

First Movement
Spiral Time
and
Transformation

Claudia Huenchuleo Paquien 2022

San Francisco State University/ Fine Arts Gallery

FIRST MOVEMENT : SPIRAL TIME AND TRANSFORMATION

My first encounter with the foye tree was followed by a series of visits to the San Francisco Botanical Garden to find inspiration and create familiarity with the tree. For about three years, I have been experimenting with photography, objects in ceramic and paper, augmented reality, and 3D printing to express the feelings and stories that the foye tree has been evoking in me.

Ana Mariella Bacigalupo, professor of anthropology who works on consciousness and transformational politics of more-than-humans, has been working with Mapuche shamans and is intrigued by the many meanings of the foye tree. She writes, "Foye trees are sacred trees of life that connect the natural, human, and spirits worlds and allow Mapuche shamans, or *machi*, to participate in the forces that permeate the cosmos.

"Historically, foye trees serve a political purpose, they show up as emblems of Mapuche society. Today, foye trees are "symbols of Mapuche identity and resistance to national ideologies and practices." ¹

When I found the foye tree at the Botanical Garden, I was also surprised to see a plate next to the tree with an image of a *machi* on top of an altar. Symbolically, these trees act as facilitators of transitions between worlds. This aspect of the plant has allowed me to conceive myself in relation to my culture and ancestors. Through it, I am activating my sense of agency in the revitalization of the culture of my ancestors as a political act and an opportunity for healing.



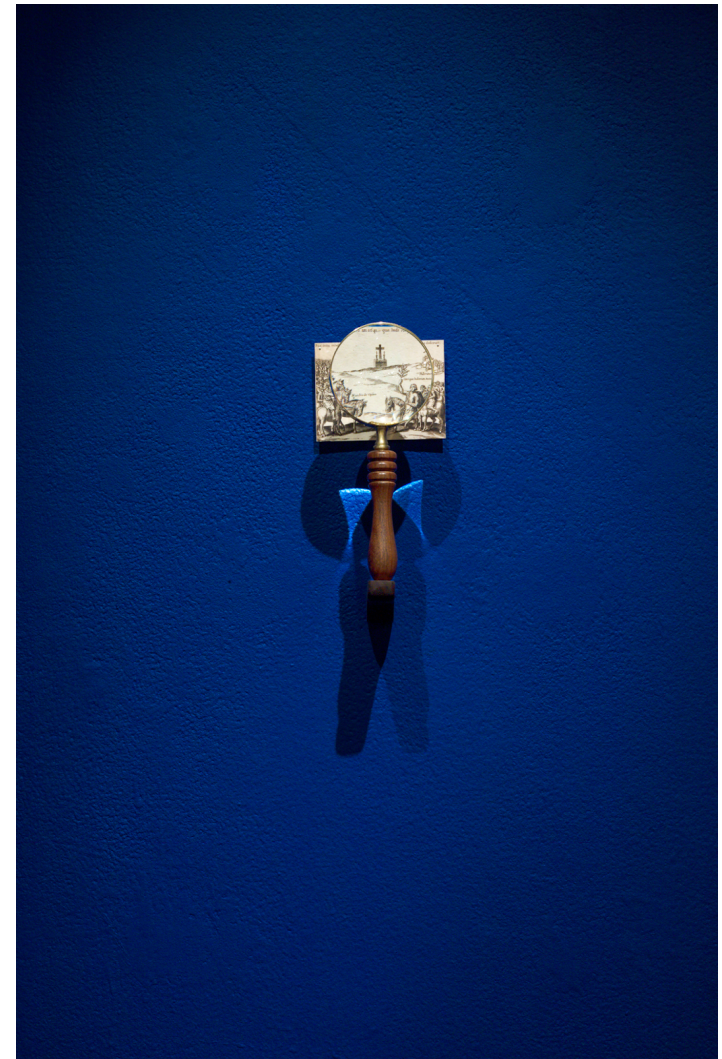
¹ Bacigalupo, *Shamans of the Foye Tree*, 1.

While researching the foye tree, I came across an illustration of an historical engraving from the 17th century showing the Parliament of Quilín, a massive meeting held on January 6, 1641. At this meeting, the first peace treaty between Mapuche and Spaniards was agreed upon after almost a century of war. In the image, a *boquifoye*² is holding a branch of foye. I was amazed to see the gesture of holding a foye branch in what was a political encounter.



Illustration of the Parliament of Quillín (1641)
from the book *Histórica relación del reyno de Chile*.
Alonso de Ovalle, cartographer. Printed 1646.

² Boquifoye is another type of Mapuche ritual priest. *Hucubuye* (*reñi, boquivoye*) were powerful ritual leaders who determined whether leaders and their warriors should engage in war and where and when it took place. Dillehay, *Monuments, Empires, and Resistance*, 118.

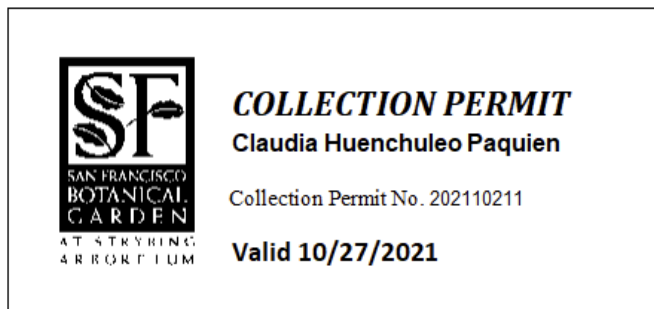



After seeing the engraving, I became very curious about the multiple meanings of holding a foye branch for Mapuche people in the past and today. I decided to embody this gesture using branches collected at the San Francisco Botanical Garden and documented the gesture through photography, which happened in a lapse of a year.

The collection of foye branches, from a botanical garden, revealed the continuation of colonial epistemologies that informed my distanced relationship to the tree.

For example, botanical gardens transformed colonies into profitable parts of the empires. They promoted the exchange of (exotic) plants throughout the colonies, and the cultivation and improvement of plantation crops for profit. Biobio, the region where I was born, became one of the major exportation points of commercial forest and wood products for the world. This is one of the reasons why Mapuche people have lost their land and the disappearance of native forests.


After my research and photography project, the alienation from the history and indigenous culture of the tree was more pronounced. For example, I was allowed to collect the foye branches only after a process of negotiation via emails and contractual conditions with the San Francisco Botanical Garden.





CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT

GARDEN USE AND ACCESS PERMIT FOR
SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN



Permit No: 202110211
 Permit Date: October 21, 2021
 Permittee: Claudia Huenchuleo Paquien
 Institution: San Francisco State University

Address:
 Tel. No. 415-625-7523
 Email: claudiahuen@mail.sfsu.edu

Once counter-signed, permission is granted for permittee to access the Plant Collections at San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum for the purpose of:

Collecting cuttings of *Drimys winteri* for MFA thesis.

PERMIT DURATION:
 October 27, 2021

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS:

The permittee is responsible for following the rules and regulations of San Francisco Botanical Garden (attached) and agree to abide by the restrictions of this permit. Garden Use and Access Permits will be revoked if any of its provisions are broken. This permit is to be carried during all activities in the Garden, and produced upon demand. Please alert the Plant Collections Manager of your presence in the garden on the day(s) of active use. Please also forward a copy of any publications that result from material obtained through our collections.

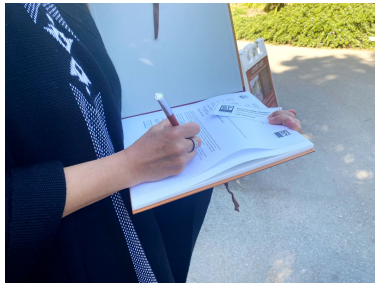
I have read the Rules and Regulations for Access and Use of San Francisco Botanical Garden, and agree to abide by the provisions provided. This permit becomes effective when one signed copy is returned to: Plant Collections Manager, San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, San Francisco, CA 94122.

 Signature Date

Approved by:
 Tory Stewart (via email) _____ 10/21/21
 Signature Date

San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum
 Plant Collections Department
 Tel: 415-661-1316 ext. 405
 vstewart@sfbg.org

Exchange		
From: San Francisco Botanical Garden, 1199 Ninth Ave, San Francisco, CA 94122, United States of America • Inst. code: CAS • E-mail: vstewart@sfbg.org		Date: 2021-10-27
To: Claudia Huenchuleo Paquien, SFSU		
Material: Cuttings		
Comments:		
Permit no.: 202110211		
Items		
Accession No.	Taxon name	Source
1986-0227*A	<i>Drimys winteri</i>	Ted Kipping via the Strybing Arboretum Society



Photographs by Sun Park, 2021

The many steps that I had to take to access the plant revealed that the colonial practices of ownership, appropriation, and categorization into taxonomies continue in place.

During the time that I was constructing the gestures, I came across an image that circulated around the world on July 4th, 2021. It was of Machi Francisca Linconao holding a branch of foye tree during the ceremony in which Mapuche academic and leader Elisa Loncon assumed the presidency of the Chilean Constitutional Convention. Seeing the image of this event and connecting it to the early print and my photograph marked the beginning of conceiving time in a non-linear way. It made me think in cycles and the notion of time as circular. Ideas that resonate with the words of Juan Ñaculef Huiquino, researcher of Mapuche epistemologies, who stresses the importance of seeing time as cyclical in the understanding of life and the universe.

*Así fue ayer, lo es hoy y lo será mañana.*³
Juan Nanculef Huaiquino



Elisa Loncon and Machi Francisca Linconao, July 4th, 2021

I experienced the circularity of time in my body.

I felt deeply moved when I saw that the historic gesture in the Parliament of Quilin was materialized in 2021.

³ English translation: So it was yesterday, it is today and it will be tomorrow. Ñaculef, *Epistemología Mapuche*, 107.



Embodied Resistance, Fine Arts Gallery, SFSU, San Francisco, California

Embodied Resistance Series
Foye branches collected at the San Francisco Botanical Garden



Kiñe, 2021
Epu, 2021
Kūla, 2022
Meli, 2022