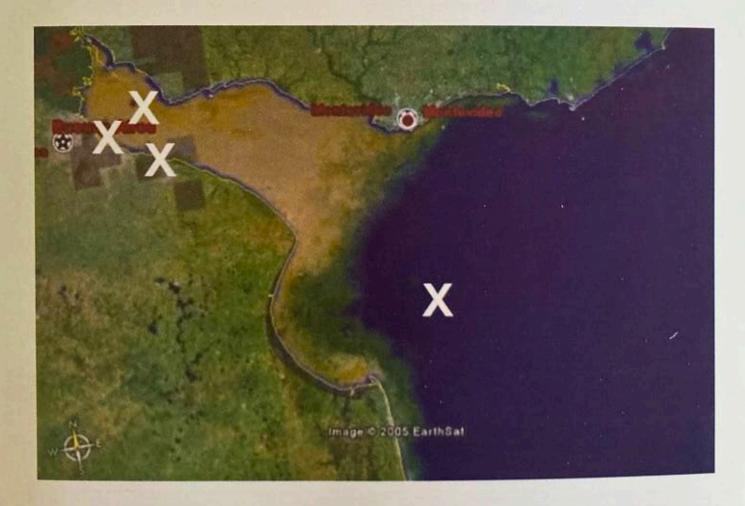


PIEDAD, pastel sobre madera, 80 x 50 cm, 2001 MERCY, pastel over wood, 80 x 50 cm, 2001

El Río es de todos

El recuerdo requiere de un objeto, la memoria de un sujeto. Quien dibuja sin pintura en el agua del Río de la Plata no está melancólicamente recordando. No está recordando sino intentando que su gesto, su dibujo, sea preservado no en el agua sino en uno de nosotros. Memorizado. La memoria es un atributo de la justicia y como tal un acto de verdad en común acuerdo. ¿Qué diferencia al Río Ganges del Río de la Plata? En el Ganges se trata de una muerte venerada, celebrada según el canon antropológico de una cultura. (Por canon defino un acuerdo entre partes, no una imposición). En el Río de la Plata se trata de otras muertes, otros ritos, otros usos, otras costumbres. La Escuela de la ESMA no es la Escuela de Auschwitz. Es otra escuela. Enseña sobre el máximo acto de crueldad humana: expulsar a alguien involuntariamente de su escena. Al respecto, la justicia Argentina ya dictaminó, ahora nos queda a nosotros que somos memoria. Si no hay nosotros no hay memoria.

REMO BIANCHEDI



The River belongs to us all

Memory requires an object, the memory of a subject. He who draws without paint in the River Plate is not remembering melancholically. He is not remembering but trying to ensure that his gesture, his drawing is preserved not in the water but in one of us. Memorised. Memory is an attribute of justice and as such an act of truth in common agreement. What makes the River Ganges different from the River Plate? In the Ganges, the issue is revered death, celebrated according to the anthropological canon of a culture. (By canon I define an agreement between parties, not an imposition). In the River Plate, it is a question of other deaths, other rites, other uses, other customs. The ESMA School is not the Auschwitz School. It's something completely different. It teaches us about the supreme act of human cruelty: expelling someone involuntarily from his stage. In that regard the Argentine courts have already passed judgement; now it is up to us, who are nothing but memory. Without us there is no memory.

Drawings in the River 1998-2005, Jorge Velarde Ferrari

One of the methodologies of the State terrorism that began in 1976 was to throw living prisoners from aeroplanes into the immensity of the River Plate and the sea. When I returned to my country, the River, which had been the happy territory of my childhood memories had taken on a new meaning. Once again I sailed on it: along its coastline its inhabitants remember how bodies used to appear on its beaches, a frequent occurrence in those years. The surface of the water registered no change other than that of its natural flow, as if it were living in a continuous present without memory. The maps reflected the courses plotted in my crossings, making an abstract network. I began to prepare the project to make an imaginary drawing with the trajectory of the sailing boat without set times. "The River Plate and the Sea as part of the natural space where life goes on and death occurs. The surface of the water as frontier and ephemeral support for a series of drawings of the X sign made by the passing of the sailing boat. A blurred trace in the continuous movement of the water. The wind shapes the waves, it draws the sails of the boat pushing its journey onwards. The prow opens a track which will be lost in the general movement, the final triumph of Nature over our constructions. After the brief agitation on the water caused by the passing of the boat there will be no more changes in the place other than that of the light reflected on the waves, solar time, and the

fluctuating intensity of the wind. The modification will occur in the way of thinking that sustains the gaze. I will sail on the stage of facts and symbolically point out the places from which the murderers decided to erase their register. The navigation chart, the photos, the story and some drawings which retain memories will make possible their transmission and imaginary reconstruction."



Notes, 1/12/97

I made my first tracing in March 1998 while out on the River between the coasts of the City of Buenos Aires and of Colonia, Uruguay. The crossing of the segments of the X determined a point that I called the central place of a memory. I threw flowers, a ritual gesture in my culture, in honour of the beloved absences. The next, on 21/03/00, was in the waters just off the ESMA, former centre of torture and disappearances, the future Museum of Memory. This group action by several vessels involved them converging on a central point where we threw hundreds of flowers. It was organised and carried out by political militants together with the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo - Founding Line. In their fliers and leaflets they called it "Action of Art, Homage", and it was signed by: the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo - Founding Line; Memoria, Verdad y Justicia de la Zona Norte (Memory, Truth and Justice of the Northern Suburbs); Agrupación Pro DDHH (Pro Human Rights Group) - Madrid; Comisión de Detenidos Desaparecidos Españoles en la Argentina (Commission of Detained Disappeared Spanish Citizens in Argentina). The call expressed solidarity with the struggle of the Grandmothers to recover the identity of those children abducted by the repressors. While sailing alone in April 2001, I made the sign just off Punta Lara. In March 2005, accompanied by Luis Velarde, Kairo Velarde and Fernando Gutiérrez, I decided to complete the series. We cast off in the Port of San Isidro, where the River begins. We traced a series of signs on our journey towards the Sea, the last being on the afternoon of the following day, 22/03/05. Virginia Franganillo, my wife, was responsible for promoting it. At 50 miles from the shores of the Bay of San Borombón we reached a place that was solitude itself. There we traced the last sign of the series and left flowers at the central point of the cross. The Pampero wind was blowing and at nightfall the wake of the boat reflected the phosphorescence of the fireflies. Drawings in the River was exhibited in December 1998 in the Borges Cultural Centre and in December 2003 in the Palais de Glace as an act in the National Secretariat of Culture to mark 20 years of Democracy, with the participation of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo - Founding Line and the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.

lorge Velarde Ferrari was born in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1949. He has been drawing and painting from a very early age. In 1967, while living in Tucumán, he studied the first year of Fine Arts, receiving outstanding marks in painting and drawing. He returned to Buenos Aires and began studying Architecture and Sociology, which he later gave up. He worked as a technical draftsman and then as an operative in a shipyard. In 1975, as trade union delegate, he survived an illegal kidnapping along with other delegates. In 1976, he goes into exile in Madrid where he worked as an artisan and portrait painter. He studied painting with Francisco Soto Mesa and lithography with Remo Bianchedi. In 1982 he travelled to Saint Joseph, Michigan for an exhibition of his work in the experimental gallery of artist Lois Wolf, Circus in the Attic. In 1983, once again in Buenos Aires, he exhibited drawings and urban paintings. In 1988, he bought a sailing boat, the Don Fierro, living on board with his wife and small daughters and crossing the River Plate drawing in his logbook. He went to live on a farm just outside Colonia, Uruguay. In 1996 he exhibited his installation named "Knives wound Bricks" in the Centro Cultural Recoleta and started work on the idea for "Drawings in the River", which he began in 1998, once more in Buenos Aires. He was invited to exhibit his documentation on the work in the Borges Cultural Centre. In 2000 he was called as a witness for the Prosecution in the lawsuits on the Italian citizens disappeared by State terrorism.

At present, in his workshop in San Isidro and on his boat, moored to an abandoned barge in the Port of San Isidro, he is working on a new series of drawings and paintings called "Imaginary Museum".



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JORGE VELARDE FERRARI Dibujos en el Río / Drawings in the River (1998-2005)

December 7th, 2005 / January 31st, 2006