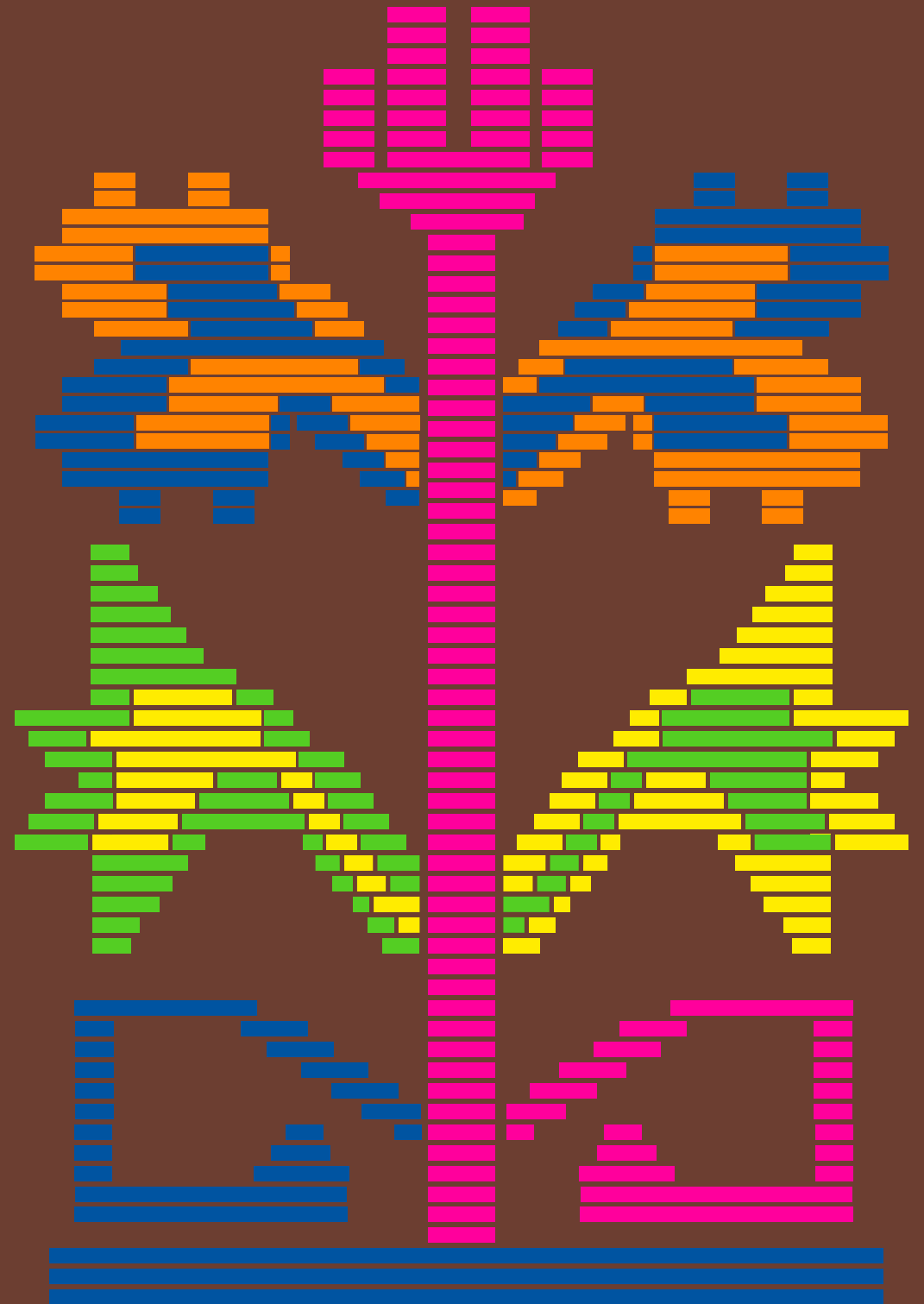


METANINFAS
EDITIONS

WE GROW BECAUSE
WE COME TOGETHER

TEXTILES SEEDS
UNION



**WE GROW BECAUSE
WE COME TOGETHER**

Unión Textiles Semillas
We Grow Because We Come Together / Unión Textiles
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Cover

Textile reference
Type: tapestry
Technique: pallado
Materials: raw sheep wool dyed with artificial dyes
Iconography: raise the hand that which blossom
Authorship: Juana Gutiérrez (Teleras de Huilla Catina)

METANINFAS is an organism that connects art and contemporary thought. It serves as a scaffold, a mobile and flexible structure, facilitating the development of curatorial, editorial, action, exhibition and circulation projects.

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This book is part of the fourth movement: the unions.

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WE GROW BECAUSE WE COME TOGETHER

Textiles Seeds Union

Weavers, Artists and Activists
of Northern Argentina

metaninfas

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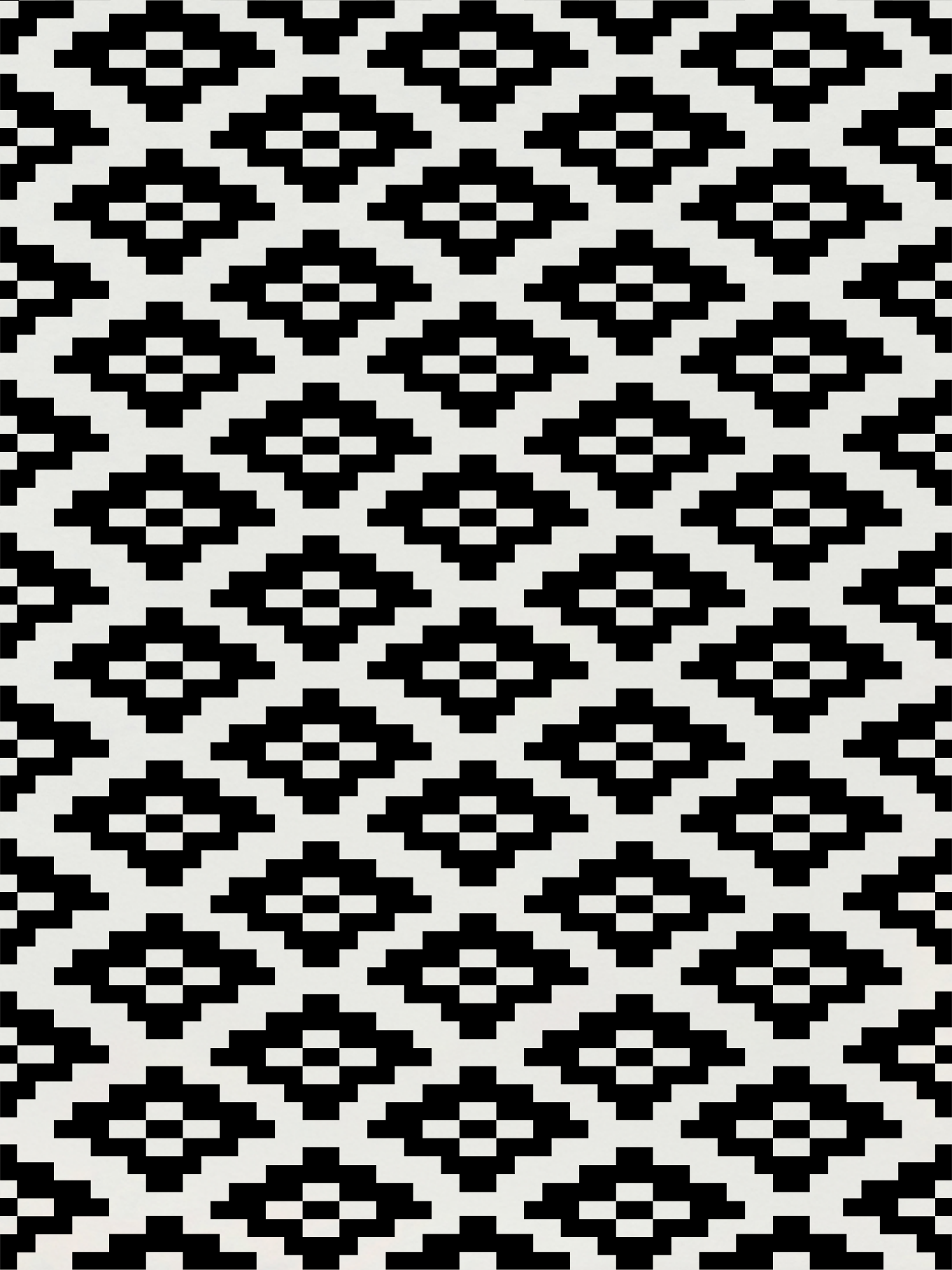
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Q'EPI



FIRST MAGIC
BUNDLE



The Memory of Collective Conscience¹

Margarita Ramírez

Q'epi - First Bundle

Textile reference

Type: pelero (textile used for the horse saddle)

Technique: torzal

Materials: raw sheep wool dyed with the *ponchito* (shell) from the nuts

Iconography: partridge's eyes

Authorship: Warmipura

I'm imagining a great many things.

I want to make a book about the Quipu, I've already started to see how I'm going to do it.

To talk about the Quipu I have to go back in time. My people are Diaguita-Calchaquí, we were conquered not only by the Europeans but also by the Inca. In this ancestral journey we left great traces, some in chests, others in clay vessels, beneath the earth, and engraved in the rocky outcrops. Today, Mother Nature speaks of our past and also of the present, which is us, who are still here because we do not forget our roots. Today an alchemy is mixed, the present with the past. I will tell you a little about it.

The Quipu was a mathematical accounting system. Before, there was no writing like today, they wrote differently. The Incas had an impressive operating system, today there are still great fortresses, as if they wanted to tell us. They never died, they are all along the Calchaquí corridor. And why not say in some parts of the world, as many records were taken away. They're in different forms; it's a distinct landscape because it has memory. And if there is memory there is life. The Quipus tied that up, that very important thing. There, they had records of harvests, of gold, of the silver they had; of the calendar, births, deaths, etc. There were even pocket Quipus, small ones. This was done on a main cord with many secondary ones, with many knots and colours, and a person was trained to read. And this person was considered worthy of reading these memories.

[1] Transcription by María Gabriela Cisterna of audios sent by Margarita Ramírez, published in the fanzine *Testimonios*, produced by **Textiles Semillas** to accompany the presentation of table 2 of the Jornada de Arte Textil [Textile Art Conference] at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA) [Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires] in February 2024, within the framework of the exhibition *Soñar el agua* by artist Cecilia Vicuña.

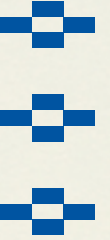
I love my culture so much and I study it, but in a poetic way. I like to rescue what is essential, what touches the soul, the spirituality. I had several opportunities to be told about the Quipu by my grandparents. I encountered some of them and they fascinated me. I asked myself, how to transmit this ancestral beauty? And I went into the heart of my people's poetry, myth and oral legend and brought back everything I could. I asked the guardian, Pachamama, for permission to bring it here, to today.

For me it is to write a book from my own being, but to write a book I have to know who I am, where I come from and where I am going. To meet the four elements, air, water, fire, earth, beyond oneself, to bring back what is in memory. To bring together the past and the present, to contemplate this great transformation.

First, it's necessary to recognise oneself, then to heal, to forgive oneself, in order to forgive, to love everything that runs through our interior, our being. If I start from there, and with a new consciousness, only then can I write my book. Imagine knots, more knots, but ones that don't separate; rather, they have a common thread. Then, for a moment, to be in another dimension, to let ourselves be carried away by nature. We'll have in our hands the book that we can pass on to future generations. A content full of peace. We'll create it with any element of today, and it will be our history, our book.

The Quipu unites many things. The past with the present, what we are talking about. I was talking about leaving threads everywhere, so that people can tie themselves to one another. I believe that's how a beautiful mobilisation will happen. It will achieve what we need in today's world, which is to be united. That is the message. These, our Andean peoples, have lived in comarcas [traditional rural districts], they have been very united, they lacked nothing because they shared everything, they shared knowledge, all these things.

The book would be called "The Memory of the Collective Consciousness", because what is coming is collective.



We Grow Because We Come Together

Andrei Fernández
Michael Dieminger

We made the first stitches of this journey without outbursts, to unite distant people and worlds. What already existed was transformed by contact with what had never before come close. The same happened with us.

We began to talk during the pandemic, after meeting at the end of 2020 at the opening of the exhibition "La escucha y los vientos"¹ [The Listening and the Winds], where we shared a workshop on ecologies of listening, there we heard messages from the birds and the mothers of the Gran Chaco monte² in a courtyard in Mitte³. Since then, we have met in video calls scheduled weeks in advance, which made us reaffirm our shared intention to work from a curatorial perspective, focusing on reciprocity as an exchange of gifts.

We found common ground, despite the different histories of the places where we live and work, Salta and Berlin, in developing artistic research practices in collaboration with artists, intellectuals and, above all, with diverse communities. We were able to share our interest in exploring what a curatorial process can propose and what can continue to grow beyond it, but stemming from it. In this confluence, we imagined a project that would stimulate a growing form

[1] Exhibition curated by Andrei Fernández at the ifa-Galerie in Berlin, directed at the time by Inka Gressel. This proposal was part of the cycle *Environment* which brought together groups of Indigenous craftwomen and communicators from the Gran Chaco with artists and researchers from the north of Argentina. For many of the exhibitors it meant the first time that their actions and works inhabited a territory that put them in dialogue with contemporary art. This event opened up questions about how to name the images generated and how to present the stories that are part of the collective memory and a form of resistance to the colonialist practices that subjugate their communities. [2] Monte is a kind of thick forest where darkness prevails, and the sunlight rays can be seen entering through the thickness. The soil is covered with leaves, grass, bushes, and extremely fine and loose dirt. The monte constitutes a live entity, a collection of lives, of presences, and the communities feel that their lives are part of it. [3] Municipality of Berlin.

that we could see and care for in its development, seeking in that process also to grow ourselves and experience new ways of connecting not only between human forms of life, but with more-than-human forms of life, with artefacts and diverse beings. We wanted to invite other people to join something they had not necessarily initiated, but which they could be part of without losing their particularities. The affirmation that guided us was ***we grow because we come together***.

In the midst of our initial conversations about this idea of working on something that grows in our care, but without our control, Michael sent Andrei a quote from a novel where the protagonist states that memories are like tiny seeds crouched in the earth, waiting for the rain to germinate and make something sprout that, perhaps, is not a clear and sharp image but a tremor, a pain or a joy⁴. The germination of **Textiles Semillas [Textiles Seeds]** began with the intention of generating encounters in different places to exchange knowledge related to craft work in the creation and understanding of textiles. The fertile ground that allowed this initiative to grow was the *99 Questions* programme⁵ of the Humboldt Forum, with actions already being developed by organised women's groups in Argentina, some building their own organisations, others entering institutions to propose other ways of doing and learning collectively and interculturally.

The Questions

99 Questions is a programme that fosters polyphonic encounters through artistic research and is also a para-institution within the Humboldt Forum in Berlin. This museum, with its large exhibition space and Prussian Baroque façade, symbolises more than mere ambition and exposes urban reconstruction as one of the forms of the struggle for memory. During the liberation of Nazi Germany, the palace was destroyed and, shortly after the war, completely dismantled. In its place, the German Democratic Republic built the Palace of the Republic, a multicultural centre

[4] Yoko Ogawa (2021); *La policía de la memoria* [The memory police], Tusquets Editores, Buenos Aires. [5] *99 Questions* is an artistic research programme curated by Michael Dieminger at the Humboldt Forum Berlin.

in direct view of the capitalist western part of Berlin. After the reunification of the two Germanies, mainly conservative (but also anti-Semitic and right-wing) groups in civil society, with the help of the government, initiated the reconstruction of the imperial palace that was part of Europe's colonial project, highlighting the ongoing struggle over what and how history is remembered.

This museum now assumes the responsibility of presenting collections from the Ethnographic Museum of Berlin (among others), which hold histories of violence and colonisation in their constitutive processes. Collections that are presented under the ideals of "Enlightenment" and "Universalism", concepts that historically supported colonialist and racist worldviews, which created canons and ignored and erased many parts of the plurality of knowledge and world relations. However, these presentations are now in a state of transformation.

Many museums with ethnographic collections worldwide are changing to address their colonial past and their current coloniality⁶. This includes investigating the history of acquisitions by focusing on the provenance of the objects. These objects are not just artefacts but living things and much more for different communities. Provenance research aims to establish ethical relationships with these collections and the communities involved. However, it often reinforces an object-centred museum canon, limiting who has the right to talk and discuss them.

The term "source community" or "provenance community" used in many ethnographic-anthropological museums highlights the extractive nature of these institutions: the source of extraction. This includes not only the object but also its spiritual elements and knowledge, hence its future. Deconstructing this historiography is essential to decolonise museums and histories. Multiplying versions and allowing diverse narratives into the museum is crucial. But how should a museum deal with the many erased and lost histories and knowledge?

[6] Colonialism is a specific historical practice of domination and territorial control. Coloniality, on the other hand, is a set of patterns of power and domination that persist after the end of formal colonialism, influencing contemporary global dynamics. This is an abbreviated explanation, but we believe it contains the essential information to raise the issue for readers.

99 *Questions* thus arise from the certainty that decolonisation⁷ cannot only be proposed within the museum building but must attempt to deconstruct the binary thinking of centre and periphery. The programme investigates in action ways in which both curating and museums can operate in a non-extractivist way to foster understandings of reciprocity, the museum not as a centre but as one part of a fluid intercultural dialogue.

The Seeds of New Entities

Textiles Semillas [Textiles Seeds] is currently a Union of Weavers, Artists, and Activists of Northwest Argentina, formed in 2023 after convening women weavers' organisations from this region of the country⁸. Based on the observation of the dynamics of seed exchange fairs that take place each year in different rural regions and in informal circuits, as a strategy for caring for native seeds and conserving diversity for food sovereignty, we conceived this project around artisanal weaving as seeds that can be exchanged and grow in different places, taking on different characteristics according to the memories and features of each weaver, each community and each geography.

The approach to the groups that are now part of **Unión Textiles Semillas [Textile Seeds Union]** was conceived by identifying collective works led by women who defend rights and memories around weaving: Randeras de El Cercado (Monteros, Tucumán), Warmipura (Tafí del Valle, Tucumán), Cooperativa La Pachamama (Amaicha del Valle, Tucumán), Tejedoras de Quilmes (Quilmes Indian Community, Tucumán), Tinku Kamayu (Santa María, Catamarca), Achalay Tejidos (Simoca, Tucumán), Teleras de Atamisqui (Atamisqui, Santiago del Estero), Teleras de Huilla Catina (Huilla Catina, Santiago del Estero), Tejedores Andinos (Huacalera, Jujuy), Flor en Piedra (Caspalá, Jujuy), Flor de Altea (Santa Ana, Jujuy) and Silät (Santa Victoria Este, Salta).

We outlined the territorial approach together with Alejandra Mizrahi, an artist and researcher who, through formal and non-formal education and from contemporary art, works to generate experiences

[7] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang explain in their article "Decolonization is not a metaphor", published in the journal *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2012), that decolonisation requires concrete measures such as the return of land, the restoration of Indigenous sovereignty and criticise the dilution of the term, which necessitates profound transformations in societies and institutions. [8] With the intention that it can be expanded to Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and other places in the world where it is possible to link joint actions and their nodes.

of unity and mixture of textile techniques, migration of objects to other meanings, and construction of worlds for objects that have lost their own. Alejandra has designed, in alliance with other professionals, mobile museums and publications for the dissemination of knowledge about handmade textile work. **Textiles Semillas** began to take shape by proposing encounters, between technique and ceremony⁹, that involve the construction of textiles with the energy of bodies and the sowing of questions that challenge the meaning of repeated forms.

In the communities visited to initiate **Textiles Semillas**, we found knowledge that comes from the connections with everything that lives alongside people, knowledge that resides at the fingertips of women from different generations, and sensory perceptions that are impregnated with what is known and remembered. Each step, from the harvesting of the plant, the care of the animals, the process of preparing the threads, the dyeing, weaving, or braiding, is made up of a multitude of specificities that intertwined have meaning, what Anna L. Tsing calls *assemblages*, "that which not only brings together forms of life but creates them. Thinking through assemblages leads us to ask how sometimes encounters become *events*, something greater than the sum of their parts. If history without progress is indeterminate and multidirectional, could assemblages show us its possibilities?"¹⁰. Thus, at each convergence point, a gesture is worked out from which an image begins to grow that expands towards a shawl, a bag, a coat, or an ornament in relation to human physiognomy.

The archaeologist Lorena Cohen points out that the *q'epi*¹¹ or magical bundles were made in Andean communities with small pieces of clothing, handkerchiefs, bags, flowers from the estate, knotted left-handed speckled cords¹², leather slippers from sheep or llamas, fleeces, elements that were part of the lives of weavers and shepherds from the puna and the altiplano. These ritual bundles

[9] Expression of the master weaver Margarita Ramírez, founder of the cooperative Tinku Kamayu de Lampacito, pointed out by Andrei in a talk in which Margarita exhibited at the Museo Terry de Tilcara [Terry Museum in Tilcara], in May 2022. [10] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2023); *Los hongos del fin del mundo. Sobre la posibilidad de vida en las ruinas capitalistas* [The mushrooms at the end of the world. On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins], Buenos Aires, Caja Negra. [11] During the process of writing this text in May 2024, he refers to a Quechua word, *q'epi*, that can be translated as mess, bundle, set of disorderly things or volume of things. In this regard, see the text "Llevo el territorio conmigo" [I carry the territory with me] by Lorena Cohen and María Gabriela Cisterna included in this book). [12] Lloque thread for ritual use. *Lloque* or *lloqui* in Quechua means left and this is the name given to the thread composed of two strands of natural black and white, spun to the left and twisted to the right. It is a thread with different virtues such as protection and healing. This thread is used as an amulet, it is placed on the wrists and ankles. It is also made at certain times with a ritual purpose.

were left in sacred places, where people moved a part of their deceased's body and deposited it together with other parts, thus composing spaces of skeletal remains of several individuals, which created a new entity, a great collective ancestor. Some tombs contain fragments of different ceramic pieces, with human and animal bones, following the logic of bringing together and integrating diversity.

Unión Textiles Semillas [Textile Seeds Union] and *99 Questions* continue this practice, bringing together fragments to house new collective entities and thus create other imaginations and memories.



[10] Durante el proceso de redacción de este texto en mayo de 2024. Q'epi refiere a una palabra quechua que puede traducirse como lío, fardo, conjunto de cosas desordenadas o volumen de cosas. Al respecto, ver el texto "Llevo el territorio conmigo" de Lorena Cohen y María Gabriela Cisterna incluido en este libro. [11] Hilo *lloque* de uso ritual. *Lloque* o *lloqui* en quechua significa izquierda y así se denomina al hilo compuesto por dos hebras de color blanco y negro natural, hiladas a la izquierda y torcidas a la derecha. Es un hilo con diferentes virtudes como la protección y la sanación. Este hilo es utilizado como amuleto, se coloca en las muñecas y tobillo. También se realiza en determinados momentos con un sentido ritual.

The Little Beginning

Alejandra Mizrahi

Andrei Fernández

Amidst those long summer days, when it seemed that everything could start again, we made a video call. It was January 2023. Ale was in Tucumán, and Andrei was in Tilcara. During that call, Andrei shared with Ale what she had been discussing with Michael, the start of a new project based on the affirmation that ***we grow because we come together***.

We wanted to do something together, to unite experiences, to unite people. We remembered Calinescu, an author we studied when we went to the Faculty of Arts in Tucumán, who said that modern dwarves stand on the shoulders of ancient giants, and we felt it was urgent to bring together the networks of which we were part.

Textiles como semillas [Textiles as Seeds] was an initial way of naming that recurrent desire to bring people and their textile-related inspirations closer together, but also to bring together the streams that each one of us nurtures, our practices of *mutual nurturing of the arts*, and to test the step towards new frontiers. We began to imagine what form a work could take that would continue to transform and grow through the textile exercise. From the very *empiecito*¹ we understood that if textiles are seeds, a plurality of ideas and imaginations is needed, like the wind that carries those seeds to grow in different soils. A few months before that call that would start what we finally named **Unión Textiles Semillas** [Textiles Seeds Union],

[1] Expression used in the north of Argentina, where everything can be named as something small. It is also the way in which the Randeras del Cercado name the beginning of their textile work when they share their process.

we rehearsed a collective piece made by *randeras* from Tucumán and Wichí weavers from the Chaco Salteño, which we called Red Transancestrocolonial [Trans-ancestral Colonial Network]².

Shortly after we met, almost two decades ago, Ale went to study in Barcelona. Returned to Argentina five years later, and by then, Andrei was moving between Patagonia and later in the high valleys of Salta. We reunited in Tucumán in 2014 and together created a Visual Arts training programme that we titled *Archipiélago*³, through which we tried to bring together groups and people that we perceived as neighbouring islands, from which we tried to sustain and rethink the art scene in Tucumán. At that time, Ale was already dedicated to researching textile and performance techniques, and Andrei was involved in community communication and art criticism.

At that time, we coincided in going through major transformations in our lives. Each of us had to start anew for different reasons. In the following years, we experienced the management of a government that produced many changes in Argentina. The consequence was a new socio-economic crisis and the expansion of the feminist movement, which found us accompanying collectives of weavers in their journey between the worlds of crafts, design and contemporary art.

Ale, together with Lucila Galíndez and the *Randeras* of El Cercado⁴ created the MUMORA, Museo Móvil de la Randa [Mobile Museum of Randa], at the same time as Ale and other colleagues began the task of creating a new degree course at the University of Tucumán: Clothing and Textile Design⁵. Andrei had started working as a territorial technician for the ProHuerta Programme⁶ and from there, she accompanied the creation of a collective of weavers from the Wichí people in the north of Salta with whom they forged social economy and communication projects. Years later, together with them, they began to carry out actions linked to contemporary art

[2] In "Fabulaciones", the first symposium of art, science, technologies and feminisms curated by Guadalupe Creche in Buenos Aires, 2022. [3] Together with Javier Soria Vazquez and Sandro Pereira, in RUSIA Galería. [4] Alejandra's work with the *Randeras* of El Cercado has taken different forms, from publications on the Randa technique, to an academic publication that brings together the experiences of different specialists on the subject, to the collective creation of the Museo Móvil de la Randa [Mobile Museum of Randa]. In this last project, which began to be shown in 2020, Alejandra acts as curator, accompanist or coordinator. At the beginning of 2024 they have been working together with Lucila Galíndez, anthropologist and cultural manager dedicated to working with craftswomen from Tucumán. [5] It was finalised in 2018. [6] The ProHuerta Programme was a public policy managed jointly with the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA) [National Institute of Agricultural Technology] that promoted Food Security and Sovereignty through support for agro-ecological production and access to healthy products for adequate nutrition. Was aimed at families and producer organisations in situations of social vulnerability. ProHuerta has 34 years of history and was one of the most important public food policies in Latin America.

worlds that brought them into dialogue with decolonial and ecofeminist theorists and activists. During that time, Ale was also one of the founders of the collective La Lola Mora⁷.

These winding routes allowed us to meet from time to time for a beer on a pavement in Tucumán or Buenos Aires, to talk about the challenges of collective work and with public institutions, to give each other advice on how to solve problems that until then we hadn't imagined and for which there were no maps or recipes. At the beginning of 2022, we attended a meeting organised by REDIT⁸, at the Museo Terry [Terry Museum] in Tilcara, where we met with representatives of weavers' collectives from different regions of Argentina, especially from the northwest. The meeting sparked debates about the way of naming, places, and ways of showing what we do, which in this space was called crafts and design⁹. We talked about the fact that so many projects are seeking to think the same and so many networks are being proposed, but in the end, each attempt seemed to be like creating a new island. Once again we find ourselves facing an archipelago, but now both standing in the same place. With the impulse of those projects we had shared before, we set out to reunite these islands to create a common territory with them.

That is how this story began.

The Pilgrimage

We chose the word "pilgrimage" to name the first action we carried out from *Textiles Semillas*. This word is the title in Spanish of a book by María Lugones¹⁰ which was the axis of the encounter organised by the *99 Questions* programme in 2022 in Berlin, with the proposal to think about creating a temporal and spatial practice capable of uniting questions. "Pilgrimage is an ancient spiritual practice, which forms groups to unite and dedicate time to a space. It is a form of movement, transformation and healing. It is a departure, open for change, to leave behind or to (re)connect. Pilgrimage encourages us to wander through space, time, memories and

[7] *Trabajadoras de las artes de Tucumán* [Women Art Workers of Tucumán], made up of artists from different disciplines who carry out actions in the public space, using performative and graphic activist language, making visible and defending the rights of arts workers. [8] Red Federal Interuniversitaria de Diseño de Indumentaria y Textil [Federal Inter-University Network of Clothing and Textile Design] composed of eight national universities in Argentina. [9] This meeting was part of the *Crafting Futures* Programme of the British Consulate in Argentina. One of the fruits of this process of research and consultation was the publication of *Voces de la artesanía* [Voices of Craft]. [10] María Lugones ([2003] 2021); *Peregrinajes. Teorizar una coalición contra múltiples opresiones* [Pilgrimages. Theorising a coalition against multiple oppressions], Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Signo

thoughts”¹¹. Lugones proposes reflecting on different actions towards liberation, starting from groping to find meaning, towards the limits of the possible. Groping as in putting one's hands in front of one's body whilst walking in darkness to be able to feel with touch where one is going, to explore levels of understanding and incomprehension, levels of intimacy and solidarity.

In May and June 2023 we undertook a series of journeys that gave way to a growing conversation in which diverse voices and tunes were added. We travelled together with companions we call *sembradoras* [sowers]¹² Clara Johnston, Cecilia Vega, Fernanda Villagra Serra, Celeste Valero, Cecilia Teruel. Between valleys, mountains, rivers, plains, hills, cane fields, carob groves, ravines, forests and small towns in the provinces of Tucumán, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, Salta and Jujuy.

In each place, there were talks about the known textiles, those that are remembered, those that are defended, and those that are represented. We visited the Randeras of El Cercado, the group of weavers from Quilmes, Mercedes Cardozo¹³, the women of the Pachamama Cooperative, the Warmipura group from Tucumán, the Tinku Kamayu cooperative from Lampacito, the group of weavers from Huilla Catina, the Warmi Guapas and Warmi Sumaj groups from Santiago del Estero, the Warmi Guapas and Warmi Sumaj groups from Santiago del Estero, a group of Teleras de Atamisqui, the Tejedores Andinos collective, the Flor en Piedra and Flor de Altea groups from Jujuy, and the Silät organisation from the Chaco Salteño. During the pilgrimage, we collected weavings from each group visited to draw up a first textile chart that would give an account of the diversity of living knowledge in these territories.

For this pilgrimage, we put together an audiovisual team coordinated by Alina Bardavid¹⁴, who conducted interviews and recordings that were edited to be shown in different proposals, meetings, and media, inside and outside the intercultural group of weavers, researchers, and activists. The dialogues include testimonies about

[11] Text of 99 Questions at <https://www.humboldtforum.org/en/programm/event/meetup-en/99-fragen-gathering-55557/> [12] We call sembradoras [sowers] those people who join the project to carry out research and production tasks with a certain constancy. [13] We decided to name her as Tejedoras de Simoca to add to the project, as she is a weaver who we believe it is essential to involve because of her particular knowledge of migrant techniques, which are not usually done in this part of the region. Naming her as a group seemed to us to encourage other women to join in working with her. Months later she created Achalay Tejidos. [14] Of which Álvaro Simon Padros and Javier Díaz are also part. Later, María Gabriela Cisterna joined the project's communication tasks.

how each woman learned to weave, what techniques she uses daily, and the strategies she tries out or creates to share her work.

We also called upon the Tucuman architect Paulo Vera to design a self-supporting structure that would allow us to exhibit this first collection of pieces without the need for a room with walls, taking MUMORA as a reference. We carried out the first assembly rehearsal of this proposal at the XIII Encuentro de Tejedoras [XIII Weavers' Gathering], which took place on 29 and 30 July 2023 at the Escuela n.º10 "Claudia V. de Cano" [School n.º10 "Claudia V. de Cano"] in the town of Amaicha del Valle, an Indigenous territory in the province of Tucumán.

The Gathering as a School

The historian and researcher Olga Sulca has been working closely with the cooperative La Pachamama¹⁵ since 2009 and accompanies it in the organisation and dissemination of the "Encuentro de Tejedoras: Tejiendo experiencias" [Weavers' Gathering: Weaving Experiences] in Amaicha del Valle. Sulca's relationship with the weavers began in 1999 due to her thesis, which focused on the textile techniques passed down in the Andean area and still exist in Tucumán. Near Amaicha, in El Pichao, Colalao del Valle, very small fragments of ancient textiles were found, which Sulca investigated and led her to look for the point at which the thread that transmitted the learning of weaving had been cut. She hypothesised that educational reforms affected the teaching of weaving in schools, as it went from being a content within the curriculum to being eliminated¹⁶.

The teaching of weaving was reduced to the family or community sphere. In the 1990s, with the increasingly fierce implementation of neoliberal policies, many families sought other ways of life and left rural villages to migrate to urban centres. There, they were faced with the reality of precarious salaries that were insufficient to support their families, which led many couples to leave their children in the care of their grandmothers in their communities¹⁷. The techniques still used in the area are tapestry, with its different variables, floating

[15] It brings together weavers, copleras [popular singer of poetic folk songs from northwestern Argentina], yuyeras [herb specialists], embroiderers and ceramicists from the area to support the production and commercialisation of their products and keep alive the traditions of their People. In the founding act of the Cooperative it is stated that Pachamama is a Quechua word and means: PACHA, Earth, and MAMA, Mother, translated into Spanish it means: MOTHER EARTH. The farmer implores Pachamamita for his sowing, for a good harvest, the craftswoman asks for her clothes to be sold quickly, the traveller asks to arrive at a good destination without fatigue. [16] This happened in the 1995 reform during the Menemist era and it was devastating, says Sulca. [17] This social and political situation had an impact on the transmission of textile techniques because weaving skipped a generation, passing from grandmothers to granddaughters, and was relegated to a few families. Unders-

warps, and double weave¹⁸, among others. The products made in pre-Hispanic America and still made today are alforjas [traditional double-pouch carrier] and peleros [saddle blankets], which were made from llama fibres, the animal of burden par excellence at that time. They also made slings and *unkus*¹⁹ for clothing.

From **Textiles Semillas**, we invited craftswomen representing the groups visited during the project's first stage to participate in the **XIII Encuentro de Tejedoras** in Amaicha del Valle. There, representatives of these groups offered workshops in which they shared some aspects of the textile techniques they work with. Each group had a stall for the sale of their weavings. They also participated in a parade in which they wore the textile pieces on their bodies and guided the audience through the exhibition of the textile collection, commenting on what the forms they learn and sustain through repetition and reversion mean to them. When we asked at our first meeting with weavers from Amaicha what this annual gathering of weavers from the region means to them, Liliana Soto told us: for us, the gathering is our school.

A Transportable Territoriality

The Encuentro de Tejedoras de Amaicha [Amaicha Weavers' Gathering] is a ceremonial space linked to thanksgiving to Mother Earth, the Pachamama, on the eve of the beginning of a new sowing cycle. It is an opportunity for the commercialisation of weavings and the exchange of knowledge related to them. **Textiles Semillas** added an exhibition of the pieces collected during the pilgrimage that started the project.

The structures with which we made the exhibition were built with eucalyptus wood and mounted outdoors, echoing in their shapes the profiles of the mountains surrounding the site. As a backdrop, they had a mural in which a series of vignettes illustrated different moments in Argentine history. Each triangle maintained independence,

tanding this reality led Sulca to propose a revitalisation of weaving. With this in mind, they designed, together with the La Pachamama Cooperative, the "Encuentro de Tejedoras: Tejiendo experiencias", which allowed them to re-establish contact with traditional local practices. In the school curriculum, weaving returned to the classroom in 2006 thanks to the approval of the Nueva Ley de Educación Nacional [New National Education Law] N° 26.206, when the Intercultural Bilingual Education modality was created. [18] Double weave is a weaving technique in which the front and back are made up as different layers which, interwoven by a main thread, form patterns. [19] Quechua word for a common garment worn by men, women and children in the pre-Hispanic Andes. It consists of a rectangular loom-woven cloth, folded at the shoulders and sewn at the sides, leaving an opening for the arms.

tied with cotton ropes to keep the structure upright when grouped together. The weavings were fastened with small nails to the structures without copying the frame's shape. Two of the triangles were participatory, meaning that people wandering through the exhibition could do weaving exercises on the stretched warps. The exhibition had a catalogue²⁰ in which images of the pieces on display could be seen, with all the information related to authorship, techniques, materials, groups, etc. The first day of the Gathering ended with a guided tour in which each weaver spoke about her piece, her territory, her techniques, forms, uses and functions.

At the end of the Gathering, the workshop *Labrar la imaginación*, [Cultivating the Imagination] was held with the guests, where the craftswomen made various tests of joining and superimposing techniques and materials, agreements were made to create new textile pieces, projecting possible versions of the exhibition of the sampler²¹ on the wooden structures. There, we proposed to the weavers to be involved in the decision-making. They suggested making new pieces following the triangles' outline and started two collective works. We believe that agreements and consensuses should be testified in the weavings, in their ways of appearing in the world, in their constructions and in the links they establish between people and territories.

A Sampler of Possible Forms

The movement of one's own body, gestures and sensations are undoubtedly in that transitional space that goes from mental representation to artefact. The very act of weaving implies different relationships, with the object, with the person for whom we are weaving or with the purpose for which we are weaving. It is a way of linking people to each other and people to the world, beyond the final result. The action of weaving is closely related to delicacy, as it builds something very fragile and, at the same time, very stable, which can remain as an object and a memory.

[20] Catalogue designed by Tirco Matute. [21] The dechados [sampler] are collections of embroidery exercises, they are examples to follow, they make up the individual library of each apprentice. Through them, a structure is fixed that can be repeated by simply looking at them through an imaginary review. These examples set up mechanisms to teach not only techniques but also values of femininity such as obedience, dedication, understanding, gentleness, patience, all attributes associated with a specific role. All of these virtues are necessary to practice each stitch, reinforcing the learning process. The samplers displays these values in the form of stitches, openwork, interlacing, lace. Thus, these pieces of fabric make up the sample of what has been learnt while at the same time recording the movements, the performativity of the bodies.

The typology of the sampler or dechado makes it possible to physically share the weavings as books made by the twelve groups that make up the **Unión Textiles Semillas**. This is a collection of gestures that the different groups of weavers made, testifying to their ancestral relationship with weaving as well as the history of their territories. Thus, textile traditions from the territories of the Kolla, Amaicha, Quilmes, Diaguita Calchaquí, Wichí Peoples and intercultural rural communities that today are part of the Argentinean northwest coexist in it.

The sampler is also a conversation from which we can recover the *ch'ixi* epistemology alluded to by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, an effort to overcome the historicism and binarisms of hegemonic social science, using concepts-metaphors that at the same time describe and interpret the complex mediations and heterogeneous constitution of our societies²².

In this collective collection, the raising of sheep and llamas, the cultivation of cotton and chaguar, include gestures that are imperceptible at first sight but which are part of the way the different groups *sentipiensan* [feel-think] about the world. Spinning the fibres, twisting them, this sampler culminates when our hands read the complex set of loops, stitches, embroideries and knots. Allegories of interconnection are woven here, sprouting relationships and links that deepen with the pleasure of meeting each other, with the joy of the choreography of hands, exchange and reciprocity. Dialogue and exchange structured this praxis, escaping the opposition between body and mind, technique and poetry, human and non-human strength, needs and desires, use and contemplation, theory and practice, art and craft.

Three States of a Presence

Contemplating, marketing, and transmitting are actions that take place around the same device created by the weavers, which is used in three simultaneous modes: the exhibition, the fair, and the workshop.

Vertically, horizontally and in process, the weaving moves in different directions, adopts different coordinates and proposes various ways of relating it to the audience: spectator, consumer or student, the role of the person who circulates changes in front of the weaving. Created based on technical skill, depending on its dimensions, its folds, whether it includes extensions or not, whether it has holes or not, we can

[22] Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2018); *Un mundo ch'ixi es posible* [A Ch'ixi world is possible], Tinta Limón, Buenos Aires.

find specific functions for it: carrying, *q'eper*²³, sheltering, covering, supporting, ornamenting, accompanying, all of these can be found in the woven artefact. When it escapes from the hands of its maker, it begins to wander through the exhibition, the fair and the workshop.

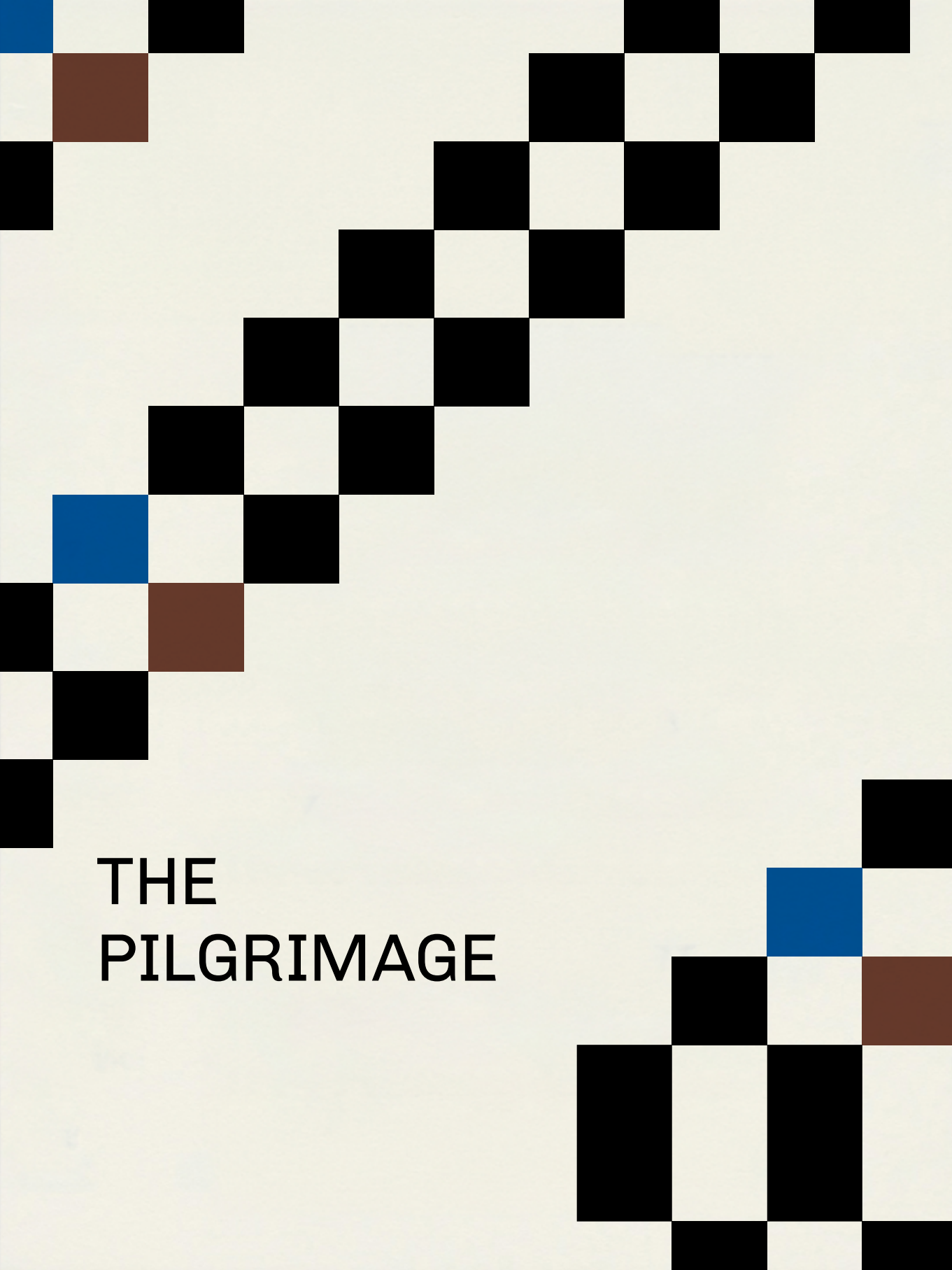
In the exhibition, the textiles are perceived as witnesses to a territory, to a group of women organised around it, and to a history. They symbolise, allude to, and evoke, operating as a platform of meaning from which we can learn about it and about those who make it. The narrative we construct from the exhibition appeals to make the episteme of the artefacts explicit.

In the fair, consumption is in the function of fulfilling some utility. It will cover the feet of a bed, shelter a body, and transport elements. The textile signals a use that will fulfil a role in everyday life. The narrative links the textile to possible actions in everyday life. At this stage, the pieces were for sale. People approached the tables, tried them on, touched them, and bought them.

In the workshop²⁴ it is analysed, repeated, broken down, taught and learned. The logic of weaving is what comes into play in this third space. Here allusion is made to the materials, the tools, how it is made, the techniques and tricks. Here the narrative is a choreography of instructions, recipes and directions in order to understand how it is.

The works we are building together do not try to invent or create something new, but rather investigate and propose new ways of presenting what we already know how to do and also what we don't want to stop doing. We believe that art is a propitious territory for this, for uniting and reinventing worlds that insist on forming traces, memory, strength, meaning. We want to continue creating together, imagining new forms, from the fertile soil that we have established during this time.

[23] *Q'eper* is an action that is carried out with a fabric, usually rectangular, in which different things are kept, and then tied on the back to carry them. The embroiderers belonging to the Kolla People of the Valles de Altura, Flor en Piedra and Flor de Altea, as well as the weavers of Tejedores Andinos, usually *q'epen* their belongings to move from one place to another. Doña Petrona Luere, leader of the Flor de Altea group in Santa Ana explains what *q'epi* is: '*Q'epi* means carrying things on your back with a *rebozo* [traditional shawl] or shawl. Before, as there were no backpacks, there were no bags to carry or to go out to pasture the sheep or to go to the countryside to see the cows or walk far, we walked two, three days to go to the monte to see the cows, so we always used the *q'epi*. The *q'epi* means to carry the things that you are going to take to use, the things that you need wherever you stay, you always have to take something with you, the food, that's where the *q'epi* is used, if you go on horseback you use the saddlebags to keep your belongings there. The *q'epi* is to carry things with all the food or our things. Here the people are used to carrying the *rebozos* to embroider, when you have the time you can embroider, you always go to pasture the sheep with the wool'. [24] The craftswomen held the following workshops during the Encuentro: Randa workshop run by María Magdalena Núñez, Randeras Cooperative from El Cercado, Monteros (Tucumán); Rope-making workshop run by Catalina Guitián, weaver from Quilmes; Elaboration of artisanal ropes of Andean and Calchaquí tradition; Wincha workshop run by Silvina Herrera of the Warmipura group from Tafi del Valle, Tucumán; *Cutsaj* workshop run by Claudia Alarcón, representative of the Silät group belonging to the Wichi people, Santa Victoria Este (Salta); Embroidery workshop under the responsibility of Ana Quipildor and Sará Figueroa from the group Flor en piedra, Flor de Altea, belonging to Caspalá and Santa Ana (Jujuy); waist loom workshop with Lucrecia Cruz from the Colectivo de Tejedoras Andinas de Huacalera (Jujuy); Rapacejo workshop with Juana Gutiérrez from Teleras de Huilla Catina (Santiago del Estero).



THE
PILGRIMAGE

Textile Dialogue

Andrei Fernández
Alejandra Mizrahi

The Pilgrimage

Textile reference

Type: cloth

Technique: enlazado

Materials: chaguar's fibre dyed with patapata bark, carob resin, palo santo roots and artificial dyes

Iconography: jaguar's eye and owl's eye

Authorship: Silät

1

Anice Ariza takes a cotton thread and makes a circle with a knot at the end. On this circle she mounts the number of stitches that create eyes according to how many weavers are present in the round. As she mounts the eyes on the *empiecito* [little beginning], she tells us where we are: El Cercado, a landscape surrounded by canes and hills, where the Randeras have given continuity to a needle lace technique called Randa that has been used here for more than five hundred years, when the first Spanish settlers arrived. As the *empiecito* circulates, each Randerera tells of the importance of this practice passed down from generation to generation, its significance as an economic sustenance for the women who weave it and as a therapy that has cured them of many ailments.

Once the net created by each Randerera grows, it is stretched on an iron frame lined with plastic bags. The stretched net becomes a surface for drawing through embroidery. Rains, spots, flowers, animals, rice, and honeycombs, among an endless number of possible images are embroidered on it. Embroidering involves going through the net from top to bottom, with a threaded needle that will leave its trace on the mesh¹. The talk constructed by the **Unión Textiles Semillas** began with a cotton thread threaded onto a sewing needle that repeats a knot and creates a network.

[1] Description of the action of weaving and embroidering a Randa. This is how the Randeras of El Cercado weave their needle lace.

2

To make a handwoven textile it is necessary to shear the sheep, wash the fibre, card it, and spin it with a spindle or spinning wheel. Dyeing with natural or artificial dyes. Warp the loom and begin writing with the back-and-forth motion of the weft on the warp. Unroll the warp to advance towards one's own body and roll onto one's own body what is left of the finished fabric.

The sampler grew as we got to know each other. When we arrived at Lampacito in Santa María, Catamarca province, women from the Tinku Kamayu cooperative added sheep's wool dyed with brightly coloured dyes to the *empiecito* made by the Randeras. These wools were linked to the initial circle, opposite to the white net. Between these wools interlaced to the circle, the Tinku weavers knotted the colours together, forming a quipu in which each one kept their names, stories, and wishes.

In Lampacito, we reaffirmed that learning and continuing a textile tradition can contain and help in limit situations, meeting to weave can save can transform a life. Once again we heard stories of how weaving has helped a woman get out of situations of domestic and economic violence. The Tinku Kamayu cooperative was founded by Margarita Ramírez as a form of resistance to the various forms of gender-based violence that were occurring in her community. Margarita says that the quipus are books made of threads, the traces of the quipus reveal that their use was not only limited to numerical records but also to generate ritual inscriptions. Tinku Kamayu is a Quechua word that can be translated as Gathered to work. The quipus, tapestries, ruanas [a type of poncho open in the centre] and ponchos [a typical South American outer garment] of this group knot and intertwine stories of struggle of women who found in community weaving a refuge and an escape.

3

A square frame with nails all around its perimeter is crossed with acrylic wool, black threads in one direction and red threads that cross them and draw a pattern in their interweaving: herringbone, this is how the fabric is created. Each loop is lifted out of the frame with a point.

María de los Ángeles Garrido receives us in her house, on National Route 40, a construction that begins a group of homes that make up one of the bases of the territory of the Comunidad India Quilmes [Quilmes Indian Community]. Here, the dialogue begins to unfold from the white mesh in the opposite direction to the quipu made by the women of the Tinku. In Quilmes, the weavers put sheep's wool that they have corded towards the ends, like short ropes.

The weavers of Quilmes are an organised group that values the learning space above all other weaving instances, encouraging their connection with the practice. Amongst carob trees, jarilla shrubs, sheep, a wide river and hens, they tell us and show us where the raw material comes from, how it is coloured and with what tools they reproduce gestures such as the "pata de gallo" [herringbone], a pattern also known as "pie de gallina".

Catalina Guitián lives in El Arbol, another base of the Comunidad India Quilmes. As a member of the Diaguita People, she learned an ancestral legacy of different textile techniques that she takes care of and shares. Although all the other weavers refer to her as the master, she always considers herself an apprentice. Doña Catita, as she is often called, tells how they used to shear in the hills, how they used to take down the fibre they spun, whether from sheep or llama and how they wove it. She planted her first loom at fourteen, where she wove alforjas, blankets, chalinás (long, narrow shawls) and ponchos. She weaves saddle blankets on the frame, and on a smaller table loom, the María loom², she makes shawls on which she draws as she weaves. She tells all this while knotting a rope in the textile dialogue that adds the weavers of Quilmes to the constellation of weavers that is being assembled. The rope, Catita adds, is made of sheep's wool braided with the figure-eight technique and woven using a batten and is used to make slings to frighten animals or ropes to carry and transport firewood.

[2] The María loom is also known as the comb loom or table loom. It is a simple, transportable and easily constructed loom.

4

To weave a traditional saddle blanket it is necessary for two people to stand in the middle of a wooden frame. The weaving is done in a mirror image, the woven structure must be woven from both ends at the same time. This is how, for example, the eyes of the partridge are drawn, a traditional design constantly emerging in the weavings of northwestern Argentina. The weaving is done at the same rhythm and quantity from both sides. The weft thread is usually thick, fluffy, almost unspun, passing over and under the warp, but not only that, it also twists around it. The saddle blanket is made using a pre-Incan technique called torzal and is one of the pieces that make up the saddle to protect the horse's back. Currently, its use is changing due to the increase in motorbikes and other vehicles.

Once we leave Route 40 behind, we take the road to Amaicha del Valle, passing by Encalilla, where the Amaicha Community of the Diaguita Calchaquí People recovered their lands occupied by the Spaniards in 1716, through the Royal Decree signed in that place. Amaicha del Valle is a community renowned for its sheep wool tapestries. They use this technique to create a multiplicity of designs and colour combinations. They are also known for their saddle blankets and unkus [traditional Andean tunics worn by men].

The weavers of Amaicha are waiting for us at the Cooperative's premises, on the corner of the square, where they show and sell their work. They await us with their weavings and copla boxes because copla [traditional folk music] and weaving are completely intertwined here.

They add felted wool to the sampler, which we are proposing in our conversation and as a conversation. They also began to knot wool from other parts of the Randeras' network, joined the quipu of the Tinku, and made the conversation grow chaotic and disorderly.

In Amaicha, weaving is part of the struggle to defend Indigenous rights, which are also present in the singing, the food, and the rituals.

5

To prepare a colour, it's necessary to gather leaves, peels, roots. The material must be selected, cut, and dried. If onion skins are put into boiling water, it soon takes on an orange colour. There, the skein of wool is immersed, previously spun, carded, washed, and sheared from the sheep that grew among the mountains, often under the weavers' care. When it smells similar to a stew, one can lift with a wooden stick the skein that was submerged almost white, and notice how during the cooking it has absorbed the orange colour released by the onion skins.

It is an hour's drive from Amaicha to Tafi del Valle. The whole landscape changes in those kilometres, the cacti and arid stony mountains are left behind, you reach a very high point, where the clouds dwell, the Infiernillo, to descend then and arrive at a valley surrounded by mountains that seem covered in green velvet, with houses that have giant stones in their patios and tiny colourful flowers dotted along the paths. We arrived at the home of the *Warmipura* group, a name in Quechua that can be translated as *among women*. It is a group made up of nine women, whose headquarters is in the house of one of its members, in the El Churqui area, where the weavers display their work processes and sell their products in the shop they have set up in one of the rooms overlooking the garden, where you can find saddle blankets, bed runners, ruanas, shawls and clothing such as vests, jackets, and crocheted animals. They weave on planted looms and frames and pay special attention and research to work with natural dyes. Liliana Pastrana is a local reference, known as the promoter and protector of the mikuna, a bush that grows in this area, linked to sacred aspects, whose roots allow the dyeing of yellow, a wide range of shades that varies according to the alchemy of the master dyers.

Silvina Herrera creates a small *wincha* woven with sheep's wool dyed with mikuna, which is braided into undyed yarns. The *wincha* is the border or edging that contains the saddle blanket and gives it its finish, it joins this conversation as an open, porous and frayed edge that enables the continuation of the assemblage of techniques and textures.

6

To weave large cloths on the looms planted in the ground, the warps must be pulled outwards, staked beyond the limit of the loom, it must be very tight so that the pattern can be seen well, and the spade must be gripped tightly with both arms to bring the weft towards the belly.

Before arriving at Doña Juana Gutiérrez's house in Huilla Catina, we can see ropes and structures on the sides of the road on which colourful blankets are spread out and thus offered for sale to travellers. There, we remember Canal Feijóo's text *Mi cama es un jardín* [My bed is a garden] and read it aloud as we enter the monte of Santiago:

"Next to the little earthy little ranch, hardly distinguishable by its small tumular mass, in the perspective of arid immensity in which earth and sky combined that mid-afternoon, there stood a small carob tree with a meagre stature and schematic foliage, which gave the impression that it had voluntarily stopped its development and the expansion of its foliage at that point, because what for? I myself, I confess, felt distended and annulled. And only my automatism of being translational and ambulatory could lead me to go round the little ranch. And it was by wiggling around a corner that I stumbled from hand to mouth with it. I say I stumbled, but in reality, what happened was that it came upon me, aggressively cutting me off. It was a santiagueña quilt spread out in the sun between two stakes. It was armed with reds, yellows, greens, bundles, blades, zigzagging, glowing masses, coruscating and crackling, tears, shots, projections, and flames as if heading for the bulk in numbers. It was something like the raid of colour in full light in full light. I will say, in a word, that there, my inertia discovered the infinite number, the multiple shouting, the offensive, the charge of the colour that was unhooked. I will say that there, in that desolate aridity, colour concentrated the voice, the will, and the form that things lacked. I will say that there the unanimous nullity of heaven and earth, conjugating in the same indistinct immensity, in the same indifference, confessed a bleeding wound, a vein reached from below [...] We must therefore consider that these quilts constitute authentic artistic expressions. They may, at times, not appeal to the fashionable taste, to the bourgeois taste that is always so indecisive and changeable. But the measure of their aesthetic value cannot be the contingent taste of those who only find the quilts as a market product, but the taste or feeling of those who make them for their life, from their life. Fauna never seen before, fantastic flora, triangles, staggered signs, mysterious reptiles, suns and moons, and stars of unknown skies. Truly, the hand that conjures between the four sticks of the loom 'the garden' of the soul, knows the magic of divine creation"³.

Next to the loom planted in the courtyard of Juana Gutiérrez's house, we gather to chat with some of the weavers of Huilla Catina, a small settlement in the department of Loreto in the province of Santiago del Estero. After telling them about our journey and its

[3] Bernardo Canal Feijóo (2012); *Ensayo sobre la expresión popular artística en Santiago* [Essay on popular artistic expression in Santiago], Santiago del Estero, Subsecretaría de Cultura.

stations recorded in a piece assembled by small textiles, they added a weaving they took from the personal collection of Doña Juana, the weaver present with the most years of life, who keeps a folder with clippings from the newspapers in which she appeared, her certificates of awards and also a sample of different weavings she made. They also knotted pompoms and tassels to ornament the blankets' ends.

Later, we visited the group of Warmi Sumaj weavers, beautiful women, also from Loreto, who added a new materiality: a cotton tassel dyed with a natural dye made from a local bush, which added the finishing touch to this conversation.

In Santiago del Estero they distinguish between field dyes and artificial dyes. Generally, we call natural dyes those colours obtained from nature. This way of naming alludes exactly to the place where they get the colour, the monte [a thick forest, a living entity for local communities' cosmovisions].

7

To prepare the design of a tied guard, it is necessary to warp in cotton thread and make small bindings. What is tied will remain blank, once all the ties have been made with nylon, the preparation is dipped in colour and the design is revealed when it is untied.

When we arrived at Villa Atamisqui, the weavers were waiting for us at Graciela Peralta's house. Between mates and threads, they told us about what they produce, how they learned, how they sustain this textile practice, how a cooperative was created in the Villa and what challenges they have encountered. Women from different generations tell us that they learned to weave from their mothers and grandmothers. Like them, they sell their weavings as a means of subsistence, often exchanging weavings for food, but in recent years they have been selling more for money and they have their customers who place orders with them.

Among the textiles we were able to see at this meeting were two large-scale textiles made of sheep's wool in brown, made by Chabela, dyed with the lloro⁴ of the carob tree. These pieces were made to order, as rugs, but were never paid for or taken back, a

[4] Word used in this region to name the resin of the tree.

situation that is repeated in different territories. Many of the women tell about it, a sign of contempt for the work of the craftswomen. These carob-coloured textiles later became Telas Tierras Viajeras⁵, [Travelling Earth Textiles], which travelled to all the places where the weavers of the **Unión Textiles Semillas** live. Each group came together to sow them with threads and needles and so they functioned as an ecosystem in which each group wrote a fragment of thought that, constellating with the others, formed these travelling books, as Margarita Ramírez called them.

8

To make the *sumaj* sweater it is necessary to shear the llama, spin and dye its fibre, knit in a tubular way with circular needles so as not to sew, draw with the kenkos needles⁶, droplets and hooks to make. This is the garment that the group Tejedores Andinos points out as their most representative piece.

The group Tejedores Andinos, led by Celeste Valero and based in Huacalera, in the Quebrada de Humahuaca, awaits us in Lucrecia Cruz's house where, at the front, the shop where the group sells its weavings is located on National Route 9. Meanwhile, in the background, a marvellous workshop, partly in the open air, where planted looms rise.

In a family round, the weavers of the Quebrada joined the textile dialogue, which we carried and watched grow on our pilgrimage, with a fragment of two-needle weaving in the shapes of drops, kenkos and hooks or waves, all made with llama fibre in different colours, similar to those usually found in the *sumaj* sweater.

Celeste Valero says: "Our history is traversed by the Qhapaq Ñan, the Inca Trail and the whole Andean, Inca culture. We have forgotten the names and meanings of the drawings we know, so we rename them and, in this way, we re-signify them"⁷. Celeste

[5] **Textiles Semillas** bought those fabrics that told a common story of abuse and vulnerability in order to transform them into power and possibility. The Telas Tierras Viajeras [Travelling Earth Textiles] are the textiles that bear witness to the ecology of knowledge that De Sousa Santos describes as the "epistemology of the South". De Sousa Santos points out that epistemologies are constructed in relation and interaction, in the framework of socially organised practices, materials, tools, ways of doing and competences to create something that did not exist before, something that has new properties and that cannot be reduced to the sum total of the heterogeneous elements mobilised to achieve its creation". Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2018); "Las ecologías de saberes" [The ecologies of knowledge], in María Paula Meneses (Comp.). *Construyendo las epistemologías del sur* [Building the epistemologies of the South], CABA, CLACSO. [6] Kenko or Qenqo is the zigzagging path of the mountain or the winding path of the river. In Quechua it is written Q'inqu and is also translated as 'labyrinth'. Kenkos is also the name given to the sinuities of the voice that appear in the singing of coplas in the northwest of Argentina. [7] Recorded in audio-visual form at the above-mentioned meeting in June 2023.

highlights the communicative nature of textiles and how meanings live in them that, although erased, are rewoven in search of new meanings. Text and textile meet again here, the textile as a rewriting of the past, as Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui expresses it to us from the Aymara aphorism *qhipnayra* (future-past): the past is for the Andean populations what is in front of our eyes and that is where we are heading, the future is the uncertain, what we cannot see and is behind us and it is only with our eyes wide open to the past that we can find the keys to the present⁸.

9

To turn a fabric into a garden, embroiderers first dream the flowers. Then it is time to stretch the fabric over the leg, draw on it with soap, take a coloured thread and start painting it with filled embroidery until the dream image is formed.

Arriving in Caspalá was like immersing ourselves in a dream, after a magical journey that included frozen landscapes and silences made of space. We found ourselves in a place where the wind flutters colourful skirts and bodies are covered from the sun with brightly coloured rebozos (traditional shawl-like garments), sometimes with fluorescent outlines. Flor en Piedra is a group of embroiderers who are especially dedicated to making rebozos, rectangles that cover the upper body, made of bayeta cloth [a thick, coarse woollen fabric]. This fabric, bought by the craftswomen, is an industrially made textile. The rebozos made on the cloth are elaborately embroidered with different flowers, known or invented by the authors.

Hilda Cruz, one of the group members, told us that the flowers come out of her dreams and she quickly draws them freehand on the fabrics stretched on her knees when she wakes up, using white fibre or soap to mark them. They then embroider them with brightly coloured synthetic threads in filled stitch. Once the rebozo is finished, the piece is finished by crocheting it with industrial acrylic wool and finishing it off with fringes. We learned about all this when we looked down on the town of Caspalá from the Antiguito, the sacred place where the master embroiderers invited us to meet, walking together along a stretch of the Qhapaq Ñan to reach it. The

[8] Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2018); *Un mundo ch'ixi es posible* [A Ch'ixi world is possible], Tinta Limón, Buenos Aires.

women of Flor en piedra embroidered there, on the collective quilt, with filled stitch and llama threads dyed with natural dyes, a half-blooming small flower bud of the panti flower on the fabric that Chabela, from Atamisqui, had added to the textile dialogue.

From Caspalá, we went down the kenko that traced the road on the mountain and climbed up again to reach Santa Ana. On one side of the mountain, there are twenty-three turns, on the other side, there are eleven. The women of the Flor de Altea group were waiting for us in Sanata Ana, with the water already steaming, to show us the alchemical process for colouring the llama fibre. This is a process that they are rediscovering to return to working with local raw materials and ancestral techniques that had been set aside in recent decades. After making newly born reds, pinks, and violets appear in the fibres, brought to light by cochineal as the sun was setting, they embroidered an althaea flower using the picado technique⁹, with llama threads dyed with natural dyes, a flower like a bas-relief, inaugurating a new form and texture in the textile dialogue.

10

To loop a bag of chaguar, you have to go out into the bush to look for the plant that grows in the shade of some trees, far from the paths where the motorbikes ride. You have to cut it carefully so as not to hurt yourself with its thorns, for that you have to make a spear with a stick and handle a machete safely. The leaves are then peeled to find the fibres that need to be crushed to loosen them. In this way they can be spun on the body, on the thigh with the hand smeared with ashes. The ends of the fibres have to be joined together to make the thread, which is then dyed with roots, bark, leaves or seeds, in the colours of the bush. It is necessary to tighten a thread between two pieces of wood and then begin to weave it, drawing geometric shapes that represent the beings of the monte, the visual language of a people, which will occupy the surface of a new container.

[9] [A Ch'ixi world is possible], Tinta Limón, Buenos Aires.

From Santa Ana, we drove down Valles de Altura to Calilegua Park. We crossed the rainforest, left the province of Jujuy and entered the province of Salta, drove through the yungas (subtropical Andean forests) until the exuberance of the vegetation was left behind along Route 34, we saw the cleared and exploited territory later to enter the semi-arid monte of the Chaco of Salta. It was many hours of travelling and changes in the landscape until we reached the Silät group, weavers of the Wichí people who live in the province of Salta, in the triple border area where Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay meet.

In the community of Alto la Sierra, some of the weavers of this group were waiting for us with a feast of food, including a dish made of wild rabbits. This group was formed several years ago, but recently took this name due to a reorganisation process. Ofelia Pérez, an intercultural mediator, tells us that most Wichí weavers learned textile techniques from their mothers and grandmothers as part of their vital education, since it is a job specially done by women. All the women of the Wichí people know how to weave, although not all of them commercialise their weavings. This group in particular began to try out their traditional techniques in large-scale weaving, testing a function that for them was never detached from use on the body: contemplation.

In this community, the Silät weavers added another language, another material, other stitches to the conversation. The sacred plant fibre of the chaguar was the protagonist of this closing. Yica stitch, ancient stitch and woven on a frame loom. The raw chaguar, dyed with palo santito root and the carob tree resin, extended the conversation's surface with other textile logics.

11

This textile dialogue is understood as a constellation of diverse formations. Ailton Krenak states: "We are peoples, tribes, constellations of people scattered across the earth with different memories of existence"¹⁰. The Earth, Ailton teaches us, is a living organism, we are part of the earth, we are not separate from nature, we are

[10] Ailton Krenak (2023); *La vida no es útil* [Life is not useful], Buenos Aires, Eterna Cadencia.

part of it. His words resonate in each of the weavings that make up this woven constellation, composed of gestures that knot sheep's wool, dye with the weeping of the carob tree, finish off edges with a wincha dyed with mikuna, grow with chaguar fibres linked in ancient stitch, embroider with images of flowers with llama fibre, draw hooks or waves with two-needle knitting, starting from a tiny net of industrial cotton.

Our sampler is a showcase of intersections, of participation, of uses, of materialities, it is an ecology of gestures and knowledge, it is the *ch'ixi*, "that strange mixture that we are", as Rivera Cusicanqui defines it¹¹. Thus, this conversation is made up of the gestures and knowledge of each group, although they are not one or the other, they are all together composing that third weaving that responds to all the ways of weaving together, that has grown, because we come together.

[11] Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2018); *Un mundo ch'ixi es posible*, Buenos Aires, Tinta Limón.





Tinku Kamayu. Wednesday 10/05/23, Santa María, Catamarca.



Weavers from Quilmes. Thursday 11/05/23, Quilmes, Tucumán.



Weavers from Amaicha del Valle. Friday 12/05/23, Amaicha del Valle, Tucumán.



Warmipura. Saturday 13/05/23, Tafí del Valle, Tucumán.



Weavers from Huilla Catina. Thursday 18/05/23, Loreto, Santiago del Estero.
 Warmi Sumaj. Thursday 18/05/23, Monte Redondo, Loreto, Santiago del Estero.



Telera from Atamisqui. Friday 19/05/23, Atamisqui, Santiago del Estero.
 Warmi Guapas. Friday 19/05/23, Atamisqui, Santiago del Estero.



Andean Weavers. Wednesday 07/06/23, Huacalera, Jujuy.



Flower in Stone. Thursday 08/06/23, Caspalá, depto Valle Grande, Jujuy.
Altea Flower. Thursday 08/06/23, Santa Ana, depto Valle Grande, Jujuy.



The Work is the Encounter and Its Protective Edge is the Celebration

Alejandra Mizrahi

María Gabriela Cisterna

Pilgrimage

The exchanges during the first visits, the breaths in the conversations we had begun, touching our hands through their work, visiting our houses, the samples saved for years, the samples of dyes and techniques, the tables, chairs, and cupboards had been the premonition of being together, all of us, among us. Between May and June 2023, we travelled to see each group that forms part of **Unión Textiles Semillas**. We christened these movements with the name *Pilgrimage*.

The first trip was through Tucumán and Catamarca to the Randeras de El Cercado, Warmipura in Tafí del Valle, La Pachamama cooperative in Amaicha, Tejedoras de Quilmes in Quilmes, and Tinku Kamayu in Santa María. We understood that bodies move differently in their place and that the desire to know a person is a desire to know her home and the steps she takes every day, where she weaves, and what her view is when she weaves.

We continued south of Tucumán and Santiago del Estero to Mechita Cardozo de Achalay in Niogasta, the Teleras de Atamisqui, and those of Huilla Catina. The third trip took us to Jujuy and the Chaco of Salta. Tejedores Andinos in the Quebrada de Humahuaca, Flor de Altea and Flor en Piedra in the Valles de Altura and Silät in Santa Victoria Este.

We knew that this mattered. That the desires of a territory are its people and that the people who live and weave, caring for animals, caring for nothing else, imagine skins, foresee futures and that, if we come together, we grow.

First Meeting

In July of the same year, we met at the Encuentro de Tejedoras de Amaicha del Valle in Tucumán [Weavers' Gathering of Amaicha del Valle in Tucumán], organised by the cooperative La Pachamama. In the warm winter sunshine among the mountains was the first meeting of **Unión Textiles Semillas**.

The smell of wood and fire welcomed the women as we arrived. We got to know each other through the passing of time and the daily events of living together.

In Andean culture, the Pachamama, Mother Earth, is worshipped on the first day of August. Her mouth is opened and shawled, and she is fed wine, coca leaves, cigarettes, wool and camelid fibres, potatoes, squash, and corn. For more than ten years now, the Encuentro de Tejedoras of Amaicha del Valle has been held on the eve of the festival.

Esta es mi ronda sorora, no estás sola, no estás sola, (This is my sisterhood round, you are not alone, you are not alone), sang the copleras [popular singers of poetic folk songs from northwestern Argentina] in the mouth of the Mother, still closed in the earth, to inaugurate the Gathering. Sheltered in a preexisting encounter, we gathered, were hosted, were received, and stitch by stitch, we tightened the threads that had begun to unite us.

To get to this and future meetings, some women had to leave their homes two days earlier, the embroiderers of Santa Ana and Caspalá, both in Jujuy, or the Wichí weavers of the Chaco in Salta, having to change buses to get there. The journey and the textile, the movements that weave one warp and the other, come and go along paths of different times, heterogeneous to everyday life.

The benches of Escuela n.º 10 "Claudia V. de Cano" [School n.º 10 "Claudia V. de Cano"] in Amaicha were overflowing with coarse and delicate fibres, some rough and yellow with contrasting coloured flowers, others soft, pink, and toasted. The *sumaj* sweaters¹ of Tejedores Andinos, with *hooks* that evoke water, were piled up in colours, who did not want to form a single body, a single skin fused in the mantle, to rhythm one's own breathing with that of the fabric?

[1] Quechua word that can be translated as beautiful. Here it is also the name of the design of a two-needled jumper made by the group Tejedores Andinos de Huacalera, Jujuy.

We also got to know each other's gestures, and the position each body adopted to weave with wise fingers. We began to understand the life that each of us had led until then, which, in the union, became a single life made up of weaves of different threads, of rhythms that could sound in unison.

In addition to the first day, the day of the arrivals, we spent three days in Amaicha, and two days during the Weavers' Gathering at the school. On the classroom benches, sheltered from a sun that was closer than usual, each woman displayed her own and her group's weavings at the fair. Mountain peaks of eucalyptus wood were erected in the school's central courtyard. The structures held each group's weavings, a vest with the figure of a mountain from Doña Clara, near fabrics dyed with carob from Santiago, from the Teleras de Huilla Catina. Around the exhibition, the Gathering was alive. There were workshops on different techniques, meetings to teach and learn, and abundant lunches prepared in giant pots heated by firewood.

When the Weavers' Gathering ended, we stayed one more day in our meeting. We cultivated the imagination by weaving together in a workshop in the *Casa de la Memoria de la Comunidad de Amaicha* [House of Memory of the Amaicha Community]. Tilling the soil and, in the same way, our imagination, crafting the fabric.

A light textile, dyed with carob, was the body that united us, around which the threads and the last afternoon passed. How many different actions happen when weaving? The object formed brought us all together. The clear carob cloths, in which Randas and embroidery, chaguar, and crochet stitches appeared, were us, all together contained in a living object, pulsating with our meanings. The last day of July ended with the joy of a new "little start" that would become two Telas Tierra [Earth Textiles], one from the highlands and the other from the lowlands. They would travel through each group to continue the conversation until we met again.

After feeding Pachamama that first of August, we left this meeting, protected by the left-handed thread, or Ilok'e, in Quechua. A thread spun backwards, left-handed, black and white, was the amulet that dressed our wrists even months later.

In the Round, we Dance, we Talk, we Weave

The second **Textiles Semillas** Gathering was held in November in Tilcara, Jujuy, the most northern province of Argentina. In the Museo Arqueológico de Tilcara "Dr Eduardo Casanova" [Archaeological Museum of Tilcara "Dr Eduardo Casanova"], we set up the exhibition with its mountain structures around a Mocachi monolith that Casanova brought back in his explorations at the beginning of the last century. On the second day, after the arrivals, the wooden peaks rose against a deep orange sunset. A red, blue, and green hummingbird on a loom, made by the Balderrama sisters of Amaicha, had been incorporated into the exhibition along with other weavings.

We arrived on a Wednesday in mid-November. We had breakfast together on Thursday. We shared rooms in the University Residence in Tilcara. We built a familiar space, a home, time together in kitchens and galleries. That day, we walked to the museum and, in a circle, introduced ourselves. Some of us met again, but there were new members of the groups and, for many, it was the first time we had met.

With more or less pronounced *S's*, *R's*, tones, and ways of saying the words specific to each space, we named and gave nouns to what surrounded us to present it as a whole. Answering the question, who am I, is not easy, but each voice, with its nuances, told who we were, revealed the threads of a story woven by several, linked to a deep past and whose future we were weaving. The meeting in Tilcara ended, but not the question we were trying to answer. We are still searching for its form: who are we? A Union.

The Telas Tierra [Earth Textiles] that had travelled as a message, on which each group could be read, were reunited at this meeting. Amongst chaguar mermaids, condors, mountains, llamas, embroideries, a miniature violet rebozo [traditional shawl] from Caspalá, a Randa from El Cercado on one of the sides, the Telas, as well as the people, met again, they recognised each other in the courtyard of the Museum that housed the new exhibition.

On the day of the presentations, in the afternoon, we were invited to see the museum's collection of archaeological textiles, followed by the exhibition's opening. A guided tour of the room, where the pieces had been displayed for us, framed a strange situation in which the guide spoke in the past about the techniques

that many of those present in the room continued to use. All eyes were fixed on the kipu, the ancient spindle weaving, the fragments of fabrics thousands of years old. We all wanted to silence the moment to see, to see ourselves in what was done before and is still being done. On the second day, we went to the ceremony of the Pachamanka, a food ritual from the Andean region that the group of Tejedores Andinos, the hosts of this second meeting, gave us as a gift.

We left in shared hire cars and cars to Huacalera, arriving in the morning, while the earth's bowels were being prepared for cooking. For the Pachamanka a small pit is made in the earth, then the ingredients are placed in it, covered with hot stones in whose heat they will cook. First, the llama meat and chicken, then stones, beans, potatoes, and pumpkins, then stones again, and finally apples for dessert. Between the layers, alfalfa is placed so that the hot stones do not touch each other. That morning, before we all ate together, we talked in an assembly about our feelings about future decisions.

After lunch, the day was spent in the stupor of a warm siesta, after which we moved on to the weavings with a workshop. The women representing each group rehearsed, in small triangular structures, models of the woven works they would make for the large structures of the Berlin exhibition planned for the following year, 2024. We returned from Huacalera after the siesta. The light in the residence where we were staying had gone out, so we started to weave in the galleries lit by the last rays of the sun. But we still had a dinner altogether that had been planned in the centre of Tilcara.

The hands weave, embroider, and rise into the air to the rhythm of new dance steps. Propelled by their arms, they go forward, grab an imaginary object, and return, emulating the movement made with the paddle of a large loom, one that many of the weavers of **Textiles Semillas** know how to handle.

Laughter and music set the rhythm for the invention of textile dance steps. The loom's beater movement is joined by those of Randa lace-making and spinning. Hands exaggerate in the air, without needles and without threads, as Los Ángeles Azules play in the

background. It is the last dinner shared in this encounter in Tilcara. The affection and warmth materialise in the karaoke and the dance steps.

The first party was shy, we asked the owners of the bar in Amaicha where we were having dinner to let us play karaoke on the TV screen. But here we all danced, also in the form of a round. The work is the encounter and its protective edge, the celebration.

The Flat Monte

Fine dust, the earth rose with the footsteps and the dance steps, the dust cloud and the chacarera [a traditional Argentine folk dance and music], which would begin after eleven o'clock. In the centre, the space was a limited rectangle with the tables set for dinner: the smell of meat, of weavings, of the Santiago night. A warm light illuminated us from one side. When we were all there, they began to distribute the food: pork, chicken and beef, grilled on the barbecue. It was March and we were in Atamisqui, in Santiago del Estero, a province in northwestern Argentina known for its vastness and aridity. At the side of the arrival route, the toads also kicked up dirt with every jump.

The party closed the days that had been days of meeting, the third of them, it finished them off, like the rapacejo of a weaving². From one meeting to the next, over a year, we already knew the cadence with which our limbs moved to weave, to dance. *Sacha* in Quechua means "that comes from the monte, montaraz" after having been among mountains, in the heights, this time we met in the flat monte, we had come to it. In the Museo de la Sacha Guitarra [Museum of the Sacha Guitarra], a sibilant-sounding stringed instrument invented by Elpidio Herrera, we spread out rebozos and loom-loomed blankets, Randas, and ponchos. As on every occasion, we had arranged everything for the exhibition and for the fair.

The scene was set. As we ate at tables arranged like frames in a still undefined space, we knew what was going to happen next, even the women whose first meeting was Atamisqui, who was going to be the first person to get up to dance, who was going

to be the last to leave. Doña Catita de Quilmes danced zamba. She smiled with grooves and raised a handkerchief as she moved her legs slowly, moving forward. Afterwards, the couple dances turned into a running around between those of us who did and those of us who didn't know how to dance folklore. The music also changed in the end, but the round and the disorder of all the moving bodies remained. From Amaicha to Atamisqui, besides knowing, we had understood our movements.

Fair or dance, the spatial arrangements are not so different. In the centre is the place of the undefined, of everything that can happen. The fair and the exhibition in this encounter had been in the Museo de la Sacha, near a vast metal cicada that *welcomed* and held an instrument. The workshops, the encounter with the works that will travel to Berlin, the close conversations, the union of textiles from different origins, the parade, and the party took place in the house of Graciela, one of the weavers of Atamisqui, the host group of this encounter.

When we meet, we discover that many feelings unite us and that physical distance is not real distance. Everything we have done in the past could have been a foreshadowing of the present moment, the decisions we have made, the trust in the meeting, being here, the samples and the collection of textiles, the workshops to weave all together, the fairs of what each group brings and the final party, each time with more and more confidence. Sharing proximities made it possible to know how our imaginations swell as we think about how much has been done and about the textile future, glowing with the possibility of meeting again.

[2] The rapacejos are edge terminations of the weaving.

Carry the Territory with Me

María Gabriela Cisterna
Lorena Cohen

1

Territory moves in and with the people it meets and shares, we live with things and places even when they are far away, as long as they are not indifferent to us.

We inhabit the territory, but it also inhabits us and is part of the ways of doing and collective memories, identities, knowledge, and narratives that emerge from all this. Things and places travel with people, in their bodies, shaping new territorialities in meeting spaces, which grow with interaction and exchange.

We assume a territory that is living and aware, that is alive and pulsating and therefore in movement.

2

With **Textiles Semillas**, we made a textile conversation with otherness, with and for the territory. We travelled through different places in northwest Argentina (NOA), where we made stitches that wove a heterogeneous weave made up of ecologies, reliefs, colours, sounds, plants, animals, stones, stories, and people with their own and shared ways of inhabiting. In NOA, diverse components exist in relatively short distances, that diversity so typical of the central-southern Andean region, which, when walking from east to west, shows multiple contrasting environments that follow one another at different altitudes. Valleys, hills, and low plains, with mountains, salt flats, and rainforests; high plains, with Puna deserts and, in a few kilometres, you reach the Pacific. It is a heterogeneous space, whose experience

marks people's lives, building collective identities and memories with the imprint of each region, but also those shared as part of a history of centuries and millennia of trans-regional links.

During our pilgrimage journeys, we travelled the deep, fresh green of the western rain-forests of the pedemonte, in the yungas of Tucuman, with the background noise of birds and crickets, the dense humidity in the air, colourful bark, and fruits with valued properties, such as the Cebil, a shamanic visionary plant for thousands of years, or the soapy-seeded Pacará. Today, there are also sugar cane and citrus crops, which are becoming emblematic of northern identity. We also travelled through the Chaco-Santiagoño monte in Salta and Santiago del Estero, with variable intensity of greenery, but with the inescapable mark of the thick bushes, hirsute plants with thorns that many women use as needles. Generous vegetable fibres are used for weaving, such as chaguar and cotton, as well as dye plants, such as Urucú and Palo Santo. We walked through the valleys and ravines of different heights in Tucumán, Catamarca, and Jujuy, endowed with very different configurations, with trees and bushes between pastures and rivers, with brownish roughness in the hills and rocks, which sometimes show the most surprising colours of the palette in their minerals of varied composition. For millennia, these valleys have been inhabited by camelids that made it possible to transport goods over long distances on their backs. They yielded their fibre, as did the sheep introduced in the colony, to make coats, ropes, woollen hides, and other items. The carob tree, or "El Árbol," as it is called in Amaicha del Valle to highlight its presence, provides the benefits of its wood, its fruits for food, drink, and medicine, and its root for dyes. In these valleys, the cacti are inhabited by tiny insects, the cochineals, which give the red colour to the textiles. A diverse and generous territory.

In order to make any object, such as a weaving, possible, an extensive chain of reciprocal contributions and care is built up across a territory, integrating things with their constituent elements and the places from which they come.

Dealing with things and productive work is a true dialogue or nurturing, *uywaña*, an Aymara word that implies nurturing, protecting with love, and that alludes to the relationship of care and respect between fathers, mothers and children, between shepherds and their llamas, between people and their ancestors. This perspective implies a communion between different kinds of beings where the elements of the landscape (animals, trees, stones, hills, rivers, houses, or farms) can communicate with human beings on condition that they know how to treat them with sensitivity. We carry the territory in every experience of life when we

walk on the hill with the sheep when we shear the llamas, and when we collect leaves and roots to make dyes. Likewise, when we care for other beings with whom we co-inhabit, they are also caring for us. In this way, we nurture each other.

That we can obtain, make, a good woollen garment is part of a chain whose first links are the river's water that makes the meadows with which the camelids and sheep feed. The fibre for the wool is extracted from them, and the care of the textiles depends on their care. Taking care of the river directly implies the provision of the woven coat, in the same way, that taking care of the monte makes it possible to provide bags woven from the chaguar plant to transport food to be sold.

Uywaña is constituted by reciprocal relationships between co-inhabitants with no intention of dominating a resource to be exploited. We deal with goods, rather than "natural resources", because they are elements whose virtue is recognised, cared for, and not exploited. There is gratitude for the animal, the plant, the mineral, and the insect that provide their colours or fibres to make a textile possible. The landscape cohabits with animals, plants, minerals, rivers, mountains, things, and people, interwoven in relationships through their roles as social subjects.

The whole landscape is permeated by the weaving, its raw materials, techniques, and tools, the stories told while weaving, the motifs depicted, and the colours.

3

We can fool ourselves into thinking that we are separate from our landscape, that we are two different things, that there is an image and an observer, a duality, a fracture that makes the landscape a backdrop separate from the life that takes place *on* it.

However, the landscape is not a totality that anyone can look at; it is rather the world where we stand to get a point of view of our surroundings. Landscape is not the object but rather the home of our thoughts. We live in a landscape, we think with it. We experience and live it as we perceive it, we pass through it immersed, we are inside it and we are part of it. Dissociation is not possible. This notion nourishes our gaze of weavers who carry their place with them and with their weavings and *knowledge of weaving*, to build these territories of encounter, such as Amaicha, Tilcara, and Atamisqui.

Body and landscape are complementary terms: one implies the other, and landscape is a collection of social practices, movements, and things, related to a living process that makes human beings as well as being made by them. It is never complete, neither *built* nor *unbuilt*, it is perpetually under construction. In dwelling in the world, we do not act upon it, nor do

things to it, but rather we move along with it. Our actions do not transform the world, they are an integral part of the world transforming itself. And this is just another way of saying that they belong to time.

About the landscape in the body, we bring you a story by Nadia Larcher, a coplera singer from Andalgalá, Catamarca, who tells in a podcast about the relationship between the landscape and the voice of the caja singing (a traditional Andean drumming and singing style)¹. She asks don Eusebio Mamani, a coplero from Fuerte Quemado in Catamarca: "Why does your voice break when you sing?" The singer invites her to walk through the mountains singing and replies: "The voice won't come out smooth-like and even-like". Larcher says that their voice broke and that this happened because the mountain landscape was not only the background but was also imprinted on the song. The song evidences the transit as if it were a map. The singer asks herself: "why aren't we singing today?" And she answers that it happens because the mountains are being destroyed, they are not being looked after. She says: "We are not being able to walk through our mountains, so we are not being able to let the landscape pass through our singing (...) that is what singing is, it is not only a cultural manifestation, as if it were a discourse, it is a state that speaks of the moment we are in, who we are being".

The meeting places created by **Textiles Semillas** in Amaicha, Tilcara, and Atamisqui allowed us to weave memories, knowledge, and affections about weaving, specific to the landscapes that each participant inhabits (but we believe that it also includes those who read and travel through these pages). In recent days, Doña Juana, from Huilla Catina in Santiago del Estero, said: "We are a family". What is being a family if not sharing living space, generating links from the land, from the past, from the memories of the places that each of us brings with us, that each of us is, to come together and find a new space in which we can link ourselves following the logic of the loom, the weft.

Just as the landscape becomes a voice in the song, it also melts into the clothes we wear, and into the bags we carry. The

[1] Copla es un canto con caja, en el cual la voz se quiebra disonante con sentimiento. Es típico del Noroeste Argentino, sobre todo de las regiones altas. Nadia Larcher (Presentadora), (2021); *Legado. El paisaje y la voz* (No. 4) [Episodio de podcast de audio], en *Copla Viva, un podcast cantado con caja*, Centro Cultural Kirchner. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/3WEDT2UpDEY8lLzBRUARch?si=9c21YWDqRdaW3a-vNh8DWg>

landscape *becomes* a textile that the body wears. Like the rebozos of Caspalá, of colourful flowers with the chromatic strength that stands out among the adobe or the mountains of a semi-arid valley, as they move on the women's backs. To wear these rebozos, would it be to add the vivid colours absent in the environment to the human body? The landscape outside is then completed with the clothed body itself.

"In my village, there is no winter/ because the women of the place/ decorate with flowers in their rebozos and hats", sings María Mamani, weaver of Flor de Altea of Santa Ana, in the high valleys of Jujuy, in a poem of her own. Textile and landscape, person and landscape, the separation is not such because the experiences are woven in the landscape, their beings settle, creating, creating themselves. The flowers that the embroiderers of Santa Ana and Caspalá embroider are the ones that grow in their places, of hollyhock, of soldaque [a local flower species].

The back of the rhea, the ear of the armadillo, the claws of the caracara, the seeds of the chañar [a native South American tree], and the eyes of the owl. The presence of the landscape, the interconnection. In textiles, as in us, there is landscape, and we grow with it, that is where the fibres come from, like the chaguar, to weave, also the root of the pata, which dyes orange, or the resin of the carob tree, to make black. There are no gestures, no movements, we are all symbiosis in the landscape.

4

Paola Agüero, from the Talapazo village in Quilmes, tells us about the presence of obsidian, a foreign stone in her territory, and understands it as a product of relations with other peoples in the pre-Hispanic past. We know from archaeological research that obsidian from the Catamarca puna circulated to the region of the Santa María Valley (Calchaquí Sur) several millennia before the Spanish invasion. These social practices of interaction had the purpose of exchanging knowledge, information, and manufactured items, as well as responding to strategies of alliance in the face of conflict and celebrations in collective rituals. They thus overcame any distance and environmental contrasts.

Mountains, considered barriers to a modern city life experience, are not and have not been for families who graze their animals and who have posts distributed in topographically and ecologically different sectors. Nor were they barriers when the exchange of goods was fundamental to people's daily lives when bringing goods from one space to another that did not have them was key to the life of human groups. These contacts allowed, for example, the yungas of northwestern Argentina to meet the Pacific, expanding the territory through exchange and encounter. In the same way, the seas came closer to the mountains and valleys, to the deserts of the Puna and the yungas, brimming with greenery and humidity.

Approximately 3500 years ago, llama caravans assembled that diverse Andean territory. The animals were loaded with sacks carrying salt, fruits, minerals, charqui [a type of dried meat], fibres, seeds and plants, obsidian, ceramics, and other manufactured and non-manufactured materials, and they set off. The territory always travelled, shaping networks of trans-regional links that often continue today, sometimes only in people's memory.

One story we can tell, of many that relate such encounters and movements in today's northwestern Argentina, is that of a connection between the lowland rainforest and the Puna high desert through a very ancient funerary rite. Archaeology revealed the discovery of a baby burial in Antofagasta de la Sierra in the Catamarca puna above 3500 meters above sea level². The burial, which took place around 1500 years ago, consisted of a ceramic vessel containing the skeletal remains. It was made in a style typical of Tucumán and Salta rainforest known as Candelaria. Inside, the infant was accompanied by various items, including baskets woven with plant fibres from the Chaco Salteño. The urn was wrapped with a knotted net made of plant fibres from the lowlands, although it had repairs made with local vegetables. Surely, that final destination in the desert implied a long journey through different environments until the body was deposited in a specific place under a large rock with cave paintings of llama caravans. This shows a pre-Hispanic past in which the territory that was

[2] S. M. L. López Campeny; A. Romano; M. F. Rodríguez; A. R. Martel y M. H. Corbalán (2014); “De aquí y de allá: análisis integral de un contexto funerario. Vínculos e interacciones sociales entre Puna meridional y Tierras Bajas orientales”, *Intersecciones en Antropología*, 15.

inhabited expanded far beyond the limits that we impose on ourselves today with supposed ecological or topographical barriers. The territory is certainly in constant movement.

5

We would like to go back to the beginning, to the textile dialogue that **Textiles Semillas** proposes. As Margarita Ramírez, a master weaver from the Tinku Kamayu group in Catamarca, said, we speak as we weave. On the loom, with the Randa net, each stitch is different, but, perhaps we are all saying the same thing in different languages. In the dialogue, we generate a collective composition with the approach of the territories and their exchanges. A piece created from the addition of fabrics and weaves with colours and techniques specific to each group, to each territory. Thus, a multiple piece was formed with aggregates that function as metonymies of identities and histories, which refers us to certain millenary Andean practices that compose new entities, which assume a collective identity, starting from the parts of a whole.

About the above, we will now share an investigation that one of us took part in. We return to Antofagasta de la Sierra, Catamarca, where we carried out an archaeological excavation inside a pre-Hispanic stone chamber that we interpret as a food deposit and tomb from about 1000 years ago. We found there a peculiar object from the 19th century, made up of several fragments of different materials, mostly textiles. The elements that constituted it were entangled together and consisted of knotted cords, a piece of a flowered scarf, multicoloured wool to *florear la hacienda*³ in the marking of the animals, part of a sheep shoe made of leather and fleeces, all placed on burlap in an extension of about 30x30cm. We interpreted that it was a *q'epi*, which in Quechua means a mess, a bundle, a set of disorderly things, or a volume of things, and that we were in a ritual deposit of relatively modern textiles, in a landscape charged with significance due to its link with the deceased from several centuries ago. This *q'epi* or ritual bundle was made up of parts of a collective identity, of a pastoralist and weaving community, as well as of specific people who lived near that site.

[3] *Flores de la hacienda* are the identification marks made with woollen string that are applied to the ears of llamas, sheep and goats in Andean pastoralist ritual celebrations.

We were looking at an object made up of cords, pieces of cloth, footwear, and parts of the lives of the people who intended to offer it in their ancestral territories⁴. This *q'epi* can be understood as an ancient textile conversation of the Andean region that interweaves materials, times, experiences, presences, memories, and places in a new heterogeneous textile composition.

After all this journey, we return to the concept of territory, that which we constructed while walking with **Textiles Semillas**, to reaffirm that the richness of its conception lies in assuming it as dynamic and as an assembly of experiences of inhabiting diversity that leaves material traces in places, practices, and memories.



[4] Cohen, M. L. and M. S. Martinez (2022); "Q'uepis, ancestros y territorios. Prácticas rituales históricas en contextos prehispánicos en Antofagasta de la Sierra, Noroeste argentino" [Q'uepis, ancestors and territories. Historical ritual practices in pre-Hispanic contexts in Antofagasta de la Sierra, Northwest Argentina], *Chungara Revista de Antropología Chilena*, Vol. 54, n.º 2.

Between Technique and Ceremony

Margarita Ramírez

Alejandra Mizrahi

Far from my land I go, carrying flowers from my field, to Atamisqui I'm going. The wind blows hard as if it wanted to get there first, to make the furrows in which each one of us must build our own dream. Thus, together we will cross the bridge, and then let it fall behind us, to weave life with different stitches. In the interweaving, a new child will emerge amidst the coloured hills of Tilcara. How beautiful it will be! He will have the eyes of the condor, red in his heart, green in his plumage, brown in his poncho. He will have the cunning of the eagle, the Pilcomayo River's strength, the hardness of the carob tree and the tenderness of a flower.

The textile is a living being, the emergence of the child is the creation of the piece on the loom. The textile is shaped as a being is shaped. Thus, while we shape our collective works, we converse through landscapes, forms, bodies and even our dreams with different textile languages. This conversation is permeated by what we can do, think, and say from the textile. What the logic of textile construction, from lace, fabrics, felts, and embroidery, allows us to articulate: to know a language and to speak it. A dialogue between different languages. Each textile technique has its own specific grammar. The conversation is established between their morphology, their territories and between people who spoke them in the past and continue to speak them today. Each speaker has its own rules and necessary steps to reach mastery of that language. Languages are techniques, some of which have fallen into disuse, some have been recovered, and some are still in use.

All of them, when combined, produce a speaking sample that tells us about those who make them. In each repetition of textile gestures, ways of doing, thinking, and organising are rooted and reaffirmed.

In this conversation, we talk about soft structures, ones that overflow bodies, objects and senses. We think about how textiles also cover beds. How they can also finish off garments with growing ornaments, fringes, lace or any piece longer than it is wide, which in different ways outline, finish, protect and neaten square, rectangular or triangular fabrics. Sometimes the pieces, longer than they are wide, support, bear, help to carry, adjusting the load to the body.

The conversation takes place on a journey through valleys, mountains, rivers, plains, hills, cane fields, carob plantations, dry stone walls, ravines, mountains, and cities, all geographies of northwestern Argentina. We chatted among women organised around textiles. We talked from pre-existing bases on which gardens were planted, from the tenderness of ancestral knowledge, where the secret lies. Quietly, we also listened to each other building nets to decorate or carry. Whispers were brought to the shelter in the form of clothes and bedspreads. The sound in the background is the singing of the loom blades, the boiling that breaks in the pots, the fire, the goats, the wind, the birds, the rivers, the laughter, and an endless number of visual sounds that were heard at the sight of needles, frames, combs, looms and scissors.

To weave is also to write. Textiles are texts elaborated with materials and techniques through which forms and iconographies that hold meanings are reiterated. Textiles also elaborate maps, function as markers, allow us to identify geographies, landscapes and even economies. We can think of them as cartographies that allow us to locate ourselves. We make as we speak, we work with our hands as we work with our minds, and we think and speak as we weave. In the past, there wasn't writing as we know it today, people wrote and counted in a different way. The quipu was a system of knots used by the Andean people to tie up important things, crops, gold and silver. Births, deaths, etc., were also knotted.

There were even pocket quipus, small ones. These were made with a main cord and many secondary ones, with many knots and colours, and a person was prepared to read. This person was considered worthy of reading the memoirs. The quipu unites many things, the past with the present.

Like the quipu itself, these pieces that we make collectively record and unite stories: the tenderness of a flower, the stitches, and drawings of the yica, among which we find the back of the tortoise and the ear of the mulita coexisting with the embroidery stitches of the Randas, rains, honeycombs, spikes, and mats. The compartment between the Indigenous and the European, that connection with the other. In weaving, stories and knowledge are tied together in silence. Often, the weaver weaves from silence, she talks to herself, she heals herself because she cries, she has pains, she is human, she is grateful, she laughs, she plays, she jokes, it is like a dialogue between the work and ourselves. We weave stories to share them.

A characteristic property of textiles is their mobile quality. To move, to carry information from one place to another, to tell stories, to move worlds and territories, in short, to produce spaces of meaning situated by weaving relationships. The Telas Tierras Viajeras [Travelling Earth Textiles] of the highlands and lowlands were the field and mobile terrain where the first seeds of this Union were sown. The Telas Tierras are woven on looms and dyed with the weeping of the carob tree, in some way, we perceive in them a territory to be worked. The nickname Viajeras [Travelling] responds to the fact that one travelled through the groups living in the highlands and the lowlands for two months, staying for approximately ten days with each group, who met to sow there their emblems, iconographies, and thoughts. Each part represents a stop where the textile stationed to talk about the past and the present and then continue the journey carrying the stories that were being drawn. Thus, hands multiply, industrious and full of kindness, coming and going to the rhythm of a melody. Thus, life goes on.

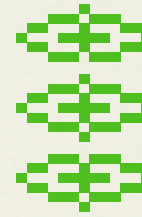
Geographical thinking is situated thinking, vital as an epistemological gesture, and that is why the very geography from which we work is soft, fluffy, and warm. It is a geography that

shelters, cares for, and protects. Art is here, the continent that allows us to find ourselves in a world without frontiers. This textile land is sown by each group with pintas [dot-shaped motif], foxes, guayacanes [a type of flowering tree], carob trees, chaguar, cotton, roots, leaves, seeds, jaguars, iguanas, brocket deer, *qenqos*, hearts, flowers, little walnut shells, onion husks, rhubarb, sheep, yerba [mate herb], eucalyptus bark, jarilla [a native shrub], jume [a salt-tolerant shrub], among other ingredients, give an account of a diversity of knowledge about the care and relationship of women with Mother Earth.

Our works are double conversations because plants, animals, and icons from the past speak. The dialogue is between us and nature; it is a conversation between the creator and creation.

The icons that come from the past are those records that our ancestors left us, for example, the funerary urns or the paintings that we find in the hills. We gave all these things meanings. Everything was transmitted orally and this has been mixed with feelings. We have not had written records, our records have been the fabrics and we realise that the fabrics have been woven with all the icons that express what our ancestors lived. In animals, for example, reciprocity comes into play, because they give us the fibre and we weave and we warm people, we keep them warm and we do the animal a favour because otherwise, it would die of heat. Plants help each other and live because one feeds the other, they give each other water from below, and they feed each other, it's that energy that comes and goes. All of nature is a reciprocity, one receives and gives.

In those times, they were spiritual beings who combined heaven and earth. We have that way of thinking. The craftsperson continues with that worldview because he has nothing else, so he dedicates himself to that, and that's how he looks at nature, the world, and the cosmos. We see the earth and the animals. We are in the middle of everything, and we live from that. We could not do what we do if we were not in nature.



The Mutual Nurturing of Textiles

Elvira Espejo Ayca

Cultural Definitions of Art

Analysing art from two different definitions, we can appreciate two important strands. The first definition comes from Latin, while the second has its roots in Greek culture. From the Latin perspective, art is defined as *Art* or *Artis*, related to creativity, the production of works or creative works. This notion leads us to understand art as the expression of creativity. On the other hand, the Greek definition presents us with the concept of *techné*, which refers to the technique of knowledge and action.

By combining these two strands, a systematisation of the approach to art in the educational context is created. A structure based on Greek and Roman influences is established, strengthening the Eurocentric artistic structure. This structure includes classifying the arts, which originated in 1790 following Greek and Roman definitions. Within this structure, influenced by the structural thinking of art, categories such as architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry are included.

This organisation of art is not only restricted to theory, but is actively implemented in art schools and academies. Institutions apply this Eurocentric structure, both in teaching and in the promotion of art, extending its concepts to other regions such as Latin America. Universities in countries such as Bolivia and Chile play a fundamental role in disseminating and consolidating this structure within the artistic field.

Artistic Structure and Classification

These two sources, Greek and Latin, exert Eurocentric influences also reflected in the Aymara and Quechua terminology of "doing", known as *Luraña* or *Ruwana*, thus offering two very intriguing perspectives. In Aymara, the term *Luriri* and, in Quechua, *ruwax* describes one who performs actions of doing, be it a man, woman, person, animal or plant, and the doer may have various specialities.

Similarly, in Quechua, *Ruwax* is the doer, the one who carries out different actions. For example, in Quechua, *makiwan ruwax* means to do something with the hands, or, in Aymara, *Amparant Luriri*, which is to do with the hands. In addition, there are terms such as *chakiwan ruwax* in Quechua or *kayunt luriri* in Aymara, which indicate the doer with the feet.

Likewise, it can also be interpreted as the ability to do with the eyes, that is, the one who can see. The individual who uses his body and his movements to create shows various ways in which art manifests itself through different acts of creation; it is in this context that we find one of the most striking perspectives. It is about how the raw material is acquired, which is supplied by an expert known as *ali qamani*, a figure of great importance in the nurturing of plants from which the raw material for textile production, such as the fabric used in garments, is obtained. In this field, he is also considered the guardian who protects crops from hail, frost, or drought, and his responsibility includes performing ceremonies to prevent such problems in the future. This cotton specialist, called *willma qamayux* and *t'arwa qamani*, is considered to be the master, the person who extracts and supplies the fibre. They are experts in raw materials, especially cotton, whose specialised knowledge facilitates understanding the process of obtaining the fibre. In addition to understanding the fibre, these experts have extensive knowledge of the land cycle, from how the soil is nourished to when to plant and how to care for the seeds, all in relation to water, soil, and sunlight, which can be intense or even adverse, such as during a hailstorm. In short, they are the real specialists in plant cultivation and management.

Similarly, we find the *uywa qamani*, who specialises in the breeding or life cycle of the animal for fibre. In both animal and plant breeding, these specialities require a deep understanding

of each process and procedure involved. For example, it is necessary to understand when the young are born, when they need more vitamin supplements, when they need to be dewormed, when the camelids reach young age and when it is the right time to shear the fibres.

Identifying the different fibres in this breeding is important, as the quality varies according to the animal's age. Thus, the fibre of an older animal tends to be coarser, while that of a young animal tends to be finer and softer. The interaction between animal and plant breeding is essential, as it helps us to understand the different specialities and varieties of fibres available.

Specialities within mutual nurturing

Moving on to another area of specialisation, we find the mutual nurturing of plants and animals, the result of which will be the selection of fibres by the *willma ajllax* or *t'arwa ajlliri*, a specialist in fibre selection. This work requires meticulous training of their fingers, as they must perceive the textures of the fibres and carry out the selection directly from the animal's body. This process is essential to understand textiles as works of art, from rustic to fine and extra fine fibres, each adapted to different textile techniques and formats. For this reason, these specialities are of great importance to the communities.

We then move on to the speciality of *puchhka qamayux*, said in Quechua, or *qapu qamani*, in Aymara, who are in charge of spinning. These people are trained to understand the force field involved, from manipulating the spinning wheel to transforming fibre into yarn. Their skill lies in understanding the spinning of the instrument and taking care of their fingers to achieve quality yarn. In this interaction between the fibre, the spinning wheel and the person, these specialists communicate with each other as if they were living beings. For example, the *phuchhkax* are specialists in various yarns, from textured and coarse to fine and extra fine, each with different twist levels and rustic and fine characteristics.

Sami qamayux or *Sami qamani* is the expert in natural dyes and dyeing, both for fibres and yarns. This person is dedicated to obtaining colours from plants and minerals, seeking harmony between both elements. In many cases, these dyers know the various regional techniques for obtaining colours and understand

the specific demands of the communities. They use a variety of colours to dye as required, drawing on their understanding of plant development and growth, as well as the extraction of colours through mineral mordanting. By combining plants and minerals, it is possible to obtain a wide range of colours from the first to the fourth immersion of water, which translates into our rich *Sami* colour palette.

Thanks to these dyes, dyed yarns are obtained, which are then passed on to the twisting speciality, known as *k'anthi qamani* or *k'antha qamayux* in Aymara and Quechua. These specialists are dedicated to twisting the yarn, offering various twists according to the desired structure of the weave, whether medium, strong, or light. The required twist depends on the fineness of the yarn, being more demanding for fine yarns and less for coarse yarns.

Next is the most crucial specialist, the *away qamayux* or *sawu qamani*, that is, the weaver. This person masters the textile format, which can be rectangular, vertical, square, or even conical, depending on the type of weaving done in the community. These weaving experts use various techniques, such as mathematically counting odd and even threads, which allows them to create patterns and textures to compose an iconography. For them, the iconography is not as relevant as the mathematical composition that gives rhythm and texture to the weaving. Thanks to these textures, they plan the colour and obtain greater clarity in the fabric shapes, allowing them to play creatively with texture.

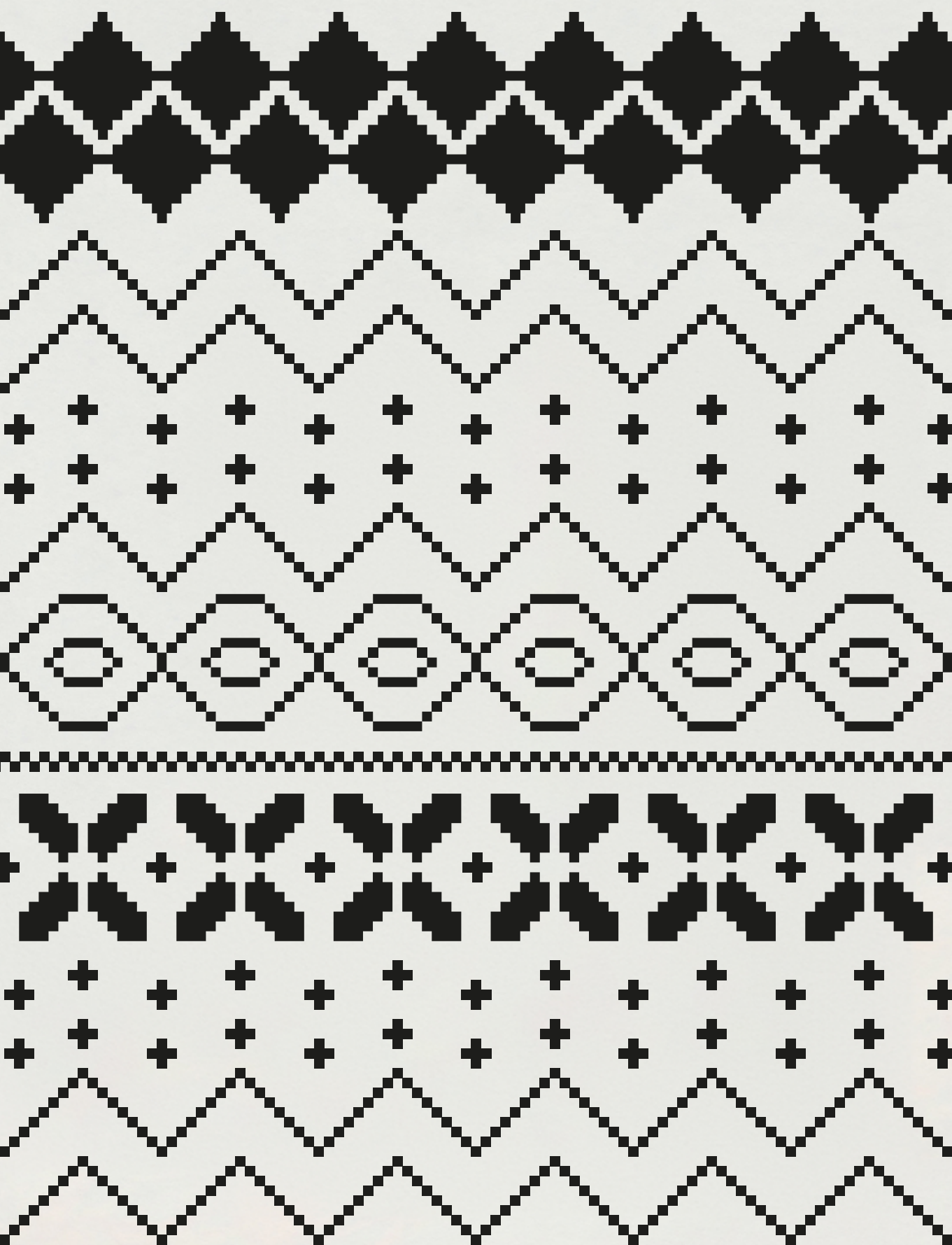
The *Isi qamani* or *p'acha qamayux* are responsible for the distribution of woven garments, classifying them according to their qualities: fine, extra fine, rustic, or simple and complex weaves. In the past, this distribution was done through exchanges, but nowadays, it is sold through traders and sellers. Thanks to all these specialities in the processes, different artists stand out: those who breed the fibres, those who select the fibres, those who spin the fibres, those who dye the threads, those who twist the thread, the weavers and the distributors, who must know how to display the garments.

From a broad point of view, it is interesting to note that we are not limited to an artistic hierarchy based on particular specialities, but that masters and masters are recognised through the

deployment of these various specialities involved in different moments of the creative process.

Creative Action in Art

When we speak of art as a creative action, we see this diversity manifested through hands, eyes, feet, textures, palate, smell, body language, the sounds emitted by doing, and more. From this dynamic perspective of art, everyone is an artist in their own way. No hierarchy is established based on the different specialities, which avoids the distinction between craftspeople and artists. This structuring and separation of specialities opens up a field of mutual respect, recognising that all who create are artists in some way. Consequently, no one is devalued by simply calling them a craftsman. They are artists working with various tools and media, from hands and feet to speech and thought. In our vision, the act of creating is an inherent part of being an artist.



THE EARTH
TEXTILES

The Weaving Resistance

María Garrido
 Patricia Quinteros
 Catalina Guitián
 Soledad Palacios

The Earth Textiles
 Textile reference
 Type: sweater
 Technique: knitting
 Materials: llama's fibre and artificial dyes
 Iconography: kenkos, start flowers,
 partridge's eyes and water's eye
 Authorship: Tejedores Andinos

"As we write this text, we search for 'Quilmes' to open another window on the weavers' story and the notes taken during the journey, and we are surprised by the insistence, at whatever time, by whatever means, to make this town disappear. It is now Wikipedia that points out: disappearance around 1800"¹

Andrei Fernández and Alejandra Mizrahi, "Textile Dialogue"

The following words are excerpts from a conversation shared by María Garrido, Patricia Quinteros, Soledad Palacios, Andrei Fernández, Alejandra Mizrahi, and María Gabriela Cisterna in March 2024 during a visit to the group Tejedoras de Quilmes. On the morning of 12 March, we talked about weaving and textiles, about the desire to weave and learn to weave, about the things that are lost and the things that have been kept, and about the Quilmes People.

We get together to weave because it's nicer to sit and talk, weaving. It's like a recreation, because every day we are in the house. To weave like this, we sit down between two or three of us and then we go to weave, that's what we do. If you're alone in the house, you weave a bit, leave it there, and go do something else. But if you're with someone else, there's a kind of obligation to sit down and weave. There you weave, you talk, you talk about your experiences, you remember how your grandparents used to weave. One person knows one weaving, another person knows another, a stitch or a shape. That's where a union is made.

Quilmes are an Indigenous people that have been around for many years and fought against the Spanish. The Spanish came and wanted to take all the settlers, the Indians as they called them, because of their metal, gold, and vessels. That's why they wanted

[1] The quotation is from "Diálogo textil" in this book. It can also be consulted in "El dechado como ecología de gestos y saberes" [The sampler as an ecology of gestures and knowledge] by Alejandra Mizrahi (2024, unpublished).

to make the natives disappear, but they couldn't because we're still here. So, the history of the Quilmes People is one of much struggle. We are constantly fighting, sometimes against foreigners who come and sometimes among ourselves, like now, when we are fighting for the Sacred City.

Quilmes is divided into fourteen Bases: Quilmes Bajo, Quilmes Centro, El Paso, Los Chañares, El Carmen, Rincón de Quilmes, Las Cañas, El Bañado, Anjuana, Talapazo, El Pichao, Colalao del Valle, El Arbolar and Anchillos. In the jurisdiction of Colalao del Valle, there are fourteen communities, each with delegates representing them. Together, they make up the *Quilmes People*. Even today there are still people who, when they arrive from other countries and even from Argentina itself, say: "But are there people in Quilmes? Does anyone live there?" Yes, there is a village. A town with many people. Many say that they have died, that there are none left, but if we go further up the mountain, there are the real features. There is no need for someone to say, "I am an Indian", if just by looking at his face, you are looking at an Indian. So you can't say "he's lost" or "he doesn't exist anymore". Yes, there is a mixture, the mixture of Spanish. But I think there were many Indian women taken over by the gringos who made them their women. And that's why those features remained.

"The official history teaches us that, after the exile of 1666, there were no Indigenous peoples left in our valley and that the Quilmes disappeared in Buenos Aires. However, the true story is different: our ancestors never ceased to exist".²

[2] AA.VV. (2010); "La otra historia" [The other story], *Los Quilmes contamos nuestra historia* [The Quilmes tell our story], Tucumán, Comunidad India Quilmes, 17. This publication by the Quilmes Indian Community tells the story of their people as told by themselves. In the face of a canonical, Western and hegemonic history that strives to declare their extinction, they affirm: "We can say, then, that our identity is not lost: we live it every day".

María Garrido

Here, what's also commonly reproduced are all the rock art designs of the Indigenous peoples. We also represent it with the pathways, the zig-zags we make, the hills, the animals, etc. Quilmes produces. There are many craftspersons. There are poleo [a local aromatic shrub] basket makers. We are very rich in that. Sometimes, the kids don't pay attention to it, but there are a lot of old people who can't do it anymore, they are running out.

If the Quilmes had died out, we wouldn't be making the weavings people used to make or eating the foods they used to eat. I have traced my ancestry back to a great-great-grandmother. So she was from here. Of course, Quilmes has been around for more than 500 years if you do the maths.

The Quilmes used to weave textiles on forked-post looms³. They were not like the ones we have today, they were fixed. They would bury four pitchforks, then put them together with sticks and weave. Then, there was another poncho loom on the ground. They would drive in four stakes and sit there. They would weave on those little looms on the ground.

I like people to do things, for the house and to progress. I used to work in Calilla making sweets. One day, passing by here, I said, "Stop, I can come here to make handicrafts". One day, there was a party in El Bañado, so I walked down with my children. I started to look at a tree that was almost dry and I said to my husband, Jesús, "Look how beautiful this tree is here, it's nice to come and make handicrafts for us to sell". He worked with sticks and I always liked weaving. Then there was an artisans' project in which they were going to deliver materials to set up a small workshop to sell. "Let's do it there", I said to the cacique [traditional community leader] and asked him to give me a piece of land to go and make the handicrafts. He said yes. We went to see the neighbours, Don Jesús Costilla and Doña Sixta. Don Jesús told us there was no problem, "so I have one more neighbour". Doña Sixta, who was an older woman, also agreed. Later my grandmother told me that that place belonged to us because her father had grown up there, further back because the river went further. There was a mortar

[3] It is a backyard loom, a loom planted in the ground. It consists of four canes, two heddles, and a reed. These heddles are attached to a simple rope that goes to two gears that play on the feet. The fabric is secured to a stake and opened by means of a small rod.

in a tree where my great-grandfather used to grind corn. "You don't have to go around asking if that's our territory," he told me. Then the cacique drew up the papers for me and we started to build the small adobe house where we have our business. Sometime later, we got a loan from Alumbrrera to continue with the building work, the kitchen, and the room.

I like people to learn, to be trained. There was a teacher in Amaicha who taught weaving, her name was María Chaile. I can also mention the teacher Ernestina, Ángela Balderrama's sister, who also taught at the school.

My grandmother used to weave, she made blankets with roses and carnations in black and red thread. I didn't learn with her, because her loom broke, and she didn't weave anymore. She was related to both culture and religion; to our ancestors who wove, made their clothes, and spun the wool of the llama and the guanaco. Guanacos and vicuñas are still up in the hills, near the peaks. The other day, one of these wild animals came to my house. I think someone has run it off, a lion maybe. But as some people don't care about nature, they caught it, slaughtered it, and ate it. Every creature they see walking, they catch it for the barbecue. I say to him, "Why did they catch it, they would have locked it up on the farm" because they are surly animals, but being on a farm, in a fence, seeing people walking around and not doing anything to them, they will start to tame down.

My great-grandmother also made weavings, but as the generations go by, sometimes these skills are no longer inculcated. Weaving teaches us a lot about our culture. One discovers many things. That's why I told the community that I would no longer be a grassroots delegate, although I would like to work with all the craftspeople. My idea is to set up a group of all the artisans in the community so that people know they exist because, unfortunately, this information is not disseminated. On the other hand, many crafts come from other places, not ours. That is why it is necessary to make a register and seek help to promote the activity. Many artisans sometimes do something else because their products don't sell. So, for example, I make a lot of weavings, but if I don't promote them, they will be full of moths and end up as nothing.

We have a lot of poleo [a local aromatic shrub used in basketry], and almost no artisans are working with poleo. There was Don

Jesús, who has passed away, and Leodan Casimiro remains. Now there are other young people too. I tell them that they must continue working with poleo because it's a job that involves going to the countryside and collecting it. It costs nothing, one sits in the shade, starts working, makes the pieces and then sells them. I tell the young lad, Hernán Yapura, that he can even make quite a lot, go to fairs, get to know places and people, have a different experience. It's not the same as working for a boss. I think they sold Don Jesús's weavings and nothing was left. He was sitting, right up until he died, making baskets because he had received an order. He would get up at dawn and weave baskets. His eyesight wasn't helping him much anymore.

Soledad Palacios and Patricia Quinteros

SP: During María's years with the workshops, one day, I decided to take a chance, I said, "I'm going to see what the girls are doing". A weaving teacher was coming, I liked it and that's when I started. My mum also used to tell me about it, but I didn't pay attention then. I don't know much yet, but I'm learning. At home, I have my little loom, I made a bedspread with little bits of thread and I learnt at María's house.

When one starts weaving, one relaxes. As one weaves, one starts to mix in a bit of thread, and, when one finishes, one realises that it's work, a part of oneself that one leaves there. One day, I was weaving a tapestry. I had many small threads and started weaving on a small frame. After making a lot of swirls, when I finished it, there were like rivers of water and one part was like sticks as if it were a carob tree, in another part, it was as if the sun was shining on it. I did it like that, I didn't design it, I simply put it together with the little pieces of thread. That's how you discover it. Another thing is that you can make the weavings that our grandparents made, and you can ask how to make a rhombus, a bird's eye, or a barracan. Barracan, for example, used to be woven by grandmothers to make clothes, like trousers. They spun the wool from the sheep very fine, and with that, they made the fabric they cut for the trousers and the men's jackets. Very little of that fabric is made anymore.

PQ: They put together the folder with what the teachers taught them about wool and dyeing with the same local plants. As for me,

I was amazed that sometimes one would sweep, burn, and throw away the plant, but it had turned out to be something so beautiful. We dyed walnut, black and white carob. With every little thread I saw, I lifted it up and that's how I put it together in the folder. I have the complete folder and I wrote down what the plant was used for next to the dyed yarn. I learnt that with teacher Ernestina.

Catalina Guitián

Doña Catita is a teacher and leader in the group of weavers in Quilmes. She lives in El Arbolar and, from there, goes to María's house to participate in the meetings. Energetic, she gets around on foot. Her eagerness to learn and her love of teaching make her participate in as many weavers' gatherings as possible.

My name is Catalina Mariana Guitián and I live in El Arbolar, which is in the jurisdiction of Colalao del Valle, department of Tafí del Valle, province of Tucumán. I am the mother of a family, I have my children, all of whom are grown up now, my husband is still with me and I look after my animals, which are goats, and I dedicate myself to my weaving. I have been doing that since I was a child. When I went to school I had my manual work and I always had my weaving, spinning, those things.

I put in two threads of one and two strands of two, twist, and then make the skeins and thread. I wash them and dye them with vegetables, weeds from the field, flowers, and roots. When dyed, I rinse them well and dry them, and then weave, warp the fabrics, and weave them.

At the age of 14, I set up my loom and wove my saddlebags, and then I started with the ponchos, with the bedspreads, all woven by hand, and then the fringes to make the ponchos and so on. With that, with those jobs, I raised my children. Now they are all grown up and I sometimes dedicate myself to the weaving meetings, but, also, whenever there was a weaving course, I would go to the weaving course. More and more, more and more. But this comes from years ago from my grandfather, from my mother, she weaved a lot and that's where I learnt, watching her, because she didn't teach us. No, she didn't teach me. When we approached the loom, she would run us away from there because she said we shouldn't be watching. Sometimes, we also learned on the hills. With a

nephew, we looked after the farms and we didn't have much to eat. We didn't know sugar then, we didn't have any. Then we started spinning, also twisted to make ropes and slings. With that, we bartered. We exchanged it for cooked flour or for sugar, for flour to make bread, and that's how we had it. Well, that's why I say that it was a necessity that led us to learn everything.

I used to watch (when I saw my mother weaving on the loom) how she made the designs for the blankets because she worked a lot on blankets, and I watched how she warped. Then, we in the countryside with the livestock would start to warp with the sticks and then we would start to weave. That's where we learned how to weave. And dyeing too, because in the countryside there are a lot of weeds and we invented everything. We used to grind them, boil them, and make small things, and we threw in the skein of thread and dyed them. With that, we made our clothes, our jackets, our sweaters. And well, that's how we continue to this day. Now I dedicate myself to going to meetings where I learn new techniques and some that I already know. For me, learning other techniques is important because you learn things every day. Knowledge never takes up space, so that's how it is.

What I like to do most is loom, warping, canvassing, and weaving on a planted loom. I have magazines, that's where I get it from, but from my mind. Things from looms, from one's mind.

I don't think about anything else, it's the fun I have with weaving because it's like mathematics: you add, subtract, multiply, and divide with the threads. My mother died at 97 and she was still weaving.

I like to go to the gatherings. I've been going to the Encuentro de Tejedoras de Amaicha del Valle [Tejedoras de Amaicha del Valle Weavings' Gathering] for about thirteen years. I like it because you exchange weavings and knowledge of other people. We get to know each other, and sometimes, we have known each other for a long time. Weaving is a joy for you; you forget all the bad things.

From El Arbolar, I walk 7 kilometres to come to the little rural school. There is a teacher who teaches, and I go sometimes, but not every day, because she teaches three days a week, and I go one day a week. So there we share with the children, we have our tea break and then I go. I help some of the children there who can't

understand something, I help them to make, I teach them how to weave. Teaching children to weave is very easy because children learn much faster than older people. If older people already know how to weave, they will continue. But if they don't know how to weave, they take a long time. I always teach them slowly, guiding their hands, like a child, and that's how they learn.

I want God to grant me life to continue with this, weaving or teaching those who want to learn. And then, once one knows dyeing techniques, that this knowledge isn't lost and that young people also want to learn so that it remains with others.



The Weaving Archive

Milagros Álvarez Colodrero

textil – texto – texere – techné

Weaving is one of the first creations of mankind, it has accompanied our wanderings since our origins. Could it be that we all come from a textile and that our first inhalation is linked to cutting a cord that leaves a knot in our bodies as a mark? We know that, due to the nature of their materials, most prehistoric and ancient textiles disintegrated over time, as do our bodies. Due to climatic conditions and specific locations, only those that were generally intended to accompany death or the transition to another life were preserved.

What will these non-disintegrating materials tell of our time? How will they be interpreted? Where and how will these weavings be preserved, which, between symbols, techniques, and materials, continue to narrate history from its roots?

We are born and die wrapped in textiles, for thousands and thousands of years, textiles have accompanied each of our days in diverse and countless ways. A succession of gestures that resulted in artefacts and technologies that became machines, factories, and industries mark transcendental historical events from the Stone Age to the present day.

In the Andean region, the beginning and the end of life are knotted with a lloqui thread¹. In Greek mythology, three spinners spin, weave and cut the destiny of mortals with white, gold, and

[1] lloqui or lloque in Quechua means left and this is the name given to the thread composed of two strands of natural black and white, spun to the left and twisted to the right. It is a thread with different virtues such as protection and healing.

black thread. A legend of Wichí origin tells that in the beginning, women were stars who came down to earth every night by a chaguar thread. Our everyday language uses textile metaphors to talk about different events in life. In many corners of the world, weaving continues to be that second skin with which weavers dress and narrate the time and space in which they live. Text and textiles share the same root, *texere*, which comes from weaving, braiding, and interweaving and shows that weaving is not only a shelter, a container, or a shelter but also a way of linking senses and keeping a cultural story alive.

The textile contains within itself the history of humanity. A history that is built collectively and cumulatively. Archaeological traces tell us about this history: the traces of some net or fabric engraved on stones or ceramics; the different tools, both those used for weaving and those that existed thanks to the cord or thread²; the techniques used (those processes between art, craft, and technology that provide *know-how* as part of the evolutionary process). The link between humans, the environment, plants, and animals resulted in the materialities and colours that we find in the textiles of ancient cultures that are still alive and in those that did not survive the passage of time. And yet, they left microscopic threads scattered like decoys that would be found, in time, in archaeological excavations where each thread would tell a story, would build a bridge to dialogue with the past and learn from other cultures in which a pair of hands wove, and still weave, telling about a people or an entire civilisation.

Human history is written, narrated, painted, and also woven.

From the urgency of shelter and refuge to the need for a narrative space. From animal hides sewn with some rudimentary needle and tendons to form a second skin for shelter, to the hand-twisted fibres that became rope and then knot, and then basket, mat, and textile. Sacred texts, quipus, symbols, burial cloaks, carrying sacks, nomadic tents, their walls, and woven carpets. The sails of the ships of all times, the cargo bags, the fishing nets. The

[2] In the so-called Stone Age, the spun cord already existed, which made it possible to make the tools that gave that era its name. The threads disintegrated and in the first archaeological finds only the stones were found. The remains of the cords were found many, many years later in new excavations, microscopic residues that completed the story. In her book *El tejido de la civilización* [The fabric of civilisation] (2021), Virginia Postrel wonders what would have happened if the cord that tied the stones together to make them into tools had been found. Would it have been called the age of thread or cord?

silk route, the secret languages, the wars for red and indigo, the burnt factories, the clandestine workshops, the political denunciations made in fabric, stitch, and thread, the tons of clothes that circulate every day... and that hand-woven rebozo that pulsates to stay alive and shelters and embraces us while we are born, live and die.

Undoubtedly, the history of humanity is also inscribed in a textile.

Where Does a Weaving Begin?

In the beginning, a thread, a thread that did not make itself, but was born as an effect of that mutual nurturing between human beings, the environment, plants, and animals. A thread that was not made at random or by a single person, but is the child of a long cumulative process of time, observation, collective thought, trial and error, tactile, civilisational, visual, natural, and cellular memory. A whole confluence of events from which came the twisted strands of vegetation that, joining together in pairs and linking like DNA helixes, gave rise to the cord and the rope, opening up infinite possibilities for human beings in this world.

But where does a weaving begin?

The question always guides and the weaving gives its answers.

To weave is in a way to engage in a silent dialogue with the universe. It is to be ready to observe the interior of things. It is to generate a structure of thought, an anchorage with the present, and an encounter with the past from which to walk towards the future. It is to create a bridge of coming and going that favours the connection with otherness (visible and invisible), with diverse territories and deep geographies. It is to enter into dialogue with others through our hands.

We are part of an extensive chain. A choreography of primary gestures guides us and reminds us of it. A memory inhabits us: it is the continuity of that gesture of thousands and thousands of years in search of survival in this world; it is the transmission of that experience; it is, finally, the textile structure itself inhabiting us.

Our skin is a vast weaving from which our hands remember. When we prepare to observe, the skeleton of the dry leaves that shed their shells in autumn reveals a crossroads of filaments that resembles a beautiful ancient lace, the spider weaves its web, the

bark contains its weft, the birds often weave their nests, the mycelium, that hidden part of the fungi, is a web of hundreds of kilometres that is formed with filaments like fine threads under our feet.

Weaving is presented to us as the tangible and sensitive matter of the extensive and diverse social and cultural fabric to which we all belong. A sensitive matter that manifests the millenary interexistence between everything that lives in this world and outside it. Sky, earth, and below among the dark and humid, where the roots grow, a place that cannot be seen, but contains a life that sustains us. Like those four sticks that hold the threads in a simple structure called LOOM³. Up-down, sky-earth, up and down, and in the centre, between the visible and the invisible, between the threads of the warp, the place of the weft: that place where life happens.

From the bottom upwards, the weaving grows, and time rolls up. How much information can a weaving contain? Between geographical, social, visual, textile, linguistic, relational, numerical, textual, sonorous, geological, sensorial, and personal layers, the weaving reveals itself. How many layers do we have to go through to understand it?

Weaving is a universal territory, it is the mycelium that unites and sustains us. It is a living corporeality that accounts for other territories, other times and spaces, and other people who shepherd, spin, and weave throughout the world, shaping a subjective experience from collective places. In it and through it, different forms of union are made possible, of encounters of worlds, cultures, people, weavers from here and there, from the countryside and the city. Its nature is one of encounter: warp and weft; humans, plants, and animals; the loom and the surrounding world; weaving and oneself; oneself and the universe.

To weave, to watch weaving, or to touch a woven piece always evokes a soft place in our memory: the hands of a loved one in that primordial,

cyclical, repetitive action; a childhood warm garment, the shelter of a home, the memory of a landscape, colours, smells, a texture that permeates our hands, a figure that constitutes identity, the warmth of an embrace, an inherited blanket, a playful, round ball of wool, a figure that in itself leads us to think about the origin.

The master weavers usually weave according to an order they call "cadejos", which are certain turns of yarn arranged in this or that direction. It seems random, even when they are executing the action quickly with their hands, but it is a whole science, a mathematical, intrinsic, natural order. The balls of yarn are beautiful, perfect, and solid. They are art pieces, ovals of

thread that already contain all the information. How can we not see in the weaving, from its genesis, a metaphor for life?

A weaving speaks to us through its centre, through its sides, and also through its edges.

How many gestures, thoughts, memories, emotions, sweeps, stories, whispers, dialogues, and steps (in the literal sense of the walking of the feet and in the metaphorical sense of the process) happen between human bodies and textile bodies to give life to a weaving?

Between memory and present practice, with each weaving that is born,

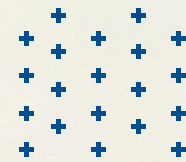
history continues to be woven, another history, the history of life, of nature, of affection, of reciprocal links and mutual nurturing with everything that surrounds us and with all those who accompany and sustain our practice on this plane and on other planes.

The weaving is born of time. It is a place where time dwells. A time that reminds us of knowing that we are present in a *being that* resists the times and forms of capitalist life and, also and above all, resists oblivion.

So, where does weaving begin?

[3] In different cultures around the world, weavers call the upper pole or roller of the loom that holds the warp threads heaven and the lower one earth.

It is a question with infinite answers and they all coexist superimposed, layered, overlapped, and interlinked with each other: by territory, by a thread, by colour, by the landscape, by imagination, by need, by desire... questions, answers, and fragmented thoughts that open up possible and diverse paths that come together in the creation of a weaving where all the answers converge and are revealed, little by little, in layers, as long as we can look beyond the visible, the tangible.



The Weaving Garden

Fernanda Villagra Serra
Nancy Gutiérrez
Mónica Chávez

This Is How Stories Are Woven

The stories, the experiences, the conversations between mothers and daughters weave stories that can be told as woven texts. These woven texts fuel a passion transmitted by means of a poem that conveys a way of thinking about the world in community, or they can, perhaps, be the motor of a reunion with the story of a weaver mother who takes on relevance and the desire of a daughter to record in her adulthood the woven journey of her matriarchal lineage or, also, awaken the astonishment of a child listening to her mother telling with pride and gratitude her daily spinning.

This time, we can say that *this is how stories are woven*, or at least these three.

I Want to Weave a Garden

Fernanda Villagra Serra

I want to write a trace a path, or rather I want to weave a soil, perhaps sandy, perhaps airy and composted. I want to weave a garden, a garden of people new to me. I prepare my seeds that I once so jealously guarded, that I received as a legacy from my mother, my grandmother, and my great-grandmother, and that are like my *guaca*¹. I check the grains that have been sown to me by those who already knew how to talk by spinning, tell by sewing, and whisper by weaving. I prepare my bag with the woven stories I have been telling and interwoven with those other women have told me. I rattle my treasure of little seeds for my land and I feel inside that it is time to share them in another soil. I check those that are intact, there are infinite seeds that could sprout, and confidently, I venture out to meet them.

A table invites us to offer our food and, between glances and voices, we begin to unroll what is our sowing. Sometimes, they are quilts, *rebozos* [traditional shawls], table runners, blankets, borders, and sometimes just stories to tell. Everything is new, fertile soil, and each one's experiences gave shape and became a pitcher to water the grains that each of us brought to share. We feel that our hands are ploughing this new land, that we are furrowing the furrow together, and we make zig-zags, *q'enqos*² and even flowers are growing. Outside and inside. We weave paths of shared threads and begin to sow something that we don't know but we sense that it will nourish our souls and nourish us all.

Our own seeds have already been hydrated and, with the wind, they have spread among the others. The breath of the story oxygenates the woven terrain to give us a glimpse of little sprouts that first generate a tingling inside us. That sprout is called desire. And that desire to grow invites us to join together to expand. Each one of us has fertilised her knowledge with that of the others, and, between us all, we have put down roots that, without realising it, have been knotted or have been *randed* by the impulse to tie. Now we want to see shared gardens sprout because the *convide* has

[1] *Guaca* or *huaca* is a Quechua word that refers to a sacred or ceremonial place, linked to the Incas. It can also appear in its Spanish form, *kenkos*.

been lush and abundant and we trust in the harvest. We want the conviviality always to be repeated and we accept that union is achieved with that salty drop poured from the soul that comes out of our eyes to amalgamate.

We have planted a large garden around us. We have watered our minds with new stories that we read in the weavings of the companions, and we embrace this that we want to take care of in order to make it grow.

Of Legacies that Weave Sowing

In the stories of the women who live in, among, with, and from textiles, we knot the stitches to achieve this re-encounter with the legacy of matrilineal lineage. At some point, the seeds that mothers sow in their daughters, we, our daughters, begin to sprout and constellate expanded gardens. There, honour, gratitude, and recognition fertilise and root this loving and passionate inheritance which, like a *guaca*, treasures knowledge that is eager to be cared for and also shared. They are a form of nourishment that, as Clarissa Pinkola Estés says, never deteriorates and whose quantity increases the more it is used.

The garden we cultivate brings us closer to extraordinary weavers such as Juana and Mónica, masters of the art of weaving gardens in wild soils. They are part of this expanded garden, and through their textile and narrative testimonies, we appreciate how they weave their lives from the plains of Santiago deep in the monte.

[2] Quechua word that refers to a sinuosity.

Colours Provided by the Monte³

Juana Gutiérrez by Nancy Gutiérrez⁴

Juana has been a craftswoman since she was very young. She weaves her dreams, her life, and her home from the interior of Santiago del Estero, in a town called Huilla Catina, located 100 kilometres from the capital of this province. It is there, in the peace and quiet of the countryside, that she is inspired to create her different works with beautiful designs, such as table runners, bed runners, tapestries, rugs, ponchos, bedspreads, blankets, and ruanas [open-front ponchos].

These handicrafts are made with great dedication. In each one, she weaves her love for her art with faith and hope to preserve the valuable cultural legacy inherited from her mother and grandmother, from whom she learned everything she knows. Other creations are her own designs or those passed down from other craftswomen in the area who use different techniques to hers.

For the dyeing of the handicrafts, she sometimes uses aniline dyes, and, at other times, she obtains the shades by experimenting with the secrets provided by the monte through the use of plants such as jarilla [native shrub], palo azul, suncho, aguaribay, sap or through tree husks, soot, cochineal, quimil jume, among others. Practically everything is useful when dyeing, and so she uses an infinity of elements present in daily life, such as onion peel, yerba, juice, pomegranate peel, and even the time of the year in which the work is done, the type of container used (enamelled or aluminium) or the time of dyeing inside it, influences the different shades that the fabrics take on. All in pursuit of creating those prodigious colours that give charm and life to the wild native landscapes.

Handmade weaving, which uses criollo (native) or merino wool as raw material, is done on a criollo loom. This involves a long process that takes months of constant dedication, a lot of sacrifice, and effort, but all to keep the flame of tradition alive and strong, to transmit ancestral knowledge and know-how to new generations, as well as their arduous but admirable way of life.

[3] This text was written in collaboration with Fernanda Villagra Serra. [4] Nancy is Juana Gutiérrez's daughter; she says that now she is learning and likes to record what her mother does, something she didn't do before, she doesn't know why, but now she does.

Travelling I Learned

Entrevista a Mónica Chávez by Fernanda Villagra Serra

"My name is Mónica Cristina Chávez. I was born on 13 August 1981 in the city of Buenos Aires. I am the daughter of Beatriz Luna and Ignacio Chávez. I learned to spin when my mother left the spindle when I was eight. When I was fourteen, I started weaving. I worked for the people who had stalls on the road; they gave me the yarns and I did the jobs. Nobody invited me to fairs or anything, I sometimes sold my work on the road or they exchanged my work for groceries. I weaved to help my mother, to have enough to eat. With my brothers and sisters, we would weave at night with the light of a lighter that we fed with kerosene. I walked to school ten kilometres every day. I would leave my little bag on the bed and start weaving. I am very proud to be a craftswoman, thanks to that, I learned that you can go ahead, and I thank God for blessing me with this beautiful art".

"My family consists of five people: three children and my husband." This is how Mónica begins her story in a voice message from the courtyard of her house. She has been weaving since she was a child. She weaves because she likes it and also because she needs it: "to support my family, my children so that I can send them to school so that I can feed them."

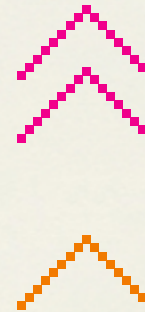
Mónica works in her little house, on her ranch, as she calls it, made of earth, she says. She has her loom there. To listen to her voice is to be transported to her homeland, to accompany her in her way of spinning from early in the morning, to observe her hands and her body at work with her imagination. What she likes to do the most are payado works⁵, but she is more dedicated to others, such as the "indio cordobés" technique, because it is quicker to weave. She weaves *little table runners*, rugs, blankets, and bedspreads with her family.

She tells us about her use of colour. She says she prefers natural colour, but she always likes to give it that little bit of, as they say, a bright colour that gives joy to the piece she is working on.

[5] Payado is a type of weaving, which is done on a planted loom, in which the pattern is visible on only one side. It is made from a supplementary weft.

"It shouldn't be too dull. The bright colour gives joy and things like that to the weaving."

Mónica has to pick up her children from school, and she tells me that when she returns, she will continue to tell me how she does each step, how she warps, and how she *enliza*⁶. Her daughter, who has listened to her recording the audios, approaches her to tell her that tonight, she will help her write her story, her inspiration, and everything she wants to tell.



[6] "Enlizar is the action of separating the warp threads from the loom by tying them to *heddles*. The *heddles* are long poles on which the warp threads are tied alternately to raise or lower them so that a space is created between them called a *shed*, through which the weft thread is passed. The more *heddles* there are, the greater the range of pattern and colour options that can be created, as the order in which they are raised or lowered dictates the way in which the warp and weft threads are interwoven. On a treadle loom, the *heddles* are attached to the treadles which the weaver operates with his feet. This simplifies the work and allows for faster weaving", in Simon Clarke (2011); *Diseño Textil* [Textile Design], Barcelona, Blume.

The Weaving Body

Alejandra Mizrahi

Tatiana Belmonte

Lucila Galíndez

I, the Randa¹

I am a textile, a network that unites women of different ages and tastes. Thus, I am making them have something in common by devoting love and attention to me. I am a kind of undefined gender, I can be art and craft at the same time. I am Randa.

The women who create me are called Randeras, they took this group identity centuries ago. I arrived a long time ago from Germany, brought by ladies who carried me on the edges of their fine and beautiful dresses made by themselves. In the process of colonisation, the first Randeras took me to what we know today as El Cercado. They wove with their grandmothers, aunts, neighbours, and mothers-in-law, they spent entire afternoons giving me life in the shade of a tree, surrounded by cane fields. They passed me down from generation to generation. I got to the point where they were creating me in different, new, and innovative ways for people, so they tried to sell me to make a living. I am a form of economy for them, just like yesterday, now. I am a comforter. I am the one who accompanies them in their illnesses, they weave me even when they are sad, happy, or angry.

The thread, the needle, and the guide are something they never forget when they go out. My creation is all the time, they weave me when they get up, while they do the housework, while they study and work. They give me life with a little stick from which

[1] We write Randa and Randeras with initial capital letters to legitimise and give a significant place to the weaving and its protagonists. Also because they are proper names, both of an object with a high symbolic content and of those who make it.

my stitches cling while a needle threaded with cotton thread passes through the eye of a beginning in which I grow stitch by stitch or knot by knot. When my thread is running out, my Randeras add me with another one, they even gave a name to this way of joining: "Randero knot." My body is made of thread so I am very thin and soft, and, to last for many years, they put a kind of starch in me to make me hard so that I can live for many more years.

I can be many things, in different crazy ways and with different kinds of yarn. My Randeras like to experiment with me. I can be a folder, a shawl, a collar or lace, a badge, or even a piece of artwork.

I dress in embroidery, these are stitches that the Randeras invent so that I don't walk around naked, I dress a lot in rain stitch, some of them like to combine me with honeycomb and, if they are inspired, they cover me with mats. Not to mention the wheat ear stitches, they love them because they look like sugar cane, my body always has to wear rice and flowers, not to mention the small figure-eight patterns.

My dresses vary according to the imagination of these women, they pour their whole being into me, there are times when they wake up looking out of the window at their flower gardens and then they dress me in them, filling my spaces with darning, leaving me beautiful, immense, full of life. I admire their work of giving me life from a small beginning to a final point.

These women came together to be able to make the world know me, to value me, and me to value them for their work. There is no president I haven't passed through, no institution I haven't hung around. The last time I was able to be in luxurious art galleries and to meet with other textile brothers and sisters. I am very happy in the hands of these women, I am the lace that fits perfectly in their hands.

For us

When the Randeras produced the last work of MUMORA (Museo Móvil de la Randa) [Mobile Museum of the Randa] in 2023, they worked on corporeality as a continuity of the previous works that explored aspects of identity: autobiography, the legacy of the ancestors and landscape. The curatorial text reads: "Each of these pieces is born of an encounter with one's own corporeality - as an

experienced limit - but is constructed in dialogue with that of the others. The desire at play here refers to the affective experience of gestures, postures, and movements that become significant in this scenario of common subjectivity".

We had not thought about the relationship between the authors/makers of this lace and their products until we saw them reappropriating the object of their work. They did so through the experienced desire to wear what they weaved. And in this way, each of them positioned themselves as the reason for their work:

"This is the first time we have weaved for ourselves," Eugenia Torres said forcefully as she guided a visit to the MUMORA exhibition at the MUNT (Museo de la Universidad Nacional de Tucumán) [Museum of the National University of Tucumán].

We were looking at a work that fulfilled one of the functions of art: to subvert the order of things. MUMORA was already disruptive in terms of the conception of the Museum and in positioning the Randa as a textile art, no longer only as a craft. Now, in addition, they were weaving for themselves, disrupting the very organisation of the experience that comes from the social order.

This order, mediated by institutions and markets in which symbolic goods circulate, socio-cultural patterns of consumption built up over time, and, above all, conditions of existence that are imposed outside their own free will, establishes the place of the Randeras as craftswomen who produce to sell, as a source of work. They have learned as children, as they always say, "to help around the house". And, at least in El Cercado, they need to do so as an income for the family economy. However, the desire for young women to continue the genealogy as bearers of the memories of the handicraft trade weighs as much or more.

The Randa entered these lands between the 17th and 19th centuries with the Spanish colony in Ibatín². From testimonies of the time, we know that it was a luxury product³. Who made them? Who wore them? "Colonial clothing allowed the ladies to adorn themselves with Randas in profusion [...] in all garments that adorned and could show off the skill of the girls of the house, because the making of Randas was, more than a trade, the work

[2] Site of the first foundation of San Miguel de Tucumán, between 1565 and 1685, the year in which, by Royal order, it was moved to its current location. [3] Teresita Garabana (2013); "La Randa: actividad económica de mujeres. Un repaso por su historia" [La Randa: women's economic activity. A review of its history], Silvina Fenik; Alejandra Mizrahi and Dirk Trotteyn (Eds.), *Randa. Tradición y diseño tucumanos en diálogo* [Randa. Tradition and design from Tucuman in dialogue], Tucumán, EDUNT, IDEP, Centro Cultural Eugenio Flavio Virla.

and distraction of the ladies”⁴. The seventeenth-century Randa in Tucumán was produced and consumed by the colonial elites and, until the eighteenth century, like other lace, it was a symbol of status and wealth.

However, studies of women's work in Tucumán in the 19th century reveal a change of subject. Domestic textile handicrafts in rural areas, including the Randa, were among the most important export items. Around 1860, the traveller Germán Burmeister observed that "the manufacture of sheepskins, laces and Randas made exclusively by women constituted the only livelihood of numerous poor and 'middle class' families in the city and the countryside". In other words, we are now dealing with a trade of popular sectors in the area of Monteros⁵.

The 1895 census reflects the transformations produced by the arrival of the railway and the take-off of the sugar agro-industry in Tucumán. The importation of textiles reconfigured the market for provincial textile handicrafts. There was a sharp fall in the sector, and in Monteros, there was one weaver and nine weavers, whose market was now reduced to this area. There were also changes in the uses of the Randa, which went from being used in clothing during the colonial period to being used in ecclesiastical ornaments and, at the beginning of the 20th century, began to appear as a domestic accessory, in the form of rugs and table centrepieces⁶.

Ana María Toledo tells us that her great aunts Tránsito and Emperatriz Núñez, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, went to the Santa Ana sugar mill to sell Randas: "The English would order them and they would take them [...] they would go on horseback to the sugar mill and return with the money. It sold well"⁷.

We do not yet know how the closure of eleven sugar mills in 1966 transformed the local Randa market. However, we can imagine that being in the province's sugar heartland, the families of

[4] Millán de Palavecino (1948), cited in Garabana (2013). [5] María Celia Bravo and Daniel Campi (1995); "La mujer en Tucumán a fines del siglo XIX. Población, trabajo, coacción" [Women in Tucumán at the end of the 19th century. Population, work, coercion], Ana Teruel (Comp.); *Población y trabajo en el noroeste argentino, siglos XVIII y XIX* [Population and Labour in Northwest Argentina, 18th and 19th Centuries], San Salvador de Jujuy, UNJU. Cited by Garabana (2013). [6] Garabana (2013). [7] Lucila Galíndez and Alejandra Mizrahi (2019); "Randera por parte de madre y padre. Testimonio de vida de Ana María Toledo" [Randera by mother and father. Life testimony of Ana María Toledo], Alejandra Mizrahi (Comp.); *Randacerca*, San Miguel de Tucumán, EDUNT.

El Cercado—a large part of small sugar cane growers—have been affected. The sale of Randa would mean an essential income.

Some of the Randeras' testimonies express what "a lifetime of work" means in their hands, as Luisa Genoveva Núñez said in 2015. The elaboration of this fine lace was carried out between the productive tasks of the harvest and the reproduction of daily life, which implied an enormous sacrifice: "I went to the fence⁸, I took the boys, peeled cane, stacked and loaded. I had the children under the malhoja⁹, I made a little house for them. I would bathe, eat, and go to work in Monteros (as a domestic worker). When I wasn't going to work in Monteros or on the fence, it was already with the vegetables, washing, getting the children's clothes ready for school... And that's how we've struggled a lot. It's a life of work. And the Randa, who is sometimes reluctant, doesn't know what she's going to do, it's like therapy for oneself", says María Magdalena Núñez in 2020.

We know from the elders' accounts that work was made to order and that sometimes, there were people who acted as intermediaries between the Randeras in the countryside and the buyers in the city. But towards the end of the 1960s, a novelty appeared: craft fairs. Ana María Toledo was the one who began to "go out" and visit fairs in Córdoba, Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, Santa Fe, and Catamarca. And with her, some others, such as Rosa Sosa. In the province, they participated every year in the Feria de Artesanía de Monteros and in events at the Museo Folklórico Provincial [Provincial Folk Museum]. There, the possibility of showing and displaying themselves as Randeras earned them the recognition of the public and cultural institutions.

However, until a decade ago, few Randeras travelled to fairs and went to the cities to give workshops. The others participated indirectly, either by sending Randas to be sold by their companions or by weaving nets that were then embroidered by others. This began to change when they started to organise themselves. Today, with the Cooperative and its brand, they sell their own products and take orders that they collectively resolve, most of them travel and participate in all the events they are invited to, and they

[8] Fence [cerco] refers to the place where the sugar cane plantation is located, fenced off to keep out animals. It is a specific area where harvesting also takes place. [9] Malhoja is the waste of sugar cane that is used as fodder and, when burnt, as fertiliser.

showcase themselves through their website and their social networks.

Randeras make fine Randas to sell. They mobilise, invest time and resources to improve marketing, and make efforts to be more visible. They manage. They network. They work for the group.

Through their work, they fulfil the aspirations and goals of each of them and their community. Each Randa they perform contains the work of the person who created it, their will, movements, and inner states. Each Randa materialises a shared ancestral knowledge and makes visible a creative act for others but also for themselves.

Claudia Aybar told us that for her, the Randas she makes "are her daughters," that sometimes there is one that she weaved at a special moment, which is very valuable to her, and that is why she does not want to sell it. But she does sell them. At that moment, her consolation is thinking she can make it again¹⁰.

This is what we call Living Heritage. Unlike the Randa object that a buyer takes away, heritage is inalienable when it belongs to a community of almost forty organised guardians willing to continue weaving, embroidering, and passing on the secrets of textile art to future generations.

However, let us be wary of the overuse of categories such as "intangible" or "immaterial" heritage, which sometimes makes us forget that any human act is both material and symbolic. We do not passively contemplate the world; we intervene in it practically; we transform it by transforming ourselves.

Once a Randa is finished, like any other work, it questions the person who has created it because it is the object of his work. It gives her back an image of herself, of who she is, of her place of belonging, and confirms her capacities and potentialities. If, in addition, these Randas have been created to be worn by the Randeras themselves, their own bodies produce a discourse of identity: not only about who they are but also about how they represent and position themselves within the social group.

The work "Con-texturas Randeras" presented them with a possible world, a world in which the division between those who create, produce, and those who consume is relaxed.

In this space of shared symbolic wefts, there are inequalities

of power but also horizons of possibility. The Randa is no longer the luxury object whose consumption denotes wealth and status. This meaning is being contested in the art scene, where other narratives of legitimisation are taking place: like that of this collective of organised rural women united in a network that sustains and projects them.

The Randeras have already begun to move from 'being in itself' to being 'for itself' by creating according to an aesthetic project in which they are included.

They, the Randas

An artefact in two different places, in two systems, in two circuits. A weaving in two different spaces of meaning, the Randa in the world of art or in the world of craft, an experience as a possible response.

An artefact is a generic way of mentioning an object made by someone that will have different values, interpretations, and/or meanings depending on where it is located. The word derives from the conjunction of the Latin *arte* and *factum*, something **"made with art"**.

The mobile quality is a characteristic property of textiles. This allows them to move, to carry information from one place to another, to tell stories, to move worlds and territories, and, in short, to produce situated spaces of meaning by weaving art and craft. Here, the emphasis is on the relationship, not on difference or hierarchy.

Contemplating and commercialising, are two actions around the same object. Women who create a piece that will be put into play in two simultaneous ways: an exhibition and a fair. In March 2023, the Randeras of El Cercado participated in two parallel events at the Centro Cultural Kirchner during the week of 8M (March 8) in the International Working Women's Day framework. One of them consisted of the participation in a fair called "Creadoras del tiempo: feria de mujeres artesanas" [Creators of time: fair of women artisans], organised by MATRIA (Mercado de Artesanías Tradicionales e Innovadoras Argentinas) [Market of Traditional and Innovative Argentinean Crafts]. The second event was the participation in an exhibition called "Premio 8M", in which the Randeras collective participated with their work "Mumora: Nuestro jardín de Randas"

[10] Focus group with Randeras in El Cercado, January 2018.

[MUMORA: Our Garden of Randas].

Two of the group's youngest Randeras, Tatiana Belmonte and Gisel Paz, travelled to "Creadoras del tiempo: feria de mujeres artesanas" fair. Both brought creations of the rest of their colleagues to sell at the fair. MATRIA provided them with specially designed furniture for the stand where, vertically and horizontally, the weavers could place their Randas, which made it easier to put on and take off the weavings. During the four days of the fair, Tatiana and Gisel replenished the production they carried in small suitcases. Collars, badges, folders, interlining, and appliqués, among other types, were sold like hotcakes. Not only were Randas sold, but the girls' diaries were also filled with contacts who later placed private orders, which represents another way of working for the Randeras, who are used to receiving orders and solving them with mastery and group work. The fair implies an effervescence, hands coming and going, touching the pieces, people putting the pieces on their bodies, and asking questions. The Randeras show with their threads and needles how to weave what they have in their hands. The fair manifests a place, a system, a circuit, and a space of meaning that places the artefacts in the craft category.

Now, on the seventh floor of the former Argentinean post office, we could find the 8M 2023 Prize exhibition. On that floor, there were around seventy works of art by Argentinean visual artists from different backgrounds. Among them was the work *MUMORA. Nuestro jardín de Randas* (2021), by the Randeras of El Cercado de Tucumán, who, through their work, made visible the delicate craftwork that travels from generation to generation. The exhibition manifests a place, a system, a circuit, and a space of meaning that places the artefacts in the art

category. On the fair's last day, the Randeras and fifteen other artists received one of the 8M awards. The prize translates into money and would also include the work in the collection of works of art from the Argentinean nation's artistic patrimony.

At the fair, the artefact is consumed according to its usefulness. It will adorn a garment, embellish a table, finish off a skirt, or hang on a wall as a reminder of a visit to the province of Tucumán.

In the exhibition, the artefact is perceived as a witness to a territory, to a group of women organised around it, to a history in relation to weaving, and operates as a platform of meaning from which we can learn about it and about those who make it.

But let's return to the fact that the artefact is one, that the women who create it are the same. Let us return to this to think about the importance of the circuits in which we propose to put into play these pieces.

The experience discussed here brings these differences into friction; better still, it proposes two different experiences almost in unison, in the same place and at the same time. It raises the question of how we relate to the textile works on one floor or the other and how this relationship modifies perception, value, the importance of authorship, and so on. In turn, this differentiation also enunciates a history of oppression that these actions seek to dismantle.

Textiles, when woven, provoke curious kinships. This is how the Randeras, through their work, weave links between women from different periods, ways of life, flowers and motifs from the environment, stories, and the multiple ways of interpreting and reproducing an inheritance. The Randeras teach us to weave worlds through weaving.

It matters which weavings weave which weavings.

The Randa connects the women to each other and the women, now as a group, to their territory.

Most Randas are individually made. They are made by an individual woman, embodying her style, history, and sensibility. They are recognisable by specific characteristics. The stitches, motifs, and patterns repeated and invented in the randear (randering) are representations of the surrounding landscape, stories, and knowledge of the Randeras.

Some time ago, we began collaborative projects together focused on the importance of the Randeras as authors, the cultural legacy they weave, and the possibility of making it dynamic through the exercise of a patrimonial responsibility for the practices of design and art. These projects entangled worlds and generated a powerful tangle that, we hope, will be impossible to untangle.



The Weaving Container

The yica¹: the Keeper of the Science of Weaving²

María del Carmen Toribio
Andrei Fernández

When a woman weaves a *yica*, what she does is to maintain the transmission of knowledge left to us by our grandmothers, through the fibre of the chaguar plant.

From harvesting: cleaning, spinning, dyeing, and weaving, with its iconographies, each process of this textile, visual and tactile teaching makes the woman carry in her mind, body, and soul the millenary art of the Wichí People.

We who are already grandmothers, mothers, and aunts have the duty and obligation to teach them the value and importance of weaving a *yica* and to feel proud that weaving a *yica* is weaving life itself. It is keeping the memory and identity alive that comes from a long line of really strong women.

When you don't know something, it is impossible to value it. You have to know that working with the chaguar is like a whole art, that it has a lot of value. The *yica* used to be used to collect and transport seasonal fruits, men used to hunt and fish because there was food in the forest, in the river, then it was used to carry food, the man who carried the best *yica* with pride was because his wife was a good weaver.

Nowadays we make it to sell it and we buy food, clothes... because there is no more monte, and the river is sometimes very far away. Now they are also on the catwalks, in the galleries, and I think we always have to look at that:

How can the chaguar fibre change, it is very noble, it adapts to all changes, and that is what we, the Wichí women, have to do.

The *yica* is the identity of each person, of each woman, of each community, and each group, of each area.

[1] This is a square-shaped linked bag, used as a backpack and is part of everyday clothing in the Gran Chaco. This word, of Quechua origin, is used to name the artefact when spoken in Spanish. Yica is a word related to memory and often has geometric images that have meaning. The Wichí word for it is hilu. [2] Text presented on the occasion of the Jornada de Arte Textil [Textile Art Conference] held at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA) in February 2024.

What a *Yica* Can Hold³

Andrei Fernández

Yica is a Quechua word; it is used in the Chaco Salteño to name a type of bag worn by the inhabitants of this region as part of their daily clothing, at hip height and with the strap crossed over the chest, like a cross-body bag.

Since time immemorial, women from Wichí communities and other lowland peoples have been weaving container objects. They weave them with the chaguar plant, *Bromelia Hieronymus*, and with other materials to which they gain access as a result of changes in contemporary life. Anthropologist Rodrigo Montani states⁴ that these woven bags, as well as serving to carry out activities in people's daily lives, including their commercialisation, have a symbolic value that is superimposed on their practical use and charges them with meanings that are linked to different dimensions of community life.

Yica is the name given long ago to a travel bag, or storage bag, made with a special weaving technique of different sizes according to its function. Today, *yica* can describe a type of bag that may have been made with ancient techniques, chaguar fibre, or other techniques and materials. The term persists as long as the object has a square design, about 25 cm. on each side, which in the Wichí language is called *hilú*. It is used to store personal belongings in everyday life; it can have a larger dimension if used for gathering food in the monte.

Historian Eduardo Rosenzvaig published a study on the ecological universe of the Gran Chaco⁵ in which he describes that the word *yica* was also used, in what is now Santiago del Estero, to refer to a collection of valuable objects that marked the most important milestones in a person's life, like stitches in the thread of the story of a biography, the outline of a network of memories and frontiers. In the southern Gran Chaco, the term *yica* also named a very fine spider's web that appeared at dawn over the pumpkin crops.

[3] This excerpt is part of the fifth chapter of the book *Silät. El mensaje de las mujeres de Thañí* [Silät. The message from the women of Thañí], edited by María Carri with the support of Bard College, published in 2023. <https://www.santiagodasilva.com/?p=2568> [4] See Rodrigo Montani (2007); "Vocabulario wichí del arte textil: Entre la lexicografía y la etnografía" [Wichí Vocabulary of Textile Art: Between Lexicography and Ethnography], *Mundo de Antes* magazine, n.º 5. [5] Eduardo Rosenzvaig (2011). *Etnias y Árboles. Historia del universo ecológico Gran Chaco* [Ethnicities and Trees. History of the Gran Chaco ecological universe]. Buenos Aires: Editorial Nuestra América.

In the object and the word *yica* is kept a history of signalling walking and memory. As always, vocabulary is not merely a succession of words, but within it, there are social textures, institutional and political coordinates. A vocabulary always contains sets of collective action⁶.

The geometric shapes, which the women pass down from generation to generation, are named after some part of an animal or plant of the monte and stories that are part of the episteme of the people who reproduce them: the eyes of the jaguar, the fox's paws, the ears of the mulita, the suri's back, the belly of the iguana, the bark of the yuchán (palo borracho) [silk floss tree], the seeds of the chañar, among others. The *yica* reconstructs life paths and, from it, unfolds stories that bring together human time and nature.

In a conversation I had with the artisan and teacher Fidela Flores from the Alto La Sierra community in Santa Victoria Este, she affirmed that the images that the women of her village weave are part of Wichí art and that the objects they sell are crafts. In other words, what is marketed is a craft, and within that craft, art takes refuge.

The designs that are repeated and reinvented in the weavings, and especially in the *yicas*, identify the people of the original peoples of this region with animals and trees, which the communities have always known to be their protectors and which offer messages to those who know how to listen to them. The beings of the monte bring to mind ancestral knowledge about life and the links between living beings, and the *yicas* transport them because the women do not fail to link these teachings and messages in them with flashes of that other world from which they came⁷ and with the splendour of united times..

In the Chaco region of Argentina, the *yica* is part of the oral history of its people, it is an object for communication. What I have learned over the years working in the north of Salta⁸ is that the *yica* you wear on your body tells about you; a *yica* is often made

[6] See Rodrigo Montani (2017). *El mundo de las cosas entre los wichí del Gran Chaco. Un estudio etnolingüístico* [The world of things among the Wichí of the Gran Chaco. An ethnolinguistic study]. Cochabamba: Itinerarios, CIHA - CONICET. [7] It refers to the story of the women stars. "There were no women on earth, only men on this earth. Only men. And these men fed on what they hunted. This Star woman, she sent the other women. To steal the roasted meats; every time the men came, they missed everything they had saved. There was nothing left, so one of them said *I'm going to stay and wait for them to steal from us*. Another said *yes, who would they be... from where?* To which they said to the Hare, *you're going to stay*. He said *yes of course, I'm going to know the truth*. He waited, as soon as they all left he went to sleep, falling into a deep sleep, the

as a gift or a thank you; creating a *yica* can be part of a ritual; *yicas* are dreamed; a *yica* is made to get food; your *yica* tells about your connections; a *yica* can also be used as a shield and as a symbol of belonging. When you get something you long for, you say: I have it in my *yica*. I dare say that every person who lives or works temporarily in this territory does not only have one *yica*. Over time, walking through this place, each person creates his or her own collection of *yicas*, and by remembering the origin of each one, one can weave one's own history with the history of this place and its communities.



feast was being prepared. When the other men arrived he said *I didn't see anything so I went to gather firewood, yes I was gathering firewood*. And... so, the next day another man was appointed to stay, this time the Parrot. He climbed up to the top of a tree, when the women arrived they started to make chaguar just like you do. And a leaf from the white quebracho tree would fall and stick its thigh into the tree. Some of them said, *“What's going on here, who could be there?”* They looked for him but couldn't find him. Until they discovered him and called him, they asked him to *speak*, and as soon as he spoke, they struck a burning ember into his mouth, leaving him bewildered, poor thing... when the others arrived, he could no longer speak, he could barely point with his hand. And the next day they decided on another man and it was the Black Eagle, perched on a log burnt by the fire, well camouflaged by his colour, he began to observe the women who were eating, making a loud cry at the same time as he took flight. And it was by him that the women were caught, and they all ran to overtake and found the women. But the Star woman did not agree that other women should stay here on earth. That's what I heard from the elders, our ancestors.” Simplicio Perez, from La Puntana community, told Claudia Alarcón and Andrei Fernández orally in Wichí in December 2023. The Spanish translation was done by Demóstenes Toribio.

[8] Especially in Tartagal and Santa Victoria Este as of 2015.

The Weaving Thinking

Alejandra Mizrahi

I grew up in San Miguel de Tucumán, where my childhood was forged in a fabric shop. The shop had a clothing workshop on the mezzanine floor and was connected to shops overlooking a shopping arcade. The garments that were made in the mezzanine workshop with fabrics from the shop were then sold in the arcade's shops. The operational chain from raw material to body unfolded daily before my eyes in the family business. The most precious moment in my memory is when the fabric samples arrived with the zigzag-cut edges. The family would gather around them to choose the rolls for the next season. The fabrics with zigzagging contours formed a sampler and, as such, expressed power. The samples became the possibility of consensus, continuity, discussion, and dialogue for me.

"[...] nostalgia can be of great help in shaping future sustainability".

A. Tsing¹

If weaving is writing, textiles are written texts whose materials and techniques reiterate forms, iconographies and communicate meanings. Textiles also create maps, function as marks, and identify geographies, landscapes, and even economies. It is about cartographies that allow us to locate ourselves. We make at the same

[1] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2023); *Los hongos del fin del mundo. Sobre la posibilidad de vida en las ruinas capitalistas* [The mushrooms at the end of the world. On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins], Buenos Aires, Caja Negra.

time as we speak, we work with our hands at the same time as we work with our minds, I wouldn't know where the two are separated, where one exercise begins, and the other begins, we think and speak while we weave.

The analogy of text and textiles allows us to understand weaving as a *performative* enunciation: they tell things, construct meanings, and elaborate narratives from praxis. In weaving, we articulate a language that says something through its particular modes. They are systems in themselves that show a structure in each weaver's hands. So, weaving involves the whole body because, from a physical point of view, each technique requires a posture. Knitting lace is not the same as making lace with two needles, felting or weaving on a loom; the mind generates different paths if we make a net or lace. In this way, the hands of the weavers can follow different paths and arrive at the same results. Thus, weaving, like writing, does not fix thought but is the very medium of thinking, and its practice is a system through which we think the world, construct it and interrelate.



The Weaving Root

Liliana Pastrana¹

I am a woman who likes to convey that, although at first glance I seem quiet, when I start to speak there is no one to stop me. Wherever I go, let it go as a teaching. I like to pass on the traditional knowledge acquired through the grandparents to value it, preserve it, and not lose it. After all, it is our history, and our history must never disappear. This is what I think when I walk in the hills. As long as I can come, I'm going to do it, and even though I already have some difficulty walking, when they tell me 'come,' I come. I like to walk through the sacred places investigating the plants. There is a plant that is more than 300 years old, the mikuna. It means a lot to me because it keeps the colours and knowledge of my ancestors.

That is why after a while I returned to the support space with the women of Tafí del Valle because they were the ones who gave me the strength to move forward at a crucial moment in my life. I have always had the idea that women should rise up here in the Valley, that my work was to reclaim all those things that had been getting lost and that there were women in anonymity, who still continue to be so. Often, the true craftswomen are not valued.

Through a weaving professional training centre, the Warmipura group was born. I guided them for a while, and they were the first to obtain the certification of Artisan Textile Producer from the Ministry of Education, a fact that reaffirms the difference between

[1] With editing by Fernanda Villagra Serra and Juan Díaz Pas.

craftsmanship and *handicrafts*, as I call the designs, materials, and industrial dyes. With this impulse, the group was born.

In my apprenticeship different grandmothers taught me the process, from shearing to knowing what parts of the wool are used and what the waste is. I confess that I have not learnt to spin well, but I do know how to handle the spindles, the large, small, and medium ones, and I know what can be done with each one. As for dyeing, the first steps I remember were when we went to look for *aliso*, a local tree that gives an impressive red. We had to go with a small jar full of mud because you have to remove the bark from the plant. But, once you take the bark off, you also have to protect it and put the mud on it so that the plant doesn't spoil, doesn't rot, and continues to thrive.

Just as we take care of the plants, they also take care of us. When I was sick, perhaps without realising it while walking in the mountains, I ate the fruit of the *mikuna*. This was something we had been doing since we were children, and now, suddenly, I was cured of something for which I was given no more than three months to live. So for me, as I said, the *mikuna* is everything, it means a lot to my life, both personally and professionally. So I got involved in the world of plants, researching them. But I only went as far as the lower parts, I never dared to go any higher.

The *mikuna* is a *berberis* in danger of extinction in the Valley. In my writing *Volver a lo nuestro* [Return to What is Ours], I stated that: "it is a journey through time that connects us with our ancestors and brings us back to a philosophy of life based on respect for our mother nature, which leads us to live and to take everything from her but also to take care of her. There are moments in life when you are overwhelmed and need your tranquillity, to feel it. And you forget what's going on over there, what's missing. It is something sacred that takes care of you".

The dream I have always had, to this day, is that this knowledge is preserved so that people know the value of plants, especially *mikuna*. If they knew all the benefits of this plant... I don't think they would ever let it go to waste. Especially young people, who don't know about it nowadays. They don't know it exists, they don't know what properties it has, and here in the Valley, we have it because of the dyeing.

In fact, the research I was doing referred to the yellow colour of the plant, but I never considered the fruit. However, when we were children, we used to go out to play with the neighbours in a place called 'la mikunita'. Today, that place is populated by a neighbourhood. But there used to be *mikuna* plants, and when summer came, they would compete to see who could eat the most, and the winner would be the one with the purplest mouth. They dyed their tongues and teeth that colour. People may have lost the knowledge that picking those fruits was used to dye yarn, but those memories of the game have savoured that learning. My children too, when they were very young, would gather leaves and cow dung so that I could make the fire and then discover what colours came out. It's about learning, always.

That's why my work wants to bring back that knowledge from before to show that there are still women who, to this day, continue to spin, whose voices affirm, "Here I am, we are still alive, we still preserve our culture and identity". In the relationship with the ancestors, colours are discovered, and these colours lead to the plants, and they lead to the earth. When I speak of ancestors, I am referring to my great-great-grandparents, my great-grandparents, my grandparents, and also the Diaguita, the Tafi Indians, who had different cultures. It is, therefore, essential that this experiential knowl-

edge is not lost because losing all the richness of the ancestors is like losing oneself. Let us not be ashamed because we come from an Indigenous culture and roots. We all carry the blood of our ancestors. Somehow or another that has to prevail over

time. Returning to what is ours is a magical journey that brings it back to life.

One of the people I learned from is Benita, a woman who was said to be a hundred years old, but in reality, she was much older. Benita has been one of those who accompanied me throughout this process because she taught me all the plants in the Valley for dyeing. She showed me how her mother and, before her, her grandmother did it.

The first twelve colours he showed me of different plants from Tafí del Valle left me in awe. If the ancestors dyed, why has that been lost? I learned that they never dyed with firewood but with cow dung because the colours are totally different when done that way. Benita used to make me collect river water or rainwater because it dyes better than pipe water, for example. I've had all that experience. The best university for me was the life of those grandparents, those grandmothers, who taught me the process they learned from their ancestors.

That's how I learned that part of the process is given to you by the plant, but you also have to take care of it. You can't do it at any time of the year. There are months when you can harvest. In the case of alder, between June and July because after you can't touch the plant because it is pregnant again. It is putting out its first shoots for the spring and it is necessary to avoid damaging it. Cutting must be done at the right time according to the knowledge of each cycle.

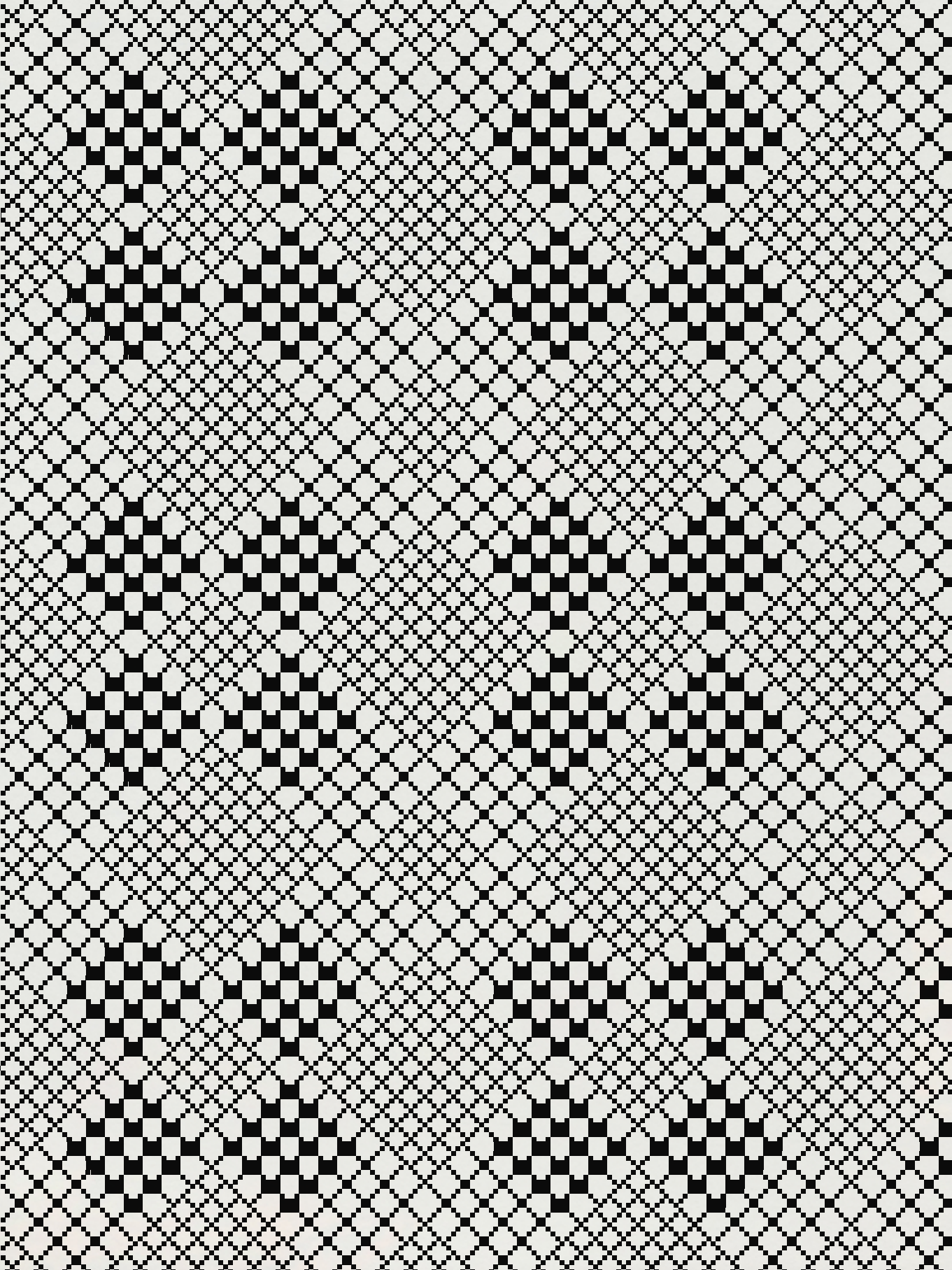
So, throughout my research I was thinking and seeing how it was done, asking myself, 'Are the leaves going to dye? And I saw that yes, the leaves dye. And if I cut this, what colour does it give me?' Let's try it! Before, the elders knew how to do calculations, but now they have a weight to say and teach how much of each element can be used. Returning to our own thing has been wonderful, bringing out the first 12 colours. I managed to make up to 56 colours, interweaving some plants with others, seeing what water to use, the day of rain, sun,

and wind. These variants modify the colours. As time went by, I began to see and analyse, 'Ah, it was rainy, no wonder I got this colour'. This was rainwater, this was river water, that's why the shades are different'. Something similar happens with the fixatives, for example, if I use one

mordant or another, it comes out more opaque or with other tonalities. I learnt all this knowledge over time. For example, green, I couldn't get it out, or I got a different green. Until I found out that if I mixed and put iron sulphate or if I looked for rusty tins and nails, the green would come out. Another example is yellow when we have dyed with the mikuna fruit and it is incredible what comes out. To discover that you can make a watercolour with these colours, with natural dyes. In that sense, yellow means

joy, the sun, life itself. I have always liked anything with yellow in it.

When I decided to climb higher up the mountain, I reached my sacred place, where the protection of the apus, the spirits of my ancestors, who will never leave me. There is my strength because there is life. Yellow has taken possession of me. It is another life. Maybe I like this place a lot because there are yellow flowers of different kinds everywhere you look. Sometimes, I come alone early in the morning, before dawn, I go up there. I see the sunrise, the sun comes up, and the moon goes in, and in the evening, the moon comes up, and the sun goes in. There are still dreams to be fulfilled. The condors always accompany me.



THE
COMMON
IMAGINATION



The Ancestral Heritage of Weaving

Ángela Balderrama

The common imagination

Textile reference

Type: rug

Technique: needle lace

Materials: mercerized cotton

Iconography: rhombuses made with speckles (primitive randa)

Authorship: Randeras de El Cercado

*Even if they tell me that I am no more
from my roots I am returning
because we are cared for by Pachamama, the moon
and the sun.*

I am an Amaicha, a Quilmes and a Tolombón too.

*My eyes weep to see her again
bloom again
to my brother Diaguita Calchaquí.*

*The star shines on my path
to follow in the footsteps of
of my ancestors¹.*

Tell Me Where They Are²

I believe this needs to keep growing, in the sense that we are doing very profound work and I see it, I believe it. We are not a museum. Or we can say that we are a living museum. We continue to work on the techniques that have been used for many years. But then an archaeologist appears and speaks of us and our knowledge as if they were in the past. For us, it's not just the past, it's present all the time, it's always present. We have been working with textiles and it has never been lost.

I think that the university has to raise this issue because sometimes we are told, "You Indigenous people are losing your identity". We know that there are many researchers who, once they have done their research, they keep it and never disseminate the results. So, there are books, documentation, and films that never return to the community. On the other hand, I think this work is helpful for the community in being able to approach the subject because we also have researchers from our people among us.

[1] "Un Amaicha soy", vidala popular in Amaicha del Valle and surroundings, written by Celia Segura de Andrade. [2] Text based on his intervention in the Assembly of Huacalera in November 2023, after inaugurating the exhibition of Textiles Seeds in the Museo Arqueológico de Tilcara [Archaeological Museum of Tilcara], dependent on the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA) [Buenos Aires University].

The work should go back to the community so that we can see the other side and understand better. Many times we are criticised, but they say: we have already done all the work and we have to go back. In my Indigenous community, for example, we demand that if a researcher comes, he has to go back to the community with his work. We are very clear that they have to leave us all the information about what they have researched in our territory, whether it is about medicinal herbs, textiles or ceramics. As part of a community, I have to be able to ask to see what work has been done where I live. Moreover, these works ought to have a place, such as in the library, for instance. In that sense, we demand this because we have already seen many people who come and take things away. We have to work together with the community's university and further education institutions because that's how Mother Nature works in giving and receiving. These are things that we are learning, because there are things that we sometimes forget.

How to work in community? Because we are all a community. Mind you, it's not that you are over there, we are over here, where are you, above, above where? Tell me where you all are. I tell you: on the ground. Well, we are all above Mother Nature. And that's what we are all responsible for here. It is not, "I am me". The Indigenous peoples have always felt the connection between the earth and the cosmos.

Though They Say I'm No Longer Here³

For my part, I would like to tell you a little about how I have worked over the last 25 years. How I became aware of the work I had to do here, in this world. First, I realised that I had an identity. Then, I realised that I had come here for something, although I didn't really know what for. For years, I searched for something without knowing what it was because no one had told me. Much less at school. I remember always having a question, I was looking for something. I didn't know when I was younger. I felt unsatisfied, insecure. People were going this way, and I was going the other way. That's how I felt. I didn't belong here, sometimes I got upset,

[3] Text based on a recorded conversation between Ángela and María Gabriela Cisterna, Alejandra Mizrahi and Andrei Fernández, in Amaicha del Valle in March 2024. The transcription of the oral testimony into the written word was done by María Gabriela Cisterna. The selection of excerpts was made by Juan Díaz Pas and Andrei Fernández in dialogue with Ángela Balderrama.

I felt bad, I felt nervous. Sometimes, I was inhibited, I was mute, I didn't speak, I didn't have a relationship with anyone. It was as if I was in another world. I didn't feel comfortable, that's the word. And I searched, I got into different places that were not what I was looking for.

I always worked independently. When I was in Buenos Aires, for example, I did it on my own. But I was looking for something, I didn't really know, until I was in my thirties. My mother, Felisa Arias, was a very good politician who led the Indigenous peoples' movement for many years here in Amaicha del Valle. My mother got on with it without asking herself as many questions as I did. She just did it.

As time passed, I realised I had to do cultural work. At 18, I travelled to Buenos Aires to seek new horizons to help my family. I always took my wool and weavings with me to go to different fairs on weekends. In 1986 the Cooperativa de Provisión para Trabajadores Artesanos Regionales "La Pachamama" Ltda. was created in Amaicha del Valle, which I represented at many fairs and in the foundation of the Feria Tradicional de Mataderos, in Buenos Aires. There, I started to meet people, shamans, old historians from Jujuy who explained to us about the Indigenous peoples, for example, about the Quilmes. They gave us lessons, that was our university. The old man Condor Canqui, who was about 70 years old, worked there. As he studied, he gave himself that name. He worked in the Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación [National Congress Library]. I got to know him through meetings where they would call him, and he would tell me, "Angela, come to such and such a place". It was clear to me that working in politics was not what I was looking for. However, one day, I went there, and there was a table where young people from Indigenous peoples from different parts of the country were gathered. What I liked and what caught my attention was that they didn't tell me what I had to say, but that I spoke my mind, I was free, and nobody questioned me. I started to participate in meetings because I liked the way each person spoke, old, grown-up, young. There were people from different places, from Peru, Bolivia and Chile, who lived there and with whom the group "Residentes Indígenas en Buenos Aires" [Indigenous Residents in Buenos Aires] was formed. The logo consisted of two condor heads, one on each side. There was also a discussion about

whether or not we needed legal status, something that was questioned, although for us it was not so important. As time passed, I saw what was happening and all the more reason to stay. We continued to work in the same way, especially on the issue of identity.

Then, we started working with medicinal herbs, which linked us the Indigenous people. At that time it was not so easy to understand what each one of us was doing, unlike now that we can now know what we have been working on for all these years. We also talked about the new Pachacuti, the positive and the negative. We didn't understand what that was, to this day, we still don't know. I'm talking about before the '90s, in the '80s, after democracy returned. In 1992 was the 500th anniversary of the Conquest. That's when people started talking about the new positive Pachacuti. They explained to me what it is: the Indigenous people were down here during the 500 years, it was all negative for us, until the 500 years were over and the Pachacuti turned upwards. I think it is nature itself, it is the earth, it is the planet. So now it is in a positive part for the Indigenous people, even though the dramas and problems of history continue. What is being said just now, the qeros⁴ were already saying: there is a new human being. That is why we have to ask ourselves what this human is what is its spiritual part. I think one answer is that we have to protect Mother Nature. There is always talk about how to take care of the earth, how to take care of the rivers, how to take care of the grass. This is what is happening.

That's how I understood that the spiritual part is very important to be in harmony with nature. On the other hand, one is also doing the work. That's when I understood that my work was linked to the cultural part and not to politics when one day I said: "I want to teach weaving". Something I had never done before. That's why I went back to my village. In Buenos Aires I didn't have thread, I didn't have a loom, I lived in a tiny little thing in a room. My idea was there, but I didn't have the means. I spent fifteen years in Buenos Aires. I left when I was 17 and came back when I was thirty-something with an idea of what I wanted to do. Then, I started to look for yarn to weave again. I went back to making the ponchos I made when I was fifteen.

[4] Qeros is a Quechua community in the Province of Paucartambo in the Department of Cuzco in Peru. The Qeros (from Quechua: qiru, often written as kero), are weavers, men and women, considered to be the last Incas. The qeros are healers.

My challenge was to recover what I had left behind and to see if it was still in my memory or not. It's not that I didn't want my sister to teach me, I just wanted to do it alone to see if I remembered. It was impressive because I did it all by myself. I warped. I made the cross. I started to weave and remembered as if I was just beginning to weave. In textiles, that is the biggest challenge. Even if you are eighty years old, you will never forget that. That's where the ancestral teaching comes from. Then I started to observe my mother, who was already old, how she taught us. I began to realise that she never scolded us to weave because deep down, when you start teaching, you become like a psychologist. You begin to investigate and ask how she taught us, that's why we are all from a family of weavers. We all come from lines of weavers on both father's and mother's side. My father weaved, my grandmother weaved, my grandmother's mother weaved. We really have some knowledge from the time a child sees his mother with the threads when he is a little boy. This is the textile heritage.

I thought: "I'm going to teach like my mum taught me". I had done some workshops with my sister Maria for two years on the traditional saddle blanket patterns that I didn't remember or that my mum hadn't taught me. I also sometimes rebelled: "Why does my sister have to teach me?"

In addition, I learned sales techniques. I thought, "I have to give women everything". If not, who is going to make the loom for them. What I am telling you is how I began to teach and what I discovered because that is part of my identity. While weaving in Tucumán, I found things I didn't know, for example, that my mother also taught at the Museo Folklórico [Folk Museum]. That's where the randeras were and where their history comes from. My mother had donated a loom, and the first thing I asked was where it was. They had it in a place full of moss, abandoned. "That has to be exposed for people to see," I told them, "it can't be abandoned and lying around. That's also where Doña Melchora Ávalos donated her caja chayera [a traditional musical instrument], and there are ponchos from the weavers of those years. When I was fifteen, we used to go to the fair organised by the Secretaría de Turismo [Tourism Secretary]. We were the first to start a fair in Monteros, which still exists today. We were the Amaicha who founded it. They would send us the artefacts and the looms that we all had to bring in a lorry, and we would go on a bus in the middle of winter, in the cold.

When I was teaching I learned to observe people, to see how they were in their state of mind: whether they are sick or healthy, whether they are doing it for a hobby or out of necessity. There is also a relation to healing, weaving is healing. Heritage is also related to memory. There are stitches, for example, that I realised have to remain in the memory, that you have to learn them well to record them. Then, it is never forgotten again. This is important for children. My mother, for example, used to make us weave while she was weaving. She had a work, the saddle blankets, she would teach us, we would finish them, and then she would sell them. It was a livelihood that allowed her to buy sugar, weed, groceries or trainers when we needed them. But weaving is also a way of life, first, because I like it; second, because I can create; and third, because they are works of art, each garment is unique. The energy of the hands and of that person is also present. Sheep and llama wool are natural. They keep you warm, they heal you. This is the origin of the practice of spinners spinning backwards, to the left. All those garments that are spun inside out are first unique, then they are healing. Not everybody spins backwards.

There are different ways to be able to learn, and sometimes you have to let that person. Don't demand it, let them observe, that's important when you teach. The emotional part is also significant because when there is a problem of illness, the mind is in another world. I realised as I was teaching: I didn't know that this woman had a health problem until I observed it in the weaving. Weaving brings the person to the present because it requires concentration in that moment, what you are doing, and then it will come out. In the moment when you weave, you have to be here and now. But we must be patient because not everyone can be here and now. Each person has their own madness, and that's why the teaching is personalised. I can have five women weaving and not all of them will do the same thing.

What is impressive about weaving is that it is always a creation. When you are weaving, you think about what else you can do, and ideas come out. Every weaving is a challenge for me because sometimes I don't know what will come out. I can think one thing, and while I'm weaving, something else comes out. At the same time, you are always learning from others. Meeting the other

weavers makes me realise that we are like spiders, we are united thanks to the textiles, always united. We are united by our hands and our thoughts, sometimes we think the same thing. We don't want this to be lost.

In the **Textiles Semillas** project, I noticed how the women grew through the last weavers' meeting we had when the proposal had just begun, the first stitches the girls were making since that visit in May⁵. When they gave me that woven textile⁶, the first thing I made there was a tree, the roots, what is just beginning. As time went by, I now see how impressive the weavers have grown in their minds. This group leads them to do something bigger that was never done before, and suddenly, it expanded. That's where all the knowledge they have comes out. Yes, it has happened to me too. The Wichí, for example, went from making a small bag to making a huge piece of work.

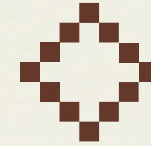
Weaving and the copla [traditional folk music] are also closely related. I remember when my mum used to go on trips, and she always took her box with her because it's part of everyday life. Wherever weaving goes, the copla goes too, together. In some free time, or when you have a barbecue after working all day at a fair, that's where the singing comes out, as well as the guitar, the quena [Andean flute], everything. My mother liked to sing to the public, that's how she met people and made friends. She was one of many wise women who had all the gifts. There are also other people who like to sing with joy and others who don't because singing has a lot to do with the state of mind. It's the same as with weaving, depending on how you feel, sometimes you can weave, and that weaving also has a story.

Singing is always important because those who do not want to speak can express themselves through it. A copla can be cheeky, sad or joyful. Sometimes, by weaving, a copla also emerges. It depends on the place or the area. In the Jujuy area, they are generally cheerful coplas, but here, in this area, they are more subdued. You can also send messages through the copla and the weavings.

[5] From 2023, when the pilgrimage was made. [6] We call them **Telas Tierra** [Earth Textiles] or **Telas peregrinas** [Pilgrim Textiles], fabrics that travelled through the communities that are part of **Textiles Semillas** to be intervened by each group.

Pachamama, Pachamama
we are on our way to weave
to meet my sisters
In Atamisqui we are going to weave.

In Atamisqui they are
the weavers of Santiago
to continue to weave
this sprouting seed⁷.



[7] Coplas by Ángela Balderrama dated 23 April 2024 in Amaicha del Valle, written for the Encuentro de **Textiles Semillas** [Textile Seeds Gathering] in Atamisqui.

Archaeology of Presence

Celeste Valero

Qhipnayra uñtasis sarnaqapxañani
Looking backwards and forwards (to the future-past)¹

Who Is Telling Our Story and How?

The movement, the vibrations of existence, the colours of flowers and the spirals in the flight of birds. We can interpret life, nature and dreams in a textile. In this sense, we can say that the presence of beings is prolonged, it comes from before and leaves much later. Or maybe it doesn't leave and the passing of the present/the presents comes to mean much more. Textiles store this information and weavers recognise the language.

A recurring question I am asked is: what does it mean to be a weaver, a descendant of weavers?

My father, Martín Valero, learned to weave as a child by watching his uncle and, rarely, his father. Then, he stopped weaving for many years until he married my mother, Ilabia Lucrecia Cruz. She helped him to remember. He passed away at the age of 61. His passage through this natural world influences mine, his words and his silences, the knowledge he passed on to me.

Without wishing to romanticise my parents' life, it is necessary to listen to them when they speak to me about where they lived with their parents, a paradise of fertile land and tireless efforts walking mountains and raising llamas and sheep. This makes me understand why I am here honouring them. My research path towards a personal identity began with my family's story.

[1] "This [Aymara] aphorism can be roughly translated as follows: 'Looking backwards and forwards (to the future-past) we can walk in the present-future', although its more subtle meanings are lost in translation." Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015); *Sociología de la imagen* [Sociology of image], Buenos Aires, Tinta Limón, 11.

My *anteabuelos*² came from Quechua communities somewhere in Peru, inhabiting the valleys of Santa Victoria Oeste, what is now known as the Province of Salta. In my parents' time, the roots moved to the Indigenous community of Casillas, recognised as Pueblo Omaguaca, where we now belong. I was born in Huacalera, in the Quebrada de Humahuaca. I cannot conceive of my path without their

journey, which is why I can say that my present is made up of the present of my ancestors. My grandparents weaved, my parents weave, and the stories are audible

although time passes. The story is still being told, descendants of knowledge, know-how, and being-doing. When I came across this family story, *I began* a path of recognition, of learning about what I had learned in a story of collectivity and balance with the *whole*³.

Textiles speak to me of the present because their lifegivers are still here. At that moment I asked myself, why is the story still being told by others? They say we have disappeared, is it true that we are dying? I remembered the words of Juan Muñoz, director of the Museo Nacional Terry [Terry National Museum], about the idea that the Indigenous people existed and are no longer here. While Juan was giving a talk on heritage management in Río Negro, some members of the Mapuche communities tell they were making arrowheads with the same techniques and materials as their ancestors. Some of those present asked them if what they were making were replicas, to which they replied that they were not, stating that they were Mapuche making original arrows. For many, it is convenient to think that we Indigenous people only

[2] Expression typical of the region where the author lives. Translator's note: "Anteabuelos" is a creative combination of "ante-" (before) and "abuelos" (grandparents), suggesting ancestors preceding grandparents. [3] The *whole* refers to the natural and spiritual world from the Andean cosmivision

exist in the past because we disturb, demand rights, defend the territory from extractivism and protect the balance with the earth.

After recognising myself and learning about my roots, I travelled through many communities, visited my weaver sisters in their homes and looked at what my parents told me about, still healthy territories, Indigenous technologies that give life to textiles today. I said to myself: who is telling our story and how?

Here we are the descendants inhabiting the same territories, preparing the humitas [traditional South American dish], spinning *lloqe*⁴, yarns, performing gestures and ceremonies of permission and gratitude to the other beings that coexist in this world, without our mother tongue but with living textiles full of information in the uses and a heartfelt and shared reading and interpretation.

I realised that I began to search for that which I already had, yet the questions were necessary and each answer or new question was a sprout in the task of protecting what was attempted to be erased, speaking audibly in the footsteps of those who came before.

Navigating Memory

What is inherited? The techniques of the backstrap loom, the floor loom, the stake loom, braiding, among others, are the making that connects human and non-human beings. We weavers conceive the creation of textiles with a life purpose, the technique brings to the world the spirituality contained in a textile. A *chuspa*⁵ was conceived for the purpose of *belonging to* or living with a family, for a specific ceremony, for example. Many textiles bear the initials of those who later wear and use them. The colours have never lost their meaning, even if it is difficult to read them as our ancestors did.

As I was writing these notes I found myself sitting on a bench at the bus terminal in Humahuaca with Doña Margarita Zerpa, from the community of Palca de Aparzo. We chatted as she offered me coca leaves from her *chuspa*, embroidered with cross-stitch and the initials of her name and surname (on each side of the

[4] Special black and white yarn in sheep's wool, for protective and medicinal purposes for the body. [5] Small bag, woven or embroidered depending on the area. Exclusively for personal or ceremonial use to contain coca leaves.

weaving). I remembered the reason why I began this journey of relearning and reviving forgotten techniques: they, the teachers of our path, are our mothers and grandmothers. I thought deep inside myself while I held with emotion and gratitude Doña Margarita Zerpa's chuspa, which is not simply an object, this chuspa is her companion, with whom she shares her rings (she had two rings in her hands and two she had tied to the sejrana⁶). We are the ancestors of others, to search in the ancestors' footsteps is also to rename, to resignify. Marvellous and painful fortune. We didn't have to dig very far or very deep. I said to myself, it is necessary to shake the dust off our hands and remember with our fingertips.

Knowledge is alive, it pulses in our hands, we the daughters and sons of time.



[6] Threads fastened to the chuspa that hang like fringes.

The Latent Commons

Santiago Azzati
Andrei Fernández

"To listen politically is to detect the signs of common projects
not yet expressed verbally".

Anna L. Tsing, *Mushrooms at the End of the World*¹

Textiles and their techniques have a particular power. A bag, a *yica*², a *chuspa*³, a blanket are useful devices for telling stories. Not precisely stories of a world that is always one, of a time that advances like an arrow forward, of vague promises and delayed hopes, of economic growth and development, of progress and modernisation. Around **Textiles Semillas** and their weavers, other stories appear, other ways of narrating this tangle of entanglements, of threads knotted with others that we call earth. Speaking and writing are ways of spinning the threads that weave the world⁴, a world that is always multiple, made up of many others, radically plural, indefinite, always on the move. A world made of worlds, like a thread that is braided with others, that converge and diverge, that twist and tangle, that sometimes also unravel. A bundle of stories, twisted upside down like a *lloqe* thread⁵, that tells through some reverse side, that asks other questions, that thinks other thoughts. As a result of being, of meeting, we have learned, we have been taught, to see in a *yica* the whole monte, in a *chuspa* the Puna and its ravines, in a *rebozo* the flowers dreamt by the stones or the stories that the cane field keep in the transcultured lace of a Randa.

[1] Anna L. Tsing (2024); *Los hongos del fin del mundo. Sobre la posibilidad de vida en las ruinas capitalistas* [Mushrooms at the End of the World. On the possibility of life in the capitalist ruins], Buenos Aires, Caja Negra Editora. [2] A word of Quechua origin used in the north of Argentina to name a type of linked bags made especially by the women of the Wichí people. *Yica* is a word that was also used in the Gran Chaco to name a collection of objects that people kept from the most solemn moments of their lives, as a mnemonic rule, a way of keeping the thread of a life, as life itself can be a network of memories and borders. [3] *Chuspa* is a Quechua word for a type of bag used to carry coca and cocoa leaves, used mainly in the Andean region of South America, made using loom weaving techniques. [4] Paraphrasing Cecilia Vicuña (2018); *New & Selected Poems of Cecilia Vicuña*, Berkeley, Kelsey Street Press. [5] *Lloqe* or *lloqui* in Quechua means left and this is the name given to the thread composed of two strands of natural black and white, spun to the left and twisted to the right. It is a thread with different virtues such as protection and healing. This thread is used as an amulet, it is placed on the wrists and ankles. It is also performed at certain moments with a ritual sense

Writing in the presence of textiles and of those who still weave them implies learning to inherit in another way this bundle of stories about weaving as a common practice of making (and knowing) that endures in the enjoyment and trust that these knowledges hold. Alejandra Mizrahi, while weaving and teaching, learns new ways of weaving. She affirms that the weavers' hands can take different routes to reach the same results because weaving, like writing, does not fix thought but is the very means of thinking⁶. What questions can arise, what stories do the weavings hold, what thoughts do they provoke, what inheritances do they inherit, and what do they force us to do. A surface of edges, a juncture of worlds, a flood, an assemblage: a multiplicity of stories still capable of bringing together those who are interested in that which, if lost, would make the world a poorer place. María del Carmen Toribio, weaver and artist of the Wichí people, said that to think of a yica is to think of life and to weave a living memory⁷. Weaving, particularly of yicas, is a device for the continuous transmission of knowledge, capable of mixing memory and enjoyment through the conservation of ancient patterns that evoke life in the monte, but also resistance and invention.

When the monte and the rivers provided the communities with what they needed, the yicas were used to go out to gather and carry what was obtained from hunting and fishing. But the present accumulates several centuries of ecological disturbance that continue to threaten the continuity of life of those who are with the monte and the beings that inhabit it. So the weaving, too, has mutated: it is no longer woven only for use, it is also woven for trade, and with what is obtained to buy what can be bought, which is almost always little, and almost never enough. The trap is still operating because the operations of devaluation of lives in these areas are constant and have been going on for more than five hundred years. However, the practice of weaving continues, it lives on, it insists. This is demonstrated by the persistence of techniques and patterns that evoke the life and beings that inhabit each landscape.

[6] In the text "El tejido pensamiento" which is part of the fanzine produced in the context of the Jornada de Arte Textil [Textile Art Conference] at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA) in February 2024. [7] At the Jornada de Arte Textil held as part of Cecilia Vi-
cuña's exhibition Soñar el agua [Dreaming of Water], held in February 2024.

María del Carmen Toribio reaffirms the capacity of weaving to adapt to change, to pay attention to what is changing as a strategy for living well in precarious times. Demóstenes Toribio, translator and communicator of the Wichí people, comments that in *wichí lhämtes*⁸ there is a word, *tayhin*, whose meaning is to weave or, rather, weaving⁹, but it is also to build, to rebuild, to heal. Wichí weavings, always in bags and now also constructing other pieces for other uses, reconstruct life paths and unfold narratives that bring together human time and nature, heterogeneous worlds in which there is no division between humans and non-humans. All of nature seems to be brought together by our thinking, bound with human fears, enveloped by our fantasies, but nature is not human and takes place in times that elude our understanding.

During the **Textiles Semillas** pilgrimage, the sowers team¹⁰ met a weaver, Clara Adelina Guerra, while she was selling hand-crafts with her family in the central square of Amaicha del Valle. She pointed to a figure on one of her weavings and said:

"This is an Inca pattern, very common here in Amaicha. Many of us say it is a Pampa pattern, but I think it is an Amaichean.

It's used a lot, there are always patterns. We have this one, which is everywhere. It's like a little staircase, a little staircase, of course. [...]

I invented this again, I did again what my mummy did, then I invented them again, these little patterns and others that I invented.

But it turns out that when I start to walk, go out, see, and notice, they exist, exist in other things, exist in other weavings, and exist in pots too.

Of course, as a memory, there are also those patterns there. I thought I invented them because I had them in my head.

[8] This glotonym is usually translated into Spanish as *the words of the people*. It is the language of the Wichí people and other peoples of the tropical dry forest of southern Bolivia and northern Argentina. [9] The word *tayhin* is a verboid forming a progressive gerund equivalent to *weaving* and the root *yhi* at the same time derived from another word *layik*. The "y" is preserved by removing the affixes, prefixes and suffixes that transform it. The Wichí language is agglutinative, like the rest of the Indigenous languages of synthetic type. This word also means: to build, to rebuild, to heal, as well as to weave. (From the unpublished text by Demóstenes Toribio on the meaning and use of the word *tayhin*, written in February 2024). [10] Composed of Alejandra Mizrahi, Andrei Fernández, Clara Johnston, Alina Bardavid, Cecilia Vega, in May 2023. The *sembradoras* [sowers] are responsible for fostering and nurturing the growth of the links and the work of **Unión Textiles Semillas**.

I made them because I liked it, I invented, but it turned out that they were on something else.”

Clara invents a form, she says with surprise that when she goes out, when she walks, she finds that the image she had in her head, which she had created to be seen by other eyes, to be part of coats and ornaments, is actually made by many hands in many artefacts. It appears before her as part of a shared memory that exceeds her lifetime and the territory she knows. The forms in her story take on autonomy, they are in different places, they walk, they are not the fruit of individual imagination but are part of a common imagination.

Weavings are the fruit of myriad processes that make up complex operative chains, stories of interweavings, reciprocity and mutual care, involving humans, plants, animals, water and soil in zones of pluriversal contact. They are gestures that allow life to find life and to cohabit in it, with it, from it. Bruno Latour points out that territory is not the place we occupy but that which defines us¹¹. Each group has a geography where space and time intertwine like maps of narratives¹².

The pilgrimage and the encounters proposed by **Textiles Semillas** are the units of this journey, stages of an instatement process. Travelling it required going a little slower, taking on the open air to build from it a provisional confidence, a space to *cultivate listening* and produce other audibilities. A listening whose starting point was to gather around something common, even if that commonality was not the same for those who gathered there. A space and a time in which to put into practice, as well as to claim, a kind of creative autonomy and to establish a common time.

At the Jornada de Arte Textil that we shared at the beginning of 2024 at MALBA, Margarita Ramírez¹³ sang a vidala [traditional folk song from northwestern Argentina] at the beginning of her presentation:

[11] Quoted by Bruce Albert and Davi Kopenawa (2024); *El espíritu de la floresta* [The spirit of the forest]. Buenos Aires, Eterna cadencia.

[12] Bruce Albert (2024) calls them “verbal maps”, borrowing an expression from Klara Kelley and Harry Francis, in *El espíritu de la floresta* [The spirit of the forest], Buenos Aires, Eterna cadencia. [13] One of the leaders of **Textiles Semillas** and founder of the Tinku Kamayu Cooperative in Lampacito, Catamarca.

Forgive my tardiness,
it took me a long time to get here.
The air almost didn't let me come
In the midst of discussions I dared to go out.

An encounter never happens anywhere, always somewhere, in a certain place. Amaicha, Tilcara or Atamisqui are the names of encounters that happened, that we evoke. Encounters transform us, contaminate us, change us, make us always become a little different. To summon the encounter as a strategy and as a method, to entangle us, to tangle us, to plot edges, to invent new floods. Always anew, always again: a common weaving in the slowness.

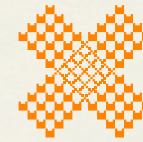
We wanted that meeting to weave could be, at least for this time and while it lasted, the possibility of *giving us time* to build trust, to unite the threads, to entangle us in a different way. The common is a shared ground, the same open air, some stories, a way of weaving, a latency. Something that insists and subsists, with a force of anachronism, with a commendable perseverance, like a design. “They have told me that I have died, but here I am”, sang Ángela Balderrama¹⁴ in the Museo Arqueológico de Tilcara [Archaeological Museum of Tilcara] after a researcher specialised in textiles stated that the knowledge about certain ancestral techniques, included in archaeological collections, had been lost due to the absence of the transmission of knowledge after the European invasion. The day after that episode in the museum, Ángela commented: “We are not a museum, or we can say that we are a living museum. Because apart from those who are there, the technique has been done for many years and we continue to work on this subject. But the archaeologist was talking about the past and we are not only the past, we are here, we are present, and we will continue to be”¹⁵.

Weaving as language and lineage, as a way of showing the intimacy of a heritage that resists in which to weave is to exist, is to invent a way of doing things together amid divergence.

[14] Representative of the Pachamama Cooperative of Amaicha del Valle, Tucumán. [15] Fragment of testimony at the **Textiles Semillas** Assembly in Huacalera, a community in the Quebrada de Humahuaca, Jujuy. Held in November 2023.

To weave together as much as possible, for the duration of the encounter and also between. **Textiles Semillas** as a becoming: a journey to be made that happens in the slowness.

In the case of the groups of weavers that make up **Textiles Semillas**, from the meetings, from pausing to comprehend the persistent elements, we had to invent strategies to map the textures of our desires reflected and nourished in the encounter with the other, in the encounter with the common. Claudia Aybar¹⁶, Randerera, in describing what textile work means to her, affirms that it is about "pouring out the imagination"¹⁷. In different testimonies of the weavers who are part of the **Unión Textiles Semillas [Textiles Seeds Union]**, this spilling over of the imagination appears as the power of a new perhaps. This overturning of the imagination is what gives rise to the recognition of a new "we", a complex "we" that enables new alliances to think about what makes uniting us matter, what encourages weaving, what links us, what we imagine, with what problems it contours. Imagination can grow, it can flood, it can transform. An event, something that became more than the sum of its parts, that brought together weavers, artists and activists, but also a network of sowers. A polyphonic encounter halfway between weaving and words, something that was able to sprout despite everything. The common, sometimes, is also woven.



[16] She is a founder and part of the Randeras de El Cercado cooperative in Tucumán. [17] In a talk recorded as part of the Pilgrimage carried out by the **Textiles Semillas** team to invite the groups to be part of this project.

The Tangled Planetary: For a Poetics of Loose Ends

Martin Savransky

"The powers of imagination and of memory are closely combined through the figure of the spider; it holds in its web the totality of what has been, but it also unfurls the infinite tangle of possible versions of a history, thereby reminding us that every situation is rich in unfulfilled virtualities".

Dénètem Touam Bona¹

There are no neat lines. There are no clean cuts. To be given over to the virtuously enduring mess that is living on earth is to be tangled, in and through tangles (if not always entangled), a life twisted and snarled around another life around another life all the way down. What, indeed, is this thing we call earth but something other, something in excess of all things possessed and dispossessed, something that is never quite a *thing* itself? Is it not precisely that which exposes every-thing to an outside it can neither control nor brush aside, to a more-than that makes each of us less-than-One, to a riotous multiplicity of threads each weaving its own insurgent tale? And what does this multiplicity of divergent weavings form but that clump, wad, and bundle, that messy and woven heap of tangled lives, nonlives, afterlives, that tumult of braided threads that give rise to the earth which gives rise to them? Each life rises upon the earth like the waves rise upon the ocean or the shoots rise upon the soil, each catches the sunbeams in their own singular way, each risks a move as others strive to stay put. But in relay and return, every movement and every twist of vitality folds back upon the manifold, reverberating through the tangled, imperfect and imperfective mess that we are (in) and continue to become². So does the earth become a memory of all that has happened, transformed by the waves and worlds woven in and out of its tangles, host to all the versions and variations of

[1] Dénètem Touam Bona (2022); *Fugitive, Where are Your Running?*, Cambridge, Polity. [2] Martin Savransky (2022); "Speculative Earth", *Speculative Geographies: Ethics, Technologies, Aesthetics*, ed. Nina Williams and Thomas Keating, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

the tangles we are, could have been, and could be in³. And so does it become a pluriversal tangle of virtual variations, of unrealised potentials, of an insistent otherwise. Which is another way of saying that to be tangled is not to be fused, not to be confused, not to be consoled, not to be cajoled, not to be made whole once more (or at all). To be tangled is to be in knots, to be exposed, to become embroiled in and out of one another's muddles, in and out of form. It is to be swept away in a movement of metamorphosis that belongs to no one but transforms everything in the untidy passage and impossible space that the knot's interstice, in the anarchic share that is the incompleteness that we share and cannot but continue to weave as we stray and sway. To be tangled is not to end, not to begin, knot to be (transformed).

On an earth unstable and unsafe, out of joint with itself, worlds only ever hang by a thread. Indeed, the very texture of earth itself might be likened to an unfinished fabric of which each thread tells a different tale; where each world hangs on a thread which leans on another thread which leans on other threads which on the whole amount to no whole and lean on nothing. The threads interlace and intertwine with one another; they form knots of various degrees of strength and percolate variable forms of influence and vibration through their manifold twists and turns⁴. But a tangle never transcends the weaving-together of divergent threads. There is nothing above or beyond the mess. What we call earth is but this multiplicity woven through divergent ensembles of existence in their ongoing giving and pulling away. Not the transcendent ground but their common ungrounding, not the

[3] Bronislaw Szerszynski (2019); "How the Earth Remembers and Forgets", *Political Geology: Active Stratigraphies and the Making of Life*, ed. Adam Bobbette and Amy Donovan, New York, Palgrave. [4] Martin Savransky (2021); *Around the Day in Eighty Worlds: Politics of the Pluriverse*, Durham & London, Duke University Press.

object of knowledge or governance but the unstable terrain through which a fragmentary tapestry of living variations improvise their ungovernable sociality. And just as they knit and knot themselves together, just as new threads develop and spin themselves through and around the fabric of things, the weavings tremble, things burst at the seams. Just as there's weaving, there's tearing — threads are added and are knitted in, and others are strained, snapped, and torn. For as long as it remains tangled, beating in the impassioned incompleteness of its snarled threads, the earth vibrates in an anarchy of loose ends: minor edges, wild variations, insistent possibilities, unsung potentials.

Loose ends. That is what the axiomatic of modern colonial capitalism has never quite been able to handle— the untimely and disorderly profusion of loose ends. It sought to straighten us up, to smoothen the path, to improve the land, to shorten the distance, to open us up (to its use). Hence its imperial design, its project of earth-wide colonisation, of deracination, of domination, of appropriation. Hence its programme of total capture, its logic of give and take (mostly take), its attempt to assign everything and everyone a proper name, a proper place, a proper function. Hence its efforts of systematisation, its stories of progress and civilisation. Hence its metaphysical deforestation. Colonialism is the business of intimate distances, of interior spaces, of clear vistas, of prearranged paths. And in seeking to take hold of the whole earth, to smoothen the crevices and untangle the threads, modernity waged nothing less than an all-out war against loose ends. It attempted to tidy them up or to appropriate their life-surplus and virtual potential, carrying out a catastrophic experiment in imperial world-making that since the

fifteenth century has seen the thorough deforestation of forests in the making of slave and imperial ships; that captured the aeolian forces of winds and ocean currents to turn the Earth into a means of commerce and an object of government; that weaponised the lives of European animals, weeds, seeds, and diseases to turn other soils into European soils, other lands into crops, other fauna into European food, other mountains into metals; that reduced life to property and lives bygone into fuel; that led to the demise of Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Black lives by the million in the tidy monocultures of the plantation and the desedimented untangling of the earth's memory that are the operations of the mine and the rig. In so doing sought, modernity sought to realise the dream of tying up the loose ends and fragmented shards of Pangaea in the fabrication of a single, seamless, globe— an interior space without snags or folds, free of wrinkles and wrests, thoroughly disentangled.⁵

This modern dream of progress, the effort to possess the earth in order for one to possess oneself, brought countless worlds asunder, tore into the earth's very fabric, destroyed more than even those enthralled by its promise were able to imagine. Against loose ends, it made loss proliferate: the loss that is constitutive of possession, of property and the proper. "All property is loss because all property is the loss of sharing"⁶. Against the planetary incompleteness that we share and the multiplicity of ongoing and finished worlds that are made and unmade as it swerves and sways, it made a planetary disaster of its imperial design. But no plan, let alone such all-encompassing design, was ever carried out in all its details. Something always escapes. There is no tying up the loose ends that this earth makes proliferate as it swerves and sways. And while every world vision seeks to bring about what it envisages, it cannot quite envisage what its bringing about precipitates. Improper and improvised, planetary tangles cannot be propertied. Which is why the modern project has not, despite its best efforts, succeeded in the generalised disentanglement it might have envisioned. In seeking to take hold of the earth, it itself became embroiled in an atmospheric mutation its dreams of

[5] Martin Savransky (2021); "After progress: Notes for an ecology of perhaps", *Ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, vol. 21. [6] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2021); *All Incomplete*, London, Minor Compositions, 14.

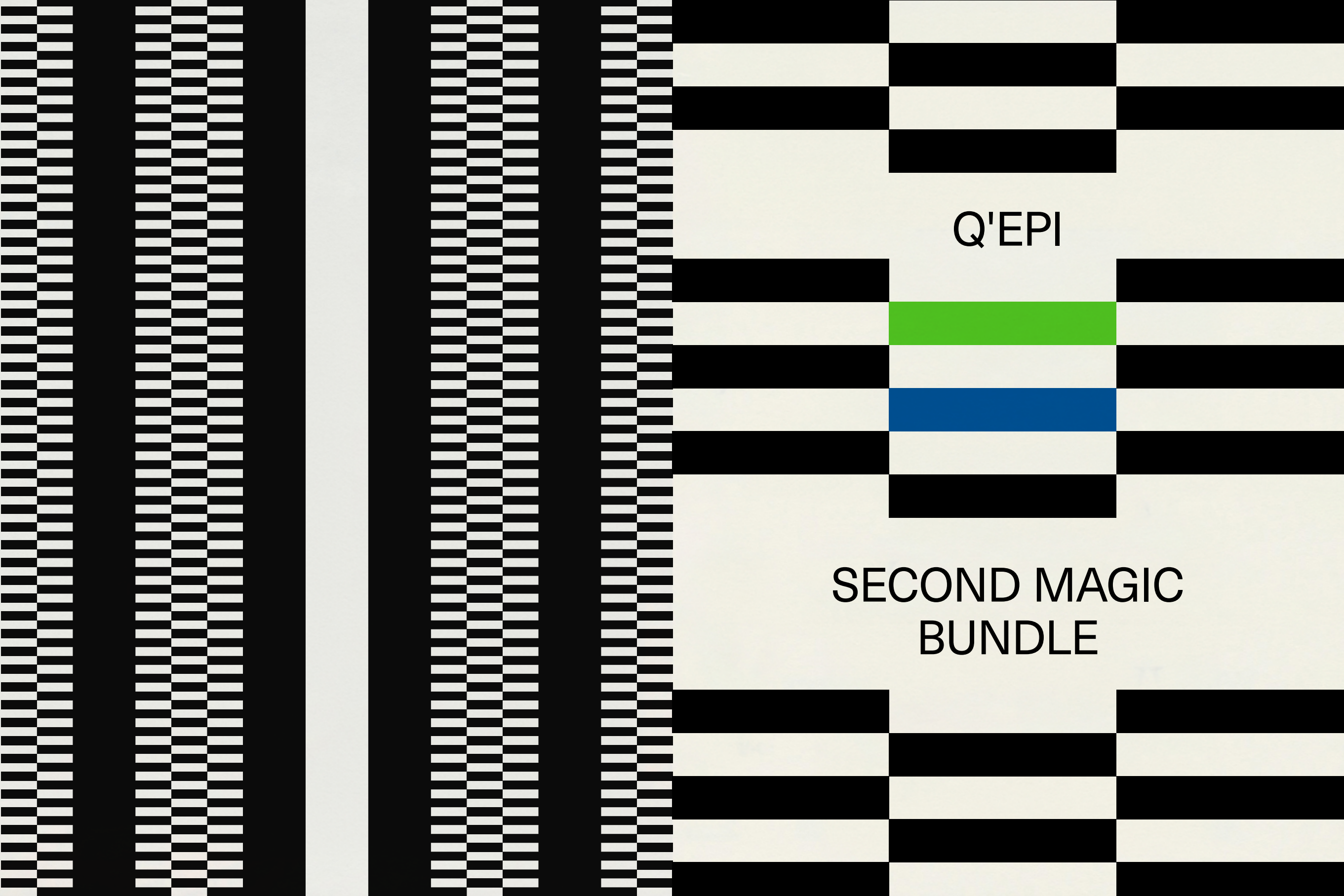
possessions may have stoked but are now quite unable to control. Nor has it succeeded in tying up (or burning up) the profusion of loose ends. In the interstices and outlaw edges of the modern world, in the riotous tangles of its surrounds, loose ends have and continue to evade and escape its grasp, they go on eluding and scattering all that seeks to appropriate them, untie them, straighten them, tidy them up. *They go on refusing what modernity deems proper to them.*

"To refuse means to move into the accursed share of life-living twisting in the troubled interstice, to move with that anarchic share of existence that keeps giving life"⁷. There's nothing like the refusal that is given in and as the surreptitious pulling of a loose thread to begin to witness the slow unravelling of the fabric of a modern world whose fantasies of sovereignty and order replace the ragged textures of our tangled existences with the seamless nothingness of its catastrophic end. Which is also to say that there's nothing like the weaving of insurgent and ungovernable tangles of social life to remind us that freedom is an ongoing and unfinished praxis, that the multiple must be endlessly made and remade. Tangling themselves in ungovernable knots, weaving together a multiplicity of divergent threads, these loose ends navigate the shifting surfaces of porous boundaries, land enclosures, transversal mobilities, and scattered solidarities through varying entwinements and detachments from forms of (state) power, corporate and financial capital, environmental violence, and engineered precariousness— out of time, untimely, rhythmically inventing their own pulse. In experiments in political autonomy, in disobedient knowledges, in practices of unpropertied subsistence, in the collective elaboration of thought and study, in impossible forms of sociality, in the generalised poetics of counter-invention to which the weaving of their aesthetic practices weave a way as they steal away, those loose ends that modernity has tried but never quite been able to capture go on creating openings in the desert of its seamlessness, introducing unsanctioned variations, keeping life alive in the imperfective, the earth non-identical with itself.

[7] Erin Manning (2023); *Out of the Clear*, London, Minor Compositions, 28.

It is in and through those openings that a certain runaway experimentation gets fugitively underway, a counter-composition that does not make a cosmos and does not seek to make one, but is intent on reclaiming the dispersed memory and unrealised potential of a buzzing present teeming with what has managed to escape, with what has managed to persist below the rim of the world. Giving to the tensions and vibrations of their disjunctive existence the power to weave their threads otherwise, they stay sensitive to the planetary tangles, alive to their buzzing, strung-along, and anonymous movements, insisting on tying their unsung and unknown persistence to the precariousness of our ongoing existence. They go on weaving their threads so as to give to memories untangled, realities suppressed, socialities derided, practices fantastical, incomprehensible, and implausible, the power to amplify the incompleteness we share, weave our dreams otherwise, enter into generous and generative ensembles of relays with the outside that is the earth's anarchic share. And in so doing they create a tangled surrounds, an improbably knotted commons made entirely of interruptions, where those who say "we" know that they are singularities in an interrupted continuum, which is to say exposed to one another and to the earth, tangled in shared exposure, in the incompleteness that we share. A fulcrum of intensive and unruly processes of unsettlement and retanglement that upends the very systemic process of devastation and devaluation they refuse, they practice a will to become tangled in their untidy mess, the insistence of all that remains ongoing, of all that remains unfinished, in generative and impossible sociality, folding the outside in, bursting the modern world at its seams. As they escape totality and evade finality, at stake is nothing less than a poetics of loose ends: a dynamic of collective invention, improvisation, and experimentation that binds this world to an outside it cannot control, just as the tangling-in of its forces destabilise our fantasies of sovereignty and connect our shared lives to many unsanctioned compositions, to a riotous multiplicity of uncommon forms, to metamorphoses unforeshadowed, in the tangled planetary mess that we are and continue to become.





Q'EPI

SECOND MAGIC
BUNDLE

N'otetsel ta otaché¹

The Ancestral that Pushes Forward

Claudia Alarcón
Silät

Q'epi - Second Magic Bundle

Textile reference

Type: cloth

Technique: planted loom

Materials: sheep wool, carob shell dyes, onion and artificial dyes

Iconography: stripes

Authorship: Teleras de Huilla Catina

It is very nice to meet each other.

Since the beginning of **Textiles Semillas** I have seen the birth of a story brought from a very distant place, through different winds and changing climates, but still something was about to begin. The sowing began and those at the front took their time to water, we weavers got up to work and then harvest and hold hands in what was to be our refuge.

Once Andrei told me about my sister Celeste Valero, that he had met her and told me about her words. It filled me with joy, I wanted to meet her so much. When I met her in person and heard her speak, I knew that her story was not so different from what I had been doing in my community with the Silät group. That's when I felt a great hope. Since then, I knew that we can rely on ourselves. We have been defending our ancestral work so that it is respected and valued. I admire Celeste very much. Thanks to **Textiles Semillas** I can meet her again and again, hug and smile at each other. Thanks to this beautiful project, beyond the fact that we can sell our craftwork, for me the most important thing is that we can meet, these twelve groups from the north of Argentina, from different communities and organisations, to be able to show each other what we know how to do. What a joy it is to admire the work of our

[1] Demóstenes Toribio explains that *otache* is the word for "my part of ahead", *ta* is a particle that denotes movement, it is an apocope of *otatache* that can be translated as future, since, he tells me, we are supposed to always move forward, although probably in a growing undulation. The women that day reaffirmed: our work is to carry the ancestral forward. I return to Demóstenes Toribio's point: *tayhin* can be translated as *weaving*, but at its root this word also means to build, to rebuild, to heal. What the Wichí women do by literally weaving images together.

colleagues and the weavers they represent. What an immense joy it is to feel like a family. I thank Andrei and Alejandra for generating all this.

I want to tell you about my first memory of the chaguar: it is my pounding it. It was freshly brought from the monte [a thick forest, a living entity for local communities' cosmovisions]. I used to watch my aunts peeling the long leaves, removing the thorns to uncover the fibre with which they would later make the thread. Ever since I was a little girl, the women in my family told me that I should learn how to work the chaguar so that, when I grew up, I could pass it on to my daughters and granddaughters. How are the older ones, who are always talking about the future.

I can say that my relationship with the chaguar is one of awe. I was always attracted to it. I played with the remains of the leaves and its fragrance always transmitted messages to me. I tried to imagine how my grandmother learned, I immersed myself in those movements they made with the fibres, that always caught my attention².

I always heard that we women came from the sky united with the chaguar. But I understood it as time went by: we women were once stars. Today I try to relive that history through weaving. I find myself weaving with that radiance that was taken away from us.

The chaguar has always been very important for Wichí women. We weave it, we live with it, it is part of the monte just like us. We look for it there, among the trees. From the moment we take the plant and work it, we feel its beautiful fragrance that makes us happy. The aroma of the chaguar is not lost, when we dye it, when we weave it, it is still present, it is the smell of the monte. The chaguar never ceases to surprise us, all that it can do, the forms it takes.

We have always weaved. We especially weave bags that in our language we call *hilú* and when we speak in Spanish we call

[2] In a talk Andrei Fernández had with Caístulo, the spiritual master of the Wichí People, about the weavings of his people, he pointed out that “virtually all the colours of the weavings are from the beginning what we are transforming, they are the weavings of the mothers. That is where the colours begin because the mothers also distil their fragrance and that is the folklore of every mother’s message. All the colours that go out to the four winds are the fragrance of mothers. All the colours form the same language, all the languages form the same force, all the forces together form the solidarity that we each have. And, he adds, women do not stop weaving because what they weave is the future. “We see ourselves in an image where we are all weaving together a grain of sand. As we know, for this work in the social, spiritual, there are also forces to structure thought, knowledge and society. Also to bring knowledge but accompanying this new generation that can give birth to a spirit in the world, where it can pronounce its messages naturally, like mothers”.

them yicas. We have always made bags to collect food, but they have not only had that function. María del Carmen Toribio says that among the Wichí, carrying a yica is a way of showing off that one has a valuable item that is expected to attract attention. Giving a yica as a gift is as common among the Wichí as receiving a handshake or a hug. Women, when making a yica, already know or presume the reactions they will cause. There are also yicas that are a symbol of commitment.

In the yicas we have always woven the forms that our mothers and grandmothers taught us, we always saw great beauty there and we knew that this could not disappear. It happened that the others, the people who are not from our people, did not see all that we know is present in our weavings. We have suffered a lot from the bad treatment and the bad payment for our work as weavers. One day we started to make the weavings bigger. It was at the invitation of a woman who began to work with us, a woman who at first in our language we called Suluj (white), Andrei Fernández. Later we began to call her Chisuk, a rebellious woman, because she encouraged us to do things that we had never done or thought of doing before. But those things allowed us that today our work begins to be valued and is seen in many places with respect. We decided to make some weavings that were like flags, for us it was like shouting out something we always said as a whisper. We made big weavings so that you, the others, can see that beauty, to share it, but also to make our presence known. Our first message when we show our work is: we are alive.

The shapes we draw with the weaving have a meaning, they are a message. When I learned to weave I was taught to draw the turtle's shell and the claws of the carancho [a type of caracara]. You can see in those weavings squares and rhombuses with different colours. But we see shapes that are part of a language, a language of shapes that tell about the living beings we live with in the monte. The shapes are always a little piece of a being: owl's eyes, fox tracks, mule's ears, rhea's back, chañar [a native tree] seeds, among others. And each one of them enhances the particular strength of that being.

I weave stories of our people, the Wichí people, which are messages for the future, which try to safeguard the collective memory but which I also believe present a new imagination, because I as

part of the Silät collective am part of a new movement, which opens an unprecedented path to meet all times. I always say that it is the ancestral that pushes forward. In my works I believe that there is a new dialogue between the past and the future that changes the present.

I do what I am doing with all my heart, with all my love. In each finished work I feel a great satisfaction. That work that I had done with the motif *fwokats'aj ch'otey*, "mule ears", under the title "Sunshine" or *lfwala lhalh* was when we first got together for this work. I saw many women abandon the idea, mainly because of the lack of a secure sale. In that sense, I did it thinking that its value and importance could be recovered. That weaving was like a door that opened for everything else that followed. After the first one, I did several more works because it is something, as I said, that I am passionate about.

For us, Wichí women, art is nothing new, it is a very old activity and we are well aware of the value of our work, we have been doing it for many years and we understand what it represents.

Perhaps it is not the value in money but the value it has for the mere fact of having belonged to our elders. Today the term art is a word that we don't know how to use because, for a long time, we called our work crafts. That's what others told us it was called. We are used to that name: crafts. But in our language there is no such word as art and craft, we say *tayhin* which can be translated as weaving. It is a continuous action that we never stop doing. *Tayhin* is also building and healing.

Now that we are told that our weavings are called art, it is by people who come from very distant places and with other languages. That makes our work arouse other interest and generate other profits for us. But for us it is no surprise to know that it is valuable. I think it's very gratifying to find people who consider our work with the importance it deserves, we feel valued and part of this is the invitation to the 60th edition of the Venice Art Biennale, where I'm not only showing my work but also the work of my colleagues from Silät. Being in this group is very nice because it is not only me but all the other women who have knowledge about weaving. It is true that I open up possibilities for the other women, but for me it is more satisfying that all the women are here because we all want

to have work and we all need it. It is true that everyone interested in doing this work that we do has a place and can participate in this thing called art.

For some time now, we have chosen the name Silät because it is our voice, from our language and from the monte. We have created an organisation in which we weavers come together to work, coming together on our own initiative. We

have named our group Silät, because for us it means announcement and it is so that everyone knows that we live here, that we, the Wichí, still exist. That's why our group is called Silät. And in this group we work, we make works of art and not only that, within the group there are also women who are dedicated to making crafts, utilitarian pieces, where we manage and sell to other places, to other countries, we get orders and the women make them. At first, since 2017, we were in the Thaí group and then we split up. We have been Silät for a

little over a year now. Although we changed our name, the objective is the same, we seek to strengthen the sale of the works, the works that are made collectively. Those of us from the community of La Puntana continue to work in association with women from the community of Alto La Sierra, coordinated by Melania Pereyra. From the age of twelve I started making thread, learning to do something that doesn't require writing skills, but rather using the wisdom of

weaving that we Wichí women know how to do. Looking at my sisters who make up the Silät group today, they really are the message. It is the message for the whole world, that the world should know about us, the women of this place and our work. We who maintain our language and our weaving, two things that for us are the pillars that support us, as I always say³.

[3] Fragment of an interview conducted by Andrei Fernández in February 2024.

The Flood and the Knots¹

Alejandra Mizrahi
 Andrei Fernández
 Michael Dieminger

Crecida is the name given by the groups of the Valles de Altura de Jujuy, Flor de Altea de Santa Ana and Flor en Piedra de Caspalá to the borders that finish off the embroidered rebozos [traditional shwals] they make. With the same colour as the embroidered fabric, they weave in crochet with the function of being a border that makes the fabric grow. This border is made up of hearts, *kenkos*², waves, among other motifs, always with a diversity of colours and phosphorescence. The *crecida* is also called the overflowing of the river after the rains. A flood is an outflow of water that can lead to flooding. In the face of these floods, we ask ourselves, what are we flooded with as we join together? What forms do we take as we grow?

Each group does not conceive of itself as a "natural" entity with rigid boundaries and principles of identification and interaction, but perceives itself as a flexible and dynamic organism, which elaborates its differences and equalities with other collectives through exchange with them. The anthropologist Fredrik Barth³ proposes to understand groups by understanding their perceptions and interactions, because their membership is not defined by their cultural features but by how the group perceives and defines its limits and boundaries.

[1] This text was made from the transcription of the recording for the second episode of the Textiles Seeds podcast with the collaboration of Diego Gelatti, María Gabriela Cisterna (presenter) (2024); *Cultivar la unión. La experiencia de crecer al compartir lo que sabemos y deseamos*, episode n.º2, **Textiles Semillas**, Spotify.. [2] Kenko or Qenqo is the zigzagging path of the mountain or the winding path of the river. In Quechua it is written *Q'inqu* and is also translated as "labyrinth". Kenkos is also the name given to sinuosities of the voice that appear in the singing of coplas in the northwest of Argentina. [3] Fredrik Barth (Comp., 1976); *Los grupos étnicos y sus fronteras. La organización social de las diferencias culturales* [Ethnic groups and their boundaries. The social organization of cultural differences], Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica.

From **Textiles Semillas** and *99 Questions* we seek to exercise ways of imagining, collectively and interculturally, to test, attempt, try out and discover ways of linking our actions. We think of textiles as territories where the overflows or selvages fulfil the function of containing but are also the contact zones that always elaborate partial connections. The new edges give rise to plural, pluralist surfaces. Edges cease to be borders and become spaces of union and the creation of new forms. Edges become protectors of a new, common territory.

The forms of production and circulation of textiles reject the exclusivity of the aesthetic function, their creators defend the polyfunctionality of their work, the aesthetic content is linked to the utilitarian, the ritual and the political. Adolfo Colombres proposes the elaboration of a new theory of art, situated in the history of the American continent, in which art is created so that multicultural symbolic universes migrate from marginality to spaces not of privilege but of respect, of social consideration, and with the incorporation of these thoughts into the human history of forms⁴.

In **Textiles Semillas** the same textile piece can be placed on one body, and at another moment, it can circulate in another way: as an object of contemplation, as a fragment, or as a masterpiece that teaches. Our project is moving towards this reaffirmation. Taking what Ticio Escobar⁵ points out about the impossibility of separating the artistic from the other dimensions or moments that make up the social whole in the cultures of the Indigenous people, who resort to the power of sensitive appearance, beauty, to mobilise the collective sense, to work together on memory and to anticipate futures. In Indigenous cultures, the set of images that they know as art cannot be separated from other dimensions of culture, politics, religion, medicine, science, etc. What we can understand as artistic manifestations in non-urban Western communities escapes the categories we know and configures tight symbolic tissues of complex signifying units that do not admit (di)sections.

[4] Adolfo Colombres (1991); *Hacia una teoría americana del arte* [Towards an American theory of art], Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Sol.

[5] Catalogue of the Museo del Barro [Barro Museum] (2008).

Rapacejos, crecidas, lace, *winchas*, remates⁶ are the forms that name the borders of textiles, zones of encounter and differentiation. Their union allows a common territory of stitches to appear, which are both bridges and scars. The first action we proposed to the leaders of the weaving groups to create a collective work was to join the pieces that are usually made to be borders. In the weaving finishings, each weaver uses those pieces that characterise the artefact she creates, according to the beliefs of the culture in which she is inscribed. These endings are determinant when establishing the cultural assignment of a textile piece. The edge of the weaving is a bordering territory, that *taypi* in-between, it is the intermediate space or *taypi-ch'ixi*⁷, the zone of contact and friction between what is outside and inside.

There are many ways of recognising that the irruption of the past becomes recurrent, sometimes metaphorically but "always as a judgement of the present", as Rivera Cusicanqui points out. From different communities in these territories of the global south, the multiple irruption of undigested pasts is experienced, the emergence of diverse formations of the past is reiterated, which in the present is populated by wounds that still bleed. Rivera Cusicanqui points out that Latin American societies appear to be discontinuous, inconclusive and in a permanent state of ferment, but they show the potential to take up other historical trajectories in which memories of diversity and differences are created and recreated. The motley formations that today make up the popular and Indigenous worlds in this region of the world, but not only

[6] Rapacejos are ends that outline the edges of a fabric, especially in Santiago del Estero and Tucumán. Crecidas are fabrics made to be used as borders of some textiles (specifically in **Unión Textiles Semillas**, the groups of Valle de Altura call crecidas to their crochet fabrics that are placed in the rebozos's borders, it is what makes the fabrics grow). Remates are the finishing touches to the edges, how the weavings are finished, which is also how they are maintained at their borders. With all these terms we refer to the edge finishes of the weavings. Each group names them in different ways. Wincha is a word of Quechua origin that means ribbon or strip of a flexible material. The weavers of the Calchaquí Valleys use it to finish off the edges of the saddle blankets. It is a smaller piece that is used as a border on a larger garment. It is woven with the fingers. While weaving it, the colours of the threads are combined in pairs. The number of threads gives the width of the strip. [7] The term comes from the Aymara language and refers to the space where the Indigenous and the western are interwoven. "Patricia Beltrán explains it as the meeting place of *awqa* or antagonistic elements, therefore, 'the place where differences can live', a space where there is a concentration and multiplicity of forces: 'a centrifugal force that tends to push the two opposing terms away from each other and a centripetal force that ensures mediation' (Beltrán 2002). This definition of *taypi* fits what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui has rescued as its fundamental quality: the capacity, shared with other terms of the Aymara language and culture, to embrace creativity in tension, and productivity in contradiction. [...] the Bolivian thinker has associated the term *taypi* with her notion of the *ch'ixi*. The epistemological scope that this dynamic concept acquires confronts us with the elaboration of a non-dual vision and, in that sense, presents a strong decolonising potential. In his work *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*. Una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010), the author takes up the complex shades of meaning of the word *ch'ixi* to think about the situation of mestizaje in society, primarily Bolivian but [...] applicable to the whole of Latin America". In Melisa Stocco (2018); "El concepto de *taypi ch'ixi* como aporte al estudio de la poesía mapuche bilingüe" [The concept of *taypi ch'ixi* as a contribution to the study of bilingual Mapuche poetry], *Mundo Amazónico*, 9.

here, move forward in time with the past before their eyes and the future behind them. They ask: what were the new times meant to be for us?

What happened during this time of working with **Textiles Semillas** was that we went through an experience that has allowed us to understand the relevance of generating encounters, spaces open to indetermination, that put those involved on an equal footing, that can make us *capable of honouring divergences*, instead of *respecting differences*, and thus weaving new conversations around situations that question us and allow us to think and create together. Just as we grow when we come together and when we exchange our experiences, since we began the journey of **Textiles Semillas** we sensed that if groups of weavers could meet, they would be able to grow and exchange in the same way that we did when we came together. We grow as we get together and each time that *we* get more and more people involved.

When we visited the territories we were able to invite the representatives of the weavers' groups to three meetings in different parts of northwestern Argentina: Amaicha, Tilcara and Atamisqui. These meetings have been key to the project and the idea is that they will continue to take place because, in a way, they have also become a workshop space, a space for assembly and a space for celebration. **Textiles Semillas** is presented as a performance deployed in different territories and, in this way, continues the search for *99 Questions* of methodologies that function as knots. These knots interconnect different knowledges and ways of working and understanding the world, the worlds within the World.

From **Textiles Semillas** we proposed to the craftswomen to work from the logic of art, from creative experimentation, the celebration of imagination, the possibility of freely mixing elements and not having to follow those mandates that accumulate about how one should be: as a woman, as a rural woman, as an Indigenous woman, as a weaver, as the guardian of a heritage of which she does not necessarily feel the owner⁸. We observe that institutions often celebrate ancestral practices as long as they are perceived as immutable, pure. There is an insistence on locking

up imaginations in display cases, detaining them, uprooting them from the present so that they do not continue to live, do not continue to be modified. In **Textiles Semillas's** meetings we celebrate presence, the possibilities of change, transformation and movement because the weavers reaffirm, time and time again: we are alive.

Our proposal grows from how we understand art, curating, and all that art can contain, can protect, can embrace, but not necessarily when it crosses that border that is imposed on us between art and craft, for example. It's not that if it crosses the border into art, it will never be craft again. Borders are crossed and crossed again. From **Textiles Semillas**, those of us who already work from art, who choose to study it and make it the axis of our practices, we act as hosts in that house that art is for us, but which we also build as our refuge. We try out ways in which artistic practice makes sense in the place where we live and generates things we need. We propose to do horizontal work of consultation and exchange of thought, with the mechanism of assemblies, towards collective decisions that make us grow. This is the "we grow because we come together" that we reaffirm from *the little beginning*.

Textiles Semillas and *99 Questions* aim to accompany practices, rituals and movements that we did not invent, of which we do not feel authors but join to understand and grow with them. We become part of a polyphony. To be the poetry of living weaving, a way of forming a forest, this Union of Artists, Activists and Weavers of Northern Argentina, which will go beyond the project within which it germinated. Each group has its own voice and with the sum of voices they form a more amplified, plural one.

María de los Ángeles Garrido, from the Quilmes community, reminds us that the seeds are covered so the birds don't eat them. The soil that covers them must be soft so the seed can pass through it and become a plant. Before sowing, then, one must water well so that the soil is soft. After preparing the soil and sowing, the edges are made, the soil is added to the edges of the sowing because there are parts where the soil is low or medium-high and needs to be evened out. Otherwise, when the plant has to settle, the water comes and washes away the border and goes to the other side. The border is a border of earth that is being

[8] Mainly for not thinking about the ownership of the immaterial with capitalist logic.

made, it is moulded, as the borders are always worked to take care of what grows. The seeds need a lot of care, and that care must be comprehensive and constant.

For the women joining **Textiles Semillas**, the most mobilising thing is the certainty that they are not alone. There is a song that identifies us, a song from Amaicha del Valle that was sung to us on our first visit, which says in its refrain:

*this is the sisterhood round
you are not alone
you are not alone*

In this experience, these groups that were perhaps isolated, that felt that no one else had the same experience as them, suddenly appear. They find peers, they find sisters, they find ideas. And in this being able to get to know that other who is apparently so different, but later, when we are talking in the dark or when we are on the dance floor, we don't feel so different.

"United by a thread we form a living khipu⁹, each person is a knot and the performance is what happens between the knots", says Cecilia Vicuña. And yes, we form a living khipu, each person is a knot and, between the knots, in the repetition, there is an action, there is a change, and something new happens. As a knot, we create moments of exchange and joint reflection. The knots have the power to unite or liberate, they function as tools of memory that remind us of the Khipus.

Knots have a metaphorical meaning, like the 'Gordian knot' of Greek mythology. *Untying* implies solving problems, while *tying* a knot means the creation of a link, a connection between at least two elements. Knots signify entanglement and relationship; they can both bind and release. Like the khipus, these devices record not only dates and numbers but also the rich spectrum of knowledge, stories and poems through a system of knots and coloured threads. The pre-Hispanic recording systems of Andean

civilisations, the khipus, have striking similarities with contemporary programming languages, founded on the binary-numeric system of zeros and ones. This affinity extends to the Jacquard loom, hailed as the first computer in 1803 in Europe because of its use of binary systems that the loom could read, allowing the replication of complex patterns. The khipu-language system seamlessly combines visual, tactile and symbolic inscriptions, inviting the imagination to flow freely between the knots, enriching the web of interconnected meanings.

Our action is based on the conviction that knowledge is a dynamic force, constantly evolving and shaped by the context in which it is situated. As we gather, we are not simply creating knots; we are forging moments of connection, exploration and transformation. Each person, each participant, embodies a knot, and the real performance unfolds in the weft of experiences that occur between these knots. That weft arises from the question-action about whether we can transform from artistic practices, those that become artistic, those that can also be artistic, the ways of imagining and connecting ourselves, not only with other people but also with the other living beings with whom we coexist. Together, we participate in the creation of knots of shared learning, exchange and attentive listening, contributing to the continuous weaving of this network of exchanges and, in this way, we grow.

[9] Poem from the book by Cecilia Vicuña (2018); *New & Selected Poems of Cecilia Vicuña*, Berkeley, Kelsey Street Press. The translation is ours.

The Edges that Unite

Alejandra Mizrahi
Andrei Fernández

Textile selvages always present some type of finish. It is somehow the conclusion of the textile artefact. Selvedge or finishing involves considering the boundaries between the textile and the surrounding space. If we approach the textile as a territory, which we have already done in the *Telas Tierras Viajeras* [Travelling Earth Textiles], we can understand its limits, its borders, its shores and margins. Geographical thinking is situated thinking and is vital as an epistemological gesture. That is why the very geography from which we work is soft, plush, warm; it is a geography that shelters, cares for and protects.

Art is in our journey the continent that shelters us to imagine together ways of connecting our practices, the textile-territories that as edges contain and meet with other edges to make a plural textile. The edges of the textiles cease to be the protective margins of the individual textile artefact and become protectors of the protectors.

Fringes, borders, lace, *winchas* [woven bands], *qirus* [ceremonial vessels] are now the care of themselves and others. Each encounter materialises from these edges and their union is our own. The hand's width and the body's height are the coordinates to make an edge, a strip, a finish or whatever each group names it. According to the function that techniques serve in textiles, the finishings can be organised in the following manner: structural, representational, and finishing techniques. Structural techniques define the woven surfaces, and different orders of interlacing are established. Representational techniques are those ways in which

images are generated in the textile. Lastly, finishing techniques are the strategies for resolving the limits of the textile¹. The finishings are the conclusion of the textile artefact. Thus, for example, bedspreads have fringes or borders on their edges, ponchos end with tasselled fringes, table runners are finished with lace, shawls with borders, and saddle blankets with winchas. From the different edges and finishings, we meet each other. We socialised them and then began to think about and put into practice different ways of

assembling them. First a curtain, temporarily placed over the doorframe. Catalina Guitián was delighted with that idea, she went back and forth across the curtain, she liked how the edges randomly brushed against any part of the body. The edges hung there, separated, they let themselves be crossed, they were permeable. Then we moved on to the table, and there we proposed a union along its

sides. Now the edges were joined, the ends became structures of the fabric. One edge became the edge of another edge and so on. A conversation took place about the place that each one could occupy, about the encounter with the other edge, about the colours, the thickness and sparseness of the structures of each one, the materials, etc. Thus, one by one, like geological layers, like foundations of diverse origins, they came together to form a plural textile that testifies to our union.

If we consider the analogy of potato and textile production developed by Arnold and Yapita², the edges or borders of the weaving are also like the edges of the farm. Thus, we begin to carve out our

[1] María Soledad Hoces de la Guardia and Paulina Brugnoli (2006); *Manual de técnicas textiles andinas. Terminaciones* [Manual of Andean textile techniques. Endings], Santiago de Chile, Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes. [2] Denise Arnold and Juan de Dios Yapita (1996); *Madre melliza y sus crías. Ispall Mama Wawampí. Antología de la papa* [Mother twins and their offspring. Ispall Mama Wawampí. Anthology of the potato], La Paz, ILCA.

imagination and compose a new territory for ourselves: "We call the edge of the chacra *qurpa*, or *yapu qurpa*. *Yapu* is the farm itself. This farm border is like the edge of the weaving itself. However, in weaving this border is called its 'mouth': *laka*. This can be considered as the border of one farm with another farm or of one weaving with another weaving"³. In the conversation carried out in that book with the weaver Doña Cipriana Apaza Mamani, from the Lake Titicaca region, a taxonomy of weaving is developed.

Just as we have borders, the textile also has a pampa. Cipriana says: "The pampa of a weaving is like the landscape in general that we see from a distance. It is the same in weaving. It is the landscape where the animals graze and the grass grows; the wildflowers and bushes. The pampa we see from a distance is not divided into individual farms with different characteristics. It is more like a general

view of the whole landscape, where the various farms are hidden and undifferentiated within the grasslands. Moreover, the pampas are flat places"⁴.

Fifteen borders made up a textile pampa, the borders became territory, not margins, not frontiers, but a single surface. The finished textile: the cultivated farm.

The lace that starts this textile from top to bottom was made by María Magdalena Núñez, a weaver who is a member of the Cooperativa Randeras de El

Cercado [Randeras Cooperative of El Cercado]. The lace was made with cotton thread, with the thread pulled out, as described by Claudia Aybar. The weaving starts at one end and increases and

[3] Arnold y Yapita (1996). [4] Arnold y Yapita (1996).

decreases to create the peaks or points of the net. Once the net is finished, it is stretched on a frame larger than the piece and the embroidery begins. The designs present there are called pintas. Randa lace is used to decorate and finish various pieces. The lace itself is a very popular product, although it was more so in the past, metres and metres to finish off the edges of skirts or cuffs.

Randa's lace reveals one of the three borders made by the weavers of the Wichí people of the Silät group. Claudia Alarcón tells us: "Border two is yica stitch, the drawings represent animal tracks of dogs/foxes. The colours are natural dyes. The tan orange is dyed with corzuela [a small South American deer] food leaves. The black is dyed with guayacán [a hardwood tree] and carob tree resin. The raw is natural from the chaguar". In the chaguar weaving done by the women of the Wichí people, there is no border finishing piece as in the case of the lace or rapacejos, as we will see below. The only linear finishing piece is a strip used as a strap for the yicas with which they also make belts. These strips are made using the loom technique, as in the case of piece number six. Claudia Alarcón tells us: "It is made of loom we call it *alu'tse daj* (iguana belly) in natural colours, dyed with roots, leaves and seeds". The eleventh border has patterns representing the eye of the jaguar. The colours are all natural dyes: the mustard yellow is obtained from iguana roots and fat; the toasted orange is dyed with corzuela food leaves; and the black is dyed with guayacan seeds mixed with carob tree resin. Andrea Arias, Nelba Mendoza, both from the Chowhay community of Alto La Sierra, and Claudia Alarcón, from the community of La Puntana, belonging to the Silät group, made the three strips of chaguar present in this textile pampa.

Border number three was made by Saraí from the Flor de Altea group. This border is called *crecida*. It is the finish the embroiderers from the Valles de Altura de Santa Ana give their rebozos [traditional shawls]. Woven with acrylic wool in the same colour as the base fabric of the rebozo, they combine colour with the crochet needle and make shapes ranging from waves to hearts. They finish off the list with a profuse fringing in the same colour as the rebozo. In the thesis entitled *Textiles Vallistos: imágenes y sentidos en la materialidad bordada* [Vallistos Textiles: Images and Meanings in Embroidered Materiality], Noelia Cruz analyses the parts of the rebozos, classifying them into ribetes [edgings], borders and

fringes, apart from the embroidered cloth, which is the most extensive field of embroidery. Regarding the taxonomy of the rebozo, Noelia tells us: "On three sides of its borders, it has a lace woven with the crochet technique, which is locally known as *crecido*. In this lace, the design of patterns along the length of the lace, which can be in the form of qenqos, hearts, flowers or triangles, stands out due to the contrast of colour. As a finish, woollen fringes were added to this lace"⁵. Border number seven follows the same construction logic, but was made by the Flor en Piedra group from Caspalá. Here, we can see that the *crecida* does not have fringes.

Border number four was made by Silvina Herrera, a member of the Warmi Pura group from Tafí del Valle. The border made by Silvina corresponds to the wincha typology. This term of Quechua origin means a strip or ribbon of fabric or other flexible material. Wincha also refers to diadema, which came into Spanish as vincha [headband]. The wincha is used by the weavers' groups of Quilmes, Amaicha del Valle and Tafí del Valle mainly as a strip with which they make the endings of the saddle blankets. Silvina tells us about the border piece made for this occasion: "It is a braid of several even threads that is done by hand. No tools are required. They can be of 13, 18 and 24 threads. The colours used are the brown of the walnut shells, the mustard of the onion skin and the corn colour of the rhubarb. It is generally used as a border at the end of the saddle blanket, part of the horse's saddle. It can also be used as a handle for bags, wallets and other garments.

Borders number five and ten were made by sisters Yolanda and Ernestina Balderrama, both weavers from the Pachamama Cooperative. Yola tells us about the border she made: "We call it *rapacejo*. It is used for the border of a garment, a bedspread or the border of a poncho or shawl. The colours are those of the Whipala [Andean Indigenous flag]. The material is sheep's wool dyed with aniline". The border made by Ernestina is different, as it does not have peaks like Yola's, but is a single straight, woven strip of sheep's wool, dyed with carob tears. It can be used as sashes or bag straps.

[5] Ruth Noelia Cruz (2022); *Textiles vallistos: imágenes y sentidos en la materialidad bordada. La estética de los rebozos creados por mujeres artesanas de los valles orientales jujeños* [Textiles from the valleys: images and meanings in embroidered materiality. The aesthetics of shawls created by women artisans from the eastern valleys of Jujuy]. [Thesis, Catholic University of Salta].

Border number eight was made by Doña Juana Gutiérrez, a weaver from Huilla Catina, Loreto, Santiago del Estero. Number fourteen was made by Graciela Peralta de Atamisqui. Both are weavers from Santiago de Estero and belong to two different groups of weavers. However, they share the production of these borders which, like Yolanda, they call rapacejos. Graciela says: "They are laces and are also called rapacejos. They are made with macramé. They are used for blankets, for the over-beds that we call them, which were used to cover the beds. All the blankets had these laces on the sides. It is decorative, as if to make the garment, the quilt, look better. Now it is still used because we are giving it a new use, it is used a lot for ornamentation, for garlands, for curtains. They are made in sets, in pairs, to be able to combine them. Everything colourful is aniline, while the natural corresponds to the countryside's colours, such as the whites, the browns from the onion, the greens from the grass. It is made like a macramé in the sizes you want and the combinations you want".

Border number nine was made by Doña Catalina Guitián, from the Quilmes weavers' group.

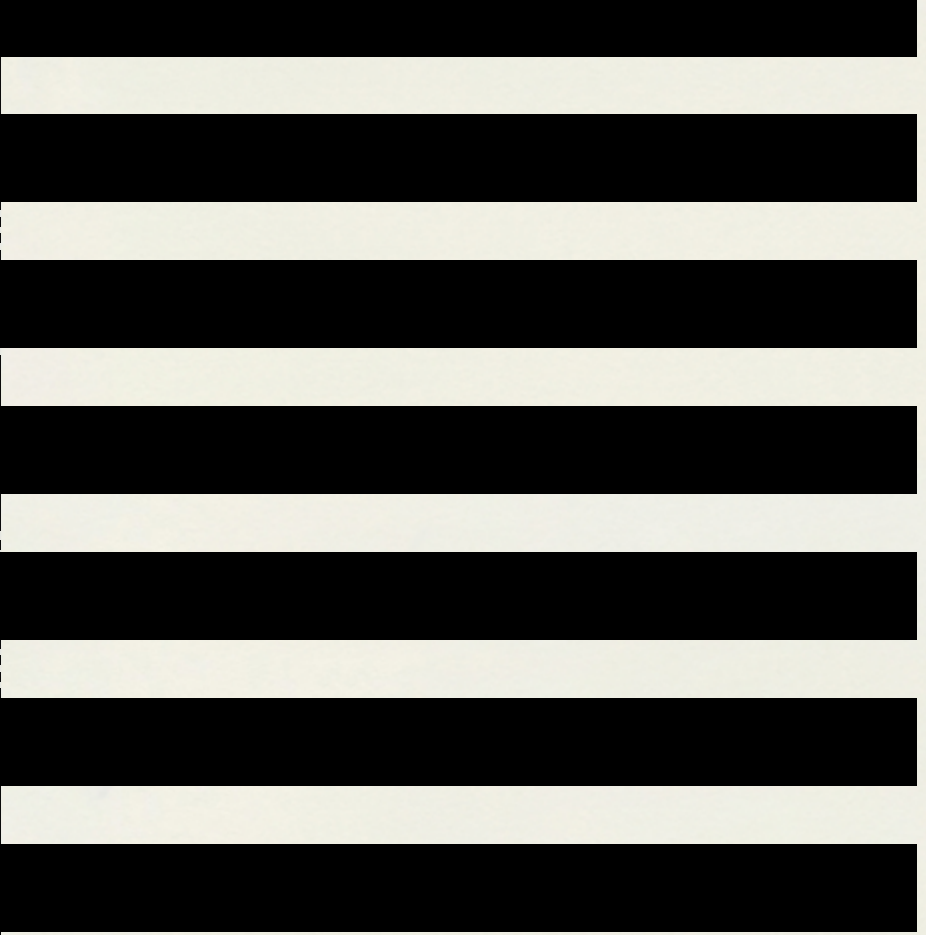
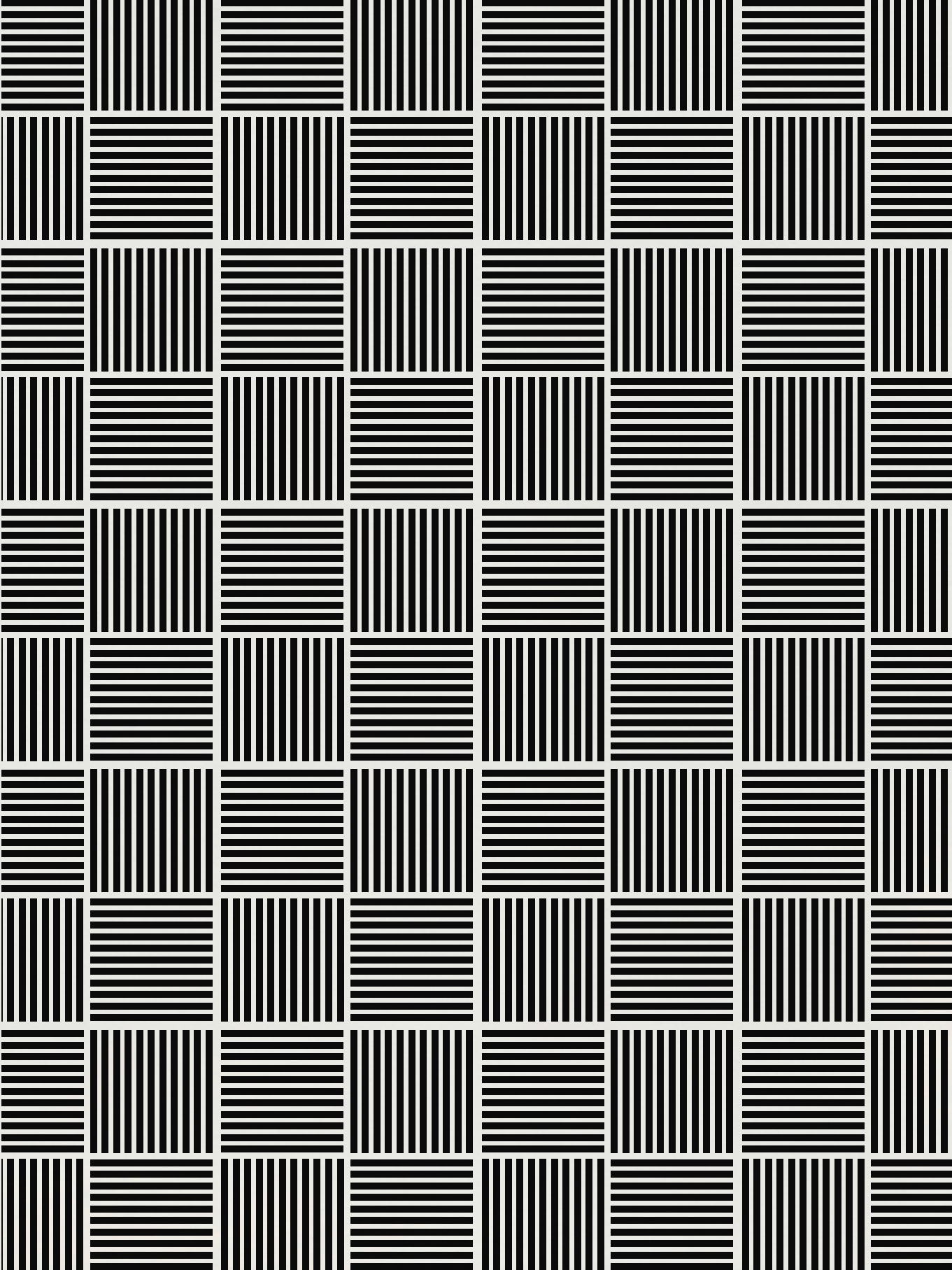
Border number twelve was made by the group Tejedores Andinos. Celeste Valero says: "We made the border in sheep's wool, the dye is artificial, and we spun the yarn a long time ago, for something else. We used that yarn to make this border. The technique is backstrap loom, it has no patterns, so the particularity of this border is its use. They are fringes made in backstrap loom and they go all around the edge of the Jujuy poncho".

Border number thirteen was made by Doña Mechita Cardozo from Simoca. Mechita comments on some aspects of the border she made: "These borders are used in quilts, it is the finishing touch and it is called rapacejo. We stretch a thread and place the colours there. We weave by hand, crossing the threads. That's how we form rhombuses. The end is a tassel. The colours are artificial and natural.

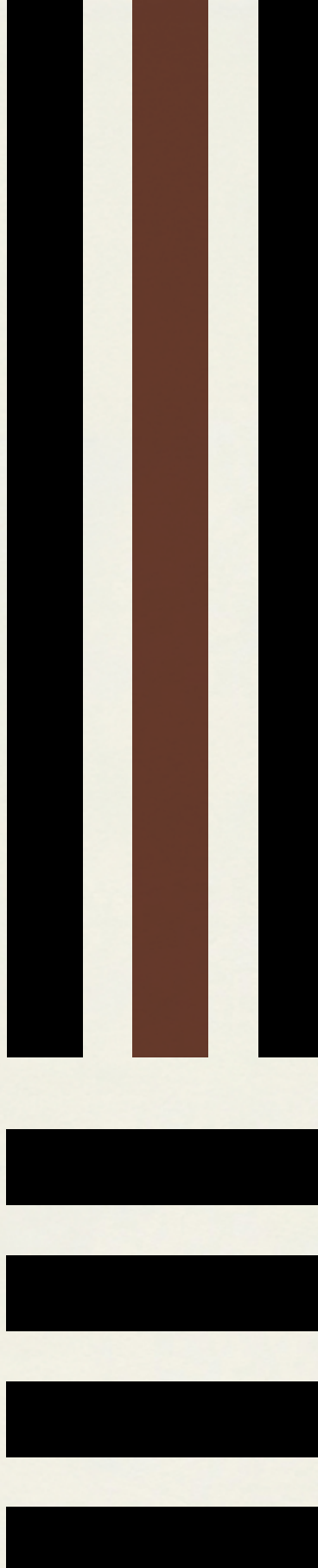
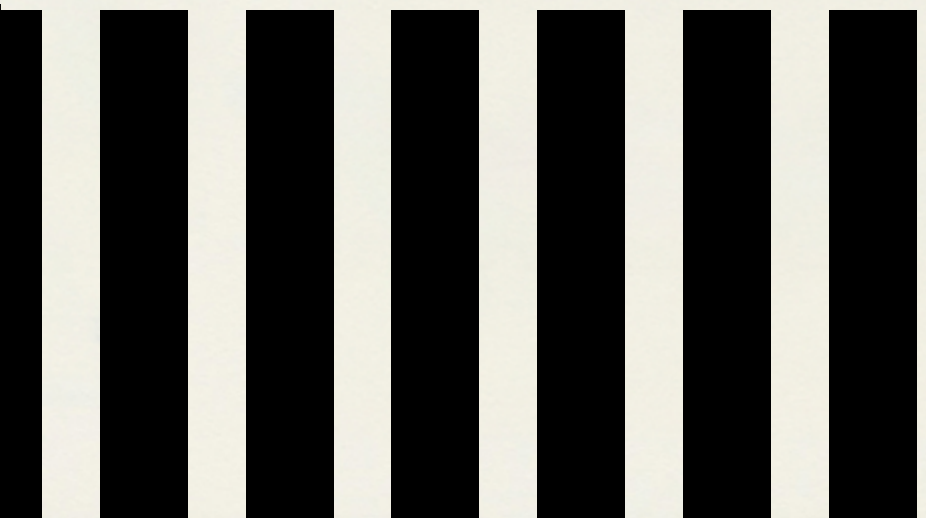
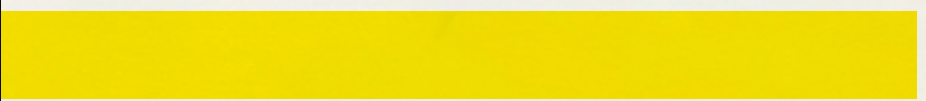
Border number fifteen was made by Margarita Ramírez, from the Tinku Kamayu group. According to her own words, "the rapacejo that we have made is made with sheep's yarn, which is the raw material. It is made with knots and is used for the borders,

especially for quilts, bedspreads, coverlets. It's an adornment that makes that bed-covering garment perfect. The yarn is spun by hand, it is also dyed in colours with natural dyes. It can be grey, which comes from the bark of the eucalyptus; onion gives us the oranges; jarilla and jume, the greenish ones; walnut shells give us the brownish ones. We make the colours according to the garment we make. This piece is a system of little tying knots used to decorate the bedspreads".

This textile pampa built by the structure of the finishes of each group is sown by pintas, dogs, foxes, guayacanes, carob trees, chaguar, cotton, roots, leaves, seeds, jaguars, iguanas, corzuelas, *genqos*, hearts, flowers, walnut shells, onion husk, rhubarb, sheep, yerba, eucalyptus bark, jarilla, jume, among other ingredients that account of the diversity of knowledge about the care and relationship of women with Mother Earth.



THE BORDERS



Uniting the Sowings

Unión Textiles Semillas [Textiles Seeds Union]

The Borders

Textile reference

Type: cloth

Technique: loom

Materials: sheep wool

Iconography: barracán

Authorship: Tejiendo sueños de lana (tejedoras de Quilmes)

Weaving is a territory of connections. Coming together ignites the power of the worlds that we intertwine and of which each of us is a part. By coming together we create a new world, we are creating it now. We are driven forward by the growth of each of our sowings. We are part of a continuity that transcends us backwards and forwards. We provoke and are part of a movement that responds to the pain we feel and encounter as we walk, the pain of what has been taken away and denied.

From the **Unión Textiles Semillas de tejedoras, artistas y activistas del noroeste argentino** [Textiles Seeds Union of Weavers, Artists and Activists of the Northwest of Argentina], we ask ourselves how to take care of this continuity that resists in us. We express the desire to celebrate ourselves and the need to defend our right to enjoyment. We came together to cultivate together a new territory of possibilities. We understand that it is necessary to move through time to recognise and nurture connections.

At the beginning of a project conceived from art, *Textiles as Seeds*¹ presented the only certainty of coming together to grow. We didn't want to anticipate defining the tasks we should develop, in which textiles were compared to seeds because of the potency of the life that grows in and through them.

We know that seeds need *sowers*, people willing to foster growth, with the care, the curious attention, and the watering

[1] This was the first name of the project, after the first action called Pilgrimage we decided to remove the "as" and after the first meeting of the leaders of all the groups, in Amaicha del Valle, we decided to start naming ourselves as Union.

needed to carry out actions in growth. Sowers can also be stitches of a thread, a chain that allows the Union to grow into different forms, to open up like the branches of a plant, to blossom and become seeds again, to multiply, to expand and continue the sowing of collective and connective tissues.

This tilling, sowing and caring is the attention to the different stages of weaving and imagination from the plurality of new *maybes*.

Who We Are

The overall coordination of the project **Textiles Semillas [Textiles Seeds]** is in charge of Michael Dieminger as curator of the *99 Questions* programme within which this proposal emerged and is accompanied. Michael is a curator and filmmaker whose work focuses on ecologies of knowledge, different forms of epistemology, care practices and the creation of the world by human and non-human agents. The territorial coordination of the **Unión Textiles Semillas [Textiles Seeds Union]** is the responsibility of Andrei Fernández and Alejandra Mizrahi. Andrei is a curator, intercultural manager and independent researcher. She works on projects linked to social economy and contemporary art in which she proposes collaborations between artists, activists and researchers from different communities. Alejandra is an artist, teacher and researcher. Her work engages with the performative nature of textiles, through which she highlights the testimonial power of textiles, both of the bodies that make them and of the landscapes in which they are framed.

The weavers' collectives that make up **Unión Textiles Semillas [Textiles Seeds Union]** are:

Achalay Tejidos [Achalay Weavings]. Achalay is a Quechua word used to express admiration, meaning "how beautiful" something is, in this case, the weavings. The group was founded by Mercedes Cardozo in Niogasta town, department of Simoca, in the south of the province of Tucumán. She has been weaving since she was a teenager, and today, she is a teacher and promoter of her textile legacy. Mercedes, better known as Mechita, founded Achalay Tejidos to share her textile practice with other women in the area. Her niece and neighbours joined this group at first. Mechita carries out the whole textile process, starting with shearing. She weaves on a backyard or planted loom and is an expert in techniques that few women do in her territory, such as *pintullo*. Achalay Tejidos started in the Mercado Cultural Don Bosco [Don Bosco Cultural Market] with the support of the Ente de Cultura de Tucumán [Tucumán Culture Entity].

Cooperativa La Pachamama [La Pachamama Cooperative]. Organisation of weavers from the Indigenous community of Amaicha del Valle, Tucumán. This community has had its Royal Decree since 1716 and still defends its memory and territory. The name pays homage to Mother Earth, called Pachamama in this region. This cooperative was founded in 1986 to disseminate and protect the work of weavers, spinners and copleras [folk singers]. Amaicha del Valle stands out for the celebration and open thanksgiving rituals to Pachamama. The cooperative's

weavers make loom weavings, blankets, saddle blankets, ponchos, alforjas [traditional double-pouch carrier], different embroideries, woven belts and natural dyes. They are dedicated to passing on their knowledge to the new generations, proud daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters of weavers. Since 2010, the cooperative has been organising the Encuentro de Tejedoras with the support of the National University of Tucumán and different organisations.

Members: Josefa Yolanda Balderrama, Ángela Balderrama, Zaida Llampá, Ernestina Balderrama, Dominga Leonor Burgos, Liliana Soto, Belén Balderrama, Silena Mamondes and María Cristina Alancay.

Flor de Altea [Altea Flower]. Inspired by the medicinal flower of the same name, which blooms in summer, opens during the day, closes and rests at night. The group of craftswomen from the Santa Ana Community in the Valles de Altura of Jujuy make rebozos [traditional shawls] that display multicoloured flower embroidery, waist-loom braids, woven belts and skirts. These pieces are part of the traditional clothing of the women who live in this area. Every year, they hold an event that brings together agriculture and embroidery in an exhibition and fair, inviting neighbouring communities to share the potato harvest and the new embroideries.

Members: Petrona Luere, Silveria Choque, Saraí Noemí Micaela Figueroa, María Adriana Mamaní, Elsa Beatriz Calapeña, Dalinda Ruth Zapana, Elizabeth Miriam Cruz, Florinda Marta

Luere, Norma Elizabeth Nieba, Micaela Melinda Canavide, Silvia Emilse Rodríguez, Gerónima Figueroa, Alfonsina Cruz and Delia Quipildor.

Flor en Piedra [Flower in Stone]. The name refers to the flowers engraved in stone found on the Qhapaq Ñan (Inca Trail) in the community of Caspalá, in the province of Jujuy. Together with two communities in the department of Valle Grande, every year they hold the Encuentro del Rebozo, where they celebrate the new textiles and embroidery made especially for the event.

Members: Rosa Apaza, Ana Quipildor, Clara Bais, Saraí Quipildor, Delia Rodríguez, Alfonsina Cruz, Silvia Flores, Emilse Zapana, Hilda Cruz and Delia Quipildor. Collaborator of the group: Agustín Quipildor.

Randeras de El Cercado [Randeras of El Cercado]. Cooperative of weavers from El Cercado commune, in the south of Tucumán province. They make a type of needle lace called Randa. Randa, introduced during the colonial period in America, is today a source of enjoyment and creativity for women living in this rural locality. They are the creators of MUMORA, Museo Móvil de la Randa [Mobile Museum of the Randa], which has been added to the Artistic Heritage of Argentina in 2022. They have participated in Biennials and collective exhibitions in different cities.

Members: Anita Toledo, Elba Sosa, Cristina Costilla, Marisel de los Ángeles Costilla, Anice Ariza, Ana Belén Costilla Ariza, Margarita Ariza, Magui Ariza, Ely Pacheco, Yohana Torres, Marta Núñez, Dolores Núñez, María Marcelina Núñez, Mirta Costilla, Elba Aybar,

Claudia Aybar, Tatiana Belmonte, Gabriela Belmonte, María Ofelia Belmonte, Silvia González, María Laura González, María Magdalena Núñez, Silvia Amado, Agustina Sosa, Giselle Paz, Eugenia Torre, Camila Nieva, Norma Briseño, Silvia Robles and Mónica Ariza.

Teleras de Atamisqui [Teleras from Atamisqui]. Atamisqui is a locality in the Loreto department of Santiago del Estero. It is a place known for its *teleras*, women who weave on backyard looms and who stand out for their colourful weavings, specially made for blankets, carpets and ponchos. In this locality you can find a loom in every house, their weavers are admired for being fighters who have managed to be valued and recognised through the craft they have learned from their grandmothers and mothers, and that they transmit to their daughters and granddaughters for the continuity of this legacy. They work with various techniques such as the payado, the indio, baetón or comb weaving, and the tied guard or ikat.

Members: Graciela Peralta, Chavela Díaz, Belén Ybarra and Fani Peralta.

Teleras de Huilla Catina [Teleras from Huilla Catina]. Huilla Catina is a commune in the department of Loreto in the province of Santiago del Estero. Loreto is in the centre of this extensive province, where Quichua (a variety of southern Quechua) has taken root in more than half of its territory and gives particularity to its music and poetry. Quichua is spoken in a vast region between the Dulce and Salado rivers, constituting what Professor Domingo Bravo called "linguistic

Mesopotamia". The group of weavers of Huilla Catina is one of the many groups of weavers in this region. They weave especially with sheep's wool on planted looms. They know and pass on different weaving techniques such as the Indio Viejo, the Indio Cordobés or Indiana, the caracolillo or corn tooth, payada or over-embroidered, and Coptic knot or cut pile. They make bedsteads, carpets, rugs, tapestries and blankets. Juana Gutiérrez, the eldest of the group, makes figurative tapestries with religious images.

Members: Lorena Chávez, Marta Espinillo, Blanca Santillán, Juana Gutiérrez and Mónica Chávez.

Tejedores Andinos [Andean Weavers]. A movement that brings together weavers in the province of Jujuy to tell the past and future history from a present and latent voice through weaving. They make pieces on pedal looms, backstrap looms, needles, cords and embroidery. They use llama fibre, sheep's wool, occasionally vicuña fibres, natural and artificial dyes. The most frequent motifs are drops, kenkos and hooks, where the continuation of the textile practice intimately linked to the Andean cosmovision can be appreciated.

In 2023 they published, in co-authorship with researcher Celestina Stramigioli, *Arte Textil Andino en Argentina, Memoria kolla* [Andean Textile Art in Argentina, Kolla Memory], dedicated specifically to Indigenous textiles made (mostly) by weavers located in communities in the province of Jujuy and surrounding areas.

Members: Lucrecia Cruz, Celeste Valero, Griselda Salas, Bernarda Martínez, Irma Cruz, Sabina Cruz, Vanesa Cruz, Joana Palacios,

Emilce Inca, Ivana Cruz, Nora Ríos, Lina Ríos, Marisol Copa, Noelia Gallardo, Ayelén Martínez, Rosa Erazo, Karen Inca, Martín Valero, Mario Martínez, Dante Vargas and Kevin Gallardo.

Tramando sueños de lana. Tejedoras de Quilmes [Weaving woollen dreams. Weavers from Quilmes.]. Group of weavers from the Quilmes Indian Community, in the province of Tucumán. Its name responds to the collective dream of reaching new horizons. They meet to weave and learn from each other, taking workshops with different master craftswomen in the area. Their meeting point is the house of María Garrido, where they work with looms and frames, dye wool and raise sheep.

Members: Catalina Guitián, María de los Ángeles Garrido, Patricia Noemí Quinteros, Carmen Asunción Costilla and Soledad Vanesa Palacio.

Tinku Kamayu. Cooperative of weavers of the Diaguita Calchaquí people, the place of origin of this cooperative is Lampacito, Santa María, Catamarca. The group's name is a Quechua voice that can be translated as "gathered to work". They make pieces on planted looms and frames, spin on hand-spinning wheels, design a variety of garments made of llama and sheep's wool, dyed with various tinctures. The founder of this organisation is Margarita Ramírez, healer, teacher, creator of quipus/books and member of the Movimientos Focolares [Focolares Movement].

Members: Gisela Moreno, Juana Ramírez, Luz Mamaní, Marisel Cancino, Inés Ramírez, Laura Vargas, Lorena Ramírez, Margarita

Ramírez, Mabel Pachao, Petrona Cáceres, Silvina Vargas and Sonia Aráoz.

Silät. Collective of weavers from the communities of the Wichí people of Santa Victoria Este, Salta. Its name is a word from the Wichí language that can be translated as message or announcement. Their weavings represent various non-human beings and their messages. Their work has been part of exhibitions such as "A 18 minutos del sol" at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (2023), "Nitsäyphä/La vida que explota" at the Cecilia Brunson Projects Gallery (2023) and they are participating in the 60th Venice Art Biennale as part of the exhibition "Extranjeros por todas partes" curated by Adriano Pedrosa (2024). They also make utilitarian pieces, especially bags made of chaguar fibre and wool.

Members: Claudia Alarcón, Luisa Lucas, Aurora Lucas, Sara López, Gisela Velázquez, Virginia Gutiérrez, Jorgelina Segundo, Rosa Medina, Patricia Díaz, Mariela Díaz, Noelia García, Miguelina Pérez, Silvia Lucas, Rosalinda Solas, Mirta López, Vanesa García, Melania Pereyra, Anabel Luna, Beatriz Luna, Ana López, Fermina Pérez, Marilyn Belizani, Mariela Pérez, Francisca Pérez, Marta Pacheco, Rosilda López, Margarita López, Graciela López, Andrea Arias, Luisa Pereira, Belén Vidal, Ramona Arias, Betina Gavi, Analí Carminia María, Carlota Ñato, Ofelia Julieta Pérez, Maura Pérez, Estela Lescano, Fabiola Gómez, Camila Pérez, Julia Aguirre, Norma Luna, Lia Marilyn Pérez, María Ermininda, Luca Juárez, Tatiana Pereyra, Tomasa Alonso, Luisa Miranda, Luisa Sandoval, Ermelinda López y Catalina Segundo.

Warmipura. Weavers from the village of El Churqui, Calchaquí Valley, Tucumán. The group's name is a Quechua word meaning "among women". It was founded by Liliana Pastrana, who was a teacher of the women who are now part of the group. She is a leading figure and cultural promoter, she researched and recovered ancestral techniques from the area. They make weavings made on planted looms and frames, they research artisanal dyeing using natural dyes from their territory, which they extract from native plants, especially from the mikuna.

Members: Silvina Herrera, Julia Marisa Cruz, María Elena Tolaba, Julia Reyes, Maira Cruz, Karina González, Rosalía Gómez and Nelly Gómez.

Sembradores [sowers] of Unión Textiles Semillas

Anabel del Valle Luna, artisan and communicator of the Wichí people. Co-founder and referent of the Silät group, with studies in intercultural health, facilitator of workshops on territorial management and marketing.

Carla Abilés, multidisciplinary artist from Salta. She lives in Berlin, where she researches ancestral knowledges from her origins and the direct relationship with the migratory narrative from a feminist and collaborative perspective.

Celeste Valero, weaver and activist, part of the Indigenous community of Casillas, Omaguaca People. She leads the group Tejedores Andinos, which brings together families from different communities in the Puna, Valles Altoandinos and Quebrada de Humahuaca areas.

Claudia Alarcón, artisan and artist of the Wichí people. She is one of the coordinators of the Silät group, organised Indigenous weavers from Santa Victoria Este. She has been an intercultural educator since 2017.

Fernanda Villagra Serra, university teacher, clothing designer and artist from Tucumán. Co-author of the books *RandaCerca*, a research on the history and technique of Randa, and *Anita Cañera, chinita Randerera*, a story for children.

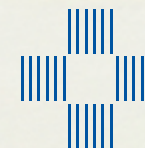
María Gabriela Cisterna, researcher and journalist. Her work is linked to writing and reflection on contemporary artistic practices. She is particularly interested in the relationships between reading, writing and weaving as ways of constructing thought.

Milagros A. Colodrero, craftswoman, textile artist and researcher based in the Andean region. Teacher of loom weaving, basketry and natural dyes, among other techniques of textile making and experimentation. Founder and coordinator of Archivo Textil [Textile Archive] and co-director of Mapa Textil [Textile Map].

Tatiana Belmonte, a young weaver and cultural promoter belonging to the Randeras cooperative of El Cercado de Tucumán, with whom she has developed different commercial, artistic and educational projects.

They have collaborated in different stages of the creation and development of **Textiles Semillas**: Agustina Neme, Agustín González Goytia, Ale Lamelas, Alina Bardavid, Álvaro Simón Padros, Árbol Ruiz, Belén Ybarra, Bruno Juliano, Candelaria Aaset, Carolina Pincioli, Cecilia Teruel, Cecilia Vega, Clara Johnston, Diego Gelatti, Esteban Gómez, Javier Díaz, Javier Rodríguez, José Luis Lorenzo, Gabriel Chaile, Gustavo Nieto, Gustavo Obligado, Inés González de Prada, Inés Justo, Lorena Cohen, Marcos Mizrahi, Mario Lullailaco, Melina Berkenwald, Metaninfas, Nancy Gutiérrez, Nicolás Kuitca, Pamela González, Pauli Burgos, Paulo Vera, Rocío Barzola, Santiago Azzati, Sebastián Vidal Mackinson, Verónica Rossi, Victoria Pastrana and Viviana Checchia.

Textiles Semillas supports actions proposed by the weavers, from which they build institutions or join organisations to try new ways of doing and feeling collectively and cross-culturally. In 2023, we held exhibitions associated with weavers' meetings and fairs in Amaicha del Valle, San Miguel de Tucumán, Tilcara, Huacalera and Atamisqui. In 2024, we participated in the URRRA residency in Buenos Aires, and in exhibitions in New York, Berlin and Chicago with pieces of collaborative authorship that are linked to actions of reflection, celebration and experimentation based on reciprocity.



Writing together

metaninfas

You're sowers too, that's what our fellow women told us at the beginning of this project. After compiling the texts, mapping the geography of the groups and the stages of each journey, and reading the voices of over twenty contributors in this book, we came to understand that our role as editors is also a form of seeding: nurturing an idea, finding its form, creating space to hold it, and spreading it so that it grows.

We Grow Because We Come Together is the fifth book we've published with metaninfas, and it's another way of stating that our practice is grounded in a network of connections that not only strengthens our editorial work but also reaffirms that, despite the complex reality we live in, we can make for the re-enchantment of the world.

Just like the gatherings of weavers, which left their mark and allowed them to strengthen and deepen their bonds, the process of writing this book brought us the experience of collective work and the sense of complicity that comes from attentive and careful reading of a material as it evolves. The texts also travelled, passing through many hands, each bringing a unique pulse, rhythm, and specific knowledge to the writing. Writing together is an act of trust; it means letting go, allowing the gaze of others in, it's a commitment and an act of self-giving.

For us, continuing to explore collective writing formats is a way of affirming that meaning is always constructed with and in relation to others. We are rooted in our own experiences, in the respect for our own identities, our ways of doing, of saying, of telling our stories. We do this as a form of resistance. Throughout this book, we resist the need to appeal to authority quotes, choosing instead to affirm the power of those of us who are part of this growing movement.

We are deeply grateful to belong to this union, to have been witnesses and accomplices in creating a framework that places our own voices within a historiographic context that proposes a local narrative—narrative shaped by the knowledge of generations of families and communities, by displacements, emotional ties and oral and written histories that, far from being static, are renewed in the vitality of weaving, of encounters, and above all, of friendships.



Author biographies

Alejandra Mizrahi (San Miguel de Tucumán, 1981). She is an artist, teacher and researcher. Her work is influenced by the performative nature of textiles. She weaves, dyes, embroiders, felts and interweaves different fibres, sometimes alone and sometimes with other weavers, highlighting the witnessing power of weaving both of bodies and of the landscape in which they are constructed. She has a degree in Arts from the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán [National University of Tucumán]. Doctor in Philosophy from the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona [Autonomous University of Barcelona]. She teaches at the *Tecnicatura en Diseño de Indumentaria y Textil* [Fashion and Textile Design Technicature], FAU, UNT. Since 2012, she has been working with the *Randeras de El Cercado* community. She has participated in national and international artistic residencies. She has had solo and group exhibitions since 2005. She is part of the collective *La Lola Mora*, workers of the arts in Tucumán. Her work belongs to the collections of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, Palais de Glace and private collections. She is part of the staff of the gallery *Intemperie*.

Andrei Fernández (Cutral-Có, Neuquén, 1983). She is a curator, intercultural manager and independent researcher. She promotes projects in which social economy and

contemporary art intersect, fostering collaborations between artists, activists and researchers from different territories and communities. She has curated several exhibitions in museums, galleries and autonomous spaces in Argentina, Germany, Paraguay, Portugal and the UK. She curated the exhibition project "*La escucha y los vientos*" presented at *ifa-Galerie* in Berlin (2020), at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Salta and at the Museo del Barro/Fundación Migliorisi in Asunción (2021), as a proposal for developing intercultural coexistence and analysing the shifts in the uses of artefacts and discourses. She was curator of the 110th *Salón Nacional de Artes Visuales* at the Palais de Glace, organised by the Ministerio de Cultura de Argentina [Argentinean Ministry of Culture] (2022). She held a curatorial residency at *Delfina Foundation*, London (2023). She accompanies the weavers' collective of the *Wichí* people, *Silät*. She works with *Cecilia Brunson Projects* gallery, with the *99 Questions Programme* and is part of *FACT*, *Fundación para el Arte Contemporáneo de Tucumán*. She lives in the north of Argentina.

Angela Balderrama (Amaicha del Valle, Tucumán, 1960). She was born and raised in the Indigenous community of Amaicha del Valle, province of Tucumán. She learned to

weave at the age of 8 and began to participate in fairs. She is a member of the *Cooperativa de Artesanos de Amaicha del Valle* [Cooperative of Artisans of Amaicha del Valle], which she represented at various fairs. This is how she became involved in teaching weaving to children. She worked together with other community members to create a new Indigenous community and in the project of the *Escuela de Gobernanza Indígena* [School of Indigenous Governance]. She is also part of the *Ruta del Artesano* [Artisan's Route], which runs from *Tafí del Valle* to *Anujana* in Tucumán, Argentina, and which includes women embroiderers, weavers on rustic looms, spinners, etc.

Between 2000 and 2007, she began teaching weaving workshops in the city of San Miguel de Tucumán. In 2010, together with *Olga Sulca*, she organised the *Primer Encuentro de Tejedoras/es en Amaicha del Valle* [First Weavers' Gathering in Amaicha del Valle], which has been held every year since then on the eve of 1 August, as part of the rituals of thanksgiving to the *Pachamama*. She is also a *coplera* [popular singer of poetic folk songs from northwestern Argentina]

Claudia Alarcón (La Puntana, Salta, 1989). Artisan and artist of the *Wichí* people. She is one of the leaders of the *Silät* group, organised Indigenous weavers from *Santa Victoria Este*. She weaves images that are part of the collective memory of her people and the fruit of her imagination, mixing worlds and times. She has participated in collective exhibitions as part of the organisation *Thañí / Viene del monte* in Argentina, Germany, Puerto Rico, Paraguay, the United States, and Portugal. She

received the First Prize in the Textile Discipline at the 110th National Salon of Visual Arts at the Palais de Glace (2022). In 2022 and 2023, she exhibited her work at contemporary art fairs with *Remota Galería*. At the end of 2023, she participated in the exhibition *Nitsäyphä/ La vida que explota* in London, together with the *Silät* group, at the *Cecilia Brunson Projects* gallery. She is one of the exhibitors at the 60th Venice Art Biennale, "*Foreigners Everywhere*", curated by *Adriano Pedrosa*.

She lives in the community of *La Puntana*, in the north of the Argentine province of *Salta*, along the *Pilcomayo* River.

Celeste Valero (Huacalera, Jujuy, 1993). Daughter of *Martín Valero* and *Lucrecia Cruz*, weavers. Belonging to the Indigenous community of *Casillas*, *Omaguaca* people. She got to know the world through threads. The threads revealed her parents' love, as they used them to feed and clothe their family. She took the threads to school without realising that, beyond a game, they would be her path and purpose to follow in the footsteps of her ancestors. She promoted a family enterprise, a dream that brings together men and women, family, friends and colleagues in a space of collective work, of struggle in defence, care for the territory and ignored rights. In *Tejedores Andinos*, recognition, consultation and transparency are some of the aspects in which they collectively advance.

Currently, she leads and serves as a key figure for this group of weavers that brings together families belonging to different communities from the *Puna*, *High Andean Valleys*, and *Quebrada de Humahuaca* regions, where she currently resides.

Elvira Espejo Ayca (Ayllu Qaqachaca, Abaroa province, Oruro, Bolivia, 1981). She is a prominent Indigenous artist, cultural manager and researcher. She was born in the ayllu Qaqachaca (Abaroa province, Oruro, Bolivia). Her practice is linked to textiles, oral tradition and poetry. She is the director of the National Museum of Ethnography and Folklore (MUSEF) [Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore].

In 2020, she was honoured with the official award of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Goethe Medal, for her arduous and tireless cultural work, becoming the first Bolivian woman (and the youngest in the history of the prize) to be awarded this important distinction. She was a finalist in the Indigenous Literature Competition of the Casa de las Américas in Cuba (1994), received the prize for international poetess in the Fourth World Festival of Venezuelan poetry (2007), won the first Eduardo Avaroa Prize in Arts, Speciality Native Textiles, La Paz, Bolivia (2013), and the first prize Fomento a la Creación Nativa in Literature, Speciality Poetry, in the framework of the V Festival de Arte Sur Andino Arica Barroca Chile (2018).

Fernanda Villagra Serra (San Miguel de Tucumán, 1984). She is a university professor in the University Technical Programme in Clothing and Textile Design (UNT) and in the Degree in Textile and Clothing Design (San Pablo T). A clothing designer and artist since she was a child, she was introduced to the world of textile craftsmanship by her mother, the designer María Isabel Serra. She accompanied the research and university extension project *Acercando*, which won an honourable

mention from the Fondo Nacional de las Artes [National Fund for the Arts] in the category of Intangible Cultural Heritage. She is a co-author of the book *RandaCerca*. Together with Alejandra Mizrahi, she wrote the story *Anita Cañera*, *chinita Randerá* which, through a fantastic story inspired by the life of a weaver, aims to bring knowledge of this technique to children. She is a *Sembradora* [sower] at **Textiles Semillas**.

Lorena Cohen (San Miguel de Tucumán, 1974). Archaeologist and Technician in Archaeological Documentation and Museology from the National University of Tucumán, PhD in Archaeology from the UBA, with the support of CONICET. She teaches Archaeology at the UNT. She directs research projects and studies spatiality, forms of habitation and ritual practices in the Puna of Catamarca over the last two millennia and, recently, rituals from three millennia ago in the Tucumán jungle. She is a CONICET professional, at the Instituto Superior de Estudios Sociales [Higher Institute of Social Studies], with the role of curator of the archaeological, ethnographic, photographic and documentary heritage of the Institute of Archaeology and Museum of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and IML of the UNT.

She works in research and curation of museographic projects and in actions of scientific liaison, with a view to a science "outside the academy". Her training in theatre, dance and music have shaped her archaeological work.

Lucila Galíndez (CABA, Buenos Aires, 1978). Professor of Anthropological Sciences (UBA). For 15 years she has lived in Tucumán, a province she has made her own. Since 2008 she has participated as a guest lecturer and in different projects at the CERPACU Institute of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (UNT). Her postgraduate training includes the Master in Social Psychology (Focus on groups and institutions) of the Faculty of Psychology (UNT), a postgraduate course in Management and Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Faculty of Economic Sciences (UNC), the Training in Public Cultural Management of the Ministry of Culture of the Nation and the Specialization in Cultural Studies (UNSE). She is a cultural manager and teacher at higher education level. Since 2013, she has been working as a technical support professional at the Ente Cultural de Tucumán, where she participates in the design and implementation of programmes and projects for the promotion and enhancement of the handicraft sector and the cultural industries of the province. She has participated in congresses and publications on crafts and intangible cultural heritage.

María Del Carmen Toribio (Misión San Andrés, Formosa, 1974). Born where the Anglican missionaries erected the second church to evangelise the Indigenous people of the Gran Chaco. Grew up where women have known how to obtain the thread that netted the most agile fish, the one that made the yica in which the strongest hunter proudly carried his prey, and the siche that carried the fruit of the expected season, ensuring supply for when scarcity struck. From these

women María del Carmen learned the art of spinning and, almost at the same time, she began to weave.

She lives in Ingeniero Juárez, together with her large and itinerant family who emigrated in search of opportunities. In 2000, she began to design garments and clothing with chaguar fibre. In 2005, she began to hold workshops, talks, exhibitions, participated in competitions and received numerous awards. Her textile works were exhibited in Milan, Beijing, New York and Paris. She did fashion shows in Formosa, Chaco, Córdoba and La Plata. She also works with textile restorers and conservators.

María Gabriela Cisterna (San Miguel de Tucumán, 1997). She holds a degree in Philosophy from the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán [National University of Tucumán]. She has a Master's degree in Visual Arts Curatorship from the Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero [National University of Tres de Febrero] and a Master's degree in Journalism from the Universidad de San Andrés [University of San Andrés]. She received a scholarship to study at the Columbia University School of Journalism in New York. She also received a DAAD scholarship to improve her German language skills. She is currently a PhD student in Philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires with a doctoral scholarship from CONICET.

In addition to her academic career, she works as a freelance journalist for various national and international media. She is particularly interested in how the exercise of philosophy and the plasticity it gives to thought can function as a way of approaching

and accompanying different lives, ways of thinking and existences.

Margarita Ramírez (Santa María, Catamarca, 1960). She is a Visual Arts Technician, graduated from the Aurora School of Santa María de Catamarca. She is a descendant of the Diaguita Calchaquí People.

Founder and member of the Cooperativa Tinku Kamayu [Tinku Kamayu Cooperative], which employs 16 women dedicated to the design and production of textiles in sheep's wool and llama and vicuña fibre in Lampacito, in the province of Catamarca. This cooperative was set up in 2001 to help women in this area to dignify their work. She participated in the publication "Voces de la Artesanía" [Voices of Craft] (2022) within the Crafting Futures Programme developed by the British Council and the Federal Inter-University Network of Clothing and Textile Design of National Universities of Argentina. As a member of the Focolare Movement, she has participated in Community Economy Meetings, a branch of this Movement that defends the "culture of giving", in different countries of the world such as Bolivia, Italy, Brazil, Hungary, among others. She is part of the **Unión Textiles Semillas**.

María Garrido (San Miguel de Tucumán, 1972). She grew up in Quilmes, with his grandparents. That is where she lives and where she wants to spend her whole life. Since she was a child, she learnt how to look after sheep, a task she continues to do to this day, from which she gets the wool for her knitting, the meat to feed her family and the beauty of watching them walk and run. She also dedicates herself to agriculture, growing

vegetables to feed her animals. Maria is one of the founders of the Tejedoras de Quilmes [Weavers of Quilmes] group, it is in her house where they meet to weave. She learned some of it from her grandmother and then in different courses she took over the years.

Martin Savransky (Buenos Aires, 1987). He is Director of the Centre for Critical Climate Change at Goldsmiths, University of London, where he manages the MA programme in Ecology, Culture and Society. His work combines philosophy and social science, postcolonial thought and the environmental humanities to activate fugitive and speculative methodologies about life on unstable ecological terrains. He is the author of *Around the Day in Eighty Worlds: Politics of the Pluriverse* (2021) and *The Adventure of Relevance: An Ethics of Social Inquiry* (2016).

He was also co-editor of *After Progress* (2022) and *Speculative Research: The Lure of Possible Futures* (2017). He has published multiple essays in forums such as *Theory, Culture and Society*, *Social Text*, *The Sociological Review*, and *SubStance: A Review of Literary and Cultural Criticism*. He was co-curator of the digital exhibition *After Progress*. He is currently working on a new book project *Exology: Planetary Social Life and the Force of the Outside*.

Michael Dieminger (Bavaria, 1985). Curator and filmmaker, trained in visual anthropology, sensory media and urban studies. His work focuses on ecologies of knowledge, the pluriverse, different forms of epistemology, care practices and the creation of the world by human and non-human agents. Currently

working at the Humboldt Forum Berlin as a curator and scientific advisor, he curates a para-institutional artistic research project called *99 Questions* which includes nodes, meetings, workshops, talks, residencies, podcasts and much more. He has curated and participated in projects at the GRASSI Museum (Germany), the Whitworth Art Gallery (UK), the Festival de Cine DocsDF [DocsDF Film Festival] (Mexico), the Museo Nacional de Río de Janeiro [National Museum of Rio de Janeiro] (Brazil) and the Delfina Foundation (UK), among others. He has also taught classes and seminars at the University of Vienna and at the Latin American Institute of the Freie Universität zu Berlin. He studied at the University of Manchester, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México [National Autonomous University of Mexico] and the Bauhaus Universität Weimar.

Milagros Álvarez Colodrero (CABA, Buenos Aires, 1983). She is a craftswoman, textile artist and researcher. She teaches weaving, basketry and natural dyes, among other techniques of textile making and experimentation. Founder and coordinator of different projects for the teaching of textile crafts: *Espacio entretejido* [Interwoven Space], 2010-2014, *Ñandutí - Artes y Oficios Textiles* 2015-2020 [Ñandutí - Textile Arts and Crafts 2015-2020], *Archivo Textil* [Textile Archive] from 2020 to the present, a mobile format for the study, training, practice and research of traditional textile techniques and their intersection with contemporaneity.

Creator and co-director since 2018 of *Mapa Textil* [Textile Map], nomadic residencies with an intercultural approach for the

exchange and research of traditional textile techniques from different regions by the hand of weavers in their context of origin. She collaborates in rural community projects working on the memory, revitalisation and enhancement of textile practices. She is currently focusing on a library and archive that can account for the unlimited and dispersed wealth of traditional textile techniques.

She lives in Juella, Jujuy, Quebrada de Humahuaca, where she is setting up *Andina Casa Taller*, a space for textile residencies.

Mónica Chávez (City of Buenos Aires, 1981). Craftswoman. She lives in Huilla Catina, in the Loreto department of the province of Santiago del Estero. She learned to spin at the age of eight, following in her mother's footsteps, and at the age of fourteen, she began to weave. With her family she makes table runners, rugs, blankets and bedspreads in sheep's wool on a backyard loom.

Nancy Isabel Gutiérrez (CABA, Buenos Aires, 1970). Technology teacher (IIEP), Analyst in Educational Management (UNSE), Higher Technician in Haemotherapy (Instituto San Martín de Porres [San Martín de Porres Institute]). She currently works in two privately run public institutions in the capital of Santiago del Estero. She also accompanies and advises in the administrative area of different schools (secondary and higher education) in terms of organisation and management of educational institutions. She accompanies the Huilla Catina craftswomen's collective and participates in meetings and workshops with other groups of craftswomen and craftsmen.

Patricia Quinteros (Amaicha del Valle, 1989). She lives in Quilmes, where at the age of 27 she started taking weaving workshops with different teachers in the area. "I learned something beautiful from each one of them, until I started to take it upon myself, I used to set up small looms in my house to make tapestries. They weren't perfect, but I was thrilled every time I finished one, so I learned more and more".

Santiago Azzati (Buenos Aires, 1988). He is a sociologist, researcher and professor at the Universidad de Buenos Aires [University of Buenos Aires]. He is a member of the Grupo de Trabajo de Economías Populares del Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales [Working Group on Popular Economies of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences] in the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO). He is currently doing doctoral research on the economies and ecologies of artisanal textiles in Argentina. He worked for several years with the Makiwan project, which brings together groups and communities of textile artisans from the Andean region of Puna and Quebrada de Humahuaca.

Soledad Palacios (Cafayate, 1986). She grew up in Quilmes Bajo. She learned to weave thanks to the impulse of a group of women who decided to get together and share different techniques. Today, they are the Tejedoras de Quilmes, of which Soledad is a member. She works at home doing different household chores and is finishing high school.

Tatiana Belmonte (Monteros, Tucumán, 2004). She learned to weave Randa at the age of seven with her mother. When she turned nine, she travelled for the first time to the Raúl Cortazar fair in Cosquín, Córdoba, where she received a special mention for being the smallest artisan.

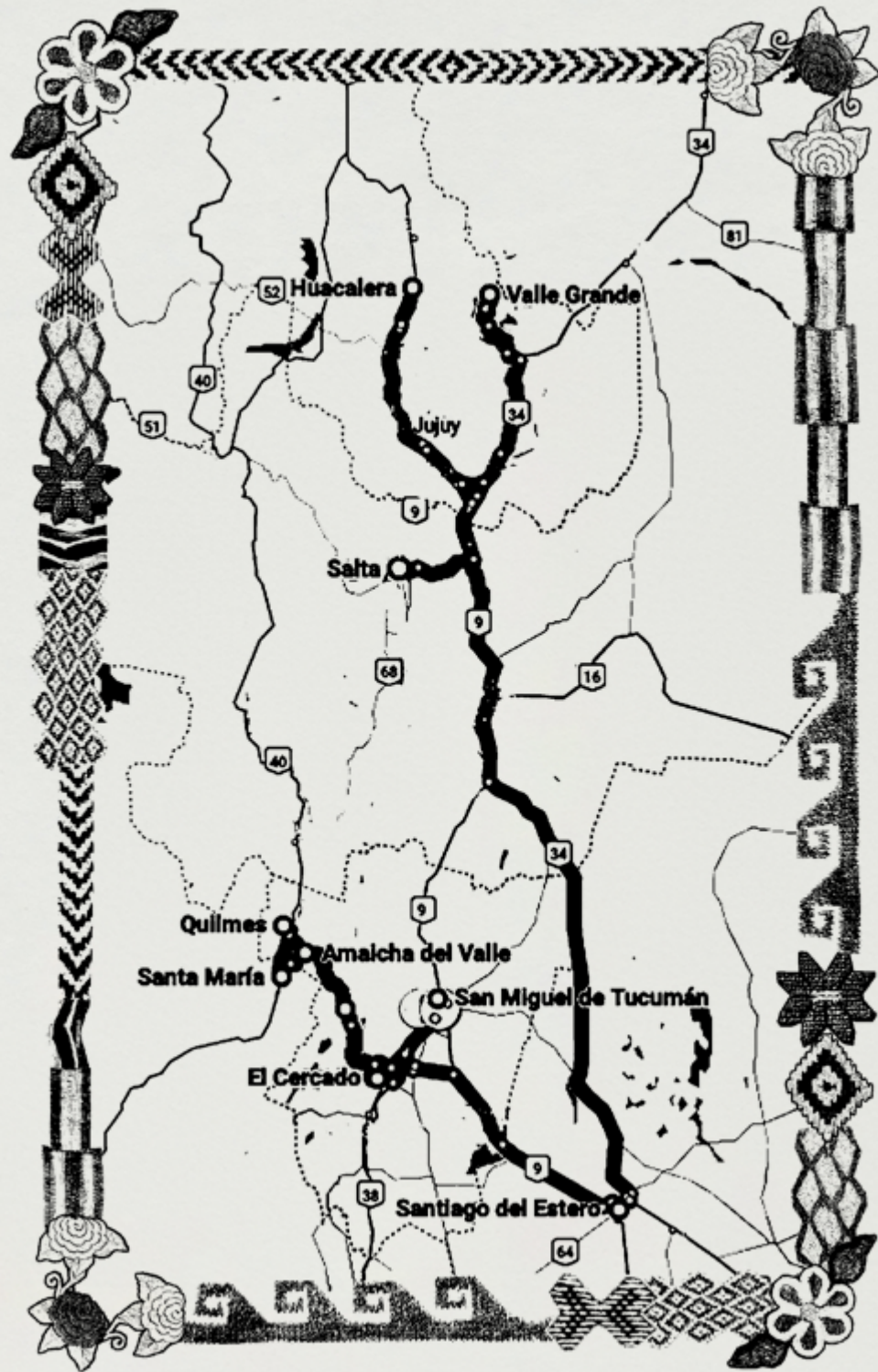
In 2022, with a group of thirty Randeras, including her mother and sisters, they formed a cooperative in which they create collective works, such as the four "Museo Móvil de la Randa" (MUMORA). With the third, "Nuestro jardín de Randas [Our Garden of Randas]", they won the acquisition prize at the National Salon 8M 2022. This work is part of the national artistic heritage.

In 2022, together with Randeras and weavers of the Wichí people, they produced the collaborative work "Red Transancestro-colonial", which they exhibited at the "Fabulaciones" conference at Selva Negra Gallery, Buenos Aires.

She attended the Escuela de Artes y Oficios (EAO) [School of Arts and Crafts] in its 2023 edition. She is a Sembradora [Sower] at **Textiles Semillas** and is part of the Randeras weavers' group in El Cercado.

Teresa Liliana del Valle Pastrana (Tafí del Valle, Tucumán, 1968). She is a teacher of Pattern Cutting and Sewing. In 1987, she joined the Plan Nacional de Alfabetización [National Alphabetisation Plan] as a literacy teacher in the High Mountains and in 1991 she joined the Programa Federal de Educación [Federal Education Programme] as a Skills Trainer. Since then, she has worked in different localities of the Department of Tafí del Valle.

In 1999, she developed the first research with natural dyes. In 2002, she promoted the project "Los Pigmentos a todo color [Pigments in Full Colour]", with the proposal to investigate and experiment with the elaboration of dyes obtained from different parts of plants. She participated in the initiatives "Volver a lo nuestro" [Back to what is ours]. Together with her former students from the Centro de Formación de Tafí del Valle [Tafí del Valle Training Centre], she founded the Warmipura group in 2014. Her interest in dyeing plants and working with natural dyes has marked her entire career and her thinking.



We would like to thank and dedicate this book to the human and non-human presences with whom we coexist, they have given us the strength and encouragement to carry out this task. The Mothers of the Mountain, the Virgin of the Snows, Pachamama, the Four Elements, and those we do not yet know how to name. Thank you to each of the weavers and sowers, and to our families.

Map of The Pilgrimage by Árbol Ruiz

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