

MAPS & TERRITORIES

Lara Almarcegui - Edgardo Aragón - Milena Bonilla
Fredí Casco - María Elvira Escallón
Uriel Orlow - Liliana Porter - Charwei Tsai

November 7 - December 23 2015
Opening
Saturday, November 7 — 4pm-9pm



Edgardo Aragón, *Unión y progreso*, 2014 (detail)

“**Maps & Territories**” gathers the works of eight artists: **Lara Almarcegui, Edgardo Aragón, Milena Bonilla, Fredí Casco, María Elvira Escallón, Uriel Orlow, Liliana Porter** and **Charwei Tsai**. Each question the notion of territory, a physical space outlined by more or less well defined borders and shaped by power relationships. Ground of conflicts, territory is a crucial concept to understand the current geographical and political fragmentation of the world, and how it might be challenged in the coming decades.

To figure the reality of a territory, the most commonly used tool is the map, key element in period of confrontation and essential guide in our everyday life. In *Variations on a Homogeneous Landscape*, **Milena Bonilla** takes the shape of the external borders of several American countries and distorts them in order to form a continuous skyline. The work deconstructs the hierarchy between the countries, creating an impression of unity in spite of the plurality of the continent. Bonilla invents new fantasized territories, freed from their actual borders.

The concepts of territory and borders are explicitly linked to the one of land possession. The right to ground property

can almost be likened to a fight, most of the time fought unevenly. Throughout Latin America, corruption has for long been a way to become a landowner. **Fredí Casco** reveals this established fact in his drawings series *Arete Gua'u*, focusing on the case of Paraguay, a country in which land possession has been a topic since the colonial period. Casco covers official land titles documents from the XIXth century with either colourful or black figures. These spectral shapes make the hand-written documents hard to be understood and embody symbolically the ghosts of history.

Violence is a recurrent mean to annex a territory. The first massive slaughter of the XXth century was the Armenian genocide. This human extermination was accompanied by a cultural cleansing: since the beginning of the genocide in 1915, Turkey has been leading a systematic destruction campaign of Armenian cultural heritage. In his series *État des Lieux*, **Uriel Orlow** captured the last stigmas of Armenian architectural heritage hidden in the Turkish landscape and architecture. Through this gesture, the artist highlights the former presence of a people, said to have lived on the current Turkish territory for more than 2 500 years before the beginning of the genocide.

If a territory can be defined as an area ruled by a political authority, it can also be defined as a surface on which a social group with its own habits is settled. Conflicts for land possession also occur between communities themselves. **Unión y progreso**, a piece by **Edgardo Aragón**, tells the misadventure of a community which lost its territory in favour of another. Aragón took a portion of the soil of the lost territory and shaped it into an ingot, revealing that this particular soil is as precious as gold to this community.

Forced or deliberated, migrations, movements and flux play a determining role in the circumscribing of territories. For **Relocated Houses, Brittons Yard, Wellington, Lara Almarcegui** investigated the origins of 19 houses offered for sale in Wellington, New Zealand, presented side by side in a simulacra of street in the yard of the house moving company Brittons. Historically, the cause of the first house move was the appropriation of a land: a house had to be moved so a higher authority could rule the territory on which it was settled. Also working as sculptural objects, each of the houses captured by Almarcegui carry an on-going story – from their forgotten former owner to their future settlement on a new site – reflecting the changes in the region's landscape.

The video **Chaco Fantasma** was recorded in Paraguay by **Fredi Casco** during the first two days of the *Arete Guasu* celebration in the Chiriguano de Santa Teresita community. This area was the theatre of the longest South American territorial armed conflict between Paraguay and Bolivia from 1932 to 1935, and is now suffering from massive deforestation because of North American meat and dairy companies. The hazy image of the video reinforces the mystical aspect of the celebration and of the territory in which it occurs.

Maria Elvira Escallón's series **Nuevas Flores do Sul** was shot in the city of San Miguel das Missoes in the Brazilian part of Guarani territories. This city is particularly known for the Spanish Jesuit ruins that can be found in its National Park, along with baroque statuary. The photographic series shows baroque carving made by the artist on some of the trees of the National Park, questioning the boundaries between the natural and the cultural through an intervention on the territory, engaging a sensitive dialogue between these two states and drawing new perspectives on the landscape.

The imprint left by men on a territory can involve destruction as much as construction. **Lara Almarcegui** documented the changes in the landscape around the Ebro River in Zaragoza, Spain, a place deeply marked by human activities, from fly tipping to infrastructures newly built for Expo Zaragoza in 2008. But nature regularly takes back its rights on this seasonally flooded land.

On another level, **Liliana Porter's Labyrinth** confronts a miniature figurine to an abstract freehand drawn labyrinth, offering a metaphor of the human condition; while **Charwei Tsai's Earth Mantra** shows the artist writing the *Heart Sutra* – a pillar of Buddhist wisdom evoking the ephemerality of things and beings – on a mirror reflecting a virgin hilly landscape. In these works, Tsai's peaceful and quiet vision is opposed to Porter's humorous seriousness, both bringing a poetical image of the territory.

List of works

Entrance

Lara Almarcegui

Non realized proposal: Rubble of Waterschei, Genk, 2011

Series of 4 drawings

A4 (21 x 29,7 cm) each

Fredi Casco

Arete Gua'u, 2014-2015

Pastel and different inks, legal documents dating from the XIXth century

21,5 x 32 cm unframed each

Left wall

Maria Elvira Escallón

Nuevas Flores do Sul, 2011

Giclée prints on cotton paper

70 x 70 cm each

Front wall

Milena Bonilla

Variations on a Homogeneous Landscape, 2006

27 C-prints made from digital drawings, mounted on aluminium

28 x 21,5 cm each

Right walls

Lara Almarcegui

– Relocated Houses, Wellington, 2009

2 C-prints

app. 60 cm x 80 cm each

– A wasteland on the banks of the Ebro River, Zaragoza, 2009

Slide projection

40 slides

Uriel Orlow

– États des Lieux, 2012

Black and white photographic prints

100 X 75 cm each

– Dance of Atoms, 2011

Archival pigment prints on baryta paper

39 x 17 cm

Liliana Porter

Labyrinth (her), 2007

Graphite and metal figurine on paper

38 x 28 cm

In the stairs

Charwei Tsai

Earth Mantra II, 2009

C- print

67 x 120 cm

Downstairs

Edgardo Aragón

Unión y progreso, 2014

Digital photograph, soil ingot and paper chart

Variable dimensions

Fredi Casco

Chaco Fantasma, 2007

HD Video, color, sound

6:40 minutes