



SALAR : EVAPORATION

In the discourse on urban futures and the amplified role new technologies may play, questions around resources also arise, such as the consequences for wild land as well as city living conditions that massive extractions of raw materials such as copper, lithium and rare earths bring. These industrial operations yield leftovers such as the monumental tailings mounds surrounding open pit copper mines or the poisonous ponds from lithium mining—waste materials vast enough to be visible from satellites and to sometimes bury whole towns, and which will shape the land for millenia to come.

SALAR : EVAPORATION is a multi-channel video and sound installation that focuses on the Salar de Atacama, or the salt flats in the Atacama desert near San Pedro and Calama in northern Chile.

ANNA FRIZ (CAN) sound and media artist who creates multi-channel media installations, radio art works and solo performances

RODRIGO RÍOS ZUNINO (CHL) musician, composer, producer; radio and sound artist

Opening Fr, 24.01.2020, 5pm

***The desert is the sea remembering itself*, Sound performance by Anna Friz:**

Fr, 24.01.2020, 6pm

Guided Tour with Anna Friz: Sa, 25.01.2020, 6pm

Opening hours 25. – 26.1. Sa, 25.01.2020, 11.00am – 6pm, So, 26.01.2020, 11.00am – 4pm

***Broken Kinship – Beyond the line of hope...*, Sound performance by Sarros (Wolfgang Fuchs, Lale Rodgarkia-Dara):** 4.2.2020, 7pm

Opening hours 4.02. – 21.02.2020:

Tue – Fri, 2 – 7pm and by appointment

Finissage: Fr, 21.02.2020, 6pm

SALAR : EVAPORATION is a multi-channel video and sound installation belonging to a larger series of works entitled *We Build Ruins*, a project which expressively documents areas of mining and industrial exploitation in the high altitude desert in northern Chile. Based on intensive desert fieldwork, the project considers the temporality and scale of massive extractive industries and accompanying infrastructure designed by humans, located in a vast desert and mountainous environment that in turn exceeds the human. The work contemplates the historical and future impact of industrial development that is currently servicing the insatiable globalized demand for copper, lithium and rare earths, all key elements in such high-turnover miniature technologies such as smart phones.

SALAR : EVAPORATION seeks to de-totalize industrial extractivism in favour of manifesting many worlds from the perspective of temporality, land, and space. This multi-channel video and sound installation focuses on the Salar de Atacama, or the salt flats in the Atacama desert near San Pedro and Calama. All parts of this landscape reference the sea that was here millions of years ago, from the frozen turbidity of salt formations, to the brine that is extracted for producing lithium. We take an experimental rather than purely documentary approach, challenging the deadly hubris of human exploitation in the desert by working with the forces characteristic of the desert itself, such as mirage, perceptual distortion, and the long duration of the geologic present. Long still shot video of the rocky salt flats and natural patterns of evaporation which have taken place over millions of years contrast to the surreal landscape produced by lithium mining, where giant piles of lithium carbonate could be mistaken for snow being groomed on a ski hill.

The landscapes could seem to be melting ice and snow in the north, but instead are the reality of evaporation in the high altitude south, located at more than 2300 meters above sea level in the most arid part of the earth. The deep mirages of midday heat and intensive ultra-violet rays from the sun produce further visual uncertainties, combined with unexpected sonic textures composed from field recordings both raw and manipulated, and electro-magnetic signals of human and non-human origin recorded on the flats. The work reflects on landscape, infrastructure, and environmental change, exploring the micro and macro scales of human intervention and activity in relatively inaccessible areas which occupy the space between urban sprawl and wilderness, and investigates the role of people (and artists) as agents in the myth-making and storytelling process which bring critique and create counter-narratives to those of progress and growth that propel unsustainable extractivist corporate and state-sponsored industries. Particularly at this contemporary moment, where the people of Chile are engaged in widespread national resistance and protest to business as usual by the state and corporate forces that have ravaged the country and environment while propagating gross economic and social inequities, such areas of resource extraction like the Atacama desert can hardly be understood as peripheral or as neutral sites of industry. Instead, they are centers of power, exploited to feed the forces of global capital to the benefit of a global elite. The future technological 'smart' cities will actually function as the peripheral expressions of this power that is being pillaged from the desert. We consider how the desert produces power in the form of unique and fragile ecosystems and geological expressions of time, from which we may learn and imagine alternative worlds.

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