

Léala Book Festival Returns With An Extraordinary Program

Where Writers and Critical Thinkers Engage and Children and Families Soak Up Culture in Spanish

Under the motto **“You are your language. You are the Spanish-Language”**, the University of Guadalajara Foundation USA announced the celebration of **LéaLA the Spanish-Language Book Fair and Literary Festival, set for September 14 to 17 at LA Plaza de la Cultura y Artes in the heart of Los Angeles.**

At the kickoff event, held at the Los Angeles Central Library, the general director of the Guadalajara International Book Fair and LéaLA, Marisol Schulz Manaut, highlighted the importance of our language and said that “we all inhabit that homeland that Carlos Fuentes called the territory of La Mancha, which is not a small thing for those of us who speak Spanish.”

The editor also stated that since 2011 LéaLA has been considered one of the most important and highly anticipated literary gatherings in southern California.

To highlight the importance of LéaLA she pointed out that more than 80 authors and 35 publishing houses participated in the last edition, as well as more than 7,400 visitors who experienced a unique series of conferences and workshops.

“LéaLA is committed to continuing to promote reading in all areas,” added Schulz, mentioning that this year there will be a very diverse agenda that includes segments such as **Poetry Central**, where invited poets will be able to interact with each other and improvise, even in indigenous languages. “Let's say it's something like a poetry jam, she added.

She also shared that this is a complex and sad year for those who organize LéaLA due to the death of its founder, Raúl Padilla, former rector of the University of Guadalajara and president of the Guadalajara International Book Fair. “He was always close to the details of organizing the book fair. We will continue his vision and legacy of promoting the Spanish language that unites us in this city with a growing Hispanic population.”

Being that the festival is produced by the University of Guadalajara, one of the most important educational institutions in Mexico, the **Ideas Forum** will once again be of great relevance, because current social we are facing will be debated with the participation of renowned academics.

A central part of this year's LéaLA are the popular **children's workshops**, run by Letras para Volar (Letters to Fly), said Schulz. "We will have 11 workshops for children, with the theme of Mexican folk art, where through games youngsters will delve into that universe.

She also reported on the recently formed alliance with the **Instituto Cervantes of Los Angeles**, which recently inaugurated its headquarters in Los Angeles. "Both institutions seek the same thing, to promote reading and the Spanish language," she added.

Luis García Martín, renowned novelist and director of the Instituto Cervantes in Los Angeles, in his remarks pointed out that "reading, in addition to giving you the possibility of entering other worlds, gives you great pleasure, and this is something rarely claimed." Reading and books in general – he added – allow us to build better societies, "they allow us all to be better, not only for reading itself, but for the information that books provide us, for the ability to get into the skin of the other, due to the versatility of written content".

He pointed out that the Spanish language is a language with brilliant grades. "It's beautiful, but it's also a language of political power, of economic power, it's the language of science and technology." García Martín recognized the importance of the Guadalajara International Book Fair and LéaLA. "They have managed to do what no one else has achieved: bring together all kinds of voices, fill the physical and spiritual space of books in Spanish and that this has an extension in a city like Los Angeles, is of great relevance," he said.

For his part, Gustavo Padilla Montes, president of the University of Guadalajara Foundation USA, mentioned the recently deceased Raúl Padilla López, who once stated that a society that does not read is a society without imagination. And he added that the legacy of this great cultural promoter will be continued through the Foundation: "We will continue to do so hand in hand with Marisol Schulz."

For the 2023 edition of LéaLA, a high-level literary, cultural and academic festival has been prepared and he added: "we are committed to building a more humane, friendly and committed world", and that books are the main tool to achieve it. "

This year LéaLA will coincide with Hispanic Heritage Month and particularly with Mexican Independence Day celebrations. "But this is a party not only for Mexicans but for all of us who speak Spanish, who are more than 500 million people in the world," said Schulz. "Although we are widely

dispersed geographically and have different accents and meanings, it is our commonalities that unite us."

LéaLA 2023 is organized by the University of Guadalajara Foundation USA, with the support of the Grodman Legacy and the collaboration of the General Consulate of Mexico in Los Angeles, the Alumni Association of the University of Guadalajara in Los Angeles, as well as various public and private institutions. on both sides of the border.

Among the guests at LéaLA 2023 are the following writers:

The renowned writer of children's and youth literature **Antonio Malpica**, who among other important awards has received the "Gran Angular" Youth Literature Award; "El Barco de Vapor" award for Children's Literature; the "Rosario Castellanos" Short Novel Prize, the "Una Vuelta de la Tuerca" Black Novel Prize and the Premio Internacional Norma for children's and youth literature.

Antonio Ortuño. Journalist and writer from Guadalajara, who has also received various international awards, such as the Fundación Cuatrogatos Award in Miami for the best youth book for El Rostro (2017), or the V Rivera del Duero Award and the Fine Arts Award for Short Stories. Hispano-Americans 2018 for The vague ambition. His novels include El Buscador de Cabezas (2006), Recursos Humanos (2007), *Ánima* (2011). His most recent novel, The Invincible Armada, touches on the inverted biography of a brotherhood of musicians, young-up-and comers whose promises were never fulfilled and that, now, suffer the weight of the decisions that led them to a routine life and smell of defeat.

Benito Taibo. Writer, journalist, enthusiastic advocate of reading among young people and current director of Radio UNAM. His versatility makes his work transition between poetry, comics, television and advertising. Benito has been a key player in all the editions of LéaLA, making dozens of presentations to young people and children where he jovially talks to them about the importance of reading. The Guadalajara International Book Fair awarded him the Fernando Benítez Tribute for his work as a cultural journalist. "I always write from the perspective of a reader, I always write what I would like to read and, perhaps, this is why the kids feel identified by what a 58-year-old old man says," said this renowned author a few years ago.

Monica Lavin. A biologist by profession, Mónica "hung up the habits" of biology to dedicate herself completely to literature and has established herself as one of the favorite authors of readers in our language. She is the author of short stories, novels and essays. She has won the Gilberto Owen National Literature Award for the storybook Ruby Tuesday Is Not Dead, the Colima Narrative Award for her novel *Café Cortado*, and the Elena Poniatowska Ibero-American Novel Award for *Yo, La Peor*, a

book in which she explores the life of Sor Juana Ines De La Cruz. In addition to her literary work, Mónica writes a weekly column in the Mexican newspaper El Universal and has hosted various cultural programs on Television. For Monica, literature is an opportunity to spread the passion for reading.

Myriam Moscona is a renowned Mexican poet, translator, novelist and journalist. The daughter of Bulgarian-Sephardic migrants who arrived in Mexico in 1948, she is a prominent member of the Jewish diaspora that settled in Mexico. She has worked as a scriptwriter and producer on radio and television. She was the producer and announcer of the cultural news program Nueve Treinta for Mexico's Channel 22 from 1993 to 2001, a pioneering cultural television program. As a cultural journalist, she has collaborated in publications such as Diálogos, La Brújula en el Bolsillo, Unomásuno, La Jornada or Reforma and for the supplements Sábado, La Jornada Semanal and Confabulario. Among other awards, she has been awarded the 1999 Bridging the Gulf Award given by the US-Mexico Fund for Culture in the city of New Orleans; as well as the Mexico-Israel Cultural Institute Award in 2000 and the Manuel Lewinski Award 2017 for his artistic career. In 2012 she received one of the most important awards given in Mexico, the Xavier Villaurrutia, for her play Tela de Sevoya, Halfway between the novel, poetry and memory, this extraordinary book takes us into the secret territory of word and its saving power. Myriam Moscona, a Sephardic Jew, relives the shadows and voices of her past through Ladino, the ancient Spanish still spoken by Sephardim today, and with it she revisits family ghosts.

For the complete list of activities, workshops, guests and conferences, [click here](https://lea-la.com/).

The Facts

What: LéaLA Spanish-Language Book Fair and Literary Festival

When: September 14 to 17, 2023

Where: LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes. 501 N. Main St., Los Angeles, CA 90012

Cost: Free

Information: <https://lea-la.com/>