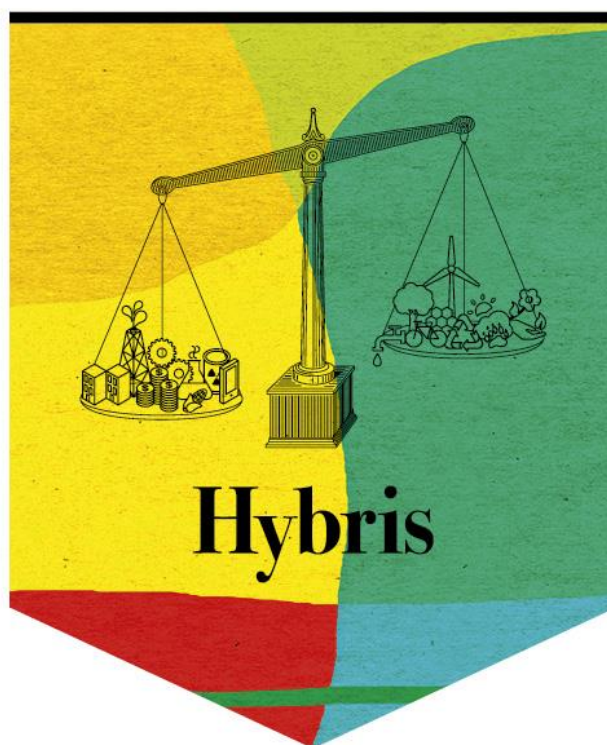


# HYBRIS

A Possible Approach to Ecoaesthetics



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17.06.17 – 07.01.18

Halls 4-5

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**MUSAC** Museo de  
Arte Contemporáneo  
de Castilla y León

**Exhibition guide**



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# Credits

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**Title of the show**

HYBRIS. A Possible Approach to Ecoaesthetics

**Artists**

Elena Aitzkoa, Amy Balkin, Zigor Barayazarra, Jorge Barbi, Guillem Bayo, Basurama, Luna Bengoechea Peña, Joseph Beuys, Juanli Carrión, Jacobo Castellano, Carma Casulá, Agnes Denes, Nicole Dextras, Bárbara Fluxá, Regina José Galindo, Nilo Gallego and Felipe Quintana, Fernando García-Dory, Andy Goldsworthy, Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison, Basia Irland, Patricia Johanson, Maider López, Lucia Loren, Ana Mendieta, Pablo Milicua, Fina Miralles, Santiago Morilla, Vik Muniz, Amor Muñoz, Xavi Muñoz, Teresa Murak, Katie Paterson, Asia Piaścik and Monika Brauntsch, Herman Prigann, Vegonha Rodríguez, Adolfo Schlosser, Alan Sonfist, Hiroshi Sunairi, Juan Zamora.

**Curatorship**

Blanca de la Torre

**Coordination**

Carlos Ordás

**Dates**

From Jun 27, 2017 to January 7, 2018

**Place**

Halls 4 - 5

# About *HYBRIS*

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*"We will need more than an "ethical ecology" that considers human beings as equal partners of natural entities —animate or inanimate—. It is required, rather, a "political ecology".*

Bruno Latour: *Políticas de la naturaleza. Por una democracia de las ciencias*. RBA (Barcelona, 2013)

*Hybris* wishes to encourage a rethinking on the potential of art as a tool for action as well as for subjectification in relation to the environmental concerns of today.

Curated by Blanca de la Torre, the show creates a landscape that speaks to political, economic and social ecology based on the gazes of around forty international, national and local artists. These include some pioneers in this field, such as Joseph Beuys, Newton & Helen Mayer Harrison, Agnes Denes, Patricia Johanson and Andy Goldsworthy; as well as projects by promising young talents such as Juanli Carrión, Luna Bengoechea Peña and Amor Muñoz. It also showcases iconic artworks like *Time Landscape* by Alan Sonfist, *Tree Mountain-A Living Time Capsule* by Agnes Denes and *Public Smog* by Amy Balkin, as well as works conceived specifically for the exhibition, taking the region as a starting point for their artistic concerns, including proposals by Basia Irland, Nicole Dextras, Basurama, Bárbara Fluxá, Juan Zamora and Lucia Loren, among others.

All the artists featured in *Hybris* contribute, in one way or another, to a rethinking on how to maintain the balance of the ecosystem, whether by working with nature through gestures that have more to do with the symbolic or else by searching for some kind of more tangible impact. In their works, both the content as well as the form speak of ecology from an eco-aesthetic approach that goes beyond a simple critique of the well-known consequences caused by climate change, which distances *Hybris* from other previous shows exploring this subject matter. In all cases, they adopt a respectful attitude to the environment, in a response to the hubris characterising the present, with the goal of seeking alternatives that will help to bring about a paradigm shift and to collaborate towards a more habitable future for everybody.

The primary focus of *Hybris* is to adopt a different approach to art's relationship with ecology and sustainability, two highly questionable concepts due to the increasingly more prevalent greenwashing techniques used by many corporations and businesses. Having said that, the exhibition engages with the approaches of Felix Guattari, for whom ecology questions the overall subjectivity and formations of capitalist power. In the foundation of his ecosophical theory, the French philosopher introduced the

inextricable interconnection and articulation of three areas: the environment, the social, and human subjectivity.

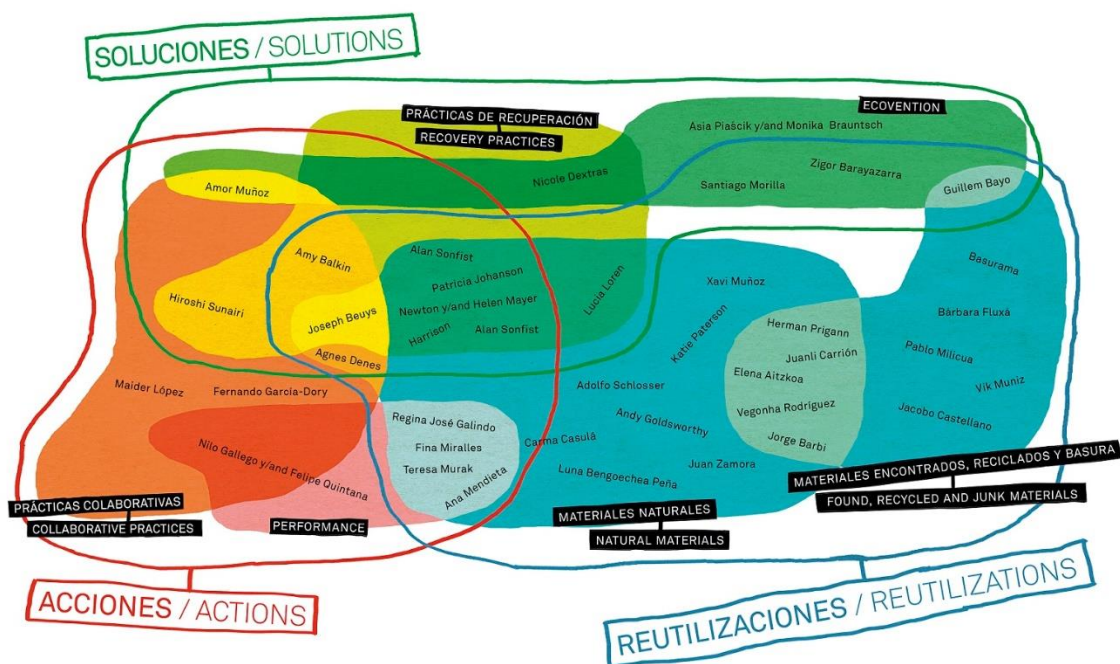
In this sense, the art historian and cultural critic T.J. Demos wondered about the ways in which art practices, operating within the framework of art institutions, activism and non-governmental politics, can challenge the emergence of neo-liberal eco-governability; or about the role of art when it comes to redirecting greenwashing in favour of alternative paths to define the environment and sustainability with a focus on global justice.

To this end, and with the purpose of undertaking a project coherent with this approach, the methodology for the curatorial selection was deliberately conditioned by the ways of working, with the goal of reinforcing the solidness of the project and to open a door to a search for other more ethical ways of consuming. A number of guidelines were decided on, such as criteria of closeness in the selection and ecological footprint in the transport of the works, the use of environmental materials and processes, recycling of exhibition materials and mechanisms, a refusal to build walls, etc.

*Hybris* wishes to rethink possible alternatives to tackle the destruction of the environment, and proposes an approach to art as a way of adopting a position towards a reality, as a means of protest and awareness-raising that opens a path towards a possible ecological aesthetic. Art must contribute to the public debate on politics of sustainability, developing creative proposals that—both in form and content—put forward alternative forms *of working with the environment fairly and sustainably, ranging from the symbolic to the practical.*

# Structure and description of the works

The exhibition is divided into three chapters, each one of which is further divided into two thematic sections that rather than being designed to act in parallel, are continuously intertwined, against an overall backdrop that wishes to recover the relationship between ethics and aesthetics. These formal divisions are conceived to bring to the table some of the most pressing environmental concerns: the destruction of the environment, deforestation, pollution, how to manage consumer habits and residues, the use of genetically modified organisms and food sovereignty, the importance of preserving indigenous cultures, contamination of water and the extinction of autochthonous species, and so on.



It is important to underscore the permeability of the boundaries between the different chapters outlined here in order to avoid falling into excluding taxonomies. In any case, all the artists included in the exhibition operate—in form and in content—from a respect for the environment and understanding nature in a more holistic and inclusive fashion, where natural and urban landscapes meet and mix and where the spheres mentioned in relation to Guattari are taken into account.

# CHAPTER 1: SOLUTIONS

## Practices of recovery Ecovention

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The first chapter, called SOLUTIONS, has two sections: the first one addresses what we could call *practices of recovery*, for instance “Restorationist Aesthetics”, “Remediation Art” or “Land Reclamation”, but at once is intrinsically related with the second section, “Ecovention”, two categories that are characterized by offering practical solutions to environmental problems. In the first case, the artists usually work with specific contexts, generally contaminated spaces, degraded areas or abandoned industries, while the second showcases creations not necessarily associated with a specific place.



## LUCIA LOREN

### *Api Sophia*, 2017

Installation, mixed media

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artist

The survival of bees and other pollinators has been seriously affected by the use of pesticides, as well as by the growing attack of fungi, parasites and predating colonial organisms. Taking into account that bees pollinate 70% of the plant-based foods consumed by humanity, the dramatic impact their disappearance could have on the rest of the biotic community is obvious. Urban beekeeping is presented as a new resilient practice by which, paradoxically, cities are transformed into “islands of protection”. Lucia Loren’s proposal of intervention in the courtyard of the MUSAC aims to activate mechanisms of reflection on urban beekeeping, including a pollination device created with her hives/sculptures and a garden of melliferous plants. To break down the isolation of the museum as an institution and of the courtyard as a physical space, the artist intends to organise meetings with the local community and environmental associations.



## ALAN SONFIST

### *Time Landscape, 1965-2017*

Selection of photographs

Several measures

Courtesy of the artis

This is possibly the oldest of this type of interventions, conceived in 1965, although it did not begin to be done until 1978. Alan Sonfist recovered pre-colonial endemic plants of the city of New York and started growing them in lower Manhattan, in the northeast corner of West Houston Street and Laguardia Place. The photographs include images from the moment the project started to the present day.



## PATRICIA JOHANSON

### *Fair Park Lagoon (Dallas, Texas), 1981*

Selection of photographs

Several measures

Courtesy of the artist

### *Drawings from different projects, 1969-2012*

Several measures

Courtesy of the artist

For several decades Patricia Johanson has been developing creative projects that combine design, art, ecology and urbanism in order to “revive” degraded spaces. For *Fair Park Lagoon (Dallas, Texas)* the artist was commissioned to redesign a lagoon that was in a very deteriorated state: it was filled with algae and most of its fauna and flora had disappeared. The artist reconstructed the endemic ecosystem, controlled bank erosion and designed a series of roads and bridges for the public. Thus, plants, fish, turtles and birds repopulated the lagoon, now sharing the space with several sculptures based on natural elements.





## NEWTON AND HELEN MAYER HARRISON

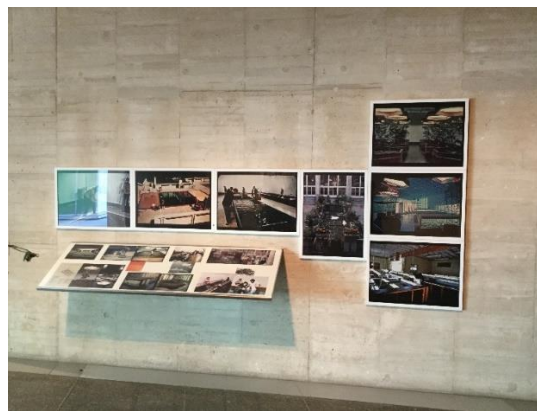
### *The Survival Pieces*, 1971-1973

Selection of photographs

Several measures

Courtesy of Harrison Studio

Pioneers of the so-called eco-art movement, the Harrison have been working with biologists, ecologists, and architects to develop collaborative art projects seeking real solutions to ecological problems and environmental degradation for more than forty years. Their iconic *Survival Pieces* are examples of ecosystems that they have been creating for years in museums all around the world, and range from edible gardens for the public to portable farms of orchids, crabs and fish.



### *Peninsula Europe*, 2000-2017

Digital print

233 x 400 cm

Courtesy of Harrison Studio

*Peninsula Europe* spreads over several million square kilometres its concepts of regeneration, which have been conceived to remediate the sixth extinction, while at the same time reducing the probability of the breakdown of civil society



## JOSEPH BEUYS

*Archive from 7.000 Oaks, 1982*

Documentation

Several measures

Images: Documenta Archive and 7,000 Oaks Foundation

Video: School of Art and Design Kassel and 7,000 Oaks Foundation MUSAC

Library-Documentation Center

Joseph Beuys was an artist, activist, environmentalist and shaman, as well as teacher of the FIU (Free International University), who in 1979 stood as a candidate for the German Green Party. Possibly, the project that best exemplifies his idea of social sculpture is *7,000 Oaks*, developed for the 1982 Kassel Documenta, which consisted in piling 7,000 blocks of basalt in front of the Fridericianum Museum, venue of the artistic event, and planting a small oak at the end of the pile. Each of the stones could only be removed if an oak tree was also planted in their new location. The action took five years to complete, a year after Beuys's death, and helped to transform the city of Kassel through the collaboration of citizens, Government and businesses. Until today the oaks grow together with the immutable stony monoliths that remind us of the importance of uniting disciplines and wills in the search for other ways of living.

*La rivoluzione siamo noi, 1972*

Litograph on paper

185 x 106,5 cm

Artium, Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz

## AMY BALKIN

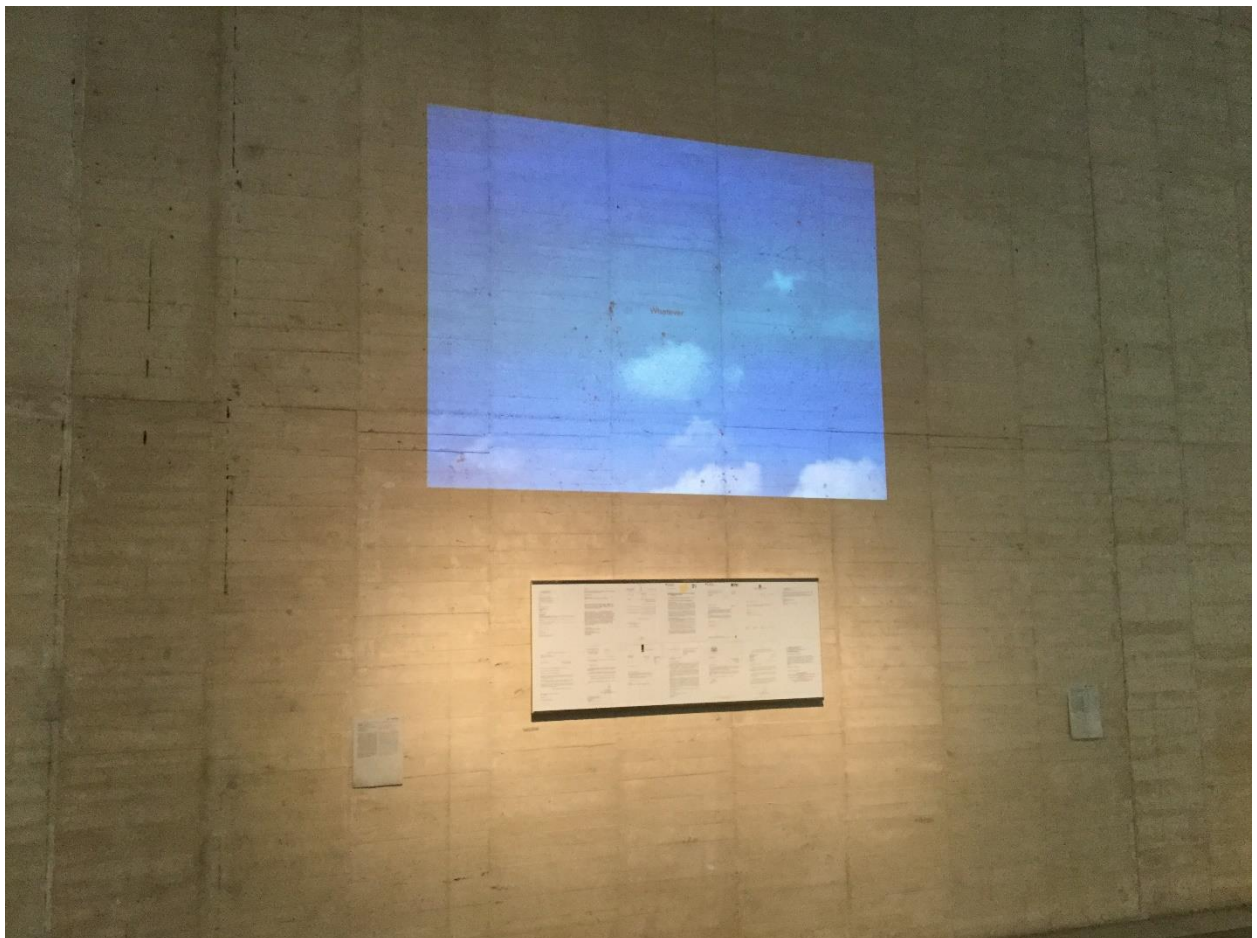
### *Public Smog, 2007-2017*

Installation, slide-show and documentation

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of the artist

*Public Smog* is a park in the atmosphere that fluctuates in location and scale, constructed through financial, legal, or political activities that open it for public use. Activities to create the park have included purchasing and retiring emission offsets in regulated emissions markets, making them inaccessible to polluting industries. When *Public Smog* is opened through this process, it exists in the unfixed public airspace above the region where offsets are purchased and withheld from use. The park's size varies, reflecting the amount of emissions allowances purchased and the length of contract, compounded by seasonal fluctuations in air quality. Among the actions, Balkin has been also attempting to submit the Earth's atmosphere for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List.



## ASIA PIAŚCIK AND MONIKA BRAUNTSCH

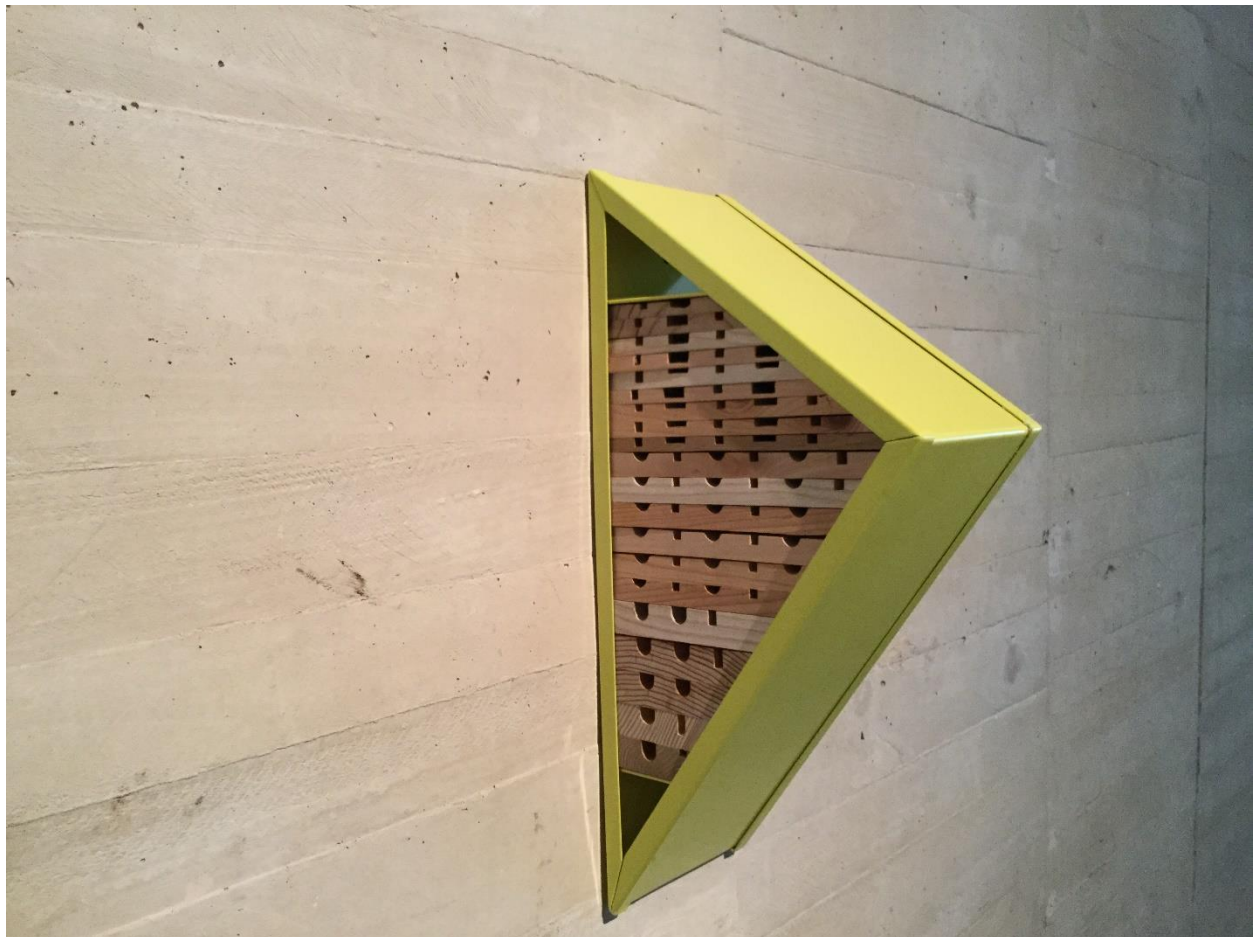
### *Hotel for Wild Pollinators, 2017*

Installation, mixed media

48 x 15 x 23 cm

Courtesy of the artists

In an effort against the fact that cities and urban parks do not offer many places that provide refuge to pollinators, the Polish artist created this hotel for them. It has different shelves and channels for insects that can be removed for cleaning, so that the following season its small rooms can be occupied again.





## BASIA IRLAND

### *Ice Books on Bernesga River, León, Spain, 2017*

2 photographs (113 x 168 cm each) and video with no sound (2')

Ice sculptures: Alejandro Sáenz de Miera

Photographs and video: Eduardo Fandiño

Courtesy of the artist

For this exhibition, Basia Irland has created two of her famous frozen books. After an investigation on the riparian seeds of the areas in which she carries out her projects, Irland makes her books by freezing water from the river and placing the endemic seeds as if they were letters of a text—a site-specific ecological restoration language. As the books gradually defrost, the written words release the seeds in the river—the River Bernesga in this case.





## GUILLEM BAYO

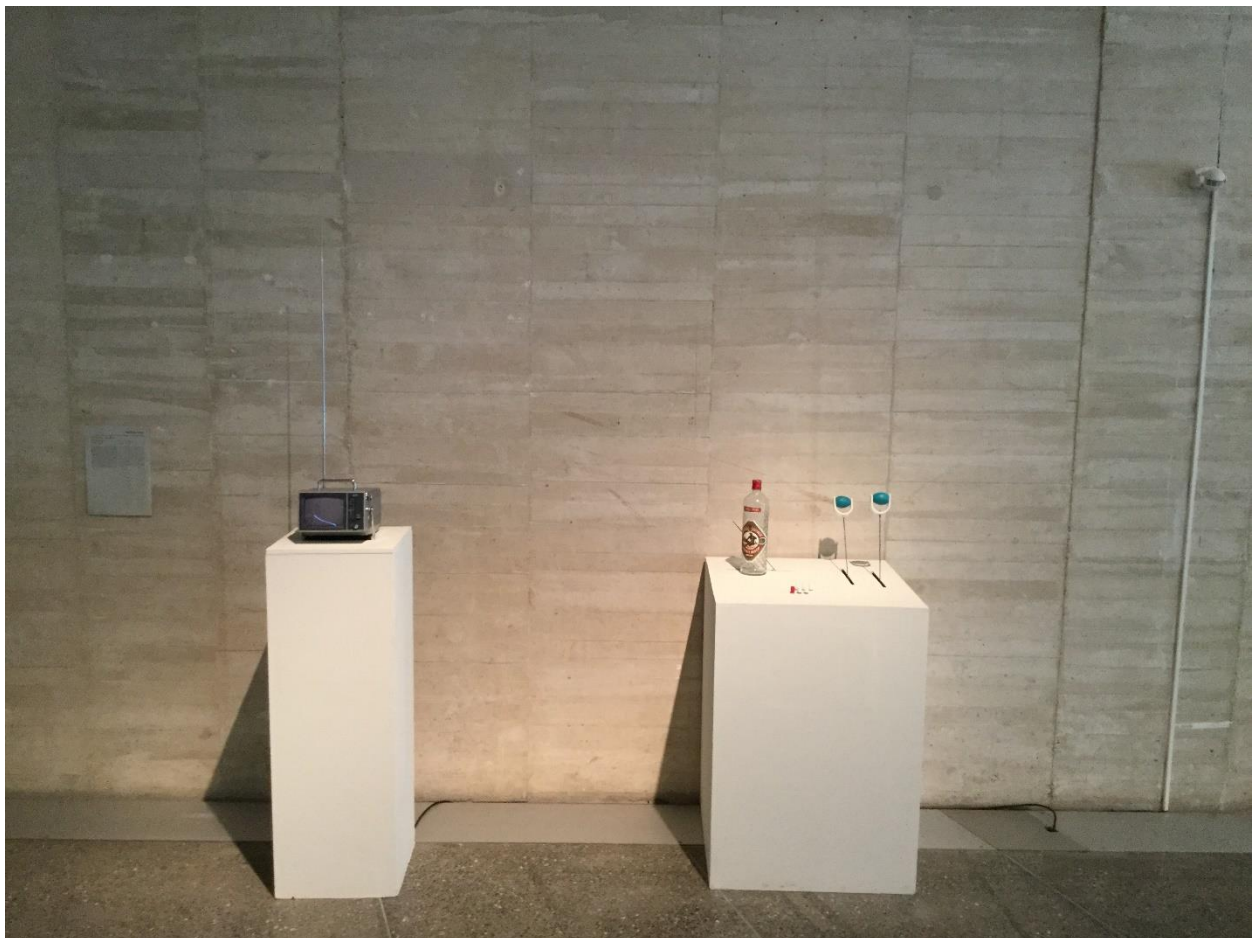
### *TV, huevos y anís*, 2013-2017

Installation, mixed media

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of the artist

Guillem Bayo's proposals combine electronics with our daily life, taking the transformation of e-waste and objects of our everyday into hybrid technological equipment as his starting point. With these works, the artist speaks of how radioresistance is not the same in every human being, while in many species it can be surprisingly high. This work is composed by a series of musical instruments that the artist builds with found materials, such as a bottle of anise, eggs, a portable TV or an oscilloscope, among other things.



## ZIGOR BARAYAZARRA

### *Garden As A Body / Baratze Gorputz / Jardín como Corpus, 2014*

Installation, mixed media

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artist

Barayazarra makes a series of felt garments where the techniques of hydroponic cultivation of vegetables—growing of plants in aqueous solutions—are applied to create his outfits/sculptures. What is shown here as a group of pieces—and not in chronological order—was achieved in a gradual process. Paying attention to the grammar of the form, the artist successfully developed objects that could be wearable and plantable, a sort of garden behind which a person could hide his or her movements. For the artist these works possess an atavistic nature that materializes in the body.





## SANTIAGO MORILLA

### *Fundar un bosque. Prototipo de bicimáquina para huerta-invernadero de interior #1, 2016*

Installation, mixed media

400 x 328 x 70 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Morilla presents here *Fundar un bosque* [Founding a Forest], his first prototype of a ecological machine, but he has developed many others. *Fundar un bosque* is a project of self-management through physical commitment and the transfer of energy in a closed system of production. For the plants to survive, the garden/greenhouse needs the care and full responsibility of the occasional “public-cyclist” who pumps water and feeds them while exercising. It is also a book-case/furniture, a greenhouse and a field for a “home battle” that is not connected to the power grid, or depends on nothing more than the kinetics of the human body.



## NICOLE DEXTRAS

### *Forest Warrior*, 2017

Installation, plants and textiles

Variable measures

Assistance on dress making: Sonia Pacho

Courtesy of the artist

For *Hybris*, Nicole Dextras has spent some time in Leon making one of her famous garments of the series *Urban Foragers*, a sort of portable architecture that transforms into a mobile plant and vegetable gardens. Her aim is to promote a sustainable lifestyle for the new nomadic urbanism that allow us to germinate our own seeds and grow our own food, while at the same time building and promoting the idea of community. *Forest Warrior* is her latest addition to the series, conceived as a botanical conservation anti-superhero wearing a cape full of trees, vines, shrubs and grasses. He is a passionate tree-planter concerned about Spain's centuries of deforestation, which turned the once lush forests into barren scrublands, making them vulnerable to erosion and fire.



## **CHAPTER 2: REUTILIZATIONS**

### **Found, recycled and waste materials**

### **Natural materials**

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The following chapter, *Reutilizations*, includes, on one hand, artists who work with found, recycled and waste materials as well as those who use natural materials as the basis for their artistic creations. Found materials, both from urban settings as well as from nature, speak to an attitude in consonance with non-consumerism, degrowth, and the importance of working with “what is already there”.



## GUILLEM BAYO

### *Huevo radioactivo*, 2015

Mixed media

12 x 5 x 5 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Guillem Bayo's proposals combine electronics with our daily life, taking the transformation of e-waste and objects of our everyday into hybrid technological equipment as his starting point. With these works, the artist speaks of how radioresistance is not the same in every human being, while in many species it can be surprisingly high. His radioactive egg refers us to some of the unpredictable consequences of controversial issues such as nuclear power or GMOs. In Bayo's opinion, there is no turning back, there never was or was expected, although we can always think about the interesting part of the matter: people becoming bioluminescent upon entering a bar, mutations everywhere, and plenty of unexpected surprises.



## HERMAN PRIGANN

### *Skulpturenwald Rheinelbe, 1997-2000*

Selection of photographs

Variable measures

Courtesy of heirs of Herman Prigann / Bildrecht (Vienna)

For this immense project, Herman Prigann's point of departure was an old degraded mining area in Gelsenkirchen, in the German Ruhr Valley, a *non-land*, as the artist called this kind of spaces. Prigann restructured it into a gigantic sculpture park, creating an artistic project which houses itself different projects. The artist rehabilitated the place by giving it a new use as public park while at the same time preserving the memory of its industrial past. To do this, he re-used some of the mining area's old concrete blocks and various industrial remains, together with local wood, in order to expose the importance of showing the traces of the terrible degradation caused by industrialization and of the disruption of European society after the deindustrialization.

## XAVI MUÑOZ

### *Personal Landscape I*, 2016

Bronze

182 x 2 x 2 cm

Courtesy of the artist and L&B Contemporary gallery

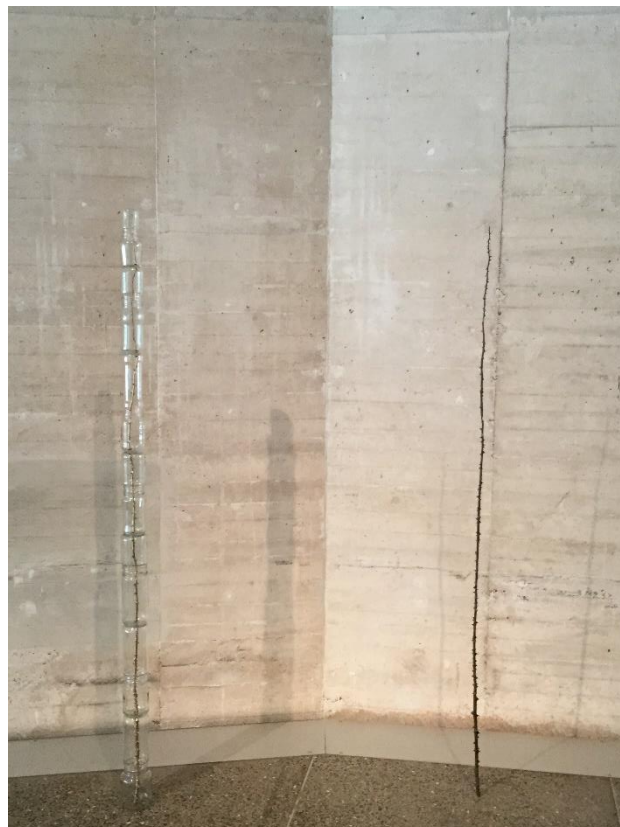
### *Personal Landscape II*, 2016

Natural elements, glass, gold paint

182 x 9 x 9 cm

Courtesy of the artist and L&B Contemporary gallery

*Personal Landscape I* and *Personal Landscape II* are two independent pieces which in this case are presented together: one is made of bronze—with an extremely delicate foundry work—and the other is made of glass, consisting of glass household jars with gilded rose stems inside. The two works have the same height, that of the artist, thus establishing a dialogue related to identity. Both pieces are part of the latest series of sculptures by Xavi Muñoz, entitled *Landscape*: a series of works revolving around the inclusion of natural materials that reconstruct an emotional landscape, an intimate landscape where one can sense a recreation of memory spaces. It is a juxtaposition between art and nature that emphasises their metaphorical and symbolic quality.





## ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

*Tree Painted with Black Mud Collected from Nearby Bog, Dumbrieshire, Scotland, 21 March 2014, 2014*

2 photographs

60 x 90 cm and 60 x 40 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Slowtrack Society SL

Andy Goldsworthy uses the materials and conditions he finds *in situ*—earth, rocks, leaves, ice, snow, rain or sun light—to produce works of art that exist for a short time before being altered and eroded by the usual processes of nature. In this work, the artist painted a tree with the moss of the surroundings. The work—always created without public—lasts only a moment, and all that remains from that moment is a single, non-serial, unmanipulated photograph, which becomes a new performative process, a new work in itself. Every ephemeral work of Goldsworthy contains life, and, as such, it grows, remains and dies, and the photograph capturing the climax and the secret of its fullness becomes the central part of this cycle.



## JUANLI CARRIÓN

### *La edad de Indio, 2017*

Installation, mixed media

Variable measures

Images:

Las Médulas: Karsten Wentink

Parque tecnológico de León in construction: Javier Gallego (2004)

Future Palacio de Congresos: Campillo (2011)

Courtesy of the artist and Rosa Santos gallery (Valencia)

The installation made by Juanli Carrión links three of the sources of revenue that have marked the history of the economy in Leon from its origins: gold, sugar beet, and technology. Sugar beet, which was brought by Napoleon and was one of the main sources of income for the Leonese modern economy, is currently experiencing a sharp decline. Before sugar beet, the chief source of income was gold—the reason for its foundation as a city in the year 29 BC, by the Legio VI Victrix. Throughout its history, Leon has been linked to the exploitation of these economic nostrums, for which Western society has killed, enslaved, poisoned and destroyed people, animals and landscapes. The gold from its foundation, the sugar from its modernity and today's technology which, after receiving great support from public administrations for the creation of technology centres, has attracted several companies whose economic impact on the city is questionable. The installation's sculptures transform technological trash into sugar crystals to put into question the economic solidity and commercial reliability of technological companies in Leon, while at the same time questioning the sustainability of the technology itself. Indium is a chemical element, and is currently the main material used in the manufacturing of touch screens.



## LUNA BENGOCHEA PEÑA

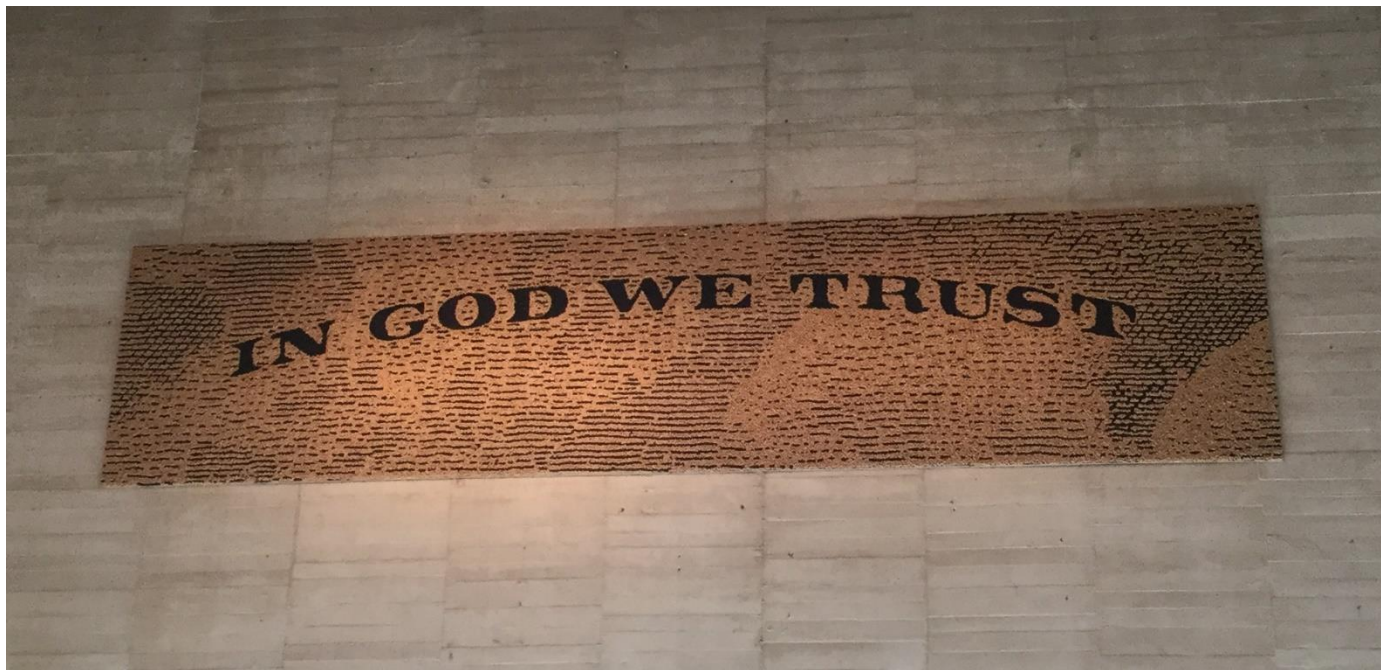
### *In God We Trust (En Dios confiamos), 2017*

Installation, chickpeas and common beans on board

100 x 450 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Canarias Crea

Luna Bengoechea did this intervention *in situ* making use of local seeds (chickpeas and common beans) as a commentary to the importance of legume crops in the León region—it represents 70% of the national production. The piece alludes to the American dollar—because of its status as world’s leading currency—and reproduces the motto appearing on US banknotes and coins, which reads: “In God We Trust”. The artist takes the sentence out of its context to connect it to a feeling of loss of confidence in our Governments, subject to international economic mechanisms that leave the citizens unprotected and vulnerable. The fact that at present eight out of every ten kilos of vegetables consumed in Spain are imported, given that according to the Spanish Legume Association (AEL) “production costs are more expensive than goods arriving from outside Spain”, makes us ponder over the contradictions of the capitalist system. On the other hand, the motto “In God we trust” has an ironic ring to it if we take into account that the majority of global crops have been “improved” through genetically engineered methods, with the United States as supreme precursor of these practices.





## JUAN ZAMORA

### *Pelophylax perezi*, 2017

Installation, moss

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artist

This work of Juan Zamora is the drawing of a common frog, or “*Pelophylax perezi*”, carried out with a technique known as eco-graffiti or green graffiti, using moss and water obtained from several of the rivers running through Castile and León territory. With this piece, the artist pays tribute to the life of this animal, which is essential for the environmental balance, through the cultivation of its figure with organic vegetable elements gathered from its own habitat, resulting in a mural made of a moss that goes on growing and has different hues of green depending on the contamination of its native area. The work aims to put the focus of attention in the gradual decline in the numbers of this species of frog, a choice made against the backdrop of the fact that more than one hundred and twenty species of these invertebrates have disappeared in the last 25 years. According to biologist Francisco Purroy, the species’ disappearance occurs only in the Iberian Peninsula, and it is caused by the pollution of the rivers and the use of herbicides; the solution found by biologists from the University of León to preserve the species is captive breeding. Fishing was approved again by the Regional Council of Fishing of the Community of Castile and León in 2015.



## CARMA CASULÁ

### *Monsanto no es Santo de mi devoción\_PRS*, 2014-2017

Installation, mixed media

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artist

Carma Casulá has spent years creating a *Memory Bank of Farmers* that deals with traditional agriculture and the family culture of the land. There were already seed banks, but no “memory banks” to preserve not only the material aspect of traditional crops, but also the farmers’ way of life and culture in relation to seeds. This process is carried out by the artist through the compilation of visual and literary accounts of the experiences of the main players in these stories, revealing the human and sociological side of the agricultural world and the high value placed on an asset that they consider the most important thing to preserve. In the current landscape of the food market, bound to end up limiting itself to industrialized farming and soaring expansive agriculture—assisted by corporations like Monsanto or Pioneer, with their transgenic imperatives—, the small family economies of traditional agriculture increasingly represent resistance. Part of the Bank is accompanied by an installation made with maps and charts over a bed of germinated seeds with a line symbolising the course of the river Jarama in the stretch of the PRS (Southeast Park). In the maps the quality of the ground is represented through the different stains along the river line: mechanized crops, crops cultivated with tractors, irregular and family crop areas, gravel pits and lagoons, among others.



## **JORGE BARBI**

### *Argentea II*, 2001-2010

Series of 44 photographs

29 x 22 cm each

Courtesy of the artist

Jorge Barbi photographs seagull droppings exactly as he finds them, after an exhaustive search that has been going on for years. The artist is especially interested in capturing the strong suggestive power of what manifests itself in a natural way, and, by its uniqueness, makes us doubt that it belongs to reality. He calls these photo “surface works”, precisely because it is there, in the visible—and not in the deep or dark things—, where the mystery lies.

## KATIE PATERSON

### *Langjökull, Snæfellsjökull, Solheimajökull, 2007*

3-channel video with sound

1h 58'

Artium, Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz. Private collection

Sound recordings from three glaciers in Iceland, pressed into three records, cast, and frozen with the meltwater from each of these glaciers, and played on three turntables until they completely melt. The records were played once and now exist as three digital films. The turntables begin playing together, and for the first ten minutes as the needles trace their way around, the sounds from each glacier merge in and out with the sounds the ice itself creates. The needle catches on the last loop, and the records play for nearly two hours, until completely melted.



## VIK MUNIZ

*Atlas. After Guercino, 2007*

from the series *Pictures of Junk*

Photograph

220 x 178 cm

Artium, Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz

Vik Muniz's images are always created with non-traditional materials: food, litter, toys or "found-remains". This work belongs to the series the artist has developed on mythological themes of famous painters as a way to rethink the eternal search of the artist for models and historical contexts. The choice of this subject matter aims to expose idealization as rhetorical simplification—such as seen in the classic forms of sculptures of Greek gods—and contrast it with the sense of emptiness caused by post-industrial rubble. This series was carried out on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, in collaboration with the art students of a favela [shantytown].



## BASURAMA

### *Nuestro aporte, 2017*

Installation, metal structure, wood and waste products

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artists

Basurama is an artistic collective devoted to cultural and environmental research, creation and production that has focused its area of study and activity in the production processes, the generation of waste involving these processes and the creative possibilities arising from such contemporary issues. For the MUSAC, the collective has performed a research on the processes of rubbish disposal and accumulation of waste in Leon, recently hit by several cases of mismanagement. The garbage used in the project, coming from different places of the province, as well as from the museum, shows us what “our contribution” to the history of planet Earth is. Garbage is something generated by everybody, and yet no one wants to be responsible for it, allowing it to spread across the surface of the world as a thin but dense layer.



## BARBARÁ FLUXÁ

### *Reconstrucciones arqueológicas, 2005-2006*

*Paisaje cultural. Asturias, 05, 2005*

*Paisaje cultural. Esles, 05, 2005*

*Paisaje cultural. Segovia, 06, 2006*

Installation, mixed media

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artist. Co-produced by Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente (Segovia), Casa Velázquez, French Ministry of Culture and the Town Hall of Santa Mª del Cayón (Cantabria's Regional Government)

Through the series of installations *Reconstrucciones arqueológicas* [Archaeological Reconstructions], millions of the so-called “disposable” objects which are manufactured, consumed and disposed of every day on our planet, are transmuted into transcendental future reminders of our society and the way in which it inhabits the world. They are presented as a sample of the hegemonic material culture characteristic of the political and economic system of contemporary overconsumption. Inside the showcase, we are shown reconstructions of the waste objects created following the strategies and methodologies of archaeology. The artist gives us an ethical look on the problems and systemic contradictions of the contemporary capitalist society: sustainability, industrial and technological development, preservation of the environment, habitat degradation, land exploitation or recycling. To some extent, the three installations included in the show represent the same perspective: the imposition of the values and needs of the economic market over those behaviours that represent a change of consciousness in our society, a new ethical dimension of respect for the environment and, above all, a principle of responsibility towards future generations.



## PABLO MILICUA

*Motorino*, 1994

Mixed media on motorcycle

110 x 171 x 62 cm

Artium, Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz

“*Motorino*” is the Italian word for motorbikes. Pablo Milicua made his work *Motorino* in 1994, during his Fellowship in Sculpture at the Spanish Academy in Rome. He abandoned the motorbike and left it to rust on the lawn next to the stairs that take you from Trastevere to San Pietro in Montorio. Most of the elements of the mosaic that covers the bike come from the flea market of Porta Portese, where on Sunday, when the market closes, a large number of unsold or unsaleable ceramic pieces are thrown to the ground and shattered. The mosaic covers the motorcycle as a crust, as a sedimentation caused by time, history and culture, forming a hyper-baroque rocaille that contrasts with the mobility of the bike, its potential speed and its teenage dream of freedom.

## JACOBO CASTELLANO

### *Piñata*, 2017

Installation, wood and linen

255 x 40 x 40 cm

Courtesy of the artist, F2 gallery, Mai 36 Galerie y Pedro Oliveira gallery

The starting point of Jacobo Castellano's works are the materials of his close environment, with which he builds sculptures that touch upon different subjects: the stopped time, the poetics of found-objects, the fortuitous... In his works these elements from the urban ecosystem tell us about memory and the possible stories of the found-materials.





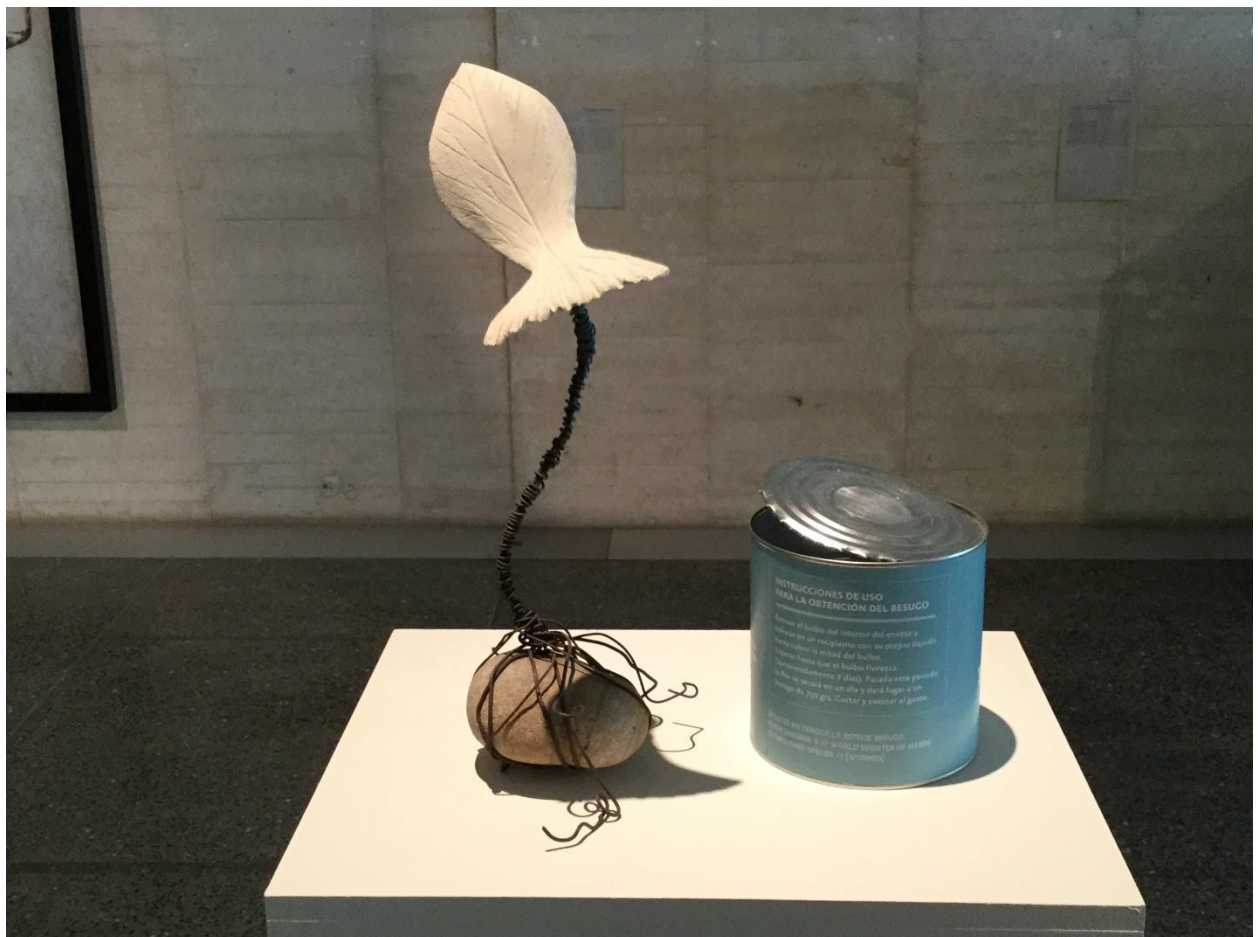
**VEGONHA RODRÍGUEZ**

*Bulbo de pez, 2017*

Ceramics and stone (17 x 16 x 45,5 cm) and iron tin (15,5 x 15 cm)

Courtesy of the artist

According to Vegonha Rodríguez: “Humans have not learned anything. This is the year 2700. Pollution is about to degrade the sea to the point of collapse and many species have disappeared. What little is left in it is being overfished to preserve it as future food, common species like turbot, sardine, or sea bass don’t exist anymore as a living species.” Vegonha Rodríguez imagines a dystopian society that has invented a conservation process of surrealist undertones, through which they could get a sort of hybrid plant, a canned bulb from which you could obtain an edible fish.



## ELENA AITZKOA

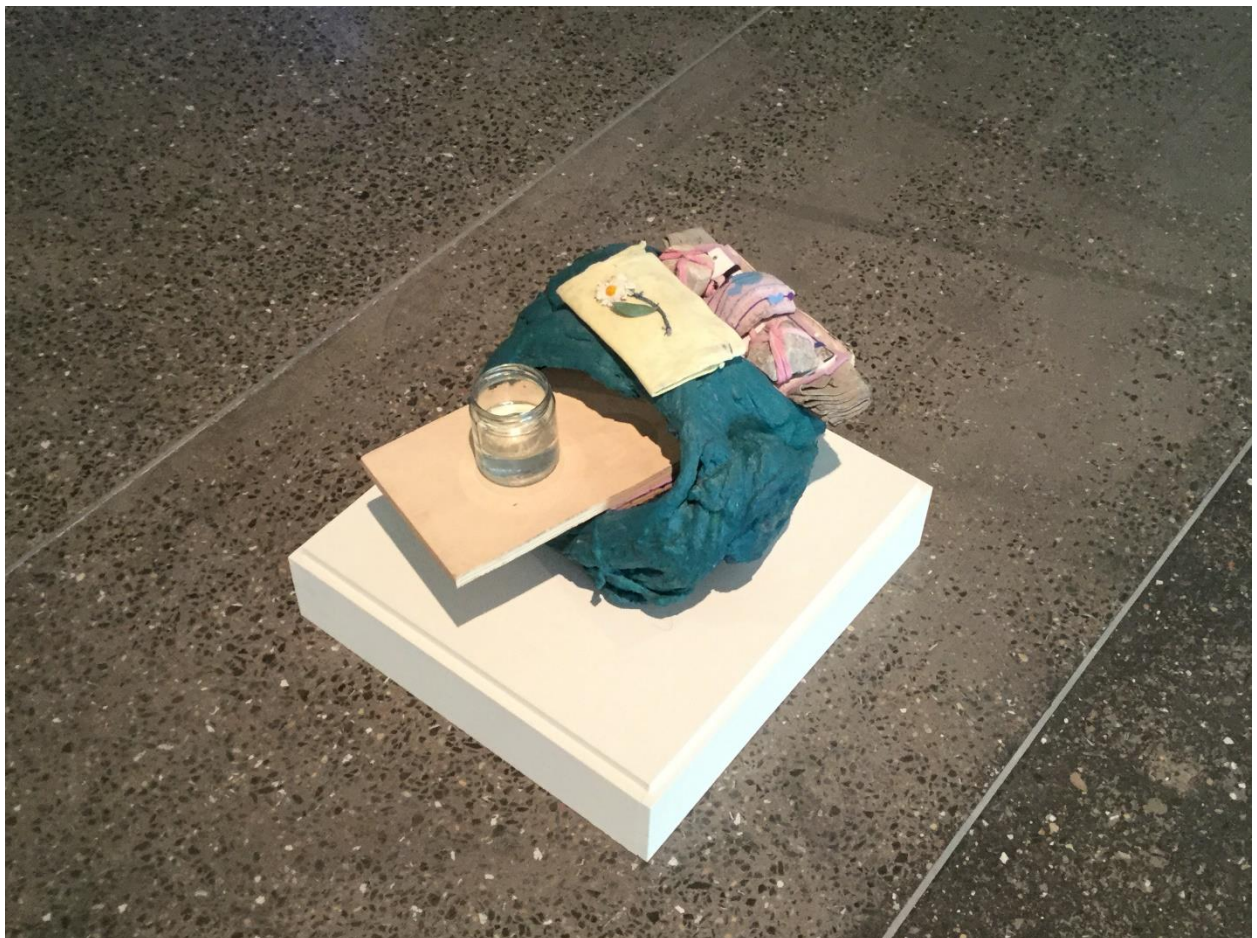
### *Conejos*, 2016

Mixed media

27 x 40 x 43 cm

Courtesy of the artist

“Landscape-home” is the subject matter of this sculpture. Her concave or hollowed forms—shaped by use and strange desires—are a peaceful destination for the endless number of actions that comprise them. Lake stones. Boundary stone. Trip. Raised kerb. A pocket house with a view. To pick up from the ground or to hold our hair: a hairgrip, it shines. A hairgrip and a stone. The flower is lying down and the little jar is empty, but filled with water.



## ADOLFO SCHLOSSER

*Pequod*, 1990

Mixed media

200 x 75,5 x 23 cm

Artium, Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz

Although of Austrian birth, Adolfo Schlosser has spent more years in Spain than in his homeland. His residence in Bustarviejo, in the Sierra de Madrid, becomes the main source for his works, where he gathers most of the organic materials used for his works—stones, branches, earth, among others—. The delicate and fragile nature of his works is enhanced by his treatment of the natural materials themselves, which provides the works with a distinctly poetic character. For the critic Francisco Calvo Serraller, his relationship with nature is spiritual: “He saw that the true materials of art were there.”

## CHAPTER 3: ACTIONS

### Performance Collaborative practices

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Finally, the last space exhibits works related with performance, showing some iconic works developed in the early seventies, usually by women, where the body of the artists points out the importance of understanding nature in a much more holistic way. This attitude is taken up by younger, half-career artists and it's linked to those known as "Collaborative Practices" in which the participation of the public or of different actors outside the artist becomes crucial for the development of the work and the Authorship is blurring towards collective action.



## ANA MENDIETA

### *Burial Pyramide, Yagul, Mexico, 1974*

Colour video with sound

3' 30"

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Ana Mendieta (1948-1995) used her body to create an extensive corpus of performances that were developed in nature. In the archaeological site of Yagul (Oaxaca, Mexico) the artist performed his first piece of "Earth-Body". In *Burial Pyramid* she emerges slowly from beneath the rocks while a camera films the short action. The artist's interest was to establish connections with pre-Columbian culture through her personal actions. By means of a syncretic combination of symbols of life and death, Mendieta embodies the pre-Columbian belief that the soul or life force still exists in the afterlife.



## FINA MIRALLES

*Relacions. Relació del cos amb elements naturals. El cos cobert de palla. (Sabadell, enero 1975), 1975*

Series of 5 photographs

20 x 30 cm each

Museo d'Art de Sabadell

Fina Miralles explores the relationships between humans, nature and objects, and analyzes the transformation and alienation experienced by natural objects when taken out of context. The artist works with different media, including painting, performance and video. This work belongs to a series in which the artist's body is merged with a range of natural elements, in complete identification with it, forming a single unit of interchangeable values revolving around the eternal processes of destruction and rebirth of nature.



## REGINA JOSÉ GALINDO

### *Mazorca*, 2014

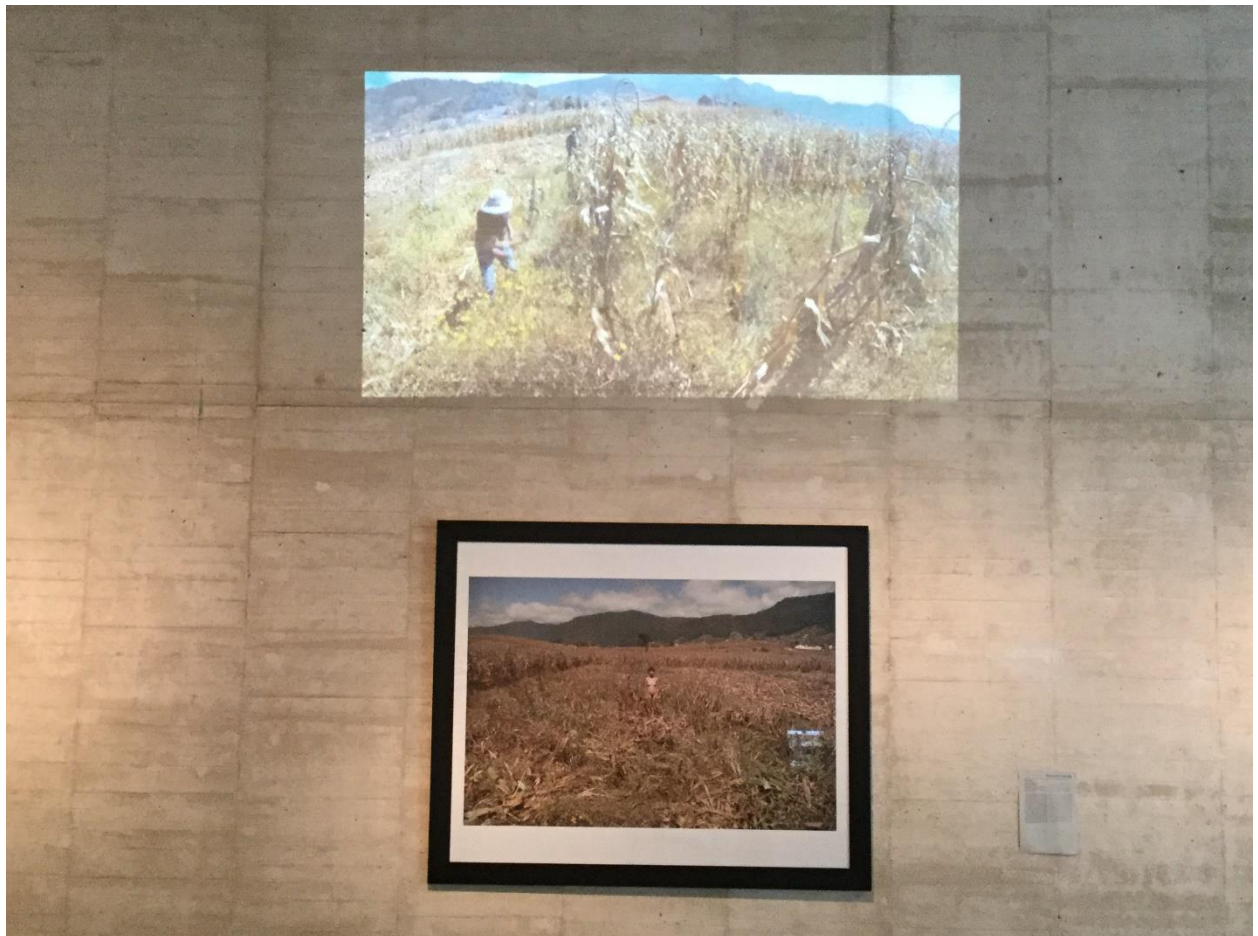
Video with sound (8' 30") and photograph (132 x 161 cm)

Video: José Enrique Juárez / Edgar Osorio

Photograph: David Pérez / Alex Socop

Courtesy of the artist and Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milano

During the war in Guatemala, and as part of the military strategy of scorched earth, corn was cut and burned by the national army with the intention of destroying indigenous communities, considered to be the guerrilla bases. Peace was signed in 1996. Corn resisted. Peoples resisted. In 2014 the Congress of the Republic adopted the Law for the Protection of New Plant and Varieties, popularly known as Monsanto Law, putting at risk the future of the corn and the country's food autonomy. Indigenous peoples represented the strongest opposition to the law, achieving its repeal. In this action, Galindo remains hidden within a cornfield while four men with machetes cut all corn until she is completely in sight. For a few minutes, Galindo remains standing on the ruined corn.





## TERESA MURAK

### *Procession. Eastern Carpet. Kielczewice, 1974*

Photograph

80 x 140 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Teresa Murak is one of the most important representatives of the 1970s Polish avant-garde. Her works are characterised by their relationship with nature, with its rhythms and transformations, as well as with spirituality and religiosity—both Christian as Eastern, especially Zen and Tao. For this work the artist grew the seeds for the carpet in the attic of a monastery used as a children's home, led by Sister Cecilia. The procession began at the monastery on Holy Saturday and arrived to the parish church the Day of Visitation, carried by four Norwegian friends of the artist, together with Sister Cecilia and one of the girls from the orphanage. The carpet was placed on the steps of the Church, and later, during the mass, on the High Altar.



## FERNANDO GARCÍA-DORY

### *El lamento del tritón, 2016*

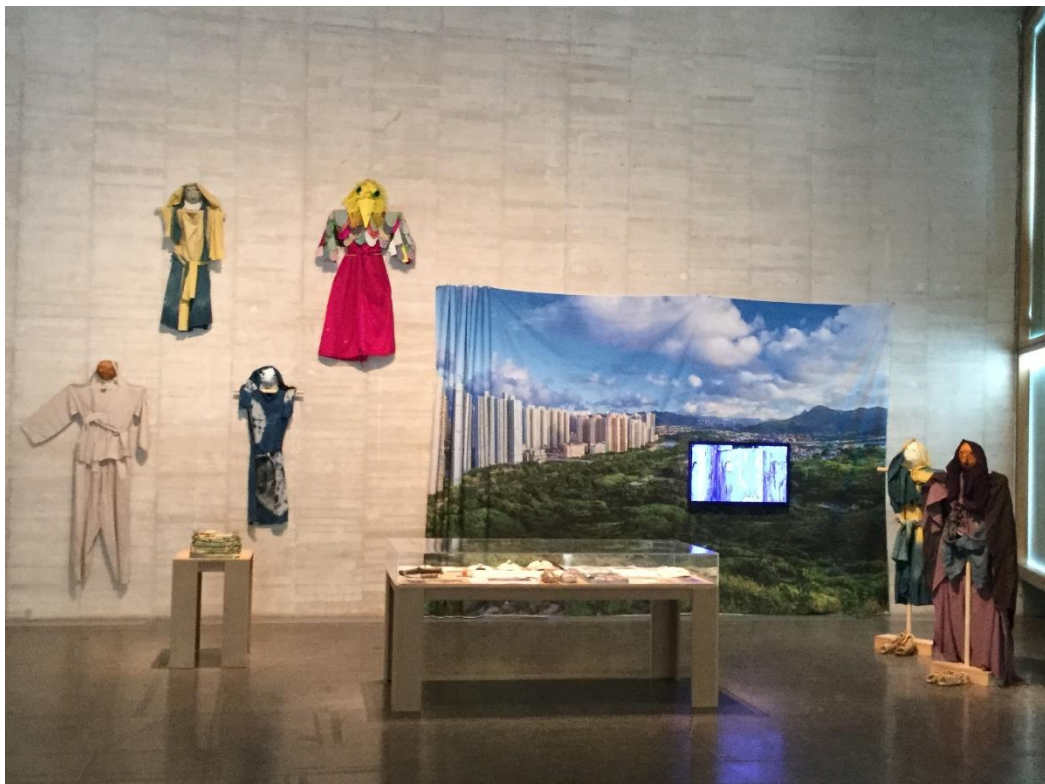
Installation, mixed media

Variable measures

Action performed at the 2016 Gwangju Biennale in South Korea

Courtesy of the artist, 2016 Gwangju Biennale, AC/E and the people living near Hansaebong Dure

Hansaebong Dure, Gwangju's last rice field, now surrounded by high-rises, became the protagonist and a huge stage for a collective action on the relations between the city and its ecosystem. With this in mind, the artist formed a theatre company with the residents of the buildings surrounding the field, and created a play that talks about the rituals surrounding the cycle of rice cultivation, in which the possible stories, characters and scenes gradually emerge and are defined by the group. Drawing on the traditional rural masked celebrations— such as the Ga-Myun, the countercultural work of the 1980 “small theatre movement” in Gwangju, the choreography of the sync pop and some recent agricultural manifestations— the action calls into question prevailing models of urban development and the political and cultural structures that encourage it. This opera-action appeals to the self-recognition of the resistance that local residents have been putting up for decades against the plans of development threatening the rice field, and is presented to the citizens of Gwangju to enhance overall awareness of the importance of self-managed agro-ecological spaces and the challenges facing their continuity.





## AGNES DENES

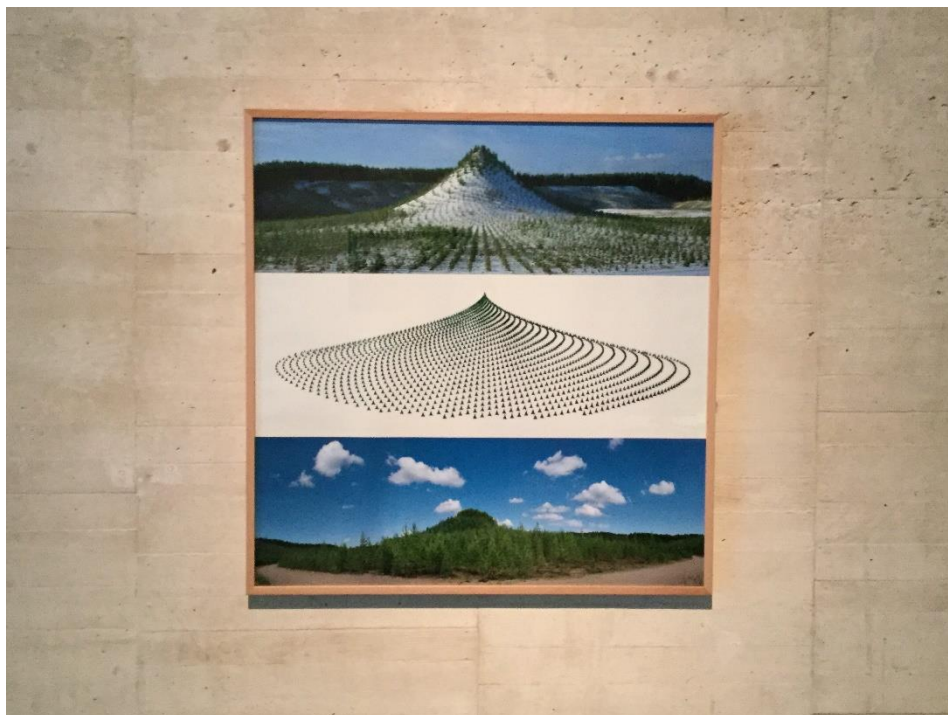
### *Tree Mountain - A Living Time Capsule - 11,000 Trees, 11,000 People, 400 Years (Triptych), 1992-1996, 1992-2013*

C-print

91 x 91 cm

Courtesy of the artist Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York

Near Ylöjärvi, Finland, Agnes Denes organised the creation of an artificial mountain and then had 11,000 people plant 11,000 trees; she convinced the Finnish Government to promise to preserve it for a minimum of four hundred years and give to tree planters and their heirs the right to pass on their legacy of those trees for at least twenty generations. This was the first area of virgin forest created by a human being, and it follows an intricate mathematical pattern derived from the combination of the golden section and the pineapple/sunflower pattern designed by the artist.



## MAIDER LÓPEZ

### *Zoom In, 2016*

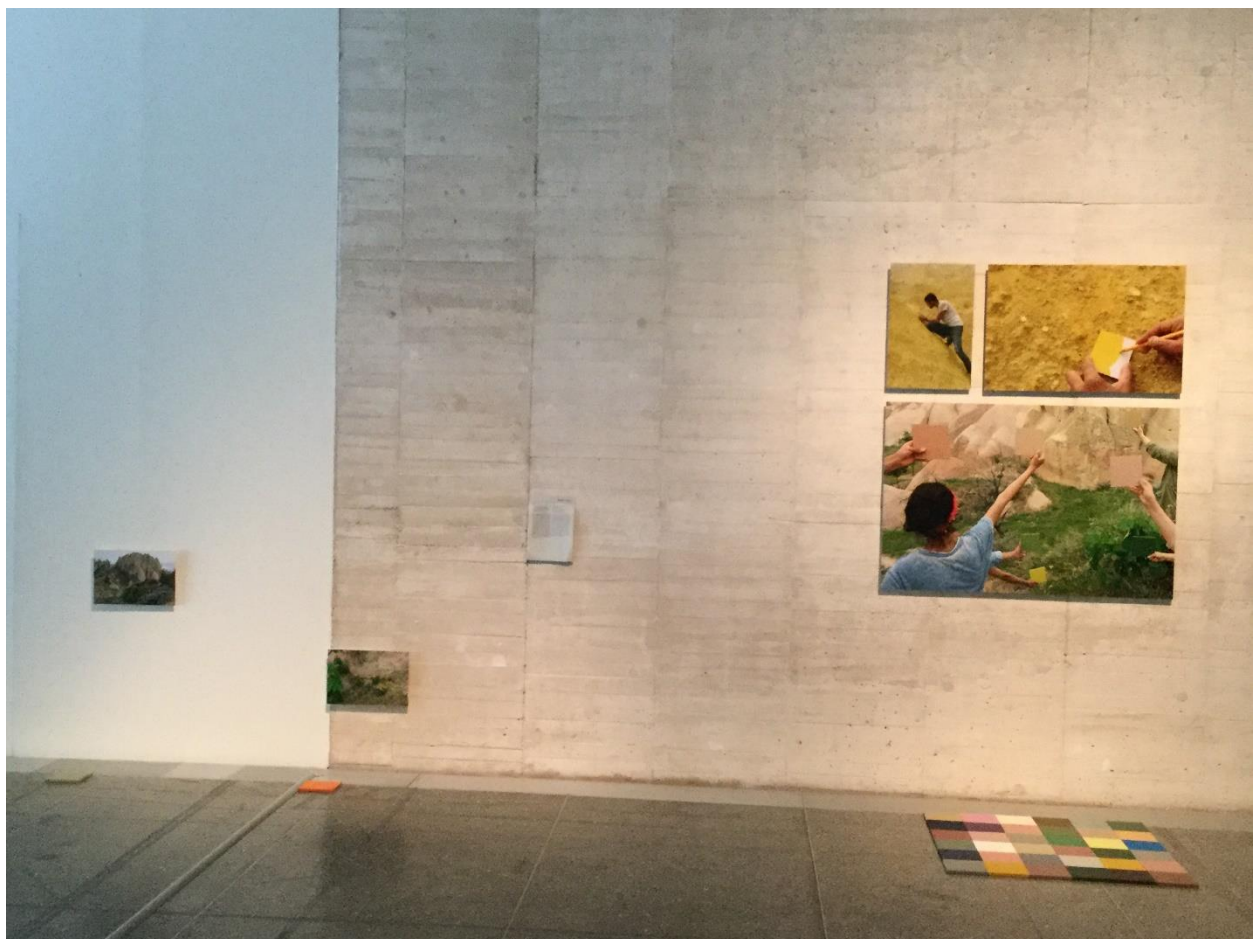
Installation, mixed media

Variable measures

Action performed in Cappadocia within the framework of Cappadox 2016 (Turkey)

Courtesy of the artist and Galería Espacio Mínimo, Madrid

Maidier López marks the landscape with coloured tiles. As we walk along the trails of Kızıl Çukur the monochromatic tiles appear before us, pointing out a specific element of the landscape in which we can find exactly the same colour: the yellow of a mountain, the gray of a stone, the blue of beekeepers or the specific green of a particular plant. These chromatic similarities were previously established during a workshop with painting students from the University of Fine Arts Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli, in which they approached nature directly and searched for all specificities in it. With this project the artist uses colour to shift the focus of attention to specific elements of the landscape, in order to rescue them, singling them out and individualizing them from that generality that masks them.



## AMOR MUÑOZ

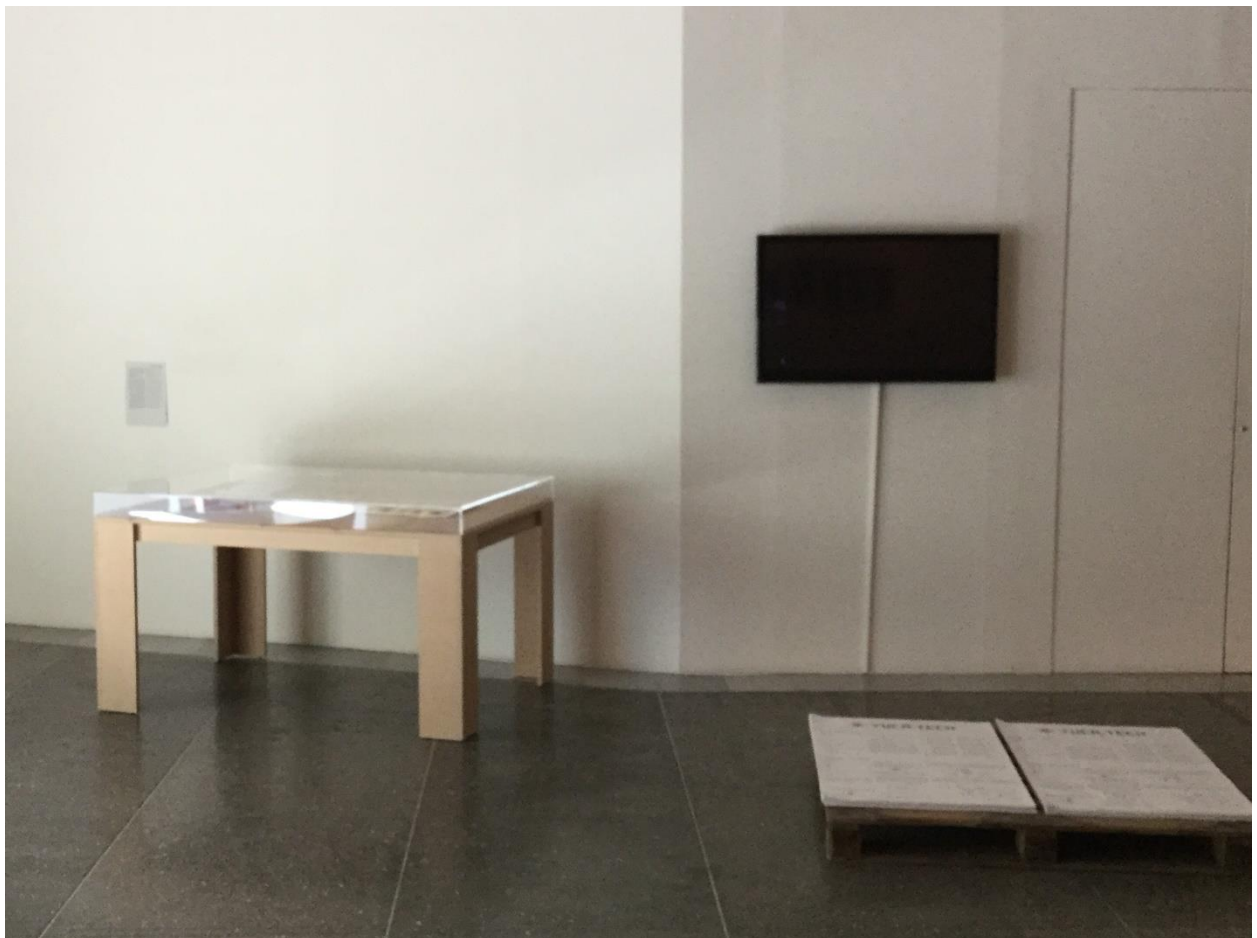
### *Yuca-Tech: Energía hecha a mano, 2015-2017*

Installation, video with sound (4'), solar panels and poster edition (90 x 60 cm)

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artist and MUCA Roma Museum, Mexico City

*Yuca\_Tech* is a social, interdisciplinary project that seeks to generate collective work with the collaboration of the community for the solution of local problems, using low tech and high tech resources, and applying concepts such as tradition, innovation, appropriate technologies, social technology, craftsmanship and artefact. It's a community technology lab, developed with a group of artisans of Yucatan to create a series of artistic and technological parts: solar cells, textiles and lighting objects. The aim is that participants make a technological artefact with their own hands that they have also designed, so that they identify with it and give it a productive and emotional value according to their needs and culture. The project is developing at this time in Mexico City's MUCA-Roma Museum, with which a collaboration has been established for the presentation of this work. The Yucatecan artisans will be conducting workshops in the Mexican museum itself for several months, the results of which will be shown at the exhibition at the MUSAC.





## NILO GALLEGO AND FELIPE QUINTANA

### *Felipe vuelve a casa con las ovejas sonando*, 1999

Video with sound (18'), score, documentation and bells

Video: Chus Domínguez

Promoters of El Apeadero: Carlos de la Varga y Javier Hernando

Centro de Operaciones El Apeadero, Bercianos del Real Camino, October 1999

Courtesy of the artists

On October 23th 1999 a sound action supported by the sound of 300 sheep with bells took place in Bercianos del Real Camino (León). The sheep concert, entitled *Felipe vuelve a casa con las ovejas sonando* [Felipe goes home with the sheep sounding] was possible thanks to the collaboration of the musician Nilo Gallego and the shepherd Felipe Quintana. The two main intentions of the “concert” were: to show respect for the daily “action” of the shepherd and his flock, as well as the intensification of the sound by increasing the number of bells. Thus the daily return of the flock is singled out, acquiring the value of a musical action. Of course, as in any musical proposal, the action demanded the presence of a public—necessarily active in this case given that movement is an intrinsic characteristic of a herd.



## HIROSHI SUNAIRI

### *Leur Existence – Tree Project, 2005-2017*

Installation, Hiroshima trees and documentation

Variable measures

Courtesy of the artist

The Japanese artist Hiroshi Sunairi began receiving seeds of the trees in his hometown, Hiroshima (Japan), that had survived the U.S. bombing in 1945, from a Tree Dr. Chikara Horiguchi who takes care of them. These trees are known as *hibaku-jumoku* [bombarded trees / surviving trees]. After collecting the seeds, Sunairi distributed them throughout the world, and tracked the participants in the project: more than four hundred people from twenty-three different countries. In Hiroshima, it was said, “sixty years ago the city of Hiroshima was destroyed by the nuclear bomb and people thought that nothing would grow there for seventy-five years. However, seeds began to germinate in the remains of burned trees and grasses emerged from the earth... This new life gave encouragement to people who had lost all hope.” The curator of the show, Blanca de la Torre, met the artist in New York at the beginning of the project and she planted some of these seeds in the Leonese town of Arcahueja. Thus, the *hibaku-jumoku* exhibited here has spent years growing in this region, along with two others that have recently been planted and that will continue to grow throughout the exhibition period. The information about the trees planted all around the world is updated on the website of the project: <http://treeproject.blogspot.com>





# The relevance of the project in 2017

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The International Energy Agency (IEA) warned that if we did not control our emissions before the terribly close year 2017, our fossil fuel-based economy would have led to an 'inevitable' level of highly dangerous warming. As Naomi Klein pointed out in *This Changes Everything*<sup>2</sup>, 'energy infrastructure installed at that time will generate the total emissions of CO2 permitted' in our carbon budget to achieve a global warming target of only 2c, 'not leaving no margin for the construction of additional power plants, factories, or any other infrastructure that is not zero-carbon', and that it will be exorbitantly expensive'

In the categorical words of the Chief Economist at the IEA, Fatih Birol, 'the door to limit global warming is about to close. In 2017 it will be closed forever'.

<sup>1</sup> N. Klein: "Esto lo cambia todo. El capitalismo contra el clima". Paidós (Barcelona, 2015)

# Conclusion

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And to conclude, let us return to Guattari, who claimed that ‘there will be no *true response* to the ecological crisis except on a planetary scale and on the condition that it brings about an authentic political, social and cultural revolution’, i.e., if the ecological problem is addressed from a technocratic perspective, we are doomed to fail, because ‘only an ethico-political articulation—which I call *ecosophy*—between the three ecological registers (the environment, social relations and human subjectivity) would be likely to clarify these questions.’

The challenge we face is how to address the current ecocide and art is a very suitable tool to reveal the unsustainability of the current systems, imbalance relationships and global power models. The art as a way to take a stand on a reality, as a means to denounce and raise awareness that leads the way toward a possible ecological aesthetics.

*“A coherent ecological thinking attacks at the root a mode of production that sacrifices the living wealth on the altar of monetary wealth. The aim is not to find new solution for the growing needs, but to limit those needs, to reorient them”*

José María Parreño: *NATURALMENTE ARTIFICIAL. El arte español y la naturaleza 1968-2006*. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente (Segovia, 2006)

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