



Campamento de Dibujo

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

Notes on *Drawing Camp*

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

Some months ago, while I was talking with some researchers of the Multidisciplinary Institute of Plant Biology (IMBIV), 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, an open call for the Premio Fundación Medifé Arte y Ambiente award caught my attention. The award's focus was related to everything I was interested in so I couldn't miss the opportunity. That was the kickoff, an attempt to conceive a way in which drawing practice and the knowledge from other areas come together as an innovative interpretation of the landscape. This is a very frequent and familiar process in my work but in the context of the award it made me question how to expand it to include more people, and how to share with them the procedures I apply and enjoy working with.

Another reason I was so keen on the project 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 of Córdoba at the *Quebrada del Condorito* National Park. The camp's activities would consist of interpreting the park's ecosystem through drawing in relation to the biological studies carried out in that area. The main activities would be designed with the help of IMBIV specialists who would highlight the most relevant elements in understanding that particular ecosystem and at the same time would show the methodology used to carry out fieldwork. These activities would involve workshops in association with local rural schools. As an artist, I would be the one in charge of coordinating and communicating the contents provided by the specialists through drawing activities that would help educate 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 a revaluing 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 interconnect and so could a heterogeneous group of people. A crucial underlying element in devising the project was the reliance on experience. A confidence that being in a particular place and situation with other people can generate a unique dynamic that allows for thinking, learning and drawing in a way that would otherwise be 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 different institutions and entities we would work with, such as national parks and education and research institutions. I had contacted some of them beforehand.

A lot had happened since the early stages of the project: a lot of work and a lot of experiences gained by the people involved in one way or another. *Drawing Camp* went through several stages that were different in nature but very similar in terms of methodology. Various groups of society took part: adults, children, scientists, artists and people with diverse professions and trades. The idea was to create a space for communication and to 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 different triggers would always be through 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 2017, the production team and three IMBIV researchers (Natalia Pérez Harguindéguy, 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 that was where our interest in this experience lay. During the workshop, we found ways of apprehending and assimilating experience through drawing.

The following stage meant the beginning of *Drawing Camp*. From February 26 until March 5 a tent workshop was set up in the Quebrada del Condorito National Park [ii]. With open enrollment and limited places, everyday a group of people participated in the proposed

activities. Each day researchers attended and explained the varying elements of that ecosystem to us. Some visitors only stayed for a day while others camped longer. Each day was different regarding the themes, participants, processes, and results. We elaborated the drawing instructions on a daily basis—they were never fixed; they were always different. These instructions were related to the topics discussed and based on the best way of contributing to an understanding of such topics.

What most attracts me is being part of these processes in which different fields intermix: 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 diversity of methods used by the sciences to define the fields of study. It's been years since I've been 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 number of operations and that's when I think the gap between different fields is not so wide and communication is possible.

After spending some days in town to organize ourselves, we went back to the campsite where the children from the Ingeniero Arturo Pogliari school 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 Research) talked about lichens. Sofía Pestoni (IMBIV) talked about impact herbivores on that particular ecosystem. Ariel Zandivarez and Eugenia Díaz (from Córdoba Astronomical Observatory and The Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Astronomy, respectively) talked about and showed prototypes of the solar planets. Paula Tecco discussed invasive species and Carlos Urceley 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 join but were unable to camp with us due to logistics. One of the solutions we came up with was devising an activity that would last only one morning in the Padre Liqueno primary school and the La Ventana high school [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 the activity was to track those aspects that were not so visible.

The following two activities involved two schools visiting *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 *Drawing Camp* was over, we noticed it 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 too noticed that hues in nature were not the same as the hues an artist sees. Instead, tones 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 were 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 we could 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, we 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 them 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.

Drawing Camp ended up being very similar to the old scientific campaigns carried out in the 17th and 19th centuries. They were made up 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 was that in our campsite we didn't draw to document. Instead, we drew as a way of understanding the environment and the way it worked.

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

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 *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 mentioned above, determining when the project began is not easy. And neither is 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, opening new spaces of dialogue and interaction, of drawing much more. That way, *Drawing Camp* will continue to exist in different ways in those of us who experienced it.

i

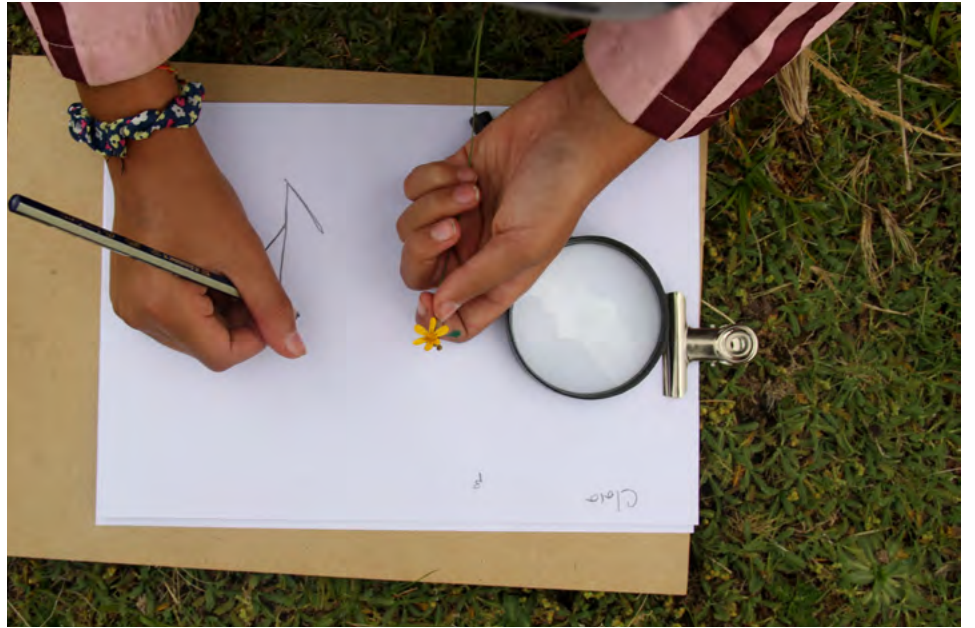
February 15th – 16th, 2017
Ceferino Namuncurá and IPEM N° 285
in Los Cerros

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











Andrea del Milagro Pino



Jazmin Agustina Gimenez



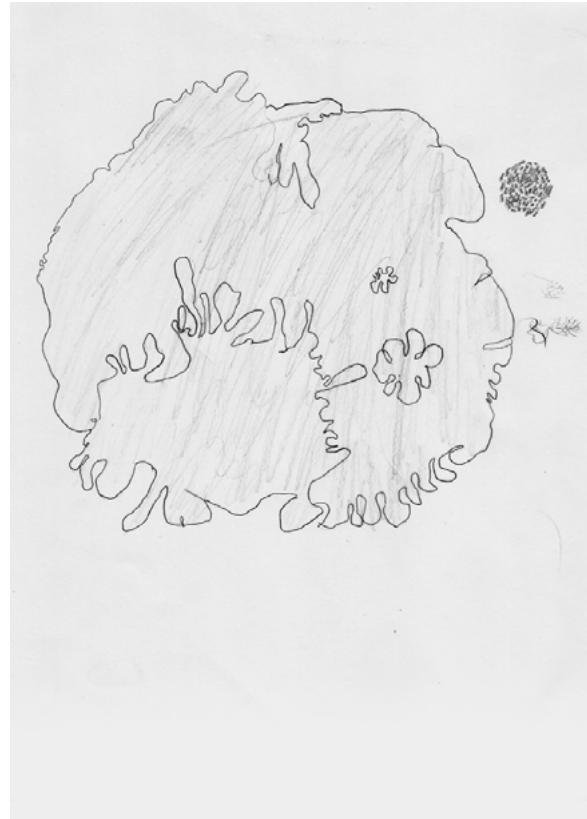
Laura del Barco



Julieta Oviedo



Axel Leonel Giménez



Yamila Soledad Merlo



Naida Oviedo

ii

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



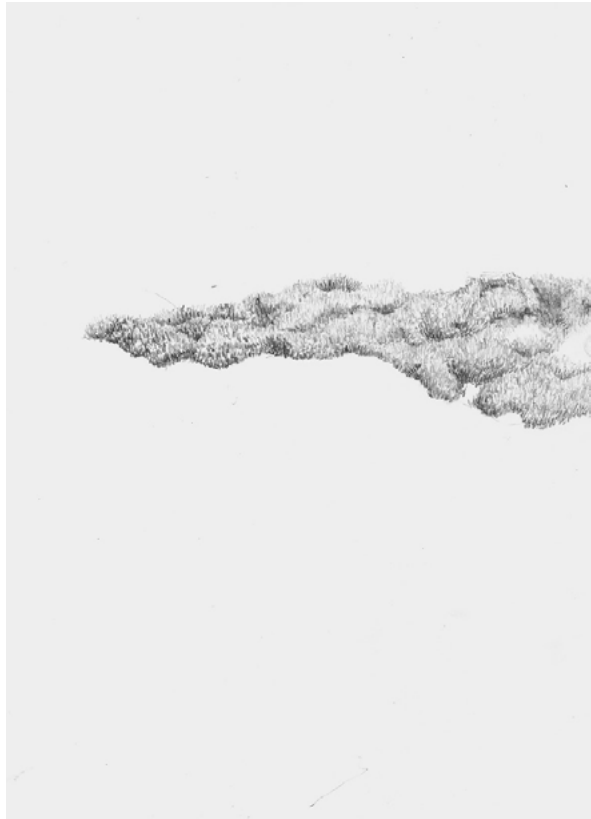
Emma Ferraro Bardiz



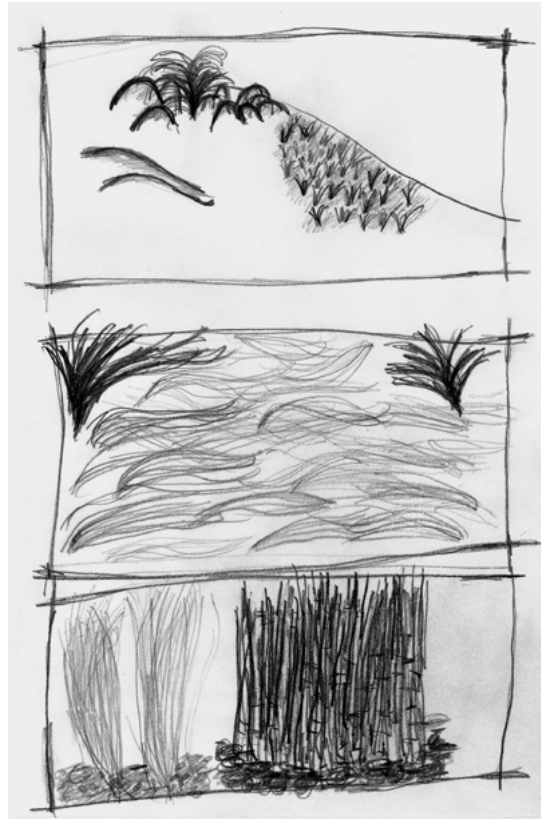
Natalia Ferreyra



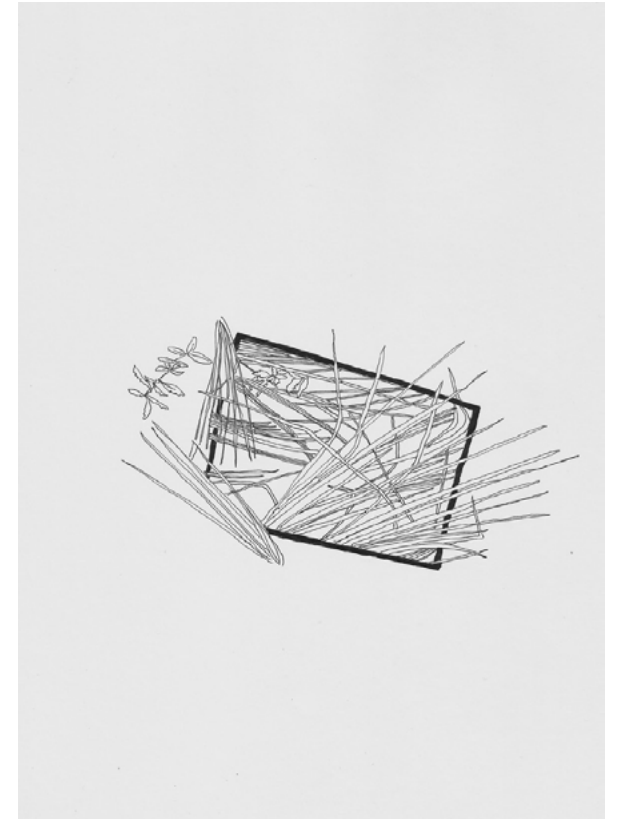
Ignacio Agustín Cañón



Tatiana Bardiz



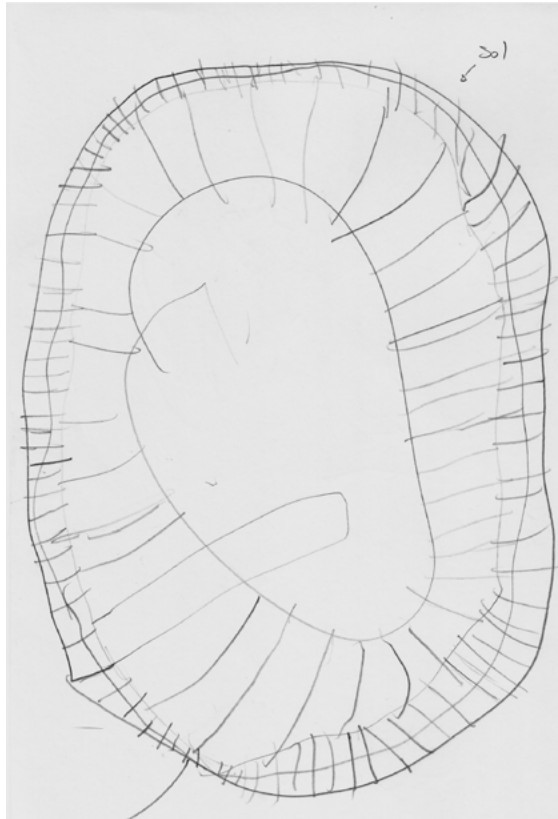
Eloisa Calderón



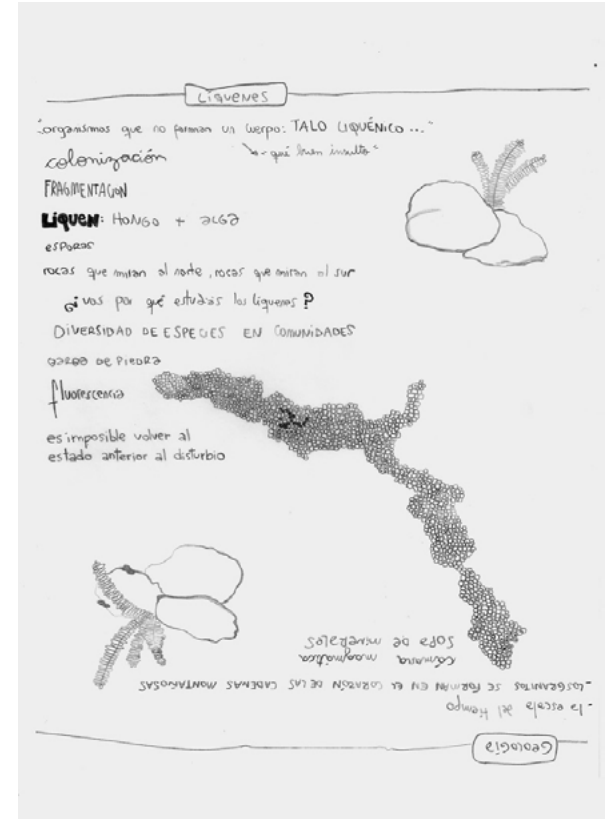
Celeste Viullanueva



María Belén Trabucco



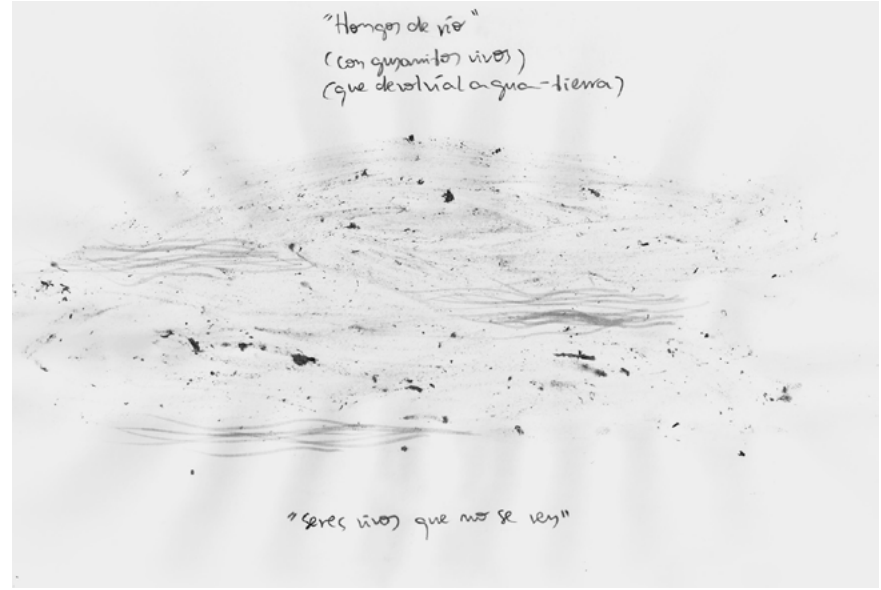
Sol Fernandez



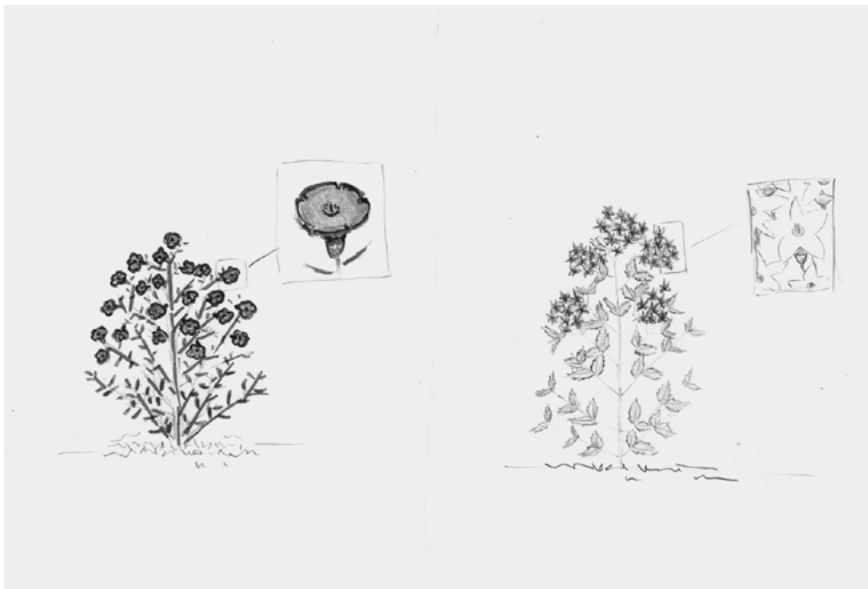
Emilia Casiva



Matias Lapezzata



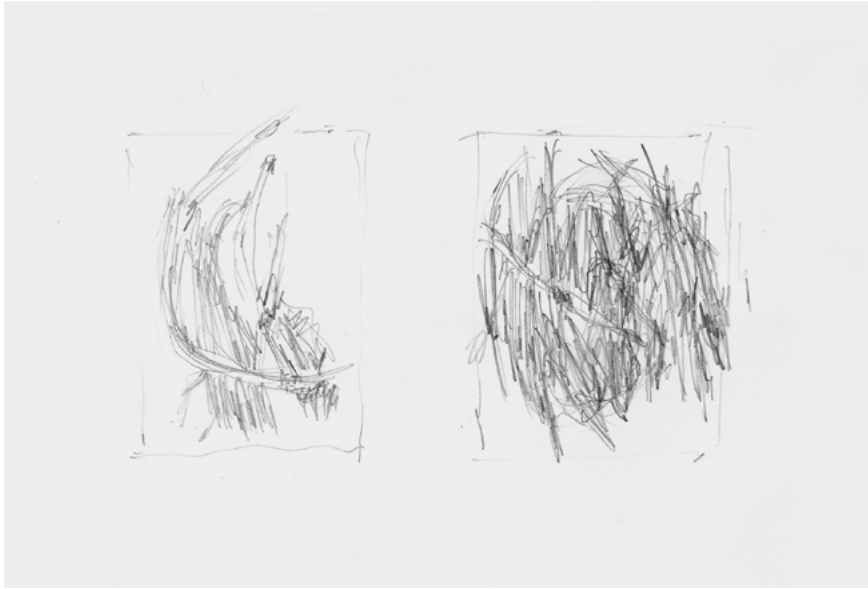
Juliana Enrico



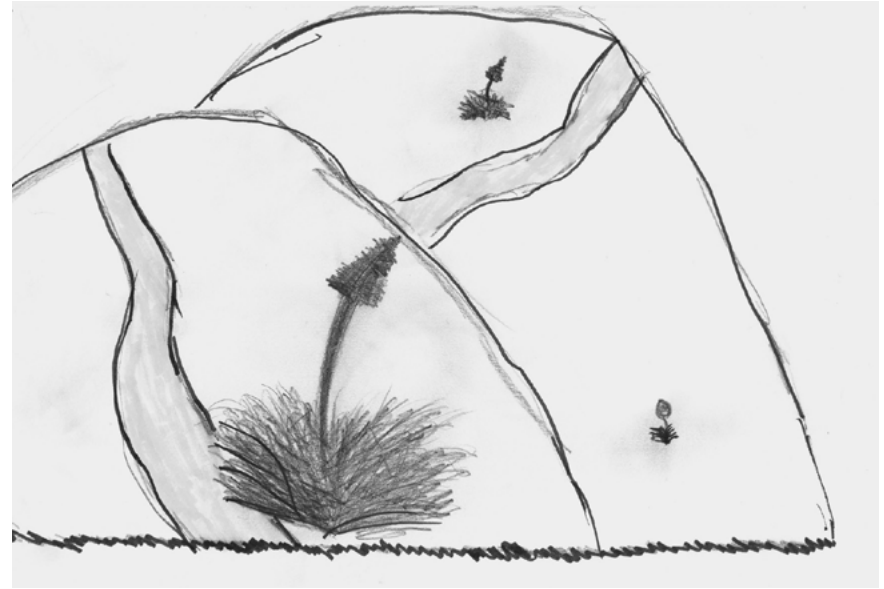
Georgina Conti



Daniél Antonio Martínez



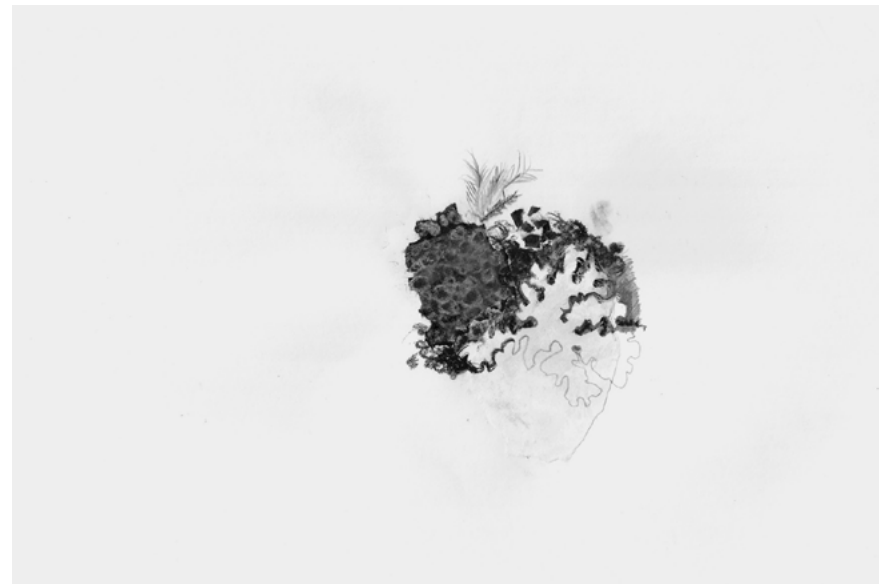
Irene Kopelman



Laura Fernandez



Marcos Santos Marcus



Fabiana Romano

iii

March 10th–12th

Quebrada del Condorito National Park

Ingeniero Arturo Pagliari School

With:

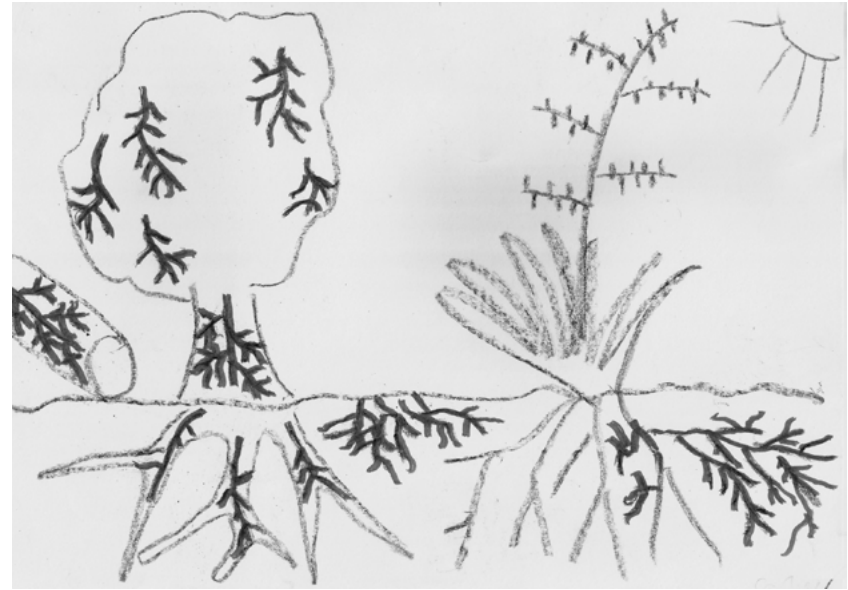
Juan Manuel Rodríguez (IIBYT), Sofía Pestoni (IMBIV), Ariel Zandivarez & Eugenia Díaz (Córdoba Astronomical Observatory and the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Astronomy), Carlos Urcelay (IMBIV), Paula Tecco (IMBIV)







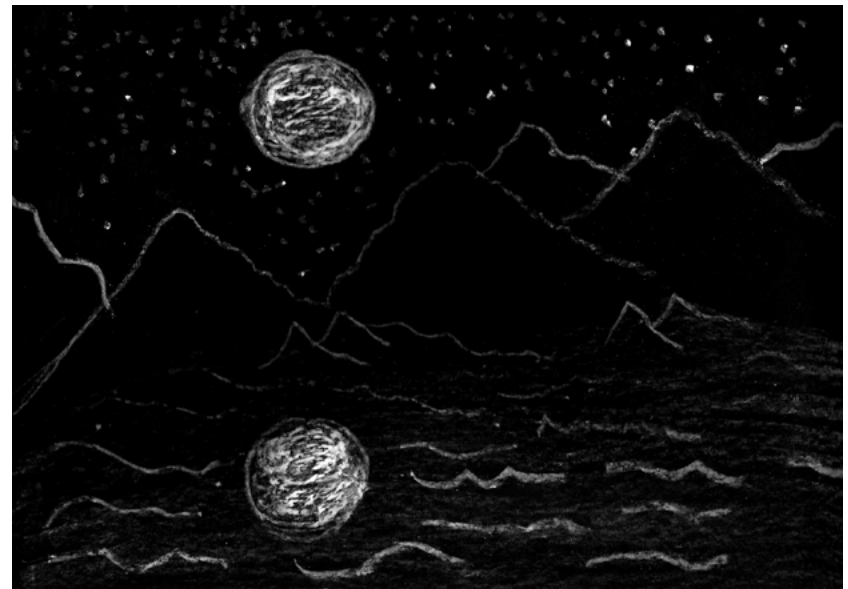
Agostina Cena



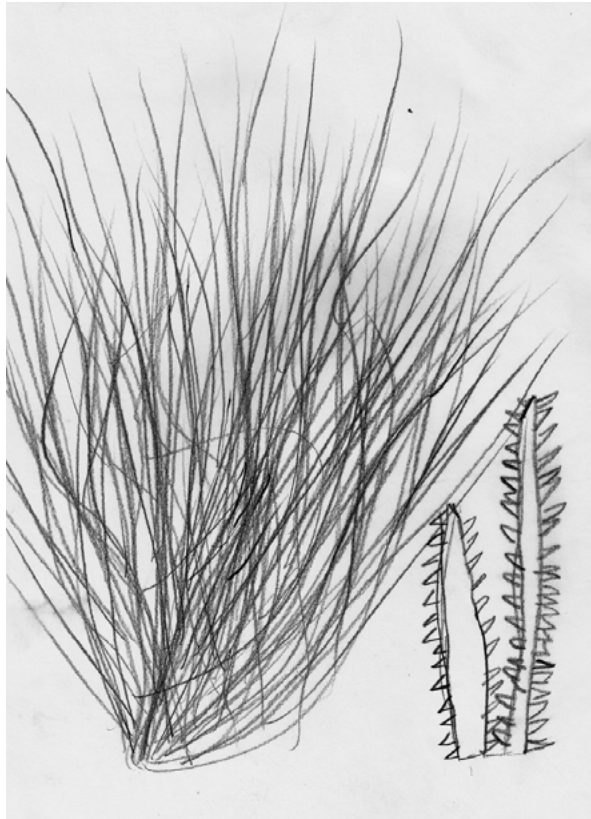
Carlos Urcelay



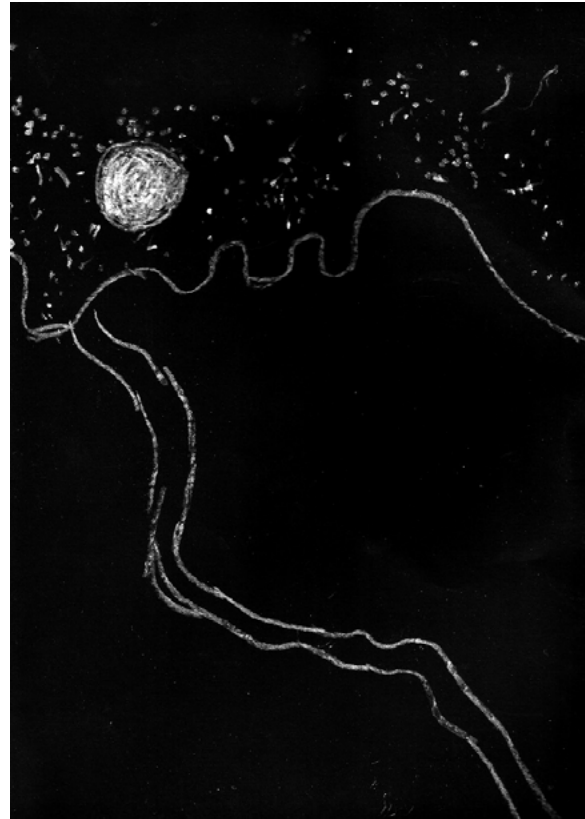
Julieta del Barco



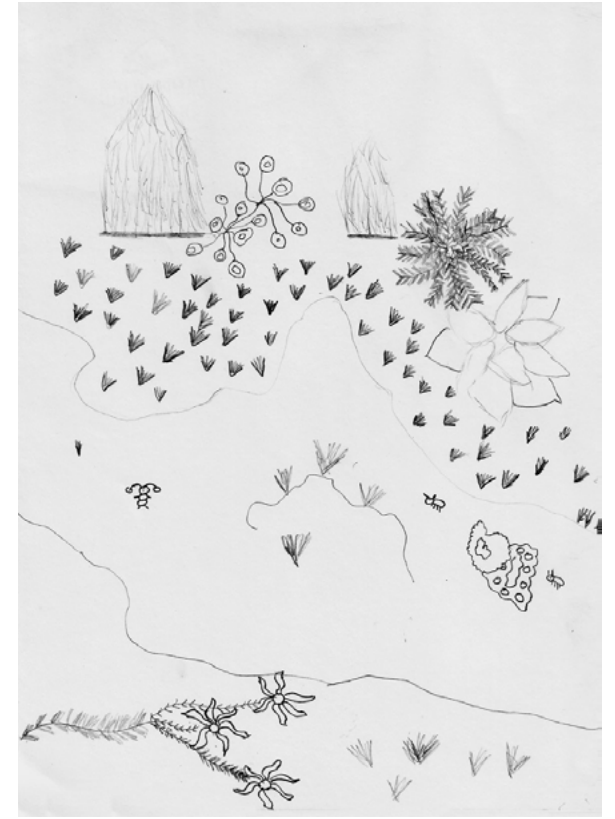
Cristina Pedernera



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)





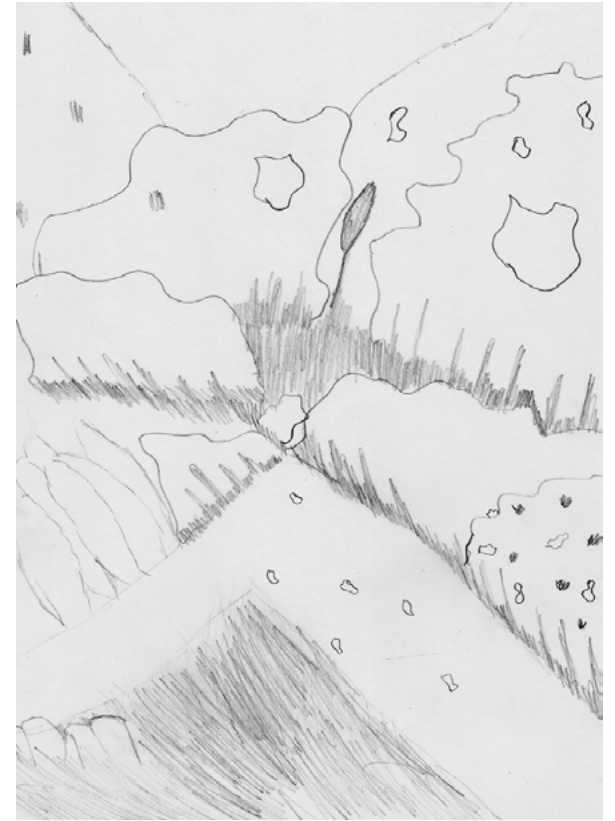




Enzo Romano



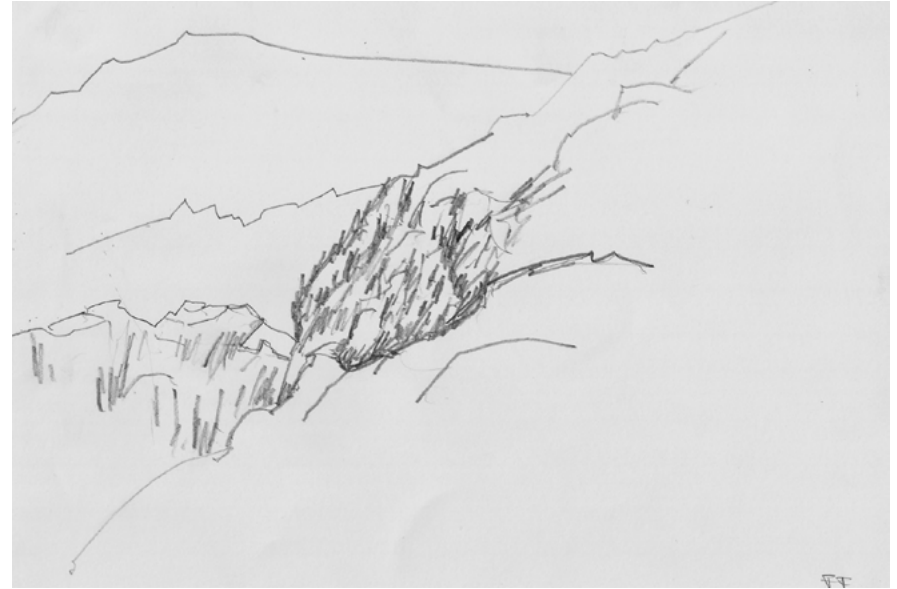
Agata Sommi



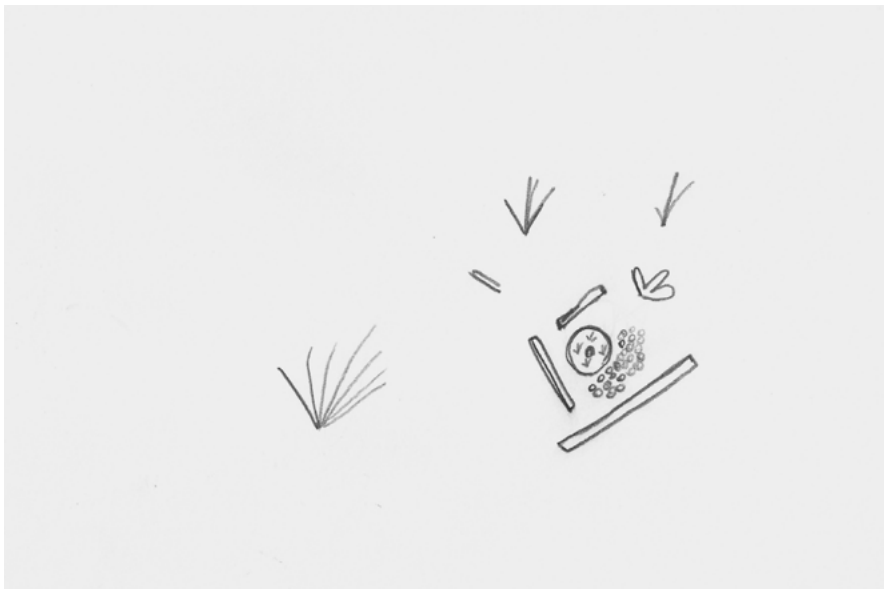
Tania López



Matias Moreno



Fernando Farina



Victoria López



Malena Sosa

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Irene Kopelman
Campamento de dibujo

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