



Cecilia Vicuña, *Niña Mapuche*, 1975–2021. Photo lithograph on mulberry paper with bamboo and red thread, 30 x 20 inches (76.2 x 50.8 cm)

**Cecilia Vicuña**  
***Quipu Girok (Knot Record)***  
**Lehmann Maupin Seoul**  
**February 18 - April 24**  
**#CeciliaVicuña | @LehmannMaupin**

Lehmann Maupin is pleased to announce *Quipu Girok*, an exhibition of new work by Chilean artist Cecilia Vicuña featuring her first “painted” quipu, a recent video, hand-painted prints, drawings, and an installation of precarios that will engage a dialogue between Korean and Andean textile traditions and techniques. An artist, filmmaker, poet, and activist based in New York, Vicuña’s work ranges from performance, to painting, to poetry, to large-scale installations that address pressing concerns of the modern world, including ecological destruction, human rights, and cultural homogenization. The exhibition marks Vicuña’s second with the gallery and is her first solo presentation in Asia. *Quipu Girok* will coincide with the Gwangju Biennale, which will feature a selection of Vicuña’s paintings from the 1970s and a number of textile prints. These prints are a recreation of a series of paintings on fabric that the artist produced from 1975-1977 as an homage to the women who served in the Vietnam War.

The title *Quipu Girok* combines ancient Andean language and Korean, loosely translating to Knot (quipu) Record (girok). The quipu—an Andean method of visual-tactile communication and record-keeping system involving the knotting of colored strings—has featured prominently throughout Vicuña’s oeuvre since the 1960s and 70s. In the artist’s varied renditions, the quipu becomes a conceptual and performative poem in space, an act of resistance based on Vicuña’s desire to recover the lost history of this ancient form of writing. The centerpiece of the exhibition, from which it takes its name, is *Quipu Girok*—a large-scale quipu installation comprised of columns of painted gauze (reminiscent of ancient forms of indigenous painting on weaving), silk polyester (hanbok), and cotton (used in traditional Korean textiles) that hang vertically from uneven bamboo sticks. Each panel of transparent fabric is painted using pigment and pastel crayon to create a multi-layered work inspired by a series of Solar paintings the artist created during the 1970s. These paintings, like the installation *Quipu Girok*, feature simplified marks and geometric signs and symbols that recall the very beginning of painting on textiles in the pre-Columbian Andes. For Vicuña, these early artworks (forms of visual communication) are “abstract in a very profound sense.” As with poetry, there is a general sense of what the image signifies while its specific reference point remains unknown.

Vicuña’s early Solar paintings also led to the creation of her ongoing series of small sculptural installations called *Lo Precario* (the precarious), visual poems that utilize feathers, stones, wood, shells, cloth, and other human-made detritus. These poetically tiny sculptures are often loosely fastened together with string, emphasizing their fragility and impermanence and giving the impression that the materials have assembled by themselves. In each precario, Vicuña combines objects gathered and sourced from her travels over the years, imparting a geographic and temporal ambiguity to these works. For the exhibition *Quipu Girok*, Vicuña will create one of her archetypal precario installations but will incorporate new elements. This new work, a hybrid installation comprised of precario sculptures, features precarios/drawings that incorporate line, gesture, and found materials on a single sheet of handmade paper, as well as a precario/video that combines a wire “vest” with woven butterflies and a video on an iPad. The video documents the artist’s performance wearing this vest while walking along the bank of the Hudson River, an ancient migratory route for Monarch butterflies whose existence is in danger due to climate change, pesticide use, and habitat loss. Vicuña describes her precarios as a form of prayer, “uncertain, exposed to hazards, insecure. From the Latin precarious, from *précis*, prayer.” Each aspect of the precario installation holds its own history, materiality, and language that offers a global understanding of the environmental effects of pollution and masses of post-consumer waste.

Video has played an important role in Vicuña’s practice as documentation of performances, components of installations, and poetic works in their own right. Much of Vicuña’s moving image work refers to the fragility of ecosystems and mourns the extinction of species as a result of human abuse. For *Quipu Girok*, Vicuña has included a recent video, *Que la verdad despierte/ Let truth awake*, which depicts a flag *Ver Dad* (1974/2020) blowing in the wind in Marfa, TX against the sound of Vicuña’s haunting incantations and music composed and performed by Ricardo Gallo. The imagery is a recreation of a 1974 drawing made while the artist was living in London, in exile from the Pinochet regime in Chile. Placed at the center of an eye is the Spanish word “ver,” which translates to “to see,” alongside the Spanish word “dad” in the palm of a hand. Put together “verdad” translates to “truth.” The flag, first exhibited at Ballroom Marfa in *Unflagging* (October 2020), is an offering for us to see the truth of this moment.

Though composed of work produced within the last year, *Quipu Girok* is an exhibition rooted in history—that of Vicuña’s own practice, which includes the revival of lost or destroyed works, and

ancient traditions in weaving, image making, and record keeping. The artist's complex, ephemeral poems in space combine the history and tactile ritual of weaving and spinning with assemblage, poetry, and performance. As with all of Vicuña's work, this exhibition is a poetic interpretation of time and place where global histories, ancient and contemporary memory, and multiple languages come together and where textiles meet in an act of generosity and love.

### **About the artist**

Vicuña received her MFA from the National School of Fine Arts, University of Chile in 1971 and continued with postgraduate studies at Slade School of Fine Art, University College London from 1972-1973. Solo exhibitions of her work have been organized at the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico (2020); Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Miami, FL (2019); Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2019); Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA (2019); Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA (2019); Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2019); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA (2018); Brooklyn Museum, NY (2018); the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (2018); Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY (2018); Neubauer Collegium, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2018); Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, LA (2017); Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Santiago, Chile (2014); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile (2014); FRAC Lorraine, Metz, France (2013); Institute for Women and Art, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ (2009); The Drawing Center, New York (2002); and the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, CO (2002). Group exhibitions and biennials featuring her work include *Artistic License: Six Takes on the Guggenheim Collection*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY (2019); *Radical Women: Latin American Art 1960-1985*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2017) traveling to the Brooklyn Museum, NY and Pinoteca de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2018); Documenta 14, Athens, Greece and Kassel, Germany (2017); 18th Sydney Biennale, Australia (2012); *DANCE / DRAW*, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2011); *ONLINE, Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010); *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2007); Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1997); and *INside the VISIBLE* curated by Catherine M. de Zegher, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, traveled to the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC, the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, and the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (1996).

Her work is in numerous international private and public collections, including the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin, TX; Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain de Lorraine, Metz, France; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Gallery, London; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile; and the University of California Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA.

Vicuña is the author of 20 volumes of art and poetry published in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. Her filmography includes documentaries, animation, and visual poems. Vicuña has received several awards, including the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts (2019); Anonymous Was a Woman Award, New York (1999); and The Andy Warhol Foundation Award (1997), and in 2015 was appointed the messenger lecturer at Cornell University.

### **About Lehmann Maupin**

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996. The gallery represents a diverse range of contemporary artists and estates from around the world. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies. This mission has resulted in historic first exhibitions in New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul. The gallery opened its

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newest location in London in October 2020. For more information on the gallery and its artists, visit [lehmannmaupin.com](http://lehmannmaupin.com).

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