

# WATER THAT NEVER HALTS

Lucas Beccar

*“Who knows all the paths?  
Who talks with no listeners?  
Who knows all the secrets?  
The water, the river, the pond.”*

*Sacred Song of the Pond  
Beatriz Pichi Malén*

There was a time that required setting out on a solitary journey of inevitable silence, turning one’s gaze in search of foundations and inner rules. Then, the Earth revealed itself, naming Teresa Pereda as her daughter, moulding her into its own sign as she took the responsibility of her own existence as an artist. Under this signal, her production was organized around the notions of itinerary, gathering, restitution, identity, diversity and conciliation, and has been divided into multiple exchange perspectives. Her work spreads like water in a multidirectional flow, non-restrictive to formats or materials, which range from paintings, objects, drawings, artist’s books, installations, photographs, moving images to performances.

### **Man immersed in his ecological environment. Earth and water**

Two decades ago, Teresa Pereda diverted her working scheme when including earth in the execution of her works. Starting from a series of especially generated events, she set forth on a number of journeys and itineraries throughout Argentina and other territories requesting, gathering and exchanging earth and life stories. Thus she initiated a new period in search of the idea of being rooted in South American origins.

As from 2006, she started experimenting with water which has become an axial phase in her poetics as a reflection on mankind, the environment in constant danger, the awareness of limits and the confronted concepts of nature and culture. The distinctive feature that generates her oeuvre comprises elements that lead to both aesthetic and poetical encounters. Therefore, her work emerges as an extended metaphor of constant transformation which permanently moves from the subjective to the construction of a sense of community.

### **The transmutation from the individual to the collective state**

As connecting vessels, her rationale approaches diverse levels and links different identities. Within, man and earth coexist inspired by water, which draws poetical spaces by means of its endless cyclic flow that never holds its procession. This essential substance for survival pursues its mission of slow streaming, at times rough and unsettled and on other occasions decelerated until the flux becomes imperceptible.

These works do not expect to be laboriously decoded. Their nature responds to nothing but their own revelation as mysterious magical spaces located at the edge of the ascertainable. Within our sight, water and earth keep a silent truth veiled to the universe of reason. As the Argentinian writer Juan José Saer once reflected "*... but more than once, the evidence of the absolute, something unprecedented, an element of the world not yet thought of, diverts its way and forces it to modify and grow...*"<sup>1</sup>

1\_ Saer, Juan José. El concepto de ficción. Buenos Aires. Editorial Seix Barral. 2004.

### **The alchemical praxis and the time of processes**

Teresa Pereda summons and reconciles distinct substances in a field of harmonious coexistence. To understand the depth of her expression, it is necessary to deliberately observe the accord that secretly flows when man sets up a dialogue between water and earth. These alchemical manifestations are embodied in syncretic images, that occur symbiotically and conciliatorily. On that spontaneous exchange process, drained figurations and irregular trails emerge. Shifted by water, the elements transfigure into alchemical images.

It seems as if those images were born out of a magical principle of a truth that hides away from the senses and cognition. These marvelous effects are the manifestation of the spirit, which reasserts the Cosmos, is not only ruled by natural or material laws but also by the souls inhabiting the air, the water, the earth and the firmament. Spirit and matter. Dissidents of reason facing the inevitable submission of man to the immensity of the universe.

Immersed in this contextual reality, Teresa Pereda's existence is no longer conceivable without an anthropological perspective, an esoteric origin and a relational method. Constantly throughout, her work defines the bonds linking essential elements, geographical sites and people in the acts of tracing itineraries, gathering earth, giving and restoring identities.

She operates from instinct, observation and inner rules. She wonders, deepens, investigates and seeks to unveil what disarmingly faces us secretly and silently. At times, she moves in centrifugal, expansive directions in the process of binding and merging geographies and people. On other occasions, observant, she dredges into the centripetal flow of water and earth as both elements become one in the alluvial images. She explores the elementary and essential constituting matter of man. Earth and water, particles of an eternal, universal cosmogony.

## I

### **Water drawings**

Since 2006, Teresa Pereda has experimented with the immersion of paper in water blended with earth and coal. The slow drainage of this substance allows water and earth to express. While the artist keeps the paper in her hands, a fluid but dilatory flow plenty of accidents and decantations occurs. From the mutations provided by the changes of matter, the unhurried passage of water, its draining and course the consubstantial union emerges in a geological phase of sedimentation.

## II

### **Eruption - alluvial drawings**

On big stainless steel sheets, water, earth and ashes from the Puyehue volcano were spilled. As if an explosion, they reflect the traces of eruptive activity. The presence of the ashes revives the lava rivers which move voraciously forward over the territory. Geological practice. Rock extrusions and lava emissions trigger from the forces of the unknown. Suddenly we see each other with otherness, at times unrecognizable and nameless.

## III

### **When water is silenced - Land prints**

The works that come off this series are the outcome of the immersion of papers in the Patagonian Andean "mallines" (floodable lowlands, wetlands). The pieces rest in water for several days and by the end of this period, susceptible to fixation, paper works as the sensitive material medium for the impregnation of minerals and substances floating in the water.

It is all about facilitating an organic time which demands shelter and protection from the risks of weather as well as the preservation of the habitat in constant conditions. Consequently, the regulation of water transition along the ditches is crucial and allows to proceed with solid and fluid matters. Latent images obtained as a result of a set of layers sensitive to the action of water, air and organic processes arise.

## IV

### **The time of water**

*From the series Gathering in the Amazon. Appointment in Morena (Brazil)*

This video was produced in a key region of the planet for environmental balance, the Amazon. It recalls that brief instant when the myth-tale bonds with nature and daily life.

A ball of yarn rolls through the rainforest and is introduced in a river with turbulent cascades. It is immersed by the torrent and disintegrated by water in a frantic pace. Nature imposes, advances and consumes.

## V

### **Humus, the skin fails to keep silent**

This video comprises direct captures of a natural spring situated in the Patagonian Andes. The piece portrays the opposition nature in motion/urban motion. As from the displacement of earth particles produced by water in rhythmical synchrony, hundreds of recordings of city and human voices sound steadily. Field of encounter and retreat. Nature and daily life. Both throb, none is silenced.

Starting from an approach to a new conceptual framework, the piece has been specifically installed for the site of the ballroom of the museum-house in order to draw a counterpoint regarding the architectural, stylistic and historical space of the manor. Nature's chaotic constant flow, in contrast to the rational architectural planning, arises our awareness on the frailty of man.