

Almendra Otta

# *Lying River*

Lying River is a personal journey through the river to the sea.

Yuyapichis, a village in the Peruvian Amazon is the starting point from which memories and family stories of misunderstandings and estrangement come together while images of the daily life of my family wonder about the destiny of women who were born in a territory where the extractive economy is always present.

Video link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1p\\_-HnDHBkWoD\\_Mc2aLyPdchweGcKeYLz/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1p_-HnDHBkWoD_Mc2aLyPdchweGcKeYLz/view?usp=sharing)



*Lying River*  
Video, 16' 58". 2022



I hope that my daughter, like all the  
people who are born for love and freedom,

*Love, labour, time... strike!*  
Video, 08' 45". 2022

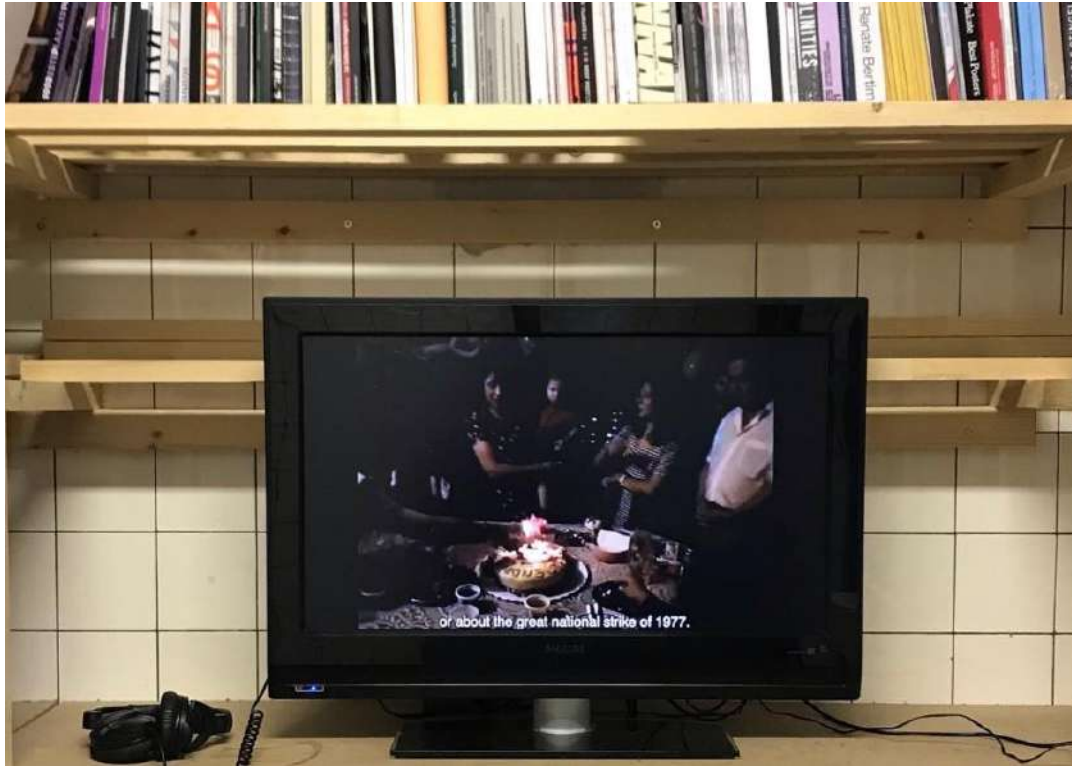
## *Love, labour, time... strike!*

While reading Rosa Luxemburg's book "Mass Strike, Party and Trade Unions", I discovered that it was not my father's - as I had assumed- but my aunt's, so she and I started sending letters to each other.

Writing to her becomes an exercise of memory in which affections and memories interconnect with the territories and political history of the place where I grew up.

Video link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RDezvYf1ZE6G6VtSWegxxqe9f6BN1JJ/view>



Exhibition view

This hybrid work, with elements of video essay, family found footage, videos recorded by me, letters and books; is framed within a broader ongoing investigation on the reflection of the link between art and politics and its collective manifestations in the public sphere.

Starting from Luxemburg's book, "Mass Strike..." and from my personal experience, this work addresses the subject of strikes and protests. Nevertheless, although it may seem paradoxical because the place of enunciation is the intimate sphere, this is what allows me to play and establish connections between the political context, memories, theoretical texts, affections, old footage, my family and the History.

Pastorita Huaracina



"Long live the Women's Union my friends".

*Quisiera Quererte*

Video, 14' 46". 2023

Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b6-rSRNbku0cKMg3004B5LuN0XkQ2bo/view?usp=sharing>



# Quisiera quererte / I would want to love you



*Folkloric artists union card*

Marker on paper, 23 x 17 cm. 2019

I would want to love you (Quisiera quererte, a Pastorita Huaracina's song), as the desire to want or the desire to desire and music as a catalyst for collective desire. It is from the music of Pastorita Huaracina (María Alvarado Trujillo), and from herself as an icon, that I explore the relationship between tastes and forms of musical consumption linked to a feeling of belonging.

From smaller physical spaces such as the Malvas province or the Ancash region, to increasingly abstract, problematic and more difficult to determine spaces such as Lima, Peru; to spaces of resistance that do not have a territorial component unifying, such as the Union of Folkloric Artists of Peru, the Union of Domestic Workers (in which Pastorita Huaracina collaborated, and the first Union she was part of) and the Women's Union that Pastorita Huaracina imagined and proposed in her songs.

Songs about specific places like Ancash, the Peruvian Republic, the Andes, which lyrics get confused with passionate letters written towards a lost loved, and album covers that I draw from records of huayno and cumbia, help me to reconstruct my family history, while simultaneously narrating migratory processes, the journey from rural area to the city, feelings of uprooting, the transformation of the country and the construction of the identity and community of its inhabitants. Music as a collective way of enjoyment and sorrow.

These drawings were made after a certain selection of album covers and stills of YouTube videos. On the one hand they embody the development of the dematerialization of the physical record and the new networks and forms of consumption that emerge from the internet, while in its content new identities and collectivities are building and transforming, this reflects on lyrics and music, but also on the visual side of this aesthetic. This series begins with highly politicized artists and ends with the arrival of the 90s (the period of the most wildest neoliberal insertion in peruvian history), when music and its interpreters starts to focus almost entirely on romantic and love songs.



Map of Ancash

Marker on paper, 29.7 x 21cm. 2019



*En el cielo las estrellas (In the sky the stars)*

Marker on paper, 21 x 24 cm. 2019

*(In the sky/the stars/in the land the spines/inside my heart/the peruvian republic)*



*Amigas por siempre (Friends forever)*  
Marker on paper, 18 x 17 cm. 2019





*Agua Marina*

Marker on paper, 21 x 29.7 cm. 2019

## *Playlist*

1. Pastorita Huaracina - Quisiera quererte:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usAJYQdcuj8>
2. Pastorita Huaracina - En el cielo las estrellas:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XlfjJp6w9I>
3. Peregrina del Rímac - Sangre obrera:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADYnMwroMZs>
4. El Jilguero del Huascarán - ANTAC:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1YTc\\_3QJ\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1YTc_3QJ_Y)
5. Pintura Roja - Yo soy la cumbia:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohEI2bWtmd4>
6. Agua Marina - Paloma ajena:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ea5aPpPe-u0>

# *Possible logos for a possible Women's Union*



*Paper tiger*

Water tattoo on paper, 10.5 x 6 cm. 2019

The collective desire may also be linked to a politicized sphere such as trade unions, where the fight for women's rights encompasses both the work and the domestic (the claim on household chores, childcare, which is often not shared, since historically it has been relegated exclusively to women and is also not formally recognized as work; and among other gender problems).

From Pastorita Huaracina's idea of a Women's Union, I propose a visual exploration in search for logo prototypes, props and images that illustrate this imaginary union. Through tigers, lions, panthers and Micaela Bastidas, emerges what could be the Women's Union of Peru or of the world.

To address the issue of the continuous precariousness of labor rights and the situation of work in the late capitalism and neoliberal context of today, is necessary to review how this affects to historically vulnerable subjects, such as art and cultural workers, domestic workers, women and dissidences.

Therefore, to think about the complex relationship between work and gender (also taking into account equally important variables such as class and race) is to bring recognition on the construction of determine female identities linked to the domestic environment such like "the maid", "the nanny", "the housewife", "the mother".

A Women's Union as a possible space for re-contextualization and re-imagining these identities both locally and universally. A continue work in progress, a project proposed as a collaborative work for other people to imagine and design logos, props, write a collective manifesto, and what is more, to imagine other possible and necessary unions.



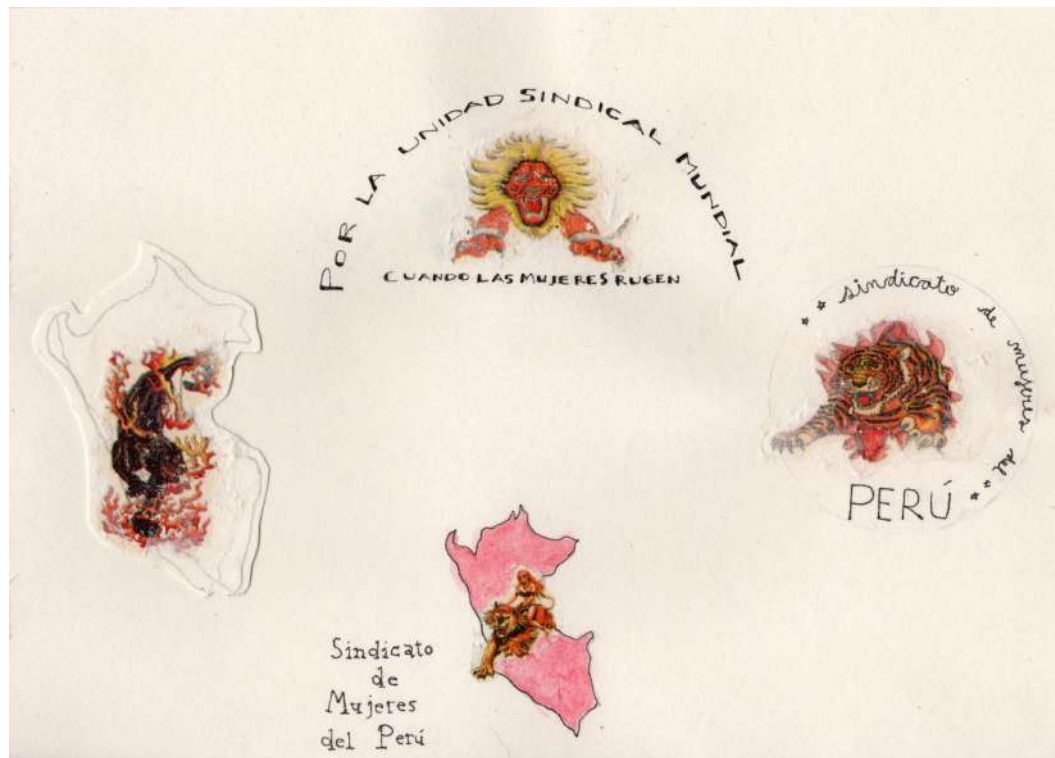
*General Strike*

Mixed technique (Marker and water tattoos on paper) 14.5 x 20.5 cm. 2019

Banner design and flag installation

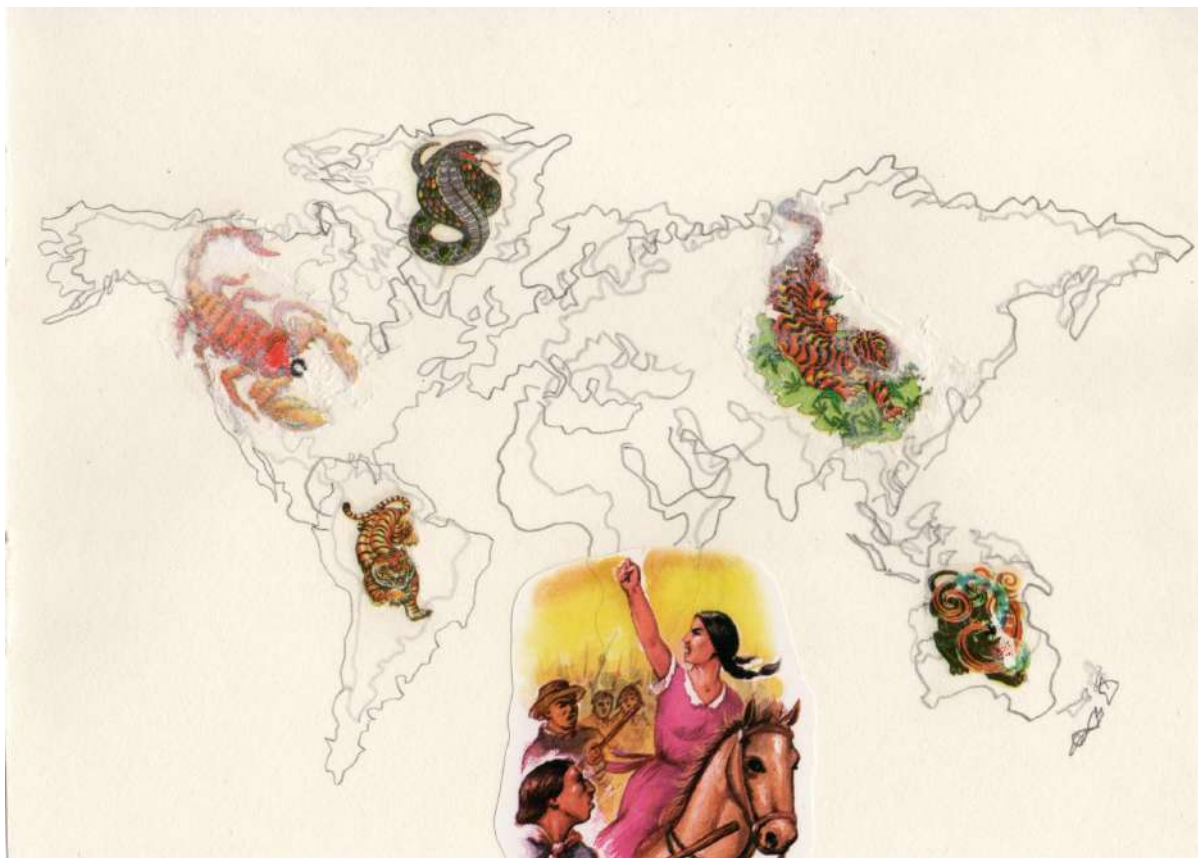
*"Long live the Women's Union / General Strike"*

"For world union unity / When women roar"



*Possible logos for a possible Womens Union*

Mixed technique (Marker, watercolor and water tattoos on paper), 14.5 x 20.5 cm. 2019



*Untitled*

Mixed technique (Pencil, sticker and water tattoos on paper), 14.5 x 20.5 cm. 2019



Cultural activities +

events +

art projects related



Poster of the event: *50 Years of revolutionary changes 1968-2018*  
(2018)

#### Event information:

In the 60s the world was shaking by the Chinese revolution and the anti-imperialist and national liberation movements that emerged in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Cuban revolution constitutes the highest point of the Latin American revolutionary wave. In this context, it is necessary to locate the events that occur in Peru on October 3, 1968. The Military Forces, under the leadership of General Juan Velasco Alvarado, initiated a process of profound economic and social transformations that made oligarchic Peru, a country in transit to modernity and sovereignty. They laid the economic and social foundations for democratic forms and mechanisms to achieve certain advances, even when they do not reach full citizenship. Therefore, we commemorate transcendental events such as the Agrarian Reform, Educational Reform, Declaration of Quechua as official language, Law of Native Communities and sovereign Foreign Policy that broke the oligarchic and colonial system.

#### Program

6.30 PM Screening: *Land without landlords*. Experimental documentary, Federico García y Pilar Roca. (1973, 11 min)

7.00 PM Roundtable: *Reform Process, 1968-1975*.  
Héctor Béjar, Salomón Lerner G., Vicente Otta and Mijail Mitrovic. Moderator: Fanny Palacios

8.30 PM Song of struggle and hope  
Margot Palomino

Lima, Casa Museo José Carlos Mariátegui, october 2018

Fb event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/977013315804066/>

This event in 2018 took place in Casa Museo José Carlos Mariátegui (Museum-House José Carlos Mariátegui), this has a relevant symbolic meaning because Mariátegui is the most important left-wing intellectual and writer of Peru, he theorized about communist philosophy and politics but he was able to transform it and generate new proposals that were adapted to the Peruvian and Latin American context. He was the founder of the Peruvian communist party (1928), founder of the General Confederation of Workers of Peru (1929), and he also founded and ran the publication named Amauta (which means “Master” or “Wise” in quechua language), which dynamized the local and Latin American cultural scene. Many artists, intellectuals, poets, journalists, among others, collaborated with their work, creating an avantgarde and committed with revolutionary changes, proposal.

It was José Carlos Mariátegui who stated that the problem of indigenous people was the problem of the land, a problem of the ownership regime of it. Until General Juan Velasco Alvarado's government, indigenous and non-white / spanish-speaker people, lived in a situation of semi-slavery. Perú had one of the highest concentration of land owned by a few of the region, these landowners were descendants of colonizers. Hence, this part of history is very controversial because the government expropriated the land in order to give it back to the native communities in form of cooperatives, but the economic power groups of nowadays that come from these ex landlords, became more protective of their wealthiness and of any type of restriction from the government that could affect it, they are always vigilantes of any possible change in the politic and economic model.

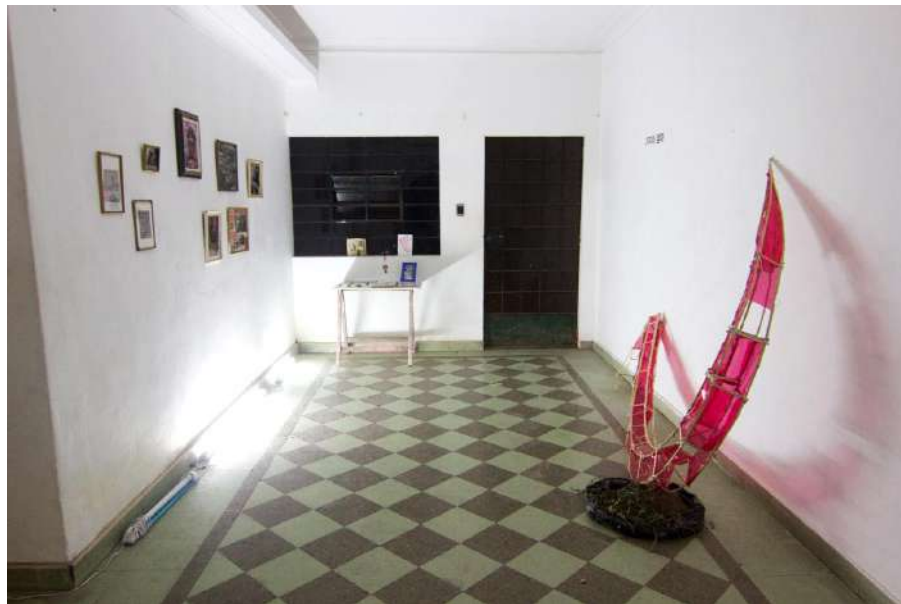
The result of this is that this period of history is hardly taught in schools, and when it is it is poorly done, and on the other hand this became polarized, some people argue that he did wrong expropriating this land because the cooperative system failed and peruvian economic development was delayed 30 years supposedly, but for a long time Peru had been stagnant in medieval, semi feudal era (economic, productively, and overall, in terms of basic human rights) before all these reforms and changes happened.

For all this is why i believe (and this is something that I like sharing with my dad), that is so important to bring up discussion over this subject, it is necessary the dialogue and generate these collective spaces, a space that help us to exchange different kind of experiences and knowledge. Therefore was important to have varied activities, in this opportunity we were able to project a short experimental documentary that was filmed during the time of agrarian reform, and we finished the night singing along with musician Margot Palomino.



Photography: Francisco Landa

# *If a hundred flowers bloom*



Exhibition view

This series was part of the collective exhibition of the same name *"If a hundred flowers bloom"*.

Andrea Garcia Roque, Almendra Otta, Christian Luza and Victor Ybazeta.  
Cultural space El cubil. Barranco, 2018

From the compilation of images and texts from Peruvian magazines of the 60s and 70s, new pieces are created using the collage technique. Searching different ways of approaching the national archive, of interrupting it. A reappropriation game, where new possibilities are built and rehearse, from the past, by being able to propose new relationships and create new contexts from the local environment, the history, important political-social moments and historical characters.

In this series there is an interest in addressing specific historical moments in both the national and international cases, and wonder how the Peruvian revolutionary process is linked to the global one (Cuba, China, USSR, May 68). Especially pointing the cases of relegated communities as peasantry and women groups, and how they start to become more relevant in the political and social life of the country.

What kind of myths are articulating the collective desire in order to carry out a political mass mobilization? A discourse elaborated with strong historical and cultural signifiers are embedded with new meanings, Tupac Amaru, Micaela Bastidas, José Carlos Mariátegui and even Velasco Alvarado himself.

An exercise from which visual and narrative representations emerge, different versions of the past open up to the future.





Exhibition view from *If a hundred flowers bloom*



*"Mao replegates towards the mountains / The workers organization was reconceive as a peasant movement / Mao and the red chinese army were the only ones to offer them what they had been waiting for centuries: the land / Their triumph was inevitable"*  
Collage, 11.5 x 13.9 cm 2018



*"Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend"*  
Collage, 11.5 x 13.9 cm 2018



Poster of the event: 50 years of Agrarian reform (2019)

## 50 years of Agrarian reform 1969-2019

### Roundtables:

*The actors speak, cultural impact, economic-productive meaning, construction of the citizenship*

*Screenings, music, dance and artistic exhibition*

*june 24, 25 and 26*

In order to organize this symposium in 2019, my father and I created the Taki Camac collective which means *dance of change* in quechua language.

The activities were held for three days at the local of National Agrarian Confederation (CNA), this organization of agricultural producers was founded in 1974 to protect the recovered land from the counter reform and the landowners (gamonales). This made the event very special because a lot of the people who lived in that time and were beneficiaries of the agrarian reform or worked for the revolutionary government were present and they could talk about their experiences before and after the reform. I believe that for younger people like me and to the general public, listening and learning about this historical process from real people who participated in it and not just from books and archival materials, makes a difference in terms of generating a different kind of understanding, a broader and more complex one.





Opening day

Dance: Abuelitos de Quipán (Grandparents of Quipán)

#### Event information:

The end of servitude and the semi-feudal estate expresses the cancellation of traditional Peru and the beginning of social and political modernity. The servant who has become a peasant and owner of his own land, also owns his destiny and with that begins the long and winding road of conquest of citizenship.

Recognition of Quechua as the official language, the right to vote for the illiterate, Law of Native Communities, in which the ownership of their habitat is recognized, are claims that radically transform the status of indigenous peoples endorsed later by the Political Constitution of the year 1979 .

Today, better than ever, the democratic and national content achieved by the reforms of the Velasco period, 1968-1975, which temporarily foreshadowed a sovereign homeland with a democratizing encouragement, can be calibrated.

To celebrate 50 years of this historical reform is to maintain the aspiration for full freedom, social justice and national sovereignty, political pluralism, intercultural citizenship, environmental sustainability, gender equality and regional alliances.

Fb event:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/439721496588734/>



Jesús Ruiz Durand (artist) presents *"Agrarian reform, visual testimonies"*, projection of posters and photographs on agrarian reform.



A member of the group Abuelitos de Quipán (Grandparents of Quipán ) and Antolin Huascar president of the National Agrarian Confederation



Musician Elena Pasapera performing



# *Land without landlords*

I wanted to reproduce a slogan that was widely used by peasant movements in the struggles for land and I chose to do it with artificial flowers. This slogan along with others like “land or death” come from a long history of organized movements that fought for trying to recover land, which configures an extensive lineage of usurpers and land owners.

It seems that the relationship between the land and the people who inhabit it is always changing, although it could be difficult to name it. Exploitation, domination? How does economic, social, and cultural systems orders around land during pre-Inca, Inca, colonial and republican periods?

What has changed in 50 years since the agrarian reform, how we relate to land and to each other as a community?

In this installation the artificial materiality of the flowers that seeks to represent something from nature shows us the contradictions of our present and future. Is it the city, progress, capitalism of today, is only capable of producing beautiful but sterile things? how are things valued today, for how much do they cost? for their representations or for what they are? are these separable qualities?

I do not believe these flowers are useless or merely ornamental, but I do not think that they worth or exist by themselves, they become alive in a context of collectivity where historical personalities who have participated in these struggles previously against the landlords and today against transnational corporations and big companies, resignify space and words.



*Tierra sin patronos (Land without landlords)*

Installation view, National Agrarian Confederation auditorium. 2019



*Tierra sin patronos (Land without landlords)*

Installation (phrase made with artificial flowers), variable sizes. 2019



*Agrarian reform 1969-2019*

Collage (Stamp, newspaper, marker and water tattoos on paper), 29.7 x 42 cm. 2019





# INKARRI



**INKARRI**  
Object, variable sizes. 2019

*The first god is Inkarrí. Born of the sun in a wild woman, did everything that exists on earth. Tied the sun and locked the wind in the mountains to finish his work of creation.*

*Then Inkarrí decided to found a city and launched a barrel from the top of a mountain. Where the barrel fell would found Cusco.*

*When Inkarrí created everything that exists and the human being, laws were dictated so they could live in society, the Spanish king arrived and captured Inkarrí.*

*It was God (the Catholic) who ordered the troops of the king-state to capture and behead Inkarrí. It was not the Spanish king who defeated Inkarrí and made cut off the head.*

*There was a prior exchange of mutually incomprehensible messages between the gods.*

*Inkarrí was martyred and beheaded. The head was brought to Cusco.*

*Inkarrí's head was in the Lima Palace and remained alive but had no power because it was separated from the body.*

*As long as the possibility of the reintegration of the body was maintained, the humanity created by Inkarrí (Indigenous people) continued to be subjugated.*

*But Inkarrí's head was alive and the body was rebuilding down. When the body was complete it returned.*

*Inkarrí's head was released and reintegrated with the body, was able to face the Catholic god again and competed with him.*

*It was the day of the final judgment.*

After the different versions of the inkarrí myth collected by José María Arguedas





Details and exhibition view from group exhibition *Carpa Interdimensional*.  
Collection of materialized objects from another dimension. El Garajr, Lima, 2020.



# Publications

Besides the sphere of production, the system and the context in which my work circulates and socializes later is also important to me, the traditional art market and the academic environment, are problematic spaces with big flaws and limitations. On the other hand in the process of materialization when creating physical objects, sometimes I like to see things that I imagine transformed into specific objects with practical uses. Therefore an object that can be reproduced easily, allows me to reach a larger and diverse audience, that's why I usually turn to publications as form.

The following are two recent publications that I made, they are a kind of object books, hybrid objects. The first one is an illustrated fanzine with poems, the poems are from about 7-9 years ago, when I was in the first years of college, they have a coming of age style, innocence mixed with excitement by new experiences, for starting to know and recognize the world, and a nostalgia for leaving a stage behind. A couple of years ago I compiled them and even though many of the poems no longer felt current even for me, the visual part consolidated the proposal, building a wild, fresh, colorful and suggestive world from old photographs, stickers and water tattoos. All these things I had been collecting throughout my life from different parts of Lima city, from second hand markets, street shops, street vendors. Through them I try to reflect on how my relationship with the city has influenced and formed my taste and the way i consume or collect objects.

The second publication is an sticker album that gathers this personal collection of water tattoos, which I consider an informal archive from the city. I really like the ephemeral nature and beauty of water tattoos, i wanted to share something that stimulated me to create with other people, maybe it could generate the same effect on them. A detachment exercise, I did not want to hold on them and keep stored, like a dead collection, I think other kind of relationships beyond privet possession, with objects is possible. If i was excited when i found them maybe other people could feel this way, and the stickers would have many different uses and possibilities.



Link to see full first publication: [https://drive.google.com/open?id=1w\\_jGCP6xkdilsPBArpHelhm0pjNBjUjv](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1w_jGCP6xkdilsPBArpHelhm0pjNBjUjv)





*"despite everything, words, they say what they can"*