



Partial view of *Salir del surco al labrar la tierra: delirios de grandeza II (Leaving the Furrow When Tilling the Soil: Delusions of Grandeur II)*,  
© Photo courtesy of Barro.

## GABRIEL CHAILE'S WORKS STAND FOR TIMELESS EXISTENCES

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Archeological gestures can be traced in a great deal of contemporary artworks, but it is only when they manage to suggest their multiple temporal dimensions that they can critically question the present. Excavation, exploration, discovery, and chance, surround this gesture and are latent in Gabriel Chaile's works exhibited at *Time, Times and Half a Time* at Barro gallery and at The High Line.

There is something implicit in archaeology, I think, which is the endless relationship between quests and origins. A circular and incessant turn for establishing a beginning, over and over again. If we take archeology in its most usual and practical sense, of studying material remains, not even human endeavors would be enough to reach a conclusive state of knowledge about it. The planet Earth is vast and immeasurable in its remains, as it is the universe. The main installation at the gallery, *Salir del surco al labrar la tierra: delirios de grandeza II (Leaving the Furrow When Tilling the Soil: Delusions of Grandeur II)*, entails the dispute over origins. The piece features 49 tall iron bases, distributed in 7 rows, which carry bricks and eggs on top. Some bricks are covered partially with soil and vegetation while golden brass sticks fall above all of them, like thunder. The egg, principal character of the installation, and mystery object par excellence, shapes the question of origins from the elemental, as it does the brick, but also from the indeterminacy, *the impossibility of what came first*. This main scene is crowned with a light bulb that hangs in the center: it has the appearance of an experiment, but also the temperance of waiting.

Time is articulated in different and complex ways in Chaile's works. Everything seems to be *germinating* continuously. Whether in the artist's iconic adobe sculptures that function as ovens, or in the laboratory-type installation mentioned

above. The artist's interest in processual times merges with the incorporation of elements that carry temporalities without beginning or end. In this sense, *The wind blows where it wishes* incorporates an element of nature, the wind, as a haphazard and untimely maker of art. This adobe sculpture, in the form of a giant humanized vessel playing a musical instrument amidst the skyscrapers, is related to the *Genealogy of Form* that Gabriel Chaile develops around his work. As an archaeologist of figures and forms, the artist traces the journey of objects and their visualities from pre-Columbian histories, indigenous cultures and to the present. Not to find a single original form and reproduce it, but to investigate variations and assemble structures, in this case a large-scale sculpture, as collages that enigmatically overlap shapes and temporalities.



*Gabriel Chaile, The wind blows where it wishes, 2023. A High Line Commission. On view April 2023 – March 2024. Photo by Timothy Schenck. Courtesy of the High Line.*

In *Proto, una película de Gabriel Chaile (Proto, a film by Gabriel Chaile)*, on view in the second room of the gallery, a series of sculptures, drawings and a movie poster plot a film that was never actually filmed. Here, a desolate future world emerges. The leading figure of the adventure is a creature made of brick and iron, which has an egg as its head, and illustrates another key element of Chaile's work: humor. An aspect generally undervalued in the occasionally solemn world of contemporary art. When everything seems to get too serious, Chaile's works humorously remind us of the delusional side of all experiments.

Along the movements generated by Chaile's works, time scales are shifted repeatedly without finding a fixed place. It is the journey, and not the timeline, for which archeology and soil serve as receptacles of memories, histories, mediums, and temporalities yet to be discovered.