

An art show with a free meal planned for fall

The effort joins the Mural Arts Program and French artists Lucy and Jorge Orta.

By **Stephan Salisbury**
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A vast repast will unfold on Independence Mall Oct. 5, a product of the Mural Arts Program's effort to rethink its mission, program director Jane Golden said Thursday.

Part of a months-long effort called "What We Sow," the event — "70x7 The Meal, act XXXIV" — is a collaboration between Mural Arts and the Paris-based artists Lucy and Jorge Orta. It involves a free communal meal created by star chef Marc Vetri involving heirloom vegetables. Golden said nearly a thousand people will dine at a table decorated by the Ortas' tableware and runners. The purpose? "To inspire people to think about heirloom meals and what [they] mean."

Tickets are free. About one-third will be available to the public via a lottery; the rest will be distributed among groups involved in "What We Sow," which involves numerous partners from local sustainability and green movements. Golden said the idea was to engage a broad audience in a conversation about sustainability, heirloom foods, nutrition, hunger, and related issues.

For the Mural Arts Project, she said, it represents part of the ongoing effort to "rethink muralism in the 21st century."

While this is the 34th time the Ortas have mounted a special communal meal, it is the first time they have done so in the United States. "Creating an art form in the form of

a meal is one of our most cherished daily rituals," said Lucy Orta.

Michael DiBerardinis, deputy mayor for environmental and community resources and commissioner of the city's Parks and Recreation Department, said "What We Sow" — which also involves tastings and tours during the summer — promised to focus attention on the history of food and agriculture in and around the city as well as on the issue of sustainability. The \$250,000 project is funded by AT&T, PNC Arts Alive, and the William Penn Foundation.

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