



Querétaro, México, November 2nd, 2016

For the peoples of Estonia and México;

## MEXTONIA FESTIVAL

The Intercultural Celebration of Estonia's First Centennial

A Gift from Mexicans to Estonians

June 14-22, 2017, Tallinn, Estonia

Mextonia is the festival of Transgraffiti Muralism inspired by 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexican muralism and created by street artists and graffiti writers from Estonia, México and the world. Produced by "Todoesuno Eesti" and "Nueve Arte Urbano", for the "Governmental Committee to Estonia 100", to celebrate the cultural roots of Estonia, by creating "Cultural Identity Symbols", while cleaning damaged walls and reuniting artists with graffiti writers, authorities and neighbors towards a common goal: to orderly express love for humanity, cultural diversity, Estonia and México. This document is composed of three parts: 1) Transgraffiti Muralism Manifesto; 2) Estonian Identity Symbols, a proposal; 3) The response by Marju Kõivupuu to our Symbols Proposal.

### 1) Transgraffiti Muralism Manifesto

Partially inspired by two Siqueiro's manifestos signed by Rivera and Orozco among others; the first one published in the Mexican magazine "El Machete" (June 1924) and the second in the Buenos Aires newspaper "Crítica" (June 1933).

*Artists, graffiti writers, producers, governments and citizens, we are working all around the world on a movement dedicated to creating large format pieces of visual art, murals, on the streets and community spaces, where all publics are present to appreciate them, with the purpose of gifting society with an implement of cultural catalysis towards happiness.*

*We define **Culture** as the linked tissue of meaning and symbols that connect individuals with each other and into a society. Therefore, we use trans-graffiti muralism with the intent of catalyzing culture through urban art towards a collective wellbeing, prosperity, peace and happiness; easily translated as "**wanting to smile**". We advocate the integration of different cultures, subcultures, micro-cultures, ethnic groups and individuals in a human swarm of fractal composition and inter-cultural wisdom, recognizing its natural ability of self-organization, allowing it to compound a mix between order and chaos.*

*We seek that each of our acts of creation meet four simultaneous results; to improve environment, society, culture and economy, around all of our projects. To achieve this we involve the apprentice in every step of the creative process, sharing collective experiences and theory. We integrate the artist on to collective proceedings, fractal organization and swarm intelligence. We take advantage of any technological advance available, using contemporary materials and tools to shape the power of cultural symbols into urban art: from the collective mind to the wall, to the digital world, reaching global audiences. We use virtual reality and artificial intelligence in order to explore new boundaries of the human experience; always inspiring the ultra-modernity with ancient*



*ethnic traditions and societal ideals. We strengthen the health of our ecosystems by promoting consciousness of unity and respect for Nature. We sustain ourselves, autonomous, through social entrepreneurship and respect for the law.*

*We understand that creativity has a purpose that should be aligned with life and aimed at individual and collective wellbeing. Today, there are millions of people all over the world expressing themselves in the streets through the transformation of walls and consequently influencing society, seeking vision and strengthening their own convictions. They begin by writing their names to identify themselves with and in their own space: we call them **grafiteros**. Later on, they grow and embark themselves on a path of trans-personal change through all accumulated knowledge. From solely writing their names, they start adding metaphors, transcending borders and involving themselves in cultural catalysis; and so we call them **transgrafiteros**. They discover that their creations (personal or trans-personal) impact the streets and the culture of the neighborhood, and they become a mimicry of urban shamans: producing street incantations and becoming cultural leaders in the “barrio”. This swarm of young artists, never conceived by Siqueiros, holds a clear chance to manifest the purpose of plastic creativity; the metamorphosis to a better world. This is **Transgraffiti**.*

## **Estonia and Mexico**

The Republic of Estonia will reach its first centennial on February 24th, 2018. This celebration will last three years, beginning in the spring of 2017 (one hundred years after the provinces of Estonia and Livonia were unified), to be culminated on February 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2020 (one hundred years after Russia’s recognition of Estonia’s Independence). Simultaneously, Estonia will assume the presidency of the Council of the European Union, from July to December of 2017. This combination of circumstances offers the unique opportunity to deliver an official gift to the people of Estonia on behalf of the people of México; a gift rooted on the cultural heritage of two distant but synergetic peoples and in plain sight of the rest of the world.

Estonia and Mexico share the wounds of repeated invasions and cultural pressure on native ethnic groups. It is possible to argue that Estonia was the last great civilization to suffer a religious colonization in Europe, and that Mexico was the first one in America. Cultural diversity enriches humanity and we believe it is important to remind ourselves that when a culture is extinguished, we all lose a piece of the world.

Mexico stands out for the diversity of its native cultures, many of them in danger of disappearing. Since we seek to prevent this from happening in our own country, we understand the pressures on Estonian culture all too well. We also believe it is important to acknowledge Mexico’s centenarian research on "cultural miscegenation processes", in which authors such as Andrés Molina, Manuel Gamio, Jose Vasconcelos, Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, Agustin Basave and many more were involved; creators of various approaches that merge into a body of knowledge to which we would like to make our own contributions.

Inspired by the brilliant words in the last paragraphs of “México Mestizo” by Agustin Basave, we dare to propose undertaking a campaign for creativity; opting for a multi-directionally enriching meeting between western modernity and native cultures, aimed at the procreation of something greater. Assimilating the combined origins of every nation and societal group is only the first step; surges of freedom and creation will build the rest, since only those who can conceive their own summit of greatness can aspire to climb it. As Mexicans we recognize our lack of awareness of our own identity, as such we inquire with zeal. This awareness of our unconsciousness is



often fruitful. Perhaps thanks to this and to the kind nature of time, we can consummate the synergy of what seemed antagonistic, and can share in the bliss of contemplating humanity with a gentle smile, because only then will a new version of us germinate: the sublimated soul of this mestizo world that we are all together, today.

We propose that culture is not homogeneous, nor discreet, but fractal. Cultural diversity is infinite, because it is assimilated differently by each individual and in every moment. However, there are universal structures that manifest themselves as symbols of communal identity and union all over the world. As in all natural systems: fractality shows that there is self-similarity in each level of recursion, even in a field of infinite diversity.

We propose the use of this "Mexican cultural technology" to make a modest contribution to Estonia, on the walls of graffiti writers, which we will take as an atañor, where we will perform a sort of "cultural alchemy" to unite Estonians, Russians, Danish, Germans, Swedish and citizens of the world in an Estonian cultural fractal; beyond its centennial as a republic.

## **Production and Results**

In order to create 36 murals through an intercultural group of artists joined by a common creative inspiration, we will produce an intercultural dialogue under the "Todoesuno vision" and the "Nueve method". Each wall will achieve four simultaneous objectives: environmental, social, cultural and urban; thus Todoesuno. To achieve this, we began a research process on July 2016, consisting on urban analysis, anthropological research, social immersion, consultation of local leaders and communication strategies.

Simultaneously, we have compiled a program of activities and a budget to the consummation of this project. We have allocated Thirty-six thousand euros from the Marketing Department of the Mexican company Incusa SA de CV, directed by Édgar Alberto Sánchez González, founder of "Nueve Arte Urbano". This amount represents 30 per cent of the total budget. The rest of the expenses will be covered by sponsorships from public and private institutions from México and Estonia.

This is an ephemeral art form. Transgraffiti murals have a short life span and it is advisable to reinterpret them frequently through the involvement of the ever-emerging generations of young artists. The sets of walls of a neighborhood or city should have a narrative line suitable for local culture, for all kinds of public, and with active participation of local artists. Social impact must be measured qualitative and quantitatively, using variables as perceived happiness index, security perception index, neighbor's approval index, etc.

## **2) Estonian Identity Symbols Proposal**

Our work with Estonian experts and Mexican anthropologists (influenced by personalities such as Diego Prieto Hernandez and Jose Antonio Mac Gregor), focuses on defining a group of key elements that properly express the Estonian cultural roots, which we will call "symbols of identity", or simply "symbols"; general ideas that give sense of unity to a particular social group. These symbols must be approved by authorities in Estonia, to later be reinterpreted artistically by Nueve's creative team, and finally submitted to the intercultural group of performers committed to the project through expressive means, whether literary, plastic or dramatic.



This curatorial strategy is based on swarm intelligence and allows wide freedom of expression to the executing artists. We will provide two color palettes, the first one is inspired by the colors of Estonian wetlands, the other by the range of blues and pastels used in traditional textiles and wood houses of Estonia.

Provided with information from experts in Estonian History, three months of field investigation and two processes of social immersion in Estonian territory, we propose the following symbols:

1. The people of Estonia have a powerful communal voice, capable of changing the world. Singing in chorus, Estonia was released from Soviet Union. Hundreds of thousands gathered to proudly show their ancestral traditions, singing and celebrating the unity of a millennial culture. The world heard, nowadays we refer to this episode as The Singing Revolution. The power of singing comes from the unity of all humans as a swarm. Voice comes from the vibration of the wind, just as the wind vibrates among the trees, making the forest sing.
2. Estonia is covered by dense forests, which abound in wild species. The black stripe of its flag represents the fertile soil and the mystery of its woods, between the blue sky and the white snow. In the whole world, Estonia stands out for its peculiar relationship with forests. They are "the forest people", and this poetic idea manifests in plenty of traditions and myths, ranging from fairies to magnificent elks.
3. The elk enhances the black of the forest with its huge crimson heart. Elks abound in Estonia, so much so that they still give their flesh to skilled hunters. The world's largest deer reminds Mexicans of the legend of the Blue Deer of the desert; the spirit of all creatures from the Wírrárika myths. Even now, when an elk is hunted, its captor honors the body on a prairie, surrounded by fir-tree branches and pyres in all four directions. Hedgehogs, swallows and cornflowers are also meaningful, as they convey classic attitudes of the Estonian mind: hidden sensibility, traveling beyond the seas, and the beauty of nature reborn.
4. Estonian language has survived eight centuries of cultural aggression. Estonia has a unique and resilient language that emanates from the mouth like clean bubbly water. Language is the main symbolic system of culture: the first response to local natural conditions. This fact is the clearest demonstration of the uniqueness of Estonian culture, whose tribes toured the Urals to settle in their "promised land" ten thousand years ago.
5. Estonia gave birth to a singular mythology. Geologists report that 4 thousand years ago, a meteorite sailed across the heavens leaving a trail of fire and falling in the mythical Saaremaa Island (Ösel). The ethnologist and former Estonian President Lennart Meri states that this event influenced deeply into all of Estonia's people's consciousness, giving this land a mystic and mysterious character in all local legends. Taarapita, supreme god of the Oeselians, is also associated with this meteorite turning Saaremaa Island into the most sacred place in the Baltic Sea.
6. *Oeselians* is the historic name for the "Eastern Vikings", inhabitants of Saaremaa Island. This group of Vikings gained its fame all over the Baltic Sea for their military might, raiding even Swedish Vikings ever since the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Legends speak of magical swords and Swedish Kings who died in an attempt to



conquer the island. Contemporary archaeological findings suggest that these legends could be based on historical facts.

7. Giant hero Kalevipoeg is the ancient mythical king of Estonia, son of Kalev and Linda, who is daughter of Taarapita. Faehlmann and Kreutzwald, researchers on Estonian legends and vernacular songs, wrote the epic poem Kalevipoeg, a "pseudo-mythology", today commonly accepted as reliable reference on the matter of the Estonian native pantheon.
8. Estonian Society is dynamic and egalitarian. Women were empowered since remote times. There were no noble castes. Men worked to improve the living conditions of their families. Councils and "elders" governed their cities. Today, we see the legacy of Estonia's past in the agile actions of their authorities and committees.
9. Estonians are known to engage in hard work and to possess great ingenuity to solve problems. The Estonian literary classic "Truth and Justice", by Anton Hansen Tammsaare portrays the life of the working middle class and countrymen, which strikes a cord in Estonian imaginary; the protagonist rediscovers his inner balance in the countryside by engaging in hard work and a simple life. The fruit of hard labor, bread, is considered holy, so much so that some grandmothers still kiss it when it falls to the ground.
10. Estonia was known in ancient times for the manufacturing of iron tools and weapons, which led the young men to travel and learn from distant lands. This technological tradition is even stronger today, as can be attested with the creation of Skype, electronic voting, digital society and e-governance that has brought bureaucracy to a minimum. There is a utopian sci-fi vision of the motherland in every Estonian person nowadays.
11. Estonians have intercultural wisdom. Understanding interculturality as the ability to recognize truth in a different culture or sub-culture, even when its ideas are opposed to ones own. Example of this quality is the absorption of invading cultures by Estonian society. Russian culture, latest example, is today in the initial stage of this process, which is evident in the pride for Estonian nationality manifested by citizens of Russian origin.
12. In the ancient Estonian worldview (cosmovisión), Earth is believed to turn around a gigantic Oak tree "Ilmapuu", to which the skies are nailed, by the North Star. The Milky Way is called "Linnutee", a branch of the world tree and the way by which swallows take the souls of the deceased to the other world, through the North Star. Estonians are like thousand year oak trees, deeply rooted while young and flexible, so their branches dance with the storms.
13. Nature has shaped Estonians to be resilient and adaptive, so they survive and strive. They make friends in the world and embrace strangers in their land. Once a year, in summer solstice, Estonians burn bonfires in the forest and stray into the white night, when dusk and dawn meet for their yearly kiss, to find true love and strive.

As in every other stage in the process of research, creation, production and documentation for "Mextonia Festival", this group of symbols and their contents are subject to the approval of the Estonian authorities. We



are honored to serve Estonia with this gift, and we offer our best talents and greatest effort to do what we do best: a banquet of intercultural meanings.

Respectfully,

Ing. Édgar Alberto Sánchez González, MAE  
CEO Incusa, Todoesuno and Nueve Arte Urbano

### 3) The Response by Marju Kõivupuu to our Cultural Symbols proposal

#### Cultural Symbols of Estonia

#### By Marju Kõivupuu

Translated by Sigre Tompel & Édgar Sánchez on January 22, 2017

#### SEA

When thousands of years ago the forefathers of Estonians reached their land, that which today we call Estonia, they stood at the high banks by the sea, looking at the endless blue waters, and they realized: **Stop! We cannot go on from here. So they settled!** Over time, the Estonians learned to sail and navigate the sea, familiarizing themselves with the places and peoples beyond the waters. **Even for the epic mythical hero Kalevipoeg, the “sea extended just to his knees”, so sailing on the mythical ship “Lennuk” until the end of the world was just a “piece of cake”.** By the way, Estonians did not stay behind the epic hero; they built a sailing boat named “Lennuk” and sailed around the world to find the truth about the saying - **“you can find at least one Estonian in each port of the world”**. Sailing around the world took “Lennuk” one year and a half; the boat left on the 20<sup>th</sup> century and returned on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Lennuk is the Estonian word for airplane.

Bigger and stronger nations have forcefully taken Estonia as own, and they have occasionally **locked the sea gates for Estonians, throwing away the key into the depths of the sea. More recently, sharp Estonians risked their lives and crawled through the locked gates, to escape the Soviet totalitarian regime, to reach the free world.** So the Estonian diaspora was born, the Estonians to whom home represented the unreachable fairyland of beautiful memories, for long lost. Once in the free world, many of these Estonians made great contribution to the strength and visibility of the Estonian culture and history - Arvo Pärt, Neeme Järvi, Roman Toi, Felix Oinas and many others, who kept the idea of a free Estonia alive.

Meanwhile, the Estonians that remained behind the iron curtain, stood at the high banks by the sea, waiting for the “white ship” – the dream of freedom and a better world, so they kept working hard, cultivating the black soil, so there would be food on the table and clothes to wear. **Estonians believe that hard work redeems and that work has to be done with full heart and seriousness; always trying to do better than a whole village, or at least trying to be better than one neighbour.**



Time went by, **and the locked sea gate eventually rusted open, so Estonians could sail freely again, sense the winds of a free world, be part of its benefits, joys and concerns, introduce themselves and most importantly; they could find the countrymen long-lost behind the iron curtain.**

Sea is always important in an Estonian life – in summer they go to the beaches and in winter, when the ice covers the sea, they burst with the pride of having **the longest ice-roads in the world; as now they can drive on the ice road, with the land machines, from the mainland to Saaremaa; to see with their own eyes where the meteorite fell and how big a crater it left in Kaali.** Estonia is extraordinarily rich in meteorite craters, but it is still debated by scientists if the people of Estonia actually witnessed the falling of sky stones. However, the old folk tales tell us about the burning of Saaremaa, as well as **how the Moon, the Sun and the Stars came to propose Estonian young woman in ancient times.**

**In general, Estonians are very pleased when their doings or themselves are noticed in the larger world and when their country is special and outstanding for something.**

#### **LET'S DO IT!**

**Estonians have to be in action all the time, otherwise they become ill.** Estonians want to make this world and other persons better by working hard. Out of this will, **Estonians came up with the cleaning movement “Let’s Do It!”**, to clean all together the beautiful motherland from garbage. After that initiative, many nations discovered this great idea and took the example. It is truth that a human tends to leave an incredible amount of garbage behind, therefore putting plants-birds-animals into danger of disappearing, leaving no place for grandchildren to live. So the Estonian is concerned if the water in the Baltic Sea is clean enough for seals to paddle, eels to wriggle and birds to nest in the coastal reed. **By the way, Estonia is a perfect spot for bird watching; Matsalu Nature Park is the richest for bird species in the whole of Europe.**

However, the hard-working approach is not limited by earthly matters, the Estonian desires more. **So Estonians invented Skype, for the parents to keep in contact with their globally located children, flown out from the home nests. So Estonians sent a satellite to space, the e-cube, showing the world that despite they are just a few; they just do it. Estonians do it everywhere, also in space, taking action more than using big words!**

#### **NATURE AND FOREST**

**The solitary and serious Estonian believes in forest and trees, swamps and bogs, wild birds and animals, wild berries and mushrooms;** they communicate with them more often and with more pleasure than with a neighbour in their apartment building or at the office. **And as there are just about 1.3 million Estonians,** then Estonians need to have just about 1.3 million trees, whom to hug.

Estonians know nature – when and where to pick and gather berries and mushrooms, to be precise. They take these forest treasures home in baskets, so there will always be something to put on festive tables during winter or give away to relatives as presents. When Estonians are very busy, they complain, even in social media, that they have no time to pick berries and gather mushrooms in the forest! **Forest is the sanatorium and spa for Estonians, where one can be alone and in peace, without meeting fellow countrymen.**

Wild untouched nature is the sanctuary for Estonians; there they know, by reading the mysterious signs, the paths of the forest fairies. Greeting a century-old tree, knowing that he or she is not just a tree but also a guardian



spirit of the forest. The sacred natural places give Estonians an invisible connection with the earth of their forefathers and their magic rituals; they give them a spiritual support and power also during difficult times and circumstances. Nature, forest and land, and the sacred places within these, are all important matters of the heart and spirit, so they are kept as deep secrets, **shared only with the closest friends. It's not easy to become a close friend of an Estonian, but once that happens, they do not betray friends as they do not betray their country, their nation or the places for picking berries and gathering mushrooms.**

## SPIRITUALITY

**Estonians are independent and doubtful in the matters of belief** – they believe into many things, and at the same time they seriously doubt. **They like to decide themselves about how much, when, what or whom to believe in, but they also take the right to change their minds at any time.** A portion of Estonians is Christian, **mostly Protestant or Lutheran, but there are also Orthodox and Catholic.**

**Until today, part of the Estonians do not accept that Christianity reached their forefathers through fire and sword – and with the new religion came also a new political power, that bended and forced the Estonian country people to live according to foreign rules.** Perhaps because of that, Estonians have not forgotten their forefathers' pre-Christian belief in Nature, which over the centuries has been greatly influenced by village Christianity into today's world. Estonians also believe in horoscopes and modern time witches and fortune-tellers... just in case. As there must be something in there.

**And as Estonians love to read – every Estonian has at least one wall filled with books at home.** Among other things, they read about other nations' beliefs and religions, and if something feels right they fit it in their own individual belief system. Estonians feel particularly close to Finno-Ugric nations, because their language, and therefore their consciousness, is related to Estonians as kin. In reality, Estonians feel as one, in believing in the **Estonian language, their mother tongue**, so if you truly want to connect and become a friend of an Estonian, you should learn the most beautiful Estonian sentence: **“Sõida tasa üle silla!” (“Drive slowly over the bridge!”).** **Then the Estonian believes that you are “one of them” and you understand the deepest corners of their soul.**

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

Estonians have **two additional sacred places; the smoke sauna or black sauna and the singing festival grounds. Particularly in these places, Estonians enjoy and love to be close together with others.** Perhaps because of this, the activities related to these two places are registered in the UNESCO's list of spiritual cultural heritage. In smoke sauna, Estonians get totally naked – yes, totally naked! Because the gender of a naked person has no relevance inside the sauna, but the social aspect does. In the Sauna the Estonians purify their body and soul, wash the neighbours back, throw water to hot stones and while sipping a beer, confess all the things from the heart. Once the soul and body are purified, Estonians dress up in national folk clothing and go to choir singing or folk dance rehearsal – otherwise, how can one go to the **singing and dancing festival?!** And one real Estonian will be on the singing festival grounds, during the singing festival, either in the choir, orchestra or audience, singing until their voices are hoarse. **Singing together is important because it fills the heart with joy and it makes the country free; and brings to otherwise impassive Estonians, a drop of tear into the eye.** On the 19<sup>th</sup> century Estonians sang themselves into a nation; on the 20<sup>th</sup> century Estonians sang themselves into freedom, without arms or a drop of blood. **Why nobody has come to the thought of inviting 1.3 million Estonians to sing in the places of**



**crisis around the world? Estonian singing stops arms and hostility; that is the knowledge of every Estonian, even before being born from the womb of a mother.**

And if there is time left after sauna and singing, then the Estonians attend theatres and concerts, they organize folk festivals, they knit wool socks and gloves and they help their relatives in the countryside to harvest the hay and potatoes. **All this together is a cultural heritage that should be preserved and passed on to the next generations. And for sure, the IT-minded Estonian sooner or later will invent an app for hay and potato harvesting, because who knows, these new generations might be afraid of getting their hands into the sacred black soil!**

#### **SAFETY**

**When you see a small girl or boy in Estonia, walking their way between home and school, through the snowy weather, carrying a pink or green satchel, home-key hanging around the neck with a ribbon,** then you should know; this child has loving parents, that child is not abandoned. Even though many different nations live in Estonia, it is a safe place, where parents still dare to send their children to school on their own. And so the children learn to be independent since early childhood, they learn skills for life, solve problems and cope with them. Of course, modern children in Estonia have a mobile or smart phone in their pocket, to use it in case of emergency.

Estonia is a place where many different nations live peacefully next to each other; even though the Estonians seem to be harsh and serious and Estonia has long and dark autumn-winter nights, cold winters and brief white summer nights. **It is very good to know, that in the earth-ball there are still such safe places, with clean untouched nature, such as Estonia.**

**Marju Kõivupuu**

**Tallinn, Estonia, December 2016**