

Mapu: Sacred Land

Sarabeth Triviño

September 10 – October 15, 2022

*Desde el otro extremo de la Tierra,
Te hablo abuelita.*

*De fronteras alienadas,
Te hablo.*

*From the other side of the Earth,
I speak to you, grandma.*

*Across foreign borders,
I speak to you.*

In this exhibition, artist Sarabeth Triviño invites us to enter her textile universe, which is rooted in the cultural and ancestral traditions of the Indigenous peoples of South and North America. More specifically, she invites us to contemplate the sacred land of her origins, from which she literally weaves links of filiation and solidarity with the Mapuche (people of the land) of Patagonia, in southern Chile and Argentina.

*Territorio del corazón,
Te hablo de derechos robados.*

De luchas pacientes.

*Land of my heart,
I speak to you about stolen rights.*

About patient struggles.

Patiently, tirelessly, the artist interweaves textile fibres or glass beads in her own artistic communion that transforms the traditional gesture into a contemporary aesthetic. Through the prolonged labour of precise and repetitive gestures, she integrates various narrative figures, which become symbols of territorial, social, and feminist claims.

Her works are inspired by and are part of a quest for identity whose ultimate aim is a desire to reclaim her roots so as to transpose them into a sense of presence in the world and universal resonance.

As we enter OBORO, we encounter the impressive *Ruka* (traditional Mapuche house). This textile (macramé) work is a symbolic representation of the Mapuche family home. This is a place of intimate relationships but also a space of community deliberation, suggesting an allegory of Mapuche resistance to colonialism, cultural survival, and the refusal to disappear.

Con mis manos abiertas,

Te hablo abuela.

Te hablo desde el fondo de mi alma.

With my open hands,

I speak to you, grandmother.

I speak to you from the depth of my soul.

In the small gallery, *Les Quatre éléments* [The Four Elements] take us into the mythological origins of humans and the world. Sea, fire, air, and earth articulate a cosmology through a skillful combination of thread, cotton, and glass beads placed in hoops. A universal dialogue between specific and interlinked narrative objects is established.

Kuyen (moon in Mapudungun, the language of the Mapuche) is an homage to feminine presence on earth. In Indigenous mythology, the moon represents woman, fertility, mother. For the Indigenous peoples of the Andes, this is Pachamama, the one who passes on artisanal traditions over millennia. She is also the one who, when having to leave the community out of economic necessity or because of marriage, is left to fend for herself without rights.

The ten works of *Tourbillon* [Whirlwind] evoke a hectic family life with its highs and its lows. The spiral figures symbolize the movements of families, which are sometimes happy, sometimes sad, and sometimes even violent, as when entire families or family members are forced to leave their communities and survive migration.

Larmes [Tears], a huge mobile made for children, moves in the slightest draft of air. It offers a vibrant homage to children, whether from here or from Chile, who are victims of systemic sexual and physical abuse under the pretext of education or Christianization. Hundreds of children, deprived of the right to live according to their traditions and languages and whose tears lie buried underground, move us to cries of rage and anger. This genocide is full of intentions of assimilation in the guise of a collective lack of conscience.

Triviño—artist, woman, immigrant, and citizen—creates a universal dialogue through her skillfully orchestrated works of knotting, beadwork, embroidery, and crochet, whose unique and performative style reactivates modern decorative arts and sustains tradition.

Mapu: Sacred Land, an exhibition of contemporary textile works, undeniably transports us elsewhere, far from comfort and ease, through the complex expression of a dialogue with the sacred: the land that lives in the heart and soul.

—Bertrand Martin

Translation: Oana Avasilichioaei

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