

CRISIS

Pierina Másquez
Something has to be hidden so that others can exist
July 6 - August 19, 2023

Dear Pierina,

I am writing this letter in the early hours of this June solstice, as the sun begins its longest excursion. I know the complex circumstances and emotions of mourning that went through you on the last December solstice. It's not something I've planned, but I envision this coincidence of dates as a tunnel through the movement of the sun. Depending on where we are geographically located, the solstices are the longest night or day of the year. Those are also the two moments when the Earth has a maximum effect of tilting its axis of rotation. Although the force of gravity means that our bodies do not perceive these movements, it is by looking at the stars that we can really understand what is happening down here.

I sense that it is for this reason that your most recent works have chosen to embrace the farewell in the form of sidereal explorations. I start counting all the stars you've created, Pierina. Some appear as tattoos on the skin of the ceramics, others as flashes that inhabit the bodies or agglomerations that look like superimposed skies. I see them proliferate and think of the constellations that ancient astronomers used as navigational tools. I feel invited to move around that bewitched map of star-bodies. Are the glimpses of those we have loved, of those who have accompanied us, and whose energies live as guardians only visible in the dark?

While the solstice rays appear intensely in the sky, I dedicate myself to carefully observing your engravings and ceramics. I try to touch them with my eyes as if I could undo the physical distance that separates us. I recognize in them some signs that have populated your previous work, such as silhouettes of domestic objects and numerous faces/masks, but a different energy appears in this new set; these characters come from another place, perhaps because you are also a different person. In fact, the first sensation I had before your engravings was that I was before the manifestations of an oracle. What to ask him?

Your sets of small ceramic offerings remind me of pre-Columbian grave goods placed in tombs to accompany the transcendence of the bodies. For many precolonial cultures, the dead had an active agency in social dynamics. The act of dying occupied a vital place as a regenerative moment of the cosmic balance, something that has been displaced today by Western modernization and the incessant cult of the present. Having lost the intertwining between human beings, territory and spiritual forces has the consequences that we see on this planet in extinction. As if they were ancient inscriptions, many of your images seem to delve into the traces of that lost intertwining, like that engraving of two almost-(not)-human silhouettes titled *Mountain*, rain and stars, or that other titled *Mountain bird* (being air and rock). I see them as testimonies of a primordial fertility, of the regenerative energy of the earth in spite of us humans.

As I write, the sun moves across the sky and the shadows in my room change shape. Even if it eventually hides, it will continue to be present, radiating its strength and affecting the gravity of our bodies. Those presences that escape our eyes are perhaps always the most important. I try to see the sun head on but the rays are too intense to hold my gaze. So, I stay looking at one of your celestial ceramics, a delicate concavity that reminds us that even if we don't know it, we are always holding the sky with our hands.

Miguel López. Oslo, 21st of July 2023.