

2025. 5. 9. — 2025. 7. 20.

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Clear, Lucid, and Awake is an exhibition featuring a selection of Spanish artists' works from the TBA21 Collection and puts them in dialogue with the artistic scene in Korea. The exhibition, opening in May at Art Sonje Center, one of the oldest art centers in Seoul, is conceived as a reflection on the many traits the two countries and communities have in common: from being both peninsulas, to the impact of capitalism in their recent democratic political and social developments and the need to regain a connection with the rural and nature.

Presenting Spanish artists in Korea, the exhibition is designed to be a case study concerned with what can be learned from the establishment of relations between two communities of artists. The exercise of naming features that define the artistic production of a given country is difficult. Looking instead to what is shared leads us to a thorough line that delineates contemporary over modern life. The twenty-first century has awakened in us an awareness of the global ecological trauma that humans, nonhumans, and the earth have been enduring. The awareness of this collective suffering can propagate a feeling of solidarity and understanding among artists and their works, and not only of contemporary artists whose work has emerged in the last two decades, but also in the interpretation of past artistic practices seen in this light.

Understanding time as a notion disentangled from human biological time is imperative for many artists. What does it mean to suffer not only for time as measured in human life but for a planet's lifetime? Art and artists have guided us toward a multi-layered and nuanced comprehension of the

texture of time. How can the time of history and the all-encompassing existence of a trauma that divided a country in a civil war be entangled with the time of the creatures and the oceans, the time of the mountains that do not talk or write as we do? This is the reason why so many artists have shown an interest in folklore and the oral traditions that carry a history different from the official histories written in documents approved by the state. Folklore can be seen as a form of collective technology preserved by the people to create a different flow of mental images and sentiments that link an ancient past with a future that is yet to arrive. How to do so? Fiction has been a key element in discerning nonhuman intelligence, in conceiving nature as being us, in breaking the culture-nature binary. Fiction has made space for poetics and turned speculation into a valid way to re-establish a relationship between artistic practices and questions or concerns that affect the future of life. In fiction we have seen not only the emergence of nature but also the eloquence of Indigenous and vernacular cultures and their values, vindications, and ideas of the future.

The artists in this exhibition all share an interest in time, oral traditions, and fiction. We developed this proposal thinking that these traits are also widespread in artistic practices in Korea. What is important here and now is not to appear unique but to appear united, connected, creating the sense of togetherness necessary to identify the common good.

We have many things in common: being part of a peninsula with a long coast, a long sense of the relationship between the coast and our culture, and

a long history of exploiting the sea. Both countries share a transition to democracy marked by what has been called “miraculous” capitalist development marked by extensive migration to the cities and a poor understanding of rural and countryside cultures. There is so much that we can say about our common histories beyond the colonial divide that situates us far from each other in Asia and Europe. We hope that an exhibition like this can assist in the exercise of thinking about artistic practices outside of national and fixed cultural parameters in order to suggest different informational pathways connecting artists and works.

The title *Clear, Lucid, and Awake* refers to the importance of looking at culture like we look at a mind, not a historical substance set in stone. “Thanks to culture, in short, the world opens out and becomes intelligible to humans in a way that lies beyond the wit of any other creature. The forms that lend meaning to experience, however, are to be found not in the world but in the mind. To study culture was therefore to study the human mind” —these words by anthropologist Tim Ingold in his book *Imagining for Real* summarize what all these artists are trying to convey: an appeal to understand the paths of the minds in search of answers.

One of the most beautiful moments of the encounter with another culture is how we immediately start inventing ways of relating to others. One time, when I was eight, we all arrived at the classroom to encounter our teacher dressed beautifully. She was wearing an elaborate dress embroidered with flowers and birds, in layers of pink silk. Her hair was

done in a way we never saw, with beautiful ornaments, and her shoes were made of a material that looked like porcelain to us. It was a hanbok. She said she attended a wedding in Seoul dressed like this, since she was the sister of the groom. This image was so powerful that I forced my parents to tell me more about Korea. My father came up with an explanation that still makes sense to me to this day: Korean people cannot be very different from Spanish people since they are also inhabitants of a peninsula, surrounded by the ocean, living by the seas. Since then, I have always wanted to create an exhibition that would act almost like a tale composed by Spanish artists about our Peninsula.

Looking at maps can be tricky. The ocean and the surrounding nature in different lands were for centuries regarded as crucial elements of imperial power and grain production. Later, capitalism accelerated the use of the territories in such a wild and rapid manner that the coasts and the lands became production sites of fishing and other industries. At all times, what seems so beautiful and obvious on a map remained opaque and difficult to access in reality. It is pointless to generalize, but it took a long time—centuries, I would say—to produce cultural and artistic practices capable of bringing the concerns of waters, winds, and birds closer to the burdens that workers and laborers in cities endure daily. Nature has been absent for so long that it seemed so difficult to understand how we could get closer: how we could reconnect and understand. For over two centuries, the cities of Spain have been nourished by waves of peasants and farmers who left the fields. To forget one's origins was easier than

inventing a way of being a citizen with a “green” background. For generations, it has been difficult to return to the land, to create a relationship of respect and joy with nature. A “nature” deteriorated by mining, by the industry, by rapid building, by tourism... a nature that is now inexistent. Also, it took artists and art a long time to formulate a language through the materials of the soils, the trees, and the waters and to formulate a new philosophy of life together with the coasts, rivers, and fields. However, artists slowly started to see that the highest form of conceptualism is to understand how art makes sense beyond the limits and the institutions created in the cities. Art that could be made and exhibited in a forest or could converse with the damaged rocks of a mining site. Art that interprets the land and situates citizens in the context of respect for life, learning to see the interests of humans and nonhumans together. Nature then became a site, a home, or even a school to experience other important matters such as gender. Nature—not only because of Covid-19, but also—has been important for addressing mental states, mental distress, mental health. Nature has also allowed us to see how technology is not only artificial but organic. Intelligence has been emerging from forests and natural entities in artworks, books, theories, and science. Nature, in other words, can be seen as a new paradigm that proposes a model for complexity that is approachable, a model that departs from experience and not from the studio or even the academy. We are still at the very beginning of this process, and many twists and surprises will change our perception of space and time as a result of it.

All artists included in this exhibition have works in the collection of TBA21, a contemporary art and advocacy foundation that dedicates its effort to commissioning new artworks and to the understanding of art in relationship with processes of climate change and peace. Peace and nature are almost the same word since coexistence is the state of living together without endangering others. Almost all the artists in the exhibition belong to the same generation, a generation oriented toward regeneration: regeneration as the effort to return life to life, to care for communities and their particular and specific knowledge of the environments they inhabit and their needs. It is a regeneration of the values of respect and a deep critique of greed.

Nature took on a deeply emotional and even tragic significance in twentieth-century literature. In the work of poet Federico García Lorca, for example, nature, and particularly the forest, plays a symbolic and often mystical role. The forest appears as a place of destiny and liberation far from the rules of society, thus becoming a setting for both love and violence. Similarly, nature and children are central themes in the work of Ana María Matut, in which the forest is a quiet, beautiful space that enables isolation, a place where pain can be processed in silence.

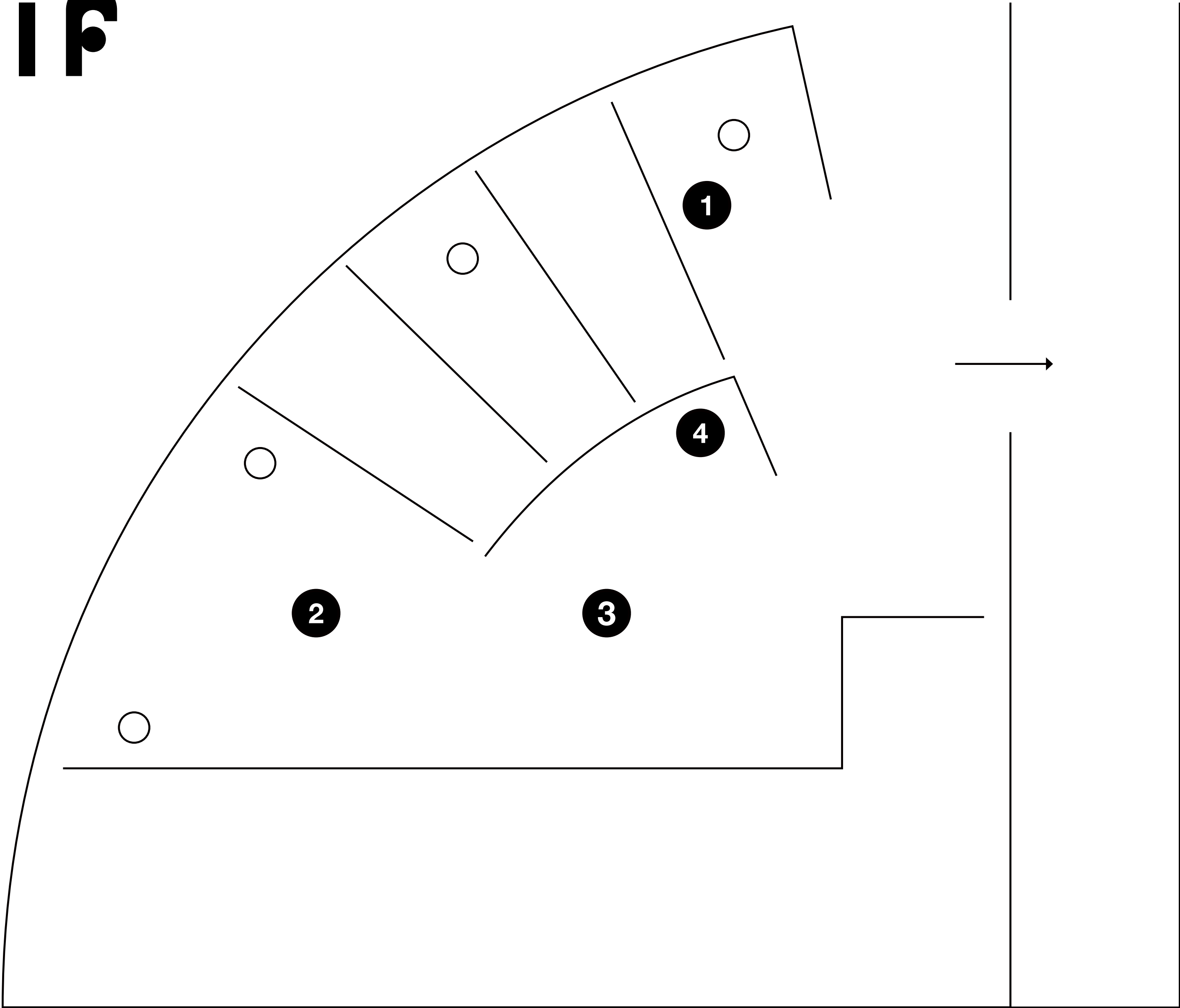
A reflection on urban life—the enormous pressures of capitalism, relentless working hours, pollution, and the growing disconnection from rural life and older generations—has led artists to return to nature not just as a subject or symbolic site, but as a political language. The politics of materials left behind by industrialization—wood, textiles, embroi-

dery, ceramics, clay—are now intertwined with a call for respect toward nature and a critical awareness of the damage caused by mining. This has given rise to a new, powerful eco-social consciousness that speaks to the agency of rural landscapes affected by extractive industries. Mining has historically been a major economic and cultural force in Spain, and remains significant today. Located in Huelva (Andalusia, Spain), the Río Tinto mines highlighted in the exhibition have been active for over 5000 years and are among the oldest known mining sites. Alongside this, the revival of clay traditions speaks to the rights of the earth itself. In Spain, pottery and ceramics are not merely crafts but expressions of identity, spirituality, and regional heritage. Similarly, the exhausted ocean demands attention. Spain's extensive coastline along the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Bay of Biscay has fostered distinct regional fishing cultures over centuries—cultures now endangered by industrial fishing, overfishing, warming waters, pollution, and microplastics.

For centuries, thinkers have debated the complexities of Spanish national identity, often arguing that Spain lacks shared myths to unite its people. The generation of artists featured in this exhibition are not simply following a global trend of renewed interest in nature. Rather, through their work, they are cultivating a cultural language that aspires to transform how Spain perceives itself, treats its people, and relates to the rest of the planet. They seek to recover traditions such as Mediterranean wisdom, promoting slowness, conversation, moderation, and a deep connection to nature as tools for regener-

ating public values and the common good. There is no such thing as a country in a fixed sense, only shared ways of living that we can propose both for ourselves and for others. What matters are shared ethical narratives grounded in solidarity, dignity, and justice—and how these intertwine with similar traditions elsewhere.

Written by. Chus Martínez



1. Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, *∞*, 2020
2. Teresa Solar Abboud, *Tuneladora (Tunnel Boring Machine)*, 2021
3. Asunción Molinos Gordo, *¡Cuánto río allá arriba! (How Many Rivers Above!)*, 2021
4. Asunción Molinos Gordo, *Barruntaremos (Inklings)*, 2021

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané (b. 1977)

- 1 ∞ , 2020, Installation with four Kriska aluminum curtains, aluminum rails, and powder-coated steel frames 450 x 1455 x 780 cm, overall dimensions variable, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection

In ∞ (*incomplete infinity*), Mangrané invites visitors into a long, tunnel-like passage composed of colorful aluminum chain curtains, evoking the ritual of crossing thresholds.

These Kriska curtains—common in southern Catalunya, Spain, where the artist grew up—form four layers that visitors must navigate, either pushing through the chains and triggering a metallic rustle, or slipping silently through the irregular gaps. While the curtains hang in precise vertical order, the cutouts in them are organic and asymmetrical, creating a contrast between structure and fluidity. The title ∞ , a mathematical symbol meaning incomplete infinity, hints at the work's play between fullness and void, order and disruption, and the in-between states of transition. Steegmann Mangrané often turns to symbols and abstract forms when language proves insufficient. Here, he reminds us of the delicate ethics of movement—how we enter, inhabit, and interact with spaces that are not our own.

Teresa Solar Abboud (b. 1985)

- 2 *Tuneladora (Tunnel Boring Machine)*, 2021, Refractory clay, resin, paint, varnish, metal ceramic shaft, 160 x 217 x 80 cm, TBA21

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection
Solar's work navigates the space between the biological and the mechanical, the mythical and the

material. Ceramics, a central element in her practice, become a metaphor for our physical and cultural entanglement with the earth's crust—its insulating properties offering a means to tell stories of shelter, transformation, and layered memory.

With *Tuneladora*, Solar delves into the formal language of the tunnel boring machine—an industrial device designed to penetrate layers of earth and stone. Drawing on its biomimetic potential, the sculpture transforms this technological tool into a hybrid creature, part geological probe, part fantastical organism. Ceramic bases—dense, tactile, and imprinted with the artist's gestures—anchor brightly colored resin extensions that resemble beaks, claws, or fins, evoking both the deep time of natural history and the engineered aesthetics of contemporary machinery. Suspended between fiction and natural science, *Tuneladora* suggests a being that has surfaced from the subterranean world—an emissary from the shifting boundary between what lies beneath and what we bring to light.

Asunción Molinos Gordo (b. 1979)

3. *¡Cuánto río allá arriba! (How Many Rivers Above!)*, 2021, Glazed ceramic, iron, 188 x 65 x 65 cm, 170.3 x 52 x 52 cm, 188 x 65 x 65 cm, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection

The title, *¡Cuánto río allá arriba! (How Many Rivers Are Up There!)*, is drawn from a poem by Mexican writer Octavio Paz, lamenting the effects of modernization. Echoing that sentiment, Molinos Gordo reimagines farmers not just as food

producers, but as vital cultural agents facing today's environmental and social challenges. Combining sculpture and traditional ceramics, the artist pays tribute to the ingenuity of pottery used for storing and transporting water. Created in collaboration with artisans in Manises, Spain, her ceramic collages bring together historical forms—pitchers, jugs, basins, and rhytons—used for centuries in the Mediterranean to carry, share, and celebrate water. Molinos Gordo revives elements from different periods, such as Nasrid designs and *botijos de engaño* (jugs of deception), which playfully feature multiple spouts, some purely ornamental, atop *cántaros de novia* (bridal jugs), symbols of abundance and communal joy.

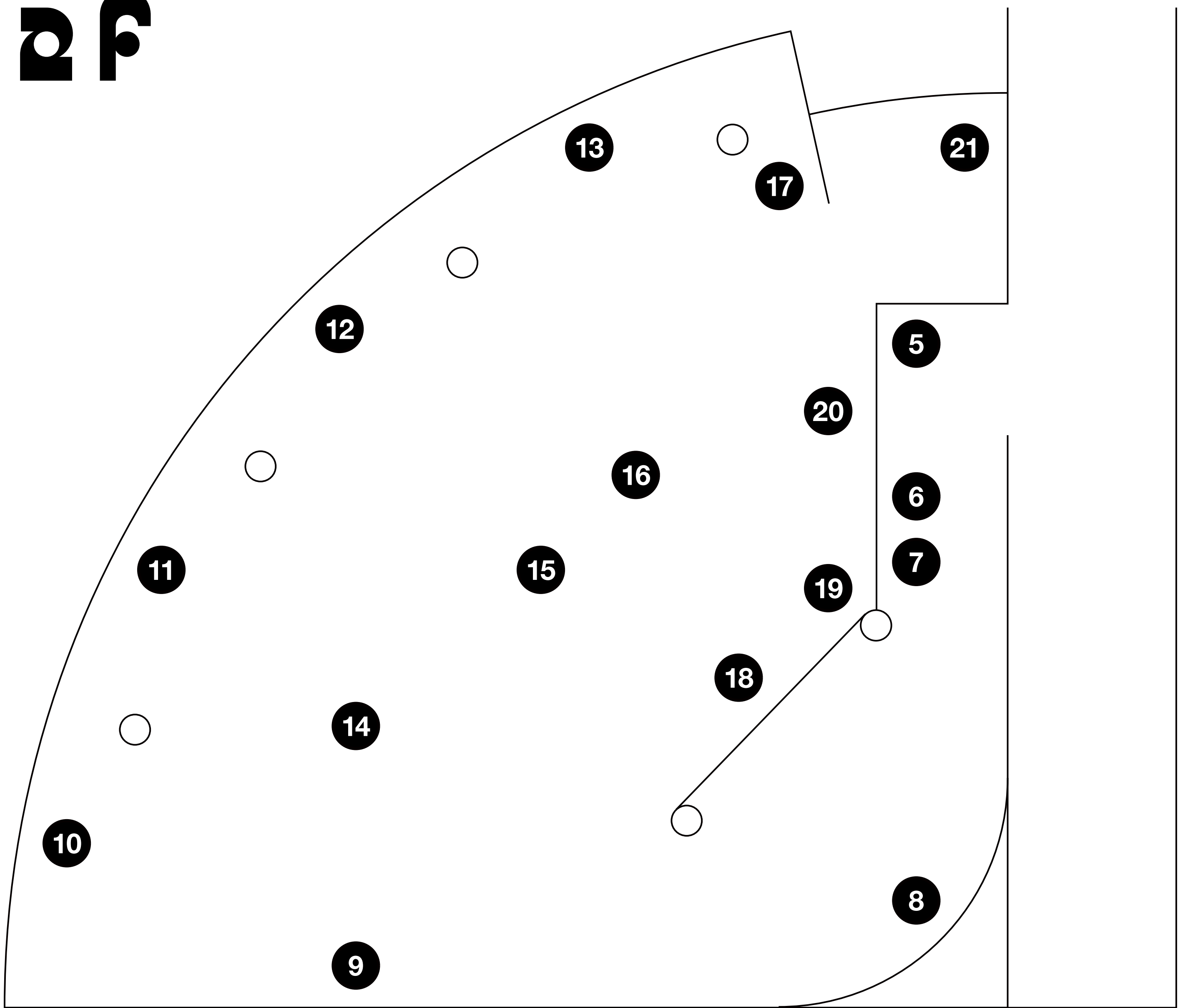
Metal structures evoke *ollee*, public fountains in Islamic cities that offered water freely to passersby. With this work, Molinos Gordo draws attention to questions of water access, traditional systems of solidarity, and the growing threats of privatization. As a researcher of contemporary peasantry, she highlights the cultural and ecological knowledge embedded in rural communities and artisanal practices.

4. *Barruntaremos (Inklings)*, 2021, Single-channel video, color, sound, 9 min. 38 sec., Video: Sonia Pueche | Sound: Alberto Carlassare, Commissioned by Thyssen Bornemisza Art Contemporary for st_age

Barruntaremos (from the Spanish verb *barruntar*, meaning to foresee or sense) explores ways of inhabiting and perceiving the world through traditional ecological knowledge. Narrated by Pedro

Sanz Moreno, a shepherd from Segovia, Spain, the film centers on *Cabañuelas*, an ancestral form of weather forecasting still practiced in parts of Spain, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. Drawing on careful observation of clouds, winds, stars, soil, and animal behavior—especially during early August and mid-December—Sanz Moreno has developed a system for predicting weather patterns that relies on more-than-human cues, such as the movements of ants, birds, caterpillars, sheep, and donkeys.

Through this lens, Molinos Gordo challenges romantic notions of landscape in art history, instead framing it as a site of interspecies knowledge and interaction. Inspired by philosopher Vinciane Despret’s idea of an “affected perspective,” the video highlights how perception is shaped by attunement to the lives and needs of others. The work ultimately positions traditional knowledge as a tool for navigating the climate crisis—what Sanz Moreno calls “an interference in the signals of the landscape.”



5. Irene de Andrés,
La Isla. A través del cauce (The Island. Through the Riverbed), 2023

6. Cristina Lucas,
Tufting: Corea y Japón 1953 (Tufting: Korea and Japan 1953), 2025

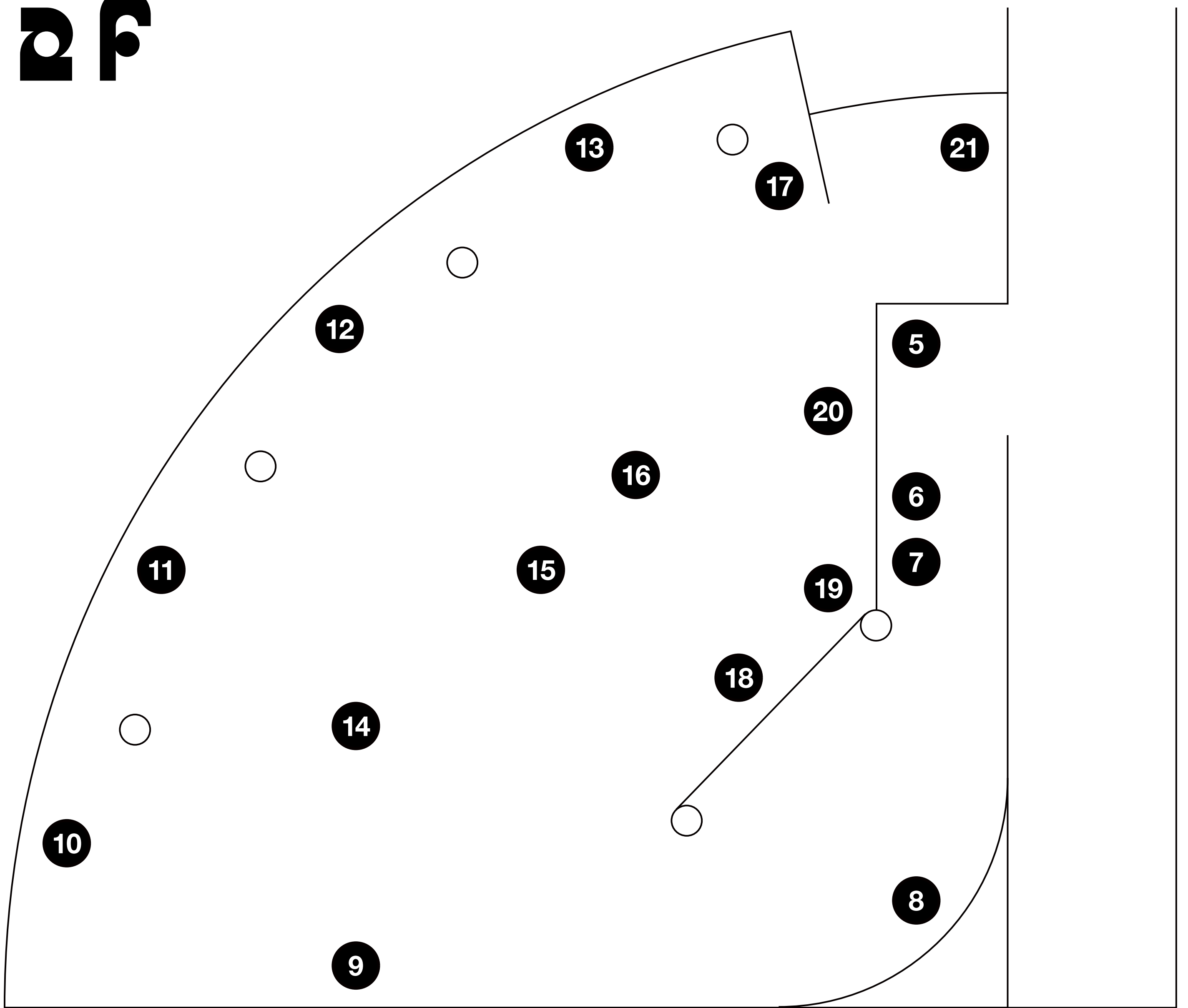
7. Cristina Lucas,
Tufting: España y el Rif 1939 (Tufting: Spain and The Rif 1939), 2017
8. Claudia Pagès Rabal, *Aljubs i grups (Cisterns and Groups)*, 2024

9. Regina de Miguel, *La vida en Conamara (Life in Conamara)*, 2025

10. Diego Delas, *La lámpara del cuerpo (The Lamp of the Body)*, 2025

11. Diego Delas, *La carta del revés (The Reversed Card)*, 2024

12. Diego Delas, *La madrepora (The Madrepore)*, 2025



13. Diego Delas, *Yo escucho los cantos (I Listen to the Chants)*, 2024

14. Teresa Solar Abboud, *Quadern 06 (Sketchbook 06)*, 2018

15. Teresa Solar Abboud, *Ojitos (All its eyes stare at you)*, 2025

16. Teresa Solar Abboud, *Flotation Line*, 2018

17. Teresa Solar Abboud, *Forma de fuga (Forms of Fleeing)*, 2020

18. Belén Rodríguez, *Chaqueta de Granjero (Farmer's Jacket)*, 2024

19. Belén Rodríguez, *Traje revolucionario II (Revolutionary Suit II)*, 2024

20. Álvaro Urbano, *La vida breve (GRANADA, GRANADA) (The Brief Life (GRANADA GRANADA))*, 2023

21. Regina de Miguel, *Nekya: Una película río (Nekya: A Film River)*, 2022

Irene de Andrés (b. 1986)

5. *La Isla. A través del cauce* (*The Island. Through the Riverbed*), 2023, Two-channel video-installation, color, black and white, sound installation, 19 min. 46 sec., Commissioned and produced by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary for st_age with the support of Matadero Centro de Residencias Artísticas
- La Isla. A través del cauce* revisits the forgotten waters of Madrid through the story of *La Isla*, a 1930s riverine swimming complex designed by Spanish architect Luis Gutiérrez Soto. Shaped like an ocean liner and anchored along Madrid's main waterway, the Manzanares River, *La Isla* reflected the era's hygienist ideals at a time when the river was central to the city's leisure and community life. As Madrid expanded, the river became increasingly polluted, channeled and overshadowed by highways. Yet recent urban and ecological efforts have helped restore its flow and biodiversity, allowing both nature and people to reconnect with it once again.

The film shifts aspect ratios and textures to guide viewers through different eras, juxtaposing archival images with present-day footage. It captures the river's role not only as a site of joy and memory, but also of resilience, as celebrated by poets during the Spanish Civil War. Part of the broader project *On the Banks of the Manzanares*, this video work invites reflection on urban transformation, forgotten landscapes, and the quiet power of water.

Cristina Lucas (b. 1973)

6. *Tufting: Corea y Japón 1953 (Tufting: Korea and Japan 1953)*, 2025, 128 x 95 cm, Machine-embroidered textile, monotype, Commissioned and produced by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary
7. *Tufting: España y el Rif 1939 (Tufting: Spain and The Rif 1939)*, 2017, 128 x 95 cm, Machine-embroidered textile, monotype

Cristina Lucas's series *Tufting* emerges from research the artist had undertaken for her ongoing project *Unending Lightning* (2015–), in which Lucas examines the devastating impact of aerial warfare on civilian populations since 1912, when the first civilian casualties of which there is record took place. In her collection of cartographies composed of embroidered fabrics, each black dot marks a bombing site, stitching together forgotten or overlooked acts of violence and the long-lasting scars they leave on both people and the environment.

Referencing the idea of counter-mapping, Lucas repurposes cartographic methods often used by states and media to give visibility to civilian-led investigations. Beneath the embellished surface lies a painstakingly compiled database of attacks—many of them omitted from official records—drawn from extensive research carried out by non-governmental organizations and independent experts.

These two embroidered maps of the Iberian and Korean Peninsulas evoke the memory of the Spanish Civil War and the Korean War—conflicts that became ideological battlegrounds and left enduring, far-reaching legacies. By blending data,

memory, and craft, Lucas challenges the selective nature of historical narratives and confronts the ongoing disregard for international humanitarian law. Her maps remind us that, despite legal protections, civilians and their environments continue to bear the brunt of armed conflict worldwide.

Claudia Pagès Rabal (b. 1990)

8. *Aljubs i grups (Cisterns and Groups)*, 2024, Single-channel video, color, sound, 14 min. 58 sec., Commissioned by Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana with the support of Ammodo and Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, with the collaboration of MACBA, IVAM, La Caldera, and Hangar, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection

Aljubs i grups (Cisterns and Groups) is a choreographed performance-film set within two ancient cisterns in the city of Xàtiva, Spain—one from the Roman era, the other from the Islamic period. These architectural spaces, layered with centuries of graffiti, become both setting and subject: containers not only of water, but of language, memory, and power. Through movement, sound, and spoken text, Pagès explores how time inscribes itself onto bodies, places, and language—not linearly, but in sedimented layers, like palimpsests. The cistern serves as both physical infrastructure and metaphorical vessel, holding memory, histories, and social structures alongside echoes of individual and collective experience.

Filmed with 360-degree cameras worn like bodycams, the work fragments the viewer's gaze and unsettles conventional hierarchies of narration

and perspective. The result is an immersive, sensorial landscape where rhythm, gesture, and voice intertwine with themes of drought, extraction, and the commodification of water. Resonating with global struggles over water, memory, and sovereignty, *Aljubs i grups* invites us to consider what forms of resistance and remembrance might emerge—not only through what flows, but through what endures.

Regina de Miguel (b. 1977)

9. *La vida en Conamara (Life in Conamara)*, 2025, Mural and eight 3D-printed sculptures, 20 x 15 x 15 cm (each); 245 x 450 x 15 cm (set), Assistant: Dongmin Shin, Commissioned and produced by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

In *La vida en Conamara*, de Miguel explores the speculative frontiers of extractivism beyond Earth, linking the enduring violence of colonial legacies to the techno-capitalist aspirations of outer space. Known for her research-based practice addressing geotrauma and resource extraction—from the Colombian jungle to the mining basin of Riotinto—de Miguel here turns her gaze toward *Europa*, one of Jupiter’s moons, as a new imaginary of conquest and displacement.

At the heart of the installation is a large-scale mural: a dreamlike, diagrammatic rendering of Europa’s geology. This celestial body, recently confirmed to contain carbon dioxide likely originating from a subsurface ocean, has become a target of scientific curiosity and corporate desire—a “smooth and soft” frontier imagined as uninhabited and ripe for extraction.

Overlaying this planetary skin, a constellation of small, 3D-printed sculptures evoke synthetic minerals. These objects are material translations of Eurostat data sets—statistical traces of Europe’s cognitive capitalism and the somatologies shaped by technological regimes. Together, they form a critical cartography of the present, revealing how economic abstraction and data-driven control continue to sculpt our bodies, landscapes, and futures.

Diego Delas (b. 1983)

10. *La lámpara del cuerpo (The Lamp of the Body)*, 2025, Oil on canvas, artist’s frame ebonized with black tea, wine, and linseed oil, 252 x 197 x 4 cm, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection
11. *La carta del revés (The Reversed Card)*, 2024, Oil on canvas mounted on an aluminum frame, 250 x 195 x 4 cm
12. *La madrepora (The Madrepore)*, 2025, Oil on canvas, artist’s frame ebonized with black tea, wine, and linseed oil, 252 x 197 x 4 cm, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection
13. *Yo escucho los cantos (I Listen to the Chants)*, 2024, Oil on canvas mounted on an aluminum frame, 195 x 150 x 3.5 cm

Diego Delas’s works explore the house as both a physical structure and a vessel of memory—personal, familial, and collective. Drawing on his upbringing in Spain’s rural Castile region, Delas constructs images that recall vernacular architecture, domestic rituals and the subtle stratification of time. His paintings

often incorporate reclaimed textiles, structural materials, and handmade elements, evoking spaces where memory and matter intertwine.

These four works function like fragments of a larger dwelling, including murals, maps, and talismanic objects that resemble the structure of tarot cards and act as amulets. Their composition suggests a reading, both of the whole and of each element in particular, arranged in an order that invites deciphering and interpretation of their cryptic nature. Patterns and textures reference household practices from pre-modern Mediterranean culture—such as mending, making, and remembering—echoing the seasonal rhythms of rural life. Names and titles are drawn from *Catalogue of Amulets* by Carmen Baroja, Museo del Pueblo Español. Through this visual language, Delas activates the tension between preservation and erasure, between what is remembered and what is lost. As in much of his practice, these paintings inhabit a space between archaeology and storytelling, where the act of looking becomes a form of listening: to places, people, and traditions on the verge of disappearance.

Teresa Solar Abboud (b. 1985)

14. *Quadern 06 (Sketchbook 06)*, 2018, Artist Book, Ink and aquarelle on paper, 29 x 40 cm
15. *Ojitos (All its eyes stare at you)*, 2025, 1 unit, Bronze, metal, ink, 34 x 8,5 x 2 cm (1 unit)
16. *Flotation Line*, 2018, Synthetic leather fabric, foam, ropes, 700 x 200 x 100cm, Commissioned by Der Tank, Academy of Arts, Basel.

In *Flotation Line*, Solar creates a sculptural landscape suspended between land and sea, myth and material. At its center is a monumental whale—at once a living being and a symbolic figure—surrounded by vibrant, zoomorphic forms that hang like pendulums. Inspired by literary works such as Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* and Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, the installation hints at submerged mythologies and deep ecological consciousness.

The “line” in the title refers to the waterline, a boundary that determines buoyancy and belonging—what floats and what sinks. Solar renders this fragile threshold with vivid colors and contrasting materials, evoking the aesthetics of safety gear while suggesting internal life and transformation. More than a collection of sculptures, *Flotation Line* is a fluid system of relations. It invites viewers to enter a space where perception is shaped by empathy, movement, and sensation—a place where emotion and matter are intimately entangled.

17. *Forma de fuga (Forms of Fleeing)*, 2020,
Baked clay, resin, paint, ink, 33 x 70 x 40 cm,
TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary
Collection

Forma de fuga (Forms of Fleeing) evokes a shell-like form—part cavern, part exoskeleton—crafted in clay and resin. Like the mantle of a marine mollusk, it offers both protection and expression, as though the form had once been inhabited by a being that shaped it from within. The surface bears traces of effort and introspection, adorned with marks and words that suggest the presence of a voice, a confession, or a question rising from

its depths. Solar's practice often draws parallels between internal, bodily architectures and the vast infrastructures that lie beneath our cities. Here, the cut or opening in the form mimics a beveled incision, exposing an inner life otherwise concealed. Bright, fluorescent hues reminiscent of safety gear worn in dark, subterranean environments suggest a luminous darkness, something emerging from within. As part of a broader family of sculptural forms, *Forma de fuga* speaks to Solar's ongoing exploration of transformation, vulnerability, and the quiet labor of becoming.

Belén Rodríguez (b. 1981)

18. *Chaqueta de Granjero (Farmer's Jacket)*,
2024, Series of 12 c-print, 32 × 48 cm (each),
Photographer: ©Miriam Mora
19. *Traje revolucionario II (Revolutionary Suit II)*,
2024, Recycled textile garment, 140 x 55 cm

Chaqueta de granjero (Farmer's Jacket) brings together a handcrafted garment and a series of twelve photographs mounted on wallpaper that reflect on traditional textile practices, memory, and sustainable ways of making. The jacket is woven by the artist using strips of fabric from her previous works, dyed with natural pigments—such as oak and birch—collected near her home in the Valles Pasiegos, northern Spain. Each strip carries its own story, layered into a new form that embodies slowness, care, and the passage of time. Influenced by Japanese artisanal techniques like *bashōfu* and the reserve-dye method *ikat* (or *kasuri*), Rodríguez embraces the imperfections and shifts that occur in the dyeing and weaving process. These irregularities

become part of the visual language of the piece, echoing the rhythm and unpredictability of nature.

The photographs document and expand the gesture of making—offering glimpses into process, material intimacy, and the tactile presence of the work. Together, the jacket and images speak to a broader commitment in Rodríguez’s practice: reconnecting with traditional knowledge, honoring manual labor, and reimagining how art can emerge from, and give back to, the landscapes we inhabit.

Álvaro Urbano (b. 1983)

20. *La vida breve (GRANADA, GRANADA) (The Brief Life (GRANADA GRANADA))*, 2023, Metal, concrete, and paint, Overall dimensions variable, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection

In *La vida breve (GRANADA GRANADA)*, Urbano imagines a poetic encounter between Mexican architect Luis Barragán and Spanish poet Federico García Lorca. Centered around Casa Franco—a house Barragán designed in 1929 in Guadalajara, Mexico, with clear influences from Andalusian and Moorish architecture—the work reflects on how cultural forms travel and take root across geographies. The imagined meeting gains deeper resonance through a shared symbolic language. A pomegranate—*granada* in Spanish and the namesake of García Lorca’s hometown in southern Spain—emerges as a central motif, connecting Lorca’s literary universe with Barragán’s architectural sensibility. Through this subtle scenography of symbols and materials, Urbano explores the emotional charge of spaces, the echoes between distant histories, and

the imaginative possibilities of place.

Urbano's installation blurs the line between fiction and memory, inviting viewers into a space where architecture, poetry, and personal resonance overlap. The work suggests that buildings and objects can hold imaginary dialogues and that the traces of one place can be felt in another. Through this interplay, *La vida breve (GRANADA GRANADA)* offers a meditation on cultural inheritance, longing, and the silent stories embedded in the spaces we inhabit.

Regina de Miguel (b. 1977)

21. *Nekya: Una película río (Nekya: A Film River)*, 2022, Single-channel video color, sound, 74 min., Commissioned by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary. Supported by the program Apoyo a la Creación by La Caixa Foundation and by the Botin Foundation, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection

Nekya: A River Film is an immersive journey through the layered histories, mythologies, and ecologies of Riotinto, a mining region in southern Spain shaped by its blood-red river. Drawing on the myth of the river Styx and the ancient rite of Nekya—a dialogue with the dead—de Miguel blends science fiction and documentary style to explore Riotinto as a site of geological wonder, colonial violence, and forgotten resistance.

Once regarded as an entrance to the Underworld, Riotinto now serves as a testing ground for astrobiology, mirroring the conditions of Mars and reflecting humanity's ongoing search for life

beyond Earth. Yet beneath its scientific significance lies a landscape deeply marked by exploitation: from the harsh labor conditions imposed by the British-owned Rio Tinto Company in the nineteenth century, and the environmentally destructive mining practices, to the historical erasure of the 1888 environmental massacre. This forgotten atrocity is directly connected to the later discovery of the largest mass grave ever found in a rural area during the Spanish Civil War and Francoist dictatorship.

Through evocative imagery and testimonies, de Miguel connects ancient myth to contemporary struggles, calling attention to the ongoing impact of extractivism, the silencing of marginalized communities, and the need to reckon with buried histories. *Nekya: A River Film* is both an elegy and a call to justice—an invitation to listen to the past in order to reimagine the future.

TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary is a leading international art and advocacy foundation. Established in 2002 by philanthropist and art patron Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza, the foundation stewards the TBA21 Collection and its outreach activities, which include exhibitions as well as educational and public programming.

TBA21 is based in Madrid, working in collaboration with the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza. It also maintains key hubs in Venice, Italy, where it established the art and science center Ocean Space, and in Portland, Jamaica, through its marine conservation initiative, the Alligator Head Foundation.

All activity at TBA21 is collaborative and fundamentally driven by artists and the belief in art and culture as catalysts for social and environmental transformation and ultimately in the service of a culture of peace, understood as a continuous practice in the affirmation of life, diversity, and coexistence.

TBA21–Academy, the foundation’s research and action arm, is its main driving force. For over a decade, the Academy has fostered deeper understanding and connection with the ocean and broader ecologies by serving as an incubator for transdisciplinary inquiry, artistic production, and environmental advocacy. Through long-term, collaborative engagements, TBA21–Academy catalyzes new forms of knowledge at the intersection of art, science, policy, and conservation. These in turn manifest as exhibitions, new commissions,

public programs, fellowships, residencies, and a range of other formats.

The TBA21 Collection, which includes over 1000 works, stands out as the result of interdisciplinary research that addresses contemporary social challenges, where the arts intersect with philosophy, ecology, science, and reflections on political agency. TBA21 promotes ecocritical works that connect social and environmental justice, highlighting feminist, non-binary, decolonial, non-anthropocentric, regenerative, and more-than-human worldviews. In doing so, it challenges dominant Western narratives, amplifying the misheard and underrepresented voices of the Global South and Indigenous communities, as well as various emancipatory social movements, while also reflecting Spain's current commitment to inclusion and cultural diversity.

For years, TBA21 has supported a promising young generation of Spanish artists, promoting commissions and research that connect them with global concerns and interests. The artists accompanying us on this journey in Seoul have a clear, lucid, and engaged outlook on the environmental crisis, encouraging us to awaken and act.

This project marks the beginning of several future collaborations and learning between cultural agents in both countries, a view shared by the Spanish institutions supporting this initiative in the context of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Spain and Korea (1950–2025): the Subdirectorate General of International Relations and the European Union of the Ministry

of Culture of the Government of Spain, Acción Cultural Española (AC/E), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and the Embassy of Spain in the Republic of Korea. We thank them all for their trust. The anniversary is celebrated in both directions, and the presence of Korean artists in Spain in different projects over the next few months is an opportunity to continue building a shared future, one that requires a great deal of generosity and imagination.

Public Program

Saturday, May 10, 2025

14:10 – 14:40 Greetings

- Sunjung Kim, Artistic Director of the Art Sonje Center; Guillermo Kirkpatrick, Ambassador of Spain to the Republic of Korea; Rosa Ferré, Co-director of TBA21–Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

14:10 – 14:40 Keynote lecture

- Chus Martínez, Head of the Institute of Art Gender Nature, FHNW Academy of Arts and Design in Basel & Artistic Director of the 36th Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts

14:45 – 16:00 Roundtable

Awake! Or How to Get to Work

- Belén Rodríguez, Asunción Molinos Gordo, Diego Delas, and Daniel Steegman Mangrané
- Moderator: Chus Martínez

Sunday, May 11, 2025

14:00 – 15:15 Screening

- Regina de Miguel, *Nekya. A River-Film*

15:20 – 16:20 Conversation

- Artist Regina de Miguel and Marina Avia Estrada, Head of Exhibitions & Public Programs at TBA21

16:30 – 17:30 Performance

- Claudia Pagés Rabal, *Rats and Roaches*

Clear, Lucid, and Awake

2025. 5. 9. – 2025. 7. 20.

The Ground, Space 1, Art Sonje Center

Curator

Chus Martínez (Head of the Institute of Art Gender Nature, FHNW Academy of Arts and Design in Basel, Artistic Director of the 36th Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts)

In Collaboration with

Jina Kim (Project Director, Space for Contemporary Art)

Coordinator

Yoojin Jang (Exhibition Coordinator, Space for Contemporary Art)

Organized by

Art Sonje Center

Co-hosted by

Art Sonje Center, TBA21
Thyssen-Bornemisza Art
Contemporary

In collaboration with

Spanish Ministry of Culture,
Acción Cultural Española
(AC/E), Spanish Agency for
International Development
Cooperation (AECID), Embassy
of Spain in the Republic of
Korea

Logistics and Installation

DASAN ART

Lighting

Hyun Sung Moon, Jae Il Yun

Graphic Design

Dokho Shin

Photography

Seowon Nam

Video Production

Eurock Lee

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MAG PR & Image

Translation

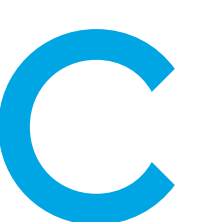
Jina Kim

Subtitle Translation

Sehyun Kim, Yoojin Jang

Docent Program

Hyeonmi Kim, Yunji Kim



Clear, Lucid, and Awake

2025. 5. 9. – 2025. 7. 20.

The Ground, Space 1, Art Sonje Center

TBA21

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Marina Avia Estrada

Exhibitions & Public Programs Manager

Claudia Schafer-Tabraue

Head of Collection

Simone Sentall

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Architect & Exhibitions Assistant

Clara Alsedà Rodríguez

Exhibition Design Support

Clara Álvarez García

Exhibitions Assistant

María del Mar Medina Guasch

Information

Opening Hours

12:00–19:00 (Closed Mondays)

Admission Fee

10,000 KRW: 25–64 years

7,000 KRW: 19–24 years, over 65 years, Art Pass
cardholders

5,000 KRW: 9–18 years

Free: 8 and under, visitors with disabilities, ICOM ·
CIMAM · SCM cardholders

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