

SEBA CALFUQUEO

A VOZ DO RIO (THE VOICE OF THE RIVER)

GALERIA
MARILIA
RAZUK

21.10.23 - 16.12.23

A voz do rio [The Voice of the River]

"In Chile, the Water Code of 1981, drafted during the Pinochet dictatorship, is still in force. The document defines Chile's waters as a marketable commodity." So begins Seba Calfuqueo's text, which acts as a counterpoint to the images of her body immersed in the waters of the Cautín River and literally tied to the nature that surrounds it, in the 2020 performance video *Kowkülen* (Ser líquido). In this work, the artist presents a journey through the river and, at the same time, through her own body, associating the fluidity of water with that of her identity, which is recurrent in her recent production and leads us to critically question the binary structures imposed by colonial orders of many kinds, as well as the consequences the predominance of these structures have in global society and contemporary Mapuche culture specifically, something the artist addressed in one of her earliest works, *You will never be a Weye*, 2015. As Seba herself has stated, her body of work constitutes, both for the artist and symbolically for the Mapuche community, a way to "appropriate a history and place that historically has been denied to us." *A voz do rio* (The Voice of the River), the artist's first exhibition at Galeria Marilia Razuk, ratifies this strategy of reappropriation of territory and traditions through a body of work that is incredibly diverse in terms of the materials and techniques used, but also extremely coherent in its relationship with water, a central element in the Mapuche cosmology and culture.

The way that Seba manages to simultaneously approach issues of gender and race, local and global cultural debates, and pressing universal social and ecological threats, is probably one of the most recognizable and fascinating characteristics of her work. *Tray Tray Ko*, 2022, the other video included in this exhibition, expresses these relationships lyrically and poetically. The true protagonist in the work is *trayenko*, the waterfall towards which the artist directs her action — a sacred place where many Mapuche rituals and practices happen, both because of the presence of water itself and because of the abundance of *lawen*, curative and medicinal plants that grow on the banks of the small pools that form near the *trayenko*. Carrying a long blue robe that snakes through the forest like a second river, the artist expresses again the inseparability of her body and nature and, in turn, of nature from the ancestral practices of her people. In other words, Seba Calfuqueo's body is, literally, an integral and inextricable part of Mapuche territory.

Perfectly conscious of the capitalist logic that defines, in almost always an immediatist and disastrous way, relationships with the environment in Chile, Latin America, and the majority of countries worldwide, the artist also created a set of models of hydroelectric plants, three located in Chile and two in Brazil, which occupy the center of the room, almost reaffirming the inescapable centrality of that capitalist logic in any context. In a certain way, the models also act as tiny, silent monuments to the struggles of the original peoples, not only in Chile, against predatory infrastructures, like hydroelectric plants, so often presented as "green energy" but that which usually bring with them, in the artist's words, "adverse environmental impacts, destroying the indigenous worldview that understands territory as part their own bodies." One of the plants reproduced, and perhaps the most symbolic, is the Central Ralco plant, located in Alto Bío Bío, part of Mapuche/Pewenche territory in Southern Chile, and installed despite the protests and efforts of women from the local Mapuche community, who tried unsuccessfully to defend the *lefwü* [river] from the Spanish/Italian company Endesa, which ultimately flooded indigenous territory where a cemetery with over seven hundred bodies is also located, now underwater.

The faces of these women, the memory of their struggle and, symbolically, of the Mapuche bodies that have been repeatedly raped, erased, and buried since the colonization began, are the subject of the series of drawings that is also the body of work that most directly connects the spiritual and almost mystic realm of the videos with the explicitly militant nature of the models. The saga of the women who fought to protect a space that is sacred and untouchable because it is also an integral part of a collective and communal body that defines them and from which they are inseparable, is the place where the two centers that delimit the space where Seba Calfuqueo's work happens meet. A work that, like the blue cloak that the artist carries like a river in *Tray Tray Ko*, meanders and molds itself to the place it appears, touching on different techniques and issues, thus managing to be one and, at the same time, many.

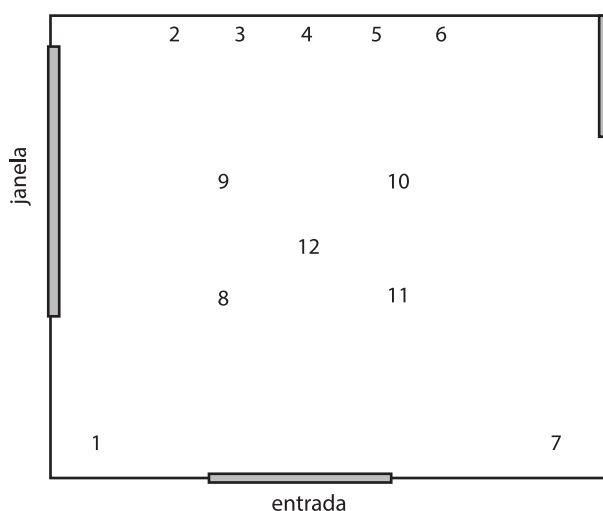
Jacopo Crivelli Visconti

Seba Calfuqueo (Ela/Elu, Santiago, Chile, 1991).

Visual Artist and Curator at Espacio 218. They live and work in Santiago de Chile. They are part of the Mapuche collective Rangĩntulewfũ and Yene Revista.

Of Mapuche Origin, their work recurs to their cultural heritage as a starting point in order to propose a critical reflection on the social, cultural, and political status of the Mapuche subject within contemporary Chilean society. Their work includes installation, ceramics, performance and video, with the aim of exploring the cultural similarities and differences between the crossing of indigenous and Western ways of thinking, as well as their stereotypes. Their goal is also to make the issues regarding feminism and queer theory visible.

Their work is part of the Centre Pompidou (France) Museo MALBA (Argentina), Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum (Spain), KADIST collection (France), Museu de Arte Contemporânea do Rio Grande do Sul - MAC RS (Brazil), Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Chile) and MAC (Chile). They participated in the 34th Bienal de São Paulo, 12th Bienal de Mercosur and 22th Bienal Paiz. They are winner of the Municipalidad de Santiago Award in 2017 and Fundación FAVA Award in 2018. In 2021 they were awarded by Eyebeam's Fractal Fellowships and in 2023 by Fundación Ama Amoedo'a FAARA.



1. TRAYTRAY KO, 2022. Video performance. 6', 4K ed. 3/5
2. "The voice of the river" series, *Mujeres mapuche protestando a central Ralco*, 2023. Acrylic and pigments on Arches Aquarelle satin-finish grain paper, 300 g. 88.5 X 69.5 cm
3. "The voice of the river" series, *Nicolasa contra fuerza policial e instalación de Ralco*, 2023. Acrylic and pigments on Arches Aquarelle satin-finish grain paper, 300 g. 88.5 X 69.5 cm
4. "The voice of the river" series, *Berta y Nicolasa contra la instalación de Ralco frente a la moneda. (Palacio Presidencial)*, 2023. Acrylic and pigments on Arches Aquarelle satin-finish grain paper, 300 g. 88.5 X 69.5 cm
5. "The voice of the river" series, *Nicolasa Quintreman en memoria al río*, 2023. Acrylic and pigments on Arches Aquarelle satin-finish grain paper, 300 g. 88.5 X 69.5 cm
6. "The voice of the river" series, *Cementerio indígena bajo el agua hasta hoy en Ralco*, 2023. Acrylic and pigments on Arches Aquarelle satin-finish grain paper, 300 g. 88.5 X 69.5 cm
7. *Kowkülen (Ser Líquido)* 2020 Video, 3', 4K ed. 4/5
8. BARRERAS, *Central Angostura*, 2023. Glazed ceramic at 1060° 20 x 20 x 9 cm
9. BARRERAS, *Central Itaipu*, 2023. Glazed ceramic at 1060° 20 x 20 x 9 cm
10. BARRERAS, *Central Belo Monte*, 2023. Glazed ceramic at 1060° 20 x 20 x 9 cm
11. BARRERAS, *Central Pangué*, 2023. Glazed ceramic at 1060° 20 x 20 x 9 cm
12. BARRERAS, *Central Ralco*, 2023. Glazed ceramic at 1060° 20 x 20 x 9 cm