



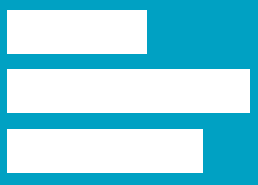
The ecosystems, testimonies and collaborative creations of Toltén, a locality on the southern coast of La Araucanía, have reached the country's capital, the central valley, at the CCLM in Santiago de Chile.

Why did They Get Here and How?

The Corporación Capital Biodiversidad

invited us, as a cultural center, to collaborate in a project that aims to make visible and value the biocultural heritage of Toltén, specifically its wetlands. What began as a wish to make an exhibition about nature and decentralization, quickly turned into a much more ambitious project; one that would allow us to deepen the ideas of rights, participation and cultural democracy: the natural and cultural.





What do These Ideas Express?

These ideas express a challenge: to recognize that culture is a manifestation of what we share, to recognize that all people are capable of creating, and to understand that each cultural expression belongs to all, beyond where we were born and raised, beyond our tastes and appearances.

In addition, this way of sharing culture is linked to a commitment to biocultural restoration and ecological protection, since collective action allows us to take care of the environment and biodiversity, including both human and non-human forms of life that inhabit a space that we need to continue to exist.





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In the *Wetlands of Toltén* project, we asked ourselves how to protect the heritage threatened by human action.

We believe that by connecting the wetlands, the history, the social fabric and the knowledge of Toltén, while bringing science and art together, it is possible to find some answers.





This exhibition serves as a starting point for ongoing research, bringing us closer to the particular territory of Toltén and the experiences of its communities in coexistence with four types of *wetlands*: *swamp forests*, *meadows*, *estuaries* and *lagoons*. The exhibition proposes a sensitive cartography based on stories, sounds, sculptures, ceramics and engravings, and aims to value the natural and cultural aspects of Toltén as a whole, incorporating the knowledge of its communities and the thinking of the Mapuche people, in order to learn about the wetlands through the collaboration of different people who share the dream of living in a more just and caring country.

This is an invitation to visit a little piece of Toltén. Here you will hear some of its voices, see some of its landscapes, appreciate its land and feel its smells through works done together with artists from the region of La Araucanía.



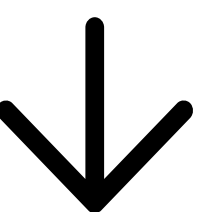


The Children of Toltén are Listening

Sound artist Jorge Olave's initial question was, "How and where to listen to the voice of the wetlands?" He found the answer in the voices of the children of the Frutillar 144 School, located on the road to La Barra and in front of the Patagua Lagoon, also called "Catrilef" by Mapuche communities. This ecosystem protects a valuable biodiversity, which is today threatened.



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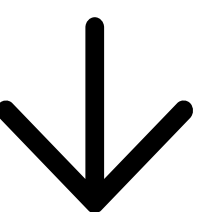




«We walked from the school to the lagoon, along a route marked by those who travel it every day: the students. They were siblings, cousins, neighbors; people who know where to step so as not to fall and when to stop and drink water to continue their work in the field.»

Here, we can listen to recordings of different types of wetlands, as well as everyday situations and experiments carried out by the children. Focusing on the sounds they had known since they were very little, the exercise of sensitive listening and the acoustic horizon of the territory, the artist and the school children reflected on the soundscape of Toltén. Through conversations about the wind, the birds, the river, the mouth of the river, the sea, territorial spirits, toponymies and inherited stories, you will learn about this space and the human and natural aspects of this area from their voices.

These are the stories they want to share with you.



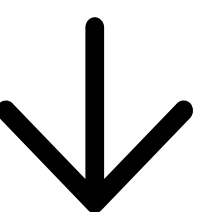


The Voice of Artisanal Fishers in the Estuary

On the shores of Caleta La Barra, one of the fishermen who participated in the community art experience guided by artist Daniel Lagos and anthropologist Javiera Delgado shared: «*The State has forgotten about artisanal fishers.*» This community views the wetland with both affection and concern, as a trade that has been passed from generation to generation, and which today is threatened by sport fishing and national fishing legislation.



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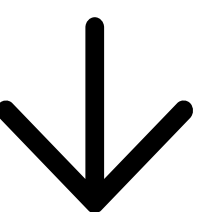




«We travel in rowing boats because they allow us to stand up and break the waves at the mouth,» they told us. «Every 28th of February the season ends, which only lasts a few months, the rest of the year our work is ilegal,» they insisted.

Carving the wood and inking their drawings, they talked about their experiences, past events and current situations. The fishermen created sixteen woodcuts that depict their links with the estuary, the Toltén River, the sea, their memories and all the biodiversity of this place.

This is their story told through woodcut engravings.





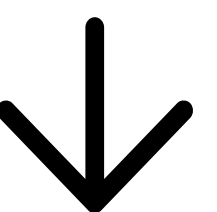
The Toltén Rural Women's Roundtable

The women of the Rural Women's Roundtable of Toltén meet in the market around coffee and food for tea time.

They are all artisans, weavers, growers, honey collectors, and thinkers who protect their territory and the products that nature provides them. They share their knowledge and help one another; sense of humor and solidarity are part of the tablecloth of this roundtable.



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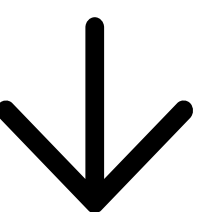




They decided to share their knowledge with Elizabeth Rodriguez and shape it into a collective sculpture: *Lil Zomo*, which in Mapuzugun means *Woman of the Ravine*, was the name they chose for their work. The sculpture's body was made of vegetable fibers collected from the meadows of Toltén and worked together with their hands, sharing collective and personal stories.

Inspired by the strength of nature and women, their connection with the earth and their knowledge, they sent a message of hope to a colleague who had suffered a serious accident. Through art and creative encounters, they transformed their grief and sadness into love and strength.

The presence of this force is *Lil zomo*.



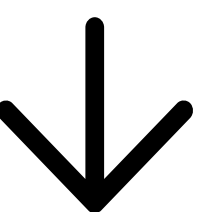


***Trawün* in the Lagoons of the Past and Present**

The Mapuche artist Gonzalo Castro-Colimil together with several Mapuche communities living in Toltén, specifically in the surroundings of the Catrilef lagoon (or Patagua as it is called in Spanish): the communities Juan de la Cruz de Pinchumilla, Luis Ñancuqueo 1, Luis Ñancuqueo 2 and Mozo Marileo, articulated an artistic experience called *El habla de Toltén* (The Speech of Toltén).



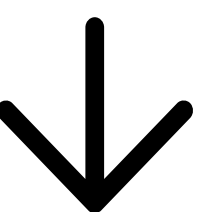
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Sus relatos, el habitar la lengua y la exploración del territorio fueron un ejercicio de memoria a partir de lo cotidiano, desde el mate y el pan amasado, activando sus encuentros y desencuentros, manifestándose en la obra *Aukin Lafken - Ecos del mar*.

The stories of the people, the inhabiting of the language and the exploration of the territory were the key aspects in an exercise of everyday memory around mate infusions and homemade bread, in which their encounters and misunderstandings manifested in the work *Aukin Lafken - Ecos del mar* (Echoes of the Sea).

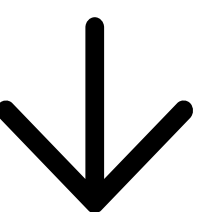




Water has been expressed throughout the history of people and their communities: the *trawün* from pain, from affection, from creation and territory have allowed for the manifestation of what was observed, dialoguing from the *rukas* (huts), thinking and feeling the memory, and experiencing the living territory where the family stands as the resisting nucleus.

After this meeting, word of mouth spread, and slowly it became a space for memory and dialogue. *Trawün*, a word in Mapuzugun which can be interpreted as an encounter or meeting, is the key piece of this work: a brainstorm of proposals, agreements, conflicts and mutual collaboration.

This roundtable is geography and biography, a *trawün* for everyone.



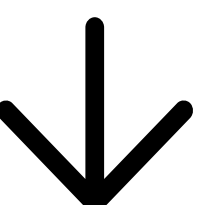


Women Defending the Native Flora

Saberes sobre flora nativa (Knowledge about Native Flora) is the name of the collective work in which artist Gina Negroni participated together with the women of the Flower Strips Workshop in vegetable gardens. This initiative was organized by Corporación Capital Biodiversidad, with the support of Fundación Mar Adentro. The result was a set of ceramics created both collectively and individually using clay from the territory.

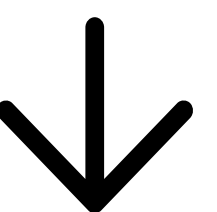


© Gina Negroni





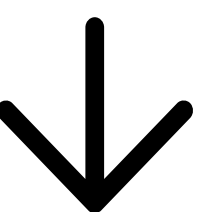
The women of Toltén, many of whom are dedicated to activities associated with agriculture and tourism, have forged a close relationship with the various types of wetlands found in the area. They play a crucial role in the management and conservation of the wetlands, in the rescue of native flora for medicinal and artisanal uses, in maintaining traditions and transferring knowledge, such as living near the wetlands, family tasks, and the ways of traveling between home and school or warehouses where rivers were the usual mode of transport. Women combine their active participation in conservation actions with their professional and care work, such as raising children.





Despite inequalities, the women of Toltén have triggered positive and substantive changes in their environment, creating learning in a collective and supportive way, as is the case with the Native Flower Strips Workshop in vegetable gardens, where they learn about the reproduction of cuttings and the cultivation of species in their family vegetable gardens.

Women take care of the land and keep it alive.





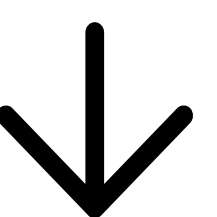
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Let's Talk: Nature and Culture are Not Separate

The wetlands system of Toltén contributes to the daily life and well-being of its inhabitants.

A wide variety of functions generate a permanent flow of contributions that satisfy the needs of the inhabitants.

The interaction between aquatic and terrestrial species, and between these and the ecosystems, gives rise to ecological processes that contribute to the development of life - all life.





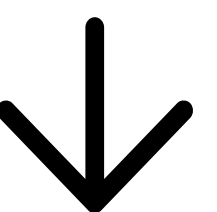
In wetlands, aquatic plants are responsible for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Imbalances in the environment imply changes that in some cases can be chronic and irreversible, while in others, the system can be resilient. The communities of Toltén recognize multiple contributions of the wetlands to the people; in general terms these contributions are related to:

- **Regulation of environmental processes**

It is recognized that wetlands play a fundamental role in the maintenance of habitats for animal and plant species, as well as in the regulation of climate, the hydrological cycle and in flood protection.

- **Material benefits**

The wetlands in Toltén are identified as providing a variety of biodiversity resources, such as fishing, hunting, traditional medicine and water for animal husbandry and crop maintenance.

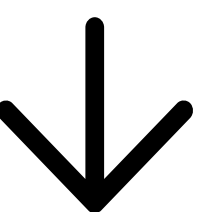




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- **Non-material benefits**

It is recognized that the variety of wetland systems provides diverse landscapes and scenic beauty, which contribute to the development of recreational, contemplative, and tourism activities. Furthermore, the community highlights the educational potential and the local and ancestral knowledge associated with these ecosystems.





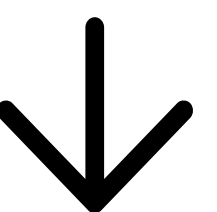
These types of resources are known as «ecosystem services.» However, disturbances on wetlands, their fragmentation and infilling, as well as the loss of forests, can diminish them. For example, the reduction of soil quality for agriculture can reduce water quantity and quality, increase the risks and loss of biodiversity of pollinating insects and fish, among other effects.

Although human action puts the continuity of these «services» at risk, their recognition by communities reflects the importance of biodiversity in human existence.

This, in turn, allows us to understand the relationship between society and nature, as well as the interaction between ecological systems and cultural operations that together constitute a socio-ecological system.

Let's keep talking.

The wetlands and their communities need it.





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