

# Arts and Extractivism in the Global Present

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## 3 *Pharmakon*

Aesthetic Practices, Submerged Modes,  
and Plant–Human Entanglements

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### 3 *Pharmakon*

#### Aesthetic Practices, Submerged Modes, and Plant–Human Entanglements

*Liliana Gómez*

##### Pharmakon and Ecological Thinking

In recent discussions about arts and extractivism, it has been acknowledged that an ecological thinking traverses the arts and aesthetic practices from Latin America. Increasingly, the arts have articulated forms of knowledges and epistemologies that probe new assemblages of the more-than-human, transcending the modern division between “nature” and “culture.” These aesthetic practices, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and experimented with a variety of media, radically brought forward an ecological thinking that has contested the long trajectory of extractivist capitalism experienced by Latin America and the Caribbean since colonialism—manifested in environmental crises, widespread ecocides, and the extinction of species.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I will discuss two art interventions, both video works: *Patrón Mono* (2018) by Carolina Caycedo and *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses de Richard Evans Schultes y Albert Hofmann* (Footnotes to the book *Plants of the Gods* by Richard Evans Schultes and Albert Hofmann) (2019) by Claudia Salamanca. Both form an important part of the exhibition *Extractive Zones* which I curated together with Alexander Brust in 2021 at the Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland. The two video works relate to what cultural critic Azucena Castro highlights as the artistic potentiality to

destabilize the fixed constructs about nature inherited from the colonial and extractive system in the face of the current environmental crisis, transforming the ways in which we read by crossing geographical contexts and going beyond the figure of the rootedness-uprootedness of human beings from nature.<sup>2</sup>

I follow this observation by positing that both video works elaborate on this kind of destabilization of colonial and extractive systems—systems deeply embedded in the modern dichotomies of nature–culture—through a radical shift and aesthetic imagination that permeates the figure of the *pharmakon*. In the following, I will read the *pharmakon* against the backdrop of the transcultural history of the Americas and Europe, focusing on its material and cultural entanglements, which reveal a pharmacological imagination that traverses ecological thinking. I am interested in how these video works probe, elaborate, advance, and articulate this ecological thinking, as they imagine more-than-human entanglements. In this sense, they follow Adriana Michèle Campos Johnson’s framing that “Nature is not the infrastructure to a world scripted by human mastery; instead human activity is infrastructural to a new post-human assemblage that is hard to discern.”<sup>3</sup> Expanding, molding, and transgressing this liminal space of

the non-human or the more-than-human, the video works by Salamanca and Caycedo are inscribed within an environmental aesthetics and, more broadly, the planetary—a framework that radically “decenters the human,”<sup>4</sup> as pointed out by Jens Andermann, “by mobilizing nonhuman agents and forces that, under the sign of catastrophe and even extinction, [and] present[s] a limit to the dreams of endless extraction and profit.”<sup>5</sup> He further writes that

Trance as a breaking-down of the confines of body and of species and as a reconstellation of alliances among existents in a cascade of becomings . . . [it] is also a way of suturing the wound extractive violence, . . . and of re-immersing the human, not in “environments” but in an extended matrix of selfhood as always already verging on the otherness it allies itself with.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, in the introduction to his study on the pharmakon as both a “concept figure” and “poetic practice,” literary scholar Hermann Herlinghaus underlines that “the concept of pharmacological imagination serves us to critically pull together facets of both the specialized modern concept of pharmacology and the more complex cultural and historical meanings of the pharmakon.”<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, “poetic practice” refers to the way the pharmakon manifests in art, literature, and poetry. Herlinghaus highlights how the pharmakon “combined at least three meanings—of being a medicine, a poison, and/or a magic potion, and it speaks to us through early epic narratives as well as philosophical concerns.”<sup>8</sup> Following this, I use the pharmakon—or the perspective of cultural pharmacology—as a vantage point to discuss the extractive zones, as they have been probed in the eponymous exhibition. Pharmakon seems to be a productive cultural concept to delve into the various thick layers of material, cultural, and more-than-human entanglements and, further, to transgress the modern duality of nature–culture embedded in extractivist capitalism and its worldview. Adopting what Macarena Gómez-Barris elsewhere coined as “submerged perspectives,” the aesthetic practices that I will discuss in this chapter contest the dominant view of the extractive zone that has been characterized by the overlap of extractive practices—including mining, industrial, or otherwise—and various forms of (artistic) representations, which conceive landscapes as pure commodities and future biodiversity storage sites, effectively inserting them into global economic circuits.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, I employ pharmakon as a conceptual approach to the relationship between art and extractivism, acknowledging and emphasizing its significance as magic—both as an “accursed share”<sup>10</sup> and as a supernatural element in order to introduce the affective dimension, the realm in which both video works—*Patrón Mono* and *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses de Richard Evans Schultes y Albert Hofmann*—certainly intervene. Moreover, the figure of the pharmakon also re-narrates the transatlantic dialectic in the history of magical and psychoactive substances, their “dissemination and reappropriation in different scenarios of the modern world,” thus serving as material-conceptual lenses on modernity.<sup>11</sup> As an integral part of the extractive zone, this re-narration as probed and imagined by the artistic works becomes “an account of a conflictive, local-transatlantic transculturation of psychoactive substances from the periphery ‘into’ Western modernity”—a notion I am interested in discussing in the following.<sup>12</sup> As suggested by Hermann Herlinghaus and Arne Romanowski in their study on tobacco, the focus on the transatlantic migration, such as of tobacco and sugar, permits us “to look at colonial and neocolonial institutions that became responsible for an uneven world order on its way to advanced

globalization.”<sup>13</sup> Against this backdrop, the chapter foregrounds “a different historicization of cultural modernity, one that elicits its constitutive linkage to the proliferation and commodification of stimulants such as tobacco, as well as to the criminalization of other psychoactive pharmaka.”<sup>14</sup> Importantly, following Herlinghaus and Romanowski’s argument, the conditions of tobacco—and other pharmaka—are linked to the founding contradictions of Western modernity and “to the global North–South dynamics and its geo-political, affective, and economic maladies.”<sup>15</sup> In fact, it is these founding contradictions of the nature–culture divide—and thus the incommensurability—that are being contested by emergent contemporary Latin American arts. These practices seek to imagine different horizons of futurity and to radically probe the more-than-human entanglements that the pharmakon seems to advance.

More recently, the transcultural history of stimulants and pharmaka has also been explored in art exhibitions that engage with the entangled transatlantic histories of substances, their economic circulation, and their role in forming the material cultures of colonial and modern encounters.<sup>16</sup> Of exceptional interest is the project *Stimulants: Circulation and Euphoria* (2016–2017) at Tabakalera in Donostia-San Sebastián, which studied the contemporary world and culture through the filter of stimulants, such as sugar, cocoa, coffee, and tobacco. Through these psychoactive substances, the project foregrounded the colonial modern entanglements between the Basque Country and the Americas since the sixteenth century. Tabakalera, as San Sebastián’s oldest tobacco factory, served as a site of these entanglements, which provoked a significant circulation of stimulants and initiated a radical transformation in the consumer habits of Western societies. The project and the exhibition aimed at advancing a critical reflection on stimulants, particularly in relation to cultural production, while foregrounding psychoactive substances as the underpinnings of Western modernity.<sup>17</sup> The exhibition asked pertinent questions such as: “Wasn’t coffee the gasoline of the new bourgeois spirit that flourished in the Enlightenment?,” and “Isn’t the massive consumption of tranquilisers a sign of a society that has excessively intensified the productive gesture of the worker?”<sup>18</sup> The project thus deals with the complex interrelationships of stimulants in modern material culture and provocatively posits the thesis that “The need to digest everything that exists and make it significant has ended up manifesting itself as the occult spiritual colonisation of the West” while probing the stimulants as “techniques” that “situate us in a network of relations in which the connections between desire and rationality, intoxication and capitalism, or subjectivity and cosmovision become especially relevant.”<sup>19</sup> Significantly—and I follow its premises in my discussion of the relationship between art and extractivism—the project *Stimulants* envisions art “as an operation capable of uniting the imagination and our modes of tackling the material world.”<sup>20</sup>

Against this broader context regarding the cultural meanings of stimulants and other psychoactive substances—as a productive lens of ecological thinking—I use the pharmakon, understood as both a “concept figure” and “poetic practice,” to approach and discuss the extractive zones probed in the video works *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses de Richard Evans Schultes y Albert Hofmann* by Claudia Salamanca and *Patrón Mono* by Carolina Caycedo. These works explore social ecologies and—often Indigenous—spaces characterized by high biodiversity, on the one hand, and long histories of resource extraction, (neo)colonial relations, and extractivism, on the other. I argue that both works probe the significance of ignored knowledge practices and systems of alternative worldviews beyond the logic of progress—worldviews that the

pharmakon pointedly subverts and delimits as modern ambivalences and contradictions. Furthermore, both works delve into what has been underlined by Herlinghaus as the

Cultural traditions that could provide knowledges about meaningful ecologies of use, such as the large indigenous repertoires of healing plants, substances, and ritualistic practices [that] were overwritten by the far more lucrative goods proffered by transatlantic commodity chains and their fueling of a psychotropic modernization of European, and later North American, societies.<sup>21</sup>

Aesthetic practices, as meticulously elaborated on by Salamanca and Caycedo with the two video works, critically and poetically plunge the viewer into modern ambivalences with their subtle resurrection of both Indigenous knowledges of healing plants and the psychotropic, affective dimensions of modernization, probing the more-than-human as a transformative force for a sustainable Earth. Accordingly, the pharmakon—with its wider cultural-scientific and economic modern history, as elucidated in these videos—becomes a key conceptual approach to the more-than-human entanglements that are inscribed within Amerindian and Afro-descendant sacred knowledges, spiritual realms, and thus their performative and poetic practices of healing. As a counter-figure of Western modernity and an important conceptual entry for environmental aesthetics, the pharmakon—the affective and accursed share—eventually reflects the very constitution of modernity, and thus gives insights into the founding conditions and internal contradictions of extractive capitalism.<sup>22</sup> This ambivalent, transformative potential of the pharmakon also resonates with what Jens Andermann illuminates in his seminal work on trance,

where trance represented “a transition, a passage, or a becoming,” suspending diegetic continuity for the purpose of “produc[ing] collective utterances capable of raising misery to a strange positivity: the invention of a people” . . . Latin American aesthetic production of the twentieth and twenty-first century also urges us to imagine as not solely human but rather as a kind of trans-species *communitas* in insurrection against the “immunitary” pact of extractive capitalism.<sup>23</sup>

In introducing the concept of the pharmakon as a poetic practice for exploring Salamanca and Caycedo’s works, I aim to highlight the artists’ powerful aesthetics, which imagine and recover the lost potential of the more-than-human or trans-species *communitas*—a shared and extended community: *Communitas* embodies and is informed by cultural traditions, local epistemologies, and Amerindian and Afro-descendant knowledges that challenge the linear histories of modern science, commodification, and extractive capitalism.

### ***Plants of the Gods: Plant–Human Entanglements in Claudia Salamanca’s Video Work***

In the soundless and poetic video work *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses de Richard Evans Schultes y Albert Hofmann* (2019) (Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2), the Colombian artist Claudia Salamanca offers a visual rereading of the famous book *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*, written as an exhaustive study of psychoactive flora by U.S. biologist and ethnobotanist Richard Evans Schultes and Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann, first published in 1979. Interestingly, in this



Figure 3.1 Claudia Salamanca, *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses de Richard Evans Schultes y Albert Hofmann*, 2019. LCD screen, HD video, color, sound, 10:35. Installation view: *Extractive Zones*, Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland, 2021.

Photograph by Omar Lemke; Source: Museum der Kulturen Basel.

study, Schultes and Hofmann describe cultural activities such as pilgrimages to collect sacred plants involving rites, songs, prayers, and dances integral to ceremonial use in Indigenous societies. These accounts are accompanied by a narrative of the chemistry of these mind-altering plants and their potential for the biochemistry of psychotropic substances. As a self-made ethnobotanist, Schultes was well-acquainted with the use of plants and hallucinogenic substances, particularly in medicine; he spent several years doing fieldwork in the Colombian Amazon, collecting and studying sacred plants used in healing rituals of Amerindian communities and experimenting himself with hallucinogenic substances. *Plants of the Gods* was received as a pioneering study because of this very focus on the sacred use of plants in ritual practices, expanding the field of botany and contributing to the institutionalization of ethnobotany as a modern discipline. In addition, the co-author and pioneering chemist, Albert Hofmann, had a special interest in the study of psychotropic substances, having synthesized the hallucinogenic substance known as LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) in 1938 while employed at the pharmaceutical and chemical department of Sandoz Laboratories in Basel, Switzerland. Furthermore, Hofmann's interest in the self-intoxication of LSD deepened, as he personally experimented with its



Figure 3.2 Claudia Salamanca, *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses de Richard Evans Schultes y Albert Hofmann*, 2019. LCD screen, HD video, color, sound, 10:35. Installation view: *Extractive Zones*, Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland, 2021.

Photograph by Omar Lemke; Source: Museum der Kulturen Basel.

ability to stimulate the imagination and induce hallucinations. As an illuminating history of cultural pharmacology—as the underbelly of scientific modernity—the book’s broader cultural and historical context became the nucleus of interest carefully explored by Claudia Salamanca in her video work.

In her video work *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses*, presented on a single LCD screen, Salamanca carves out the contours of the lacunae within this transcultural encounter between the Western scientists and the Amerindian cultures. She retells this encounter by presenting two copies of *Plants of the Gods* simultaneously in a vertical split screen, with one copy above and the other below. She turns the pages of both books slowly and rhythmically in a synchronized manner, page by page, and in resonance with the silence surrounding the unspoken history of Western knowledge extraction. Only upon second glance does the careful viewer become aware of the intervention made by the artist: in the copy in upper part of the video, all the images have been erased; in the second copy in the lower part of the video, the text has been obliterated, leaving only traces and lacunae. By using synchronization as an aesthetic strategy to highlight the interventions in the books, the video attempts to shift the meaning of the relationship

between the visual and the textual, foregrounding the founding contradictions in the knowledge production of ethnobotanical literature on hallucinogenic plants—of which *Plants of the Gods* is a major work. In the slow and delicate movement of turning the pages, we notice a chalk-like residue on the artist's hands—a visible trace of the act of erasure. The erased images and texts create a constellation of silenced omissions, revolving around a body of withdrawn knowledge. The viewer is confronted with the epistemic violence imposed by scientific modernity's radical and irreversible extraction of knowledge from the world. As a powerful visual work, the artist thus revokes this violence while silently performing within the erasure and lacunae of a potential, other world. The video presents the book as an artificial artifact, a human-made object, clean and neat against a conventional white background, as it is used in ethnographic or botanical photography for the purpose of documentation. It is equally presented as a malfunctioning or disrupted archive—what Derrida calls a *mal d'archive*<sup>24</sup>—while its lacunae and the book's erased parts certainly dispute this very notion of the archive.

Importantly, *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers* is interested in fundamental questions such as “What are hallucinogens?” and aims to elaborate on their origins and uses in different Indigenous cultures across the world. Schultes and Hofmann thus introduce a botanical lexicon of more than ninety hallucinogenic plants that have influenced the worldview of Indigenous peoples, who consider these plants to be a gift from the gods, to be used in ceremonies with different magico-religious significance. Additionally, the authors complement this lexicon with a reference guide to indicate where and how the hallucinogens have been used in their respective spiritual practices, their preparation therein, and, interestingly, their affects and effects. Nevertheless, Schultes and Hofmann's book offers an entry point to the transcultural history of hallucinogens and cultural pharmacology, delving into a liminal space articulated between traditional sacred knowledges and the modern sciences to which both authors unquestionably belonged as pioneers.

In the following, I will delve deeper into the context of the book *Plants of the Gods*, and in particular, the pivotal role Richard Evans Schultes played in ethnobotany, to better understand the plant–human entanglements evoked by the pharmakon, which are critically reflected in the aesthetics of Salamanca's video work. During his life as ethnobotanist, Schultes spent a considerable amount of time in the Colombian Amazon, living with and studying the various Indigenous peoples living there, in order to delve into the use of mind-altering plants and their effects on an expanded consciousness. Ethnobotany was defined by Schultes as “a study of the relationships between man and his ambient vegetation,”<sup>25</sup> and he identified two principal goals of ethnobotany. The first was of academic interest and “concerned the study of the ‘psychological’ features of human relationships with plants,” and the second one was related to ethnobotany's practical use and involved “finding” plant species for agricultural, industrial, and pharmacological value.<sup>26</sup> Ethnobotany, rooted in a long history of economic botany, re-emerged as a modern discipline against the backdrop of imperial entanglements and thus a broader colonial history of bioprospecting.<sup>27</sup> Yet, because Schultes explicitly referred to these mind-altering substances as “intoxication,” he dismissed the distinct ways his informants, or Indigenous peoples, perceive and order the world. Subsequently, he subordinated their knowledges to Western modern epistemologies that remain linked to universal and objective modes of knowledge production. Following biologist Merlin Sheldrake, Schultes's description of this “enigma”—referring to the Indigenous knowledge of plants—became a metaphor for the incommensurability between these different knowledges, that is, “the

unsettling clash between the cosmology of his Amazonian informants and that of his own modern science, a worldview that prevented [Schultes] from understanding the plants on the Amazonians' own terms."<sup>28</sup> Sheldrake concludes that his work in the Amazon elucidates his own limitations and failure to understand the *cultural* features of plants, in particular of ayahuasca.<sup>29</sup> He thus fails to acknowledge an Amazonian *perspectival multinaturalism*<sup>30</sup>—the coexistence of multiple cultural understandings of nature—that “emerges from—and illustrates—a profound incomprehension between a scientist, his scientific ‘objects’, and his indigenous informants.”<sup>31</sup>

In *Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses*, Salamanca consciously addresses these missed cultural encounters by literally erasing both images and text from the book—an act that represents the lacunae in the history of plant–human entanglements. Through this gesture, she outlines the overlooked perspectival multinaturalism and complicated transcultural history of stimulants and pharmaka. I argue that her work delves into what Schultes described as an “enigma” in his work as an ethnobotanist and modern scientist. After all, ethnobotany seems to provide “an idiosyncratic perspective on scientific enquiries in that it is exactly the relationships between people and plants that make up its subject matter. The discipline makes cultural ways of knowing its scientific subject.”<sup>32</sup> Salamanca’s work is ambitious regarding this wider epistemological struggle and the place of the pharmakon in Western and Amerindian cultures. With the hand moving through the book, it illustrates both the incommensurability and epistemic violence inherent in modern knowledge extraction and thus the ambivalences and contradictions Schultes continued to explore. Importantly, Sheldrake explains that

Schultes’s work reveals an epistemological chasm separating the cosmology of indigenous Amazonians from his own modern scientific cosmology, and shows how a scientific practitioner might grapple with what it means to see under the influence of ritually administered Amazonian plants, and how this differs from what it means to see within the “objective” ocularity of Western science. This ontological crack provides unusual vantage on the often fragile processes by which scientific naturalists might impose categories such as “nature” and “culture”, and how they might navigate—or fail to navigate—the passage between radically different ways of knowing and observing.<sup>33</sup>

*Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses* delves into these contradictions of Western knowledge production, which are deeply linked to the paradigm of extractivism—into which both ethnobotany and the scientific work of the “father of ethnobotany” are inscribed. In this vein, the enigma becomes “not only the peculiar outcome of an interaction between modern scientific and local Amazonian systems of classification,” but reflects how “Schultes . . . scrambled the traditional categories of plants’ ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ properties.”<sup>34</sup> What remains particularly understood within Western and modern approaches to the pharmakon—approaches that focus primarily on “natural” description—are the plant–human entanglements as part of a broader cultural knowledge. Moreover, Salamanca’s video work delves into this fragile process of imposed categories—such as “nature” and “culture”—which contest the “objective ocularity of modern science” as the viewer is visually confronted with the unreliable relationship between image and text, and thus the inscribed universality of modern scientific knowledge. Salamanca makes explicit this “ontological crack” and radically irritates the viewer’s positioning as an observer with culturally pre-defined categories. What remains is the uncanny and enigmatic affect her work provokes.

Regarding the broader context of Schultes's work as an ethnobotanist, Sheldrake illuminatingly notes that his "reports of 'intoxication' represent the outcome of a process of extraction and decontextualization," thus disentangling plants and specimens from their cultural, historical, and economic contexts, while ultimately contributing to the advancement of modern taxonomies.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, on the level of Schultes's own writing, these reports seem to "not feature in the taxonomic products of [Schultes's] own altered states, which concerned the narcotic properties of the plants rather than the sum of their hallucinogenic effects on his mind and senses."<sup>36</sup> The silenced omissions and unreliability of the narrative are foregrounded by Salamanca's orchestrated erasure of the images and texts within Schultes and Hofmann's book. In this sense, the *Notas de pie* or "footnotes"—as the work's title emphasizes—to the book *Plants of the Gods* must be read as submerged modes of a counter-narrative to an untold history of modern science and epistemic violence that is embedded in the extraction of Indigenous knowledges. Following Schultes's own work, ultimately, he did not overcome the nature–culture divide and thus the premise of a Western epistemology, as he seemed to be convinced of an epiphenomenal *intoxication*: "There was no way that plants could speak to humans about themselves, no way for plants to teach people to sing, no matter how prevalent these accounts are among Amazonian holders of plant knowledge."<sup>37</sup> The pharmakon, understood here as a concept figure, defines the ambivalences of Western–Indigenous cultural encounters and, when used as a magic potion, has the potential to transgress the nature–culture divide. In this vein, Salamanca's work articulates philosophical concerns about and elaborates a poetic practice of plant–human entanglements. By evoking a pharmacological imagination, the artist not only gives shape to the political implications of the pharmakon, alluding to the U.S.-imposed problematic drug policy in Colombia, but also to our lost relationship with magic in terms of a deeper understanding of the cultural practices related to plant–human entanglements.

As has been underlined by Sheldrake, for Schultes, the enigma becomes "a statement of incommensurability, a record of the way that knowledges might not be exchanged."<sup>38</sup> In this sense, "the enigma calls into question the very notion of encounter, a term that presumes knowledge of the actors involved; it is precisely the lack of clear knowledge about the nature of the actors, both plant and human, that form the subject matter of the enigma."<sup>39</sup> For my discussion of Salamanca's video work, it is interesting that Schultes's struggle with the enigma of Western–Indigenous encounters—and his difficulty in recognizing the "natural" and "cultural" features of plants—reflects the founding contractions and paradoxes inherent in Western knowledge production. Salamanca powerfully reveals this through the performative rubbings that cause the omissions of text and images in *Plants of the Gods*, thus highlighting the lacunae and profound misunderstandings in the Western history of science.

### Submerged Modes: The Hallucinatory in Carolina Caycedo's Artistic Work

By adopting a submerged perspective, Carolina Caycedo's artistic work offers a renewed perception that refers to an "enlivened sense of the relationships that inhabit autonomous and uncharted spaces within capitalism and those that exist between the tracking of colonial and disciplinary power."<sup>40</sup> As underlined by Macarena Gómez-Barris, Caycedo's work not only makes "visible microspaces of interaction and encounter within geographies where coloniality has left and continues to leave a deep imprint" but also re-configures aesthetically what has been obliterated and omitted, thus allowing for strategies of

resistance against deeply engrained extractivism. In another context, the anthropologist Michael Taussig wrote illuminatingly on the Gold Museum in Bogotá—gold being the figure of extraction of both raw materials and Indigenous knowledges *par excellence*:

The Gold Museum is also silent about the fact that if it was gold that determined the political economy of the colony, it is *cocaine*—or rather the U.S. prohibition of it—that shapes the country today. Not to talk about cocaine, not to display it, is to continue with the same denial of reality that the museum practices in relation to slavery. Like gold, cocaine is imbued with violence and greed, glitter that reeks transgression. What’s more, cocaine has roots deep in pre-history too.<sup>41</sup>

In the following, I argue that gold and the hallucinatory—that is, both aesthetic expression and critical concept—are not only recurrent themes but also underpin the submerged modes of aesthetic practices and artistic interventions developed by Carolina Caycedo, particularly in her more recent sculptures, installations, and video works. In a series of works commissioned by the Sharjah Biennial 15, 2023, Caycedo aesthetically foregrounds the material and cultural practices of mining activities in colonial Spain, particularly the production of mercury and quicksilver. She examines the long history of mineral extraction and a colonial-modern political economy, whose material and epistemic implications have long been silenced. With the sculptural installation *Agua Pesada/Alma’ Althaqil* (Heavy water), she inquires into the cultural and economic entanglements of the Arabian Peninsula and colonial Spain. With *Agua Pesada*, she undertakes a material, etymological, and historical investigation into the *sub(e)merging* forms of the production of economically important minerals, such as mercury. She presents this as research into the cultural and linguistic implications of mineral extraction and models of extractivism. *Agua Pesada* is composed of 240 replicas of *aludeles* (clay pots) inscribed with poetry inspired by the etymological, economic, and cultural connections materialized in the Spanish and Arabic word for mercury, which is *azogue*. Caycedo explains that she chose the title because it references one of the many synonyms for mercury used by medieval Arabic-speaking alchemists.<sup>42</sup> The clay pots are modeled after those used in the Hornos de Bustamante, the furnaces of the Almadén mines in Spain, which started functioning in the seventeenth century and still stand today, midway between Toledo and Córdoba. These monumental *aludele* furnaces were used to roast cinnabar ore and process quicksilver. Also referred to as the “hermetic vase,” the *aludele* is a bottomless pot used in alchemy for sublimation.<sup>43</sup> In this newly developed installation at the Sharjah Biennial 15, Caycedo weaves together the cultural and linguistic practices and encounters surrounding mining, deeply rooted in Spain’s long colonial history and thus in early global extractivist capitalism. Mercury was, and is again, becoming a key mineral to produce commodities, such as lamps and batteries. Despite being one of the most toxic minerals, capable of damaging the nervous, digestive, and immune system, and posing particular risks for children, not all countries have signed the 2013 Minamata Convention on Mercury, which aims to limit or ban the extraction and use of quicksilver. Artisanal gold miners in Colombia and other parts of South America are exposed to mercury vapors, and mercury contamination can accumulate in local ecosystems, damaging the environment and entering food chains, endangering people who eat mercury-poisoned fish or livestock. Once mercury enters the global supply chain, it can travel far from its source, contaminating the soil. Caycedo’s installation *Agua Pesada* and her video performance *Fuel to Fire* (2023) (Figure 3.3) re-narrate and counter-appropriate the entangled

economic and cultural chains that define the mining practices and extraction of mercury and gold. Both works reflect Caycedo's long engagement with (colonial) mining of gold and mercury ore as a threat to people's health and the environment.<sup>44</sup>

For the Sharjah Biennial 15 in 2023, Caycedo created the single-channel video *Fuel to Fire*, which immersed the viewer in the cultural and magical ritual of a *pagamiento*, the “payback of gold to a body of water.”<sup>45</sup> Caycedo explains, “This ritual was performed for the wellbeing and conservation of the Paramo of Santurbán” in Colombia, which is a moorland ecosystem where intense gold mining is taking place.<sup>46</sup> With her own performance of *pagamiento*, Caycedo refers to the Indigenous ecological and economic protocol fundamental to maintaining the flow and balance of life and cycles on Earth, embodied in highly symbolic practices. Her performative and self-reflective intervention on paying back a debt to nature can be understood as practicing an ecology of care. Gold, I argue, becomes the material dimension in Caycedo's work through which she articulates a critical reflection relating to what I have called *liquid ecologies*, or the cycles of being and life.<sup>47</sup> Caycedo highlights the mutual care of humans and non-humans, that is, the fluidity and relationality of shared ecosystems towards an environmental justice and collective agency. The video performance *Fuel to Fire* develops a decolonial aesthetics, to which the undercurrents of water and gold become the submerged narrative articulating a counter-appropriation of extractivism. The video performance is, above all, a sensual, material, and sonic investigation of the flows of gold as part of a dormant and untold story of colonial oppression and accumulation of commodities. It contests Western epistemologies based on the figure of accumulation, or *primitive accumulation*,<sup>48</sup> for which gold stands *par excellence* as a symbol of the oppression, dispossession, and displacement of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas—an oppressed history silenced by the (in)famous Gold Museum in Bogotá. By performing the act of paying back a debt to nature—through recognizing and caring for Indigenous knowledges—the work advocates for the mutually constitutive bio-cultural rights of the human/non-human that move beyond the nature–culture divide.

These recent works, which reconnect with the undercurrents of water and gold, are a continuation of Carolina Caycedo's research on submerged global (neo)colonial economic flows, as well as on emerging histories of resistance and bodies of water. With the video work *Patrón Mono* (2018) (Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5), she portrays water as an agent of its own. As a form of self-healing, she lets the Cauca River in Colombia tell its own story—one threatened by the mega-project of the Hidroituango Dam. Thus, she reflects on these extractive practices and opens pathways towards regeneration. She explains:

*Patrón Mono* portrays the canyon of the Cauca River. . . . The muleteers, fishermen and gold miners who characterize the culture of the region call the Cauca *Patrón Mono* (blonde boss), partly because of its yellow color and partly because of the gold found in its water and sand. For them, the river is the best employer in the world, because it does not impose working hours and never refuses to pay. It provides them with fish and gold. The images that make up the triptych of the projection are composed of shots of the gold washed out of the river by gold seekers and shots of the canyon.<sup>49</sup>

Sub(e)merging becomes the main movement of the video work, fusing critique, potentiality, and transformation.<sup>50</sup> In her work, Caycedo continuously engages with the motif of fluidity as a metaphor for a new analytical terrain. Significantly, through modes of



Figure 3.3 Carolina Caycedo, *Fuel to Fire*, 2023. Single-channel, HD video, color, sound, 07:34. Installation view: Sharjah Biennial 15, UAE, 2023.

Photograph by Liliana Gómez.

submersion, she paraphrases the mythical depth of these cultural practices, alluding to the magico-religious meanings of both water and gold, in which fishing and gold mining are rooted. The video work immerses the viewer in the sacred realm of gold within Indigenous practices of initiation and healing, at the center of which lies the pharmakon of the coca plant. This represents the other side of Colombian history, as Michael Taussig explores in *My Cocaine Museum*.<sup>51</sup> Through the hallucinatory, I argue, the viewer is further submerged into the river, dissolving into the gold particles, as fluid as the water itself. Submerging and emerging become one and the same movement, weaving into the video's original mediality, as also seen in the video performance *Fuel to Fire*.

Sub(e)merging is explored and performed in several of Caycedo's works, which revolve around the river and the lives of riverine communities, and is part of her practiced embodied spiritual fieldwork.<sup>52</sup> From the bottom of the river, she takes the submerged perspective literally, plunging us with her video work *Patrón Mono* into the water of the Cauca River and performing a decentering, decolonial perspective.<sup>53</sup> In this video, she also narrates the struggles of riverine communities from the river's submerged perspective, highlighting their resistance against the hydroelectric mega-project of dams and extractive industries that threaten all fluvial and riverine life. Through a variety of artistic

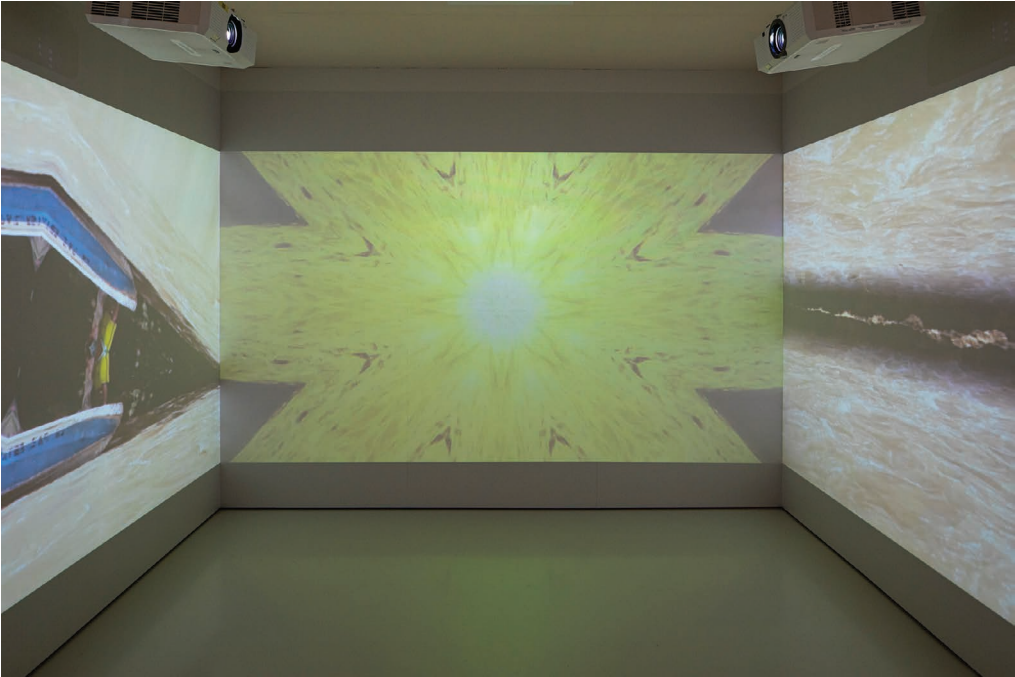


Figure 3.4 Carolina Caycedo, *Patrón Mono*, 2018. Three-channel HD video, installation, color, silent, 4:23. Installation view: *Extractive Zones*, Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland, 2021.

Photograph by Omar Lemke; Source: Museum der Kulturen Basel.



Figure 3.5 Carolina Caycedo, *Patrón Mono*, 2018. Three-channel HD video, installation, color, silent, 4:23. Installation view: *Land of Friends*, Artium Museoa, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, 2023–2024.

Source: Artium Museoa.

strategies, she contests the dominant view of extractivism that reduces landscapes to mere commodities. The triptych *Patrón Mono* forms part of the broader project *Be Dammed* (2012–ongoing), which engages critically with the radical transformation of the fluvial landscape. I understand this transformation both ontologically and metaphorically, as it addresses forms of political violence and radical environmental change caused by dams, large hydropower, and agriculture projects. With *Be Dammed*, Caycedo develops a series of participatory interventions, using diverse media to contest the normative construction of space in extractive zones. From within a participatory work with riverine communities, the artist invites us to adopt submerged perspectives and imagine counter-narratives. She investigates local and peripheral spaces affected by various forms of asymmetrical extraction and repression while recreating—through an act of *poiesis*—the activity of bringing into being a world that did not exist before. As this “fish-eye-episteme” refers to a “material and philosophical shift in perspective,” that is, “an underwater perspective that sees into the muck of what has usually been rendered in linear and transparent visualities,”<sup>54</sup> Caycedo searches for and activates those submerged and suppressed local epistemologies in the form of participatory action research.

Both *Patrón Mono* and the video performance *Fuel to Fire* engage with the magico-religious dimensions of riverine practices—particularly the *pagamiento*, or the “payback of gold to a body of water”—to delve into the meanings of raw materials such as water and gold as part of a counter-appropriation of extractivist practices. It is this particular dimension of temporality that traverses Caycedo’s artistic work, defining it not only as a form of critique but also as a horizon of futurity. Furthermore, her video work *Patrón Mono* is particularly interesting for discussing submerged modes as an aesthetic that elucidates not only the hallucinatory as a powerful critique of Western epistemology but also plant–human entanglements, which Caycedo carefully unfolds while performing the *pagamiento* in *Fuel to Fire*. In *Patrón Mono*, the triptych triples the visual field of water, as Caycedo’s visual distortions—through water and color—produce a kind of expanded state of consciousness. In doing so, she alludes to the mind-altering powers of plants within Indigenous and vernacular healing practices. I argue that the hallucinatory powerfully traverses her video work; it further foregrounds the diverse non-Western cultural and epistemic contexts while orienting it towards a perspectival multinaturalism. Caycedo works with the hallucinatory as both aesthetics and critical concept in *Patrón Mono*, which plunges the viewer into a stream of water, color, sound, and life. This immersion mimics the visions and hallucinations that orient the viewer towards a potential horizon of futurity while also enabling a restorative relationship with a broken past and lost ancestral knowledge surrounding human–non-human entanglements. During the *pagamiento* in *Fuel to Fire*, these magico-religious dimensions of the *pharmakon* and its cultural practices are made even more explicit. Caycedo pays back a debt to “nature” by returning gold in the form of small particles to the river through a magico-religious ceremony. This performance seems to help restore the relationship with the more-than-human and critically reflects her own artistic practices. The hallucinatory, as it traverses *Patrón Mono* and *Fuel to Fire*, is part of an emergent environmental aesthetics and poetic practice that articulates an environmental thinking.

The themes of paying tribute to “nature” and women in environmental struggles are also central to the last of Caycedo’s works in my discussion of plant–human entanglements. In this ongoing series, Caycedo revisits and reconstructs female lineages, giving her artistic practice an activist perspective and political engagement. In the artistic banner *My Female Lineage of Environmental Struggle* (2018–ongoing) (Figure 3.6), she



Figure 3.6 Carolina Caycedo, *My Female Lineage of Environmental Struggle*, 2018–ongoing. Printed cotton banner, 150 cm × 600 cm. Installation view: Artium Museoa, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, 2023–2024.

Source: Artium Museoa.

foregrounds the collective memory of women environmental activists worldwide who are at the forefront of the fight against extractivism. As part of the larger series *Genealogy of Struggle*, Caycedo thus devotes herself to a “visual reconstruction of historical environmental memory.” She underlines that

[w]omen suffer most from the effects of extractivism and environmental injustice, and therefore are protagonists of land and river defense networks, and play important roles in organizing their communities against dispossession, contamination, and extraction of common goods. We focus on building our own feminist genealogies, understanding that women who defend the environment are ancestors in thought and action.<sup>55</sup>

Overall, Caycedo’s artistic strategies not only contest the normative construction and Western perception of landscape—as seen in *Patrón Mono*—but also the very visibility by which we are trained to see and perceive the world. By relating in this way to a deeper understanding of the river’s perspective, and eventually the pharmakon, and by validating Indigenous and vernacular knowledges, water becomes an ontological material that challenges the extractive worldview, which reduces elements like water from living ecological and biological systems to abstract commodities. In this sense, as ontological material, the river and its water embody ancestral memory that opposes the violent transformation of landscapes imposed by the death cycle of dam infrastructure. Caycedo’s work proposes, in a participatory manner, that we adopt this submerged perspective emanating from the river, in order to see, watch, and know the histories of the riverine communities. At the same time, she

offers a counter-visibility that includes the aesthetics of the hallucinatory as a way of imagining a more just and equal world. As an artist-activist, Caycedo uses decolonial aesthetic strategies, making micro-spaces tangible for possible actions to contest the modernizing grip of both technologies and mega-projects that convert the world and its elements into pure and abstract commodities bound up with cycles of the production of value. Finally, she invites us to engage with the magico-religious dimensions of ancestral and riverine knowledges and, thus, the hallucinatory to delve into the wisdom of the Earth.

### The Affection of the More-Than-Human

Let me conclude on the inherent perspective of plant–human entanglements in the video works by Claudia Salamanca and Carolina Caycedo, as shown in the exhibition *Extractive Zones* at the Museum der Kulturen Basel in 2021. The decolonial aesthetic practices developed by Salamanca and Caycedo probe a sort of creative animism and affection of the more-than-human. This means, as outlined by Azucena Castro in *Posnaturalezas poéticas*, that ecological thinking in the arts, to which plant–human entanglements and thus the more-than-human belong,

manifests itself through poetic practices that serve as tools to place us in a state of corporeal and affective estrangement, illuminating the deep and intimate connections with other existences as a way of coexisting in a critical zone shaped by the violence of extractive capitalism.<sup>56</sup>

The pharmakon as a poetic practice and concept figure, used here to discuss these entanglements and the more-than-human, becomes an entry point to this “corporeal and affective estrangement,” to reconnect and restore the intimate connections with other species and existences.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, contesting the ocularcentrism of Western epistemology, Jacques Derrida has elaborated on “the multifaceted and paradoxical aspects of the pharmakon” to introduce the concept of affection as a “vital phenomenon.”<sup>58</sup>

Overall, in their artistic practices, Salamanca and Caycedo have built upon what has been framed as *ecopoetics*—an aesthetics or *poesis* of ecological thinking. Drawn from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning home, “‘Eco’ here signals—no more, no less—the house we share with several million other species, our planet Earth.”<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, *ecopoetics* refers to “poesis or making, not necessarily to emphasize the critical over the creative act . . . Thus: ecopoetics, [is] a house making.”<sup>60</sup> Following what Castro has underlined, “ecology should be thought of as a post-anthropocentric practice that allows us to notice multi-scale interconnections.”<sup>61</sup> Importantly, she then concludes that:

‘Ecology is more like an operation’ . . . , that is, ecology as an operation, as a way of noticing, of perceiving the intimate interconnections between diverse bodies. This intimate process of ‘becoming in’ and ‘thinking with’ other bodies shapes new objects that emerge as a result of heterogeneous, fluid, and multiple landscapes. In this process of assemblage, new environmental imaginaries are created that are very different from those that represent nature as a static entity to be conserved or as a lost reference point to be recovered.<sup>62</sup>

In this vein, to conclude, the power of Claudia Salamanca and Carolina Caycedo’s artistic works can be found in their radical and open engagement with the potential affection

of the more-than-human, developed through different means and aesthetic strategies as plant-human or human/non-human entanglements, that is, the more-than-human perspective. They recover and creatively elaborate on the pharmakon as a poetic practice, to productively unfold its radical and omitted ambivalences and paradoxes and, finally, to plunge the audience into an expanded frame of *ecopoetics*. In doing so, they expand ecological thinking towards a potential horizon of futurity, where vibrant reconnections with other species and existences are probed, imagined, and projected onto the future.

## Notes

- 1 See my discussion in Liliana Gómez, “‘El cuerpo de uno como cuerpo del mundo’: estéticas radicales en las artes latinoamericanas,” in *World Exhaustion in Latin American Literatures and Cultures*, ed. Gesine Müller and Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2025), 193–209.
- 2 Azucena Castro, *Posnaturalezas poéticas. Pensamiento ecológico y políticas de la extrañeza en la poesía latinoamericana contemporánea* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2025), 5. Spanish original: “de-sestabilizar los constructos fijos sobre la naturaleza heredados del sistema colonial y extractivo de cara a la corriente crisis medioambiental transformando las maneras en que leemos al cruzar contextos geográficos e ir más allá de la figura del arraigo-dessarraigado del ser humano de la naturaleza” (my translation).
- 3 Adriana Michèle Campos Johnson, “Infrastructure,” in *Handbook of Latin American Environmental Aesthetics*, ed. Jens Andermann, Gabriel Giorgi, and Victoria Saramago (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 240.
- 4 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 3.
- 5 Jens Andermann, Gabriel Giorgi, and Victoria Saramago, “Introduction,” in *Handbook of Latin American Environmental Aesthetics*, ed. Jens Andermann, Gabriel Giorgi, and Victoria Saramago (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 2.
- 6 Jens Andermann, “Trance,” in *Handbook of Latin American Environmental Aesthetics*, ed. Jens Andermann, Gabriel Giorgi, and Victoria Saramago (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 410.
- 7 Hermann Herlinghaus, “Introduction: Towards a Cultural Pharmacology,” in *The Pharmakon: Concept Figure, Image of Transgression, Poetic Practice*, ed. Hermann Herlinghaus (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018), 3.
- 8 Herlinghaus, “Introduction,” 2.
- 9 “The material and affective production of extractive capitalism crushes vernacular life and its embodiment, enclosing it within the leveling technologies of globalization. In relation to schemes of mega-development, large-scale extractivism assaults peripheral spaces, inflicting uneven pain upon regions where Indigenous majority communities continue to organize life and proliferate it, even in sites of extreme pressure and violence.” Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), xviii.
- 10 See here Georges Bataille, *La Part maudite: Précédé de La notion de dépense* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1949).
- 11 Hermann Herlinghaus and Arne Romanowski, “Grey Magic and Transatlantic Intoxications: Incursions into the Modernity of Tobacco,” in *The Pharmakon: Concept Figure*, ed. Hermann Herlinghaus (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018), 51.
- 12 Herlinghaus and Romanowski, “Grey Magic and Transatlantic Intoxications,” 52.
- 13 Herlinghaus and Romanowski, “Grey Magic and Transatlantic Intoxications,” 52.
- 14 Herlinghaus and Romanowski, “Grey Magic and Transatlantic Intoxications,” 53.
- 15 Herlinghaus and Romanowski, “Grey Magic and Transatlantic Intoxications,” 54.
- 16 For instance, more recently, the exhibition *Power Plants: Intoxicants, Stimulants and Narcotics* was on display at the Sainsbury Centre at the University of East Anglia, UK (September 14, 2024–February 2, 2025).
- 17 Oier Etxeberria Bereziartua, “Stimulants: Circulation and Euphoria,” in *Stimulants: Circulation and Euphoria*, ed. Oier Etxeberria Bereziartua (San Sebastián: Tabakalera, 2018), 9.

- 18 Etzeberria Bereziartua, "Stimulants," 12–13.
- 19 Etzeberria Bereziartua, "Stimulants," 18, 20.
- 20 Etzeberria Bereziartua, "Stimulants," 21.
- 21 Herlinghaus, "Introduction," 6.
- 22 See Jens Andermann's elaboration on trance as a similar conceptual entry point to the pharmakon: "I explore the possibilities the concepts of trance and tranceculturation hold for the environmental aesthetics as a field wagering on imaginative engagements with the more-than-human, opening a way towards fashioning new worlds-in-common." Andermann, "Trance," 410.
- 23 Andermann, "Trance," 411. Original italics.
- 24 Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive. Une impression freudienne* (Paris: Galilée, 1995).
- 25 Schultes quoted in Merlin Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma' of Richard Schultes, Amazonian Hallucinogenic Plants, and the Limits of Ethnobotany," *Social Studies of Science* 50, no. 3 (2020): 348. See also Richard Evans Schultes, "The Place of Ethnobotany in the Ethnopharmacologic Search for Psychotomimetic Plants," in *Ethnopharmacologic Search for Psychotomimetic Drugs: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in San Francisco, California, January 28–30, 1967*, ed. Daniel H. Efron (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1967), 33–57.
- 26 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 348.
- 27 See the study by Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). See also Richard Evans Schultes, "The Amazonia as a Source of New Economic Plants," *Economic Botany* 33, no. 3 (1979): 259–266.
- 28 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 365.
- 29 Ayahuasca is an Indigenous brew made of various plants in the Amazon that have mind-altering capacities and psychoactive effects. It is used for magico-religious ceremonies by many Indigenous peoples in the Amazon and became an object of many ethnobotanical studies well before Richard Evans Schultes.
- 30 See Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (1998): 469–488, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3034157>.
- 31 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 364.
- 32 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 347.
- 33 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 347.
- 34 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 355.
- 35 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 362.
- 36 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 362.
- 37 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 363. Sheldrake further states: "Nor was it unusual for Western researchers to describe psychedelic substances as providing access to realms of experience that were different, but not necessarily any less real than those experienced during the 'ordinary' states of consciousness normally associated with modern scientific knowledge making." Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 363.
- 38 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 365.
- 39 Sheldrake, "The 'Enigma'," 365.
- 40 Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone*, 2.
- 41 Michael Taussig, *My Cocaine Museum* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 2004), xi.
- 42 Carolina Caycedo, "Carolina Caycedo, 'Fuel to Fire,'" March 8, 2023, YouTube video, 59:59, uploaded by Brown University Cogut Institute for the Humanities, <https://youtu.be/M9YFo2NUOk>.
- 43 Caycedo, "Carolina Caycedo."
- 44 See my discussion, Liliana Gómez, "Undercurrents of Water, Mercury, Gold: The Fluid in Decolonial Aesthetic Practices," in *Sub(e)merging. Poetics, Temporalities, Epistemologies*, ed. Marie Sophie Beckmann and Petra Löffler (Zurich: diaphanes, 2025), 113–132.
- 45 Gómez, "Undercurrents of Water, Mercury, Gold," 113–132.
- 46 Gómez, "Undercurrents of Water, Mercury, Gold," 113–132.
- 47 See Lisa Blackmore and Liliana Gómez, "Notes on the Liquid Turn," in *Liquid Ecologies in Latin American and Caribbean Art*, ed. Lisa Blackmore and Liliana Gómez (New York: Routledge, 2020), 1–10.

- 48 See the discussion in Taussig, *My Cocaine Museum*, x–xi.
- 49 “Video Portfolio 2024,” Carolina Caycedo, accessed October 16, 2025, <http://carolinacaycedo.com/>.
- 50 See the discussion by Löffler and Beckmann, *Sub(e)merging*, 7–25.
- 51 See Taussig, *My Cocaine Museum*.
- 52 See the discussion by Carla Acevedo-Yates, “Embodied Spiritual Fieldwork: Dismantling Western Perspectives Through Affective Exchanges,” in *Carolina Caycedo: From the Bottom of the River*, ed. Carla Acevedo-Yates, exh. cat. (Chicago/New York: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago/DelMonico Books, 2020), 23–34.
- 53 Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone*.
- 54 Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone*, 103.
- 55 “Carolina Caycedo Portfolio 2024,” Carolina Caycedo, accessed September 24, 2025, <http://carolinacaycedo.com/>.
- 56 Castro, *Posnaturalezas poéticas*, 9. Spanish original: “se manifiesta a través de prácticas poéticas que constituyen herramientas para ponernos en un lugar de extrañamiento corpóreo y afectivo e iluminar las profundas e íntimas conexiones con otras existencias como manera de cohabitar en una zona crítica atravesada por la violencia del capitalismo extractivo.” (my translation.)
- 57 See the discussion by Michaela Ott, “From Pharmakon to Affection: The Ambivalence of an Epistemological Figure,” in *The Pharmakon: Concept Figure, Image of Transgression, Poetic Practice*, ed. (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018), 299–317; and Jacques Derrida, “La pharmacie de Platon,” in *La dissemination* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), 77–214.
- 58 Ott, “From Pharmakon to Affection,” 300.
- 59 Jonathan Skinner, *Ecopoetics* (New York: Periplum Editions, 2001), 7.
- 60 Skinner, *Ecopoetics*, 7.
- 61 Castro, *Posnaturalezas poéticas*, 13. Spanish original: “la ecología debe ser pensada como una práctica posantropocéntrica que permita notar interconexiones multiescalares” (my translation).
- 62 Castro, *Posnaturalezas poéticas*, 13–14. Spanish original: “‘Ecology is more like an operation’ . . . esto es, la ecología como operación, como manera de notar, de percibir las interconectividades íntimas entre cuerpos diversos. Ese íntimo proceso de ‘devenir en’ y ‘pensar con’ otros cuerpos configura nuevos objetos que emergen como resultado de paisaje heterogéneos, fluidos y múltiples. En ese proceso de ensamblaje se crean nuevos imaginarios medioambientales muy diferentes de los que representan la naturaleza como un ente estático que conservar o como referente perdido que recuperar.” (my translation.)

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### Exhibitions

- Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland. *Extractive Zones*, July 2 –October 17, 2021. Curated by Liliana Gómez and Alexander Brust.
- Tabakalera, San Sebastián, Spain. *Stimulants: Circulation and Euphoria*, February 17– June 11, 2017. Head of Artistic Project, Oier Etxeberria Bereziartua.