

# BPA// Raum

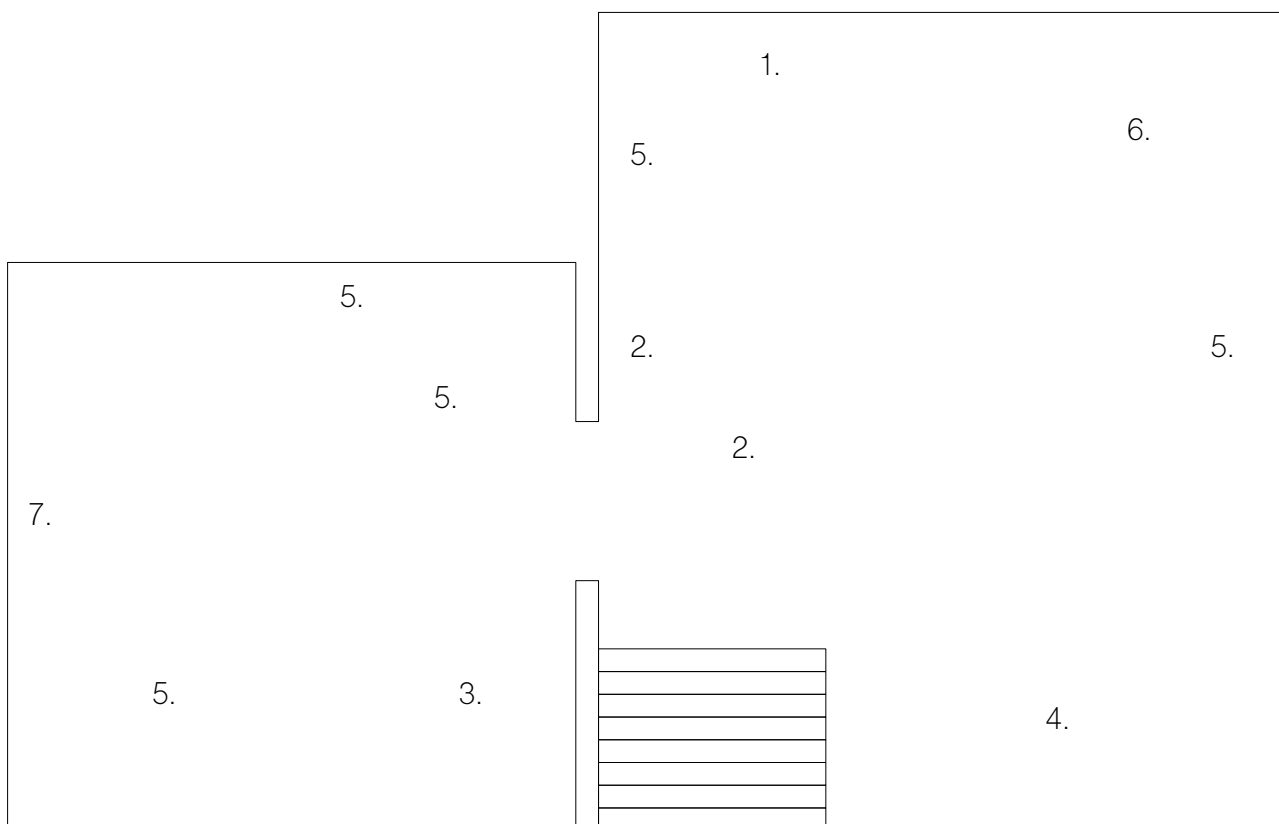
## Tiempo de Siembra

03.08.–15.09.2024

The group show “Tiempo de Siembra” (sowing time), curated by BPA// participant Simon Speiser, brings together various positions from the contemporary Ecuadorian art world that work at the intersection of nature and technology.

In 2009 during the reformation of the Ecuadorian constitution, the Andean concept “Sumac Kawsay” was introduced, commonly translated as “well-living”, the term signifies a departure from Western socialist theory, embracing ancestral, communitarian knowledge and the culture of the Quechua people. It called for nature to be recognised with rights, akin to human beings. Unfortunately many of these ideas did not materialise into action. However, the recent referendum in 2023 saw an astounding majority of the Ecuadorian population opposing oil exploitation in the Amazon, during times of crisis. This underscores a consistent understanding for the importance of reconciling contemporary life with the environment.

This resonance is strongly reflected in the work of many Ecuadorian artists, with some shedding light on the exploitation of the natural resources, its technologies and their environmental impacts. Others analyse a spectrum of technologies, from indigenous technologies to our present digital worlds and speculative technologies, in search for a symbiotic coexistence.



1.

In her artistic practice, **Angelica Alomoto** explores the intersections of ritual, body, and image through the lens of Andean–Amazonian thought and art, fostering dialogue across diverse knowledge spaces. She delves into sound, image, and representation in specific cultural contexts and art education to build collaborative epistemic bridges in artistic, popular, and community education. Her aim is to contribute to the dissemination of art that transcends elitist discourses, promoting practices and aesthetics grounded in alternative logics.

**Cuatro Caminos** (Four Paths), canvas, acrylic, rubber tree sap, 2024

In this work, Angelica Alomoto reinterprets an archival image from 1883 called "The Travelers of the Upper Napo. Le tour du Monde." The depicted landscape, representing a fragment of the Ecuadorian Amazon, is painted with rubber tree sap. The artwork's size is altered and accompanied by a symbol representing the Napo cloud forest, derived from Omagua pottery, a culture from the Ecuadorian Amazon. The piece aims to highlight the social use of images during the transition from the colony to the republic in Ecuador, where landscape narratives were used to map, measure, classify, and identify natural resources for exploitation, such as wood, rubber, oil, and gold. The violent rubber exploitation period, known as "white gold," impacted the Amazon in Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Peru. Through landscape painting, rubber tree sap, and cloud forest symbolism, the work questions the embedded intentions in landscape representations. The artist proposes a non-violent journey for the rubber tree sap and cloud forest symbols, viewed as living subjects capable of dialogue and resonance. The ritual act of gathering signs, symbols, and materials without hierarchy is considered an act of healing.

2.

**Aquiles Jarrín** is an artist and visual anthropologist. He was born in Quito and currently resides in Berlin. His work develops at the intersections of architecture, archaeology, anthropology, and communication. He explores and investigates the relationships between objects, space, and materiality to develop conversations between the human and non-human, expressed in speculative, visual, and narrative fictions. He is currently researching the relationships between territory, displacement, and the impacts of extractive practices in the contexts of change and technological advancement.

**From mother earth to motherboard**, etched motherboard, copper structure, 2024

This piece juxtaposes the technological and anti-colonial narratives of Georgius Agricola's "De Re Metallica" and Guaman Poma's "Nueva Crónica y buen gobierno," two 16th-century texts. Presented as a sacred book or computer screen, it facilitates a dialogue through AI, imposing a Western aesthetic where AI-generated visuals overshadow Poma's mestizo graphics. The copper plate, etched using a chemical process typical in artisan circuit construction, highlights the continuum from early extraction practices to modern technology. By incorporating spiritual elements of the earth, often negated by AI, the piece critiques the legacy of colonialism in technological advancement.

**Dissection from A to B**, 24 iron pickaxes of different sizes, 2024

The installation unfolds within the gallery space as a cut through the earth, reminiscent of the geological cross-sections illustrated in Georgius Agricola's "De re metallica." The tools scattered on the floor seem to acquire a dynamic presence, engaging viewers with their historical and functional significance. This work delves into the fundamental act of breaking the earth, rooted in the earliest technologies where metal served the purposes of agriculture. It creates a dialogue between past and present, function and form, and the evolving relationship between humans and the tools that shape their environment.

3.

**Martina Miño Pérez** is a visual artist whose work focuses on the creation of “incarnations” and “immersions” that use taste, smell and touch as essential tools for interpreting various types of sensitive languages. Her pieces often imply the “desolidification” of the work or the “dissolution” of the visible object and its internalization as a transformative device. She uses the poetics of “digestion” as a metaphor for the assimilation of concepts and my material research explores its poetic potential.

In a similar way to contemporary alchemy, she uses resin, iron, stone, wax, gelatin and other materials to produce transformative vessels, while employing experimental techniques from culinary science. Her pieces want to provoke intimate and ritual, sensorial and collective encounters between the work and its audiences.

**Transfusion as eternity**, Porcelain, magnesium milk, lactose, jasmine, steel, 2024

Porcelain sculpture representing a double body or a mirror body which rests on a milky and mineral lagoon. It alludes to the gesture of sowing body and harvesting spirit through the transmutation of matter. This reflux still alludes to the exchange of hot liquids through boiling. In the ancient world, this type of stills, through fire, heated the liquids, and these through evaporation could be exchanged between two bodies. Its shapes, similar to organs or animals, replicate digestive or corporal processes, to create utensils for the transformation of nature. This piece alludes to the recirculation of liquids and the concept of transfusion as vitality, movement, volatility, exchange. The piece invites us to feel the interior of the substance in its spillage, in a lagoon of magnesium milk, jasmine and lactose. This mineral milk over time goes through a sublimation process in which it transforms from a milky liquid to an arid talc. Entering the interior of a dreamlike substance through touch and smell.

4.

**Juan Carlos León**, is a migrant artist from Ecuador in Mexico, his work is characterized by a constant hybrid identity. His production explores the development of landscapes and "sensitive data visualizations," electronic, robotic, and automated sculptures that include experimental scientific research processes, merging culture and nature, art and science. He often works with materials rich in physical and symbolic qualities (oil, water, fungi, medicinal plant extracts, waxes, resins, etc.), from which economic, religious, mythological, and cultural connotations also emanate. His current work explores the plant world, addressing its migration, its spirits, and its energies, from the molecular and microscopic to their cosmologies.

**Limpia de siete hierbas para Simon Speiser**, encaustic wax, flaked wax, graphite pencil, and vegetable dyes on paper. Brass appliqués, aluminum, and methacrylate box, 2024

My work explores the plant world, addressing its migration, its spirits, and its energies, from the molecular and microscopic to their cosmologies. These investigations represent my search for a "Southern" identity and a pluriversal aesthetic. Plants constitute a living social exploration that evidences a planetary mestizaje (Clément, 2021), and they seek to transcend the territories of life compatibility. They are a form of living thought (Kohn, 2021) in which the spirits and materials that form these other worlds also communicate semantically.

"Limpia de siete hierbas para Simon Speiser" is a piece that functions as an amulet and is sent to Berlin as a container object for a ritual of energetic cleansing. Through the combinations of cosmology, scientific representations, and material, it requests a change of energies and protection for the curator of the exhibition.

5.

**Paula Proaño Mesías'** work reflects on various technological structures and their cultural and political dimensions. Through various mediums such as performance, sculpture, video, and installation, Proaño Mesías assesses Western conceptions of the natural world, defying human-centered notions and norms. In her projects, she creates prosthetic hybrids that transcend purely human forms by expanding the body with sculptural objects, articulating the multiplicity and heterogeneity of a process of subjectivation beyond the human.

**Affectus**, series of 4 sculptures and 2 X-Rays, 2022–2023

Affectus is a project that hybridizes the aesthetic and conceptual realms of reconstructive medical sciences, biological sciences, and instruments of animal domestication. This fusion is distilled into four sculptural objects that reference the reconstructive prosthesis of Grecia, the toucan, the first bird to receive a beak prosthesis. The works include: Hyperbeccus (Sobre artefactos transhumanistas) [Hyperbeccus (On transhuman artifacts)] (2023); Elizabeth (Sobre instrumentos musicales quirúrgicos) [Elizabeth (On surgical musical instruments)] (2022); Grecia (Sobre mecanismos de reparación) [Grecia (On repair mechanisms)] (2022) y Tukã (Sobre dispositivos de domesticación) [Tukã (On domestication devices)] (2023).

6.

**Oscar Santillán** is an artist and the founder of studio ANTIMUNDO, based between Amsterdam and Quito. His practice emerges precisely from the concept of 'Antimundo', a cybernetic matrix where science, fiction, and non-human perspectives converge. Antimundo is "a way of identifying and generating realities that do not fit in the world", interweaving various media as well as old and new materialities.

**Spacecraft**, ceramic burned from chemical composition of surface soil of the planet Venus, 2018  
Departing from data gathered since 1972 by Soviet, American and Japanese probes it has been possible for this project to faithfully recreate the chemical composition of the surface soil of planet Venus. This extraterrestrial soil has been used as clay, and consequently shaped, turned, and burnt transforming it into ceramic pieces, that together form a spacecraft. As much as ceramics was a fundamental technology to sapiens' civilizations it remains deeply relevant to our present, nowadays enabling space shuttles to break through our atmosphere and shielding it from the extreme heat.

7.

**Simon Speiser** is an German–Ecuadorian artist known for his interdisciplinary approach that merges nature and technology through various media, including writing, sculpture, virtual reality, installations, and printmaking. His works explores themes of origins and the interplay between human and technological worlds. Blending virtual reality and ancestral folklore, weaving science fiction with non-western conceptions of technology, and believing in storytelling as a tool in the fight against dystopian thinking, Speiser often creates immersive, sensory experiences that highlight the convergence of traditional knowledge and contemporary digital techniques, showcasing the resilience and adaptability of precolonial cultures.

**Visiones**, PLA 3D print, brass, aluminium, LED light box, 2024

Visiones is a continuation of the work "La Vision del Monte" a sculptural approach to telling stories of spiritual encounters in the Esmeraldenian Rainforest through light and shadow. The depictions of a devil and a "siren" Mami Wata, are based on interviews that Speiser did with the help of Diana Ante in the countryside of Esmeraldas Ecuador. The Catholic Church kept demonising the spirits of the maroon society of Esmeraldas, to a point that they are mostly remembered as evil beings, which Speiser tries to counter through a focus on positive encounters.