



Campamento de Dibujo

Quebrada del Condorito National Park (Cordoba, Argentina)
February - March 2017

Notes on the *Drawing Camp*

It is always difficult to know when a project will be actually launched, as it is preceded by a series of complex procedures that take time to develop and expand long before the project starts to take shape. The other day, Laura and I were wondering when was it that we came up with the idea of setting up a camp with so many people... and the truth is we don't exactly know.

Some months ago, while I was talking with some researchers of the IMBIV (Multi-disciplinary Institute of Plant Biology—A research institute set up by means of an agreement between the National Scientific and Technical Research Council [CONICET] and the National University of Córdoba), it came to my attention the call for the award *Premio Fundación Medifé Arte y Ambiente*. The focus of such award was related to everything I'm interested in and has been the subject of study in my work for years, so I thought I couldn't miss this opportunity. That was the kickoff. An attempt to conceive a way in which the drawing practice and the knowledge from other areas come together and provide an innovative interpretation of the landscape. This is a very frequent, familiar process in my work but in the context of this award it made me question how to make it expansive to include more people and how to share with them the procedures I apply and enjoy working with.

Another reason that couldn't be postponed was my eagerness to work once again in an area I care so much for: *Pampa de Achala*.

In time, the idea of setting up a *Drawing Camp* started to take shape. It would involve pitching a camp in the hills in Córdoba, at the national park *Quebrada del Condorito*. The camp's activities would consist of interpreting the park's ecosystem through drawing in relation with the biological studies carried out in that area. The main activities would be designed with the help of IMBIV specialists who would be able to highlight the most relevant elements in understanding that particular ecosystem and at the same time show the methodology used to carry out fieldwork. These activities would involve workshops in association with local rural schools. As a drawer, I would be the one in charge of coordinating and communicating the contents provided by the specialists through drawing activities that would help learn about and interpret the pivotal elements of that ecosystem. The proposal would be based on the belief that a better understanding of the elements that damage the ecosystem and re-valuing the landscape by means of "illustrating the experience of living in it" could help raise environmental awareness about this particular ecosystem. I was also interested in coming up with a setting where different disciplines could interact and so could a very heterogeneous group of people. A crucial, underlying element in devising this project was the reliance on experience. A reliance on the belief that being in a particular place and situation with other people can generate a unique dynamics that allows for thinking, learning and drawing in a way that would be otherwise unattainable.

The potential became realization; my own work turned into team effort; ideas began to

mutate and the project started to take shape. The first person to come on board as early as the elaboration and presentation stage was my colleague and friend Laura del Barco. Later, Cecilia Salomón, Natalia Ferreyra, Martín Bustos and Verónica Cuello also joined in. Each of them had specific tasks but at the same time worked in the project as a whole.

When we got the wonderful news that the project had been approved, our hopes began to materialize and we started to ponder how to make our wishes come true with what was available to us.

Once the team was created, we started to hold conversations with the different institutions and entities we would work with, such as national parks and education and research institutions. I had made contact with some of them some time before.

A lot has happened since the early stages of the project: a lot of work and a lot of experiences gained by the people involved in the project in one way or another. The *Drawing Camp* went through several stages that were different in nature but very similar in terms of methodology. Various sectors of society were part of it: adults, children, scientists, artists and people with diverse professions and trades. The idea was to create a space for communication and live in it. Learning and drawing would be the instructions. People would work with the same kind of paper, drawing board, materials, and motivation. The way in which people responded to the different triggers would always be drawing: drawing as a way of understanding and facing a problem; as a way of reflecting upon it; as a way of paying more attention in

order to draw and go through this experience in a unique way that only drawing can teach.

One of the main factors underlying the design of the project was the idea of focusing on aspects that are not highly visible in the ecosystem, such as natural processes or organisms that are invisible to us due to their size or simply because we don't usually think about them. The intention behind this parameter was to change the way in which we relate to the landscape and value some elements that do not call our attention or are not beautiful but nonetheless are part of what surrounds us.

In mid-February, the production team and three IMBIV researchers (Natalia Pérez Harguindeguy, Paula Tecco and Lucas Enrico) spent two days at the rural schools *Ceferino Namuncurá* and *IPEM N° 285 in Los Cerros* in order to run the first workshop [i]. The activities took place outdoors and focused on different aspects of the ecosystem such as the decomposition cycle of dead leaves, and herbivory and invasive species, among others. Sharing knowledge outdoors and experiencing the environment is very different from being in a classroom, and this is where our interest in this experience lies. During the workshop, we found ways of apprehending and assimilating experience through drawing.

The following stage meant the beginning of the *Drawing Camp*. From February 26th until March 5th, 2017, a tent/workshop was set up in the national park *Quebrada del Condorito* [ii]. With open enrollment and limited places, everyday a group of people participated in the activities proposed. Each day researchers attended and explained the varying elements of that ecosystem to us. Some visitors only stayed

for the day while others camped. Each day was different regarding themes, participants, processes, and results. We elaborated the drawing instructions on a daily basis; they were not fixed, they were always different. These instructions were related to the topics discussed and were based on the best way of contributing to understand such topics.

What most attracts me is being part of these processes in which different fields intermingle, processes of knowledge, decision-making, systems design, selection of methodology, raising questions and coming up with ways of answering them. I'm also interested in the different methods used by the sciences to delimit the fields of study. It's been years since I've been working on drawing various aspects of nature and delimiting the subject matter is definitely very complex.

When we look at any aspect of a finished product, there seems to be nothing behind. We tend to erase the traces. Works of art usually look polished and scientific papers flawless. But if we focus on the processes, we learn that there's been an impressive amount of operations and that's when I think that the gap between different fields is actually not so wide, and communication is possible.

After spending some days in the city to organize ourselves once again, we went back to the campsite, where the children from the school *Ingeniero Arturo Pagliari* joined us for three days [iii]. During that time, some of the researchers that had already worked with us before also joined us, together with new researchers. Juan Manuel Rodríguez (IIBYT—Institute of

Biological and Technical Researches) talked about lichens. Sofía Pestoni (IMBIV) talked about impact herbivores on this particular ecosystem. Ariel Zandivarez and Eugenia Díaz (from Córdoba Astronomical Observatory and The Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Astronomy) talked about and showed prototypes of planets. Paula Tecco discussed invasive species and Carlos Urcelay talked about fungi.

Every subject matter raised an issue and triggered a series of activities aiming at understanding it. Our goal was to find ways of coming up with topics and discussing them through the drawing practice.

There were also some schools we wanted to work with but were unable to camp with us due to logistics issues. One of the solutions we came up with consisted of devising an activity that would last only one morning in the primary school *Padre Liqueno* and the high school *La Ventana* [iv]. We visited these schools with Daniela Tamburini, who discussed the importance of the fauna in the ecosystem and ways of studying it through drawing. The goal of this activity was to track those aspects that are not so visible.

The next two activities involved two schools visiting the *Drawing Camp*, one from Nono and the other from Ciénaga de Allende. The first day, we were joined by Paula Marcora, who dealt with invasive species and the next one by Lucas Enrico who focused on herbivory [iv].

When the *Drawing Camp* was over, we noticed that it had generated certain changes in those who had spent more time in it. The landscape was different. It was not a form detached

from us. In fact, it was not a form anymore; it had turned into a set of systems and processes. It was an inhabited space: ants playing a role, fungi playing another (everywhere and at different levels), leaf litter being part of a natural cycle in the soil, pollinators and flowers, herbivores and their reasons to feed in a particular way, native and invasive species and their mechanisms to compete for resources. We noticed too the hues in nature were not the same as the hues an artist sees. Instead, hues were different for a reason, such as getting a pollinator's attention or fighting back a predator. The same could be said of textures, flavors and smells. Everything could potentially be perceived in a different way. It wasn't about plants, insects, or animals being beautiful or ugly, good or evil. It was a system in which each species had its own place and purpose.

We also noticed there were different ways of perceiving time: geological time and evolutionary time. There were other dimensions.

Throughout the project, researchers mentioned many words and concepts that are familiar to those of us working in the field of art. Also, the topic of "scale" came up many times: what can be "read" in the landscape from far away and how to analyze it from up-close. And a beautiful phrase, which may sound familiar to many artists, was also present: "to ask a question to the landscape"—and based on this question, set a methodology that could give an answer.

The word "representation" was also mentioned by many researchers and we discussed what that word meant to researchers and what it meant to artists. Similarities and differences emerged during the project not with the aim

of creating comparisons but rather opening up a dialogue.

Words familiar to many, which are used in different contexts, started to add up; words that were beginning to acquire new meanings within this context and create some sort of new poetic lingo: deceitful pollination, limbo, cadis, labium and stigma when it came to flowers, bias when it came to methods and fuel when it came to grass.

The *Drawing Camp* ended up being very similar to the old scientific campaigns carried out in the 17th and 19th centuries. They consisted of a main settlement where different types of studies and explorations about nature were carried out and where drawing was part of the settlement's dynamics. The main difference is that in our campsite we didn't draw to document. Instead, we drew as a way of understanding the environment and how it works.

This is how the field work, the *in situ* learning, came to an end. And we started to work on this publication in an attempt to gather different parts of the experience, being fully aware that only some of them could be gathered.

This book is a compendium of the writings of some of the researchers who worked with us and at least one illustration of each participant of the camping experience, focusing on the drawing practice as a learning experience.

The heterogeneity of the drawings is consistent with the heterogeneity of the texts. Much as the *Drawing Camp* was experienced by various drawers and researchers, this publication contains very diverse texts that explain and reflect upon different aspects that have an

impact or are part of the ecosystem in *Pampa de Achala*.

As I said above, determining when a project began is not easy. And neither is determining when it ended. I guess that being part of such a particular environment has probably left a mark on each of us who were part of it. Learning, discussing, and drawing some of the aspects that are part of that ecosystem probably had an impact too. This experience might trigger others, which will be new spaces of dialogue and interaction, of drawing much more. Thus, the *Drawing Camp* will continue to exist in different ways in those of us who experienced it.

i

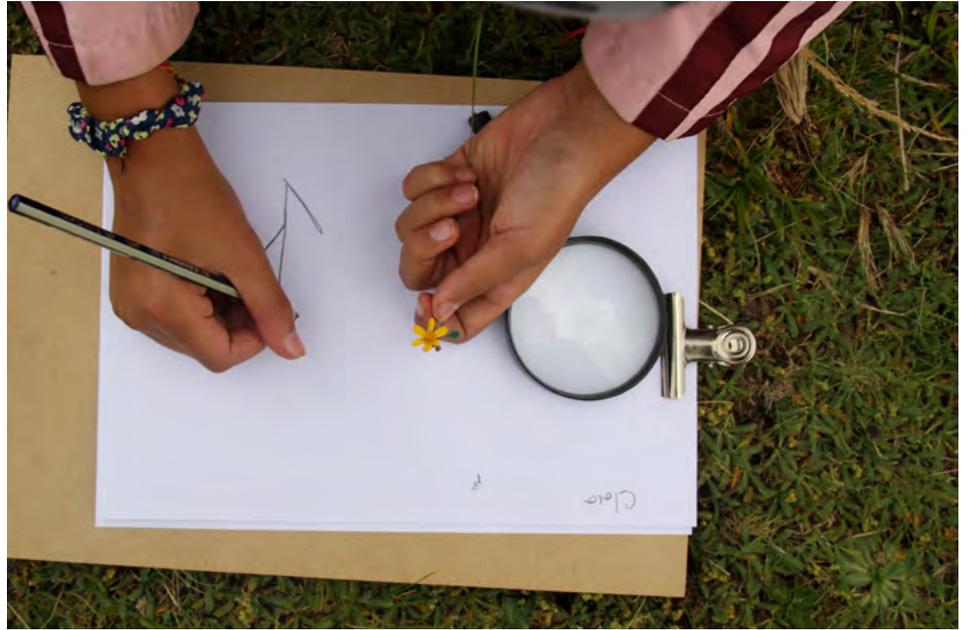
February 15th – 16th, 2017
Ceferino Namuncurá and IPEM N° 285
in Los Cerros

With:
Natalia Pérez Harguindeguy, Paula Tecco,
Lucas Enrico (IMBIV)











Andrea del Milagro Pino



Jazmin Agustina Gimenez



Laura del Barco



Julieta Oviedo



Axel Leonel Giménez



Yamila Soledad Merlo



Naida Oviedo

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February 26th – March 5th

Quebrada del Condorito National Park

With:

Natalia Perez Harguindeguy (IMBIV),
Daniela Tamburini (IIBYT), Alicia Sersic &
Andrea Cocucci (IMBIV), Georgina Conti
(IMBIV), Pedro Jaureguiberry (IMBIV),
Eduardo Nouhra & Noelia Cofre (IMBIV),
Paula Tecco & Paula Marcora (IMBIV),
Contanza Maubecin & Nicolás Rocamundi
(IMBIV), Sofia Pestoni (IMBIV), Juan
Manuel Rodriguez (IIBYT), Miguel Ezpeleta
(CICTERRA), Marcos Tatian as a visitor
(IDEA CONICET UNC), Also joined in by
Fernando Zamudio, Fernanda Chiappero &
Agustín Sarquis (IMBIV)













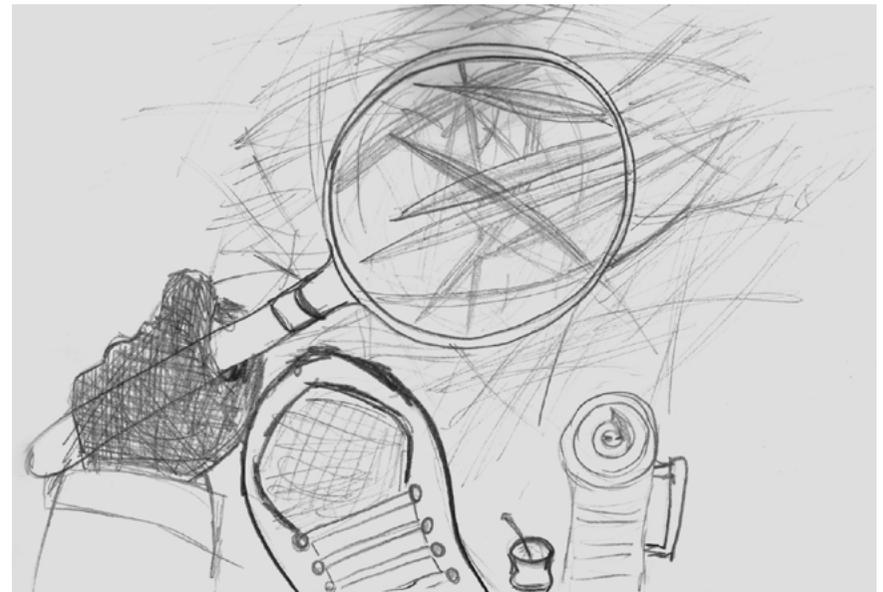
Cecilia Salomón



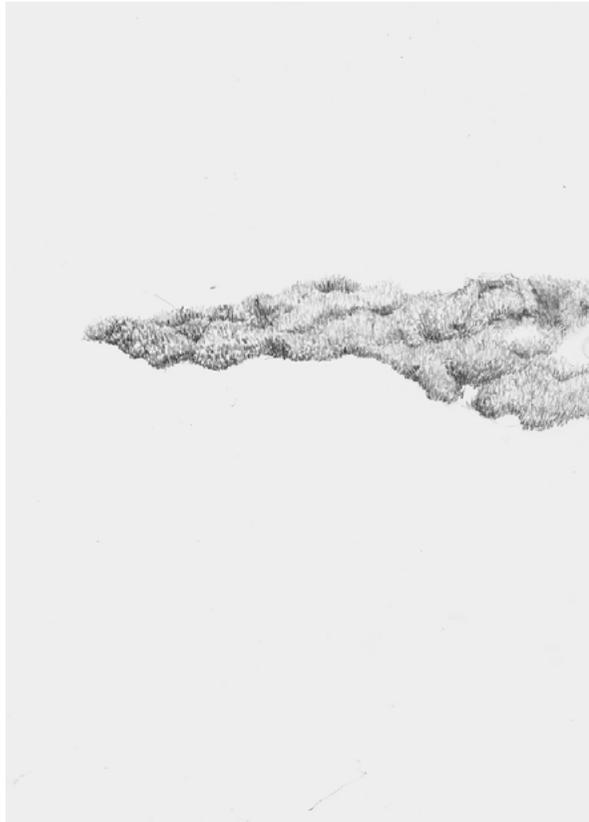
Emma Ferraro Bardiz



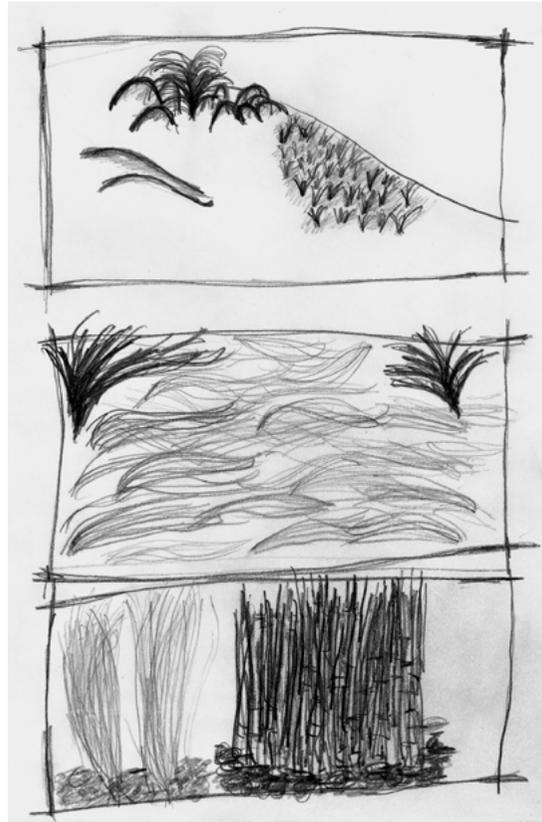
Natalia Ferreyra



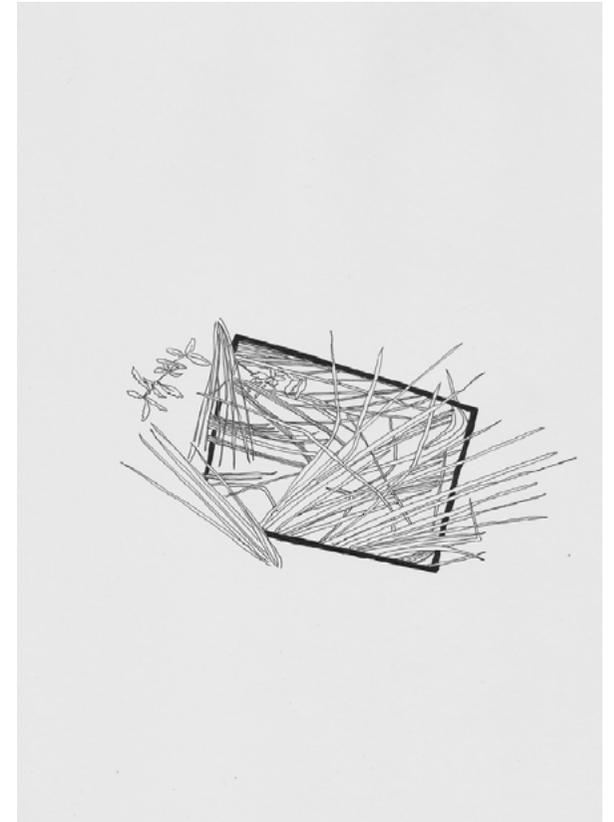
Ignacio Agustín Cañón



Tatiana Bardiz



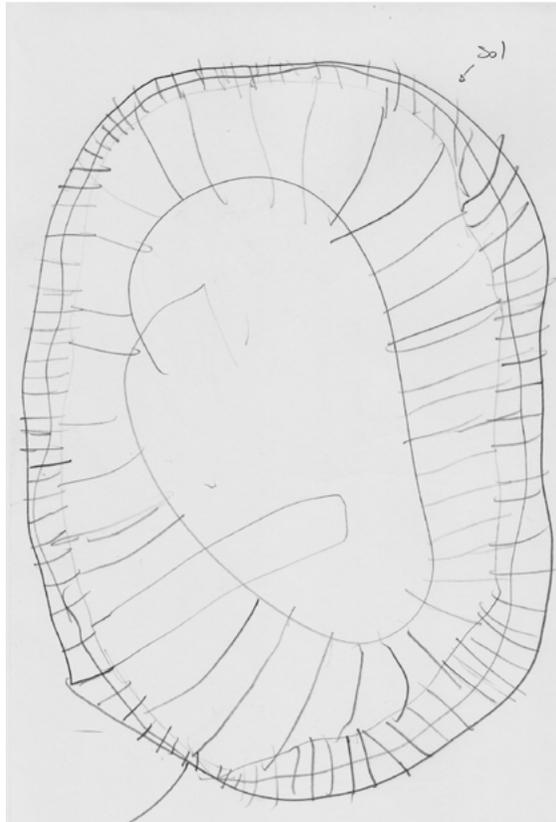
Eloisa Calderón



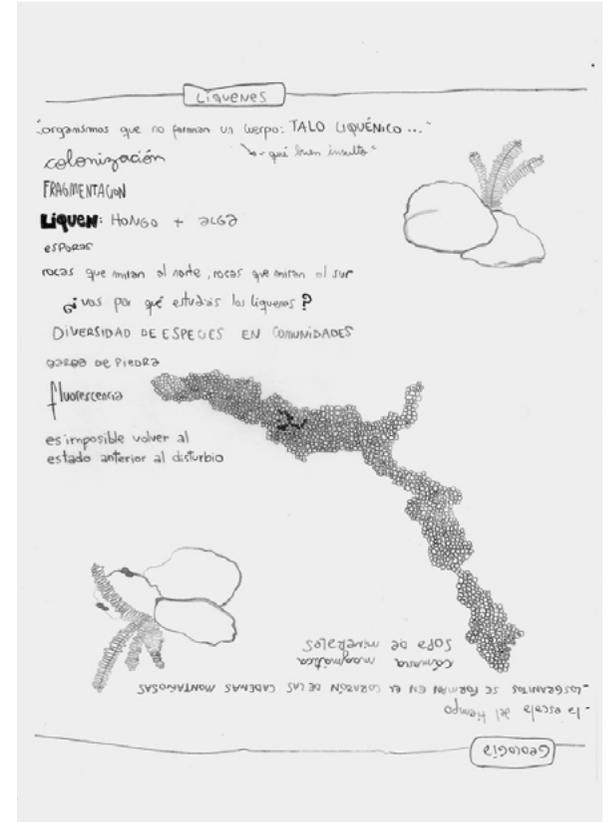
Celeste Viullanueva



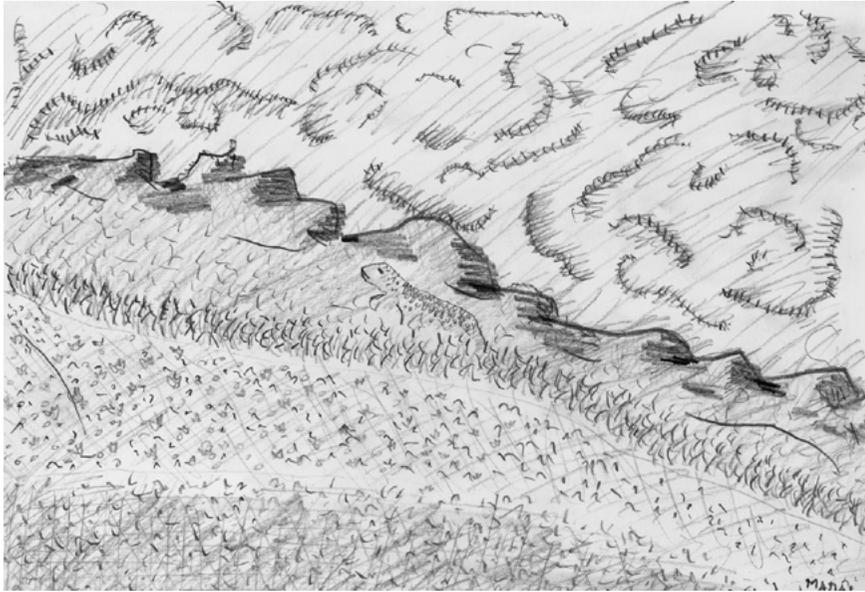
María Belén Trabucco



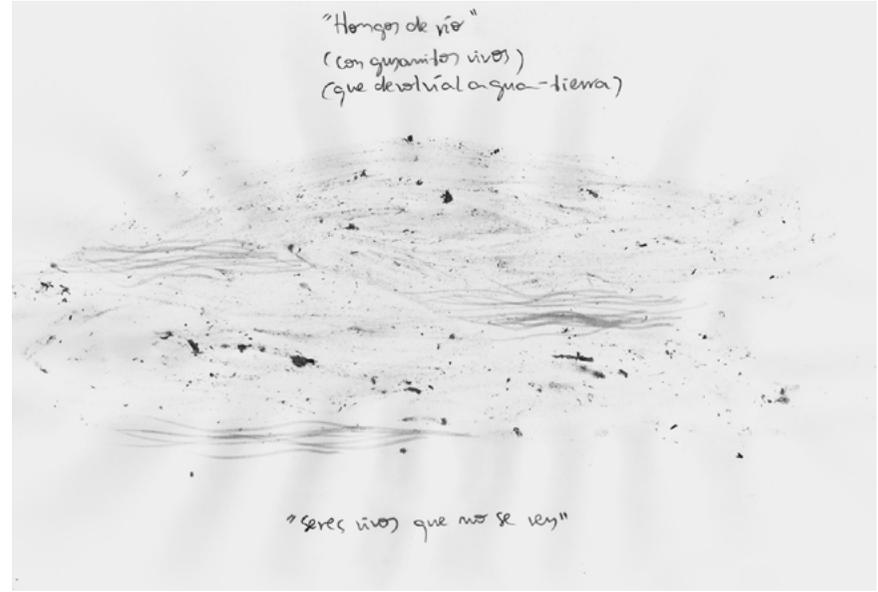
Sol Fernandez



Emilia Casiva



Matias Lapezzata



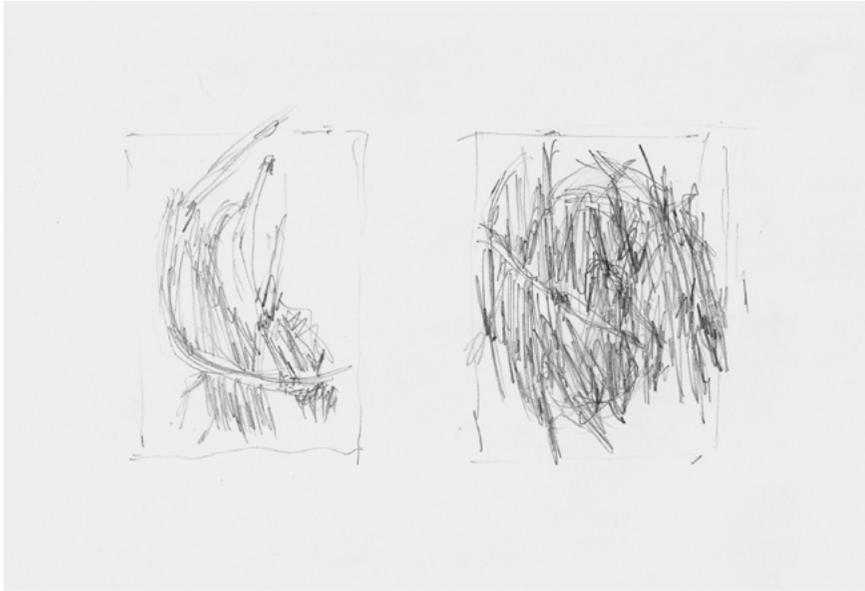
Juliana Enrico



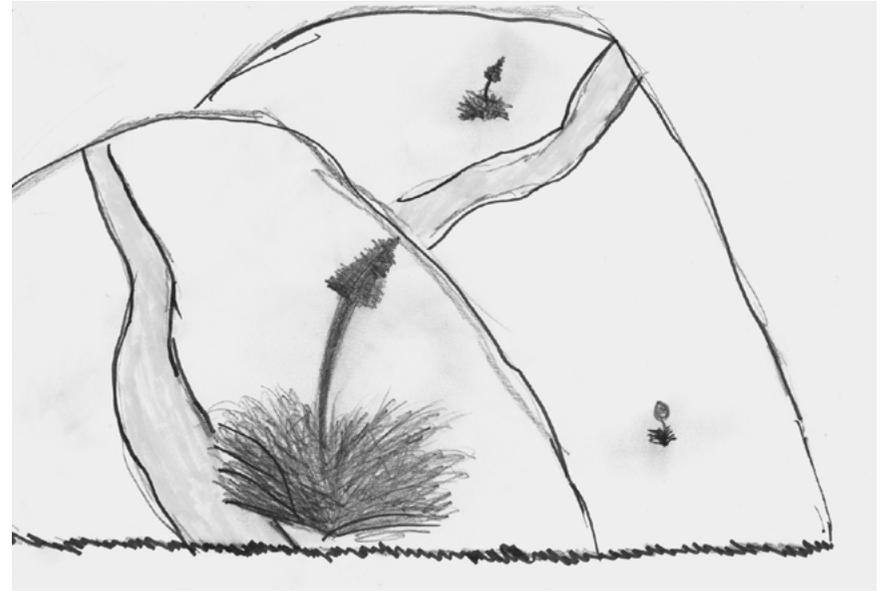
Georgina Conti



Daniél Antonio Martínez



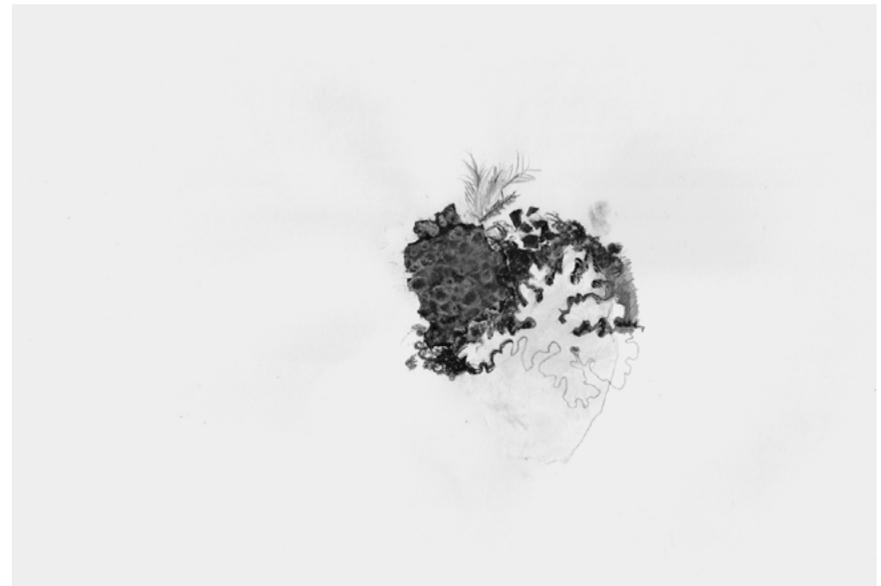
Irene Kopelman



Laura Fernandez



Marcos Santos Marcus



Fabiana Romano

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March 10th–12th

Quebrada del Condorito National Park

Ingeniero Arturo Pagliari School

With:

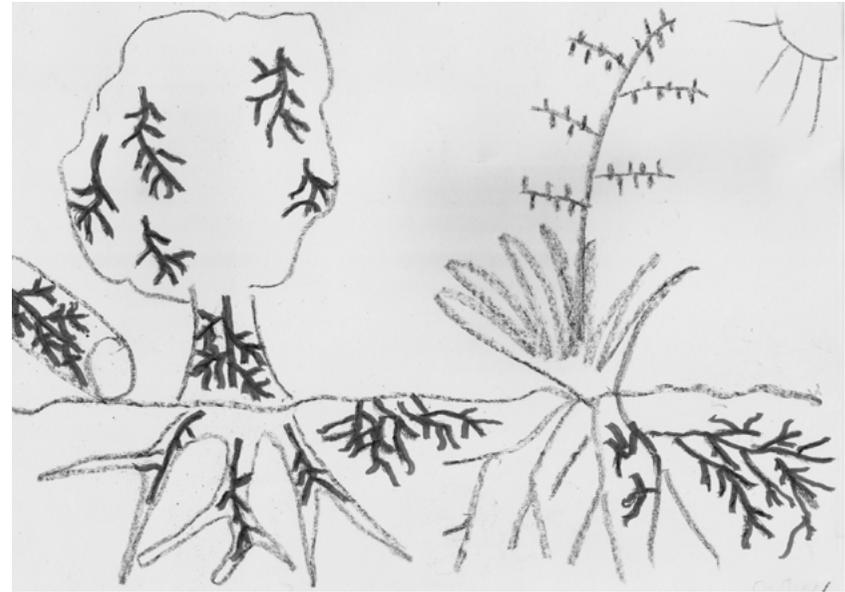
Juan Manuel Rodríguez (IBYT), Sofía Pestoni (IMBIV), Ariel Zandivarez & Eugenia Díaz (Córdoba Astronomical Observatory and the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Astronomy), Carlos Urcelay (IMBIV), Paula Tecco (IMBIV)



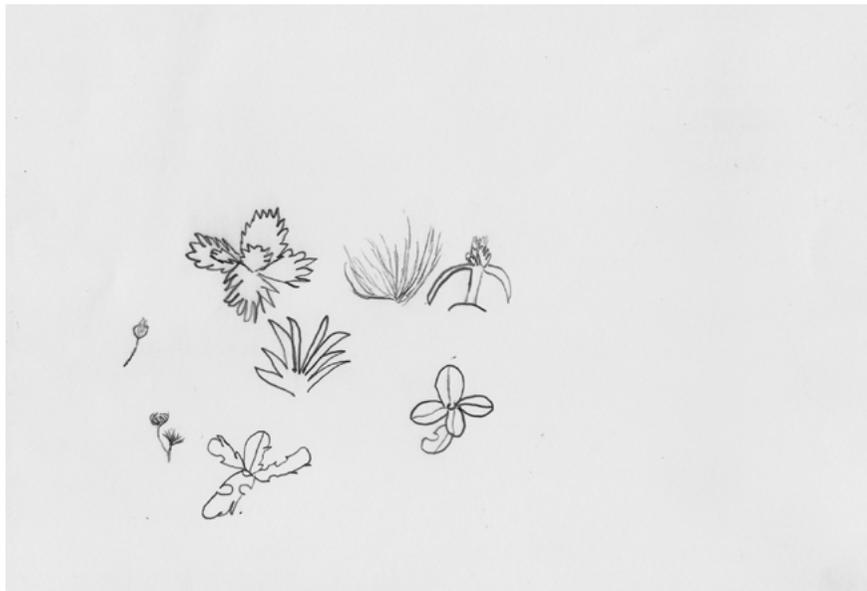




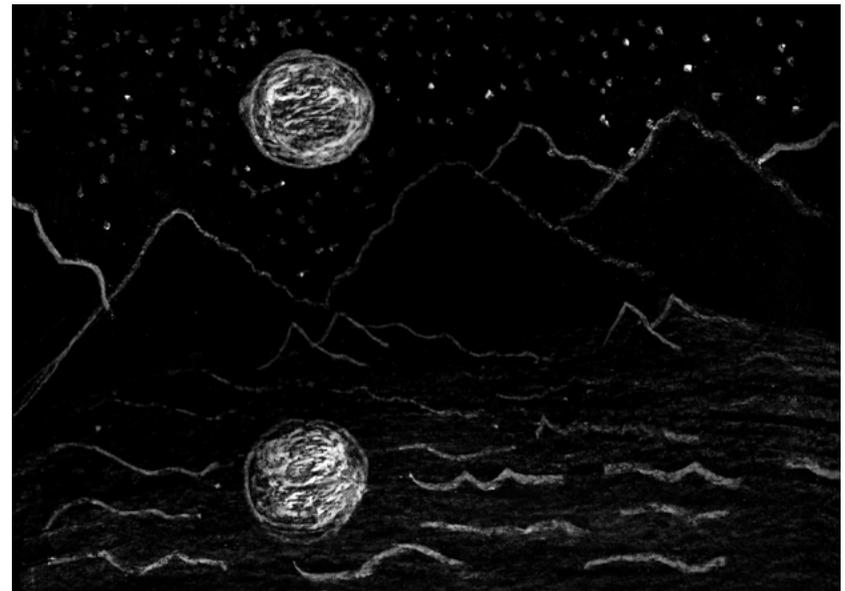
Agostina Cena



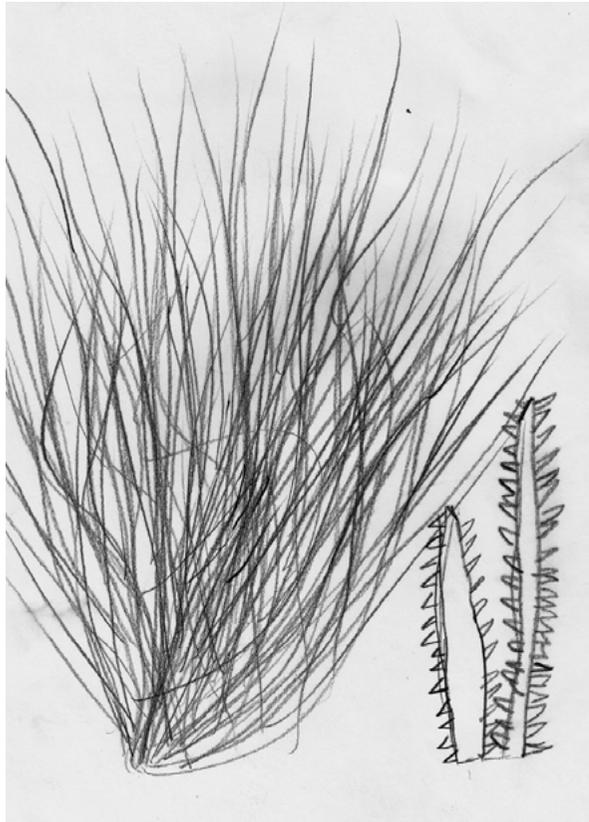
Carlos Urcelay



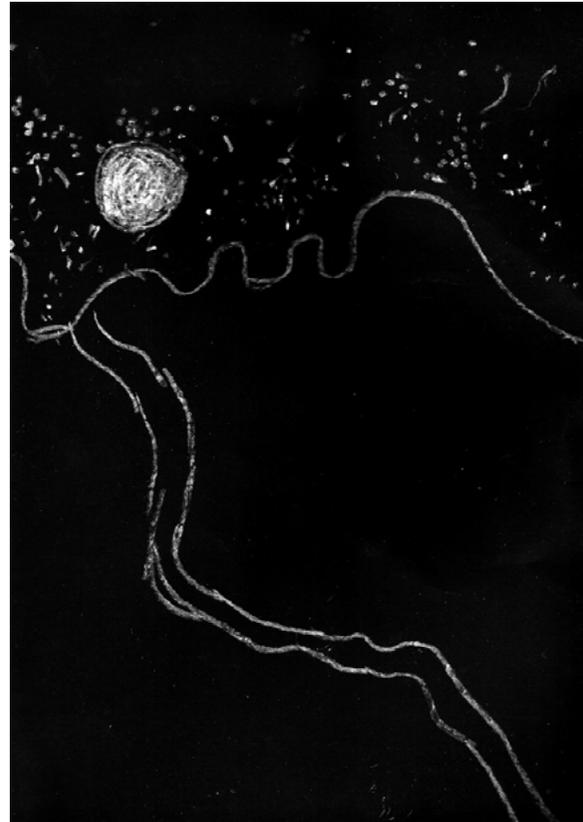
Julieta del Barco



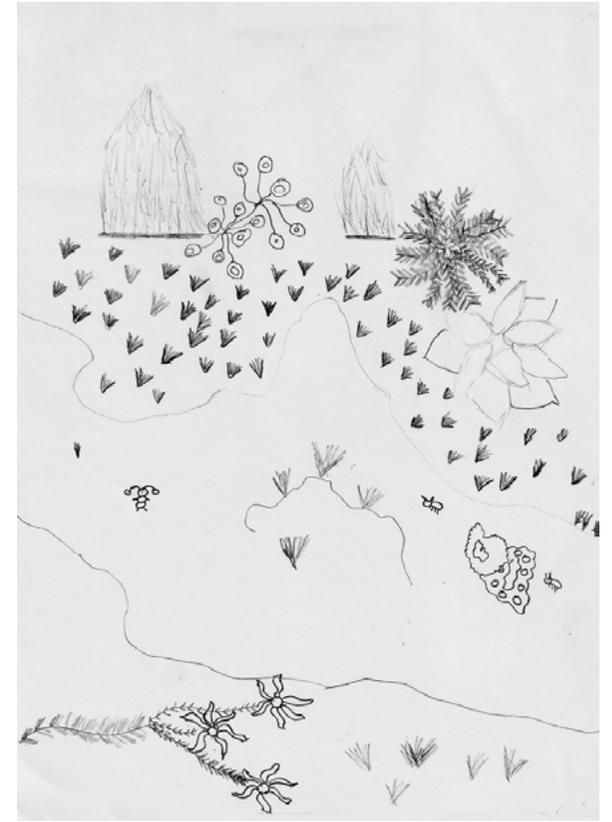
Cristina Pedernera



Thomás Arévalo



Valentino Oliva



Tania Estefania Gimenez

iv

March 13th

School Fray José María Liqueno & high school
IPEM 285 in La Ventana

With:

Daniela Tamburini (IIBYT)

March 16th

IPEM N° 135 Jose Felix Recalde Sarmiento
in San Alberto, Nono

With:

Paula Marcora (IMBIV)

March 17th

School IPEM N° 285 in Ciénaga de Allende

With:

Natalia Perez Harguindeguy (IMBIV), Lucas
Enrico (IMBIV)





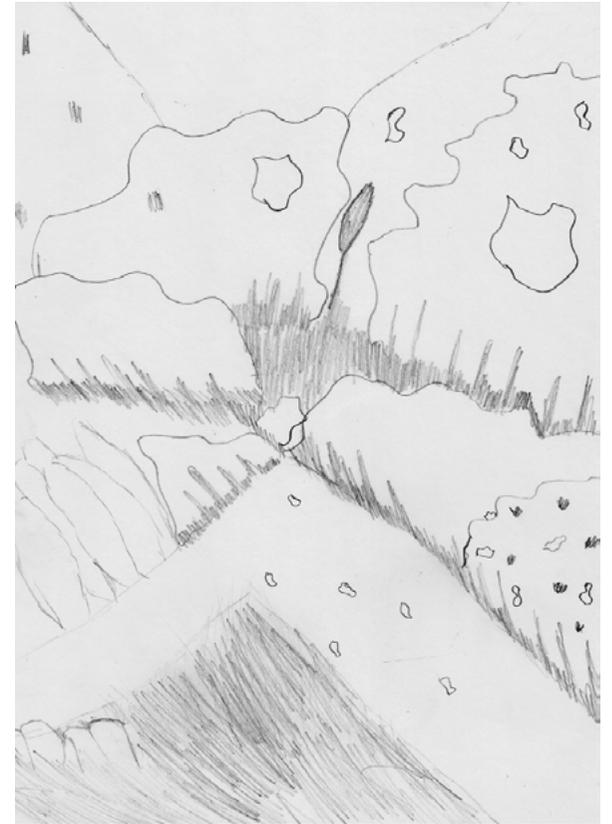




Enzo Romano



Agata Sommi



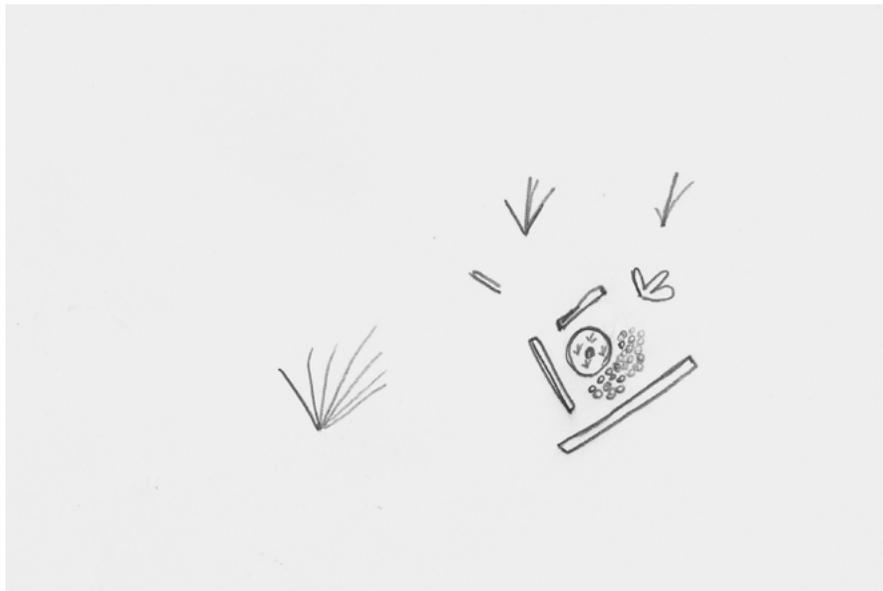
Tania López



Matias Moreno



Fernando Farina



Victoria López



Malena Sosa

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Irene Kopelman
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