

Earth: Rites of Restitution

If one takes a look at the most recent developments of Teresa Pereda's production, certain slow and deep changes are evident, all of them driven by her great interest in mankind's relationship with the earth. In Pereda's work, the earth is a space of belonging whether for herself or for others; it is the place where the most diverse cultures have deposited meaning. It is also, however, a sphere of pressing needs: a silent force that makes itself heard to even unwilling ears.

It could be said that the essence of Pereda's work is based on a subtle perception of what reverberates in the earth.

Born in Buenos Aires, Teresa Pereda spent part of her childhood in a wool farm in Neuquén near the Patagonian mountain range. For more than twenty years, she has lived in Arenaza, an agricultural region in the province of Buenos Aires. An entire lifetime connected to the land and the labors associated therewith serve to explain how her art brings together the experience of the horizon, the exchange of cultures – which, in her work, entails performative strategies– and the use of highly symbolic materials like soil and wool.

The Argentine horizon has enormous weight in the country's culture; both visual art and literature from Argentina make frequent reference to it.^[1]

Like the great plains that unfold in all directions in the Argentine countryside, the horizon –that wholly unreachable imaginary line– is also a metaphor for dreams, encounters, both found and missed, between immigrants and natives. Herein, perhaps, lie the reasons that Teresa Pereda chose to give shape to an aesthetic agenda based on the logic of restitution and exchange first seen in *Las Cuatro Tierras* (The Four Soils). In that project, she wove together life stories from different geographic settings. The project ultimately led to an artist's book and an exhibition. But it continued for years in actions that took place in a number of places in the Americas. Its various supports are revisited in the recent exhibition *Recolección- Restitución. Citas por América*, held at the Centro Cultural Recoleta of Buenos Aires in 2010.

Wool as a means of union played a key role in this logic of exchange. Throughout the work, though, the powerful presence of the earth was also felt, sometimes in small handfuls of soil and sometimes in a torrent leaving its color and texture on paper. Soil of different hues and balls of wool have formed part of Teresa Pereda's restitution rites as she undertook performative actions in Tierra del Fuego (2007); the Uyuni Salt Pan, Bolivia; and in the Amazon, Brazil (2008). That path continues to broaden with this exhibition, which allows Pereda to take her work to new geographical, social, economic and cultural horizons while also forcing her to change her artistic practices.

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^[1] This was a central issue of the VIII edition of the Estudio Abierto (2005), which included a number of exhibitions, among them *Arquitectura, Buenos Aires y el Río, Argentina bajo la línea del horizonte de cara al Río*, which returned to and expanded on an earlier show held at the Fondo Nacional de las Artes in December 2000. In 2007, the question of the horizon was a major component of *Pampa, ciudad y suburbio*, an exhibition held at Imago, Espacio de arte de la Fundación OSDE. For an overview of literature that deals with the horizon in Argentina, see Ariel Schetini "Más allá del horizonte" in *Estudio Abierto Experiencias de Arte y Cultura Contemporánea Buenos Aires 2000- 2006*. Buenos Aires Department of Culutre 2007, pp112.