

Mariana Silva Varela

- Expedition Magallanes

21 October - 10 December 2023

Swedish archives keep the skulls of three Selk'nam men, part of the indigenous population of Patagonia, southern South America. They were brought to Sweden by the polar explorer Otto Nordenskjöld after his trip there in the late years of the 19th century, while the ongoing extermination of the Selk'nam people took place through the violence of European ranchers.

The stories about the Swedes' visit to the Magallanes region and their involvement in the colonial developments are the starting point for a larger body of work by artist Mariana Silva Varela. In textile weaves in materials such as gold, linen and wool, the artist traces the early relations between Chile and Sweden. An interest in how arts and crafts techniques have moved between the continents through the ages influences her work, and during a residency stay at Art Lab Gnesta several new weaves have been produced. In collaboration with the artist Jakob Krajcik and his publishing house The Fire Editions, the weaves have been transferred to an artist booklet printed on the house's risograph.

On top of a double-woven, checkered woolen poncho, a black-and-white silent film recorded in 1910 by an Italian missionary in Patagonia is projected. Here, the brutal transformation of the landscape is documented, such as the rise of the wool industry where many of the surviving Selk'nam women were forced to work before their culture finally was eradicated, and the wild animals whose living conditions were just beginning to change. The memory of them is actualized through the artist's hands, where they appear as abstracted figures in the various weaves of the exhibition.

The exhibition conjures up a world of its own. It is certainly influenced by historical research, but perhaps above all composed of memory fragments and fantasies about a place that for a long time was only accessible to the artist through the stories of an older generation.

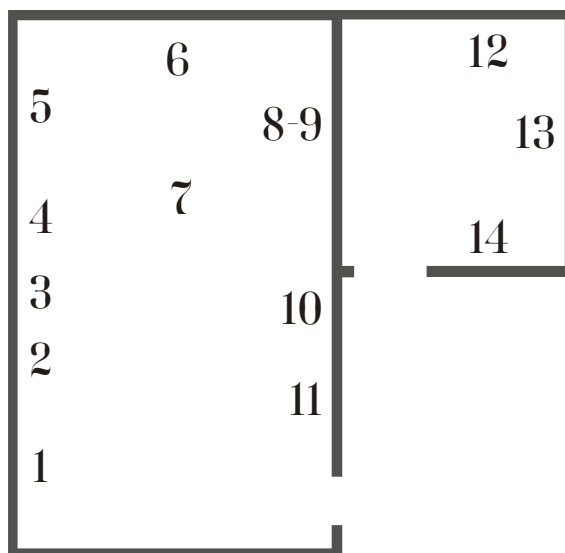
Caroline Malmström, curator

About the artist:

Mariana Silva Varela (born 1973) is educated in pedagogy, rhetoric and scientific theory at Södertörn University and has a higher textile education from Handarbetets Vänner School. With a background as a historian in History of Migration, she works artistically with textiles, staging and light in relation to anthropology and folklore.

1. **ARAUCARIA**, 2023
49 x 200 cm
Japanese gold, linen yarn, wool dyed with indigo & madder, silk.
2. **RAMON**, 2022
70x70 cm
Wool.
3. **TORRE DE LOS PAINES 1**, 2023
35x 75 cm
Wool, golden thread.
4. **TORRE DE LOS PAINES 2**, 2023
35x 65 cm
Wool, golden thread.
5. **CORDILLERA DARWIN**, 2023
50x50 cm
Cotton, indigo dyed wool, japanese gold.
Produced at Art Lab Gnesta.
6. **JADE**, 2022
84 x 250 cm
Japanese gold, wool, silk, double weave.
7. **PATAGONIA**, 202
130 x 310 cm
Wool, indigo & madder dyed wool, double weave with pile rug.
8. **ARAUCARIA TOPP**, 2023
50x60 cm
Linen, indigo dyed wool, japanese gold.
9. **XILIN**, 2023
50x50 cm
Cotton, indigo dyed wool, japanese gold.
Produced at Art Lab Gnesta.

10. **XUMANX**, 2023
60 x 130 cm
Linen yarn, indigo dyed wool, japanese gold. Produced at Art Lab Gnesta.
11. **SPRINGHILL**, 2023
60 x 130 cm
Linen yarn, indigo dyed wool, japanese gold. Produced at Art Lab Gnesta.
12. **XUA**, 2020
135 x 206 cm.
Textile painting.
13. **RESCUE BLANKET**, 2020
85 x 150 cm
Double weave and tapestry technique.
Silk, wool, japanese gold.
14. **XUE**, 2020
135 x 206 cm
Textile painting.



Curator: Caroline Malmström · Exhibition technicians: Erik Viklund & Rolf Schuurmans · Communication: Emanuel Hallklint · Executive director: Maline Casta · Pedagogue in Konstverkstan: Olle Halvars · Artistic leaders: Signe Johannessen & Caroline Malmström · Exhibition guides: Milo Rören & Rufus Kjellgren