

Javier Correa, Victoria Jolly

### Ciudad Abierta

Solo es suelo lo que guarda el abismo— Only What Holds the Abyss is a Ground

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### Summary

Entangled with the interconnected logics of coloniality and modernity, the landscape idea has long been a vehicle for ordering human-nature relations. Yet at the same time, it has also constituted a utopian surface onto which to project a space-time 'beyond' modernity and capitalism. Amid the advancing techno-capitalization of the living and its spatial supports in transgenic seed monopolies, fracking and deep sea drilling, biopiracy, geo-engineering, aesthetic-activist practices have offered particular kinds of insight into the epistemological, representational, and juridical framings of the natural environment. This book asks in what ways have recent bio and eco-artistic turns moved on from the subject/object ontologies of the landscape-form? Moving from botanical explorations of early modernity, through the legacies of mid-twentieth century landscape design, up to artistic experimental recodings of New World nature in the 1960s and 1970s and to present struggles for environmental rights and against the precarization of the living, the critical essays and visual contributions included in *Natura* attempt to push thinking past fixed landscape forms through interdisciplinary encounters that encompass analyses of architectural sites and artworks; ecocritical perspectives on literary texts; experimental place-making practices; and the creation of material and visual ecologies that recognise the agency of non-human worlds.

### Keywords

aesthetics, architecture, art theory, cultural critic, ecology



**Jens Andermann (ed.),  
Lisa Blackmore (ed.),  
Dayron Carrillo Morell  
(ed.)**

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## Javier Correa and Victoria Jolly

### Ciudad Abierta

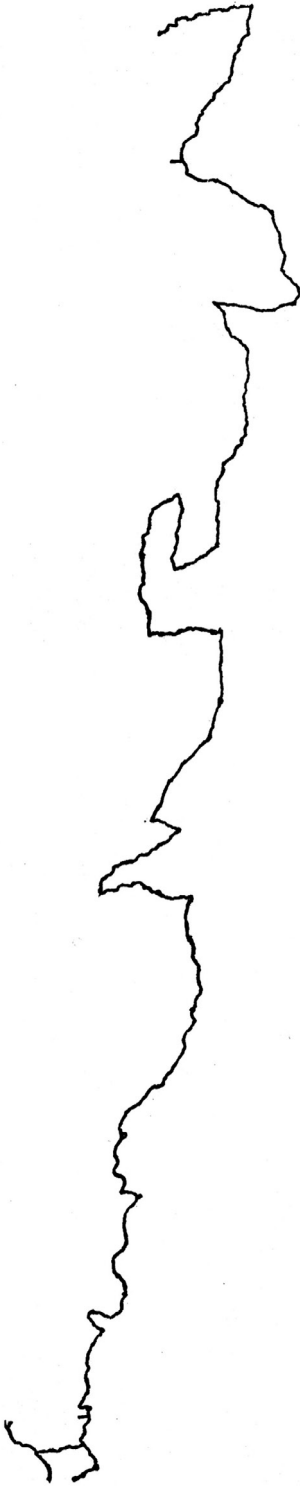
#### **Solo es suelo lo que guarda el abismo— Only What Holds the Abyss is a Ground**

In July 1965, the poets Jonathan Boulting, Michel Deguy, Godofredo Iommi, and Edison Simons, the architects Alberto and Fabio Cruz, the philosopher François Fédier, the sculptors Claudio Girola and Henri Tronquoy, and the painter Jorge Pérez Román began a journey in a pickup truck from Tierra del Fuego to Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia, following the Southern Cross meridian across the American continent. Their movement and actions during this *travesía*—or crossing—revolved around a single word: *Amereida*, a poetic voice that sings the emergence and destiny of the continent, the Aeneid of America.

During the journey, they carried out poetic acts and art interventions, gave lectures, and created sculptural signs in empty places, small towns, and cities. There was no fixed route leading them from one road to another, but there was a will to break through to the center of the continent and move away from its borders. In their wandering path, they went through Patagonia, the Pampas, the north of Argentina, and parts of the Bolivian Chaco. However, because of skirmishes between the *guerrilla* and the Bolivian Army at that time, they weren't able to reach Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the city that, for them, was the center and poetic capital of America, where the two axes of the Southern Cross meet.

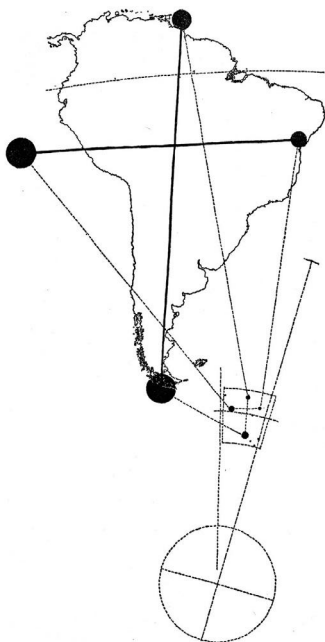


The *Amereida* is set out as an experience, one that, led by word and action, wonders about the meaning and destiny of America, in order to open up the possibility of a poetic mode of dwelling in the continent. The encounter with—or gift of—this territory over five centuries ago had come to complete the world, yet its original meaning had remained veiled by the objectives of conquest and colonization. America was inhabited from its borders, while its *Mar Interior* (Inner Sea) remained intact. For *Amereida* it was necessary to unveil that immensity, thereby providing a new meaning to the American continent.



The poem *Amereida* was published in 1967. Composed by the participants of the *travesía* in the form of a collective poetic text with no author, it embodies both the question about America and the very formulation of the *travesía* and its proposition for—or re-orientation of—the continent. It represents a vision that attempts to address America in its totality, from the viewpoint of foundational epic, of myth, and of dwelling.

The poem was accompanied by a series of maps that show the outline of America, highlighting its settlement from its borders, rivers, coastlines, and topography, yet also its internal vacuum, or “Inner Sea,” the “unknown” that it was necessary to cross and even to inhabit in order to make America resonate with its “gift”—its difference with regard to Europe. The maps of *Amereida* are pages-territories that suggest a radical inversion of America’s orientation toward *el propio norte*, its own north and destination.





This inversion, already anticipated by the artist Joaquín Torres-García, brings us into the presence of a calculus that far exceeds the margins of the page, the territory, and even the poetic refounding of the continent. It is the abyss itself, the border toward which all crafts are dangerously inclined; the possibility of possibility, which, as François Fédier has pointed out, means that the destination is not the future but the continual opening of all present times. The crossing, the poem, and the maps, then, are but an attempt to “contain within the territory the macrocosm and the microcosm,” as *Amereida* says. This same desire, perhaps, was one of the motives that originated, in 1971, *Ciudad Abierta*—the Open City of Amereida.





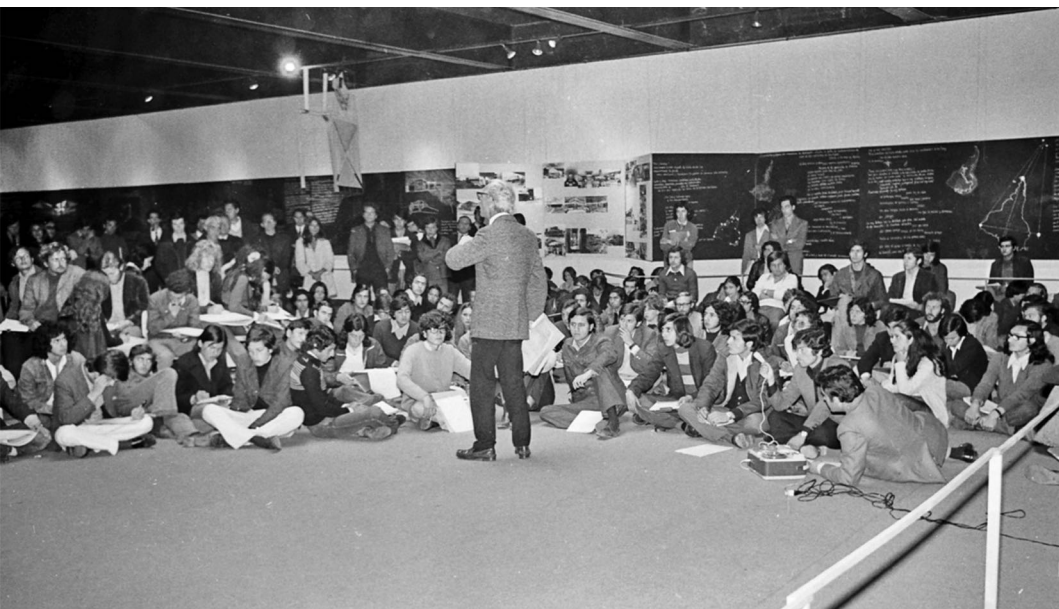
In January 2017, fifty years after the publication of *Amereida*, photographs of the *travesía* that had been absent from the original text were exhibited alongside the poem and the maps. Their presence finally appeared to define a *corpus*, in the sense of an assemblage, provoking new openings in meaning, and once more setting in motion the cycle of abyss and adventure.

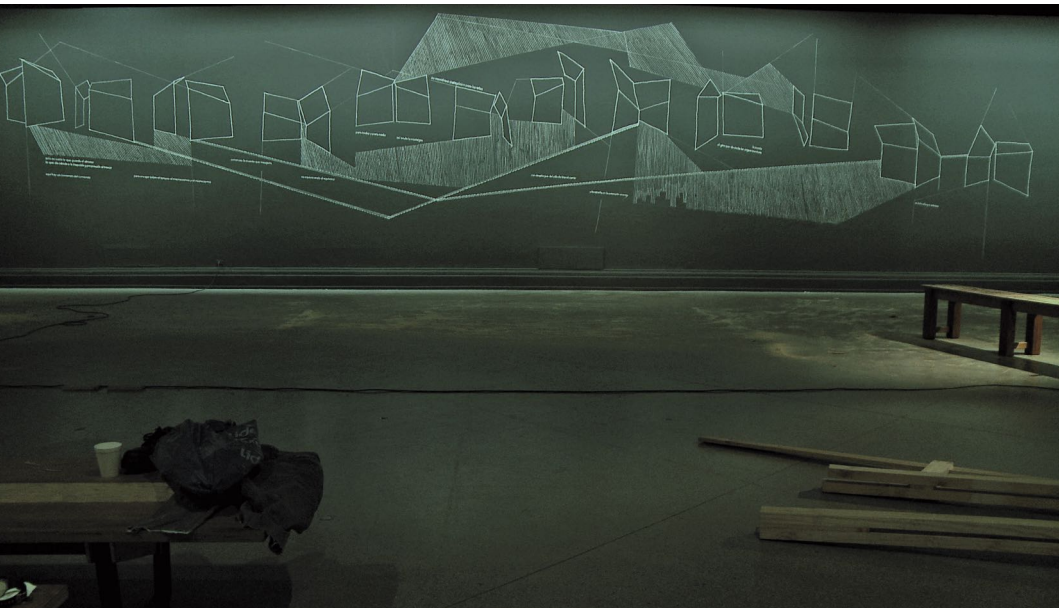


These images, still recent in their appearance, remain uncertain, in waiting, announcing new departures, whereas the poem and the maps carry within them a formula that has come to consolidate a project and a becoming. Hence, perhaps—as Jens Andermann wrote in the exhibition catalog—the omission of all images from the poem may have been an indication of its initial purpose, that of being in itself an iconic foundational act, one that could consequently be reproduced anywhere. This kind of iteration, in our view, also inevitably entails the formation of a sediment, a cluttering that paradoxically ends up becoming a methodology for *Amereida*: an oxymoron between history and poiesis, between icon and abyss.





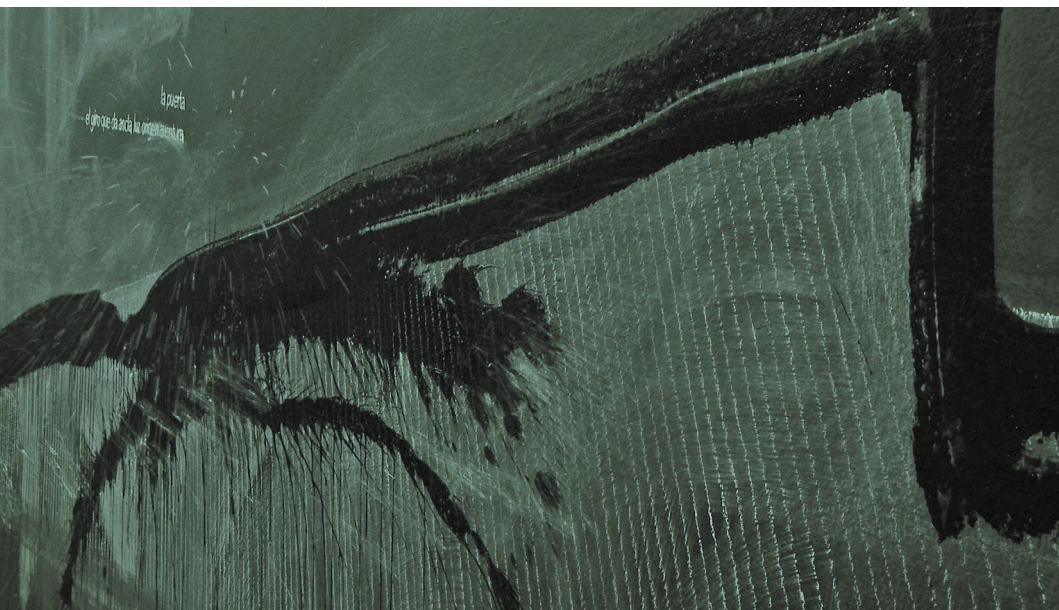




At the end of the exhibition, the maps and stanzas from the poem of *Amereida*, which had been drawn in chalk on the walls of the very same hall that in 1972 had hosted the first exhibition of the Open City, were wiped off with wet sponges. This was done in successive “steps,” thereby generating a series of new figures and lines that, even as they cancelled out the original image, opened up space for a new, ephemeral figure. This figure, too, would disappear almost at once, but not without first allowing a final glimpse, through its multiple layers, of the original image. Erasure, then, was being executed here not as *tabula rasa* but as a conjunction of meanings: a ground from which to care for the abyss as the horizon and creative present of the Open City.



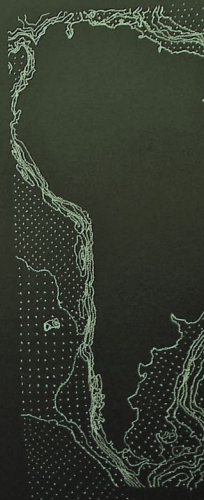




In July 1966, Jonathan Boulling poet, Alberto Cruz architect, Fabio Cruz architect, Michel Deguy poet, François Fédier philosopher, Claudio Ginali sculptor, Gedeón Linnit poet, Jorge Pérez Román painter, Edison Simons poet and Henry Tronquoy sculptor, started a journey on a pickup truck from Tierra del Fuego to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in Bolivia, following the Southern Cross mission over the American continent. They did this gathered around a single word: *Ameréida*, poetic voice that sings the emergence and destiny of the continent the *Aeneid* of America.

During the journey, they performed poetic acts, conferences, art interventions and sculptural signs in empty places, small towns and cities. There was not a fixed route leading them through roadways, but there was a will to go through the center of the continent and move away from its borders. In their wandering path, they went through Patagonia, the Pampas, the North of Argentina and some of the Bolivian Chaco. However, because of the tension between the guerrilla and the Bolivian Army at that time, they weren't able to reach Santa Cruz de la Sierra. For them this city is the center and poetic capital of America, where the two axes of the Southern Cross meet.

The *Ameréida* is proposed as an experience that, led by word and action, wonders about the meaning and destiny of America in order to open the possibility of a poetic dwelling in the continent. The finding *weight* of this territory from our two centuries ago, had come to complete the world, however, its original sense was veiled for by the disjunctives of the conquest and the Colonial period. America was inhabited by its borders, while its "inner sea" remained under an "unknown", and that for *Ameréida* was necessary to unveil, thereby providing a new orientation or "own north" to the American continent.





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Photographs  
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