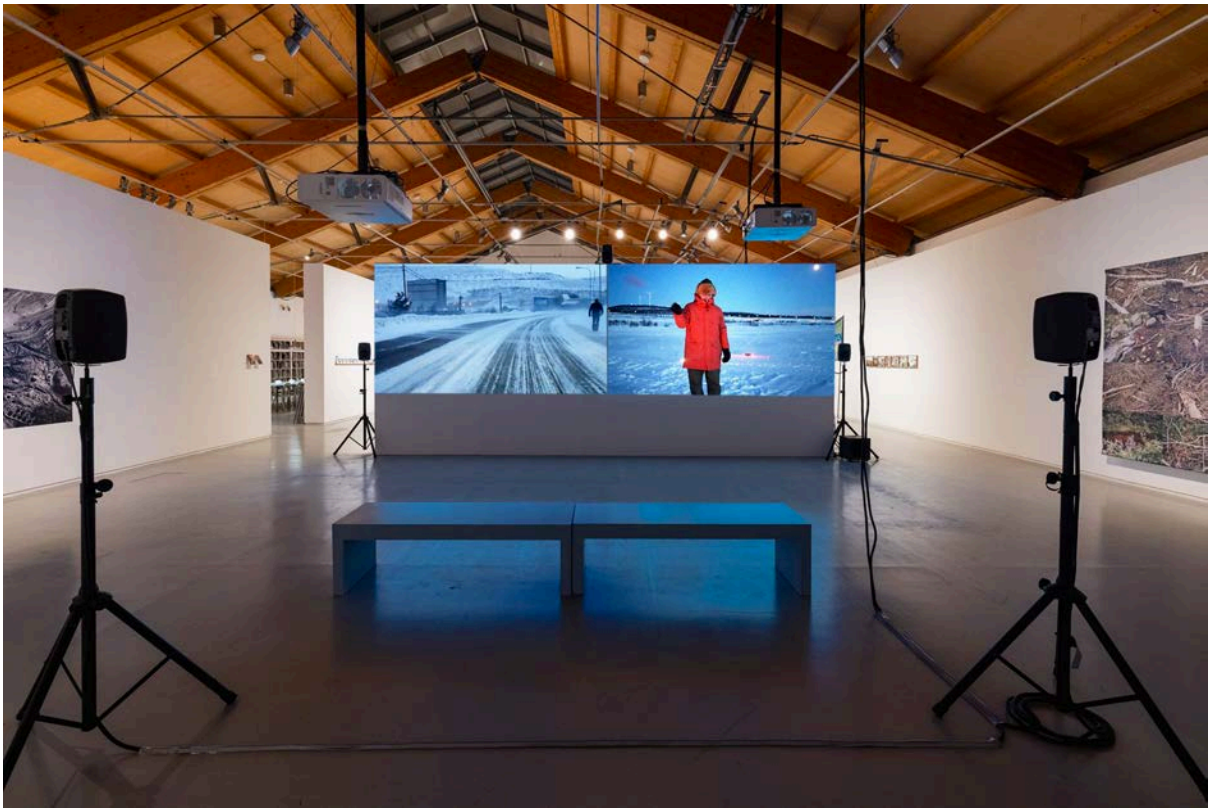
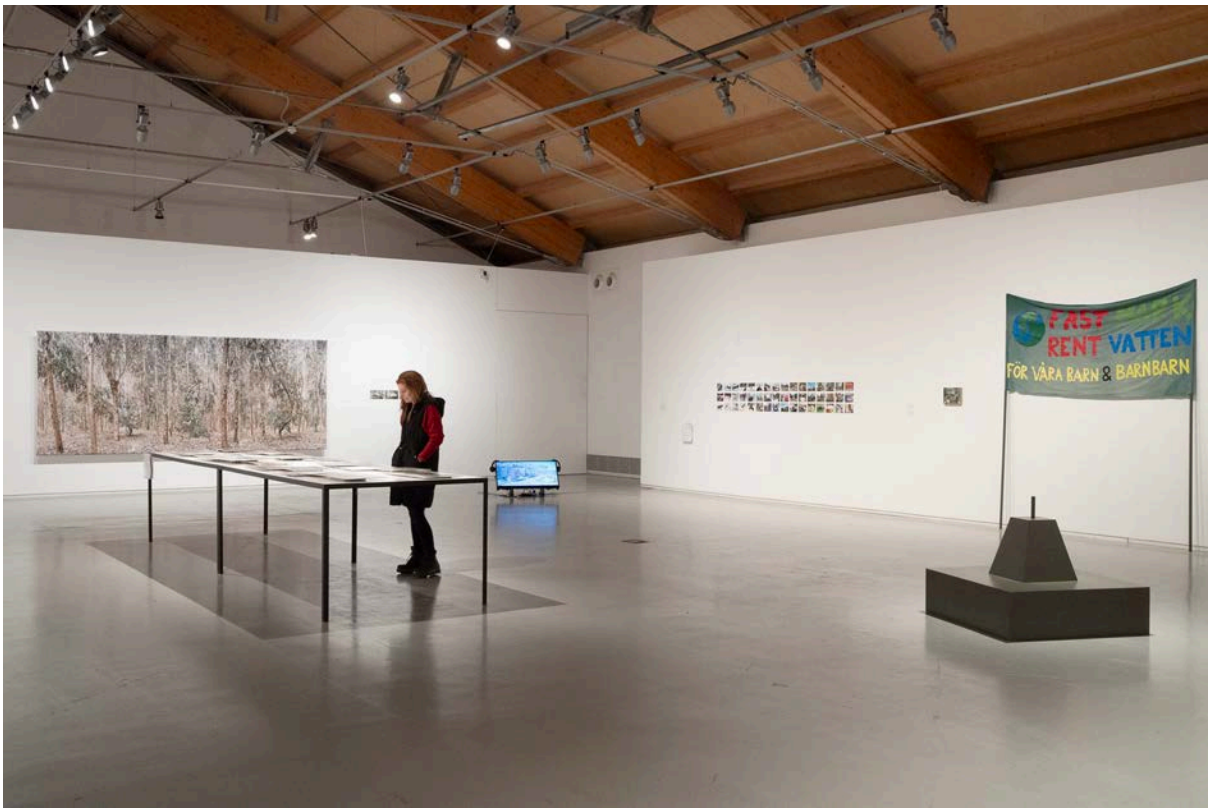
From Mars to Venus
Ignacio Acosta
13a Bienal de Arte Leandro Cristòfol - Prologue
Curated by María Íñigo Clavo and Christian Alonso
Centre d'Art la Panera, Lleida, Spain
19.10.2024 — 02.02.2025



From Mars to Venus brings together works by artist and researcher Ignacio Acosta untangling politics of representation, extraction and resistance across two seemingly distant geographies: Sápmi in northern Sweden, home to the Sámi people; and the Atacama Desert and Andes Mountains region in Chile. The expansion of mining projects in these regions already affected by anthropogenic climate change has led to a rise in social, environmental, and economic injustices. Faced with the sustained violence that mining exerts on bodies and ecosystems, the exhibition brings these distant regions into dialogue with each other through their diverse strategies of resistance, highlighting the determination of Indigenous and local people to maintain their knowledge, traditions, and ways of life in increasingly fragmented territories.

In ancient cosmology, planets and minerals have long been associated with alchemical traditions, astrology, and symbolic correspondences. Mars is symbolized by iron, while Venus is associated with copper. In this work, Sápmi where the majority of the iron is mined in Europe, becomes Mars; and the Atacama-Andes region, where the largest amount of the world's copper is produced, becomes Venus. Mars and Venus; iron and copper—like yin and yang, opposites but interconnected.

Rooted in an animistic belief that inanimate objects and places possess souls and agency, Acosta's work envisions these distant territories rich in minerals and wisdom as connected bodies of knowledge. The exhibition begins with three video projects that highlight the role of social movements in refusing and contesting mining exploration ventures. Juxtaposing traditional knowledge with the scale of mining operations and the observation of space, the works consider the roles of technology and spirituality in resisting settler colonial exploitation, and open up ways of thinking and engaging with care-based community-led strategies of visibility and counter-surveillance.



Showed alongside these films are photographic installations, documents, objects and a video that reflect on the unequal geographical development of extractivism, zooming in on mining's legal frameworks and the resultant loss of biodiversity and toxicity from resource extraction. Stemming from a practice grounded in rigorous research methodologies and long-standing collaborative processes, these works challenge the narrative of the so-called "green transition" while acknowledging these spaces as pluriversal and highlighting the importance of small community-run spaces of resistance forged in the confluence of feminist and queer activism.

Ignacio Acosta is a visual artist and researcher based between London and Jåhkåmåhkke (Jokkmokk). He works with photography and video in territories made vulnerable through ecological exploitation, colonial intervention and intensive capitalization. Acosta holds a practice-based PhD from the University of Brighton (UK), as part of the collaborative arts research project *Traces of Nitrate: Mining History and Photography Between Britain and Chile*, in collaboration with art and design historian Louise Purbirck and photographer and researcher Xavier Ribas, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Their current research project *Frozen Future* documents the inequalities of copper mining in the Chilean Andes and lithium extraction in the Atacama Desert and is based between the University of Brighton and the Royal College of Arts (RCA). He leads the collaborative project *Indigenous Perspectives on Forest Fires, Drought and Climate Change: Sápmi,* funded by the Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development (FORMAS) developed in collaboration with Sámi scholar May-Briitt Öhman, the Sami and non-Sámi community, based at the Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies on Racism (CEMFOR) Uppsala University, Sweden. Recent exhibitions in which he has participated include *Image Ecology,* C/O Berlin, Germany (2023-2024); *Mining Photography: The Ecological Footprint of Image Production,* Gewerbe Museum Winterthur, Switzerland (2023-2024), and *Mein ABC ist elementar*, Sitterwerk Foundation, Switzerland (2023).

From Mars to Venus marks Acosta's first solo exhibition in Spain and serves as the prologue to the 13th Leandro Cristóbal Art Biennial at La Panera Art Centre in Lleida, dedicated to art and extractivism. Collaborators: R&D project *Sense of place and socio-spatial inclusion in vulnerable neighbourhoods*, Faculty of Arts, University of Lleida (SENSCLUSIÓN, PID2021-123255OB-I00); R&D project *Visuality and geoaesthetics in the era of the ecosocial crisis* (VIGEO, PID2022-139211OB-I00), Faculty of Geography and History, University of Barcelona; Open University of Catalonia.

—

I Marsfolkets våld
[The violence of the Martians]
Carl Henner
1955
Lindqvist Förlag, Sweden
18.7 × 13 cm

Spökflyg over Venus
[Ghost flights over Venus]
Carl Henner
1955
Lindqvist Förlag, Sweden
18.7 × 13 cm

Courtesy of Elizabeth Johansson, bokantikvariat *Myggholkens väntrum*



Science fiction novels for young adults written by Henrik Nanne under the pen name Carl Henner.

—

From Mars to Venus: Activism of the Future
2023
San Pedro de Atacama, Atacama Desert, Chile / Kiruna, Norrbotten County, Swedish Sápmi
Two-channel video installation with surround sound
Edited by Lara García Reyne. Sound design by Udit Duseja
Features Åsa Andersson, Carola Aguilar Cruz, Janne Sirniö, Maj-Doris Rimpi, Karen Luza and Veronica Moreno
For more information see here
See 7’53” video teaser here
See 22’20” video here. Password: Resistance
See here presentation *Conference: Extractivism/Activism,* Autograph/Paul Mellon Centre, London, 2024
Commissioned for the exhibition *Into the Deep: Mines of the Future,* Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen, Germany (2023) curated by Claudia Emmert and Ina Neddermeyer



From Mars to Venus: Activism of the Future proposes a connection between two distant Indigenous territories: Kiruna—Sweden’s northernmost town, 200 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle—located in Sápmi, where the iron mining industry has historically occupied traditional Sámi lands; and the Chilean Atacama Desert, one of the driest places on Earth—inhabited by the Lickanantay people for thousands of years, where copper mining and lithium extraction are depleting underground aquifers and restricting access to fresh water for Lickanantay communities. It juxtaposes the vast scale of mining operations with territorial struggles over water, biodiversity, cultural identity loss and the observation and exploration of space. While Kiruna is a gateway to the aurora borealis and a key site for studying the Earth’s magnetic field and its interaction with solar wind; the Atacama is a key site for astronomical observation, hosting the world’s largest observatories, some of which are located on the Chajnantor plateau at more than 5,000 metres above sea level.

—

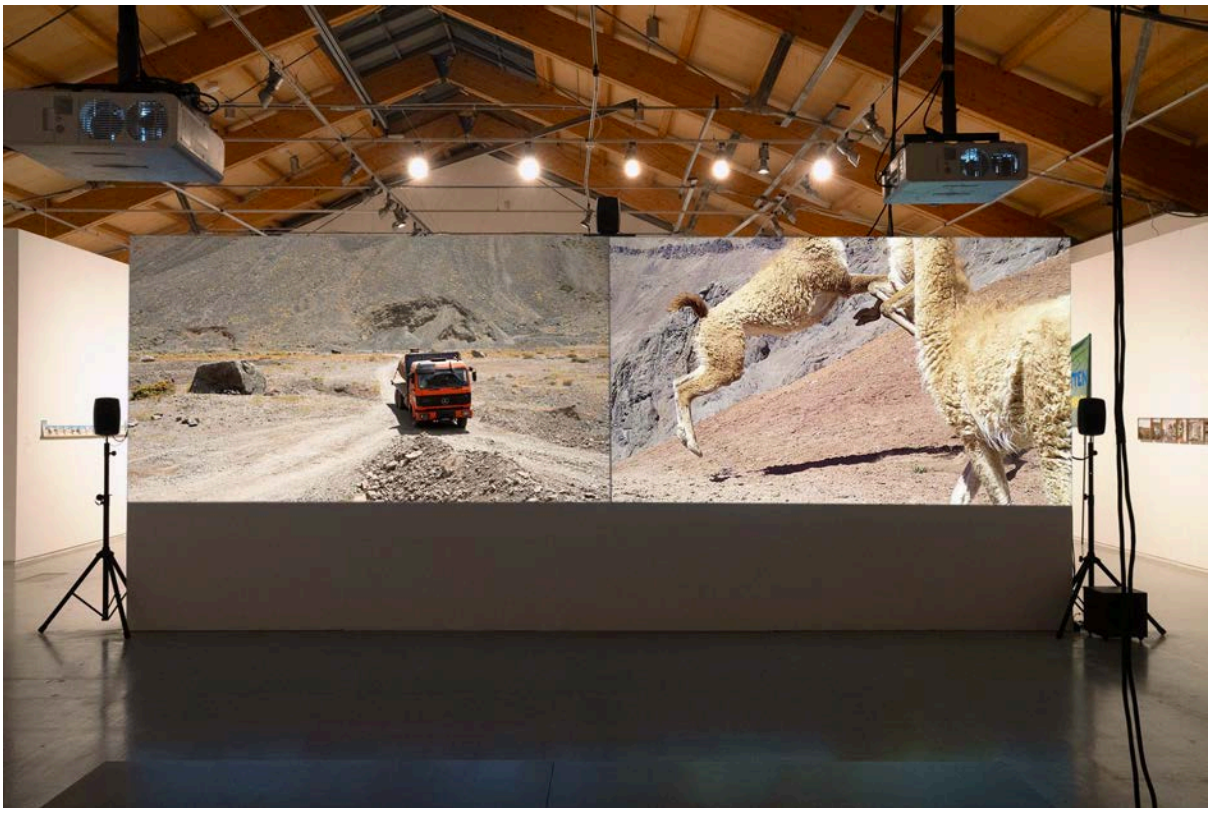
Litte ja Goabddá [Drones and Drums]
2018
Jåhkåmåhkke (Jokkmokk), Norrbotten County, Swedish Sábme
Two-channel video installation with surround sound
Edited by Lara García Reyne, sound design by Udit Duseja, colourist Paul Willis
Features Gun Hofgaard, Henrik Blind, Mose Agestam, Lars-Patrik Tjärkat and activists from Kolonierna
For more information see here
See 3'33" video teaser here
See 16'18" video here. Password: Resistance
Commissioned for the exhibition *Drone Vision: Surveillance, Warfare, Protest*, Hasselblad Foundation, Gothenburg, Sweden. Curated by Sarah Tuck and Louise Wolthers



Litte ja Goabddá explores the use of drone technologies as a tool of minority indigenous resistance to the proposed Gállak mining operations in Jokkmokk municipality, Norrbotten County, Sweden. It explores how the drone view and the drum manifest and reconcile the technological and the spiritual in counter-protests against settler colonial deforestation and extractive industries. Drone technologies have, for the most part, been associated with ideas of vertical control, surveillance and warfare, and have been perceived as a technology that extends corporate and military power. At the same time, because of the drone's capacity to generate accurate image-based mapping and analytics, drones are also used by the mining industry to increase efficiency and profitability. By artistically re-purposing this technology, Acosta attempts to offer new ways of seeing how the geographies of ecological social movements are connected across time and place.

—

Inverting the Monolith
2022
Parque Andino Juncal, Valparaíso Region, Chile
Two-channel video installation with surround sound
Edited by Lara García Reyne. Sound design by Udit Duseja
Features activists from the network Guardianxs Akunkawa
In collaboration with Parque Andino Juncal
For more information see here
See 7’20” video teaser here
See 16’06” video here. Password: Resistance
Commissioned for the exhibition *Ewiges Eis*, Museum Sinclair Haus, Bad-Homburg, Germany (2022-23). Curated by Kathrin Meyer

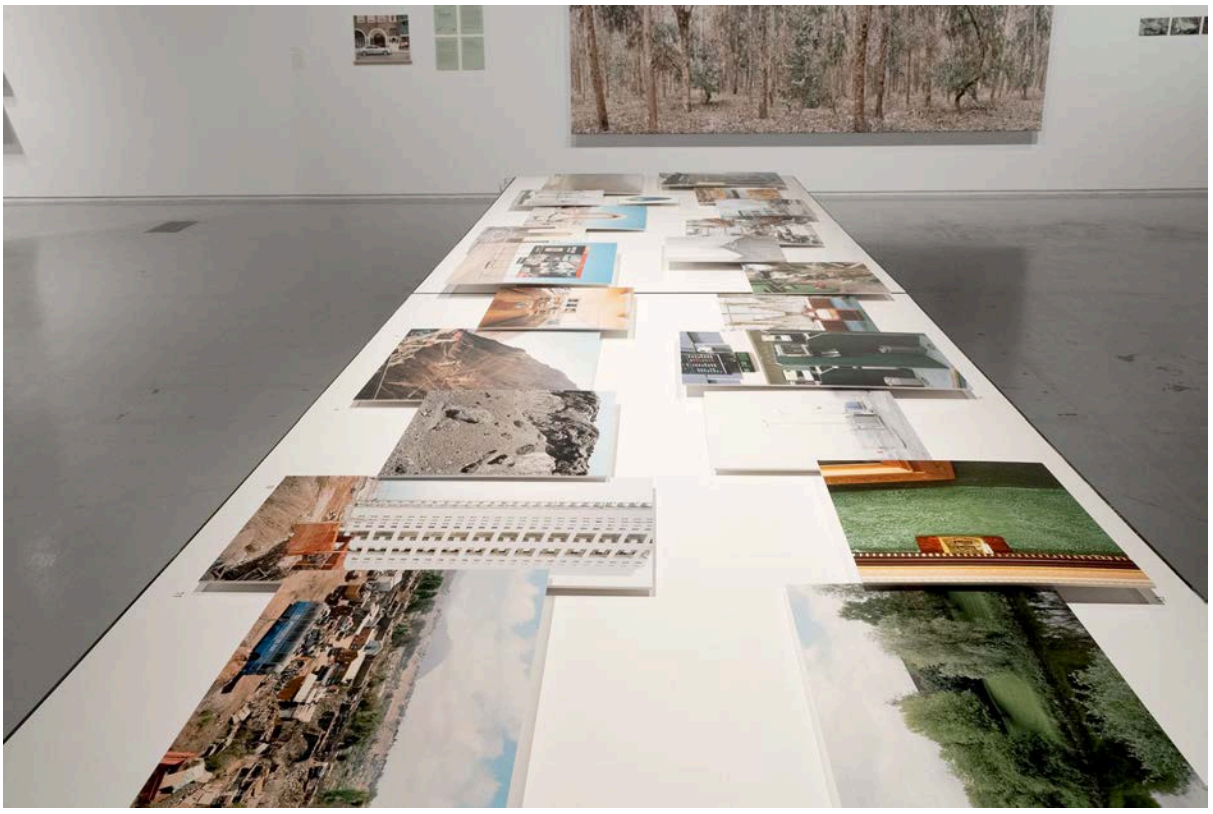


Inverting the Monolith delves into the clash between conservation and extractivism in Parque Andino Juncal, a protected area located in the Andean Mountains. Images from camera traps are intermingled with audiovisual material from activists from the network Guardianxs Akunkawa, recorded with their mobile phones, denouncing the impact the U.S-financed mining exploration company Nutrex is having on the glacier systems. Together they create a visual dialogue and multimedia narrative chronicling the progress of mining exploration in the area. The monitoring and documentation of fauna forms part of a wider strategy to contest the mining threat and show the value of conservation within this high-value ecosystem. *Inverting the Monolith* excavates and highlights the unseen: both the covert mining activities that violate local land laws, and the counter-surveillance work conducted by activists aiming to expose these illegal pursuits using drones and camera traps.

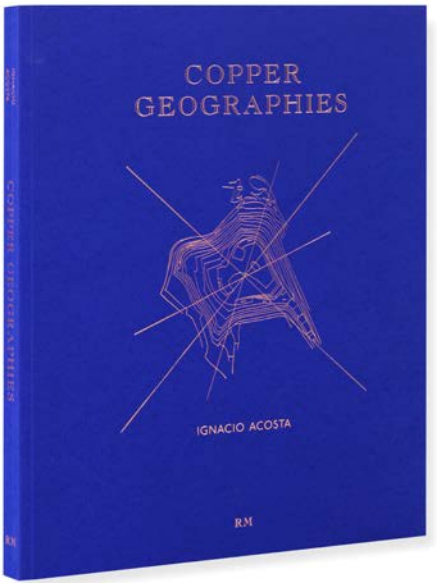
—

Copper Geographies
2012-2016
Table with 22 photographs of various sizes.
For more information see here

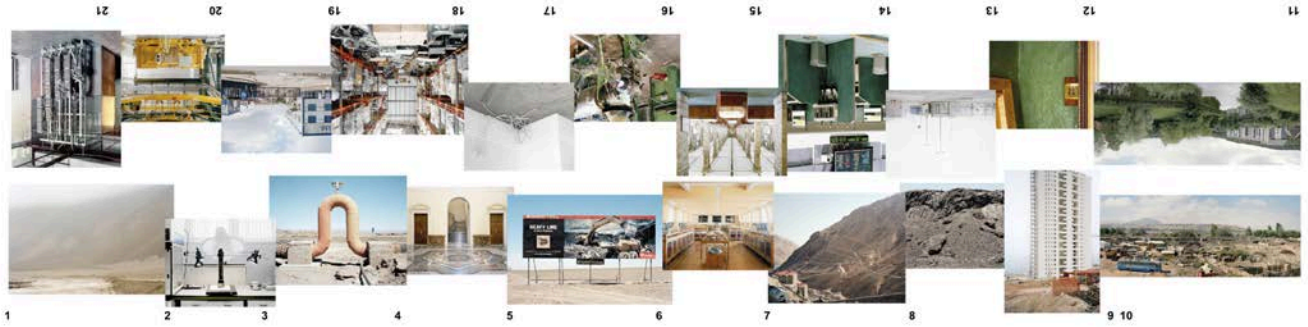




This table display follows copper's journey from raw material to stock market value, from smelted commodity via capital wealth to recycled material. The project documents spaces of circulation, contamination, protest and trade from the Atacama Desert to Wales and the City of London, making visible the geographical origins of the copper hidden in our technological devices, which returns to its place of origin with added value as recycled material.



Download PDF of the book here.



Captions:

1. *Calcantite. Copper sulphate pentahydrate from the Atacama Desert.* Private collection, London, England, 2014
2. *Sulphuric acid route.* Route 1, Atacama Desert, Chile, 2012
3. *Chalcopyrite, iron and copper sulphide, from the Atacama Desert.* Geology Collection, World Museum Liverpool, England, 2015
4. *Water pipe.* Route 1, Atacama Desert, Chile, 2012
5. *Mineral collection. Ignacio Domeyko Mineralogical Museum.* La Serena, Chile, 2014
6. *Billboard.* Ruta 25, Calama, Atacama Desert, Chile, 2012
7. *Former home of Maximiano Errázuriz Valdivieso (1832-1890), industrialist and magnate of copper mining.* Embassy of Brasil, Santiago, Chile, 2012
8. *Sewell, old mining camp.* Andes Mountains, Chile, 2012
9. *Waste from the closed Panucillo mine.* Ovalle Region, Chile, 2014
10. *Buildings resulting from copper mining boom.* Iquique, Chile, 2012
11. *Panoramic view of a 19th century copper smelter.* Las Compañías, La Serena Region, Chile, 2014
12. *Panoramic view of a 19th century copper smelter.* Lower Swansea Valley, Wales, 2014.
13. *Objects containing copper within Sudley House, one of Liverpool's main collections of paintings, assembled by George Holt (1825-1896) through the trade in copper and other raw materials.* Liverpool, England, 2015
14. *Copper warehouse and storehouse.* South dock area, Liverpool, England, 2014
15. L*ondon Metal Exchange trading circle.* The City, London, England, 2012
16. *Victorian mineral collection.* Minerals Gallery, Natural History Museum, London, England, 2012

17. *Industrial production of copper wire.* Aberdare, South Wales, 2015
18. *Electrical cables.* Slade School of Arts, London, England, 2017
19. *Refurbished computers at Computer Aid International; 41,536 units were shipped to Chile.* London, England, 2015
20. *Metal recycling warehouse.* South Docklands, Liverpool, 2014
21. *Very Large Telescope, the world's most advanced optical instrument.* Paranal, Atacama Desert, Chile, 2012
22. *Telephone spying system installed by the National Intelligence Centre (CNI) during the Pinochet military dictatorship (1973-1990).* Salvador Allende Foundation, Santiago de Chile, Chile, 2017

—

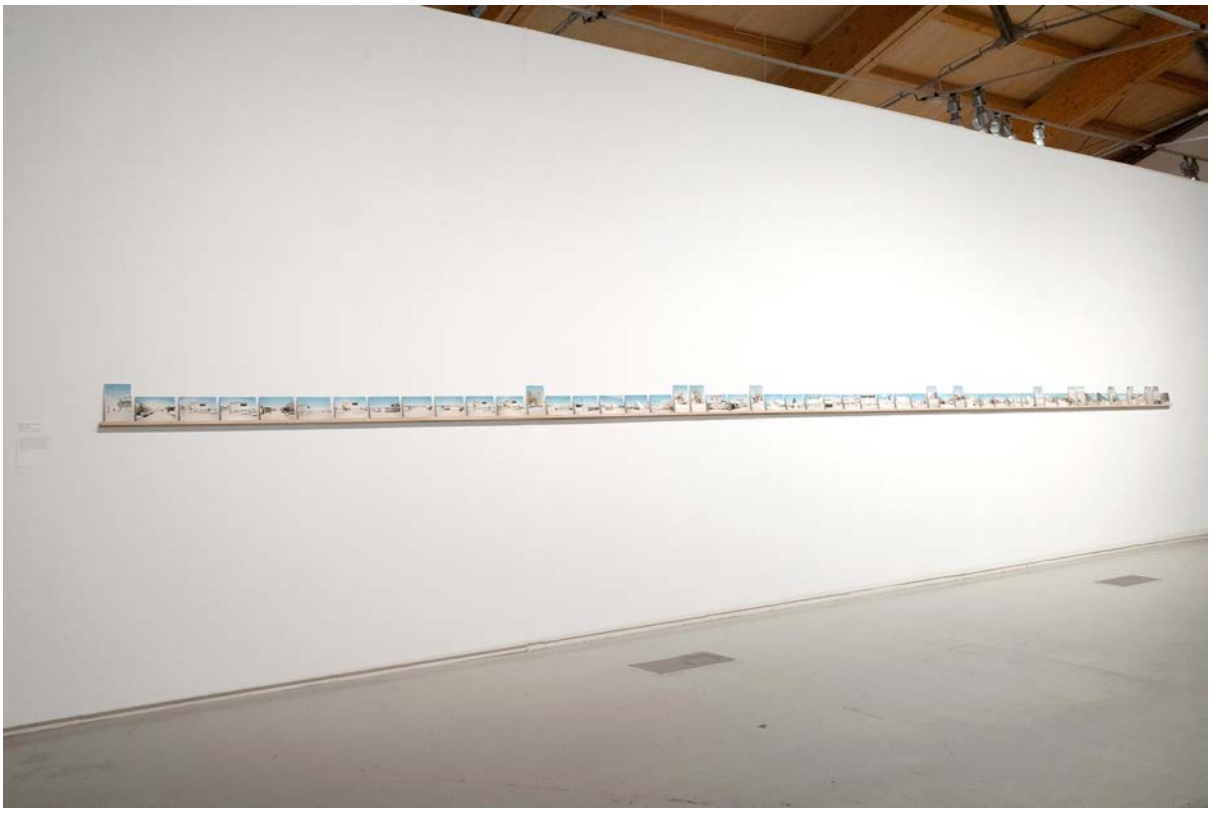
Satellite view of Chuquicamata
C. 2010 Courtesy of the Aerial Photogrammetric Service of the Chilean Air Force (SAF)
Poster, 150 × 250 cm



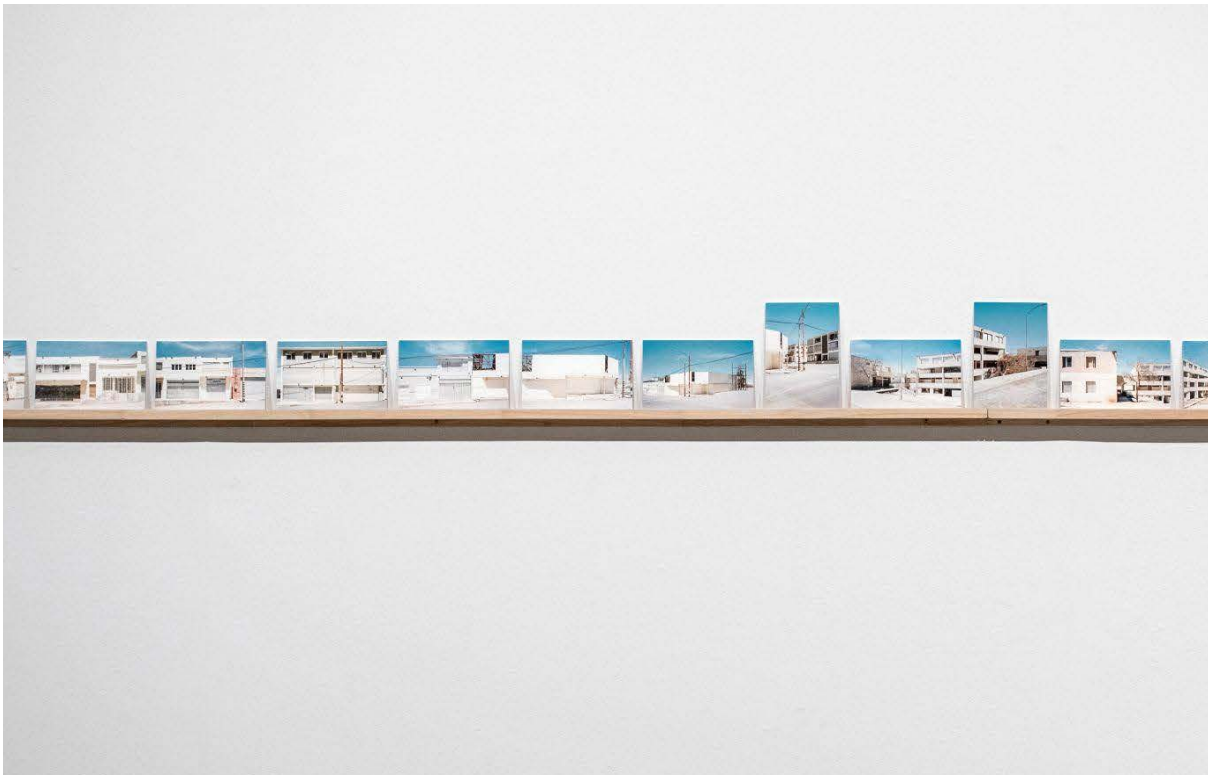
A satellite view of Chuquicamata depicting one of the world’s largest open-pit copper mines, situated in Chile’s Atacama Desert. The mine became a pivotal site in Chile's history following the nationalization of its copper by Salvador Allende in 1971, representing the struggle for resource sovereignty.

—

Miss Chuquicamata, The Slag
2017
Chuquicamata, Atacama Desert, Chile
52 photographs, 12×18cm each



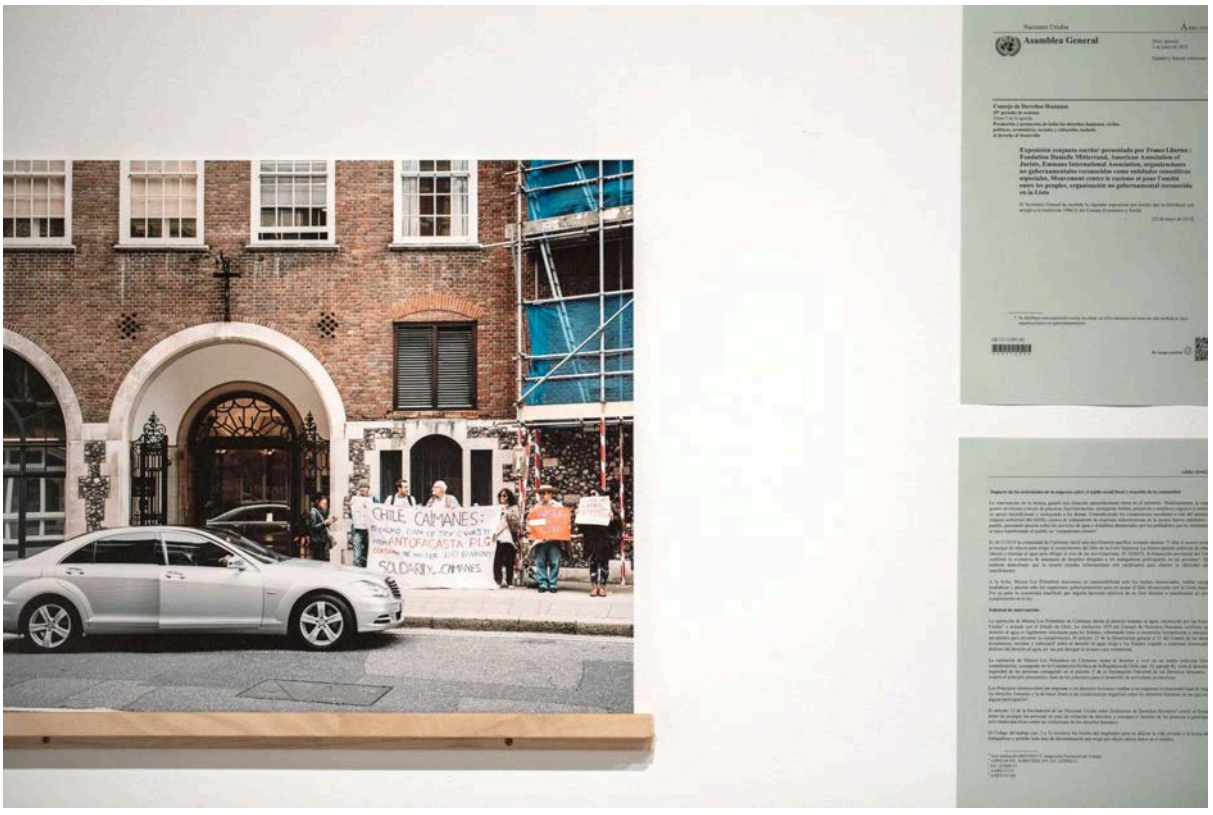
Photographic installation of the corporate mining town of Chuquicamata. The piece draws upon the notions of repetition and seriality embedded in mining towns. Using a large format camera to document the urban landscape, it emulates Acosta's walk. The town—which has the same name as the mine—was designed as a model city in the New York offices of the Guggenheim brothers in the early 20th century. Its inhabitants were forcibly evacuated in 2007 to the city of Calama because of the high levels of pollution caused by the mine's relentless expansion, which threatened public health.



—

Toxic “Forest”
2013
Coquimbo Region, Chile and Church House, London
Photograph 40x50cm, 4 A4 documents, photograph 1.8x4.3m, 3 Google Earth views 15x25cm





Demonstration organised by the London Mining Network with the community of Caimanes in front of the Annual General Meeting of Antofagasta Plc, a Chilean multinational listed on the London Stock Exchange.

A document published by the United Nations on the consequences of the activity of the Los Pelambres mining company and the El Mauro tailings dam in the community of Caimanes, which has led to a serious decrease in water for irrigation and animals; contamination of the community's drinking water network; archaeological loss; and disruption to the lives of its 2,000 inhabitants.

A eucalyptus “forest”—the tree hailing from Australia—was planted near the Los Pelambres copper mine to absorb contaminated water residues. The mine, located 3,800 meters above sea level in the Andes, extracts copper and transports it as concentrate (a mixture of sand containing about 30% copper) to the Pacific port of Punta Chungo via pipelines that require large amounts of water. At the port, the concentrate is dried and exported as raw material, primarily to Asian markets. Excess contaminated water is disposed of through the eucalyptus plantation via evaporation.

Google views of Pelambres copper mine, El Mauro tailings dam, and Port Chungo.

—

Giesse
[Summer]
2017
Gállok mining site, Norrbotten County, Swedish Sábme
Photograph 220×290cm
Courtesy of Hasselblad Foundation, Gothenburg



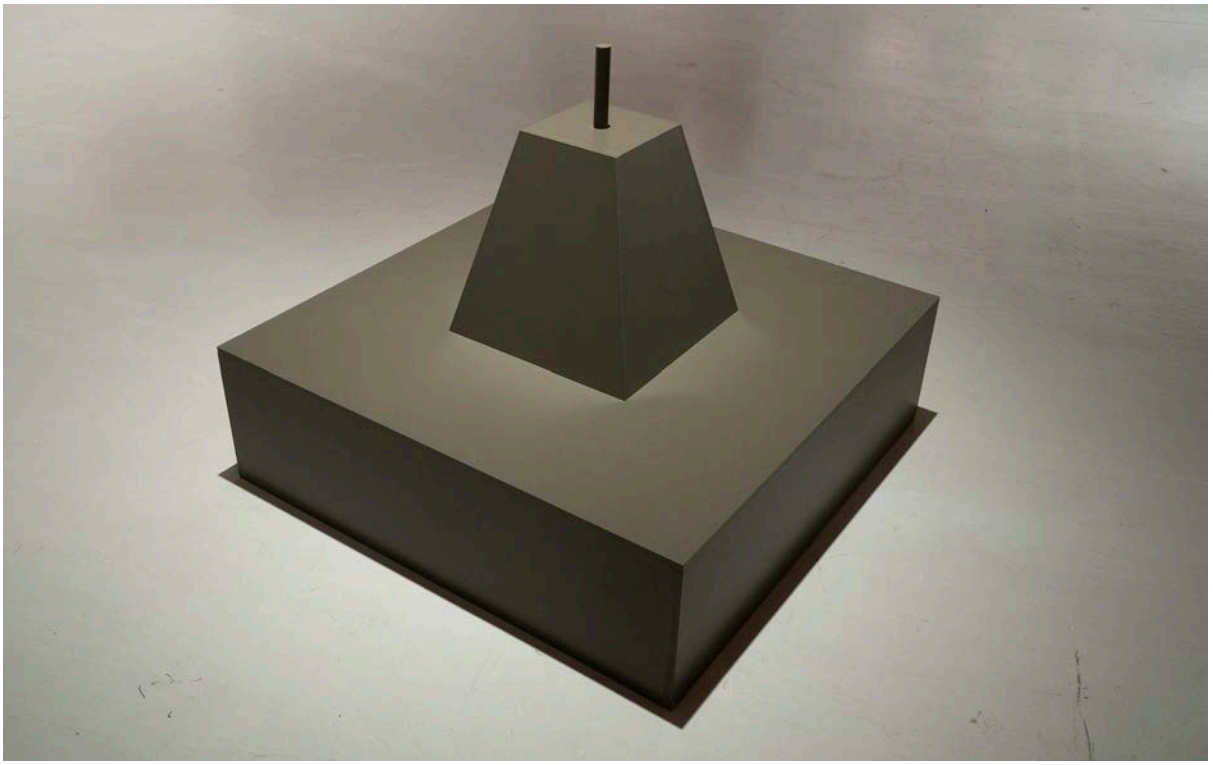
Vertical views of Earth as forensic evidence of clear-cutting, a widespread practice in Nordic countries where all trees in a given area are felled. These photographs were taken in Gállok, at the site where Beowulf Mining Plc extracted iron ore samples and where large manifestations took place in 2013. While some images focus on the remains of the Boreal forests after being cut down, others depict traces of the naturally occurring iron-oxidizing bacteria that feed on iron-rich water systems.

—

Mining Monolith
2019
Sculptural object
100×100×70cm



Sculptural object that subverts the original “Mining Monolith” or “Survey Monument” as described in the Chilean Mining Code—as a white pyramidal structure—created during the military dictatorship of Pinochet (1973-1990). Under Chilean law, ownership of Land is separated from the mineral resources beneath the earth's surface, allowing concession owners to explore or exploit a territory while bypassing the rights of surface owners.



—

Projecto Caliente
[Hot Project]
2019
Juncal Andean Park, Valparaíso region, Chile
1 photograph 72x90 cm, 35 A4 documents
Courtesy of the environmentalist Tomás Dinges (Parque Andino Juncal)
From *Mining Monument*
Download documents here





Documentary notes for the video *Inverting the Monolith* collected in collaboration with Parque Andino Juncal. These documents examine the legal case surrounding *Proyecto Caliente* (Hot Project), a mining exploration venture undertaken in 2019 by the U.S. company Nutrex Spa in parts of the neighboring Hacienda Ganadera Tongoy. They provide evidence of Nutrex Spa's activities, including the construction

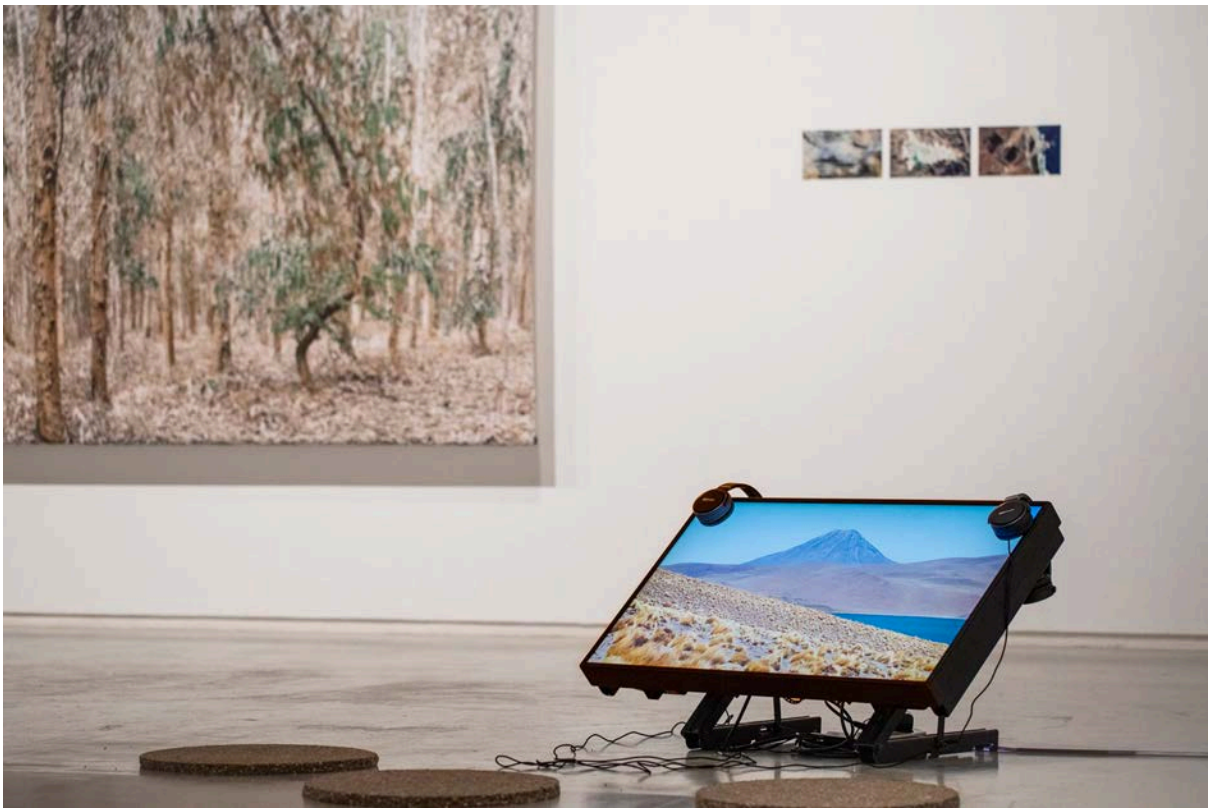
of 24 mining monoliths, construction roads, and drilling platforms, which disrupted watercourses and altered the local flora and fauna. Additionally, the documents delve into the resistance organized by Parque Andino Juncal and social movements from the Aconcagua Valley, which include the 'Mining Logbooks' written by park rangers—which offer a meticulous account of the mining operations. These collective efforts have, to date, successfully prevented the mining venture from advancing to exploit the mountain range.

—

Green Paradox
2024
San Pedro de Atacama, desierto de Atacama, Chile
Single chanel video.
For more information see here
See 5’27”m video here [English version] here [German version]. Password: Resistance
Commissioned for *The House of Futures*, Futurium, Berlin



This video features Karen Luza, a queer activist and equine therapist from the Lickanantay Indigenous community of San Pedro de Atacama, who is fighting to protect water from extractivism. The video changes the “green transition” narrative, which claims that a substantial increase in metal mining is necessary to meet the material needs of renewable energy technologies and associated infrastructure. It acknowledges the Atacama Desert as a pluriversal territory where multiple worldviews, knowledge systems, and ways of being coexist. It refutes the idea of the Atacama as a desolate place by following water systems from their source in the Tatio geothermal fields in the Andes, through biodiverse ecosystems, canalization for agricultural use, and eventual diversion for extractive activities.

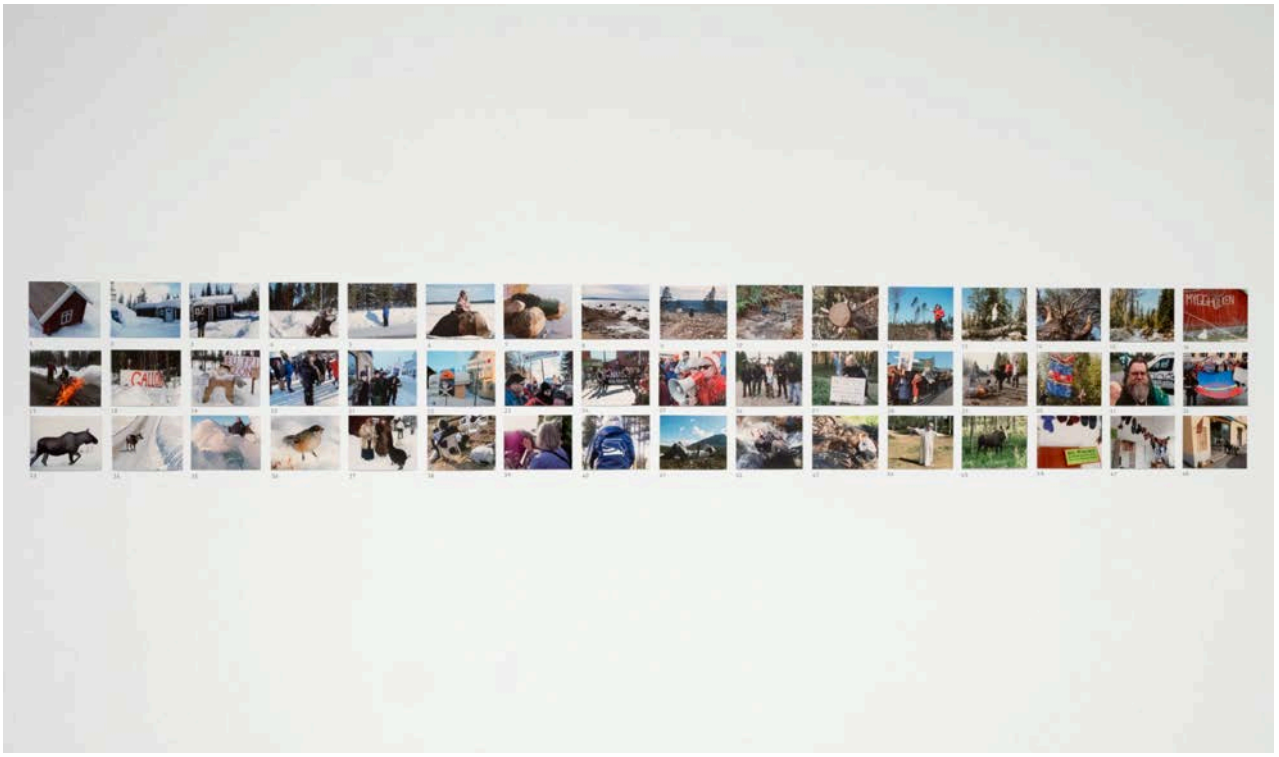


—


FAST
RENT VATTEN
FÖR VÅRA BARN & BARNBARN

—

Life of an Activist, Elizabeth
2024
Jåhkåmåhkke, Norrbotten County, Swedish Sábme
48 photographs by Leif Anders Öhman (1951-2022), 12×15cm each
See PDF here



This piece is inspired by a vitally important female figure Elizabeth Johansson (1951). Together with her late husband, Leif A Öhman, they lived in *Myggholken* [Mosquito Nest], a house located in a forest 30 km northwest of Jåhkåmåhkke and 5 km from Gállok. In 2011 they opened a café and antique bookshop in the centre of Jåhkåmåhkke called *Myggholkens väntrum* [Mosquito Nest Waiting Room], which served as the headquarters of the *Gruvfritt Jokkmokk* [Mine-Free Jokkmokk] group. In 2013 they participated in the camp that blocked the prospecting area in Gállok. These actions have—to this day—prevented Beowulf Mining Plc from opening the iron deposit.

Captions:

1. Dolls' house made by her uncle when she was a child
2. *Myggholken*
3. Leif at *Myggholken*
4. Reading a book in spring
5. Leif contemplating a pine forest
6. Sitting on a rock in the Lule River lake, which was altered by 15 hydroelectric dams
7. Rocks under the fluctuating water levels in the lake of the river Lule as a result of the hydroelectric dams
8. Lule river lake
9. Walking in a terrain devastated by the forestry practice of clearcutting
10. Walking in Gállok where Beowulf Mining Plc. extracted iron samples
11. Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris) cut
12. Activists pointing at a forest affected by clear-cutting
13. In Sarek National Park
14. For the centenary year
15. Kvikkjokk
16. Saggat goat at *Myggholken*
17. Activists of the Gállok

18. Gállok
19. Poster in opposition to NATO in *Myggholkens*
20. Anti-NATO demonstration in Jokkmokk
21. Activists demonstrating against NATO at *Myggholkens väntrum*
22. Cartell “Gruvfritt Jokkmokk” in *Myggholkens väntrum*
23. Demonstration in Jokkmokk in Jokkmokk without mines poster
24. Leif at an anti-NATO demonstration in Lule
25. With a megaphone at anti-NATO demonstration in Jokkmokk
26. With Leif and activists in Gállok
27. In Gállok with the sign “Activists are unemployed people with hair in their armpits and have deformed coconuts!!! Go home and get a haircut!”
28. Carriyng the sign “Fast Mark Rent Vatten. För Våra Barn & Barnbarn” during an anti-NATO demonstration
29. With activists in Gállok
30. With the Leif and the Sámi resistance flag in Gállok
31. Activist Lars-Patrik Tjärkat in front of the municipal building manifesting
32. Demonstrators carrying the Sami flag during a manifestation
33. Elk (*Ealga* in Lule Sámi)
34. Reindeer (*Boatsoj* and Lule Sámi)
35. Looking at Leif in the snow
36. Siberian Jay (*Guovsak* in Lule Sámi), a bird living in old-growth forest Scots pine forests, in danger of extinction due to increasing deforestation
37. In a Brown (*Bear Biernna* in Lule Sámi) fur coat together with Isse Israelsson and the goats Saggat and Skalka during the winter market in Jokkmokk
38. Reading a book with Saggat
39. With an eagle on holiday in Malta
40. Supporting the campaign “Save the Baltic Salmon”
41. Reading a book in the summer
42. At a waterfall with a rainbow
43. Leif photographing her
44. Enjoying the summer in *Myggholken*
45. Elk at *Myggholken*
46. Poster “No Mining. Reindeer Herding Area. Respect Indigenous Rights. We, the local people”, which was part of the 2013 protests, *Myggholkens väntrum*
47. *Myggholkens väntrum*
48. Leif at *Myggholkens väntrum*

—

Fast Mark Rent Vatten. För Våra Barn & Barnbarn
[Solid Earth Clean Water. For our children and grandchildren]
2024
Jåhkåmåhkke,Norrbotten County, Swedish Sábme
Photograph by Leif Anders Öhman. Courtesy of Elizabeth Johansson, *Myggholkens väntrum*





Elizabeth and Lars-Patrik Tjärkat demonstrating in front of the Jokkmokk Municipal Centre during a meeting of politicians to discuss mining-related issues in the summer of 2013. The banner connects struggles around the protection of the environment and safeguarding of natural resources for future generations. It appeared in diverse protests as part of a movement initiated in Stockholm that, until 2020, met every Thursday in front of the Parliament to question Swedish mining strategy.

—

Myggholkens väntrum
[Mosquito Nest Waiting Room]
2024
Jåhkåmåhkke, condado de Norrbotten, Sábme suec
2 photographs 19×24cm, 5 photographs 24×30cm
For more information see here



Since May 2024, as part of ongoing engagement with the local community of Jåhkåmåhkke, Acosta has revitalized the café and second-hand bookstore *Myggholkens väntrum*, opened by activist and retired nurse Elizabeth Johansson in 2011 with her late husband, Leif A. Öhman. The space, however, had been closed for five years before Acosta began collaborating with Elizabeth to reopen and reclaim it as a project space.

Acosta reorganized the bookstore's collection using queer and ecofeminist criteria, transforming the space into a vibrant hub for exhibitions and workshops in collaboration with the local community. Events organized in the space include: *Window Painting for Forest and Human Diversity* and*Queer Network for the Ancient Forest*. The *Queer Sámi Language and Embroidery Workshop*, organized in collaboration with Samernas Bibliotek during Jokkmokk Rainbow Week in August 2024 explored possibilities for gender inclusion in Sámi languages, focusing on existing non-binary and non-dualistic gender terms. Participants embroidered these words onto fabric pieces, forming part of a collective queer-language embroidery artwork, which will be donated to Samernas Bibliotek upon completion.

Most recently, *Myggholkens Väntrum* hosted its first exhibition, featuring paintings by local artist Marietta Mamia under the theme *"Trees are our parents. Without them, we are nothing. They have given us everything".*


NO MINING
REINDEER HERDING AREA
Respect Indigenous Rights
Norrbotten
MYGGHOLKENS VÄNTRUM

—