

# Miguel Angel Rios | *deterritorialization*

Exhibition tour

## Deterritorialization

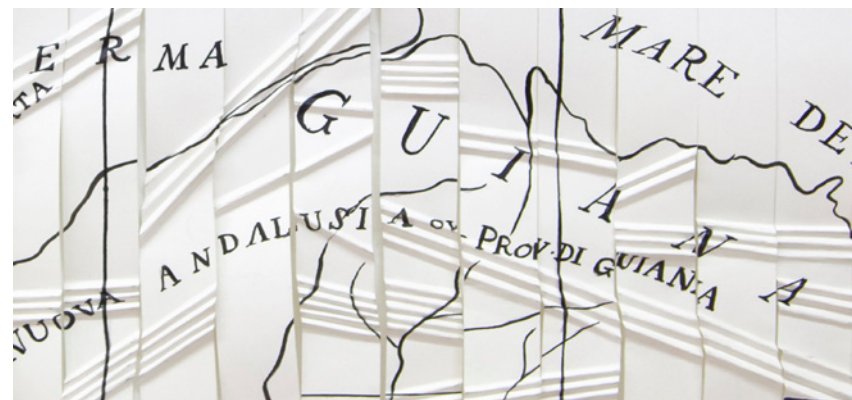
Born in Catamarca, Argentina, Miguel Angel Ríos chose to settle in the USA in the 1970's and lived and worked later in both the USA and Mexico. In the early 1990's Ríos started working on his 'Mapas'. No doubt that Ríos' interest was triggered by the five hundredth celebration of the discovery of the Americas in 1992. The cultural debates about the 'Encounter of two Worlds' have inspired Ríos, as precisely during this year he started to work on his maps, taking the colonial period as his point of departure. The ideological implications of the cartographic discipline were of tremendous interest for Ríos.

When one looks at cartographic maps of those days, one can see that the territories have been marked according to religious, military or mercantilist ideology of the conquerors. In the case of the first cartographic maps of the American continent it is obvious that e.g. native villages are obliterated while the colonial settlements are being emphasized.

In his 'Mapas', Ríos is actually 'dis-mapping' America. He decomposes the logical cohesion and orientation of the historical cartographic map by scattering the contents, creating new compositions according to new orders and making absent territories present. Some of the 'Mapas' are fragmented by vertical lines, with geometric pleats and folds referring to the surface of a landscape but also to the South-American Quipu-system. This method of encoded knots was used by the Incas to record detailed information, such as tax obligations and military organisation. The rearrangement of Ríos' 'Mapas' weaves this tradition through the colonial cartography, making the 'Encounter of two Worlds' tangible. Other 'Mapas' are deprived of a stable centre and contain multiple points of orientation in their new form, reflecting the multiple perspectives in history, violence and politics.

This body of work by Miguel Angel Ríos from the early 1990's mark an important period in his career, and he has made a name for himself with his 'Mapas' which are in various important collections, a.o. at the MoMA New York. However, his break-through in Europe was marked by his video films of carefully choreographed black and white spinning tops he started to produce in Mexico from 2000 onwards and the three-channel film 'A Morir' that had been shown at Art Basel Unlimited in 2003. In 2008 Ríos made his film 'Crudo': a dancer in an immaculate white suit, who is dancing and swinging humps of raw meat at the

ends of ropes while he is being attacked by a pack of hungry and ferocious dogs. Comparable to the circular arrangements in his maps, the whirling dancer swings his lassos in circular movements in order to keep the dogs at a distance, as though he is dancing to save his life.



*Critical post-colonial No. 23, detail, 1995, Ink on pleated paper and push pins  
46,5 x 61 cm (18,3 x 24 inches)*

Ríos always chooses carefully the space of action, be it in his films of the spinning tops, the dancer's realm or the manipulated cartographic maps: it is the space where extremes meet, where existence is at stake, or as Raphael Rubinstein wrote: 'at the verge of chaos where borders burn'. One of Ríos' most recent films 'Endless' (2014/2020) is making borders very visible, almost tangible. The scenario takes place in the wild landscape in Tepoztlan in Mexico where Ríos with his crew has cleaned a territory from the branches of the huisache (*Acacia farnesiana*) in order to pile them up to more than thirty meters of labyrinthic endless seeming parallel walls, creating a void between them. This work, shot in 2014 and now presented at AKINCI, has a direct political reference. With its strong imagery and soundtrack, 'Endless' is a metaphor for the ongoing South American migrant tragedy at the border between Mexico and the United States.

*Text written by Leyla Akinci and Laura Korvinus for the solo exhibition 'deterritorialization' at AKINCI, Amsterdam*



*Mapa Los Cuatro Vientos - The Four Winds, detail, 1993-1994*  
 Pencil, Cibachrome mounted on pleated canvas  
 210 cm diameter (74,8 inch)

Miguel Ángel Ríos (1943, Catamarca, Argentina) has had solo exhibitions at museums across the world, including Röda Sten Konsthall, Göteborg, SE (2019), Galería Barro, Buenos Aires, AR (2019), MUCEM, Marseilles, FR (2017), ASU Art Museum, Temple, USA (2015), Museum of Fine Arts Houston, USA (2013), Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City (2013), Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, USA (2012), Museo Carrillo Gil, México DF (2011), Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2009), Maison Européenne de la Photographie MEP, Paris (2011 and 2009), Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2008), and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (2005). His videos have been screened during La Biennale de Lyon, FR (2015), Liverpool Biennial, GB (2011), and ), the Biennale of Sydney, AU (2010).

He participated in group exhibitions at a.o. Suzanne Dellal Centre, Tel Aviv, IL (2021), Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA (2021), UCCA Dune, Qinhuangdao, CN (2019), Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, IT (2018), The Parkview Museum Singapore (2017-2018), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, NZ (2016), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, DE (2015), Centro del Carmen, Valencia, ES (2014), New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA (2014), Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes, FR (2013), Busan Museum, KR (2012), Tranen Contemporary Art Center, DK (2012), Molaa Museum of Latin American Art, USA (2011), The National Museum in Warsaw, PL (2010), and Daros Exhibitions, Zürich, CH (2009). He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and has received numerous awards including the John Guggenheim Fellowship (1998) for his work exploring the mediums of painting, drawing and collage.

Ríos' work can be found in many international collections, a.o. the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, NL, Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich, CH, MoMA, New York, USA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA, and Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, ES, and is included in a large number of private collections.





Mapa Los Cuatro Vientos (*The Four Winds*), 1993-1994  
Pencil, Cibachrome mounted on pleated canvas  
210 cm diameter (74,8 inch)

Miguel Angel Rios about the work Los Cuatro Vientos:

*“In Los Cuatro Vientos no territory is mapped: the map is deconstructed beyond recognition through a crisscross of lines that unfold around a circular shape that erases the East, Occident - Orient and Poniente dichotomy, in other words in the work Los Cuatro Vientos, the artist took the right and the audacity to confuse it even more, since the Spanish conquerors suddenly have news of a ceremony carried out, further north (Cundiboyacense anti-plano) where a king covered his body with gold dust and made offerings in a sacred language. That news attracted all the settlers from all over Europe and motivated numerous expeditions, like a target pointed towards El Dorado, not to mention that the 4 marine winds were their worst enemy to reach their destination.”*







Mapa *Los Cuatro Vientos* - *The Four Winds*, detail, 1993-1994  
Pencil, Cibachrome mounted on pleated canvas  
210 cm diameter (74,8 inch)  
(Photo by Peter Tijhuis)



Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)





*Critica post-colonial No. 30, 1995*  
 Ink on pleated paper and push pins  
 52 x 61 cm (24 x 20,4 inches)





*Critica post-colonial No. 30*, detail, 1995  
Ink on pleated paper and push pins  
52 x 61 cm (24 x 20,4 inches)  
(Photo by Peter Tijhuis)



Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)



*Critical post-colonial No. 16, 1995*  
 Ink on pleated beige cardboard and push pins  
 58 x 83 cm (22,8 x 32,6 inches)

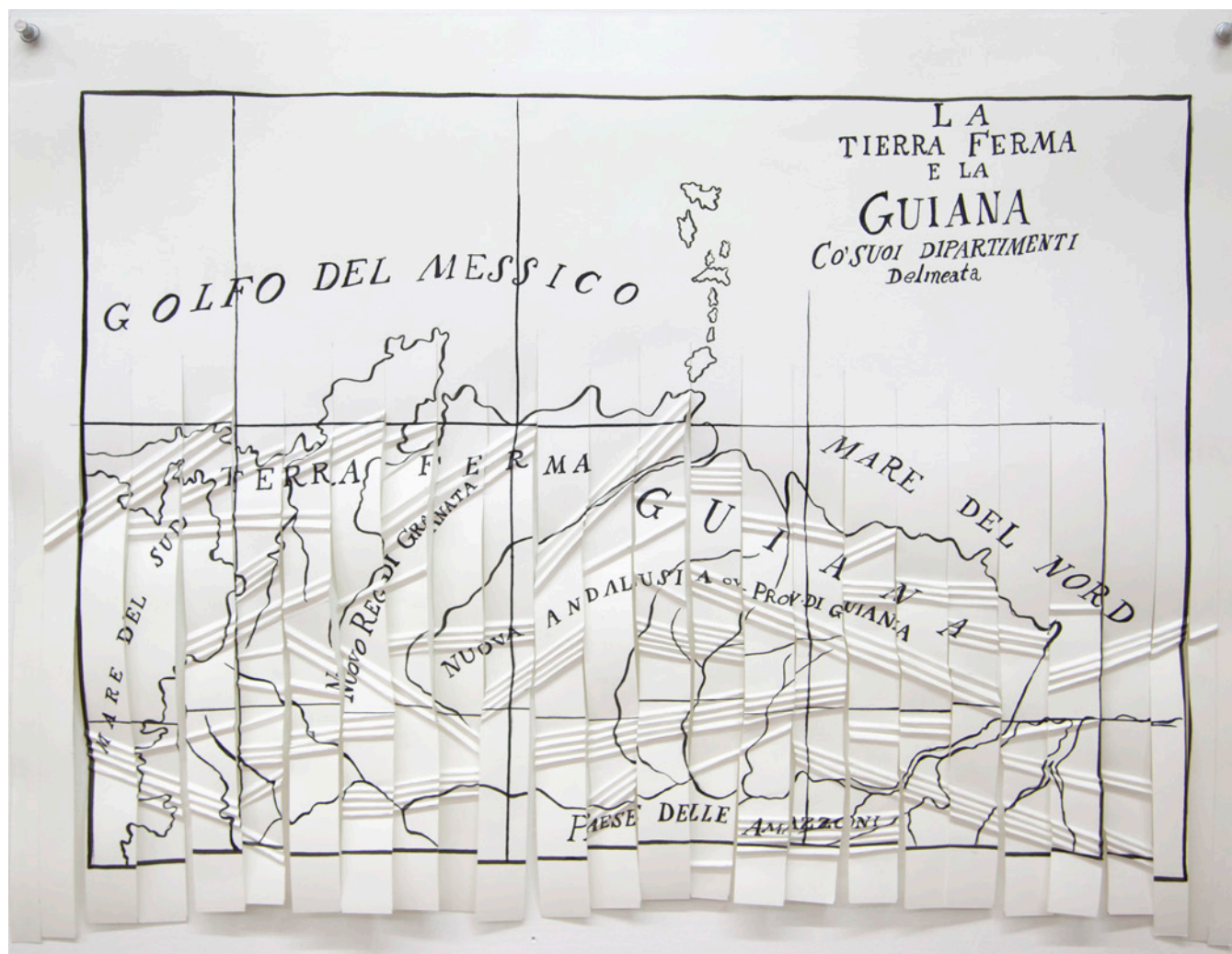




*Critical post-colonial No. 16, detail, 1995*  
 Ink on pleated beige cardboard and push pins  
 58 x 83 cm (22,8 x 32,6 inches)  
 (photo by Peter Tjihuis)



Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)



*Critical post-colonial No. 23, 1995*  
 Ink on pleated paper and push pins  
 46,5 x 61 cm (18,3x24 inches)





*Critical post-colonial No. 23, detail, 1995*  
Ink on pleated paper and push pins  
46,5 x 61 cm (18,3x24 inches)  
(Photo by Peter Tjhuis)



Exhibition overview of 'detritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)

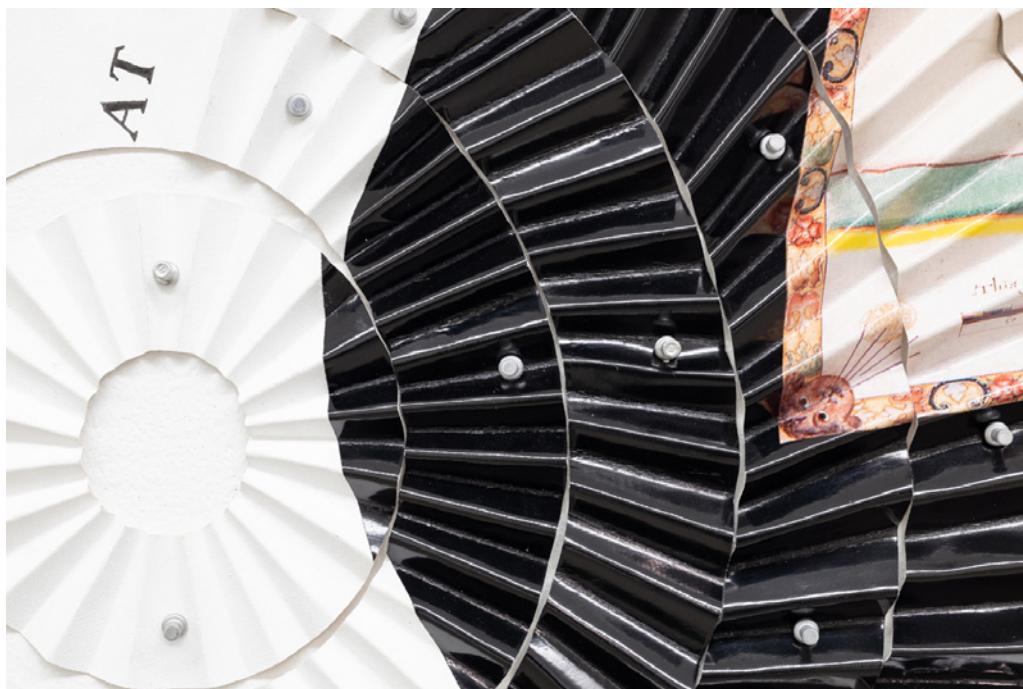


Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)





*New Amsterdam No. 2*, 1993  
 Photoprint mounted on pleated canvas & pushp.  
 132 x 142 cm (51,9 x 55,9 inches)



*New Amsterdam No. 2, details, 1993*  
 Photoprint mounted on pleated canvas & pushp.  
 132 x 142 cm (51,9 x 55,9 inches)  
 (Photos by Peter Tijhuis)





*Untitled*

Pencil and ink on pleated cardboard & push pins  
150 x 220 cm (50 x 86,6 inches)  
(Photo by Peter Tijhuis)





*Untitled, detail*

Pencil and ink on pleated cardboard & push pins

150 x 220 cm (50 x 86,6 inches)

(Photo by Peter Tjhuis)



Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)





Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)





Filmstill *Endless*, 2014-2020  
One-channel wall projection  
4:24 min.

Watch *Endless* [here](#)  
Password: Endless123





Filmstills *Endless*, 2014-2020  
One-channel wall projection  
4:24 min.



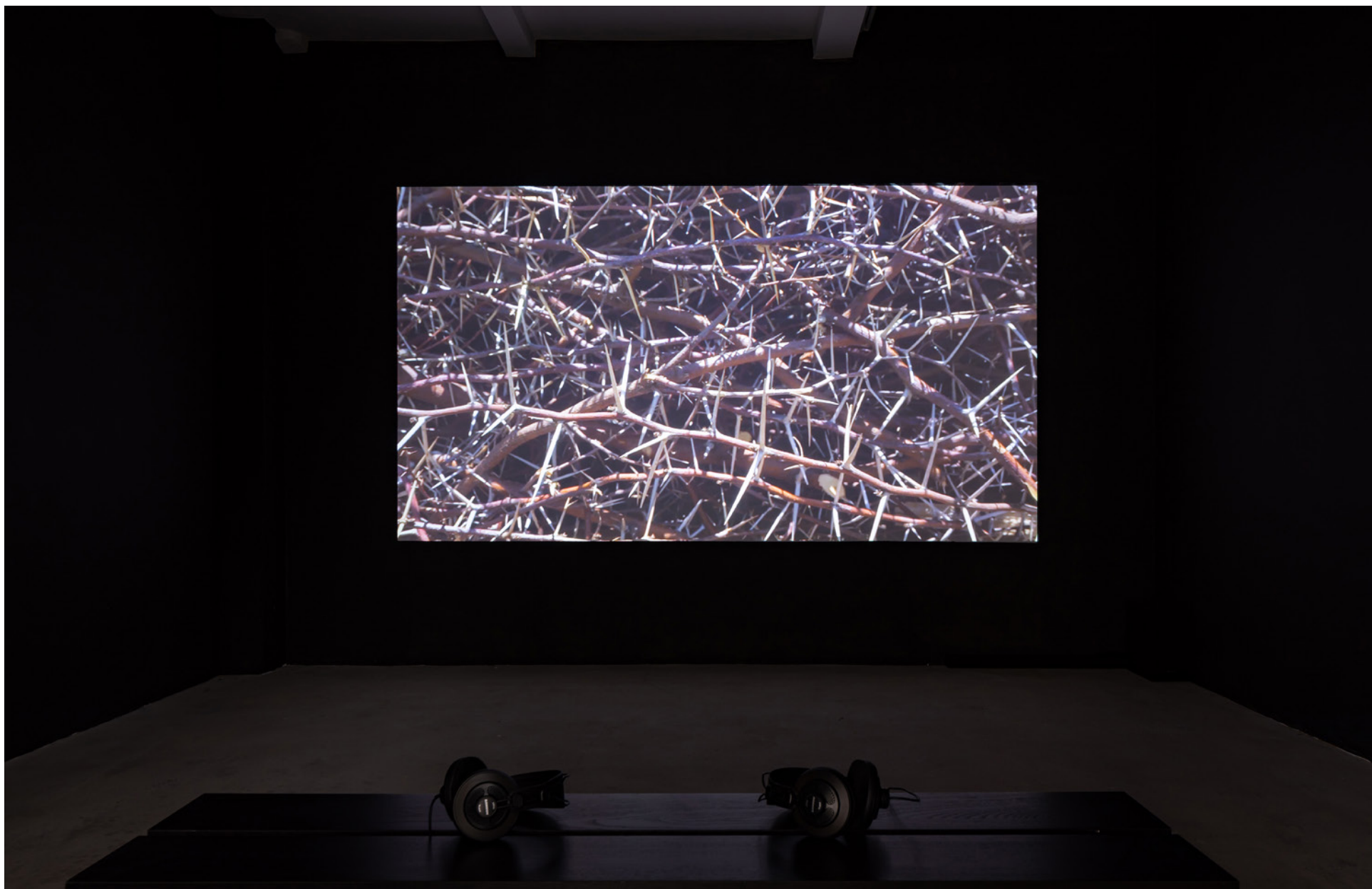


Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)

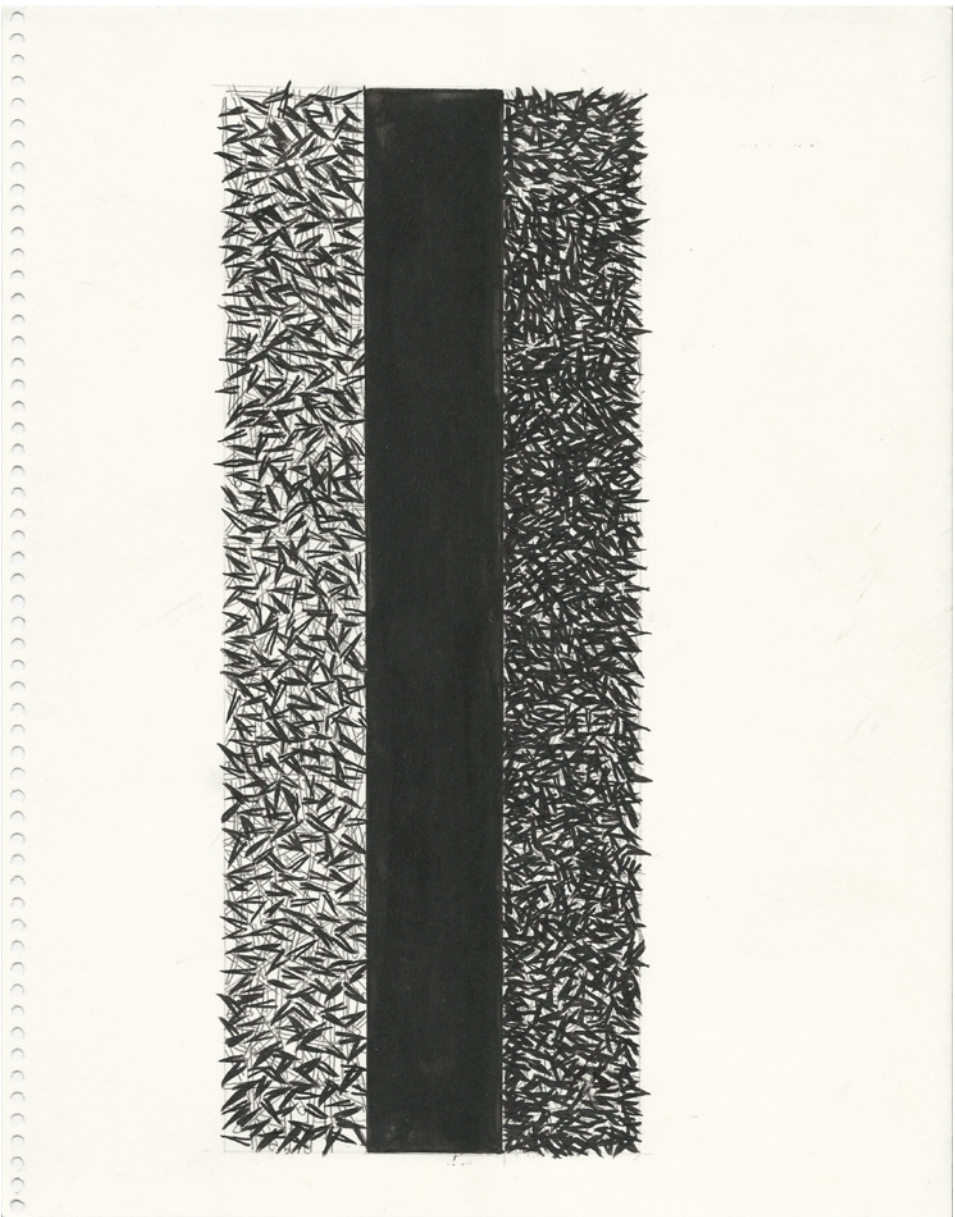




Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)



Exhibition overview of 'deterritorialization', at AKINCI, 2022 (photo by Peter Tijhuis)



*Espinass*  
Mixed media on paper  
38 x 31 cm (14,9 x 12, 2 inches)  
(framed)



“First, I’d like to talk about the maps. I was traveling in the Amazon, and at a small hotel I found an issue of National Geographic with an antique map of the Americas. For some reason, I was reminded of my childhood in the Argentine Precordillera. Every year, we’d have a three- to four-day celebration for Carnival. I wasn’t allowed to go, but each night, my father would bring home several rolls of streamers. I’d fold them up like accordions and fill my room, attaching them to the walls and ceiling until it looked like a forest. I took that antique map and automatically started folding and pleating it, like when I was a boy, then cut it into strips, deconstructing it and reconstructing it to make a new map.

Being lost is a recurring feeling in my life. It happened to me suddenly on another trip to the Amazon, and when I returned to Caracas, I visited a museum presenting an exhibition of antique books. One of them contained a map by Christopher Columbus, and it struck me that he was also clearly lost. I couldn’t keep the book, obviously, but with the help of an artist colleague, José Antonio Díez, the guard allowed us to take a few photographs. I returned to New York not long after that.

So my interest in colonial maps was born in my studio at 25 East 4th Street in Manhattan. I went to the Duggal photo lab and printed test images of the map I had photographed in Caracas. I decided that Cibachrome would be a strong enough material, had several copies made, and returned to the studio with a

very large print, about ten by thirteen feet. With the help of my assistant, I began pleating the map, and as we worked, it took on a new appearance; it could no longer be read the same way. I added more material to fix the joins, and the map changed even more. We hung the pieces up with pushpins, and the map was transformed again. I did several maps. The first was of the Amazon, titled *Striped America* (1992), and the second was *Christopher Columbus Making Ripples*, which was included in *Mapping* and now belongs to the MoMA collection. This show was my presentation to the world as an international artist. Other major shows followed, and my work started to gain visibility.

I worked exclusively with colonial maps of Latin America, done by Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese explorers. I later began to incorporate the Andean quipu, a numerical system for accounting and exchange. By knotting cords to indicate something on the maps, I carried out an intervention on the information and on the document.”

- Miguel Angel Rios on the *Mapas Series*, interviewed by Julio Morales



*Critical post-colonial No. 16*, detail, 1995, Ink on pleated beige cardboard and push pins, 58 x 83 cm (22,8 x 32,6 inches)