



S a n t i a g o V é l e z

Water Geopoetics

## Statement

Looking at water in different scenarios around the world has led me to investigate the relationships established between this element and some of the major contemporary concerns such as human migration, climate change, mining or the economy, among others. With the intention of pointing out the relevance of water in specific events, I approach certain territories through explorations and investigations that, by means of disruptive actions of the everyday, are translated into installations, videos, photographs and sculptures. This is how, through direct links such as "water and border", "water and fictional capitalism", or "water and commitment" I conceive the geopoetics of water.

## The memory of the desert



"Contrary to the archetype, a desert is not defined by the absence of water. The desert landscape is shaped by the memory of water."

Our contemporaneity is in check. The arbitrariness of consumption, the ambitions of power and the excessive need to control everything, have plunged us to the brink of a climatic collapse that increasingly alerts us with the countdown of a clock that has fewer and fewer hours left to count.

The geographical modifications that have molded the earth to the point at which humanity has known it as a whole, is struggling against the collisions imposed by the excessive wear and tear of a planet that has no more room for plundering. Much less so much waste that no longer knows how to be accommodated in the oceans, in the mountains or in the deserts, which day after day modify their original landscape of thousands of years for another imposed by tons of waste that give it a new shape and reality.

The desert, in itself, is an accumulation of random events that constitute it as a millenary space that has experienced everything, that has felt everything. The memory of the desert is a bet to recover, for a period of time, a memory of what could have been there. For the Atacama, the water of the ocean that covered it or of the rivers that furrowed it in the passage of time, is presented here as a tenuous thread that rather than wetting, reflects the environment, configures the space and adapts the presence of the visitor to its image inserted in a landscape that, if we continue like this, will disappear not only geographically but also in the imaginary of those who, stubbornly, want to remember it.



2023. In-situ installation with polished sheet metal.  
90 x 8 meters  
Hunchaca Ruins, Antofagasta, Chile  
Bienal Saco



## No blue no green



Sylvia Earle, a famed marine biologist, explorer and National Geographic documentarian, said in a TED talk a phrase that has been popularized and referenced hundreds of times: No Blue, No Green. Actually the text was more complete: No Water, No Life. No Blue, No Green. This simple sentence, in addition to becoming a complex analysis of the relationship of marine ecosystems in terms of their impact on forest ecosystems and therefore on the entire globe, is also a call for the preservation of the oceans as a fundamental key to counteracting the effects of the climate crisis.

To this extent, a possible proliferation and mediation of this phrase could become in itself a campaign of environmental reflection that in media expansion could impact some mental territories that manage to be aware of the climatic reality we live in.

This phrase, written in yellow and on a neutral or black background, denotes a state of regulated alert that could already be a more disturbing shock. However, and beyond the necessary campaign that humans must make to save the planet and the beings that inhabit it, this phrase, with a small semantic twist, is unalterably a precise definition of the color theory that is evidenced by the yellow color in it. To that extent, No Blue No Green written in yellow, is from the outset and for the most unwary spectator of planetary necessity, a simple basic rule of color combination that is stripped of a symbolic rigor to acquire another notion of anodyne sense and without pretensions of environmental safeguard.



2021. Intervention in illuminated billboard in public space.  
El Poblado Park, Medellín.  
600 repetitions



## Useless actions to reverse the defrost



Faced with the imminent climate crisis, all living beings are called to carry out, to a greater or lesser extent, actions that help counteract the effects that our worn-out planet is weathering.

This is a series of photographs made up of childish gestures: reassembling ice using elastic rubber, gluing ice blocks with high-resistance adhesive tape, trying to preserve ice blocks with kitchen plastic, covering ice with an anti-heat isothermal blanket, assembling ice with nuts and bolts, disguise a stone as if it were ice, collect water from thawing so that it does not dissolve with that of the sea, carry a piece of ice to the snow area, sew pieces of glacier with wire and even teach about environmental conservation to the penguins. A series that shows us that all these useless actions to reverse the thaw, like so many others that we hopefully do in everyday life, will continue to be fruitless and irrelevant as long as we continue trying without the awareness of the other, without the responsibility (Haraway, 2016). ) and without the active action of all those involved on this planet Earth.



2022. Useless actions to reverse the defrost. Photography and video

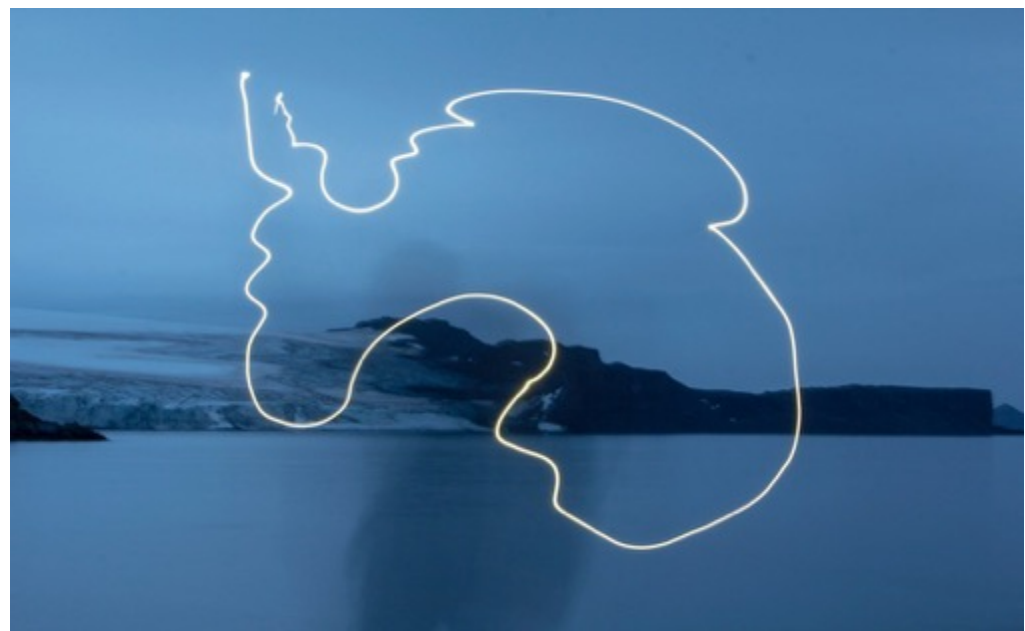


## Failed attempts to draw a map



Each of the researchers on these scientific expeditions has a specific mission: to georeference the geological spaces from which the rock samples to be studied in the laboratories are taken, to measure the levels of solar radiation proportional to the latitude of the South Pole and its variable perpendicularity with respect to the sun, to calculate the focal distance with respect to the atmospheric visibility to install a lighthouse, to trace the navigability routes of the waters at different distances with respect to the coasts..., to quantify the climatic impact on the thickness of the glaciers, in short, many and very varied objects of study, quantifying the climatic impact on the thickness of glaciers, in short, many and varied objects of study.

With unsuccessful attempts at mapping, I use different strategies of those scientists and their practices, to achieve the goal of my own research.



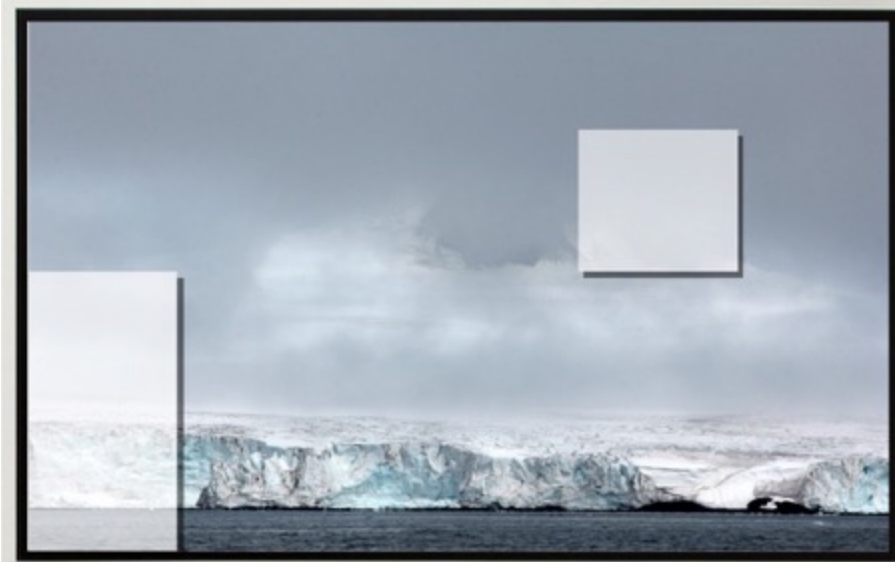
2020. Failed attempts to draw a map. Photographs of light action in which repeated attempts are made to draw the map of Antarctica with light.. 77 x 116 cm.

## Sleeping Beauties



In cartography, sleeping beauties are called blank spaces on maps. Antarctica has many of them, so many that it is a common practice to give names to everything you find as an expeditionary exercise of discovery that, perhaps, will transcend in time.

These blank spaces are traced on the maps with rectangular figures and the inscription "No Survey" next to the spaces already delimited. These Sleeping Beauties conserve the pattern of use of geographical charts, but this time on photographs of landscapes typical of this territory.



Sleeping beauties. Inkjet photography on satin paper and  
frosted glass.. 77 x 116 cm. 2021

## Cartographic Projections



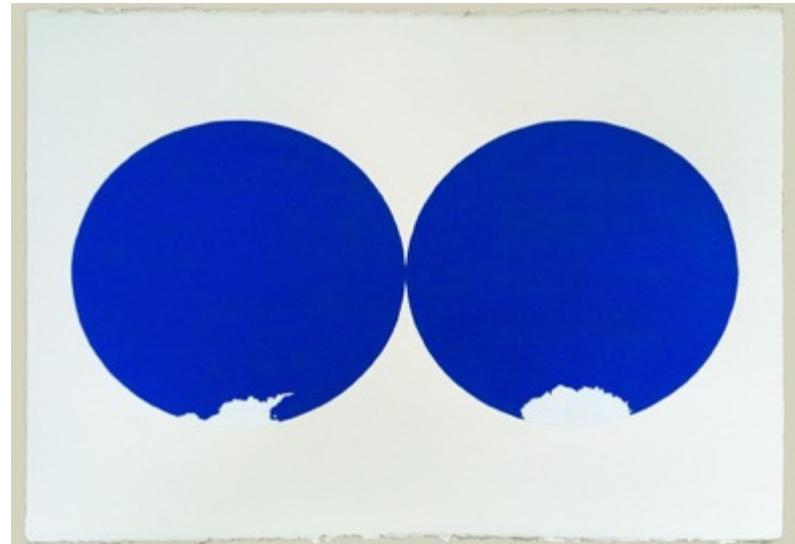
Cartographic projections are graphic representation mechanisms that attempt to bring to a two-dimensional plane the spatial distribution of the curvature of the earth. In all of them, the sizes and proportions of the continents can vary according to the cartographic needs that arise.

With these new projections we want to make a compensation to the hundreds, thousands, of maps of the world that have omitted the presence of Antarctica and for a moment give it a unique and exclusive prominence.

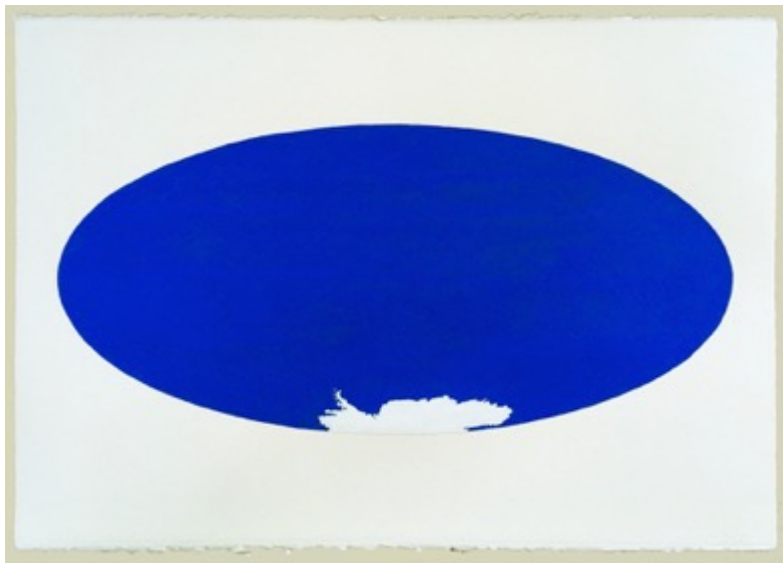
Note: The project contemplates the realization of more than 30 cartographic projections



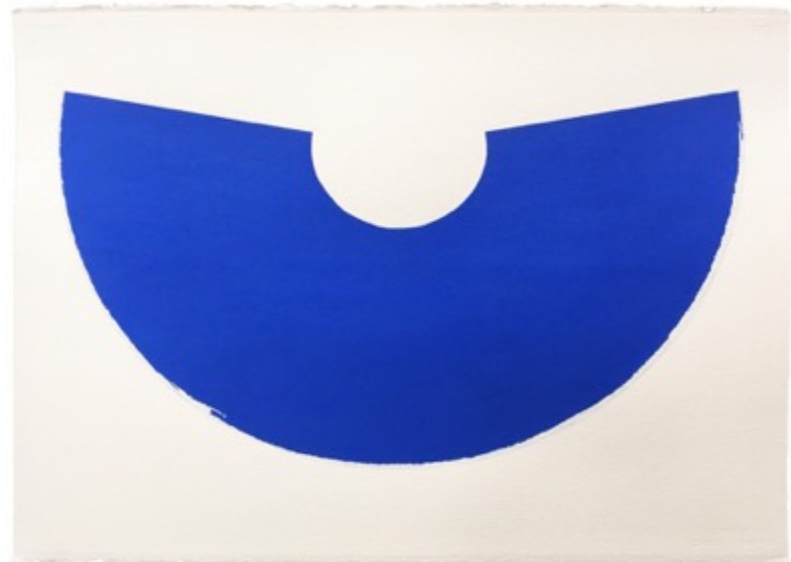
Cartographic Projection by Goode. Acrylic on Arches cotton paper of 600gr.. 56 x 78 cm. 2021



Cartographic Projection by Nicolosi. Acrylic on Arches cotton paper 600 gr. 56 x 78 cm. 2021

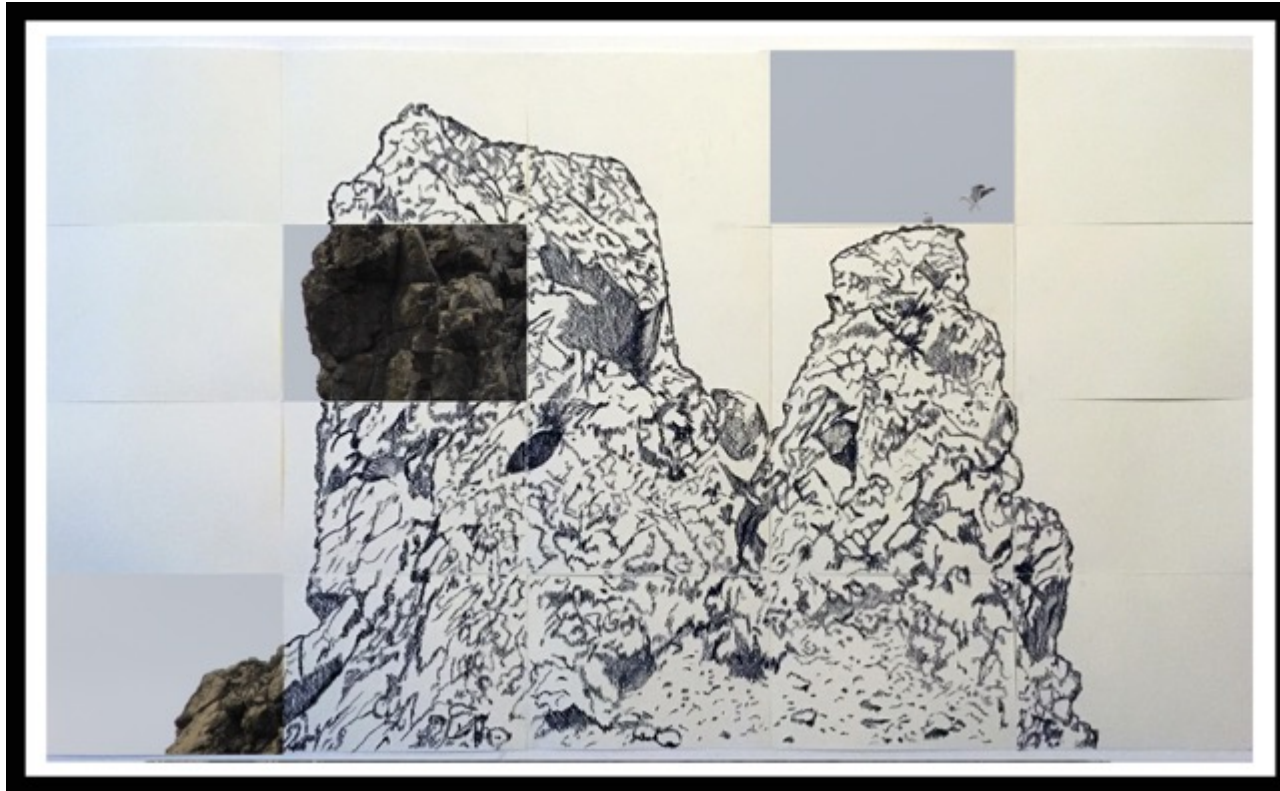


Cartographic Projection of Aitof. Acrylic on Arches cotton paper of 600gr.. 56 x 78 cm. 2021



Cartographic Projection of Albers. Acrylic on Arches cotton paper of 600gr.. 56 x 78 cm. 2021

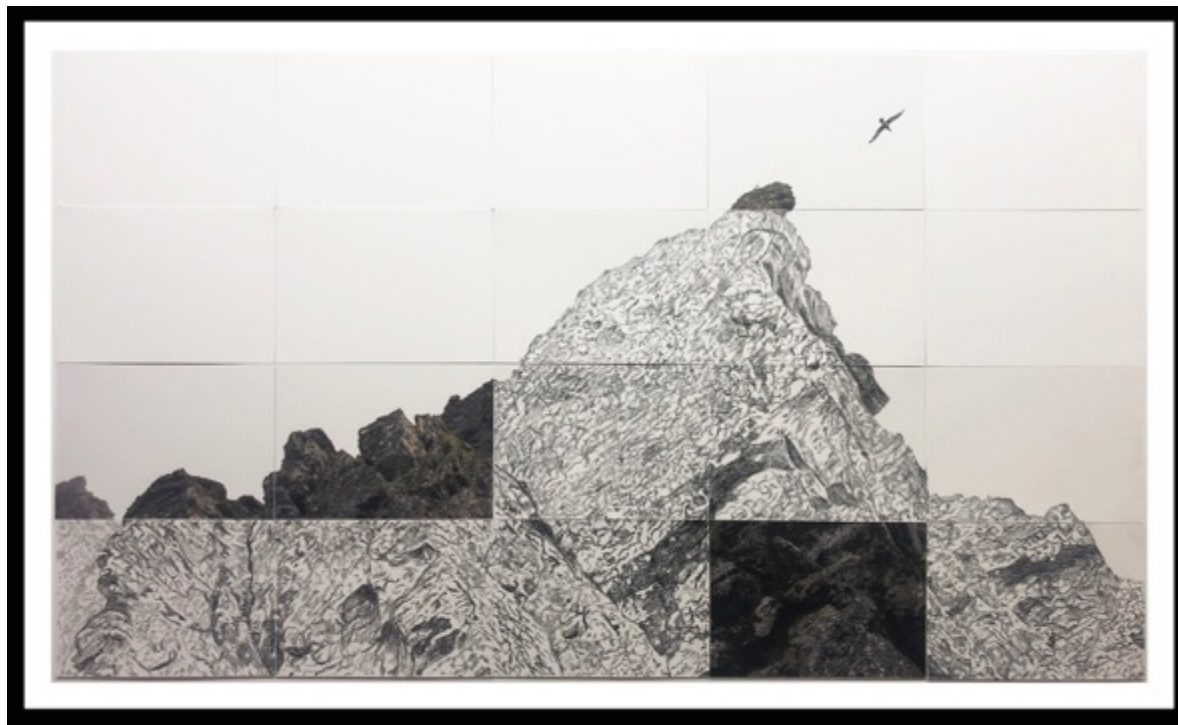
## Antarctic Landscapes



Antarctic landscapes emerge as a record, memory and metaphor of the experience of looking at Antarctica.

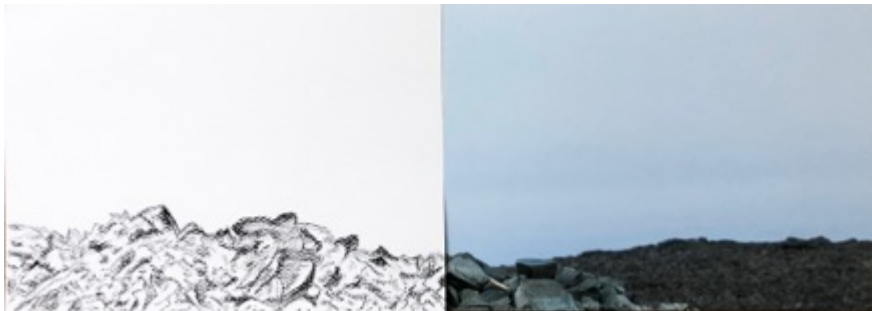
The polar landscape is changing and constantly mutates at an unusual speed. At any moment a dense fog appears, erasing everything that can be seen, making us believe that what we perceive is a mirage- like reverie that confronts a duality between an indescribable extraterrestrial territory and a blinding cloudiness.

A faint memory remains in the memory that, when confirmed with the photographic memory, is juxtaposed in these graphic compositions between drawing and photography, which evidences the intangibility of this changing landscape.



Antarctic Landscapes. Charcoal drawing on watercolor paper and color photograph on glossy paper.. 70 x 125 cm.

2020



Antarctic Landscapes. Charcoal drawing on watercolor paper and color photograph on glossy paper. 17,5 x 50 cm.

2022

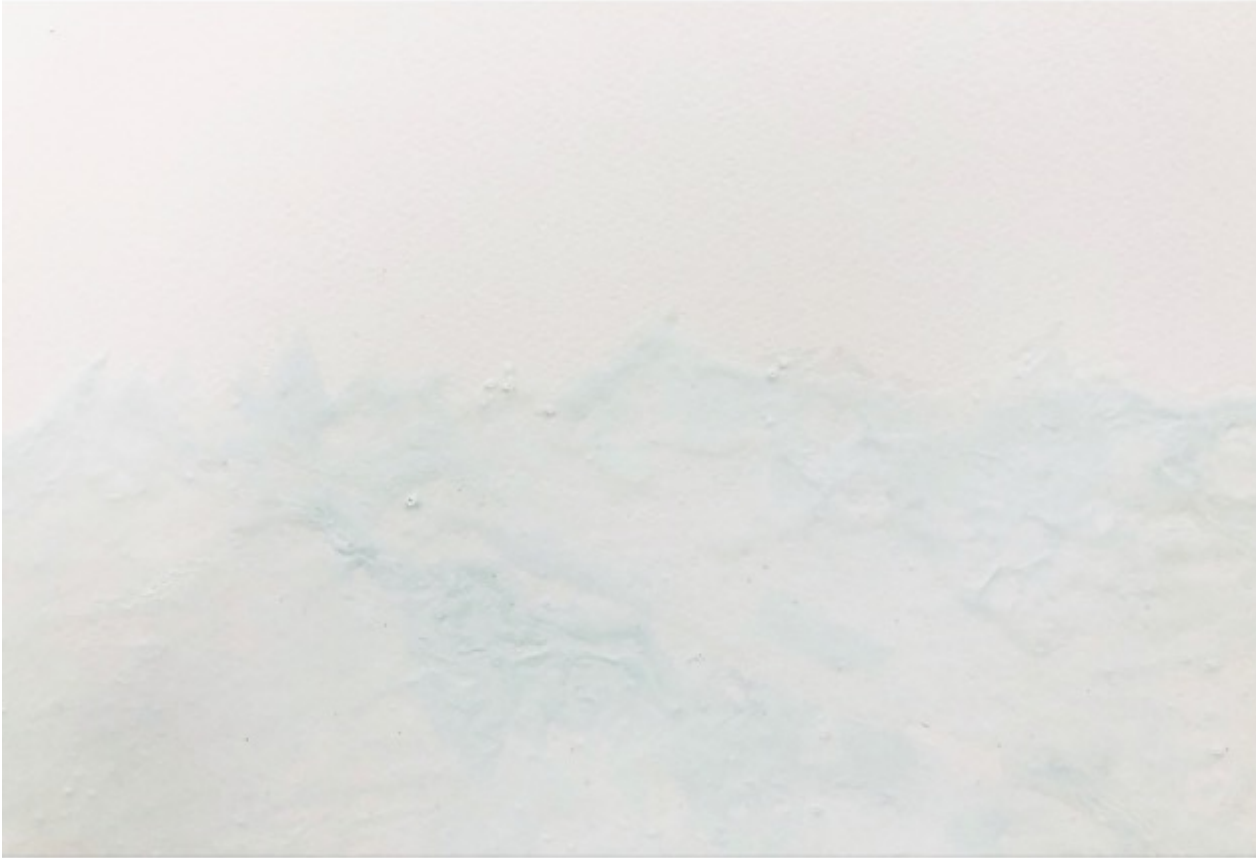


Antarctic Landscapes. Charcoal drawing on watercolor paper and color photograph on glossy paper.. 17,5 x 50 cm.

2022



## Glacial Landscapes



One of the expedition members, an Ecuadorian mountaineer who prides himself on being one of the few human beings to climb the 14 eight-thousanders without oxygen, Ivan Vallejo, said at some point looking at the glaciers, that this was a magical place not only because it was remote, inhospitable and virgin, but also because it was one of the few places in the world where fresh water and salt water came together in this way. Fresh water from the glaciers and salt water from the sea.

Glacial Landscapes reconstructs a fragment of this encounter. On the one hand, the glacier is drawn with sugar and the sea, with its own salt.



Glacial landscapes - snowy mountains. Water, sugar and charcoal. on cotton paper 450gr 57 x 76 cm.

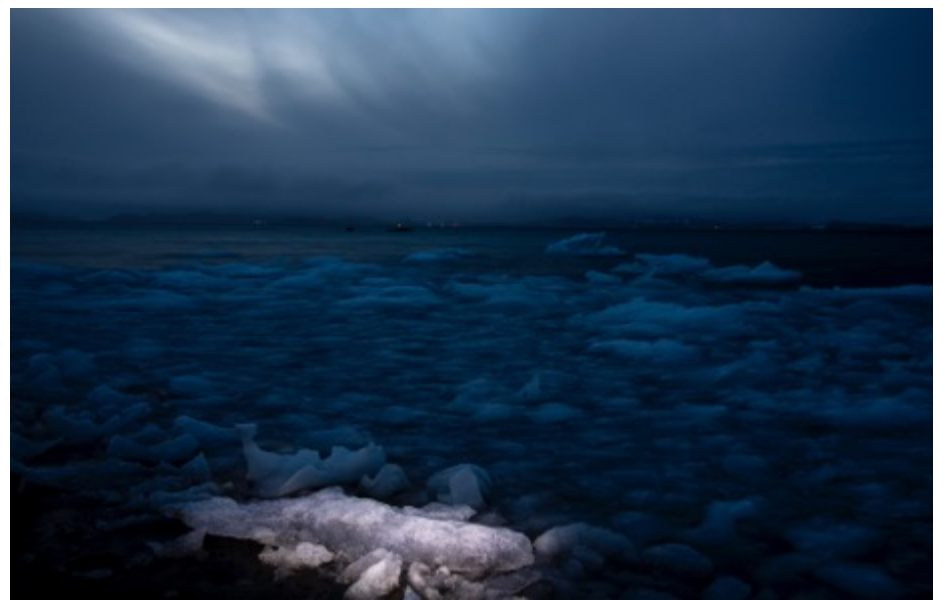
## Illuminated



One of the most recurring and impressive images in Antarctica is made up of the multiple shapes that glaciers have.

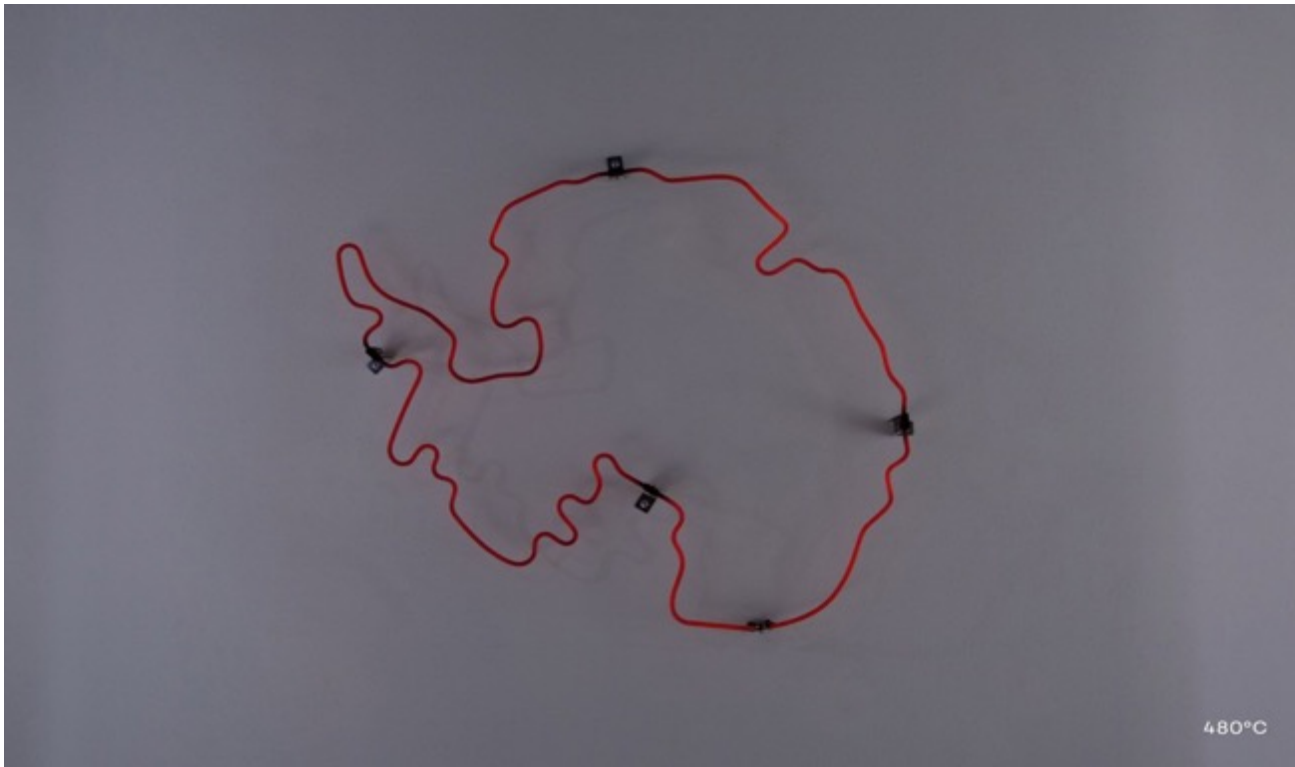
Furthermore, their constant variation in cracks and uncontrollable landslides make them an admirable phenomenon both for their beauty and their impact on the environment.

A block of ice on the opposite shore of the glacier becomes evidence of so many mysteries that glaciers hide and, in turn, show us the sad event of their melting and that, here, illuminated, show their sad fate.



Illuminated. Photography on glossy paper. 2023

## Global Warming



These wonderful premises are fantastic until the moment when some adverse connotations become evident that distort its purposes: finding plastic garbage with labels from some oriental country in a place absolutely far away from everything, makes us think that any action done in the world will have repercussions in any other place with its possible consequences.

Global Warming is a map of Antarctica made in electric resistance with a movement sensor that, with any step of the spectators, will make it light up and warm up, as a reflection of what we already do in the world.

The Antarctic Treaty has managed to consolidate this territory as a place without borders, that has no state of its own, that does not belong to a few countries and that on the contrary is a territory of the world and for the world.



Global warming. Map in electrical resistance and motion sensor which activates the ignition of the map reaching a temperature of 500°C.66 x 60 cm. 2021

## Climate Change



Glaciologists use beacons (plastic tubes buried in glaciers) to measure the effects of climate change and its effect on these large masses of ice.

Buried in the thickness of the glacier by means of hoses with steam, they are stuck up to 6 meters deep to measure the changes that may occur due to its thawing. Never by its increase.

Finding beacons completely uncovered and already bent by the wind, are the grim evidence of a climate crisis that has no reversal and that in these red and anodyne elements is concentrated all its catastrophe



Climate Change. Sculptures in stainless steel with electromagnetic paint. Variable dimensions with thickness of 4 cm. 2021



This is how a glacier dies, this is how a river is born



This is how a glacier dies, this is how a river is born.. 4K. Loop. 2021

<https://vimeo.com/441698806>

All the effects brought about by climate change are devastating; the increase in temperatures, deforestation, drought, rising sea levels, the modification of ecosystems, the affectation of crops and, of course, the thawing of glaciers. All these phenomena are reversible as long as there is a planetary conscience and individual actions that allow, little by little, to change the world.

In the meantime, nature shows us its ways: the thawing of a glacier, its death, is at the same time the birth of a river. A transformation that opens up to other possibilities, to other ways of understanding our planet.

## Deception Islands



One of the South Shetland Islands, very close to Greenwich Island where the Ecuadorian base where we focused our research was located, is called Deception Island. This name, a bit strange, makes me think constantly if there would be a particular reason to use it.

At the end of the austral summer of the year 2020 and due to the substantial increase in temperatures, the thawing of Antarctica caused the emergence of some islands that were under the ice. At that moment I knew the reason for using this name.

Any island born from a thaw will be a Deception Island.



Deception Islands.Oil on  
atlas book sheet  
35,3 x 28,3 cm  
2021



Deception Islands.Oil on  
atlas book sheet  
35,3 x 28,3 cm  
2021

## Defrost



The GLIMS project: Global measurements of land ice from space, is designed to monitor the world's glaciers using mainly data from optical satellite instruments.

Although they have not yet incorporated data from Antarctic glaciers, this tool already has the measurement of 90 glaciers from the rest of the world in places such as the Himalayas, the Andes, the Alps and mainly in the Arctic.

Melting of other glaciers in the world, only reaffirms the need to continue scientific expeditions on the white continent, even if it is to sadly demonstrate their melting.

<http://www.glims.org/>



Defrost – Hungu and Merala Glacier, Himalayas.

Acrylic on canvas.

2021.

150 x 150cm



Defrost - Fitz Roi North Glacier, Los Andes.

Acrylic on canvas.

2021.

150 x 150cm



Defrost – Glaciar Tebenkof - Alaska

Acrylic on canvas.

2021.

150 x 150cm

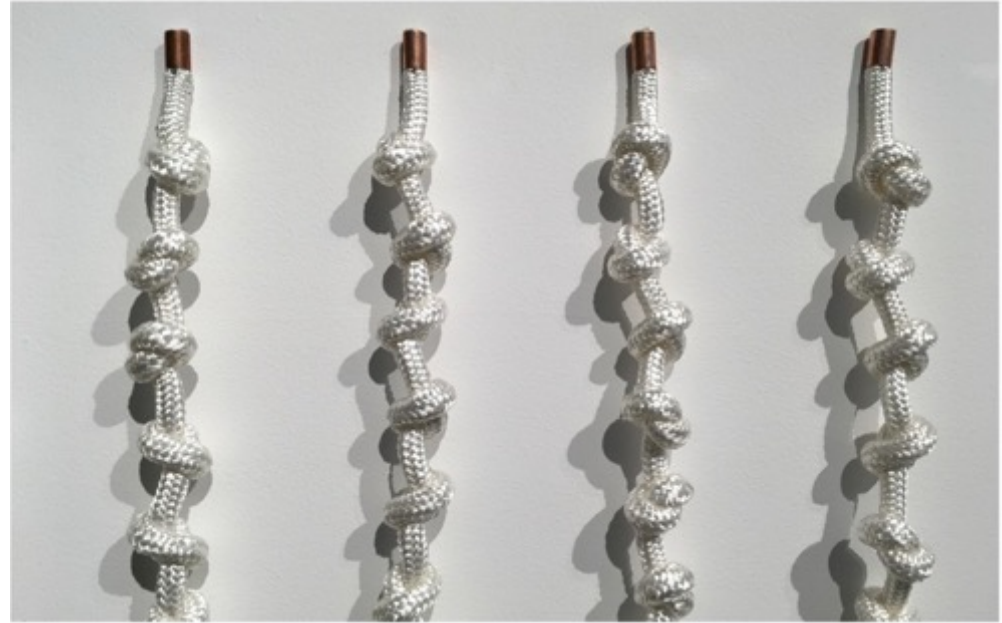
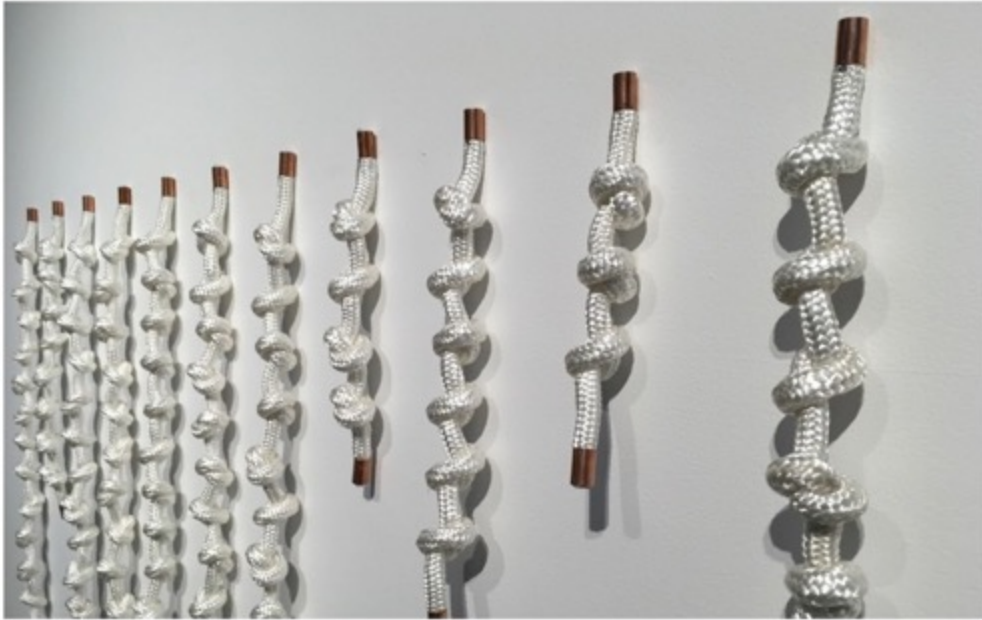
## Wind Diary



Measuring the wind at practically every moment of the day is essential for any activity: traveling by plane, getting to the ship, disembarking, walking, touring, going to a nearby island or even leaving the base to stretch your feet or breathe the fresh air.

This speed, measured in knots, is decisive for all the activities that are experienced and carried out in Antarctica.

This weather diary, with knots, gives an account of each of my days in the place and reading it, perhaps, you will understand what I experienced each day.



Wind diary. Installation with marine rope.  
Variable measurements.  
2021

## Se hacen viajes Travel is made



The multiple possibilities of recursion generated by a closed border make both people and their needs more creative and diverse. That is what I found on the border between Colombia and Venezuela, both in the vicinity of the Simon Bolivar Bridge and in the infinite number of trails that stretch along the Tachira River.

The systems and inventions that migrants generate to cope with the difficulties imposed by the rules that block the free transit between countries, was the input I found for the realization of a research focused on the objects used for the transfer of goods and belongings that people acquire for their daily sustenance.

Flip-flops and Crocs that could become skates for the loaders who cling to the cars at high speed, bicycles that are loaded one to the other as if supporting the moments of each of the countries, Diesel brand sacks of high fashion to transport gasoline and "pretales" (a kind of belt that helps them to support the weight of the packages on the forehead) made with out-of-circulation bills in which important Indians and blacks in the history of Venezuela are represented, are some of the works that were made with the research.





Se hacen viajes. . Skaters. Video Monocanal FullHD. 2:04min. 2023  
<https://vimeo.com/826374856>



Se hacen viajes. photo. 2022



Se hacen viajes. Skates. Escultura ensamble. 2022



Se hacen viajes.  
Pretal  
Cargo belt made with 10 Bolivar bills with the image of the Guaicapuro Indian and with 5 Bolivar bills with the image of the Negro Primero, both with woven ribbons on their head  
2022

## Trail road



The processes of migration, flow and exchange that occur day by day across the Colombian-Venezuelan border, constitute in themselves as channelers of related realities that involve both one and the other. In the border areas of Cúcuta and Táchira, there is a tireless human and commercial transit that, at the same time, strengthens and/or weakens one and the other

On the one hand, the "official" passage through the Simon Bolivar Bridge is presented as a horde of men and women who make up a human river of beings carrying on their shoulders sacks and sacks of identical colors and shapes that are composed of what is necessary to get through their daily lives. On the other hand, an innumerable series of "clandestine" trails across the Táchira River allow another type of flow, no longer of what is specifically necessary, but of what is better not to name.

This conjunction of flows, transits, movements and concealments, constitute Trocha, an artistic proposal with the character of a habitable installation that allows the settlement on itself at the same time that re-creates a latent state of social proximity.



trail road. Video installation with mat, cushions and bridge. 56  
inch screen. 2020

## Doors to the sea



“The Mediterranean, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico form a homogeneous, although interrupted, sea”.

A.J. Liebling

Doors to the Sea is an ongoing project that poetically checks the absurd solutions proposed to solve the world's migration problems.

The project, which has already opened doors in the Mediterranean Sea where hundreds of thousands of African immigrants cross it to try to reach Europe, in the Caribbean and more precisely in the Florida Strait between Havana and Miami, once the most famous border crossing in the world, and in the Gulf of Urabá between the borders of Colombia and Panama, where thousands of people are currently passing through with the intention of completing their journey by land, crossing all of Central America and reaching the land of opportunity; It highlights the border territories that, despite the immensity of the sea, are marked and delimited as fences and fences, but in the end, continue to demonstrate the porosity of the limits.



Doors to the sea – photos



Doors to the sea – Videos  
<https://vimeo.com/180429447>  
<https://vimeo.com/462172594>



Doors to the sea  
Sculpture  
230 x 150 x 150 cm

## Errants



Err

transitive verb/intransitive verb

Transitive verb To make a mistake or make a mistake in a certain thing.

Intransitive verb. To go from one place to another without a determined purpose, reason or destination.

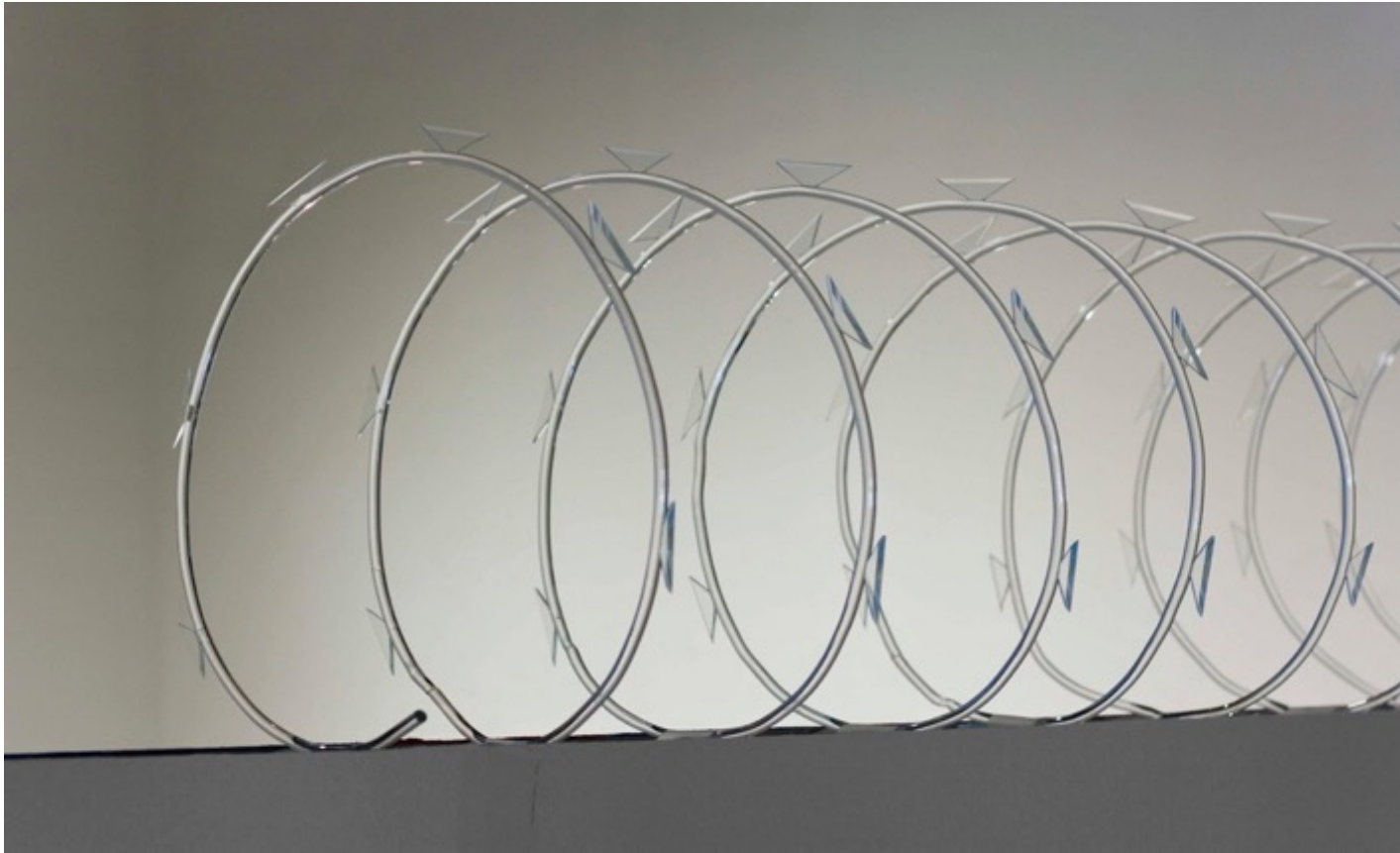
Wanderers, like the figure of the nomad, are those who wander without apparent destination, who seek without end, to remedy the punishment that condemns them to an infinite wandering.

Wanderers, alludes to the wandering, the march, the fatigue, the anonymity and the disappearance. With them, a symbiosis is created between the two meanings of the term Error: error and wandering, which in the condition of the immigrant are superimposed in two acts: error of those who promote and allow it, and wandering of those who suffer it.



Errants  
Sculpture with thermal  
blankets  
2018

## Crystal Frontier



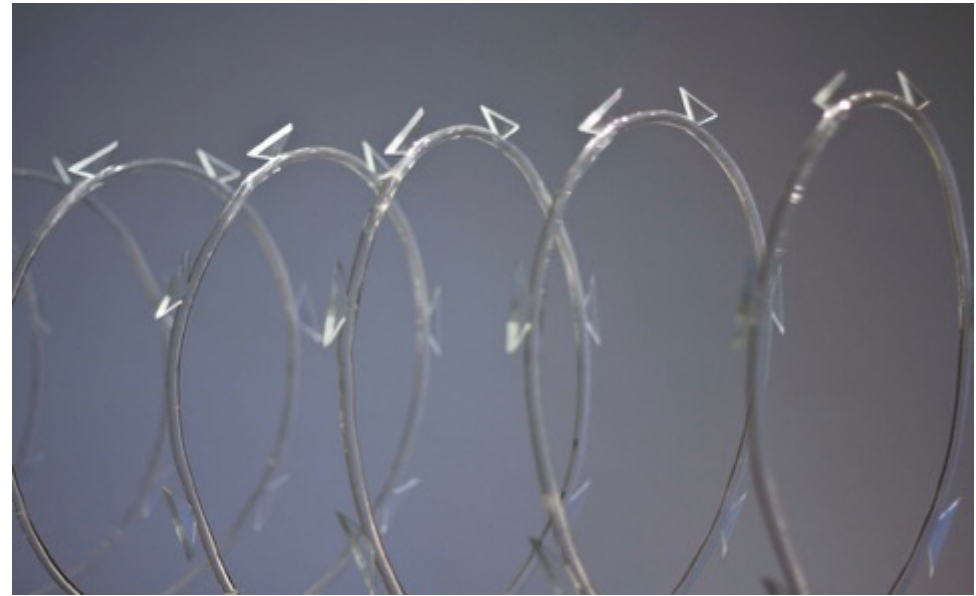
«Humanity is a magnificent but fragile achievement»  
E. O. Wilson

The Limits of the Sea is an ongoing project, initially motivated by an inquiry into the headlines surrounding the migration crisis in the Mediterranean, but which, as a contemporary reality, is far from being a historically or geographically localized phenomenon and moves to any place where there is a promised land to long for. Installing an improbable razor wire elaborated in glass, then, came as poetic verifications of the tragedy of war, the "hereditary curse of mankind".

The works gathered here find their cohesion not only in the reference to the phenomenon of forced migrations, which day by day turn men and women into victims or victors of their destiny; but, mainly, by making evident for these border territories, sort of "non-places", the coexistence of life and death -physical and symbolic- as simultaneous realities. In Vélez's recent work, the sea, an obligatory vehicle at some point for any migrant, operates as a metaphor and a clear political instrument to rethink the problematic condition of borders. Water, an element with the capacity to transform, to redefine the spatial, floods, seeps in and, like air and light, is difficult to stop. However, it also materializes an abysmal physical and psychological barrier.

Melissa Aguilar R.





Crystal Frontier. Glass sculpture. 40 x 120 x 40 cm

## Mediterranean: the sea that became a frontier



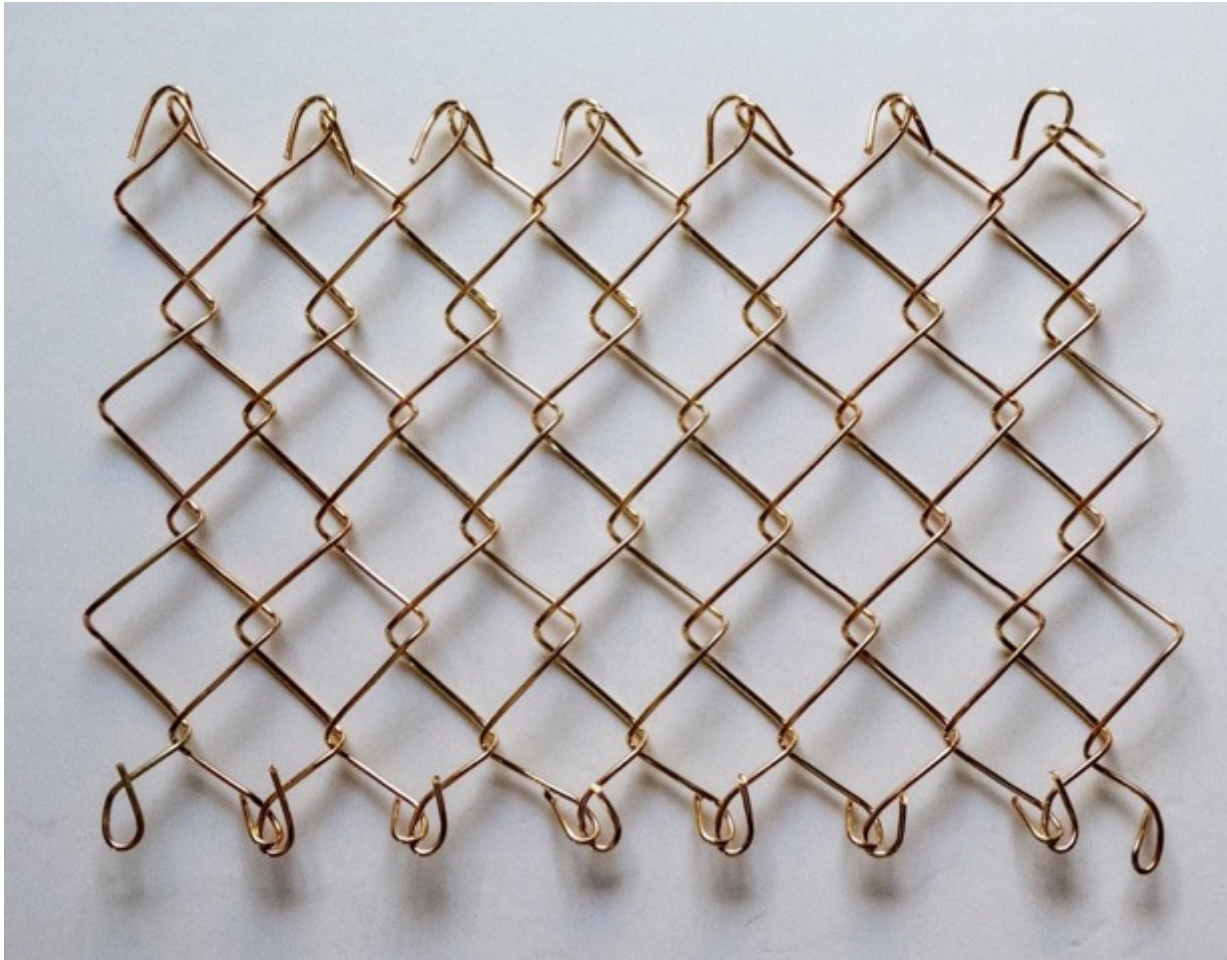
After making a selection of headlines from the Spanish newspaper El País in which there was editorial or news reference to migrations across the Mediterranean Sea, those that did not make direct reference to the number of people alive or dead, to the mafias, to the dispute between countries and to the unfulfilled agreements were selected.

Among those that remained - very few indeed - the sea that became a border was one of them.



Border wire sculpture. 12 x 5 x 100 cm

## Cutting borders - Leakage



Sculpture in gold plated border mesh.35 x 50 cm

A small fragment of a metal mesh is just enough space for a body to make its way to the promise offered by the other side, and breaking through it is the treasure, in gold, most longed for by many.

# Europa



Reinterpretation of the flag of the European Union based on a simple modification of the 12 stars that compose it

## The Red Line



Photo intervened with interior flashing light.

In any uncomfortable journey, the promise of arrival is always latent and the gaze, a little lost, a little hopeful, settles on the horizon with the intention of glimpsing, at last, the arrival.

Línea Roja alludes to that endless, latent, promising and perpetual horizon that never arrives.

# Dignity



Dignity. Video. Monocanal 5:30 min.

<https://vimeo.com/171557727>

Dignity is the fusion of two elements: on the one hand, the fragility, brightness, fluidity and tenuous transparency of the thermal blankets that also serve to warm the bodies of migrants after enduring the inclemency of the cold and uncertain journey across the Mediterranean. And on the other hand, the data, the figures, the proliferation of documentaries, reports, news, reports that deal with everything, that scrutinize even the most invisible trifle, this time summarized in three rescue actions of Doctors. Without Borders.

In a clear allusion to Fellini's film *E la nave Va*, this fusion fictitiously recomposes the rescue of immigrants at sea, creating a sea of "plastic" that, as in that film or in the beginnings of cinema: the movement, the incidence of light, the audio and the editing, transport us to the high seas and everything that happens there.



“¿Dónde están?” Dignity Series. Collage: Photography, thermal blanket and laser on glass..  
28 x 47



Los rescataremos a todos” Dignity Series. Collage: Photography, thermal blanket and laser on glass..  
28 x 47



## The Great Wave (of refugees)



Digital printing on thermal blanket.

210 x 160 cm

Hokusai's Great Wave is perhaps one of the most highly reproduced and reinterpreted images in the world. His drawing, as described by Edmond de Goncourt, "is a sort of divinized version of the sea" and is undoubtedly an allegory of its majesty and strength. However, a sea, the Mediterranean, increasingly loses its divinity, to become a "desperate" version of impotence, uselessness of effective migration policies and a cry for salvation for those who see in it their only way out.

The Great Wave (of the refugees) is a mixture of images that multiply day by day: that of Hokusai, that of the thermal blankets of the rescues and that of a sea that can no longer cope with so many bodies.

## Refugee is refugee



Refugee is refugee, they are simple photomontages based on well known images of European refugees during the Second World War to whom a thermal blanket is imposed.

This compositional game tries to put in the place of the other and to make evident a blind indifference of Europe on the migratory problem, which they have also suffered.



Collage: photography and thermal blanket.  
30x 40 cm

Nobody gets wet here



This territory has been inhabited since ancient times by the Tulé Kuna indigenous community that speaks almost no Spanish, has no border between Panama and Colombia and reproduce their surroundings with handcrafted expressions called Molas. This is how I contacted three women from this community to represent in Molas, the three most common routes that immigrants travel to achieve the dream of freedom that North America offers them.

Video The route along the Atrato River:

<https://vimeo.com/153483995>

The problems of human migration have no specific geographic location or context. In Colombia, and more precisely in the Gulf of Urabá, there is another problem of human trafficking, mostly Cubans, Africans and Chinese, who seek to reach Panama to continue their journey to the United States. It is currently estimated that 20,000 people a year cross this gulf, risking as always their lives, the few resources they have and often their mental health.



2015. AQUÍ NO SE MOJA NADIE. Video Instalación: Proyección de video, molas y plasmás

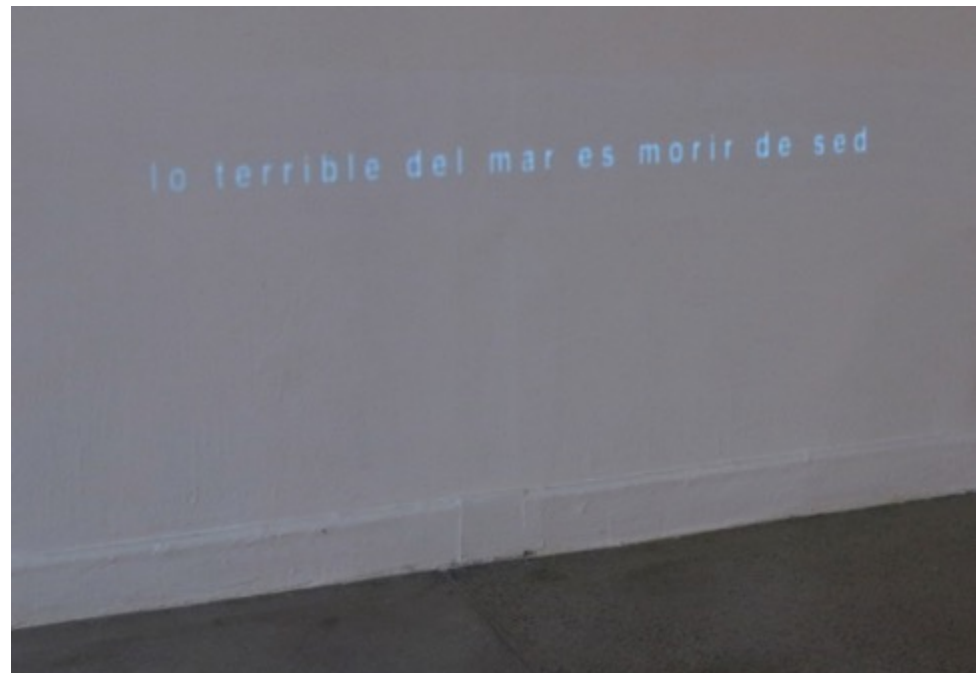


Mola. Hand woven  
95 x 95 cm  
2015

## Dizziness



With the intention of generating parallels between the processes of bird migration and the recent problems of human migration that occur simultaneously in the Gulf of Urabá, we left by boat and on its typical rough sea, in search of those that, due to their advantageous condition, do not understand border problems. The journey, in a sum of absurd situations, distanced us from a true ornithological proximity and brought us closer to the adverse sensations of shipwreck that for hours made us reflect on the experience of a journey into the unknown: a dizziness that mixes the needs of a better life and the uncertainties of a road plagued by contingencies that take you out of reality and lead you to lose the horizon, already clear, that guides your dreams.



2015. Video Installation: Video projection (text) and wooden construction

## Shipwrecked



My arrival to live in Barcelona coincided with the media aggravation of the migratory problems that daily throw dozens of people drowned in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

Using as a metaphor of salvation, I use the pneumatic chambers that many use as life jackets to contradict their use: some filled with rigid and heavy concrete that sink and others filled with inert and contained water that form a human weight.

Accompanying the project are the videos *Help* and *El mar que se convirtió en frontera*.

<https://vimeo.com/132801923>

<https://vimeo.com/132799254>





2015 DEAD WEIGHT. Pneumatic chambers filled with concrete. Weight of 40 kg each

2015 CRITICAL MASS. Water-filled pneumatic chambers. Total weight 65 kg

## Palindromes



From the experience of the Puerto Contemporáneo residence in La Boquilla, Cartagena, a series of aesthetic gestures are configured that question the duplicity that is lived in that territory. An infinite number of physical, social, cultural and economic contradictions are evidenced in everyday life and by bringing them together in objects and video, they allow us to recompose the metaphysical space that is lived there.

<https://vimeo.com/293231750>



Artisanal fisherman's rowing and sport rowing  
.35 x 200 x 5 cm



Tourist. float, car tire  
55 x 55 x 20 cm



Seashell and beer cap.  
2,5 x 3 x 0.5 cm .

## Rival



After many reflections on the idea of water as a border, I found the etymological meaning of the word rival.

In a short video and by way of symbolic verification, a slight and silent trickle of water bursts into the daily life of some ants.

2015. RIVAL. Vídeo monocanal  
<https://vimeo.com/125233573>

## Río de la Plata



Developed within the framework of the Mayo Residency for the Urra Project ([www.urrarra.com.ar](http://www.urrarra.com.ar)); Río de la Plata was conceived as an investigation into the strength and renown of the Río de la Plata in the collective imagination of the city of Buenos Aires. After visiting the delta that nourishes it and at the same time, walking infinite times through the streets of the city, I found the need to change dollars for local currency on Florida Street, a pedestrian promenade where people offer the exchange of foreign currency at lower cost.

Change, Change, Change are the words repeated by the currency sellers who are popularly called arbolitos (little trees) and that also served me as conceptual support for the invention of a new Florida Street, the one of the Río de la Plata.



2014 TREES OF FLORIDA. Trees made with \$2 Argentinean pesos bills.



2014 ASSETS LAUNDERING. Frotage on Florida Street sewers with ink from Argentine banknotes.



2014 LAS CORRIENTES DE FLORIDA. Video monocal  
<https://vimeo.com/96658055>

## The Maidens



The batea is the flagship element of mining in Colombia and as such, it is also the channel for supposed riches to which the population clings, seeing in this practice the best option for sustenance and future.

The symbolic transformation of this element involves not only the change of use that the barequeros suggest in their daily lives (see reference images), but also the deformation of the illusory opulence of those who, under the inclement sun, see the gold pass through their hands.

The Maidens Sculpture with gold plated metal  
2019

## Gold Mine



In some of Colombia's mountains it is common to find tunnels that are boring holes in the landscape in an unbridled and uncontrolled search for gold in the irregular practices of gold mining. Each one of them throws the stones and earth that they extract from the mines and that do not contain the beta of the gold that they pursue with each hammering towards the slopes of the hills and mountains.

Oro de Mina seeks to raise the question about the false wealth that gold brings through the filling of this emptying of the mountain with shredded 50,000 Colombian peso bills that have no value due to their fragmentation and damage.





Mine Gold 2

Photograph and shredded \$50,000 peso bills in acrylic frame

71 x 46 x 5 cm

2020

## Law of Paramos

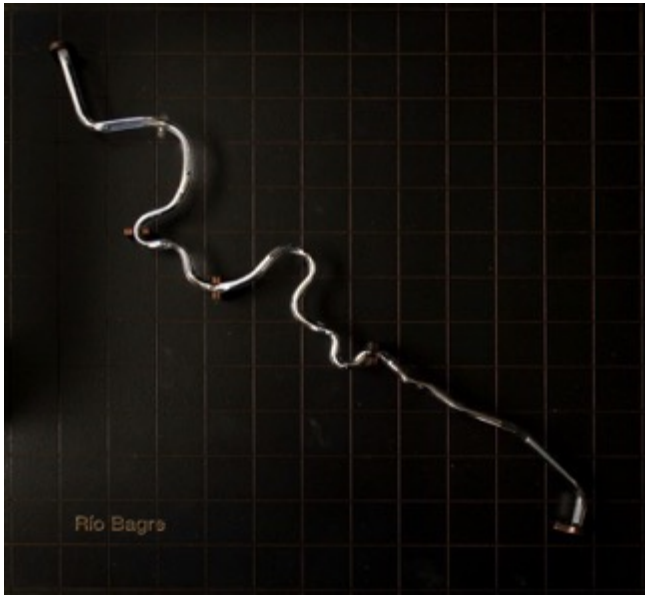


2015 National Symbols - Flag. Reinterpretation of the Colombian flag (yellow, blue and red), in which the yellow (the riches) is replaced by a gram of gold, the blue (the waters) by a few drops of mercury and the red (the blood) by sand from the mines.

In December 2015, a bill that had been pending in the Colombian Senate for more than 5 years was given the green light to protect the páramos from illegal mining activity. On July 27, 2018, Law 1930 "Whereby provisions are issued for the comprehensive management of the páramos in Colombia" was finally decreed.

However, the unbridled and evident plundering of land and streams, rivers continue to be contaminated with mercury, riverbeds continue to lose their regular course and wealth continues to be lost in the vain illusion offered by the chimera of gold.

<https://vimeo.com/146667596>



2015 MINING RIVERS mercury glass tube



2015 LINGOTES glass structure filled with shredded  
\$20,000 Colombian banknotes

## Barequear



In the process of mining activity, panning and panning are artisanal practices that do not affect the rivers or their ecosystems to a certain extent.

However, the excessive plundering of the land, the abusive practices of the territory and the illegality have left an indelible mark on the landscape, cutting the riverbanks and turning the territory into large brown pits, vestiges of the plundering of its entrails.



2015 BAREQUEAR Installation with wooden trays, sand, motor and water.

## Water - Gold



Water – Gold is the result of a research residency commissioned for the exhibition Contraexpediciones of the Museo de Antioquia and carried out in the municipality of Belmira-Antioquia-Colombia.

The experience searches in the background of artisanal mining production, the innocent and enslaving presence of water; its uses, disuses and abuses, its extraction and dumping, its abundant presence and its silent leakage, its cause and its scattered causes.

<https://vimeo.com/92734667>

<https://vimeo.com/92745907>

<https://vimeo.com/92745000>



Cyanidation  
tank. Wooden and  
rubber crates with  
water and gold dust



Batea.  
Wooden paddle,  
motor and water



Windmill.  
Wooden column, steel  
and water tip

## The gold of the wastelands



There are some spaces that, in addition to being overwhelming, immense, pristine and extremely beautiful, are true machines of nature that, in a continuous and calm flow, produce millions of liters of water from which millions of other people then benefit. Hidden on the top of the mountains or behind the clouds, they avoid at all costs exposing themselves to any risk that could affect their peaceful industriousness, allowing only the visit of a few guests from whom they expect their respect and connection with their greatness and meaning.

There, the frailejón, the peat bogs, the mosses, many other strange plants, water bodies, paths, moor animals, misty mists of various grays and rays of sun that sneak in at times, make up a singular landscape that articulates the splendor with the mysterious mysticism of what happens there and that this exhibition tries to highlight.

These wonderful spaces are threatened by mining that, in search of gold, forgets what the true gold of the moors is.





The gold of the wastelands  
Gold dust and charcoal drawing on PVC canvas  
210x150cm  
2023

## Fluvial



These contradictory consequences make us think of the imminent need to store water for the moment of scarcity but also to control it when it loses its flow. However, and incoherently, the container is the cardboard box, which will inevitably succumb to humidity and contact with water.

Fluvial is a metaphor for the river that is lost, that dissolves in drought or overflow. It is the flow of its own system.

Several uncontrolled climatic phenomena that occur in Colombia can, almost at the same time, generate overflowing rivers and floods, as well as droughts in areas not too far away or even in neighboring territories.



2011 – 2012 FLUVIAL Installation with cardboard boxes containing water



2011 – 2012 FLUVIAL FLUVIAL  
Installation with nylon bags  
containing water

## Forget



Forget is part of a series of images that are periodically repeated quite regularly in which streets, houses and entire rooms are flooded by the action of strong storms. It is common to see in them the ability of men to overcome the vicissitudes presented to them by the action of weather and nature.

I allude to this capacity for change, but also to what it implies to start over again. A baptism that erases the past and prepares for the future in such a way that the inert is hermetized before the peaceful presence of the water that covers it, because we must also remember that oblivion is a lagoon.



2.006.FORGET. Spatial intervention with furniture and water (approximately 4 tons)). Casa Tres Patios. Medellín.



2.014.FORGET Spatial intervention with furniture and water (approximately 1.9 tons)Museo del Agua. Medellín.



SANTIAGO VÉLEZ SALAMANCA  
Medellín, 1972  
[hola@santiagovelez.net](mailto:hola@santiagovelez.net)

#### STUDIES:

- 2022 PHD - Advanced Studies in Artistic Productions, The University of Barcelona. Thesis Cum Laude
- 2016 Master in Artistic Production and Research, The University of Barcelona., España.
- 2011 Master's degree in esthetics - Semiotics of Culture Line. The National University of Colombia, Medellín, Colombia.
- 2003 Specialization in Esthetics, Aesthetics, Art and Ecologisms Line. The National University of Colombia, Medellín, Colombia.
- 1999 Bachelor of Fine Arts, The National University of Colombia, Medellín, Colombia.

#### SOLO SHOWS:

- 2022 Atlas de un continente que no existe. Tasneem Galería, Barcelona, España
- 2021 Antártida. Atlas de un continente que no existe. Museo de Antropología y Arte de Jericó, MAJA, Jericó, Antioquia.  
Atlas de un continente que no existe, Galería Elvira Moreno, Bogotá  
Tiempo A Gotas, Clepsidras del tiempo en la tierra. Ana María Martínez y Santiago Vélez. Galería Aura Arte, Envigado, Antioquia, Colombia  
Atlas de un continente que no existe. Lokkus Arte Contemporáneo, Medellín
- 2020 Esto es una minita de oro. Piso Algo, Santa Fe de Antioquia.  
Trocha. Video instalación habitable. Bodega Comfama – Medellín
- 2019 Horizons. Lokkus Arte Contemporáneo, Medellín, Colombia  
Horizons. Tasneem Gallery. Barcelona, España
- 2018 Mar de Fondo. Galería Beta. Bogotá, Colombia.  
El Mar que se Convirtió en Frontera. Acadèmia Belles Arts Sabadell, Barcelona, España.  
Horizons. Galería Pontarte. Maastrich, Holanda
- 2017 Puertas al Mar. Rincón Projects. Bogotá, Colombia.  
Ley de Páramos. Galería Beta. Bogotá, Colombia.
- 2016 Los Límites del Mar. Galería de la Oficina. Medellín, Colombia.
- 2015 Naufragos. Lokkus Arte Contemporáneo. Medellín, Colombia.
- 2014 Residencia Mayo, Proyecto URRRA, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- 2012 Fluvial. Club Comfenalco La Playa. Medellín, Colombia.  
Influjos. Antigua Estación del Ferrocarril, Fundación Calle Bohemia, Armenia, Colombia.

- 2011 Fluvial. Banasta, Medicaciones Arte y Cultura. Rionegro, Colombia.
- 2010 Objetos de Agua. Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, sede Chapinero. Bogotá, Colombia.
- 2008 Disoluciones. Galería Olivier Debré, Alianza ColomboFrancesa. Medellín, Colombia.
- 2005 Paisajes de Agua. Galería de la Oficina. Medellín, Colombia.

#### DISTINCTIONS:

- 2021 Curatorial Research Grant “Arte y Naturaleza” (46 salón nacional de artistas). Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia
- 2020 Meetings between artists and craftsmen Grant.. Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia
- 2019 Creation for artists with a long careers Grant. Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia  
National and international circulation for artists and other agents of the visual arts grant – Ciclo III. Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia
- 2017 Colombians in the process of artistic and cultural training abroad grant, Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia  
Extraordinary Master's Award, Universidad de Barcelona, España
- 2005 Third place. Plastic Arts Contest “La Libertad Guiando al Pueblo”. Embajada de Francia. Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín.

#### WORKS IN PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:

- Bogotá: Banco de la República Biblioteca Luís Ángel Arango
- Medellín: Museo de Antioquia  
Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín  
Museo Universitario Universidad de Antioquia

#### WORKS IN PRIVATE AND CORPORATE COLLECTIONS:

- Arte al Límite Latinoamérica.
- Suramericana de Seguros  
Argos  
Fundación Sofía Pérez de Soto  
Fundación Fraternidad Medellín  
Colección Bachué  
Colección Oliveros

[www.santiagovelez.net](http://www.santiagovelez.net)