

# Florencia Sadir. *Lo que sucede río arriba, sucede río abajo*

By LAURA HAKEL

In San Carlos, Salta, the algarrobo is popularly known as "the tree". With a central root that penetrates the ground to reach subterranean water and horizontal roots that look to attain a maximum of rain, they tolerate drought and grow in arid conditions, accompanying the crackled beds of rivers that remain dry during most of the year. In the territory of Salta, the algarrobo's importance leads to its consideration as the first of all trees: it is the closest, the most durable, its wood is the most widely used and it is the tree whose presence filters into all dimensions of life.

In *Lo que sucede río arriba, sucede río abajo* [What Happens Upstream, Happens Downstream], Florencia Sadir's second solo exhibition at W, "the tree" is a point of departure for reflecting on the ties we maintain with our environment. It invites the question of how the world that surrounds us constitutes a structural part of human life, and how we humans transform its materiality into infrastructure. In the gallery, wooden rulers punctuate the space, echoing the use of limnimeters, tools used to measure rivers' water level. Incinerated trunks from the native forests of Animaná, a rural municipality in Salta, push against the walls, much like the buttresses used in structures in danger of collapse in the Valles Calchaquies. The round silhouette of a clock made with fragments of earth from the Salta countryside invites contemplating a different time, beyond the utilitarian nature of our measurements. The environment's instrumentalization, dissociated from its organic life and associated with human life, is re-imagined in these works, which resist, overflow or disengage from their functionality.

Water scarcity in Argentina's northernmost regions is a concern present throughout Sadir's work. In her works, water is manifested as an invocation, translated into silver patinas applied to ceramics, which take the form of drops and shining bowls. From within these receptacles, reconstructed branches emerge vertically, created from fragments of wood the river has pulled along and charred trunks, generating multiple meanings between water's symbolic vitality, the destructive power of its course and recurring fires, both intentional and naturally occurring.

The exhibition's earthy floor imagines the runoff of a river that has receded after having flooded the level of the space, leaving sedimentary marks of its passing. Water's dry footprint emphasizes the shared platform where the strategies of human and non-human life meet in order to adapt to the territory's conditions. Through memories of flash flooding in the face of sustained drought and the omnipersistence of dust, heat and fire, the exhibition makes the precarious and cyclical balance of an extreme landscape evident.

Florencia Sadir insistently observes how societies turn the living environment into a natural resource, eroding and transforming it, and how the territory models human development in all of its dimensions. In response, the artist investigates possible treaties with the ecosystem on equal terms. She looks for techniques, like sun-dried earthen bricks, that originate in knowledge that has been passed along for generations, with a conception of the territory as a space for communion rather than extraction.

In *Lo que sucede río arriba, sucede río abajo*, the artist approaches the forest of algarrobos in Animaná as if it were an archive of life, reading the story of its survival in its branches, twisted by lack of moisture and burned during fires. She also observes how despite fires, new sprouts emerge in "the trees" from their roots. In the Valles Calchaquies, these saplings are the true metric that underscores Florencia Sadir's work. It is a time that pertains to the earth, without adapting to the foreseeable nature of the human clock.



Florencia Sadir  
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