

Claudia Alarcón & Silät (collective founded 2023)

Claudia Alarcón (b. 1989, Argentina) is an indigenous textile artist from the La Puntana community of Wichí people of northern Salta. Alongside her individual practice, she leads the Silät collective (formed in 2023), an organisation of one hundred women weavers of different generations from the Alto la Sierra and La Puntana Wichí communities.

Wichí society is clan-based and matrilineal. Weaving with hand-spun vegetal fibres from the local chaguar plant has been a communal, female-led activity for centuries, and is fundamental to the visual culture, narrative history and economics of the Wichí people. Its centrality is articulated in a mythological tale, in which beautiful women, living in the sky as stars, would travel down to earth on woven chaguar ropes to dine on the fish caught by fishermen. Upon discovering this, the men employed the help of birds to snap the ropes and the women were trapped on earth for evermore, but continued to weave and pass the knowledge from the world above onto their daughters. The parable suggests a passage from the naivety and freedom of childhood to the societal responsibilities of adulthood; girls are taught to spin chaguar and weave functional objects from the age of 12, their creations a way to provide financially as well as to sustain ancestral cultural practices. In another sense, learning to weave presents a further awakening, an entryway into a collective conversation between the women of the Wichí communities; the textiles, formed of geometric motifs drawn from the surrounding environment, are a method of communicating unspoken thoughts within a culture that values highly forms of non-verbal expression, and the messages found within dreams and subconscious intuition. Silät, the name adopted by the artist collective, means 'information' or 'alert,' and reflects the role of their textiles to convey messages and a shared cultural sentiment.

The Silät collective emerged from the Thaí/Viene del monte organization, a wider public project aimed at reviving ancestral textile traditions across the Salta region. Coordinated by Alarcón and working closely with curator Andrei Fernández since 2015, Silät explore the possibilities of artmaking within and beyond these traditions. The collective have evolved established techniques into new forms, producing large-scale images that exploit the textural intricacies and earthy colours of chaguar yarn and natural dyes. In coordinating the production of the Silät collective, and leading experimentations in material and subject matter within their practice, Alarcón supports creativity, independence and self-sustaining practices, and provides a means for women across generations to transmit a contemporary indigenous culture into the webs of international art dialogues, beyond ethnographic readings.

Claudia Alarcón & Silät's work was featured in the 60th International Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, *Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere* in 2024 and the Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre in 2025. In December 2022, Alarcón became the first indigenous woman to be awarded a National Salon of Visual Arts prize by the Ministry of Culture in Argentina. Claudia Alarcón & Silät's work is represented in public collections including LACMA, Los Angeles, Museu de arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), MALBA Collection in Buenos Aires, the Denver Art Museum, Colorado, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota, and the Gund Collection.

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Claudia Alarcón & Silät

Founded 2023, La Puntana, Salta, Argentina

Selected solo exhibitions

- 2025 *Everyday Anew*, the Gund, Gambier, Ohio, US
- 2025 *Claudia Alarcón & Silät*, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea, UK
- 2025 *Claudia Alarcón: Choreography of Imagination*, Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, UK
- 2025 *Claudia Alarcón and Silät*, James Cohan, New York, US
- 2023 *Claudia Alarcón and Silät / Nitsäphä: Wichí Stories*, Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, UK
- 2023 *Silät*, Hessel Museum at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, USA (as part of the Tha'í/Viene del monte organization)

Selected group exhibitions

- 2025-26 *Arts of the Earth*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain
- 2025 *Grounded*, LACMA, Los Angeles, US
- 2025 *Picture Gallery in Transformation: Recent Gifts*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil
- 2025 *Geometrias*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil
- 2025 14th Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil
- 2024-5 *La vida que explota. Gabriel Chaile en diálogo con Claudia Alarcón & Silät*, MALBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2024 *Stranieri Ovunque*, 60th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
- 2024 *Cantando Bajito: Chorus*, Ford Foundation Gallery, New York, US
- 2024 *Claudia Alarcón & Silät and Anni Albers*, Cecilia Brunson Projects at the Armory Show, New York, US
- 2024 *Spin a Yarn*, Guild Hall, New York, US
- 2024 *Hecho a Mano*, Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, UK
- 2023 *Spin a Yarn*, Another Space, New York, US

- 2023 *Una Historia que Cura*, Salta Museum of Anthropology, Salta, Argentina
- 2022 *Die Farben des Waldes / Colours of the Woods / Los Colores del Monte*, Olaf Holzapfel in collaboration with Andrea Fernández and Grupo Thaíí, Goethe-Institut Munich. Exhibited at Sabine Knust, Munich, Germany
- 2022 *Las oportunidades*, Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina (as part of the Thaíí/Viene del monte organization)
- 2021 *III BIENALSUR*, Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2021 *La escucha y los vientos. Relatos e inscripciones del Gran Chaco (Listening and the wind. Stories and inscriptions from the Gran Chaco)*, Museo de Bellas Artes de Salta, Argentina; Fundación Migliorisi, Asunción, Paraguay
- 2021 *Cardinales, camino a la ternura*, Museo Nacional Terry, Tilcara, Argentina (as part of the Thaíí/Viene del monte organization)
- 2021 *El momento del Yagrumo*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, San Juan, Puerto (as part of the Thaíí/Viene del monte organization)
- 2020 *La escucha y los vientos. Relatos e inscripciones del Gran Chaco (Listening and the wind. Stories and inscriptions from the Gran Chaco)*, ifa-Galerie, Berlin, Germany

Selected awards

- 2022 First Prize in the textile discipline, 110th National Salon of Visual Arts, Ministry of Culture of Argentina
- 2022 Ama Amoedo Acquisition Prize, Feria Pinta, Miami, Florida, USA

Selected public collections

Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Austin, Texas, United States
Denver Art Museum, Colorado, United States
The Gund Collection, Gambier, Ohio, United States
LACMA, Los Angeles, United States
Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota, United States
Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina
Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Salta, Argentina
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, North Carolina, United States