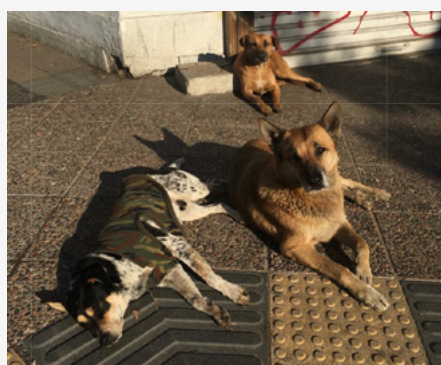
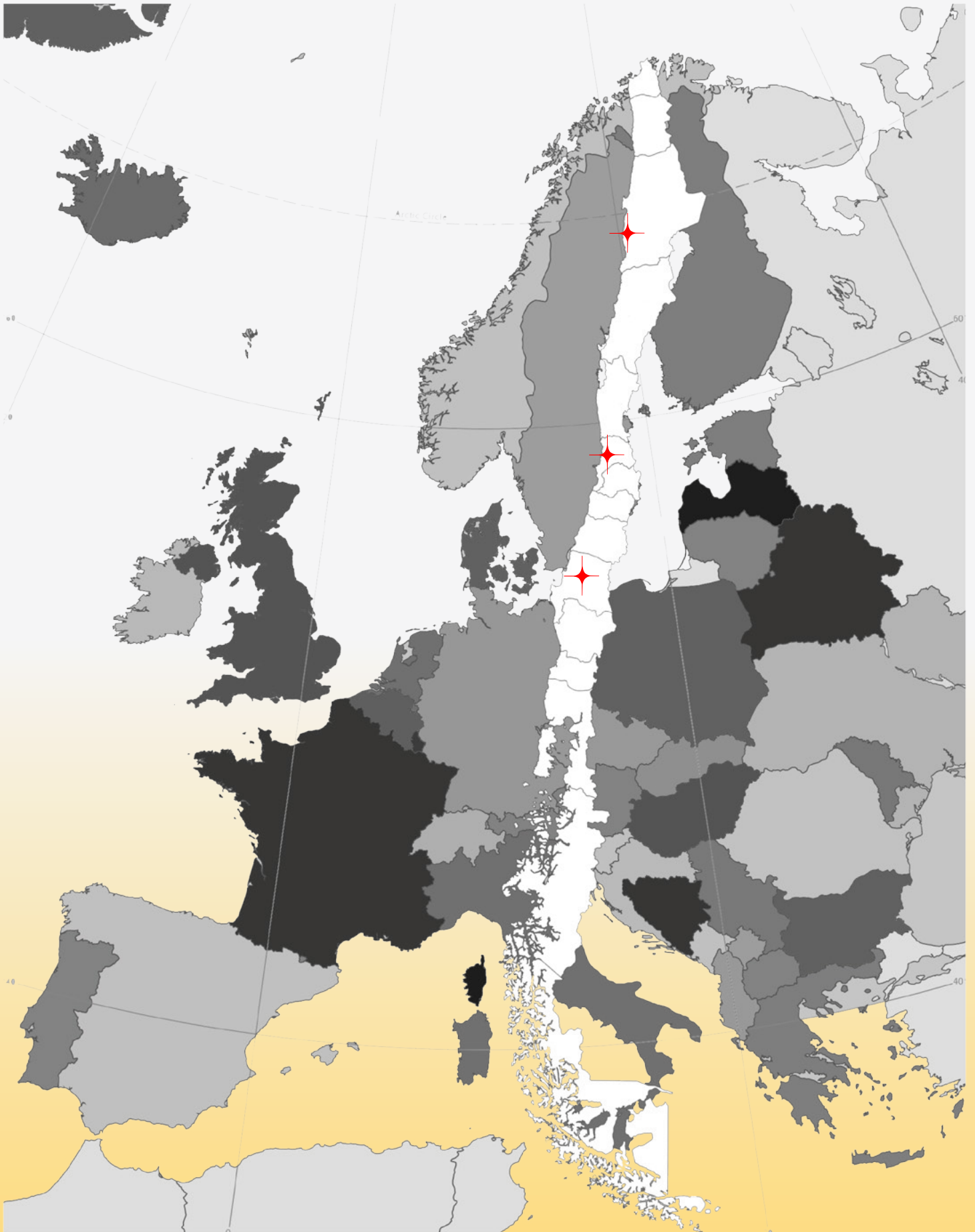


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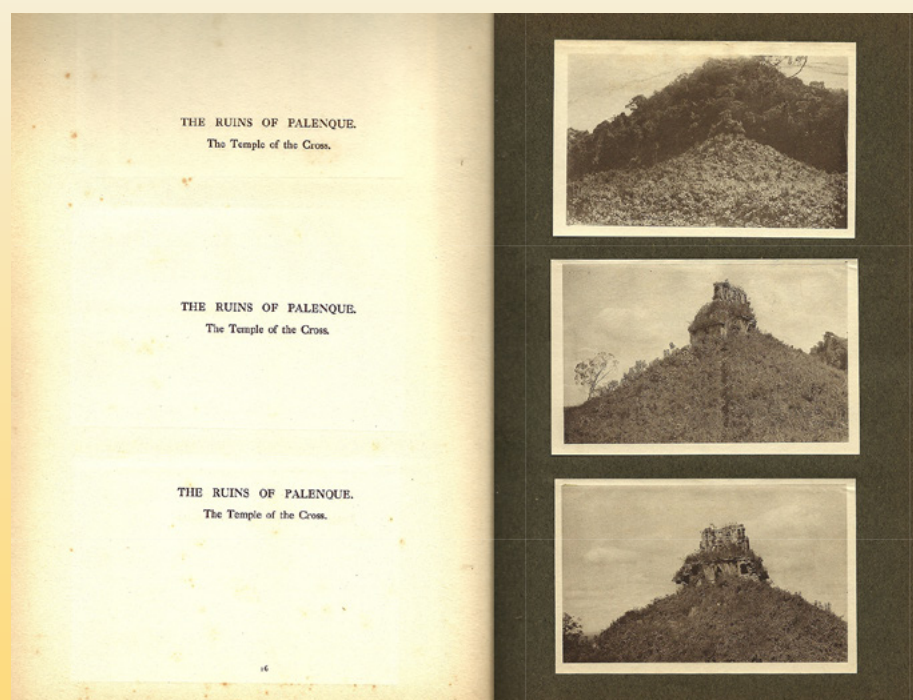
✦ Santiago, Chile

In the desert, we coexist like a living and breathing knot. A barbeque of a million histories traversed. What we see in the present is the results of transfers, misunderstandings, negotiations, appropriations and personal interventions across time and space. The collision of cultures that intensified the second that the conquistadors arrived in America, continues to transform and mutate in strange shapes, propitiated mainly by processes of extraction of natural resources. Extractions that choreograph almost all the elements in the current corporate cosmologies. Basically what has happened in Chile is a transfer of economic power from the colonial to the corporate. A radiantly impure handover.



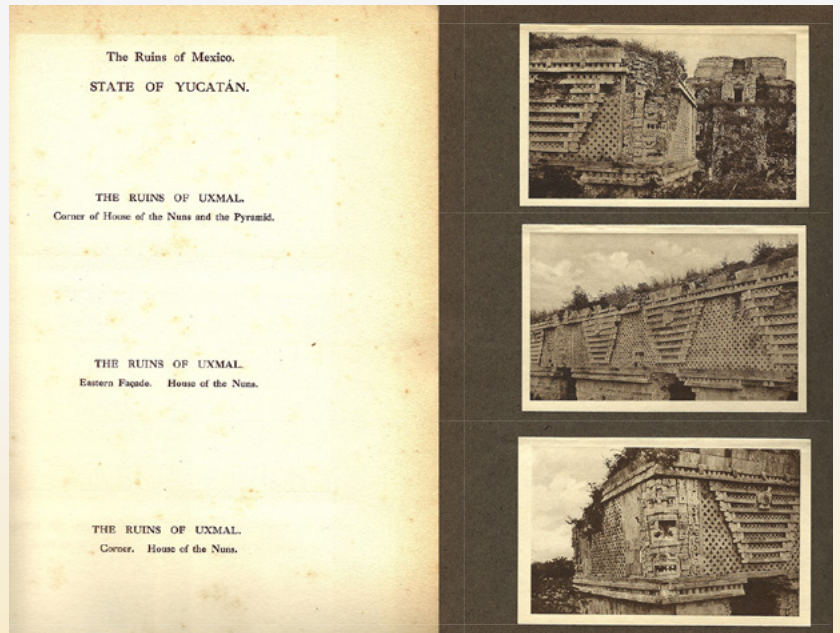
When the Spanish arrived to Central and South America, they collided into ancient cultures that already had ate one and another and transformed into something new. The Spanish crashed that chain of intercultural histories, producing not only processes of extinction and ethnocide, but also powerful symbolic and imaginative processes of transcultural readjustment and reposition.

These processes became absorbed by all fronts. On one side, the Spanish imposed their imaginations over the diverse indigenous cultures. Naming, classifying and reducing structures that they didn't even understand. An example comes in the form of these ruins in Uxmal, México:



A “church”
A temple of the
“Cross”
The house of the
prophet

The
house
of the
“nuns.” — The
catholic imaginary
containing
feminine energy



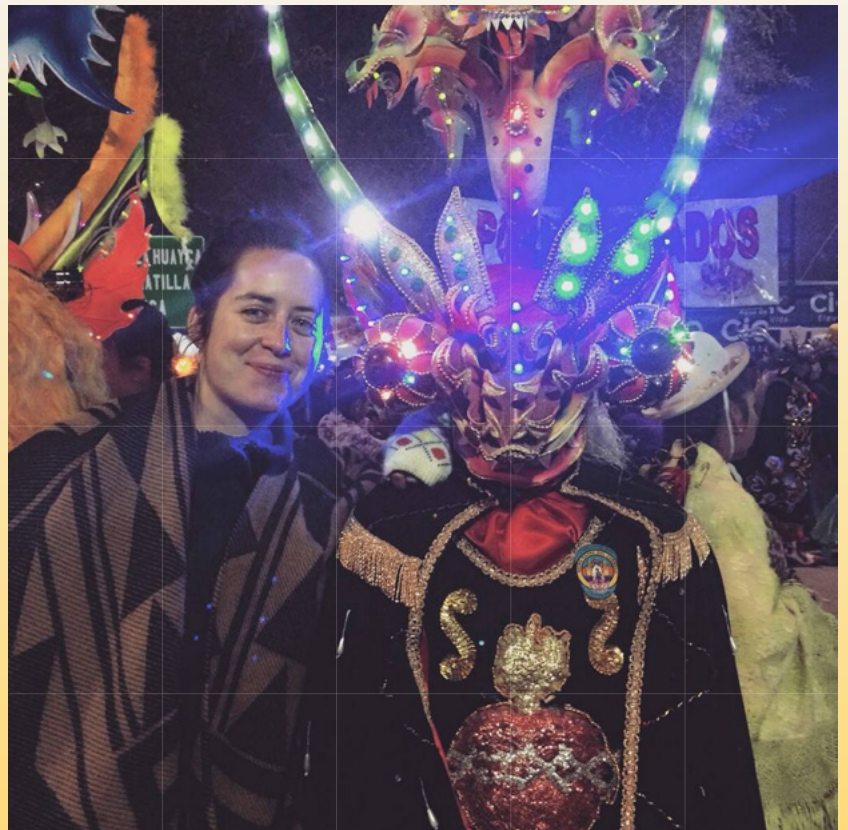
crashing into the
indigenous.
The “Palace”
The “Court”
They saw
“elephants” – In
a zone where no
one had ever heard
talk of them.

And vice versa, on the other side, the indigenous
imaginings devouring the catholic and making it
part of themselves:

✦ La Tirana, Chile
✦ Altiplano, Chile

When I visited the festival de La Tirana in 2015, close to the mining zone of Tarapacá in the I Region of Chile, I found myself posing with an amalgam of colliding histories in the shape of folk costumes of the Chilean, Peruvian and Bolivian Altiplano.

During those days of the festival, troupes dance in trance and the cursed third world fairs that sell all types of domestic objects, mount themselves in the periphery of the Cathedral. In a place that a mall has yet to appear, these economies of necessity chase that of religion.



- ✦ Anachanchu caves, Bolivia
- ✦ Anachanchu caves, Perú
- ✦ Antilas, Congo, Angola
- ✦ Potosí mines, Chile

This festival is a mix of Altiplanic dance forms in honor of the God named Tiw, protector of the mines, lakes and rivers, combined with rituals of the Aymara miners of Anchanchu (a demon that lives in the caves of Bolivia and Perú) and with the African songs and dances of the enslaved African community of the colony. A mixture that ended up camouflaged as a fervent dance to La Virgen of Carmen, Patroness of The Chilean Army. They say that its origin as a fiesta is in mining, originated by workers who worked in the copper, silver and saltpeter mines and that it was organized by the Jesuits, who from the first mining settlement in Potosí until their expulsion in 1767, enjoyed the monopoly on developing fireworks, in which they combined the saltpeter, the coal of the tamarugos and the sulfur of the volcanoes, all regional raw materials. At 00:00 hrs on July 16, the fireworks explode to celebrate the Virgin and it is the culmination of the ecstasy of La Tirana.

- ✦ 6 days
- ✦ 8 and a half days
- ✦ 1 to 1 and a half month
- ✦ one week and a bit

It is there when the sun falls and the night advances when it can be the last entanglement of globalization. The rhythms accelerate and hundreds of Chinese LED lights appear shining at night. The masks of the diablada (devil) dance troupe have incorporated LED lights brought from China in recent years. This time, hell exists in Andean cosmology. The devils are activated at night. The shine is of blue. The devils here play, they do not repent. They come as much as from the Spanish hell as from the bottom of the mines. You are brilliant. I watch you shine electric blue. You shine like my mobile phone. Your blue light was reflected in my “blanques kiltra” (stray whiteness). I shined in white. White on the outside but not on the inside.

The spectrum of the characters of La Tirana is not exhausted in the brilliant Devils. Some of the other appropriations are linked to the mining industry, such as the mestizo dance of the “Caporal”, invented by the Bolivian Vicente Estrada and his group “Urus del Gran Poder” in ‘71. The foreman dances brandishing the whip over the miners; often, black and indigenous slaves, while he rattles the bells of his boots. This recently invented dance is now one of the main components of Bolivian folklore. I love that folklore is not synonymous with ancestrality.

“Have you heard the story that Xerxes I. sent to whip the ocean to calm Poseidon?”



I am asked via whatsapp by my Spanish friend Marco, whom we nickname the colonizer. His text takes me immediately to other places. How distant and at the same time similar are the mythological references that we deal with. He has been twice to Bolivia and I have never been. I send him a picture of the tíos (uncles) who take care of the silver mines in the altiplanic zone to see if he saw any of them during his trip. The “uncles” are statues that are in remote places of the mines. They have a large erect phallus and receive offerings of alcohol, cigars and coca from the miners. They bless or curse the passage to the depths of the earth. He is considered a demon by Catholic cosmology and as the husband

of Pachamama by indigenous cosmology. One might think, what a feminine gesture of Pachamama to have a husband who takes care full time the entrance to the depths of herself, but in reality, mining is the most macho thing that exists. It's the hell itself: A type of extraction that has the highest rates of trafficking in people in the area and that subjects children and women, leaving miners with a life expectancy up to 40 - 45, which produces chemical surpluses that pollute the valleys and rivers, extract and deplete lands and souls and that has taken away the water from innumerable communities, causing personal/communal identity and economic crises. To top it all off, the "uncle" denies any woman access to the depths of the mines. The Uncle takes care of the entrance to hell himself.

✦ Atacama Desert, Chile

And a little further south of La Tirana, in the Atacama Desert, there is my grandfather Chalo (92). Architect, self-taught archaeologist and former hunter. Descendant of Spaniards and born in Chile. He is the personification of a personal symbolic production. In the last 60 years he has explored the surface and depth of a few square kilometers of the Atacama Desert. Also a mining area, it is a desert where the hills of extractable material are combined with the material processed by the mining companies



✦ Atacama Desert, Chile



✦ Atacama Desert, Chile

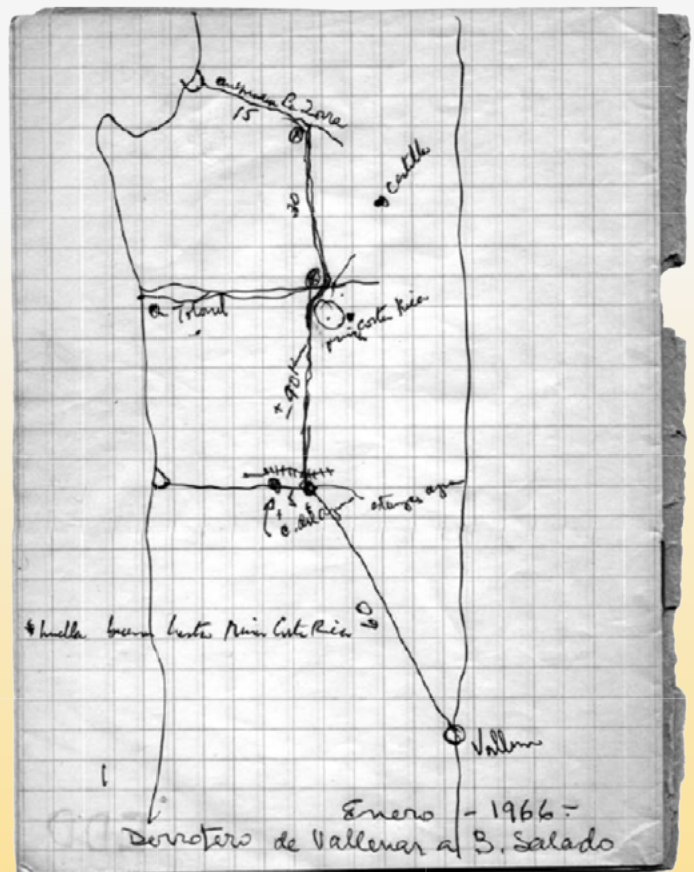
and where high monoliths stand majestically, shining like our telephones while they contain the planetary memory in their upper parts.

By the '60s, his gaze was fixed on that specific spot from an airplane while searching for traces of indigenous cemeteries during his vacations. The next year he returned and made his way overland. Approaching the place with an open attitude and without taking anything for granted, he accessed the history of the place from the objects, from the present. He has found indigenous cemeteries, Spanish artifacts, contemporary garbage, biological specimens, toys, Pacific War bullets, wounded indigenous bones with arrowheads, the most southern



✦ Atacama Desert, Chile

green turtle colony on the planet (which has also inspired problematic projects of body paint), fossils millions of years old, a mummy called the “Indian granny” (which has several braids, not just two on each side) and even a unique species of whale, 16 million years old. For this, he has the help of his family and friends who often joke about being his full time workers.



✦ Atacama Desert, Chile



✦ Atacama Desert, Chile



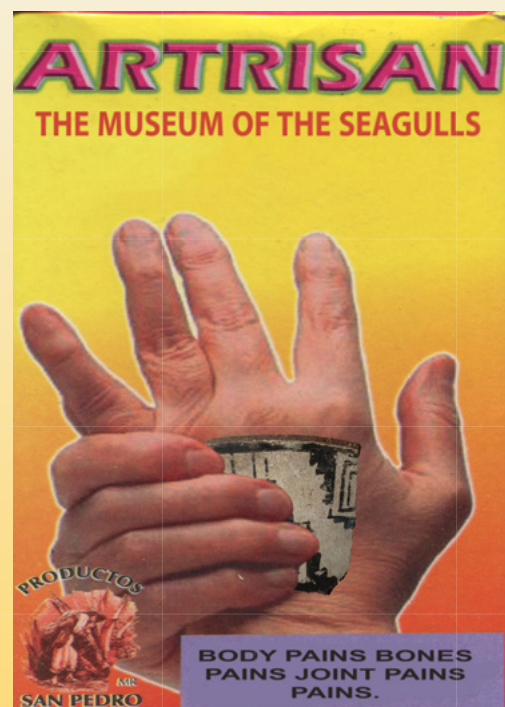
Almost all his discoveries have been organized, mixing time and space into “The Museum of the Seagulls”. A museum where present, past and future coexist in cabinets made of fishing nets discarded by the fishing industry and the ocean.

My grandfather has invented a new genre, where indigenous art, folk crafts and contemporary art have become compatible. With the objects available in the desert, he has built jewels, recreated the pirate ships that came to America with pieces of garbage, built means of transport for his relatives, wind instruments, bread ovens decorated with scallop

✦ Atacama Desert, Chile

shells, reproduced drawings of European naturalists who came to Chile, organized a cemetery of whales, built beautiful planetary objects of decoration, built a chapel where the patron is a child Jesus surfing a wave and transformed buoys into pots and useful as well as functionless ornaments.

A few weeks ago I was at the The Museum of the Seagulls, it was up to me to help patch up a series of pirate ships and thieves from the Museum. I was patching up that of Captain Morgan. His boat has a bone prow mask and it seems, drunken crew provided by corks from the San Pedro vineyard and prisoners imprisoned in champagne bottle tops of which I did not write down the brand.



✦ Atacama Desert, Chile

My grandfather's personal mode of production has become a strategy to understand the place that is inhabited in a strange and personal way, inventing a new genre in the desert, in a gesture of urgent and personal life. When someone modifies images and concepts of other multi-cultures, they do so mainly when they are found useful for the stories of themselves. And when the appropriation is made with imagination, results are produced where recent and old forms are reanimated in a radiant impurity.



✦ Atacama Desert, Chile
✦ Punta San Pedro, Chile



One Nortina morning, walking along Punta San Pedro, looking at the ground scanning for artifacts, my sister found an indigenous mostacilla that was used as a jewel. A precious trophy. After a while, Chalo found another similar mostacilla. “Which one of you found the mostacilla?” He asked. “I”. Said my sister. “Then take this one too, so you have two and you make a necklace.” His joy was euphoric. So were my jealousies. That’s the kind of justice and humor of Chalo, who usually says:

- ✦ Atacama Desert, Chile
- ✦ Punta San Pedro, Chile

“He who goes
rushed, has no
time for laughter.”

I think that humor is what has allowed my grandfather to combine the elements of non-congruent cosmologies at will.



- ✦ 5 days
- ✦ 3 days and a bit



And even more to the south of Chile, there is Lorenzo Aillapán (77), the bird man or Üñümche, who has invented a unique genre, which combines ancestral memory, colonial memory and the imitation of birds. At age 9 he was consecrated as a bird man in his dreams, where a bird with long jaws drew blood from a finger.

Lorenzo lives in Puerto Saavedra, in the IX Region of the Araucanía (Region that was to the south of the Biobío river, that for many years was the limit of the colonization of the Spaniards with the Mapuche population, the last original peoples to be conquered

✦ Puerto Saavedra, Chile

in South America.) This region is currently occupied mainly by industrial forest plantations of radiata and eucalyptus pines, which have displaced native and sacred medicinal forests.

Lorenzo says that no bird sings for singing. They do not speak, but deliver signals, onomatopoeic messages to understand the changes that take place in the ecosystem. Some birds warn of visits that approach, others announce if the fishing was abundant or not, others of ladies who are bathing in the river, others



- ✦ Puerto Saavedra, Chile
- ✦ Brazil
- ✦ France
- ✦ Denmark

of earthquakes that are approaching. Some birds, such as the turtledove and the pigeon, are giving up singing, because their nests and their eggs fall from the sparse branches of radiata pines. The birds accuse the changes of the territory, so one finds out about the change of the forests. Lorenzo is one of the most interesting representatives of the Chilean ethno-ornithology, where the traditional knowledge of ornithology is combined with environmental ethics. And his art exists to be sung.

But even more interesting, is that the birds have given Lorenzo great power. He travels around the world with or without money. The power of the birds carries it. He has flown to Brazil, France, Denmark, among many other lands. His connection with birds has freed him from having to work in forestry companies, as has had to do much of his community. Something as “useless” as to communicate with birds, has become an emancipatory and liberating gesture. Lorenzo has invented his own genre, resisting exoticism and escaping the hegemonization of the

- ✦ 3 days
- ✦ 2 weeks
- ✦ less than 2 months
- ✦ 2 months

same. As the Guatemalan curator Pablo José Ramírez has written; “Lorenzo is not the representation of a bird, but rather a becoming bird. In this transit, Man does not represent, but becomes a bird; the articulation of the word with sound is a form of deactivation of discourse and identity, in pursuit of desire. It does not pretend to instrumentalize the social or the ancestral, as a resource, but what happens here is something much more complex, made possible precisely by a creative act, resisting the (re) production of a singular future.”

It was very special to meet Don Lorenzo and see how his vital energy had not been oppressed by the dynamics of the corporate cosmology that surrounds him. At home, accompanied by a calendar sponsored by a forestry company and the effects of multicolored lights on the same wall, the prayer that he taught us reads as follows:



In words, in prayer
and in meditation:
First Great Spirit of
universal fertility
I am Lorenzo
Aillapán
I ask you to bring
your power to my
mind, in your head,
in my heart, in my
body, in my blood
and remain forever.

So that I may be
wise, so that I may
be just, so that I may
be kind, so that
I may be powerful.
Not in the sense
of money or land,
but I ask this First
Great Spirit of
Universal Fecundity
for diseases, “bad
energy –

THAT THEY
LEAVE! And my
family and all my
friends, even you
who I've just met,
that you may be
fine, that you all
be calm.”



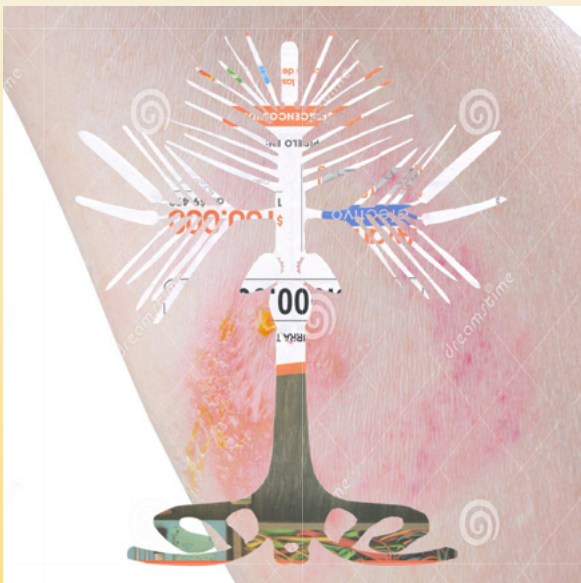
✦ Puerto Saavedra, Chile

Lorenzo told me that he does not imitate wood forests of pines or eucalyptus, he only imitates native forests, because in the forests the trees are planted in a row. In those rows, the trees do not touch, there is no friction, they do not sound. Silence. Sound - Sin. They do not have melody. They do not interest him. They do not have magic. How elegant his criticism. From the particular to the universal: your world is mediated by birds and trees. We share a dream...



✦ Puerto Saavedra, Chile

In the bird theory that Lorenzo has built, he says that the Spanish soldier, when he went to conquer them, thought that his community spoke like birds. Then the following question must be asked: If the Chileans, of Mapuche or foreign origin, spoke like birds, if the Chileans became birds, what kind of birds are becoming now in our lands? Most are birds that have to go to the office. Birds that have to work from Monday to Friday, from 9 - 7 pm. Corporate birds. Their women thoroughly wash the collars of their shirts. Some more emancipated, they have cut them and only wash the sleeves and shirt. All have incorporated and synchronized with the expressions of the emojis of their smartphones.



✦ Puerto Saavedra, Chile
✦ Don Lorenzo's day job
Santiago, Chile

What kind of ancestral knowledge is being built in a country that is a laboratory of privatization? If even Don Lorenzo tells that he was an accountant in a company in Santiago from Monday to Friday and a bird man on Saturdays and Sundays, until when in '73 he returned to his community to be a birdman every day of his life.

In the construction of this homogenous ancestral knowledge, the practices of difference embodied by these two people / birds of the third age, Chalo and Don Lorenzo, are fundamental. In deeply personal

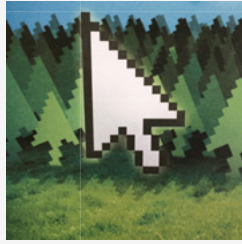


✦ Puerto Saavedra, Chile
✦ Atacama Desert, Chile



gestures, emancipated and decolonized, they have managed to “put into the juicer” pre-choreographed cosmological relations and draw their own mixtures, healing in some way the body and the social territory. It makes a lot of sense to me how Pablo José Ramírez thinks about them: “I would dare to say, that the same thing happens with the Bird-Man or with the Museum of the Seagulls; if we abstract the colonial memory of that Bird-Man mutation, we would rather face an eccentric poet; if we abstract the futuristic archeology (a particular form of memory) from the Museum of the Seagulls, we would face a collection of archaeological objects.

✦ 3 days
✦ 5 days



Upon entering into the registers of memory, both the Bird-Man and the Museum of the Seagulls are presented as creative and futable acts. These access a memory system, impossible to synthesize in the discourse, that is why they work in and outside the text.”

Back in Santiago, in the center of the country, I enter my house and first thing I encounter are the bills of the month waiting for me. Welcome! I’m welcomed by the extractors of natural resources for energy, internet and gas. Since when has this ritual of opening accounts become so intimate? To open your envelopes to see how much you owe has become commonplace. They invade even the entrance of my house, although I have asked countless times to send them to my email. Even so, I like to look at its horrid graphics. Sometimes I peek at my neighbors bills. This month they received a ticket from the highway, with pixelated pines. They have transformed the computer cursor into digital pines.



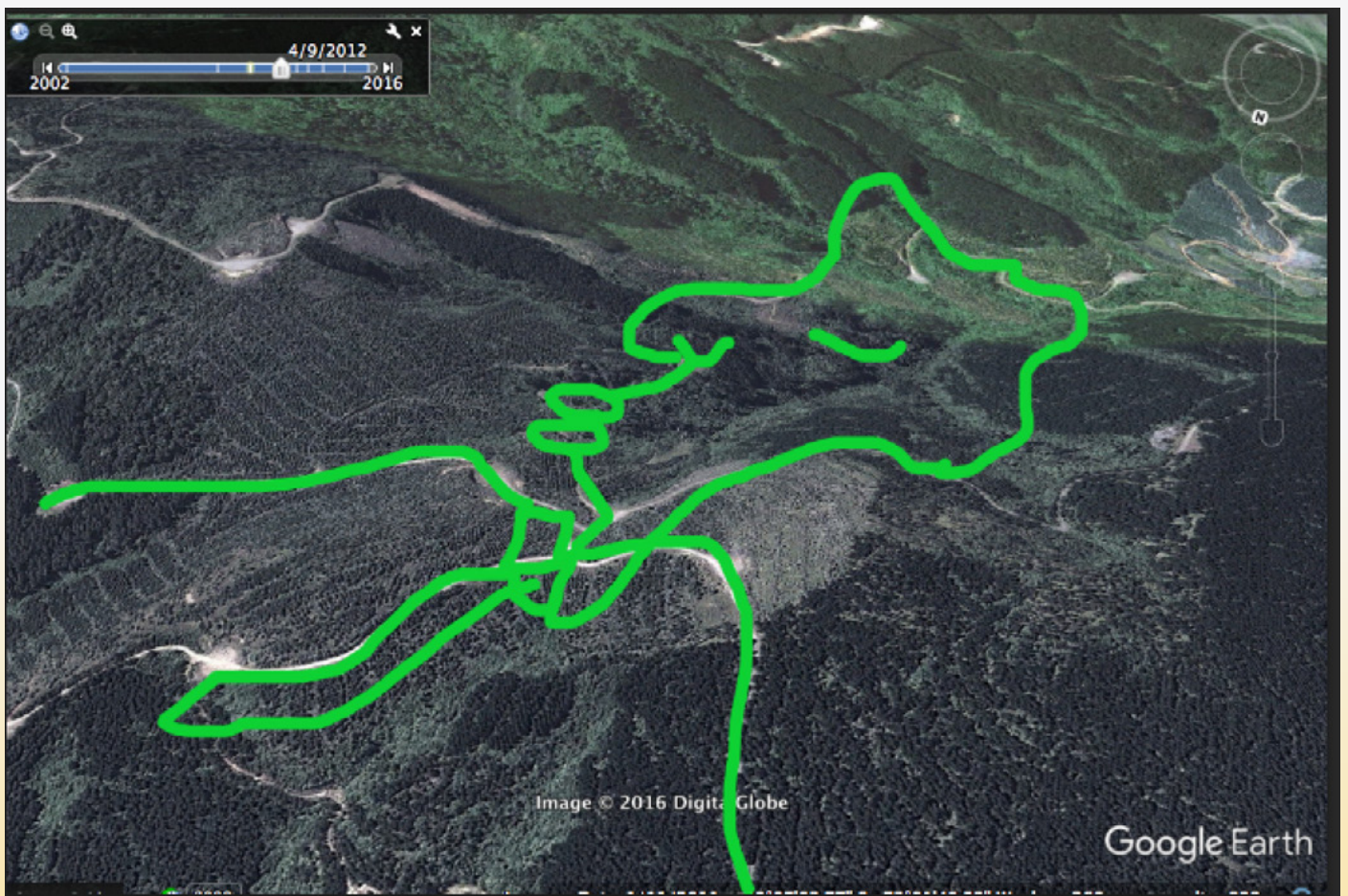
That night, the pine cursor appears in my dreams like one of the patterns painted on fragments of ceramic that rest in the Museum of the Seagulls. The tickets have infiltrated even my dreams. I enter in reverie of ceramics, tickets and birds. I dreamt that I made a bird's flight in Google Earth over the forest plantations that surround Lorenzo on the coast of southern Chile. I am dedicated to tracking the shapes of the empty spaces of the pine plantations. They resemble the Nazca lines. They are involuntary contemporary geoglyphs that emerge from the corporate use of the land. More than drawings, they are acts of unearthing of the sacred creatures that lie in potentiality. Sacred birds that are dormant under the plantations. Phoenixes appear, men with ties and birds sitting on the computer.

Figures appear in between the empty space between the pines. Sacred animals that emerge from the transmuting fire. Beings that are emerging between the empty space left between the radiata pines and eucalyptus. Beings ready to populate the new mythologies of extraction and exhaustion.



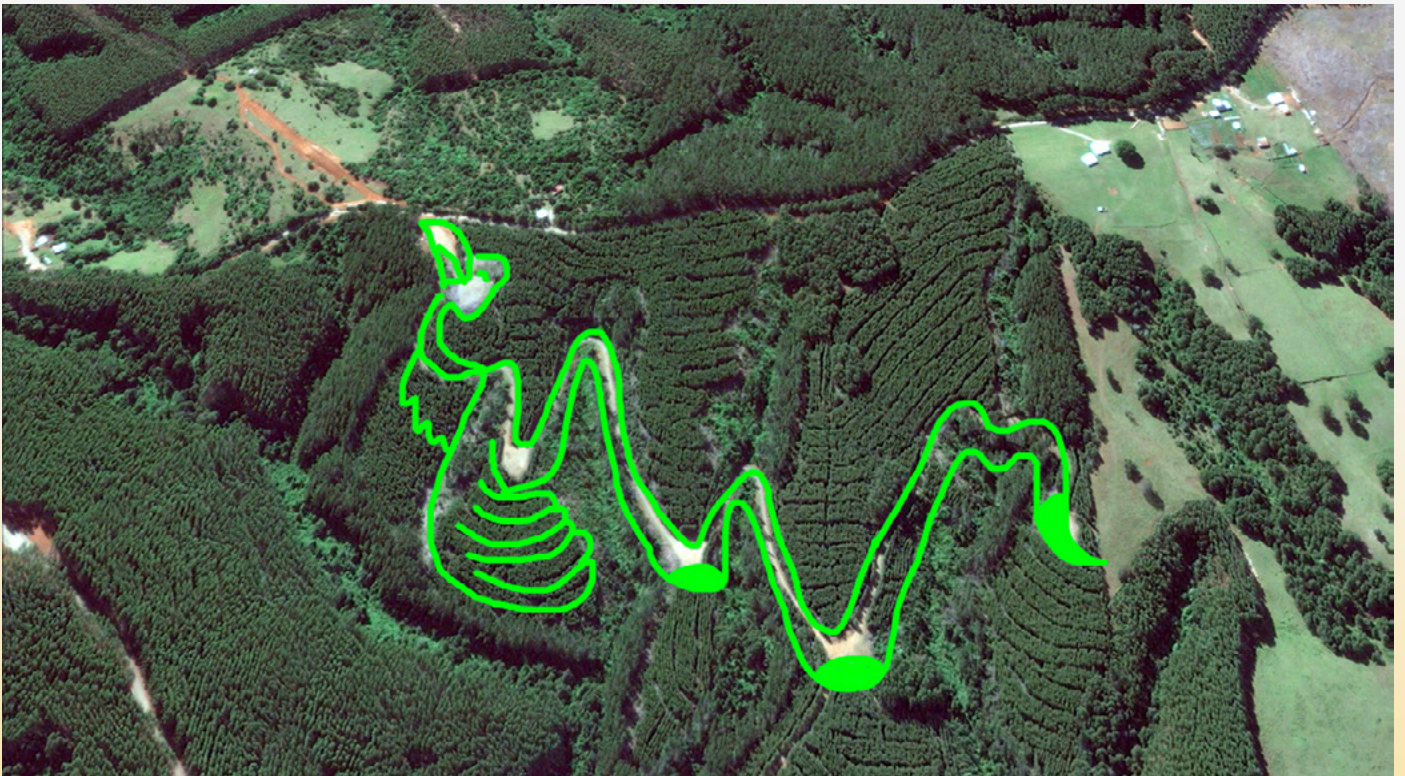


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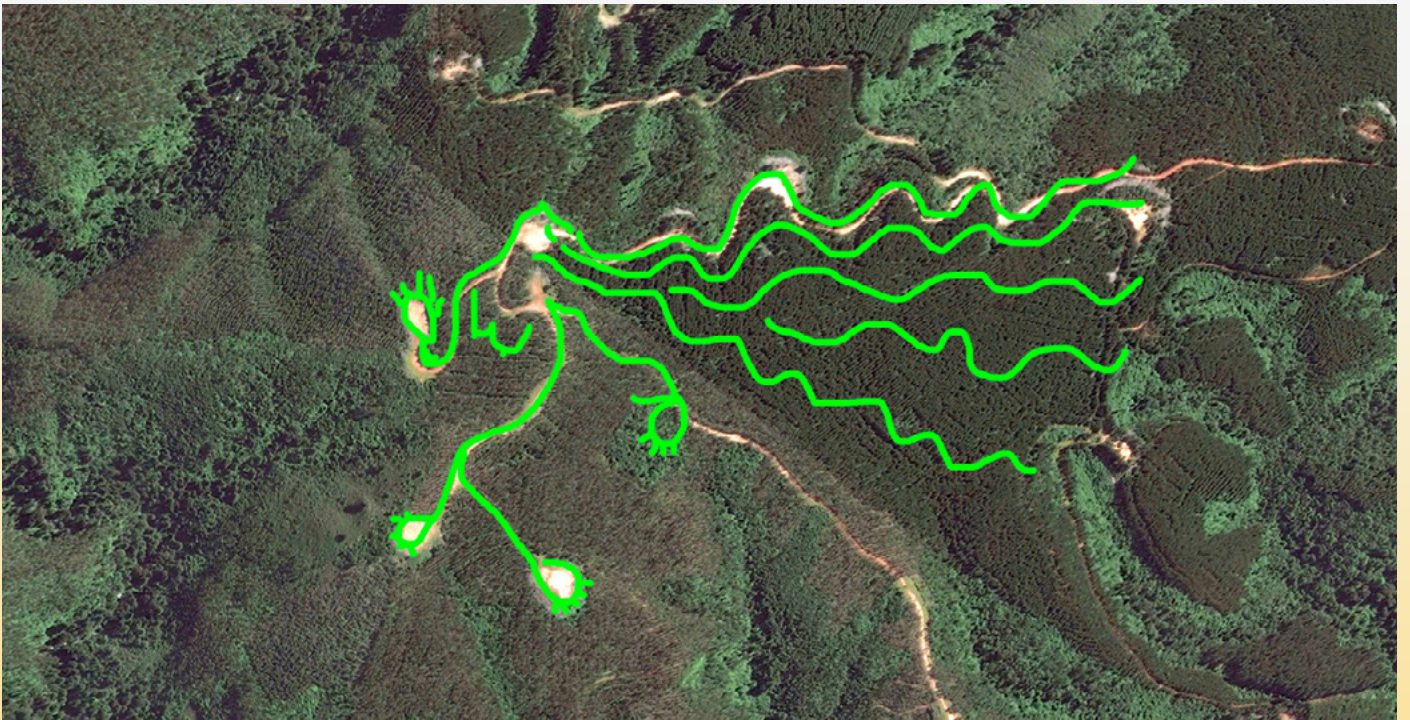


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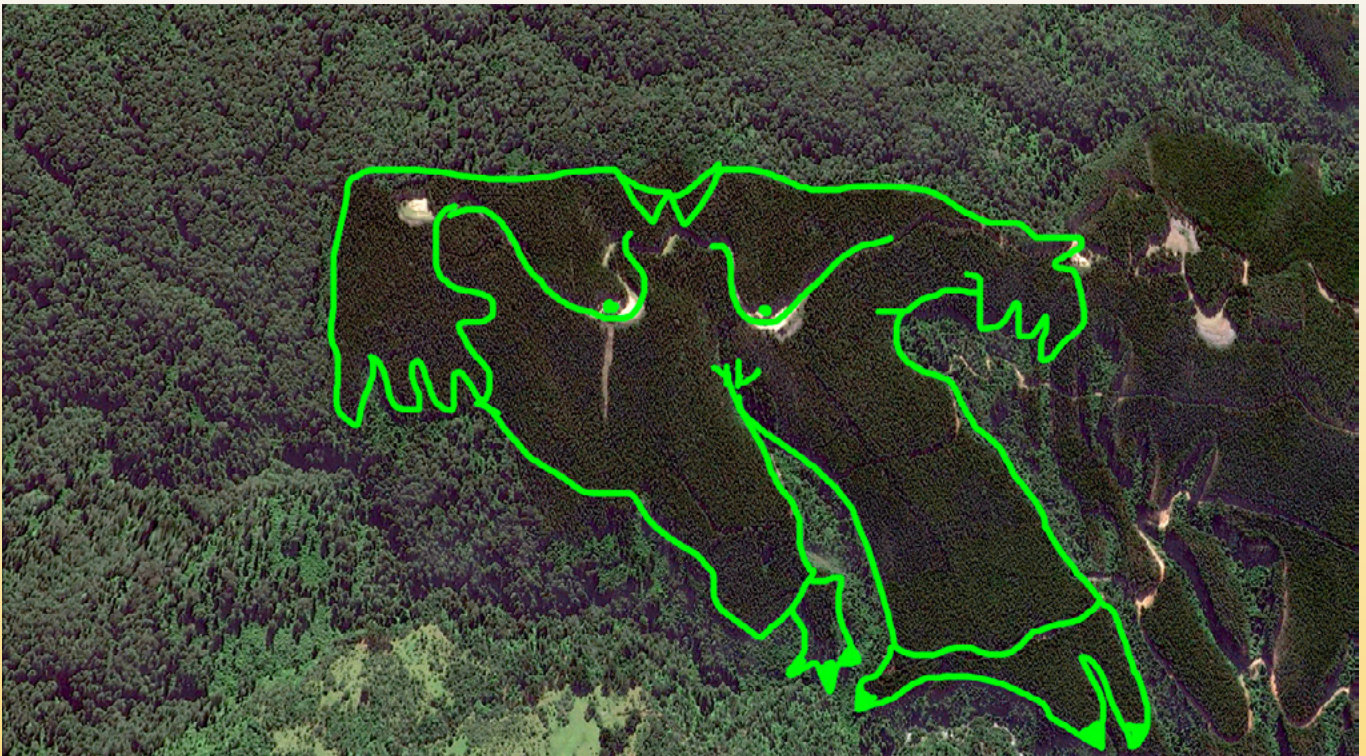


ZOOM OUT





ZOOM OUT UNTIL MORE THAN GOOGLE EARTH.



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✦ time stamps

The months and dates at the bottom of the pages refer to the hypothetical amount of time taken for Franklin's Seagull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan* – a migratory bird often wintering in Chile) to fly to the place mentioned in the text, if it starts in Santiago de Chile.



Patricia Domínguez works across video, installation, drawing and writing. Her work traces the relationships of affection, labour and obligation that are emerging from the ongoing digitisation of all aspects of life, and the precarization of the living.

