



Nora  
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**FRIEZE**  
VIEWING ROOM

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**ADRIANA BUSTOS**

## **Adriana Bustos**

Solo Booth, Dialogos Section curated by Patrick Charpenel, Rodrigo Moura and Susanna Temkin, Museo del Barrio, New York.

Adriana Bustos (B. 1965, Bahia Blanca, Argentina), a multidisciplinary artist based in Buenos Aires, who has received increasing international attention in recent years, having participated in the Sharjah Biennial, Emirates; Cosmopolis #2 at Centre Pompidou, Paris and Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh in the past twelve months.

Bustos has developed an ambitious body of work consisting in different chapters which weave interconnected narratives, they are based on complex historical, social and economic phenomena affecting the way we live today. Bustos' approach is investigative. She focuses on finding images that incarnate matters such as the effects of colonialism, the patriarchal gaze over womanhood, traffic of narcotics and of people, censorship and repression of ideas and of difference. Working with these images loaded with meaning through juxtaposition and montage she takes them apart and fosters rethinking on how systems of knowledge and historical narratives are constructed. Laborious, detailed drawing is at the core of her approach to art-making, an alchemy through which the images' energetic load is reworked when filtered by the artist's eye and hand.

Bustos has exhibited her work extensively in over 70 shows, among them Unsettled Landscapes, Site Santa Fe, USA (2014); The As-If Principle, Magazin4 Kunstverein, Bregenz, Austria (2015); the XII Istanbul Biennial; a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Castilla and León (MUSAC), Spain in 2017 and at the Klemm Foundation, Buenos Aires in 2018.

Her works are in many relevant collections including the Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Museum Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Kadist Foundation, San Francisco, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art of Medellín, Colombia; Museum of Contemporary Art of Lisbon, Portugal; Casa di Rizparmio Foundation, Modena, Italy; Asiacity Foundation, Singapore and Sharjah Art Foundation, Emirates.



History, as incarnated in images, is Bustos' source material. History contains in its structure empty spaces, contradictions, chimeras, places of dreaming, unconscious territories and hallucinations. The *Bestiaries of Indies* and the stories of the chroniclers who came from Europe to the Americas seem to be immersed in the hallucinatory world of dreams. Men and women, plants and flowers, stones and landscapes merge into enigmas that try to hide and reveal the desires, fantasies and terrors of humanity. In this work, Bustos quotes those fantastic beings which represent the colonial imaginary.

This work is a drawing on canvas, its background is acrylic paint and silver leaf.



BESTIARIO DE INDIAS I, 2020  
detail



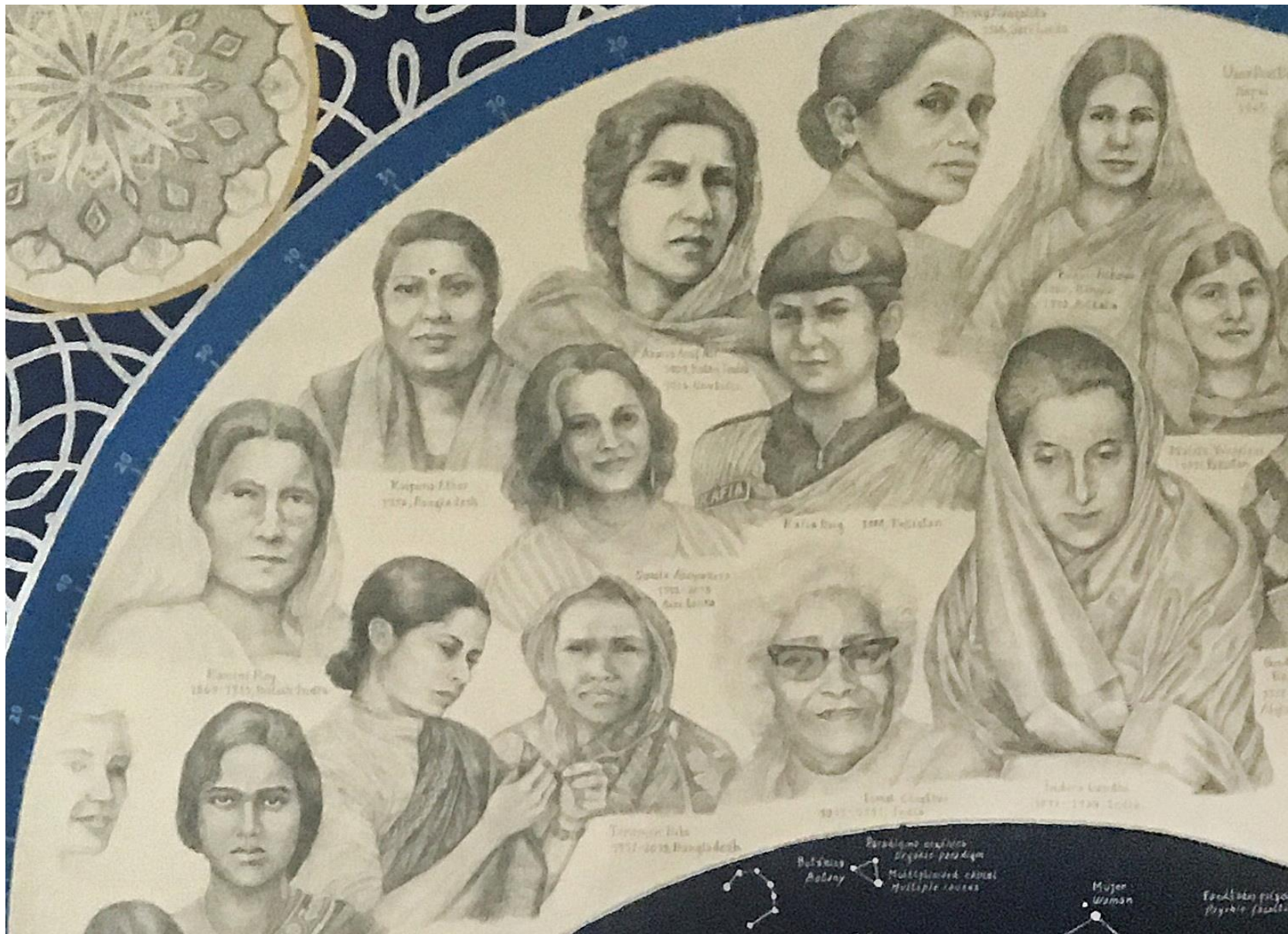
**BESTIARIO DE INDIAS I, 2020**  
detail



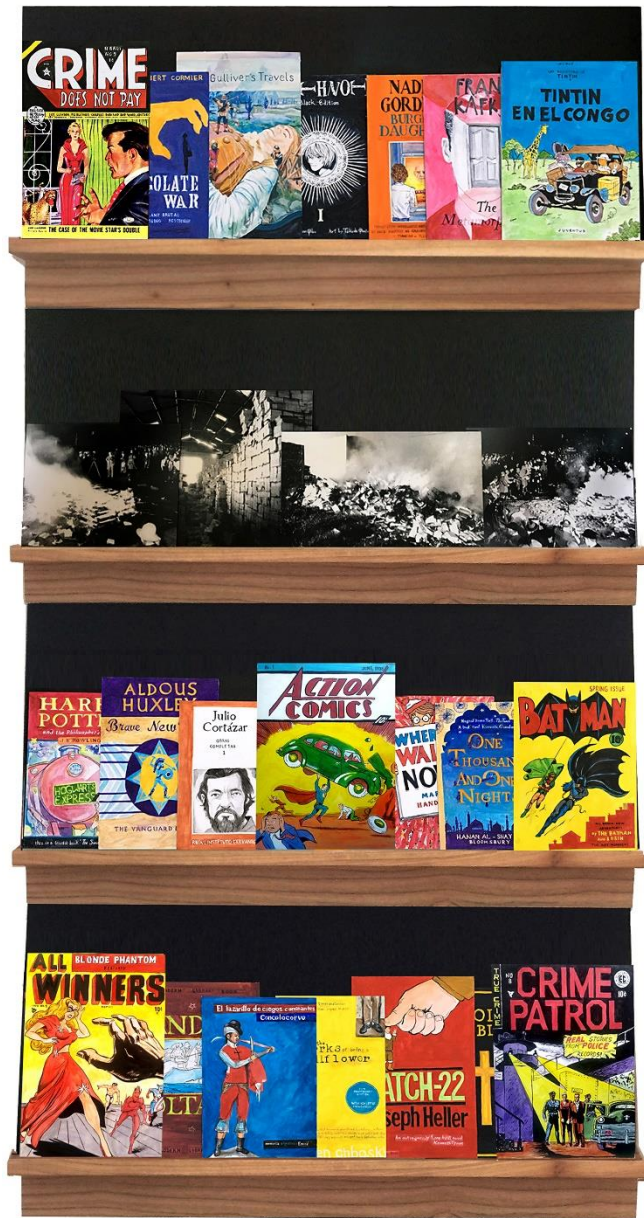
**PLANISFERIO CELESTE  
CONSTELACIÓN VENUS II**  
2019  
180 x 180 cm  
Acrylic paint, graphite,  
silver and gold leaf on canvas

This work belongs to Bustos' *Planisferio Celeste* series. Each of these pieces centers around an idea, they are organized as diagrams with circular areas around a central celestial map of constellations. The drawings inside the circles are networks of references that are not always obvious or directly related, but they together knit a new narrative about the chosen subject matter. The celestial map displays a configuration of the stars as they appeared on the first night of the Christian era. The names of the stars and constellations have been replaced by words referencing the subject explored in the work, including theoretical and personal reflections associated with it, thus becoming a chart of sorts. *Venus II*, exhibited at Dhaka Art Summit earlier this year, pays homage to influential women in Southeast Asia's history, emphasizing the women who introduced social changes and questioned patriarchal paradigms.





PLANISFERIO CELESTE, CONSTELACIÓN VENUS II, 2019  
detail



**BURNING BOOKS XI, 2020**

Watercolor on paper, photographs.

Wood, glass and wooden shelves, 158 x 75 X 12 cm



**BURNING BOOKS XII, 2020**

Watercolor on paper, photographs.

Wood, glass and wooden shelves, 158 x 75 X 12 cm

*Burning Books* is an ongoing project on censorship and right to expression. These bookcase-like pieces (actually each a group of very shallow wooden shelves) display hand-rendered covers of books that were banned, deliberately hidden from circulation or burnt in different times and places. The book covers are carefully drawn and painted by hand. One of the shelves in each “bookcase “ displays documentary black and white photographs of actual instances of book-burning. Bustos obtains listings of banned publications from her research in libraries worldwide. Censorship is far from an issue of the past. The Intellectual Freedom department of ALA (American Library Association) is currently receiving hundreds of reports each year about attempts to ban books from public libraries, many of them related to sexuality and LGBTQ themes.



BURNING BOOKS XI, 2020  
detail



BURNING BOOKS XI, 2020  
detail



**BURNING BOOKS XII, 2020**  
detail



BURNING BOOKS XII, 2020  
detail





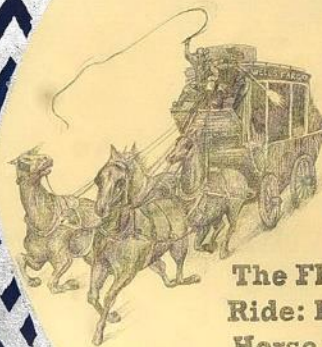
*Imago Mundi*—the title of a series of works—is a medieval expression that proposes a representation of the world where the map refers more to the territory rather than to cartography. It is an interpretation of the world through images and elements which intend to represent it symbolically. In these works Adriana Bustos aimed at an ambitious representation of the world by linking events, historical facts, testimonials, created and found images, myths, theories, personalities, experiences, without arranging the information into a hierarchy and presenting it in a non-linear timeline. These works are drawings on canvas, surrounded by painted backgrounds with silver or copper leaf patterns.

In *Turist Map* (deliberate misspelling, as by a Spanish speaker), Bustos charts the origins and creation of Miami as a tourist destination, the people behind it and the economic forces that propelled them. Julia Tuttle is featured, as well as Henry Flagler, the impact of Wells Fargo and the extension of railroad communications, Florida's native tribes and other references that knit together a complex reflection on the birth and history of a city which is today a point of articulation between Latin and North America.

# IMAGO MUNDI XIII



Francis Bacon



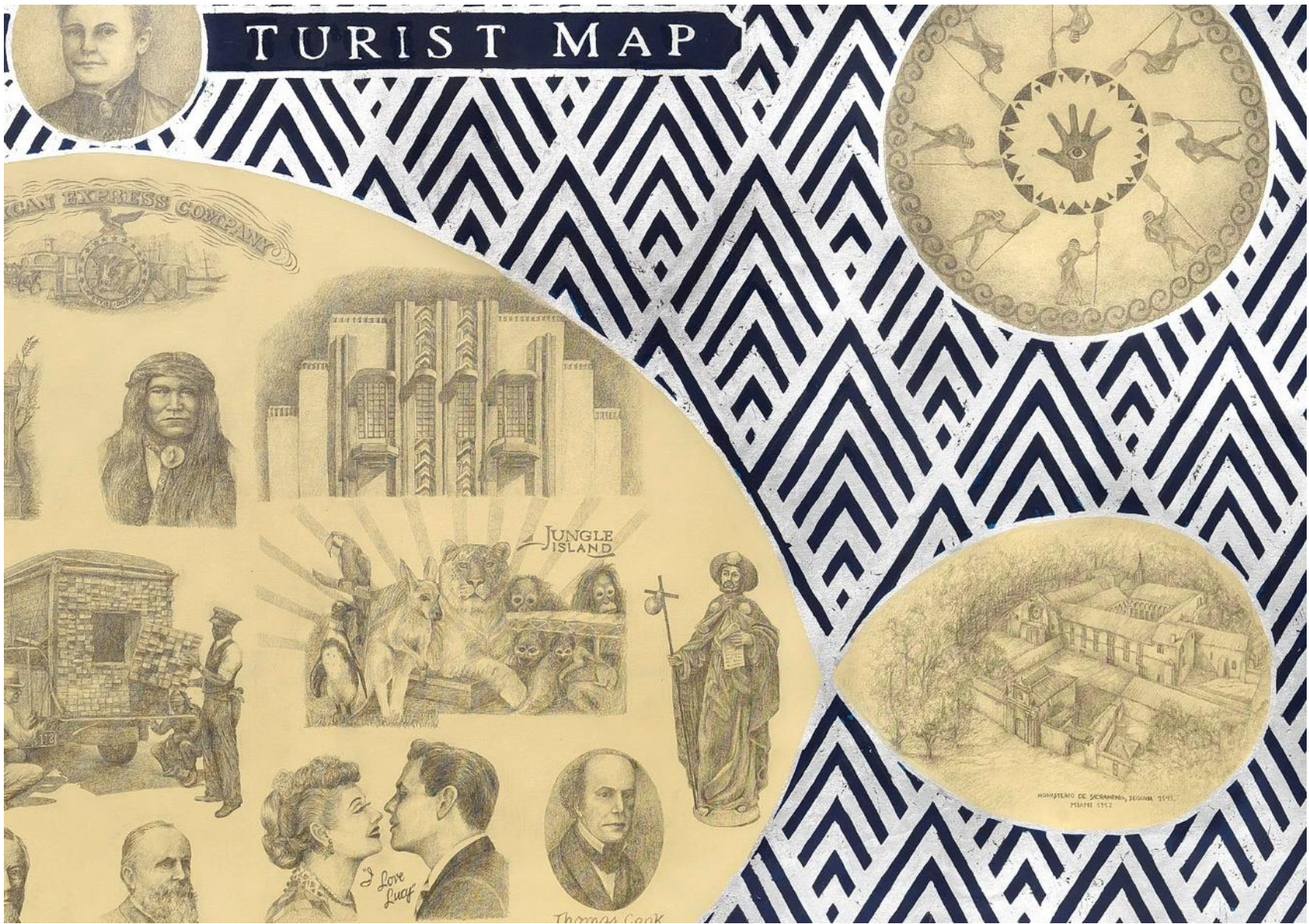
**WELLS FARGO**

Forging Evidence  
to  
Steal Your Home

The Florida Cracker Trail  
Ride: Preserving Florida's  
Horse and Cattle Heritage



IMAGO MUNDI I, TURIST MAP, 2015  
Detail



IMAGO MUNDI I, TURIST MAP, 2015  
Detail



In *Mapa Turístico*, a work related to the the previous one, Bustos charts the origins and creation of Cuba as a tourist destination, a playground for wealthy North Americans, and a point of articulation between Latin and North America. The work features references to casinos, hotels, and other emblems of glamour in the first decades of the XX century, an image of operatic tenor Enrico Caruso, who was paid a large sum to sing in Havana in 1920. Explorer Alexander Humboldt who spent time cataloging Cuba' flora, and an engraving depicting three naked women who stand for the three races that constitute Cuban's population, as seen by a colonial mind, among other images.



IMAGO MUNDI I, MAPA TURÍSTICO, 2014  
Detail



IMAGO MUNDI I, MAPA TURÍSTICO, 2014  
Detail





In the *Positivismo Mágico (Magical Positivism)* series Bustos attempts a reconciliation of two sets of thought systems which appear to be opposites: rational positivism and magical systems of belief. This large canvas includes a network of historical references: images of the founders of Western scientific thought such as Da Vinci, Galileo Galilei, Giordano Bruno, Descartes, Newton, along with Chico Xavier a famous Brazilian mentalist, Allan Kardec, who applied a systematic almost scientific methodology to spiritualism, Vera Rubin, American astronomer who pioneered work on dark matter, and some of Bustos' preferred theoreticians, Gilles Deleuze and Alfred Whitehead. The work seeks to underscore the gaps in pragmatic rationalism and the emergence of creative processes that underlie scientific theories and bring them closer to esoteric thinking.





HISTORIA DEL POSITIVISMO MÁGICO, 2015  
detail



**HISTORIA DEL POSITIVISMO MÁGICO, 2015**  
detail



**MESAYORUBA**  
2015  
Diameter: 98 cm  
Acrylic Paint on Wood

*Yoruba Table*, painted on a wooden tabletop, is about syncretism, the merging of African pantheist deities with Catholic saints that occurred in Cuba and Brazil, as slaves brought to the Americas from Africa found a way to keep their beliefs alive and find correspondences of personality or traits between their pantheon and the Catholic saints. This work is part of her *Positivismo Mágico (Magical Positivism)* series which explores the points of contact and reconciliation between apparently opposite systems of thought, as well as the non-hegemonic nature of history



**MESAYORUBA, 2015**  
detail



**FÁTIMA Y SU ILUSIÓN – JACKIE Y LA ILUSIÓN DE FÁTIMA, 2008**  
Photography, dyptich. Glicée print on cotton paper, 125 x 125 cm each





**ANABELLA Y SU ILUSIÓN - DORIS Y LA ILUSIÓN DE ANABELLA, 2008**  
Photography, dyptich. Glicée print on cotton paper, 125 x 125 cm each

These photographic diptychs belongs to earlier series by the artist entitled *Ilusiones (Hopes)*. They works are the result of fieldwork, a project developed at the Bouwer Women's Penitentiary in the city of Córdoba, Argentina. After extensive exchanges with women who are serving sentences for drug trafficking (mules), Bustos painted backdrops that match an "iconic materialization" of those personal plans and dreams each woman was hoping to attain with monies from this illegal activity. Women are seated in front of their "project on hold", their backs to the observer in order to protect their identities. These images of "human mules" are juxtaposed with photographs of "animal mules", still used as means of transportation in the province of Cordoba where the penitentiary is located. Through this play of words Bustos exposes the vulnerability of the imprisoned women as well as seamlessly deconstructs the opposition of nature and culture.

