

MARISA CORNEJO

High and Fragile

In 2023, Marisa Cornejo had a dream where she found herself with friends, artists, curators, and collaborators in a building whose architecture was so fragile that she could feel the floor and walls crumbling. This dream influenced the drawing *High and Fragile*, adopted title of the exhibition, and invites reflections on how we can forge stronger relationships in the world we inhabit.

This work is one of many that are all stimulated by oneiric storytelling. Since 1994, while studying visual arts at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Cornejo began giving form to her nocturnal visions, as a personal diary. From then onwards, this has been the basis of her activist artistic practice, interrogating and giving voice to her body as an archive, situated in the history of forced migration.

Drawing from Mapuche and Mexican indigenous traditions in which remembering one's dreams can become a principal guide for our daily existence, Cornejo ponders the questions: How do dreams shape our lives? What's the dream temporality? How can collective dreaming foster transformation?

By prioritising the creation of safe spaces for collective well-being, we aim to center the idea of community, extending notions of care to other species and transgenerational reparation. Fragility resonates throughout the exhibition, reflected in the delicate medium of choice - paper, a material infused with water - that Marisa Cornejo employs in her work. Her drawings are characterised by simple yet evocative strokes in vibrant hues. Although referring to diverse subject matter, they share in common the freedom and joy inherent in her creative process.

Cornejo's works find resonance with artists such as Ana Mendieta, Tina Modotti, Frida Kahlo, Maria Martins and Charlotte Salomon, who similarly drew inspiration from dreams as a political act. Through her art, Cornejo proposes a world where love, colours, and poetry serve as primary vehicles for expressing emotions and healing traumas.

Marisa's drawings possess strong autobiographical elements, often accompanied by dates that reveal the specific situations she was experiencing at the time of creation. Blending realism with fantasy, she employs a contemporary surrealist style to delve into questions of identity, gender, class, race, and cultural heritage.

The works selected for *High and Fragile* unveil the complexity and beauty of the artist's history as a migrant woman from South America. The exhibition allows us to access surrealist landscapes that take us through various migration histories, as well as into her own physical, mental, and emotional trajectory.

Danniel Tostes