

Pavilion of Chile at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Moving Ecologies

At the Quinta Normal Park of Santiago de Chile, in the 19th Century architecture and science allowed for envisioning the future of a country that was entering modernity. Today, the challenges are not those of progress and production, but of ecological repair and restoration of cities and landscapes. In this way, the future will be both designed and sown, built and cultivated, made of architecture and seeds, cities and ecologies. The future will be created from the sciences and landscape architecture, and in a system where species can travel within moving ecologies, operating from the ruins of a capitalist life, repairing the damage we have caused. Along these lines, the objective of this exhibition is to imagine the inventory, collection, and cabinet of species that will prepare those worlds to come. This future is not proposed as a utopia or an Eden, nor is it expected to be the result of a line of progress, development or evolution; instead, it will take the shape of a field: one made of contingencies, experiences, and situations. This is how, working from the inventory of Chilean endemic and native species kept in the Seed Bank in the town of Vicuña, this germ of the future is presented through a collection of 250 seed-filled spheres – mostly with low or no germination capacity – that tell stories of hope and care. These seeds are now being used by Chilean architects to face the main architectural and urban challenges of the future. In particular, they are using species that (1) colonize highly degraded soils, (2) restore contaminated soils, (3) improve urban quality of life, as well as (4) species that restore ecosystems post-natural disasters and (5) landscapes devastated by anthropogenic fires. This speaks of a future where the territory becomes a laboratory, a true cosmopolitical assemblage in which both human and non-human agents can rebuild the relationships between architecture and life.

The future is a field.

The exhibition Moving Ecologies is organized around three conceptions of field: a Field of Contingencies, a Field of Experiences and a Field of Situations.

In Field of Contingencies, 173 years of ecological events in Chile are exhibited. This period reflects Chile's greatest ecological challenges for the future prompted by natural disasters, forest fires, the effects of extractivism, environmental pollution, soil degradation and the creation of protected areas, especially in the face of climate change and the country's production model. It is a time that is not so much of humans, but rather of the *longue durée* characteristic of ecological processes, thus turning architecture into another agent of environmental transformation. This conception shows how as early as in the 19th century, the acclimatization garden of the Quinta Normal Park in Santiago de Chile constituted a space where it was possible to imagine the country's environmental future. In addition, the importance of the INIA Intihuasi Seed Bank in Vicuña to safeguard the future of humanity through the collection and care of endemic and native species seeds is also emphasized in this conception of field. Lastly, the Field of Contingencies shows how the architecture and cities of tomorrow are being tested today through 14 landscape projects, which act as a true laboratory of the future.

The conception Field of Experiences tells the stories of hope and care that allow landscape architects today to employ endemic and native species kept in the Seed Bank of Vicuña to face five critical scenarios for the future. These are natural and architectural stories of 14 landscape projects that use species for the restoration of ecosystems damaged by natural disasters and anthropogenic fires. The species used in the projects are ones that help remediate contaminated and degraded soils, as well as improve urban quality of life.

Finally, the Field of Situations documents the processes of seed propagation through a record of soundscapes collected in the surroundings of the town of Puerto Varas in southern Chile. Moving Ecologies allows us to dream of a future for architecture and cities characterized by cooperation between species, the restoration of ecosystems, and the preservation of different modes of existence, both human and non-human.

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