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ECO-GASTRONOMY IN QUITO — A NEW FUTURE FOR TRADITIONAL ECUADORIAN BEVERAGES?

On September 15, 2016, the **Eco-Gastronomy Project** will visit Quito, Ecuador, for a discussion and tasting event focused on traditional Ecuadorian beverages. Experts from the fields of nutrition, agriculture, anthropology, and design will explain various aspects of such beverages as **guayusa**, **morochu**, **chicha**, and **guarango**. A panel of cultural figures will then propose how the drinks might fit within the culinary and commercial foodways of the country.

As interest in Ecuadorian food and drink increases both locally and internationally, and as a new federal sales tax on high-sugar and alcoholic drinks is about to be enacted, this event comes at an ideal time to think about and rediscover the country's traditional beverages.

"This is a chance to imagine what has been called a 'recombinant future' for Ecuador's *bebidas*," says Eco-Gastronomy Project director, **Dr. David Szanto**. "That means taking the best of the past and merging it with today's economic, cultural, and political realities. There's no 'going back' in gastronomy, but we can move definitely forward, deliciously and sustainably."

Lending their perspectives to the discussion are: president of the Red de Guardianes de Semillas, **Javier Carrera**; public health nutritionist, **Michelle O. Fried**; poetic and writer **Julio Pazos**; chef **Juan Sebastián Pérez Proaño**; Slow Food Ecuador president, **Esteban Tapia**; and Ecuadorian coordinator of the Red Latinoamericana de Food Design, **Gabriela Valarezo**. The evening will conclude with tastings of different beverages, some light snacks, and informal discussion.

The event is held in collaboration with the Centro de Arte Contemporaneo, as part of their Knowledge Transfer program and commitment to generating value within the local community. In keeping with these objectives, Dr. Szanto will also conduct a presentation and workshop about eco-gastronomy for area students, which will take place on September 16.

This event comprises the seventh phase of the University of Gastronomic Science's ongoing Eco-Gastronomy Project, a fourteen-country knowledge-exchange initiative about food. A collaboration between UNISG and local partners, the project aims to develop an ecological-philosophical vision of food, gathering success stories and best practices from multiple regions around the world.

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EVENT DETAILS:

6:00 – 9:30 pm | September 15, 2016

Centro de Arte Contemporaneo

Barrio de San Juan, Quito

Admission fee: \$5.00

For further details, see the attached backgrounder.

More information is available at www.unisg.it/ecogastronomy.

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BACKGROUNDER

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WHAT IS ECO-GASTRONOMY?

Eco-gastronomy is a concept that views food systems through an ecological-philosophical perspective. It is an approach that merges the 'thinking-doing' of food (gastronomy) with an acknowledgement that when we think and do things with food, many different effects are produced. Sometimes these effects happen in real time, and sometimes later; sometimes they happen close to home, and sometimes further away.

Importantly, eco-gastronomy recognizes that food and food systems are made up of material elements, language and representation, and interactive processes. This means that any interaction with food can produce political transformations, environmental and social change, shifts in symbolic and conceptual meaning, as well combinations of all of these.

Eco-gastronomy is not limited to industry, or agriculture, or academia—it encompasses all food realms. It indelibly links food and humans, while bringing attention to the responsibility that all people have for the health and well-being of our food ways—producers, activists, cooks, academics, artists, politicians, and industrialists alike.

To date, the Eco-Gastronomy Project has visited Seoul, Mexico City, Singapore, Dili (Timor-Leste), Edinburgh, Wrocław (Poland), Oslo, Copenhagen, Dublin, and Toronto. Future destinations for 2016 include Torino, Minneapolis and Portland (USA), and Melbourne.

UNISG AND DAVID SZANTO

The University of Gastronomic Sciences was founded in Italy in 2004 by Slow Food International. It offers undergraduate and graduate programs involving multi-experiential learning in classrooms, workshops, and in the field. The university's aim is to build academic credibility for gastronomy while acknowledging that learning about food takes place through the mind and body, the heart and gut, as well as through all of our senses. To date, nearly 2000 students from 75 countries have attended.

Dr. David Szanto was one of the first English-language master students at UNISG in 2005, going on to work for the school in communications and outreach, as an instructor and program director, and now as UNISG's professor-at-large. In 2015, he earned a PhD in gastronomy from Concordia University in Montreal (Canada), the first of its kind.