immigrant inspired the documentary *Hay que intentarlo*, which earned him two Emmy Awards that same year. In 2021, he presented his exhibition “Descuento para feos” in New York, consolidating his position as an emerging figure in contemporary art.

His postcard *Arepa Pelá* (Hulled Corn Arepa) is an emotional tribute to his grandmother and his childhood memories in Falcón, “giant arepas, always ready to share, with a particular aroma and flavor of lime that I miss very much.” In the work, the size of the arepa points to its generosity, to the immense landscape of the Coro dunes, and to its perennial sun; the grinder and the river of cream evoke a family ritual that survives in memory.

@jorgetorrealba
www.bytorrealba.com

AREPA PELÁ (HULLED CORN AREPA)

2025
DIGITAL DRAWING
15 x 21 cm





EL BOCADO DE LA NOSTALGIA (THE BITE OF NOSTALGIA)

2025

DIGITAL PAINTING

21 x 15 cm

MARI CARMEN «NANE» CARRILLO

Born in Maracay in 1963, she has lived in Cádiz, Spain, since 2017. She is a visual artist, illustrator, and art teacher for adults and children. She began her studies at the Federico Brand School and as an assistant to the artist María Eugenia Manrique in Venezuela. In 1998, she obtained a master's degree in Visual Arts from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with the distinction of the Alfonso Caso Order.

Her career includes solo and group exhibitions in museums, galleries, biennials, and fairs in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Caracas, New York, Miami, Madrid, and other cities. Her multidisciplinary work explores everyday femininity and fairy tale narratives through painting, installation, assemblage, and collage.

In her digital painting *El bocado de la nostalgia* (The Bite of Nostalgia), Carrillo offers us an image charged with emotional subtlety, in which the arepa takes on a role of comfort and evocation. Food becomes an intimate gesture: a bridge between affection, absence, and the desire to belong. It is an exploration of memory and the sensitivity that inhabits everyday life.



CONSUELO MÉNDEZ

Born in Caracas in 1952, she is a visual artist with a strong international career. She resides in Graz, Austria. She earned her BA and MA in Fine Arts in California and was part of the Mujeres Muralistas (The Muralist Women) collective in San Francisco from 1971 to 1976. From 1991 to 2009, she worked as an artist, educator, and researcher at the University Institute of Higher Studies in Plastic Arts Armando Reverón in Caracas. Her artistic practice spans drawing, painting, photography, performance, artist books, and works on paper. In her work, the body serves as both axis and language—central to her personal expression and pedagogical approach. She has been recognized in numerous biennials and art salons, including the Salón Michelena, the Maracaibo Print Biennial, and the TAGA Miniature Biennial. Her work has been exhibited in Austria, Spain, South Korea, Bulgaria, Puerto Rico, Colombia, the United States, Cuba, Mexico, and Poland.

In her postcard, she presents a fragment of a recent work, accompanied by these words:

"Nowadays, our arepa flour can be found everywhere. Even in the smallest shops – in Graz, Austria, for instance – it appears on the shelves. The arepa exists, asserts its presence, and travels the world at the very moment our country has been wounded (...) and more than six million beings live beyond its borders. There is another Venezuela outside its own limits, and with it, our arepa moves, travels, self-exiles."

@mendez.consuelo | @mendezconsuelo2
www.consuelomendez.blogspot.com

SIN TÍTULO (DETALLE)
(UNTITLED) (DETAIL)

2025

PAINT ON RAW LINEN

15 x 21 cm



PENÉLOPE DÍAZ

Born in Araure in 1983, she currently resides in Atlanta. Venezuelan visual artist trained at the Universidad Centroccidental Lisandro Alvarado (UCLA). With more than two decades of experience, her work moves between the abstract and the figurative, fusing traditional and contemporary techniques with an organic and intuitive approach. For the artist, who works mainly in large formats, the act of painting is an exercise in emotional contemplation that captures the fleetingness of the moment and memory.

In her piece *Entre olores y trazos* (Between Scents and Strokes), color, texture, and gesture tell a sensory story. Against a deep black background, brown brushstrokes, diffuse sepia tones, and touches of gold leaf, create an atmosphere where you can almost smell the aroma of coffee, freshly made arepas, and tobacco dancing in the air. The gold represents that instant that slips away but remains etched in our memory. It is a tribute to the remembrance that shapes us, an intimate journey through the olfactory and emotional recollection of home.

@joiripenelope

ENTRE OLORES Y TRAZOS (BETWEEN AROMAS AND STROKES)

2025

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, GOLD LEAF

70 x 120 cm



MARÍA EUGENIA MANRIQUE

She was born in Caracas in 1953. With a degree in Fine Arts from the National School of Painting and Sculpture in Mexico (1980), she studied calligraphy and traditional painting in the People's Republic of China. She is the author of several books that integrate art and Eastern wisdom, published by Kairós, and a children's book published by Ekaré, *La Caimana*. Her work has been exhibited in Venezuela, Spain, Mexico, Colombia, the United States, Puerto Rico, Italy, Japan, China, and Argentina. She has been recognized by the Michelena Salon of Venezuela with the Luis Eduardo Chávez Prize (1990) and the Armando Reverón Prize (1993); the Bronze Prize of the Osaka International Art Triennale (1990, Japan), and the Sumie Grand Prize at the Anshan Museum International Calligraphy and Painting Exhibition (2014, China).

En her postcard *Órbita de identidad* (Identity Orbit), her strokes evoke the circularity of time, an affective memory that revolves around the symbol of the arepa. Inspired by Anaïs Nin's phrase "Life is a complete circle, expanding until it joins the circular movements of infinity," the artist proposes a calligraphic meditation on belonging and transcendence.

@mem.manrique
<http://mariaeugeniamanrique.wordpress.com/>



ÓRBITA DE IDENTIDAD (IDENTITY ORBIT)

2025

CHINESE INK ON SEMI-COOKED XUAN PAPER

15 x 21 cm



Lard arepita for mama so sweet.
Barley for papa with empanada treat.
Cheese arepita for grandpa in belly bliss.
Pork arepita for grandpa in belly bliss.



ROSANA FARÍA

Born in Caracas in 1963, she studied at the Neumann Foundation Design Institute. Since 1989, she has been dedicated to children's book illustration, and her work is recognized both nationally and internationally. Books such as *Niña bonita* and *El libro negro de los colores* have earned her numerous awards and have been translated into several languages. She is also an editorial advisor for children's publications.

In 2014, she celebrated 25 years of work with the exhibition "Cartografía de sueños" (Cartography of Dreams) and was honored at the 6th Reading Festival in Chacao. She was coordinator of the Los Palos Grandes Library's games center until 2016. She then moved to Spain, where she ran the Tres Paraguas bookshop with Linsabel Noguera and the Tiliabooks group with Carla Tábor. Starting in 2022, she ran the illustrated book space and coordinated cultural events at Espai PD, Asociación ProDiseño, in Barcelona.

The postcard *Prueba de color para el libro "Arepita de mantea"* (Color Test for the Book "Arepita with Lard") is an unpublished image that was originally part of a book illustrating this Venezuelan children's song, which gives the publication its title. Although it was discarded in the final edition for chromatic reasons, this color test – done in pencil and watercolor pencils – is a visual tribute to Venezuelan childhood, to playing, and to the emotional memory of sharing with family.

@rosanafariaarape | @rosanafariaillustra
www.rosanafaria.com

**PRUEBA DE COLOR PARA EL LIBRO
«AREPITA DE MANTECA»
(COLOR PROOF FOR THE BOOK: "LARD AREPITA")**

2025

PENCIL, WATERCOLOR, DIGITAL ASSEMBLAGE

15 x 21 cm



● ART AND GASTRONOMY: AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS

It is risky to judge in the threshold of cultural prejudice.

ANDONI LUIS ADURIZ

● A COOK IN DOCUMENTA

When, in 2006, Ferran Adrià was invited to participate in the contemporary art exhibition *Documenta 12*, more than one art critic and journalist threw up their hands in disbelief. The inclusion of the chef on the same list as creators of the stature of Agnes Martin, Ai Weiwei, Gerhard Richter, Jorge Oteiza, Mira Schendel, among others, was seen by many as a misguided decision that sparked controversy and stirred emotions.

During the 100 days of *Documenta 12*, El Bulli, Ferran Adrià's restaurant in Cala Montjoi, Girona, became Pavilion G of the exhibition held in Kassel, Germany. Each day, artistic director Robert M. Buergel and curator Ruth Noack, the event's organizers, selected two individuals—artists or attendees of the exhibition—to dine at El Bulli enclave. It was never intended that the Catalan chef's work be represented through videos of his dishes or by staging a cooking show in Kassel. Both the invited chef-artist and the organizers understood that the spectator had to become a diner at the legendary establishment in order to forge a deeply personal relationship with El Bulli's cuisine. Only in this way could one experience sensations and emotions through all five senses, seasoned with irony, surprise, playfulness, provocation, and everything Ferran Adrià's creative intelligence could evoke—far beyond simply serving a meal to satisfy a gourmand's pleasure. It was an aesthetic experience in a creative space unlike a museum or a *kunsthalle* (German for Art Hall), yet akin to the feeling one has before a work of art.

To this day, many intellectuals, artists, and art critics express disdain for gastronomy and contemporary cuisine when they are included in the "Olympus" of the arts—that supposed higher realm to which no chef, dish, or restaurant is believed to belong. It is curious how easily one overlooks the fact that, in the 20th century, when the historical avant-gardes broke with the canonical order of the arts, creative freedom came to occupy a central place in aesthetic languages. The traditional concept of art as a space confined to certain norms became outdated in the face of movements such as pop art, conceptual art, action art, and performance—just to name a few within the second wave of avant-garde or neo-avant-garde movements. In fact, in the early 1960s, Umberto Eco realized that the view of art restricted to the fine arts—like painting or sculpture—excluded other appreciations or perceptions of the artistic act, which he identified as cultural and aesthetic experiences. The Italian philosopher and writer proposed acknowledging that beauty and cultural value are not exclusive to traditional works of art, but are manifested in diverse forms of human interaction with the environment. Buergel understood this from the outset, which is why he invited Adrià to participate in *Documenta 12*, as he expressed in the statement cited here:

I invited Ferran Adrià because he has managed to create his own language, which has become highly influential on the international scene. That is what interests me—not whether people perceive it as art

or not. It is important to say that artistic intelligence does not depend on the medium; art should not be identified solely with photography, sculpture, painting... nor with cuisine in a general sense. But under certain circumstances, cooking can also be considered art.

With the statement that closes this quote, new paths open up for exploring the dialogues between art and cuisine—the central focus of this editorial project.

● COOKING. FOOD. CULTURE

Eating is an act that goes beyond its own purpose. To think that cooking is limited to the transformation of food through fire reveals a reductionist view of the culinary act. Cooking and eating involve choices and meanings that refer to social customs, cultural identities, religious practices, individual sensitivities, a sense of belonging, and interaction with natural environments. Both cuisine and food are inscribed within the universe of cultural expressions, among other reasons because “the organ of taste is not the tongue but the brain,” historically responsible for the learned criteria of evaluation.

In 2003, UNESCO, through the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, included cuisine as an expression of creativity rooted in tradition and developed within a community, understood as a relevant part of its cultural and social identity.

Thus, gastronomy, cooking, and food are part of what we understand as culture—both from the legal perspective defined by international organizations and from the viewpoint of scholars and specialists on the subject. In fact, within the framework of this project, one of the meeting points between art and gastronomy is their “shared condition” as cultural manifestations, reinforcing and adding arguments to a statement that many still refuse to accept or understand.

In all the publications of the History of The Arepa project in which I have participated, I have emphasized the symbolic value of food, which, in the particular case of our corn bread, holds a place of superlative transcendence. In recent decades, as a consequence of the Venezuelan diaspora, the arepa began to travel in the emotional and gustatory luggage of those who left. To the historical and anthropological content it carries as an ancestral food of the original inhabitants of these lands, new connections and meanings have been added.

Our traveling arepa has taken on the role of culinary ambassador of Venezuela in the world, serving as a vehicle for dialogue between Venezuelans and foreigners, exemplifying the role of food as a language. For those who left this country, the arepa also became synonymous with the national identity that names us and connects us to our affections—because in cooking it, eating it, or sharing it, we recreate our relationship with the geography that saw us born, with the family we left behind, and with the ways that identify us both individually and collectively. The arepa is an icon of Venezuelan cuisine, and cuisine is a symbol of civilization and culture.

● THE AREPA IS A POSTCARD OF IDENTITY

In the 1960s, many artists began sending postcards with drawings or poems through the mail, establishing a direct connection between the artist and the public without the need for intermediaries. This marked the birth of mail art—a rebellious act that desacralized the museum space as the sole venue for exhibition, and galleries as the gatekeepers of artistic commercialization.

When Ximena Montilla and Ira León envisioned a project that combined art and cuisine, with the arepa as the guiding thread and the postcard as its medium, they may not have imagined the richness of the dialogues that would emerge from this encounter. In the reflective and written exercise undertaken as the author of these lines, several analogies between the arepa and the postcard began to blossom.

Let us begin by noting that both serve as links between individuals separated by geography, and both carry messages of closeness and affection. In each, the individual identity and the author’s need for expression are latent—communicating feelings, visions, perspectives, ideas, sensations, and pleasures. The relationship between the creator of the consumable object—be it a work of art or an arepa—is direct with the receiver. In this project, neither exhibition hall nor restaurant is required for the dialogue between maker and recipient to take place. The arepa and the postcard, as cultural artifacts, express themselves autonomously, bypassing traditional channels of distribution.

As an added value, the material container of this dialogue and its outcomes is a “book-object.” In this way, the idea becomes corporeal, conveying content and cultivating experiences for the delight of the senses. Once again, like the arepa—that generous envelope that receives fillings both familiar and foreign—this “object-book” houses messages, stories, reflections, artworks, expressions with artistic intent, and recipes turned into offerings. The interplay between art, cuisine, and aesthetics also nourishes this flavorful “broth,” simmered for intellectual and multisensory enjoyment. The table is set.

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• **Ivanova Decán Gambús**

@ivanovadecan

A graduate in Art from the Central University of Venezuela, she has an extensive professional career in the field of cultural management. Among the institutions she has directed are the Francisco Narváez Museum of Contemporary Art, the Cultural Spaces of CANTV, and the Jesús Soto Museum of Modern Art. Cultural manager, university professor, lecturer, communicator, and consultant on art and gastronomy projects, she has published several works on gastronomic culture. She is co-editor and co-author of *Nuestra Cocina a la manera de Caracas. Tributo al libro Rojo de Armando Scannone* (Balsam/Alto, 2013); and co-author of *Italia en Venezuela: Inmigración y Gastronomía* (Fundavag, 2017).

Currently, she is a member of the Superior Council of the Francisco Narváez Museum of Contemporary Art. Since 2010, she has been an active member of the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy, an institution she currently chairs.



VALUE OF AN AREPA

● **RECIPES**

SUSTAINABILITY • **PILAR CABRERA**

SOLIDARITY • **JOEL A. TARFF ALCALÁ**

RESILIENCE • **ARGENIS RAMÍREZ**

ROOTEDNESS • **CHUCHO ROJAS**

IDENTITY • **FEDERICO TISCHLER**

RESPECT • **ELIA NORA RODRÍGUEZ**

EDUCATION • **ZORAIDA BARRIOS**

CREATIVITY • **MIGUEL GUERRA Y TATIANA MORA**

ENDURANCE • **ISSAM KOTEICH**

EMPATHY • **SUMITO ESTÉVEZ**

MULTICULTURALITY • **GABRIEL CASTAÑEDA**

INTEGRITY • **KARIN REQUENA**

WILLINGNESS • **DANIEL TORREALBA**

JUSTICE • **VICTORIA VALLENILLA**

PERSEVERANCE • **FRANCISCO ABENANTE**

HOPE • **HÉCTOR ROMERO**



AREPA OF COMMITMENT | PILAR CABRERA

Chef and founder of Casa Mejillón on the island of Margarita, where she lives and promotes sustainable cuisine based on artisanal fishing and local products. Trained as a social communicator, she studied hotel management and cooking at Le Cordon Bleu in Australia. She has been awarded the Tenedor de Oro (Golden Fork) twice by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy: the first time in 2015, for the Los Mejilloneros de La Guardia project; and in 2021, as Chef of the Year. She is recognized for bringing unconventional ingredients to the commercial table and for introducing claritas, an incidental and stationary fishing method that was previously discarded. Her approach combines research, craftsmanship, and sustainability.

This dish brings together land and sea in a single act of culinary responsibility. Its filling combines mussels rescued from extinction, previously discarded squid, and sea vegetables that define Margarita's coastal identity. Each bite honors life, the environment, and local produce, with cuisine that respects its origins and is committed to a balanced future.

AREPA OF COMMITMENT • SUSTAINABILITY • PILAR CABRERA

(5 pieces)

Dough for arepas

350 g white peeled corn

Water enough to soak the corn, cook and knead

Salt, to taste

- Cover the corn in a bowl with enough water to soak it for about 12 hours. Drain.
- Cook it over high heat for about 45 minutes in a pot with enough water to cover it. It should be al dente. Drain.
- At room temperature, pass the corn through a grinder.
- In a bowl mix the ground corn, salt and about 200 to 250 ml water. Knead by hand, trying to achieve a smooth texture. If necessary, add more water. Let stand covered for about 10 min.
- Form balls of about 120 g. Shape the arepa and cook it in the traditional way in a budare over high heat.

Mussels

250 g mussels “esjullados” (shelled mussels)

40 g wheat flour

25 g precooked corn flour

3 g dehydrated* pulverized sea vegetables:

Salicornia, *Sesuvium portulacastrum*, *Batis maritima*.

Salt, to taste

1 egg beaten with a fork

Oil enough for frying

- Mix the dry ingredients.
- Dip the mussels in egg, then in the flour mixture, again in the egg, and finish again with the flour mixture. Shake off excess flour.
- Fry in hot oil, deep frying, until a pale golden color. Drain excess oil. Set aside

* For dehydration of sea vegetables, use any method convenient for you.

Guiana longfin herring.

(*Odontognathus mucronatus* Lacepède)

25 Guiana longfin herrings about 8 cm long (125 g approx. each).

Enough oil for frying.

- Deep fry until crispy. Drain excess oil. If they exceed 8 cm, the head can be cut off so that it does not bother to eat them.

Margariteño chili sauce

The margariteño bell pepper is a variety of the *Capsicum chinense* species. It has a powerful aroma, flavor and sweetness; very low in spiciness.

- Before preparing the Sauce, the yellow chili paste* should be made in advance: 100 g of chili peppers should be used so that it is easy to blend. It is made with clean peppers, without seeds, blanching them 3 times - a minute and a half each time. Drain them. Put them in the blender with a dash of oil and a pinch of sugar until a paste is formed.
- The process of pickling sea vegetables can be done with any available vegetable pickling recipe.

Ingredients for the margariteño chili sauce:

25 g deveined and seeded margariteños peppers, cut into small pieces.

17 g pickled sea vegetables: *salicornia*, olives and sea rosemary (*Salicornia*, *Sesuvium portulacastrum*, *Batis maritima*).

mayonnaise

30 g yellow margariteño chili paste*.

- To prepare the sauce, mix all the ingredients by hand and keep in the refrigerator.

In serving, the Commitment Arepa :

Ripe but firm avocado

1 large lettuce leaf, washed and hand cut in half, or 3 small ones

2 tomatoes margariteños (*Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill)

or its equivalent, the Seville tomato, can work.

- Open the arepa and fill it with a lettuce leaf, two slices of avocado, one or two thin slices of tomato, mussels and fried herrings.
- Serve the sauce on the side for each diner to add to taste.

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UNION AREPA | JOEL TARFF

A chef from Caracas with solid training at the Center for Gastronomic Studies (CEGA), where he graduated as part of the "Cocineros Ilustrados" project led by José Rafael Lovera. He has been a disciple of great chefs such as Víctor Moreno, Edgar Leal, and Sumito Estévez, and became head pastry chef at CEGA. He completed an internship with master pastry chef Oriol Balaguer in Barcelona, an experience that shaped his aesthetic and technical vision. Today, he heads the kitchen at LD Hotels in Margarita and advises on the group's overall gastronomic offering. He also directs the culinary vision of the Aguacero restaurant, where he integrates technique, flavor, and local sensibility.

This recipe is a culinary embrace for those who travel the world in search of new opportunities. Inspired by Benedictine eggs, it reinvents this tradition with homemade *Diablitos*, fresh cheese, a poached egg, and hollandaise sauce enhanced with candied sweet Margarita chili peppers. It is an arepa that shows solidarity with those who are gluten intolerant, with diversity, and with the collective memory of the Venezuelan breakfast. A bite that unites, comforts, and celebrates.

BENEDICTINE AREPA • SOLIDARITY • JOEL A. TARFF ALCALÁ (4 pieces)

The name “Benedictine eggs” comes from a hungry and hungover guest, a client of the Waldorf Astoria. The fascinating thing is that this is the origin of one of the most popular breakfasts in haute cuisine worldwide.

My proposal seeks to intervene with our arepa and the ingredients of the Creole breakfast, which, over time, are gaining ground in the culinary universe. Commemorating the holy prophet who multiplied bread, I present the Benedictine Arepa.

Arepa dough

625 g warm water
300 g precooked corn flour
5 g salt

- In a bowl, mix flour and salt with the warm water and knead until a uniform dough is obtained. Form a 75 g arepa.
- Bring to a hot griddle, comal or pan at medium low temperature.
Brown both sides until a hollow sound is emitted when the finger hits the surface.

“Homemade “Diablitos”

750 g good quality smoked ham (“Colonia Tovar”, for instance)
250 g smoked bacon
20 g sun-dried tomato
5 g Tabasco sauce

- With the help of a food processor, turn the solids into paste and mix with the liquids.s.

Hollandaise sauce of candied sweet chili peppers

250 g good quality butter
80 g egg yolks
10 g lemon juice
5 g Dijon Antique Mustard

- Mix the egg yolks with mustard, salt and lemon juice.
- Clarify the butter. Then, mix the clarified butter with the egg yolks and put in a bain-marie until a sauce texture is obtained.

Candied margariteño sweet chili cream

100 g margariteño sweet chili
100 g butter
5 g water

- Clean the chili bell pepper and chop it into julienne strips. Heat it over low heat with the butter and water until it wilts. Blend the mixture and sieve through a fine sieve. Set aside.

Serving the Benedictine arepa

Components for one portion:

A piece of guyanese cheese or any soft fresh cheese
Avocado slices (optional)
1 poached egg
Hollandaise sauce (intervened)
Sweet chili bell pepper chips
Cilantro cut in *chiffonade*

Divide the very hot arepa in half. Spread butter on the inside of each half. Then spread with the homemade “Diablitos”. Place a piece of cheese and avocado on top, if available. Top with a poached egg. Serve with the hollandaise sauce, adding pieces of sweet chili previously *sautéed* at low temperature in butter. Finish with coriander *chiffonade*.

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REBIRTH AREPA | **ARGENIS RAMÍREZ**

Corn artisan and guardian of the traditional arepa, a legacy that runs in his family. With his project "Arepa Pelá," he rescues the recipe for the ancestral arepa: made only with corn, water, and lime, without flour or preservatives. His passion and mission have taken him to Mexico and Panama, where he has immersed himself in the knowledge of nixtamalization and the richness of corn diversity in the American continent. Today, from Caracas, he offers one of the freshest arepas in the city, made with freshly ground Venezuelan white corn. His preparation achieves a unique texture: crispy on the outside and soft on the inside. For Argenis, corn is much more than food: it is living memory, culture, and resistance.

This arepa is crispy on the outside, strong on the inside. Unlike the precooked flour arepa –quick, functional, frictionless – the Arepa Renacer (Rebirth Arepa) is an act of resilience incarnate. Taming it requires practice, patience, and mastery: nixtamalizing, grinding, kneading, shaping, and baking. Its crispy texture and soft core, topped with "asado negro" (black roast), awaken in the mouth the memory of everything it took to achieve it.

REBIRTH AREPA • RESILIENCE • ARGENIS RAMÍREZ (5 pieces)

Asado negro

1.5 kg of bottom round roast (also known as bottom round beef)
100 g shredded papelón (raw sugarcane)
1 red pepper
6 cloves of garlic
4 sweet chilies
½ cup of Worcestershire sauce (or similar)
1 cup of dry red wine
Vegetable oil enough to prepare the sauce
Pepper to taste
Salt to taste
Water enough to cover the meat during cooking

- Seal the whole piece of meat in a large pot over medium heat with a little hot oil until browned on all sides. Once it has browned, remove and set aside.
- In the same pot, add the grated papelón and let it melt over medium heat to form a dark caramel, making sure it does not burn. Blend together the onion, garlic, pepper and sweet chilies, and add them to the caramel, frying them for a few minutes until they reduce a little and the flavors are integrated. Add Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper, and return to the pan.
- Add the red wine and enough water to cover the meat. Cover the pot and cook over medium-low heat for approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, or until the meat is tender.
- Once cooked, remove the meat and slice into medallions. The sauce can be blended again or reduced until it thickens. Serve with the meat covered in the sauce.

Nixtamalization of arepas

Dough for 5 arepas of 160g each:

800 g dry corn, white or yellow
9 g food lime (calcium hydroxide or hydrated lime)
3 liters of water, for cooking
¼ cup of water, for kneading
1 teaspoon of salt, or to taste

- In a large pot place the dry corn, lime and 3 liters of water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, cover and check every 20 minutes. Cooking time varies between 45 to 60 minutes, depending on the hardness of the corn, until al dente (soft on the outside, but firm on the inside).

- Remove from heat and let it stand covered for a minimum of 10 hours. If it is observed dry during this time, a small portion of water can be added and stir lightly.
- After resting, wash the corn thoroughly with plenty of water, rubbing it with your hands to completely remove the lime adhering to the kernels. Repeat the washing several times until the water runs completely clear.
- Once clean, grind the corn until a fine dough is obtained. Add salt to taste, and add 1/4 cup of water while kneading, until a homogeneous, soft and malleable texture is obtained.
- Finally, the dough is portioned into balls of approximately 160 g each, and shaped into arepas according to the desired thickness.
- Roast, bake or fry according to preference.

Serving Resilience Arepa

Open the arepas and fill with the bottom round roast medallions and the sauce.

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ROOTEDNESS AREPA | **CHUCHO ROJAS**

Born in Tucupita, Venezuela, he is the executive chef of the Meat And Bone group, a leader in the distribution of Wagyu beef in the United States. With nearly 30 years of experience, he has managed Michelin-starred restaurants and has been a researcher for the French Academy of Sciences. He has participated in television programs such as MasterChef Latino and Top Chef VIP, and is currently developing an innovative concept in gastronomic consulting, focused on a humanistic vision of entrepreneurship. Chucho is also dedicated to sharing his experience through teaching, combining technical excellence, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to training new generations.

This arepa appeals not only to the taste buds, but also to the sensory memory that shapes identity. It is unadorned cuisine, but loaded with meaning, made of silences, mortar and embers, like an ancestral love letter. Each bite anchors the body, childhood, and the earth. More than a recipe, it is a way of returning home.

This arepa is my grandmother Machu, from the dark in the kitchen, but which she lit it up with her round face, and her voice saying, "Come, my son, to eat your arepa." And there, the happiness of seeing you restored in body and soul made her feel well rewarded.

@chuchorojas

ROOTEDNESS AREPA • ROOTEDNESS • CHUCHO ROJAS

Ingredients for 3 large arepas or many small ones, but a large one is shared

MY ROOTEDNESS AREPA

Not all recipes are cooked with ingredients.

Some are born from memories, from silences that smell of corn and firewood. This is one of them.

My Rootedness arepa is not sophisticated. It does not pretend to be more than what it is: a simple, honest offering, firm in its purpose.

It has no luxury, but inheritance...

It needs no decorations.

Its strength lies in the story it tells in each bite.

This arepa is my grandmother Machu, from the dark kitchen, but which she illuminated with her round face, and her voice saying:

“Come, mijo, to eat your arepa.”

And there, the happiness of seeing you restored in body and soul, made her feel well paid.

My Rootedness arepa is the kitchen as a universe: the place where the day was kneaded and faith was husked.

1 kg of Cariaco corn or white/yellow creole corn

1 tablespoon of food lime (calcium hydroxide, hydrated lime or “slaked lime”)

10 corncob leaves to produce ash

Sufficient potable water for each process

Arepa dough:

- **Soaking:** wash the corn and soak for 12 hours in clean water. Discard the water.
- **Nixtamalization:** in a large pot, cover the corn again with clean water. Add the lime. Cook over medium-high heat until the skin of the corn comes off when rubbed with the fingers. This process can take 45 minutes to an hour.
- **Resting:** turn off the fire and let the corn rest in the cooking liquid for 8 to 12 hours.
- **Washing:** wash the corn well, rubbing the kernels to remove lime and loose skins. Rinse several times until the water runs clear.
- **Grinding:** grind the nixtamalized corn with a grinder or processor until a homogeneous, moist and malleable dough is obtained. If you prefer, you can leave a tenth of the amount of whole corn to be added as texture pieces.

Where there was always an arepa for the one who arrived, for the one who departed, for the sick, for the familiar, for the stranger.

An arepa as an edible love letter: Every time I make it, it does not remind me: it commits me. It commits me to Katalina, my daughter, because I want her to know how to eat it, but also to know how to make it, and even more: to feel it as her own, to feel it as a root.

That is what rootedness is for me: closing my eyes and being there.

No matter how far away or how different everything seems, the arepa is there anchoring what we are.

And if I ever get lost among fusions, fires and travels, this recipe will be my compass, my way of returning home, my way of saying: I belong here.

• **Elaboration of the corn leaves ash:** Burn the corn leaves in a saucepan over medium-high heat, making sure that they do not escape from the container as they are very volatile and light. When they are burned, take them off the fire and let them cool a little before grinding them to produce the ash. Approximately 4 tablespoons of ash should be obtained.

• **Final kneading:** Add the corn leaf ash to the ground corn to add smoky notes. Knead well until completely integrated.

Molding and baking:

- Form a large cake about the size of a plate and about 2 cm thick. Cook on budare or hot griddle until crusty on each side, then cook completely. It can be finished on embers or grill.
- Once ready, cut into triangular pieces like a torta, each triangle the size of a traditional arepa.

Salted white fish balls (yields 12 balls)

400 g salted white fish

1 tablespoon grated papelón (unrefined sugar cane)

Grated zest of one lemon

Vegetable oil enough for frying

Sufficient potable water to soak the fish

- **Desalting:** cut the fish into pieces and soak in cold water. Change the water three times in 8 hours to eliminate excess salt.
- **Processing:** drain the fish well, and take it to the processor along with the papelón and the lemon zest. Process until a firm and homogeneous mass is obtained.
- **Molding:** form 3 cm balls and place them on a tray. Place in the freezer until firm (20 minutes approx.).
- **Cooking:** fry in abundant hot oil until golden brown and crispy on the outside.

Creamy Guasacaca

1 small ripe avocado

Juice of one lime

½ cup green bell pepper

½ cup green part of scallion

½ chopped white onion

2 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon of grated papelón (unrefined sugar cane)

½ cup of fresh cilantro

Salt and pepper to taste

1 seeded serrano chile peppers (optional)

- Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor. Process until smooth, creamy and bright green. Adjust salt, acidity or spiciness to taste.

Serve the Rootedness arepa as you like.

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ILLUSTRATED PORK AREPA | **FEDERICO TISCHLER**

Executive chef and gastronomic consultant, Federico is a Venezuelan chef with almost 25 years of international experience in high-end restaurants. He lives in Miami, where he leads and advises gastronomic projects recognized for their innovation and deep respect for the product. He has developed concepts ranging from food trucks, where he elevates street food to more delicate levels, to proposals in which local products take center stage. He was the first Venezuelan chef abroad to receive the Armando Scannone Award, granted by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy. This award recognizes his constant commitment to Venezuelan culinary identity from abroad.

Inspired by the lens of Venezuelan photographer Luis Brito, this arepa is both image and memory: it reveals who we are beyond the visible. Like his portraits, the Illustrated Pork Arepa condenses rawness, beauty, and everyday dignity. A bite that questions, honors, and affirms the Venezuelan people.

ILLUSTRATED PORK AREPA • IDENTITY • FEDERICO TISCHLER

(4 units)

White arepa base, for 4 arepas of 170 g each

485 g precooked corn flour
7.3 g canola vegetable oil
4.8 g fine kosher salt
7.3 g refined white sugar
918 ml lukewarm mineral water

- Mix the warm water, sugar, salt and oil in a bowl. Add the flour in the form of rain, mixing constantly to avoid lumps. Knead for 5 minutes until a smooth and homogeneous dough is obtained. Let stand covered for 10 minutes.
- Form 170 g arepas with wet and lightly oiled hands. Cook on a hot griddle or frying pan until golden brown on both sides.

Chili- lemon mayonnaise (100g)

100g traditional mayonnaise
5g classic Tajín powder

- Process both ingredients in a blender or food processor until a smooth mixture is obtained. Pour into an airtight container and keep refrigerated.

Aromatic cure for roasted pork

500 g pork (pork butt, or pork shoulder, with bone)

Ingredients for 500 g of pork

6.1 g coriander seeds
7.2 g black peppercorns
1.7 g cloves
4.4 g star anise
2.8 g cinnamon powder
1 and ½ fresh oranges, zest and juice
100 g fine kosher salt
33.3 g refined white sugar
1.1 g Szechuan pepper

- Grind the dry ingredients until a homogeneous mixture is obtained. Add the orange zest and orange juice. Mix well.
- Cover the pork with the mixture. Wrap tightly with plastic wrap, and cure refrigerated for 48 hours.

Cooking pork meat:

- Rinse excess mixture under cold running water and dry the meat.
- Cook in a steam oven at 93° C (200° F), 100% humidity, for 10 hours.
- Cool quickly, debone, trim, and keep the meat refrigerated for later use.

Serving Pork Illustrated Arepa

Componentes para una porción

1 white arepa
40 g of roast shredded pork
15 g of chili-lemon mayonnaise
2 slices of fresh tomato
5 g of fresh arugula

- Toast the arepa on the charcoal grill until golden brown on both sides. Open the arepa and spread a thin layer of mayonnaise. Place the tomato slices, the roast pork and finish with fresh arugula.
- Serve immediately, with the arepa still warm and the pork juices infusing the interior.

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RESPECT

foto: Jean Ramírez

AREPA COEXISTENCE | **ELIA NORA RODRÍGUEZ**

Figura An emblematic figure in Venezuelan gastronomy with an impressive career as an instructor, author, and union leader. Trained in Valencia, Carabobo state, and with a degree in Culinary Arts from London, she has been president and founder of the Venezuelan Chefs Association; CEO of Le Gourmets CEAC; Pre-Commis Chef Advisor, and World Chefs representative for Venezuela. She has been an international judge, advisor, and representative in competitions such as Bocuse d'Or, Global Chef, and Dior. She received the Pan American Forum President's Medal (2014), the Worldchefs President's Medal (2022), and recognition for 30 years in culinary education (2023). She is the author of Sabores de Carabobo (Flavors of Carabobo) (2012) and La mesa está servida (The Table is Set) (2022), and founder of the "Trilogía en Fusión" (Trilogy in Fusion) project

This arepa symbolizes respect for diversity as the basis for harmony. Each ingredient – the firm roast beef, crispy chicken tempura, fresh salad with mango dressing and Tucaqueña mayonnaise – contributes its character without imposing itself. Chef Elia Nora Rodríguez skillfully and delicately combines contrasts, turning complexity into dialogue. In this recipe, the flavor teaches us that coexistence means recognizing the value of others without losing our own.

@elianorarodriguez

COEXISTENCE AREPA • RESPECT • ELIA NORA RODRÍGUEZ

(2 pieces)

For the arepa

240 ml water
150 g pre-cooked corn flour
1 pinch of salt

- In a bowl place the water, salt and flour. Let it hydrate for 15 minutes and knead. Divide the dough in equal parts, make small balls and form the arepas in 10 cm disks.
- Place them on a griddle over medium heat and mark them on both sides, then bake in a preheated oven at 200 °C for 15 minutes.

Roast beef

150g beef core tenderloin
Oil
Black pepper
Salt

- Season the tenderloin with salt and pepper and wrap in plastic wrap to give it a cylindrical shape. Reserve in the refrigerator for one hour, so that it keeps its shape.
- In a deep frying pan sprinkle with oil and heat at high temperature. Remove the plastic wrap from the tenderloin and brown it on all sides, covering it for 10 minutes at medium low temperature. Remove and reserve in the refrigerator until ready to use. When ready to serve, cut into thin slices.

Chicken tempura

100 g chicken breast
0.5 g "5 Chinese spices", for the chicken
150 ml beer, alcoholic or non-alcoholic
60 g wheat flour
30 g cornstarch
5g baking powder
250 ml oil for frying
Pepper and salt, to taste

- Fillet the chicken breast and cut a square of 10 x 10 cm. Set aside.
- In a bowl, put the beer, wheat flour, cornstarch, salt and pepper; and mix with a balloon whisk or, failing that, a fork. The texture should be semi-thick so that it coats the piece well.
- Heat the oil in a pot or deep frying pan, pass the chicken piece through the tempura preparation and fry. Set aside.

Tucaqueña mayonnaise

30 g coriander
50 ml of mayonnaise
Salt to taste
Water, a touch

- Place all the ingredients in a blender and blend at medium speed, trying not to process the cilantro leaf too much.

Mrs. Diana Salad

20 g lettuce
10 fresh spinach leaves
5 g roasted bell peppers cut in strips
1/2 chive leaf, cut in very thin strips and preserved in ice water.

- Mix everything together and add the dressing before serving.

Salad dressing

100 g mango
10 g onion
3 sweet peppers
1/2 garlic clove
Pepper, a pinch
Salt, to taste
15 ml white vinegar
25 ml oil

- In a blender or food processor, put all the ingredients in and blend. It should have the texture of a spreadable paste.

Serving Coexistence arepa

Open the arepa and take out some of the dough. Place the Tucaqueña mayonnaise, the tempura chicken, the salad, some slices of roast beef and a few strands of chives to decorate.

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MAMAZORY'S WISE AREPA | ZORAIDA BARRIOS

She lives in Carabobo and is known as "Mamá Zory." She is a gastronomic researcher, founder and teacher at the IEC Laurus culinary institute, and co-author of the book *El paisaje en una olla* (The Landscape in a Pot). Her love of cooking was born in her family's kitchen. Committed to rescuing, preserving, and promoting Venezuela's culinary heritage, she has focused her work on researching traditional recipes, ancestral techniques, and local products, collaborating with leading experts. She also promotes initiatives such as the Carabobo Gastronomic Tour, the Gastronomic Artisan Festival, and the Patanemo Sancocho Festival.

This recipe preserves the wisdom and ancestral knowledge passed down from generation to generation, including foods such as caraotas (black beans), pork, which was introduced during colonization although its origin is Asian, and the beautiful preparation of "quesito valenciano," (cheese from Valencia, VE) one of the oldest dishes in our colonial cuisine according to Ramón David León's *Geografía Gastronómica de Venezuela* (Gastronomic Geography of Venezuela) and Rafael Cartay's *Diccionario Gastronómico de Venezuela* (Gastronomic Dictionary of Venezuela). It is a recipe that educates the palate and the soul, like all cuisine that honors its memory.

foto: Alexander Flores Gooden

MAMAZORY'S WISE AREPA • EDUCATION • ZORAIDA BARRIOS

(5 pieces)

Dough for 5 arepa, 100 g each

250 ml vegetable broth

150 g precooked flour

- In a deep bowl place the broth, which already has the salt included, and add the flour little by little, stirring constantly with a whisk. Once the mixture is ready, let it rest for 15 minutes to ensure that the arepas do not crack. Then knead and make balls of 100 g each, which are flattened into a circle.
- Cook in a hot pan or griddle over medium heat. Roast for 10 minutes on each side until they are puffed.
- The trick to know if they are ready is to take each one and hit it with the palm of the hand; if it makes the sound of a drum, it is ready for stuffing.

Black beans cream:

100 g black beans

2 sweet peppers cut in *brunoise*

½ onion cut in *brunoise*

2 cloves of crushed garlic.

1 branch of spring onion: cut in *brunoise*

1 red bell pepper, skinned, cut in *brunoise*

2 g coriander powder

2 g turmeric

4 g grated papelón

5 ml olive oil

- Clean and soak the beans for about 24 hours, trying to change the water at least twice. After this time, change the water for the last time and cook until they are soft. Set aside.
- In a frying pan place the oil and all the ingredients of the sofrito. Cook over medium heat for 5 minutes. Once ready, add to the preparation of the beans and return to the fire for 20 minutes until the liquid is reduced. Remove from heat and let it stand for a few minutes.
- With a mixer, process them a little until a thick cream is obtained. Set aside.

Preparation of pork:

150 g pork, in one piece

2 g cumin

1 g oregano

5 g salt

2 g papelón

3 large spoonfuls of pork lard

30 ml sour orange juice

- Prepare a marinade in a container with the cumin, oregano, salt, garlic, paprika and sour orange juice. Place the pork with the marinade in a vacuum bag or a zip-top plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for 24 hours.
- After that time, if you have a gas stove, place the marinated pork in a pot, over very low heat, for 6 hours; and if it is on vitro ceramic, set the temperature to 3 or 4 degrees, for 3 or 4 hours. "The important thing is to cook with love, however you do it, cook with love"
- Remove from heat and let it cool. Then, cut into squares and sear in lard until golden brown. Set aside.

Valencian cheese:

¼ onion, cut in *brunoise*.

¼ cup milk cream

150 g shredded crineja cheese

55 g butter with salt

- In a frying pan put the butter together with the onion and sauté over low heat until translucent. Add the cream and finally the crineja cheese. Mix and remove from heat. Set aside.

Serving Wise arepa

Take the arepa and in two on one side, without separating. Fill first with the bean cream, then the pork and crown with the Valencian cheese. Avocado can be added to decorate, extracted with a parisien or a spoon.

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INGENIOUS AREPA | MIGUEL GUERRA Y TATIANA MORA

Co-founders of MITA, a restaurant located in Washington, D.C., awarded a Michelin star in 2024 for its cuisine, whose concept celebrates vegetables, well-being, and Latin identity. **Miguel Guerra** is a Venezuelan chef trained at Le Cordon Bleu. He has worked in kitchens such as Grace (Chicago) and El Cielo (Washington, D.C.), and in pastry alongside Antonio Bachour. **Tatiana Mora** is a Venezuelan chef trained in Spain. She has worked in kitchens such as El Bulli and The Cliff (Barbados), integrating technique and cultural roots. In 2023, she founded MITA with Miguel Guerra, where they both consolidated their vision of a sustainable and narrative cuisine, focusing on vegetables, with precision and sensitivity.

This recipe is a celebration of creativity born from emotional and culinary fusion. Inspired by the Venezuelan Andes – with grated cassava dough – and by Dinorah, Miguel’s grandmother who lives in Anaco, a warm land in eastern Venezuela, where sweet chili peppers are the soul of the cuisine. It is filled with a salad of pickled eggplant, “a recipe that could have been born among Dinorah’s pots and pans, while she dreamed of the coolness of the mountains and the silence of the moors. It is a tribute to the women who cross the country with their seasonings, sowing love wherever they cook and leaving their legacy behind.”

foto: Maritza Rondón

INGENIOUS AREPA OR DINORAH IN THE ANDES • CREATIVITY

• TATIANA MORA Y MIGUEL GUERRA

(10 pieces)

Grandma Dinorah's memory

Sofrito de ají dulce

½ kg sweet chili bell pepper cleaned and seeded

1 large white onion

3 peeled garlic cloves

1 to 2 tablespoons Oil

¼ teaspoon achiote

Water

- Blend the ají dulce, onion and garlic with a splash of water until a thick mixture is formed.
- Heat the oil in a frying pan and sauté this mixture over medium heat, stirring until it reduces and becomes fragrant and slightly caramelized. Set aside.

Dough for 10 medium arepas

2 cups grated cassava, can be cooked and drained, or raw well squeezed

1 cup precooked corn flour, white or yellow

1 cup cassava (tapioca) flour

1 teaspoon Salt, can be adjusted to taste

2 to 3 tablespoons of the sweet chili sofrito

Warm water, amount needed to knead

- In a large bowl, mix the grated yucca with the precooked corn flour and the cassava flour. Add the salt and the sweet chili sofrito. Add water little by little and knead until a smooth, moldable and non-sticky dough is formed.
- Divide the dough into 10 portions. Form small balls and flatten them with your hands until you get disks of about 10 cm in diameter.
- Cook in a budare, frying pan or hot griddle, without oil, over medium heat, 4 to 5 minutes per side, or until golden brown and with a crispy crust.

Dinorah's pickled eggplant salad

Ingredients to fill 10 arepas

2 large eggplants

½ red bell pepper

1 medium white onion

2 cloves garlic

¾ cup white vinegar, or apple cider vinegar for mildness

⅓ cup vegetable or mild olive oil

¾ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon sugar (optional, to balance acidity)

Black pepper, to taste

½ teaspoon dried oregano, or a few fresh leaves

1 small, finely chopped sweet bell pepper (optional)

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

- Wash the eggplants and cut them into thin julienne strips. Put them in a strainer, sprinkle with a little salt and let them stand for 20 minutes. Then rinse and drain well.
- Cut the bell pepper and onion into julienne strips. Finely chop the garlic cloves.
- In a large frying pan, heat the oil and sauté the garlic, onion and pepper for 3 to 5 minutes until softened. Add the drained eggplants and mix well. Stir in the vinegar, salt, pepper, sugar, oregano and sweet bell pepper (if used). Cook over medium-low heat for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the eggplants are soft and everything is well integrated. Remove from heat and let cool.

Just before serving,

mix the Ingeniosa arepa with the chopped fresh parsley

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ROOTS AREPA | ISSAM KOTEICH

Venezuelan chef with an outstanding international career. San Sebastián and Dubai marked his beginnings, but it was in Mérida, Venezuela, where he planted his culinary vision with the Melao restaurant, integrating global flavors with local ingredients. His return to Dubai as a consultant for the opening of dozens of restaurants consolidated his prestige, backed by the recognition he received at Latino House Restaurant, awarded Best Restaurant in Dubai in 2006. Later, during a brief stay in Venezuela, he discovered the “Proyecto Ubre” (Ubre Project). This connection with the territory led him to change his plans and take over the kitchen at Cordero, a restaurant in Caracas that has earned admiration for its sensitive and creative approach to Venezuelan cuisine. In 2023, his proposal was recognized internationally with the American Express One to Watch Award and #44 on the list of Latin America’s 50 Best Restaurants, in addition to receiving the Tenedor de Oro (Golden Fork) Chef of the Year award from the Venezuelan Gastronomy Association.

This arepa is a celebration of the land: lamb crackling, artisanal cheese, chili peppers, spices, and a rich sofrito, give body to a recipe that honors local ingredients without artifice. Every element is used, transformed, and respected. From the oven to the stove, this arepa proves that “endurance” is not a trend, but a conviction: cooking with awareness, from origin to flavor.

foto: Natasha Lashly

ROOTS LITTLE AREPAS • ENDURANCE • ISSAM KOTEICH
(12 pieces)

Chicharrón arepa dough

175 g precooked corn flour
125 g lamb cracklings
3 g salt
2 g baking powder
250 ml warm water

- In a bowl, pour the salt and the baking powder into the warm water. Add the flour little by little, stirring constantly with your hands, and knead until you obtain a homogeneous and smooth mixture. Add the lamb crackling, previously chopped, and knead. Let the dough rest wrapped in plastic wrap for 1 hour.
- Form arepas of 50 g, and fry in abundant oil, at 180°C, for 2 minutes.
Finish in the oven at 180°C for 3 more minutes.

Sauteed chilies

25 g sartenejas chili, cut in *brunoise*
25 g red sweet chili, cut in *brunoise*
50 g white onion, cut in *brunoise*
5 g garlic
25 ml achiote spiced oil

- Sauté the white onion in the achiote oil in a frying pan over medium low heat. Add salt to facilitate and accelerate the cooking process, until it becomes translucent. Add the garlic and chili peppers and sauté for 10 minutes over low heat. Cover the pan and let it cook for 10 more minutes over low heat.

Domestic spicy seasoning

25 g yellow chili paste
25 g red chili paste
15 ml white wine vinegar
15 ml corn oil
5 g basil leaves
5 g chili peppers
3 g garlic (cloves)
3 g salt
3 g black pepper
5 g whole cumin
1 cinnamon stick
3 cloves
3 guayabita peppers
8 g chili flakes

- Lightly toast the cumin, cinnamon, cloves, guayabita pepper and chili flakes in a pan over low heat.
- Let cool and then process in a blender until a powder is obtained.
- Add the rest of the ingredients to the same blender cup, and process everything until a smooth and homogeneous mixture is obtained. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container.

Pata’e grillo de pernil

250 kg lamb leg
50 g white onion
25 g carrot
25 g celery
1 bay leaf
Water

- Place all the ingredients in a pressure cooker and cover with water. Cook for 1 hour.
- Discard the pork leg in very thin strands of meat.
- In a frying pan, over medium low heat, heat a little oil and add the meat strands. Stir every now and then, until the meat is browned and crispy.

Serving Roots arepa:

- Place a thick slice of Ubre sheep cheese on a griddle over medium heat, and brown on both sides.
- Open each arepa in half, spread with the ají sofrito, the spicy seasoning, and fill with the browned slice of cheese. Top the cheese with the Pata’e grillo, close the arepa and enjoy.

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EMPATHY AREPA | SUMITO ESTÉVEZ

He is a Venezuelan chef widely recognized as one of the most influential figures in Latin American gastronomy. His multifaceted career encompasses the roles of chef, teacher, entrepreneur, television personality, and writer, always with an integrative and committed vision. Throughout his career, he has participated in numerous social entrepreneurship projects, convinced that cooking can be a powerful vehicle for building self-esteem, promoting prosperity, and creating community ties. His public presence, both in the media and in educational spaces, has been guided by the conviction that gastronomy transcends the culinary to become a tool for change, inclusion, and sustainable development.

"On Sunday, March 30, 2025, I organized a conference in Italy to hear the testimonies of medical students who had gone to Venezuela to volunteer. I decided to make an "arepada" for the 50 people present, where I was the only Venezuelan. It was a way of repaying the empathy these young people had shown for my country, and that empathy was possible if I wrapped it in corn. So I turned to two flavors that are loved in this area: pork and tomato."

EMPATHY AREPA • EMPATHY • SUMITO ESTÉVEZ

(5 pieces)

This recipe was designed for 5 people (5 arepas),
with herbal cream adapted for 15 people.

Dough for five arepas:

200 g precooked white corn flour
50 g precooked yellow corn flour
310 ml water
10 g salt

- Mix the flours with the salt, add the water little by little, kneading until a uniform dough is obtained. Form five arepas of approximately 100 g each.
- Cook them roasted in budare or griddle, or fried if preferred.

Cooking lomo caroreño (yields 5 arepas):

500 g pork loin
10 g sugar
5 g salt
1.5 g ground nutmeg
1.5 g ground cloves
1.5 g ground guayabita (or sweet) pepper
12.5 ml oil painted with achiote

- Rub the tenderloin with the mixture and seal in an airtight bag. Place a weight on top and refrigerate for 24 hours.
- The next day, dry the loin and bake at 200°C, 15 minutes per side.
- Cool and cut into slices. Yields five portions of 80 g each.

Tomatoes to empathize:

200 g *datterino* or cherry tomatoes
10 ml olive oil
2 g salt
0.5 g dried oregano

- Mix the tomatoes with oil, salt and oregano. Bake at 200°C until golden brown and caramelized.

Herb cream for 15 diners

Yields approximately 400-450 ml.

Leftover can be used as salad dressing.

3 small avocados (300 g skinless and seedless)
150g fresh cilantro
Juice of 3 small lemons
150 g chives (white part)
300 ml corn oil
15 g salt

- Blend all the ingredients until you obtain a thick, homogeneous and shiny cream. Use to garnish the arepas, and reserve the leftover as a salad dressing.

To garnish:

Onion or cilantro sprouts.

When serving, the Empathy arepa

Open the arepas and fill with 80 g of pork loin, 30 g of baked tomato, decorate with drops of herb cream and the fresh sprouts.

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MESTIZA AREPA | **GABRIEL CASTAÑEDA**

Born in Táchira and passionate about cooking as a means of cultural connection and collective memory. He began working in restaurants at the age of 13, and after finishing high school, he was employed at La Olleta, one of the best restaurants in San Cristóbal, where chef Douglas Nieto recommended he study at CEGA, where he graduated as a Venezuelan Cuisine Chef.

Since then, he has worked in Venezuela, the United States, Spain, and Peru. He refined his style under mentors such as Reisson Frioni and Carlos García from Alto restaurant. After nearly a decade, it is at the Caracas-based restaurant Casa Veroes where he has found the ideal space to develop a Venezuelan menu with a contemporary perspective. His cuisine reinterprets native flavors using modern techniques, honesty, and authenticity, aiming to build bridges between past, present, and community.

This recipe by Gabriel Castañeda is a meeting of memories, travels, and shared tables. In its dough – half white corn, half tender yellow corn – sweet and savory coexist, rural and urban, sea and mountain. The jojoto or tender corn brought by “his old man,” who arrived home with his truck loaded with treasures bearing aromas and flavors from distant corners of that Venezuela that intersects, blends, and recognizes itself. This arepa not only nourishes: it unites diversity in a single bite, like an emotional map of the country we are.

MESTIZA AREPA • MULTICULTURALITY • GABRIEL CASTAÑEDA

(4 pieces)

Catfish:

4 catfish wheels
2 garlic cloves
2 lemons, juice
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
100 g wheat flour
500 ml olive oil

To marinate the catfish:

• In a container add the catfish, salt, pepper, lemon juice and crushed garlic to marinate for about 10 minutes. It is advisable to do this step at the beginning, before making the dough for the arepas, as this will help the fish to retain the flavors better.

Cooking the catfish:

• Once the fish has been marinated, it is dredged in wheat flour before frying; this will help it to be juicier, retain the flavors well and obtain a nice golden color.
• In a pot add the oil and heat it over medium heat until it reaches 280°C.

Dough for four arepas:

1 cup precooked white corn flour
1 cup flour for cachapas
2 cups water at room temperature
1 teaspoon salt

• In a large bowl, mix the precooked corn flour, the cachapas flour mix and the salt.
• Add the water, little by little, mixing and kneading with your hands, until you obtain a smooth and homogeneous dough that does not stick to your fingers. If the dough is too dry, add a little more water (a little at a time). But in case it is too hydrated, add a little more flour; this can happen sometimes, since not all flours have the same water absorption capacity.
• Cover the bowl with a cloth, and let the dough rest for about 5-10 minutes. This allows the flour to hydrate well.
• Take golf ball sized portions of dough and form a ball with your hands and then gently flatten it between your palms until you get a disk about 1 cm thick. This will give us small arepas of about 10-12 cm in diameter.

Cooking the arepas:

• Heat a frying pan or budare over medium heat. Once hot, lightly grease it with a little oil or butter. Place the arepas and cook for about 5-7 minutes on each side, or until golden brown and firm to the touch, with a light crust on the outside.

To accompany the arepa:

A lemon cut in half
4 slices of avocado per arepa
4 thin slices of tomato per arepa

Serving Mestiza arepa

Place the hot arepa and the fried catfish, the avocado and tomato slices, and the lemon wedges on the plate.

The arepa in my recipe is inspired by one of tender corn from the arepas book by Leonor Peña and Ronald Duque. It has a touch of cachapa, a sweet touch, without having to make the dough completely sweet. It is very special to me because they used to make it a lot in my house.

My dad was a truck driver and whenever he came home from a trip he would always bring us catfish and sacks of corn. He bought them very fresh, and besides, it was the fish that came to us there in Táchira. My mother used to make it this way; so, for my taste memory, it is a flavor that I remember a lot and I like it a lot because it is very fresh and it is very good food. Like many arepas in the country, these flavors were the fruit of the work of hard-working parents. My dad traveled all over the country in his truck, and he always came home with something to prepare the arepas.

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HONEST AREPA:

FLAVOR WITHOUT SHORTCUTS | **KARIN REQUENA**

A cook, she studied Translation and Linguistics at the University of Los Andes. Born in Caracas and raised in Paris, she trained as a cook at La Casserole du Chef and furthered her knowledge in Europe. She has worked as a sous chef and executive chef in Venezuela, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Her experience spans from teaching to designing culinary routes that connect cultures through flavor and words. She is currently writing a book that combines cooking and personal chronicles from a sensitive, gastronomic, and literary perspective. She lives between Caracas and Mérida

This recipe brings together, in every bite, the values of integrity and honesty that have defined our people. Oxtail—a humble cut—requires patience, respect, and dedication. There are no shortcuts: it must be cooked with care until the collagen transforms into a rich sauce and the meat falls off the bone. Making the most of it is an act of culinary honesty, as Grandma Trina used to say: “In Venezuelan cuisine, nothing is wasted, everything is transformed and honored.” The arepa, for its part, is bread without prejudice that welcomes everything. When filled with the sweet oxtail stew and mild white cheese, nobility is found in simplicity without artifice. Each ingredient brings out the best in itself, in an act of transparency and balance. Its process reflects the integrity of those who understand that true value lies in a job well done.

HONESTY AREPA: FLAVOR WITHOUT SHORTCUTS • INTEGRITY •

KARIN REQUENA

(8 pieces)

Beef tail stew

100 ml vegetable oil

3 large onions: one for the marinade:

one for the cooking of the oxtail and one for the sofrito

7 garlic cloves: 3 for the stew, 2 for the sofrito

4 large ripe tomatoes: 2 for the stew, 2 for the sofrito

7 garlic cloves: 3 for the stew, 2 for the sofrito

4 sweet peppers cut in brunoise: 2 for the stew, 2 for the sofrito

½ red pepper cut in brunoise

1 teaspoon cumin powder

4 cloves: 2 for the stew, 2 for the sofrito 1.5 L

beef stock: 1.3 L for the stew, 200 ml for the sofrito

70 g grated papelón (unrefined sugar cane)

2 glasses of good quality red wine, for the base stew

100 ml Venezuelan rum, to deglaze the sofrito pan

1 bay leaf

4-6 black peppercorns Salt, to taste

Preparation of the marinade

Put the pieces of oxtail, along with an onion cut in quarters, three cloves of garlic, peppercorns and red wine in a glass dish with a lid, and let it marinate overnight or at least 8 hours. The intention of this process is to help tenderize and aromatize the meat. After this time the pieces are removed and dried, but the liquid is reserved for cooking.

Initial cooking of the oxtail

- Season with salt and pepper, and lightly flour the oxtail pieces, placing them in a plastic bag with the flour, shaking them until they are well coated on all sides.
- In a large pot, heat the oil and brown the pieces on all sides until they are well sealed. Set aside.
- In the same pot, sauté a chopped onion, two cloves of garlic, half a red pepper and two sweet peppers cut in brunoise, until golden brown. Add the chopped tomatoes and the bay leaf. Cook for a few minutes.
- Add the sealed oxtail, the red wine from the maceration, two cloves and the meat stock until it is covered. Cook over low heat, covered, for about 3 hours, or until the meat falls off the bone easily. If using a pressure cooker, reduce the time to about ½.

Shred the meat

Remove the pieces of tail, and let it cool a little. Carefully shred the meat, eliminating bones and cartilage. Reserve the shredded meat, and blend the sauce resulting from the cooking process to use it in the sofrito.

Venezuelan sofrito, and second cooking

- In a large frying pan, heat a generous splash of vegetable oil. Sauté the remaining onion chopped very small, along with the remaining two cloves of garlic filleted, and the other two sweet peppers cut in brunoise. When the onion is transparent, add the cumin and the cloves, and cook for a few minutes stirring constantly so that the spices release their aromas in the oil, but do not burn.
- Add the papelón and, after a few seconds, the rum. Cook and stir for a few minutes, until the alcohol has evaporated. Add the peeled and chopped tomatoes. Cook until the tomatoes break up.
- Add the shredded meat, a little of the sauce of the stew to give juiciness, and a little broth, the amount will be determined by how much sauce the stew produced and how liquid you want the final product; the idea is that when serving it, the arepa gets soaked inside and absorbs part of the sauce, but without undoing it due to excess of liquid.
- Cook over medium-low heat, stirring, until the mixture is juicy and shiny, and the panela is fully integrated (about 15-20 minutes). The collagen in the sauce will add oiliness and thickness. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

Dough for 8 arepas of 120g

500 g precooked white corn flour

620 ml water

10 g salt

1 teaspoon butter

1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese (optional)

- Mix the flour with the salt, add the water little by little, kneading until a uniform dough is obtained. Form 8 arepas of approximately 120 g each, with a thickness of approximately 1.5 cm. The arepas should have some dough to absorb the sauce.
- Grill in the oven for 5 minutes on each side. Until they have a crispy shell.

Serving Honest arepas

Once the arepas are ready, open each one, spread a little butter on them, and fill them generously with slices of soft white cheese (Palmita, Paísa or Guayanés) and with the stewed beef tail. A little chopped cilantro can be added.

Tips

You can prepare the base stew the day before so that the flavors settle better.

All stews are best the next day.

The touch of panela (papelón) adds sweetness and depth, balancing the flavors of the sofrito and highlighting the Venezuelan character of the dish.

You can adjust the amount to suit the palate of each family, as you do with the hallaca.

Enjoy these arepas stuffed with oxtail and cheese, juicy and full of Venezuelan flavor!

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• FLAVOR WITHOUT SHORTCUTS • KARIN REQUENA

The oxtail stew and white cheese arepa is a recipe that, beyond its deep, balanced and succulent flavor, embodies the essence of Venezuelan idiosyncrasy, weaving into every bite the values of integrity and honesty that, among many others, have defined our people throughout history.

Beef oxtail, traditionally considered a humble cut, requires patience, respect and dedication. Its preparation does not admit shortcuts: after an entire night of maceration in wine, it requires hours of slow and loving cooking to transform the collagen into a tasty and gelatinous sauce and to make the meat so tender that it easily comes off the bone. This process reflects the integrity of those who understand that the true value lies in a job well done, in constancy and in respect for resources. Taking advantage of the tail, a part of the animal that many would discard, is an act of culinary honesty: my grandmother Trina, a “gocha”, -from Libertad, in Táchira state -, used to say that in Venezuelan cuisine nothing is wasted, everything is transformed and honored.

The arepa, on the other hand, is the neutral and generous canvas that welcomes any filling, without distinction or prejudice. It is our daily bread, a symbol of equality and fraternity, which unites everyone regardless of their origin. When stuffed with the combination of the sweet and tasty stew of oxtail with a mild and slightly salty cheese, a meeting between humility and nobility takes place: between the simplicity of corn and cheese, and the complexity of the aromatic stew with the tones of sweet chili, cloves and papelón (unrefined sugar cane) of this recipe. It is an honest combination: what you see is what you get, without artifice or pretense. Each ingredient is shown as it is, giving the best of itself, in an act of transparency, authenticity and balance.

I wish that sharing a stewed oxtail arepa with white cheese is a celebration of the diversity, creativity and resilience of Venezuelans. To recognize that wealth does not lie in ostentation, but in the ability to transform the simple into the extraordinary, to find flavor and meaning in the everyday. Thus, this recipe becomes a symbol of the integrity and honesty that characterize our people: a people that, despite the difficulties, continues to bet on unity, honest work and respect for tradition, from anywhere in the world.

Every time we prepare and share this arepa, we will be reaffirming our identity and our values, transmitting to new generations the pride of an honest, wholesome and deeply Venezuelan cuisine. Because wherever an arepa is prepared and eaten, we will be in Venezuela.



WILLINGNESS

foto: Liliana Martínez

FORGING AREPA | DANIEL TORREALBA

A chef from Acarigua trained at the Caracas Culinary Institute (ICC), he has been a disciple of great masters such as Héctor Romero, Sumito Estévez, and Edgar Leal. In 2021, he received the Armando Scannone Award for his contribution to Venezuelan cuisine. He leads the projects "El Maíz Nuestro" and "Merecure," focused on native corn and the traditions of the plains. His cuisine is born from rigorous study and a passion for the authentic flavors of the country. Creative and persevering, his approach honors regional identity with a contemporary perspective. "The plainsman is as big as the commitment he faces," sums up his philosophy.

The Forging, kneaded with effort and dedication, is a tribute to hard work: each step – from washing and grinding the corn to pickling onions and preserving the pork jowl – requires technique, patience, and willpower. On the palate, its firm dough and sour-fatty filling awaken the flavor of sustained effort. Daniel Torrealba condenses in it the flavor of what is made with the hands and the soul.

@elmaiznuestro
@merecurecocinallanera | @danieltorrealba_chef

FORGING AREPA •WILLINGNESS • DANIEL TORREALBA
(6 pieces)

Ce/se

500 g pork jowl
2 lemons
20 g salt
10 g sugar
250 ml vinegar
250 ml white wine
250 ml water
100 g white onion in julienne
100 g pepper in julienne
100 g sweet bell pepper
2 star aniseed
5 guayabita peppercorns
5 cloves
5 g coriander seed

- Wash the jowl rubbing it with lemon and then wash it in running water to remove it.
- In a pot, put the spices, bay leaf, white wine and salt; introduce the dewlap and cook over medium heat for 1 hour. Add the onion, the pepper, the chili, the vinegar and the sugar; continue cooking until it is very soft.
- Remove the jowl and cut into 2 cm cubes. Keep the jowl in a sterilized jar together with the cooking liquid, vegetables and spices. Keep in the refrigerator.

Pickled purple onions

500 g purple onion
250 ml white wine vinegar
250 ml water
5 g salt
5 g sugar
2 bay leaves

- Cut the onions in julienne strips.
- In a pot, add the water, white wine vinegar, bay leaf, salt and sugar. Bring to a boil and when boiling, add the onions, cover and remove from heat. Let stand at room temperature.
- Store in the refrigerator in a sterilized jar.

Dough for 6 arepas, approx. 180 g

500 g white hominy
2 L water
Salt, to taste

- In a bowl, wash the corn, rubbing it with your hands until the water is translucent, and drain it; and in a pot, cook it in 2 L of water for 30 minutes or until the corn is al dente.
- Remove from the heat and remove half of the hot cooking water and add the same amount of cold water. Let stand at room temperature, and then store in the refrigerator for 12 hours for the corn to finish hydrating.
- Grind in a grain mill with the screw tightly tightened, passing the dough three times, to obtain a very fine dough. Form balls of 180 g and shape the arepas.
- Cook in the oven until they are cooked, about 5 minutes on each side, finish in the oven at 180°C for 10 minutes until they are puffed.

When serving

Fill each Forging arepa with the ce/se and pickled onions.

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HALF FOR YOU AREPA | **VICTORIA VALLENILLA**

Venezuelan chef established in the gastronomic scene of the Principality of Monaco. She was born in Caracas and grew up between Margarita Island and Barquisimeto. She trained in Hotel Management in Nice, France, specializing in Culinary Arts. In 2023, in homage to her Venezuelan roots, she opened Taera, a pop-up restaurant, at the Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo. Her cuisine is sensitive, technical, and bold.

In times of crisis, war, exile, or poverty, the purest act of justice is sharing. This arepa was born from that simple, instinctive, and deeply powerful gesture: breaking bread in two and offering half.

It does not seek to impress; it is not luxurious or pretentious. It is modest, approachable, made to be shared—visually and in spirit. It is an arepa that nourishes and comforts. It reminds us that even in the absence of abundance, cooking can still be an act of resistance and tenderness. It is a way of caring for others when there is almost nothing left. It is made with basic ingredients, those that are still available in contexts of scarcity, displacement, and struggle. But it contains something that cannot be bought: a deep desire for justice for those who have the least. A minimal recipe with an immense message; because sharing an arepa is like saying, "I see you, I embrace you, I will not forget you."

HALF FOR YOU AREPA • JUSTICE • VICTORIA VALLENILLA (5 pieces)

Sardine *Rilletts*

Rilletts are spreadable creams made with shredded sardines, mixed with cream cheese, lemon and spices. The technique comes from traditional French cuisine, where meat was originally cooked slowly and preserved in fat. Today, it is also adapted to fish to create soft, tasty and ready-to-spread preparations.

300 g canned sardines with oil
20 g lemon confit
200 g cream cheese -Philadelphia type- or mayonnaise
50 g celery finely chopped in small cubes 50 g fresh mint leaves
Zest of one lemon
Salt and pepper, to taste

- Open the cans of sardines and de-spine - carefully removing the central spine and visible bones - using your fingers or kitchen tongs to preserve only the flesh of the fish. This step is important to obtain a smoother and more pleasant texture.
- In a food processor, place the boned sardines together with their oil, the lemon confit, the cheese and the mint leaves. Process until a homogeneous and creamy mixture is obtained.
- Add the lemon zest, salt and pepper to taste. Finally, add the celery to add texture and freshness. If a more acidic touch is desired, add a few drops of lemon juice.

Smoked paprika arepasa

These arepas have a subtle smoky aroma and a warm color thanks to the paprika.

300 g pre-cooked corn flour
600 g water
10 g salt
2 teaspoons of smoked paprika
100 g roasted peppers with oil

- In a bowl mix warm water with salt, paprika and, if desired, a dash of vegetable oil. Gradually add the precooked corn flour, kneading with your hands until you obtain a smooth dough without lumps. Let it rest for a few minutes so that the texture settles. Then add the pieces of roasted peppers.
- With wet hands, form dough discs of medium size and uniform thickness. Make them quite thin to obtain a crunchy texture. Cook on a hot griddle with a little oil, or on a grill, until golden brown on both sides. For an even crispier texture, they can be finished for a few minutes in the oven.

Fresh herb salad

Ideally, use locally available herbs, the goal is to add notes of freshness and different textures. For example, this combination: chervil, mint, chives, celery sprouts and coriander leaves.

Serving half for you arepa

There are two ways to serve these arepas: open them in two as a sandwich or use them as a tostada or taco, putting all the components on top. In either case, the content is the same: Place a generous amount of sardine *rilletts*. The red onions in julienne strips, previously soaked in ice water. And finish with a good amount of herb salad. Serve with fresh lemon and hot sauce. For this occasion a homemade hot sauce was used, based on ají panca, quite aromatic.

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CONSTANT AREPA | FRANCISCO ABENANTE

A Caracas-born chef, he is in love with Venezuela and determined to promote its values. He began his culinary training at CEGA under the guidance of master chef José Rafael Lovera and worked at the restaurant Le Deuxième Étage with French chef Pierre Blanchard, who would be fundamental to his technical and conceptual learning.

More than just the typical dishes of our country, which he prepares and knows well, his cuisine refers to what we Venezuelans like to eat, evoking the best taste memories in each of his diners. With the same consistency with which he kneads dough every day, he has managed to build a solid career, worthy of the Tenedor de Oro al Gran Chef (2009) and the Armando Scannone Award (2015), awarded by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy.

This arepa, filled with breaded cataco fish (bigeye scad), avocado, and pickled red onion, is a bite that sums up what Abenante's craft has been: conscious repetition, attention to detail, and respect for the ingredients. Cataco, a fish abundant on the central coast of Venezuela, is not, however, frequently consumed in Caracas - even though it is a nutritional powerhouse and rich in omega-3 -. Revaluing its presence is the idea behind this recipe, which establishes a direct connection with the territory and its living culture.

CONSTANT AREPA • PERSEVERANCE • FRANCISCO ABENANTE

(6 pieces)

Peeled corn dough

500 g raw whole corn

2 L of water

- Wash the corn until the water comes out clean and there are no impurities left.
- Pour the 2 liters of water in a pot, add the corn and cook over medium heat.

When it breaks the boil, count approximately 20 minutes, taste the grain, which should be hard in the center. Lower the heat.

- Discard ¼ of the water and add more cold water until the corn is covered. Cover the pot and let stand until the next day (about 8 to 12 hours). Once rested, strain the corn and grind it to process the masa.

Dough for 6 arepas of 160g each

1 kg ground corn

100 g milk cream

5 g salt

- Incorporate all the ingredients in a mixer and beat on speed 1 for 2 minutes, so that all the ingredients come together. Turn to speed 2 for 8 minutes more, until the dough becomes homogeneous.
- Form the balls of 160 g each and make the arepas. Set aside.
- Grill and bake the arepas until they are cooked and toasted.

Pickled onions

100 g purple onion

0.1 g oregano leaf

30 g lemon juice

63 g orange juice

¼ of a habanero bell pepper

2 g salt

- Peel and wash the onion, removing the core, and cut into thin julienne strips. Set aside.
- Roast the habanero bell pepper on a griddle or budare over medium heat. Lower the heat, open it, remove the seeds and cut it in brunoise. Set aside.
- Squeeze the orange and lemon by hand to prevent their juices from becoming bitter.
- In a steel bowl, pour the lemon and orange juices. Dissolve the salt in them, add the oregano, and whisk to integrate all the ingredients. Add the onion. Close with plastic wrap and leave in the refrigerator for 12 hours.

Cataco (Bigeye Scad)

100 g of cataco fillet

Wheat flour, the amount needed to coat the fillet

Beaten egg, the amount needed to coat the fillet

Panko, the amount needed to coat just one side of the cataco fillet

Juice of ½ small lemon

1 pinch of salt

1 pinch of garlic powder

- Season the fillet with the salt, garlic powder and lemon juice.
- Dredge the fillet in flour, then in the beaten egg and finally in the panko, but only on the meat side, not the skin side.
- Take it to the fryer until it is golden brown and cooked, let it drain on a paper towel and set aside to fill the arepa.

Serving the Constant arepa

One 160 g arepa

30 g avocado cut into slices

Cataco fillets

10 g pickled red onion

A few cilantro leaves, hydrated in cold water

Open the arepa, place the avocado slices first, then place the cataco fillets, and finally the pickled onions, without the juice. Decorate by placing the hydrated and drained cilantro leaves on top. Serve.

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DAWN AREPA | HÉCTOR ROMERO

Born in Caracas in 1968, he is a Venezuelan artist and chef with an outstanding career as a researcher, teacher, and promoter of Venezuelan cuisine. Founder and director of the Caracas Culinary Institute (ICC), he has trained generations of chefs and developed projects such as "El Comedor." He has been awarded the Golden Fork for Chef of the Year (2013) by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy, and in 2015, the Gastronomic Publication of the Year for his book ROMERO, Contemporary Venezuelan Cuisine; and a mention to the ICC as School of the Year (2018). He is a founding member of "Venezuela Gastronómica" and currently executive chef at Alma Cocina Latina in Baltimore, where he continues to spread the flavors of Venezuela with a contemporary sensibility. His cuisine is thought, craft, and identity. He resides between Caracas and Baltimore.

The Dawn Arepa, or Chicharrón (Pork crackling) Bomb, encapsulates the spirit of a cuisine in transition. Its round shape and unexpected interior evoke the constant rebirth of a culture that mutates, adapts, and remains alive.

Romero constructs it as if drawing with ingredients: whey, sea urchin, pork, beef, chili peppers, and plantains intersect like symbolic geographies. This arepa not only nourishes; it signals a new day, a beginning that—like the flavor—springs forth in silence and lingers.

DAWN LITTLE AREPAS • CHICHARRÓN BOMB

• HOPE • HÉCTOR ROMERO

(14 pieces)

Chicharrón arepas dough:

287 g filtered water

3.5 g salt

130 g precooked corn flour

80 g chicharrón (pork crackling)

- In a bowl place the water and salt, mix well with a wire whisk until the salt is completely diluted. Add the corn flour, as a rain, while mixing with the same whisk. Incorporate the chicharrón and mix well, it should be well integrated in the dough. Knead for about five minutes or until a smooth, homogeneous and malleable dough is obtained. Let it rest for 5 minutes.
- Form small arepas, 30 g each, they should be thick, almost spherical. Reserve them on a metal tray with waxed paper, in the refrigerator, covered with a clean and humid kitchen towel, for at least 10 minutes. If they have to be refrigerated for a long time, as it could be overnight, it is advisable to cover them with plastic wrap.
- Fry in abundant oil at 140° C for 4 minutes. Remove from oil and let stand for 2 minutes. Fry again at 160° C for 2 more minutes. Remove from oil and let stand for 2 minutes. Increase the oil temperature to 180° C, and fry again for two more minutes. Remove from the oil and drain the excess. Set aside hot.

Sea urchin and plantain dressing

5 g yuzu juice

1 g ajicero criollo

5 g egg yolk

20 g raw fresh sea urchin tongues

5 g white miso paste

25 g cooked ripe plantain - skinless, cooked in water, cut into 3 cm thick pieces

20 g oil

4 g salt

In the bowl of a small blender (*Nutribullet* or similar), place all the ingredients, and process for about 4 minutes, until a smooth and homogeneous mixture is obtained. Keep covered in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Finishing and assembly

140 g beef tenderloin: very clean, cut into 5 mm cubes

7 g finely chopped chives

43 g creamy buttermilk - place in a small sauce dispenser with a fine spout

- In a bowl place the meat, the sea urchin dressing that we had previously reserved, and half of the chives. Mix well until all the ingredients are completely integrated and the tartar is ready.
- Pierce one side of the arepa with the spout of the whey dispenser. Press and fill the arepa with a portion of whey, so that it stays inside the arepa.
- With the help of two spoons, form a sort of sphere with the meat tartar and flatten slightly. Place on the arepa so that it sticks to the arepa and remains level, in balance. Finish with the rest of the chives on top of the tartar.

When serving

Place the dawn arepas on a platter and offer as an appetizer or snack.

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• CHICHARRÓN BOMB • HÉCTOR ROMERO

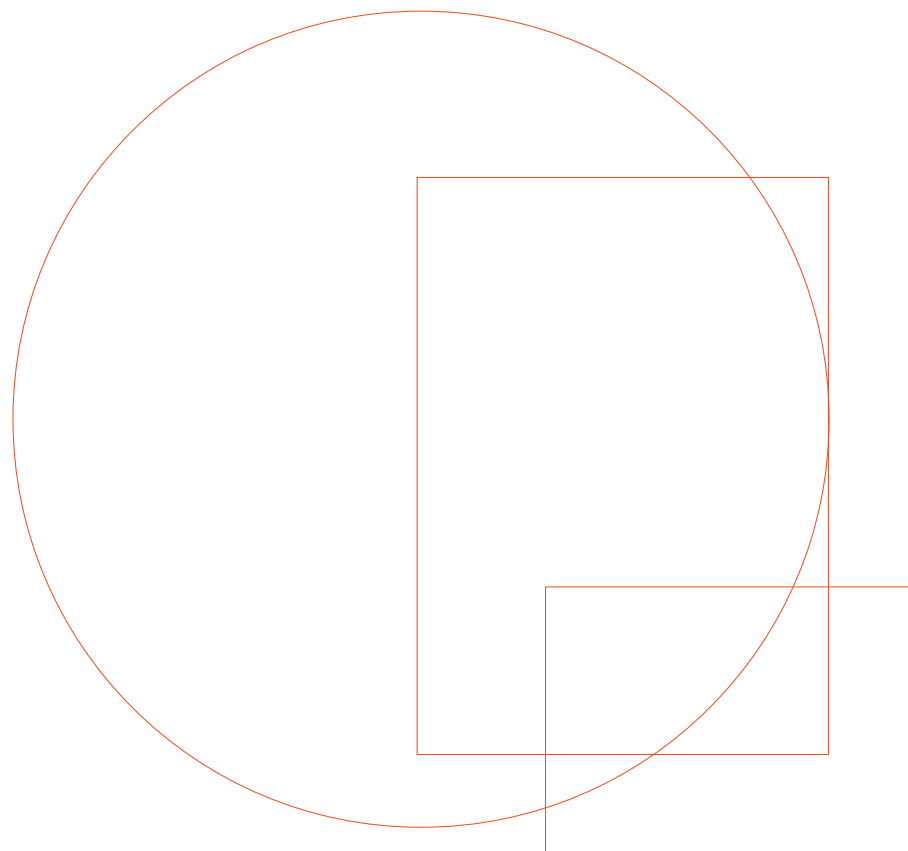
This exercise attempts to summarize the evolution of our food and culinary culture, obviously from a very personal perspective. It refers to growth or evolution, which in some cases and moments means significant changes. Renewal or rebirth, although it refers to human and therefore sociocultural processes, is also loaded with symbolism. We fundamentally eat culture, as we repeat patterns or generate new ones that are then repeated in a sustained manner and become “our own” codes, and so on, making it a permanent process. Gathering as a means of indigenous sustenance, the introduction of species (animals and plants) from other geographical areas at different historical moments, the replication and adaptation of crops to our landscapes, the influences inherited from different cultures and, as a result, new ways of producing food, managing trade, eating, and cooking. All of the above generates a system from which our identity and customs have been shaped. The “Venezuelan” identity is very broad and complex, in a good way, in my opinion, nothing is absolute. This diversity has allowed us to enjoy a cultural richness that is more or less pronounced, depending on the times, since it is not a linear situation, but rather a multidirectional one. Today, this culture wanders through different geographical and cultural spaces, traveling a path in search of new things. Evolution is natural and necessary; it is what makes it possible for culture to remain over time. The cuisine of each place is an expression of a way of living, thinking, and eating. Regardless of the historical moment, things are replicated in different dynamics.

On the other hand, it is a way to visit our geography through ingredients, some representative of different regions of Venezuela and also of other geographies. The arepa is a common element, although characteristic depending on where we are. Different ingredients, multiple processes, formats, and ways of cooking it (which give it a specific character) mean that its usefulness on the table can be different in each case. Corn is undoubtedly the main ingredient, but it also varies. Different grains, colors, organoleptic characteristics, and culinary qualities, but it is the soul of this ancestral bread that increasingly resembles us, no matter how far it goes. It is a vehicle that moves in different directions and begins to trace increasingly longer lines, which will become interconnected over time, expanding its reach and shape. The arepa is a “disc” that will continue to spin in search of an identity, as it always has, and will be determined by what happens to us, because culture is dynamic and societies are too, fortunately.

CORN•URCHIN•PORK•COW•WHEY•PLANTAIN•CITRUS FRUITS•AND CHILI PEPPER.

Historically, the arepa has been a staple food, a source of support, and a symbol. It is a concept that defines and represents us. Beyond any disputes, Venezuelans are “the arepa” wherever we are.

WORKS OF ARTS



Alejandra Mandelblum

Plexus Cardiac (Cardiac Plexus)

2018

Acrylic, enamel and charcoal on fabric

200,66 x 251,46 cm

Alexandra de Yavorsky

Serie. Pinpoint_color (detail)

2022

Various materials

96,5 x 25,9 cm

Andreína Acero

Arepita para llevar (Arepita to Go)

2025

Digital illustration

21 x 15 cm

Anita Reyna

Reina Letrada (Worded Queen)

2025

Various materials

15 x 21 cm

Apamaire

Cayena (Cayenne)

2023

Assemblage of mixed media

21 x 15 cm

Armando Velutini

Arepa somos todos (Arepa is All of Us)

2025

Mixed media

21 x 15 cm

Bernardita Rakos

Arepa

2025

Photo collage

15 x 21 cm

Camila Otero

Arepa Sagrada (Holy Arepa)

2025

Digital illustration

15 x 21 cm

Carlos Salazar-Lermont

Lucas 22:19 (Luke 22:19)

2025

Performance for the camera, digital photography, the arepa, and a gold foil

15 x 21 cm

Consuelo Méndez

Sin título (Untitled) (detail)

2025

Paint on raw linen

15 x 21 cm

Corina Briceño

Oro Mar Oro (Gold Sea Gold)

2024

Digital work, photography

15 x 21 cm

EDO

Mi arepa bajo el brazo

(My Arepa under the Arm)

2025

Pencil drawing, digital coloring

15 x 21 cm

Eduardo Azuaje

Carne mixta (Mixed Meat)

2025

Assemblage with bone, iron, and glue

24 x 24 x 13 cm

Eduardo Molina

I love you

2025

Pencil, digital coloring

21 x 15 cm

Elliott Ortiz

Arepa Coalition Project

2025

Photography

15 x 21 cm

Enriqueta Ahrensburg

Desprendimiento (detalle)

(Detachment) (Detail)

2024

Acrylic on canvas

21 x 15 cm

Gerald Espinoza

Asavke y el origen de la arepa

(Asavke and the Origin of the Arepa)

2025

Oil paint on paper and digital finishing

15 x 21 cm

Golden 305

Las Súper Arepas (Super-Arepas)

2025

Digital illustration

15 x 21 cm

Héctor Romero

Mosaico ancestral (Ancestral Mosaic)

2025

Photography and digital media

15 x 21 cm

Helwing Villamizar

Decalcomanía de la Arepa

(Arepa's Decalcomania)

2025

Oil paint on recycled paper

38 x 47 cm

Ira León

Erepá

2025

Digital graphic matrix

70 x 50 cm

Jesús Matheus

eMeTe arepa (eMeYou Arepa)

2025

Monotype on paper

21 x 15 cm

Joanna Vegas Sánchez

Con mi arepa no se metan

(Don't mess with my arepa)

2025

Collage and digital photomontage

15 x 21 cm

Jorge «El Niño» Torrealba

Arepa Pelá (Hulled Corn Arepa)

2025

Digital drawing

15 x 21 cm

Kali Martínez Dávila

La Arepa de Oro (Gold Arepa)

2025

Water and acrylic on paper

22,86 x 15,24 cm

Karla Molina

Agustín y Juana (Agustin and Juana)

2025

Acrylic and oil paint on canvas

60 x 80 cm

Laura Stagno

El mantelito de los sabores

(A Tablecloth of Flavours)

2025

Digital collage on paper, knitted fabric, and drawing with crayons

15 x 21 cm

Luis Romero

Arepa
2016
Rubber seals on graph paper
20,8 x 16,5 cm

Leonardo Rodríguez

Reina Pepiada
2025
Watercolor on satin, Fabriano paper
42 x 30 cm

Los Morochos Twins

Doble bolo alimenticio (fotograma)
(Twin Bolus) (Still frame)
2021
Video in HD format
03'14"

María Eugenia Manrique

Órbita de identidad (Identity Orbit)
2025
Chinese ink on semi-cooked Xuan paper
15 x 21 cm

Mari Carmen «Nane» Carrillo

El bocado de la nostalgia
(The Bite of Nostalgia)
2025
Digital painting
21 x 15 cm

Mariú

Hombre de maíz (Man of Corn)
2023
Ink on paper
27,5 x 21,5 cm

Mery Del Carmen**Guerrero Rodríguez**

La Arepa: un viaje de unión y tradición
(The Arepa: A Journey of Union and Tradition)
2025
Various materials on canvas
15 x 21 cm

Muu Blanco

AAA. Ella – Abstracciones Paisajísticas
(AAA. She – Landscape Abstractions)
2007
Photography
120 x 80 cm

Nayarí Castillo

Arepa liquen, arepa primordial
(Primordial Arepa, Mossbound Arepa)
2024
Digital photography
Varying dimensions

Norma Morales

Ofrenda (de la serie Erepa)
(Offering) (From the series Erepa)
2025
Illuminated transfer
22 x 15 cm

OAYA

Viajando hacia la libertad
(Traveling Towards Freedom)
1995
Watercolor and crayon
30 x 40 cm

Onofre Frías

Arepa de aguacate con guayanés
(Avocado Arepa with Guayanés Cheese)
2025
Color markers and watercolor crayons
Digital reproduction on opaline cardboard
21 x 15 cm

Patricio Agüero

Reina Pepiada
2025
Digital illustration
21 x 15 cm

Pedro Tineo

Una arepa dentro de otra arepa
(An Arepa Inside Another Arepa)
2025
Pencil, ink, fixer, on MDF
background digitally modified
21 x 15 cm

Penélope Díaz

Entre olores y trazos
(Between Aromas and Strokes)
2025
Acrylic on canvas, gold foil
70 x 120 cm

Rafa Muci

Arepa de mi corazón (Arepa of my Heart)
2025
Photography and digital photomontage
on paper
15 x 21 cm

Ricardo Benaim

Arepandala
2025
Digital art
Varying dimensions

Rosana Faría

Prueba de color para el libro
«Arepita de manteca»
(Color Proof for the Book: "Lard Arepita")
2025
Pencil, watercolor, digital assemblage
15 x 21 cm

Santiago Pol

La arepa no tiene fronteras
(The Arepa Has No Borders)
2025
Real arepa and passport
(Photographed sculpture)
15 x 21 cm

Toña Vegas

Los amantes de la arepa.
Nueva constelación en el cielo
(The Arepa Lovers.
A New Constellation in the Sky)
2025
Photography and digital edition
15 x 21 cm

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE AREPA COLLECTION

THE PROJECT

The book series through which we celebrate World Arepa Day was born in 2020. It emerged when Ximena Montilla—compiler and creator of the concept—had just published her first children’s book, *Soy la Arepa (I Am The Arepa)* (recognized with two ILBA awards and the Mom’s Choice Awards gold seal). While on her promotional tour, she met the VenMundo Foundation, organizers of World Arepa Day. Inspired by their initiative, she proposed creating a free e-book for Venezuelan children in the diaspora and their families: *Play with Soy la Arepa*, with the aim of sharing meaningful content about Venezuelan identity, culture, and gastronomy.

Together with Manuela Montilla, who has served as the editorial coordinator of the project, and with the support of a team of collaborators, the initiative evolved into a gastro-literary collection that, year after year, celebrates our greatest cultural ambassador—the arepa—by releasing a new work every September.

Since then, our mission at *Historia de la Arepa* (History of the Arepa) has been to promote, preserve, and share meaningful content centered on the arepa, with the goal of celebrating and spreading Venezuelan culture and gastronomy across the globe. Each book is accompanied by gastro-literary gatherings and the participation of (so far) over 300 collaborators from various disciplines and countries – demonstrating that the arepa speaks not only of food, but also opens conversations about identity, peace, art, community, gastro-diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and the future. It is an arepa filled with collective memory, because **together, we are writing the History of the Arepa!**

LOS LIBROS

1. PLAY WITH SOY LA AREPA (2021)

Compiled by Ximena Montilla and illustrated by Laura Stagno.

A book full of recipes, games, and Venezuelan traditions, created and published during the height of the pandemic as a space for connection and joy in challenging times.

2. AN AREPA FOR PEACE (2022)

Compiled by Ximena Montilla and illustrated by Laura Stagno.

The arepa as a table for dialogue in times of conflict. Featuring 15 recipes inspired by the culinary traditions of communities forced to migrate from their countries due to war or economic hardship—including Iraq, Sudan, and Palestine. The book was nominated in five categories at the Gourmand Award. It brought together chefs, writers, anthropologists, food journalists, and artists in an act of gastro-diplomacy.

3. AN AREPA AROUND THE WORLD (2023)

Compiled by Ximena Montilla and illustrated by Ira León.

A tribute to the ambassadors of the arepa: entrepreneurs who carry it to every corner of the planet. This book includes recipes, stories of entrepreneurship, literature, art, and practical tools for those whose lives revolve around the arepa – celebrating the creativity and dedication of those who turn it into a cultural bridge.

4. AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE (2024)

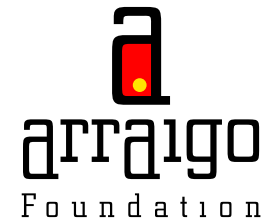
Compiled by Ximena Montilla, illustrated by Ira León, with a foreword by Ivanova Decán.

This book turns its gaze inward to explore the history of culinary schools in Venezuela; the emergence of the concept of “Venezuelan cuisine”; and the role of academic culinary training in shaping a national gastronomic identity. It highlights the contributions of twelve culinary schools across the country. Featuring texts by renowned chefs and researchers, the book pays tribute to foundational figures such as José Rafael Lovera, Alicia Allas, Armando Scannone, Magdalena Salavarría, and Helena Ibarra. It also brings together recipes from rising stars of Venezuelan cuisine and established chefs, each offering their unique vision of the arepa.

THE AWARDS

This initiative has received numerous awards, including 8 Gourmand Awards and 3 ILBA prizes. One particularly special honor came in 2023 from the Academy of Gastronomy: the Armando Scannone Award, granted to the *Historia de la Arepa* project.

SPONSORS AND COLLABORATORS





AN AREPA TURNED POSTCARD

is a symbol of home in distant lands,
a recipe flavored with origin and longing,
a companion, a witness,
a free thought, a bridge.
64 postcards form an imaginary Venezuela
that comes and goes,
like memory,
like the comfort of affection,
like the arepa itself.

Arepas in postcard, this book-object – with postcards, texts, and recipes – is one of the ways in which History of the Arepa continues to expand its mission in the present: laying bridges between art and gastronomy, past and future, among Venezuelans, and between Venezuela and the world. History of the Arepa is a gastro-cultural publishing project involving around 300 collaborators focused on the arepa: a round ambassador that – in addition to being a symbol of identity – is transformed into books that offer us a space to create, a table to share, a canvas to promote peace, and, on this occasion, a box in which our beloved country travels while made with art and flavor. Each publication is always a window that allows us to learn more about our references, gastronomy, history, and culture. Together we make history! The history of the arepa.

Under the Arraigo Group label, each year sees the publication of a gastronomic literary work that celebrates the richness of Venezuelan culture. Thanks to the ongoing support of the Arraigo Foundation, this effort continues to thrive, spreading our shared heritage both within and beyond our borders.

