



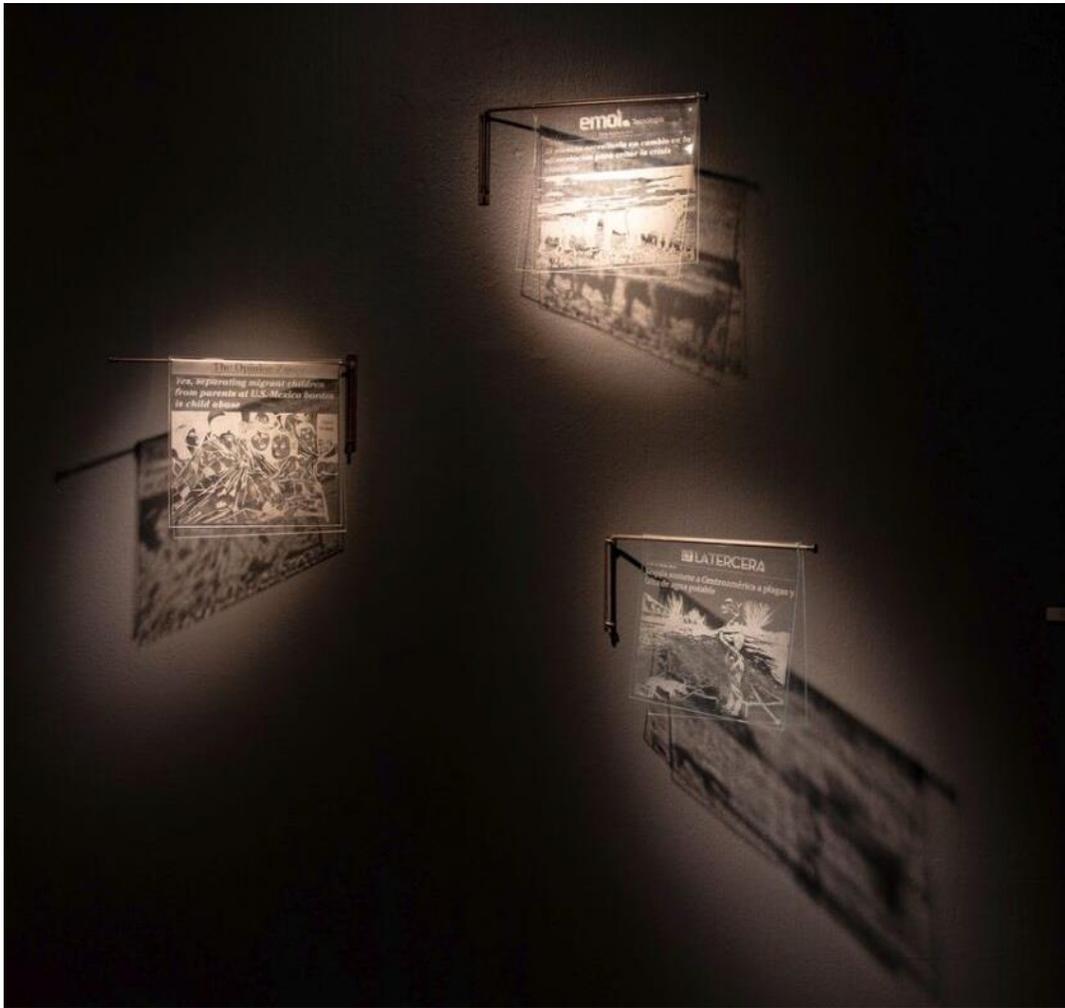
CRUCES DE CAMPO. 10 Years of Galería NAC

By Victoria Abaroa
29 Feb 2024



Cruces de Campo, organized by NAC Gallery, GAM Cultural Center, Santiago, 2024. Photo: Francisca Razeto/GAM.

The *Cruces de Campo* exhibition celebrates the tenth anniversary of the Galería NAC, originally founded by Nicole Andreu with a focus on architecture, but which over time has adopted a multidisciplinary perspective that explores the interrelationship between humanity, environment, society and everyday life. Beyond the diversity of works of the 23 artists gathered, the exhibition reveals multiple connections that enrich the experience of visitors. *Satellite* was the centerpiece of the artist's project for the American Pavilion in Venice, epitomizing her exploration of the Black female figure through bronze and aligning closely to her vessels, which symbolize and honor Black women. The piece will be sited adjacent to Cristina Iglesias' water sculpture *Inner Landscape* (2020), at the entrance to the Kinder Building.



Soledad Salamé, *Newspaper Series, Almost Transparent (1-11)*, 2019-2020, folded sanded glass, laser engraving and articulated shadow projection printing, 30.48 x 30.48 x 30.48 cm. Courtesy: NAC. Photo: Francisca Razeto/GAM

The *Cruces de Campo* exhibition, which is presented until March 24 at the GAM Center, is a clear reflection of the transformation of the Galería NAC over the last decade. Initially focused exclusively on architecture, the gallery has moved towards a more anthropological direction in its exhibitions, while forging relationships with a wide variety of agents in their transversal commitment to mediation, education and research.

Under the curation of Nicole Andreu, *Cruces de Campo* is structured around three thematic nuclei, Being and person, Territory and Mutations, which provide a coherent framework for a deeper understanding of the complexity of the human condition and its relationship with social and natural environments.

The works are distributed in the Visual Arts Room of the GAM without necessarily corresponding directly to each thematic nucleus. This arrangement allows visitors to find correlations between artists who explore different topics, which enriches both the appreciation of each particular work and the integral experience of the exhibition.

A possible connection that visitors can establish has to do with the modes of perception, the dangers of post-truth or the wonders of possible worlds. Another would be the inextricable

interrelationship between humanity and nature, which can be manifested through universal principles of organization or in objects loaded with symbolic meanings.



[Left] Cristóbal Cea, *Horoscopismos*, 2023. Full Video, HD | 3D Animation + Stable Diffusion AI. Courtesy: NAC. Photo: Francisca Razeto/GAM
[Right] Javiera Gómez, *Men of Sign I and II*, 2023 - 2024. Holographic adhesive and vinyl painted with oleographic paint on acrylic plate screen printed with water-proof ink. 50,5 x 35 cm (c/u). Courtesy: NAC. Photo courtesy of the artist

READING THE SKY

The popular Chilean astrologer Pedro Engel had anticipated that 2024, the year of the Wooden Dragon, would be expansive and less turbulent than the previous one, but the recent fires in Valparaíso seem to contradict such a prediction. The dubious accuracy of this type of forecast, however, does not tarnish the fervor for consulting the horoscope as a speculative guide to certainties about the future.

The artist Cristóbal Cea highlights as one of the most characteristic of our times the irrational desire to transcend all uncertainty through immediate explanations, regardless of whether or not they have a true sustenance. In his work *Horoscopes*, the artist equates this phenomenon with the reading of clouds, whose capricious forms open up to varied interpretations for those who observe them. In this way, it draws a parallel between the projective quality of the clouds and the historical understanding of the inhabitants of America prior to their discovery.

A similar idea intrigues Javiera Gómez, who through her work *Men of Sign I and II* explores the evolution (not entirely positive) of the role of astrology in people's lives. In each of the two acrylic plates that make up the piece, the image of an oriental Homo Signorum is presented, a

figure emerged in the Middle Ages that linked the stars to the parts of the human body for medicinal purposes.

The image on the left side is a classic representation of the zodiacal man, while the one on the right is a review that incorporates the tattoos of Javiera's partner. Like the clouds, these drawings, seemingly devoid of meaning, invite people to project their own deductions and desires, now on their own bodies.



Soledad Salamé, *Newspaper Series, Almost Transparent (1-11)*, 2019-2020, folded sanded glass, laser engraving and articulated shadow projection printing, 30.48 x 30.48 x 30.48 cm. Courtesy: NAC.
Photo: Francisca Razeto/GAM

The investigation of perceptual and projective phenomena is also observed in the work *Newspaper, Almost Transparent* by Soledad Salamé, composed of three covers of newspapers engraved in glass. The headlines refer to the migratory effects of climate change in Chile and the United States. Although the powerful lighting that bathes the crystals makes it easier to read the headlines, the task becomes challenging when trying from the shadows they reflect on the wall.

Shadows not only add complexity to the reading of the news, but also symbolize the distortion inherent in the image, the news and the environment. This aspect, which Soledad Salamé has explored since 2011, is interrelated with the fragility of the glass in the work, serving as a metaphor for the lack of protection of people affected by the events reported in the news. In such contexts, memory becomes a refuge that provides a sense of identity, both personal and collective



León & Cociña, *Atlantis the secret country*, 2023. Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 150 cm. Courtesy: NAC. Photo courtesy of NAC

Memory is also a mental space of experimentation with alternative realities that complement, modify or even contradict the established macro-stories. It is in this space of parallel worlds that the projects of Cristóbal León and Joaquín Cociña originate, who participate in the exhibition with three paintings related to their film *Los Hiperbóreos*, still to be released.

The presence of Jaime Guzmán's ghost, reflected both in the painting *Atlantis: the secret country* and in the same script of *Los Hiperbóreos*, seems to constitute a collective trauma. This specter, which arouses frustrations and heated debates, stands as a persistent witness to our recent history.

Although there are those who continue to defend Pinochet's questionable adviser, his shadow also projects the need to rethink the country narrative that we long to build. The dualistic feeling

towards the figure of Guzmán symbolically embodies the ideological polarization of the country, as well as the tensions present on our path to the future.



Juana Gómez, *Río de la conciencia*, 2023 - 2024, 300 hand-turned bells in porcelain and ceramics, led lights, 120 x 600 cm.
Courtesy: NAC. Photo: Francisca Razeto/GAM

THE LANGUAGE OF THE LIVING

For four months, Juana Gómez went into the field of neurology, becoming the only artist among dozens of scientists, as on other occasions. At an anatomy congress in 2016, he said that his interest in biology did not lie in understanding its theoretical complexities, but in discovering the interconnection between various systems, all related to the principle of energy efficiency, which postulates that the links are formed in the places of least resistance.

The universality of this principle is manifested in *Río de la conciencia*, an updated version of a previous installation by the artist. Initially entitled *Atmospheric River*, the work consists of flared porcelain pieces that materialize the natural phenomenon that saved Juana's house from a fire in 2020.

In this new version, the artist relates the work to the neural connections, incorporating light for its exhibition in the GAM. The image evokes her experience by witnessing the activity of a rat embryo cell in the neurology laboratory. When injected with a fluorescent protein, certain sections were illuminated when observed under the microscope.



Javiera Hiault-Echeverría, *Smokeless Fire II*, 2023. Courtesy: NAC. Photo: Francisca Razeto/GAM

Javiera Hiault-Echeverría focuses on interactions through language. Inspired by the fascination she experienced when participating in the decoding of drawings in a former corridor in Pompeii, the artist expanded her exploration to social groups such as a self-managed community of migrants and people with experiences linked to mental disorders.

His work consists of the creation of a hospital space through language, in which instances of dialogue are developed that transcend words and incorporate visual and sound dimensions. In each session, Javiera arranged a tablecloth on a table, equipped with strategically located microphones.

Smokeless Fire II, one of the textile pieces of the homonymous series that is presented in the exhibition, encapsulates the interactions of the 35 sessions. Its pinkish hue and satin texture evoke the aesthetics of the organ of the tongue, while its hanging nature allows it to fluctuate with the light drafts present in the room, evoking the oscillating nature of language.



Pilar Elgueta, I'm going in a thinness of fog, 2022. Action record | Digital video 7'32". Courtesy: NAC



Pilar Elgueta, Bodies of water: foreword, 2022-2023, still of digital video, 3'45". Courtesy: NAC

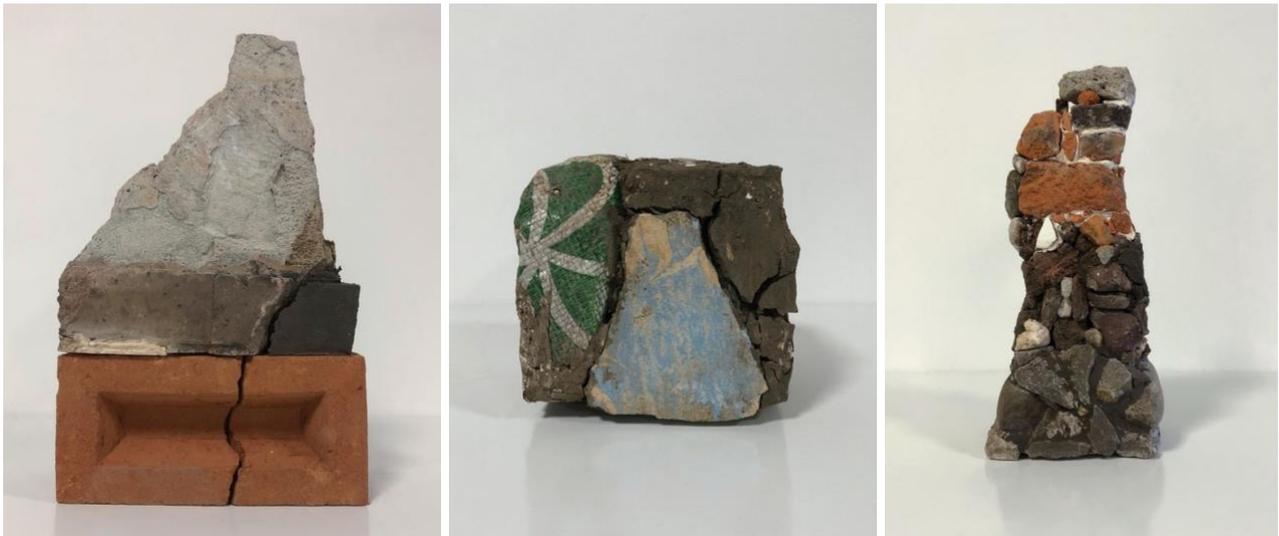
In *Voy en delgadez de niebla*, Pilar Elgueta explores the links between humanity and nature, a theme also addressed by Javiera Hiault-Echeverría and Juana Gómez. In the video, a group of people, whose clothes mimic the desert, carry with them LED signs on their backs, which progressively project the luminous letters that make up one of the verses of the poem *Finding* by Gabriela Mistral: "I go in a thinness of fog, but nevertheless I carry the features of my face, the brokenness of the weight, intact the will."

In another video, *Bodies of Water: Prologue*, of a more intimate character, Pilar shows the emptying of an ice mold that replicates her arm. This is gradually melting in the Bатуco Wetland. This scene interterlaces suggestive images and a poetic text extracted from his research notes.

Diego Santa María offers a similar perspective in *Ball, choritos, jaiba and nest*, by suggesting that forgotten objects contain personal memories and reflect the relationship with the environment. The four works, installed next to each other, present elements found on the Chilean coast on a surface of linen, all framed in the manner of pictorial devices. This gesture, which enhances the status and earthly memory of things, is typical of the transhumant artist, for whom part of the creative process involves being attentive to the earth under his feet.



Diego Santa María, Ball, chorito, crab and nest, 2023. Collected objects sewn on linen, 90 x 70 cm (c/u). Courtesy: NAC.
Photo: Francisca Razeto/GAM



María Gabler, Ensemblajes, 2023. Materials found (cement, wood, mud, brick, stone, wire, among others). Variable measures.
Photos courtesy of the artist

Drift is also integrated into the process of creating the *Ensemblajes series*, by María Gabler, in which it combines collected objects of dimensions that contrast with its recognized monumental installations. These works, of a more intimate and exploratory nature, reproduce some Chilean construction logics, typical of an architecture characterized by the use of light materials.

The pieces display a set of material tensions by incorporating both natural and manufactured elements, including a fence tip that the artist kept when they changed the fence of her house. For María, it is a kind of bastard ruin, an archaeological fragment that dissolves and merges with its environment, unlike the coveted treasure that waits to be unearthed and stripped of its history.