

Selected Biography Denise Lira Ratinoff

Denise was born in Chile in 1977.

She currently lives and works in Chile, the United States and Germany.

Denise Lira Ratinoff is an Interdisciplinary Artist with an extensive experience in environmental issues of the Ocean and Territories. Her work explores the connections and relationships between Humanity and Nature creating Art Installations and Films that display and present their symmetries, closeness and proximities. By combining photography, video, sound, organic materials, plastic residues, water, fire, earth, air and a direct contact with the space, she aims at an awakening and experimentation with each one of the senses.

Based on scientific data, the main core of each project highlights the continuing triple crisis: warming, climate change and biodiversity loss, serious issues facing the planet. She offers solutions through a shift in awareness.

These large scale and immersive projects communicate a cry as well a call for action to defend and preserve life of the planet and therefore, our present and future. This alert is a call for action for society as a whole, regarding the growing and alarming pollution and power imbalance.

Denise's ambition is to care about the Ocean through a belief in protection and allowing a variety of ecosystems to flourish. One of her recent projects portrays the Marine Mammals on a pristine and poetic vision, together with a natural sound environment, in combination with the free movement of each Cetacean across the Ocean.

She has exhibited in America, Europe and Asia. Her works are in public and private collections, and she has received different awards, such as Best Artist of the Year, photographic contests and in 2019 received the Honor Prize for the Best Art Exhibit, New Media of the year, along with Patricio Aguilar Díaz with the CHRONOMETER Installation.

Last year, (2022) she presented her last Immersive Sensory Installation **AIR(E), Firestorms**, of which the writer Magdalena Salazar Preece said: *“Human beings proved its superiority over the rest of the animals when it was able to control fire. That chemical reaction that emits light and heat, which for centuries was experienced as magical, sacred and deified. Remnants of the sun that emerge from the combustion of matter, appearing in the form of vibrant and powerful specters, with a body that is dismembered into small stars spat out by a matrix or splashed in burning sparks. Mastering fire is the bravest feat of human beings because it involves facing the fear of destruction, pain or being trapped by the hypnotic dance of flames.*

In other times, a dim fire had to be kept sheltered on some altar so as not to awaken its incandescent fury, only preserving the necessary light and heat. Because the nature of fire is to expand, spreading its power, encouraged by the suicide of the air. Its arrogance is magnified by consuming whatever its arms can reach. And it doesn't die, even if it suffocates, because just one friction is enough for it to explode again.

This aggressive and pristine material is what Denise Lira Ratinoff and Patricio Aguilar Díaz experiment with in this sensory installation. Denise exposes her own body to the magnificence of the fire. She walks among bonfires, with her body ablaze, surrounded by halos and burning flames. She crosses it with the courage of the men and women of the past, but with the awareness and humility that is so much needed in these times. In a kind of controlled immolation, Denise metaphorically embodies the disrespectful relationship of the human being with Nature, the exacerbation of its self-confidence and arrogance, which has led us to a probable extermination due to the accelerated warming of the planet. The heart of the great bonfire that is burning life and devastating mercilessly is in human actions, in the lack of love and ignorance.”

She was invited by the Teatro del Lago, in the south of Chile, where she spent several months deep diving, creating Soundscapes, and focusing on her film production. She was looking to awake our sense of hearing, while also providing the possibility to listen to her compositions through a variety of platforms (Spotify, music, iTunes, and others). **HADAL** was born: *“To feel, to experience, to discover, to dream, to relate, to love... These are 20 minutes and 10 seconds of soundscapes that reflect on dialogues of oceanic nature and also evoke human intervention, manifesting the devastating acoustic pollution underwater.*

These sounds were recorded directly from different oceanic places. The process is absolutely fascinating: first sound editing and then mixing sound with its environments. Traveling through time archived and cataloged in the sound libraries of several marine species, is an uncommon treasure and a great testimony of the many species in danger of extinction. Each of these beautiful creatures is cataloged with its species and habitat, which is of great geographical and scientific value. The same for the sound of various natural phenomena such as eruptions, currents, earthquakes... which describe and reveal life to us, even in the deepest part of the earth's crust, the Mariana Trench, at almost 7 miles deep.

Recover - Care - Preserve - Contemplate - Respect - Explore...

Beauty is the only way to reach the heart and create awareness.

Thank you for feeling and trying to understand that we are ONE and in collective collaboration we can respect each other without doing harm. TIME doesn't stop and we just need to contemplate the ocean that provides most of the oxygen we breathe.

Thank you for having this experience.

HADAL, the beginning of a GREAT OCEANIC SYMPHONY.” Denise’s motivation.

After receiving a powerful and meaningful feedback from the audience that experienced her installation **CRONOMETRO/CHRONOMETER**, she was inspired to create a new site-specific Installation called **UMBRAL/THRESHOLD**, depicting the horrific and devastating human ambition that kills the very thing that gives us life: water, our Ocean. THRESHOLD visualizes the invisible, dealing with the acoustic pollution that affects cetaceans in the ocean. Projected on 9x5 meter rectangle on the floor with 3.000 Kg. of salt, the audience was surrounded by an immersive 5.1 sound system, listening to the cetacean’s communication, only interrupted by the electromagnetic signals caused by examining the massive death of marine mammals.

In a collaboration and co-creation project with Patricio Aguilar Díaz, they created a multidisciplinary installation on the importance of time: **CHRONOMETER**. This installation was made out of bails of solid waste, from the floor to the ceiling, with only a narrow hallway opened to the visitor. A highly reflective steel flooring resembling a mirror created a feeling of suffocation under tons of waste. As you continue to walk down this waste tunnel you reach a glass at the end with a photograph of a glacier attached to a black.

Under the glacier's photograph there is a digital chronometer signaling the passage of time. The pulse, the constant flow of time. The pulse, the constant flow of threat.

At the same time, the place is surrounded by the sound of whales. This site-specific installation needs to be felt, experienced and contemplated in order to isolate oneself in the silence of the architecture created with waste bails, in order

to completely isolate any noise, so that the sound of the whales can enter into a dialogue one’s inner-self.

A symphony of devastation.

A sea of images exhibited as a viewpoint, where a cascade of solid waste falls as a manifestation of the deepest fault in the ocean. At the highest point the audience was able to visualize this great precipice, feeling the elevation of their own bodies. The silence of the animals that suffer. How can we stop the destruction?

Noise accumulation completely changes the underwater ecosystem. The installation creates an awareness and educates with information regarding oceans, its pollution due to plastic waste

and the growing threat that this represents.

This project is a battle cry and a call for action to defend our planet and the life in our oceans, which is our present and our future. Beginning with this notion, it aims to be an alert and a call for action for our society in relation to the growing and alarming problem of pollution.

Large industries are filling our planet with plastic that mostly ends up in the oceans, polluting the water and affecting life, from microscopic organisms to large mammals, as well as all ecosystems in the planet. This is already under the risk of climate change and deforestation, also consequences of the industrial activity. **CHRONOMETER** wants to give visibility to the dangers threatening us, helping us to change our consumerist patterns and understand the need to reduce the production and usage of disposable plastics, a highly delicate matter in regards to biodiversity and ecological balance. It is an active manifestation searching for a better life and environment for the present and future of mankind. No-one can remain indifferent before the continuous death of marine animals caused by their ingestion of plastic, the transformation of their environment and the generalized pollution of their ecosystems. ***“The ear is the entry of the soul of a whale”.***

The time is now!

In Tokyo, Japan at Jica Global Plaza Denise presented one of her emblematic photographs of her trilogy **Breathe-Respirar**. Under Enrique Rivera's curatorship, the exhibition called **Waves and Ripples**, presented **Desert 101**, from the series *Desert*, portraying the Lascar volcano crater (5,592 m.s.n.m) in the North of Chile.

“This life experience leaves you with a legacy of humility insofar as the perception of the world. It is a before and an after” Denise commentates.

In Düsseldorf, Germany at the Photography Museum NRW-Forum, Denise was proud to present her fantastic crater photograph (270 x 180 cm.) of the Lascar volcano, at the Grieger Relaunch exhibition, together with some of the most renowned photographers in the world.

“She succeeds in creating these magnificent works using her camera, courage and endurance, traversing landscapes otherwise inaccessible without extreme training, determination and focus; her discipline, endless energy and vision allowing for the perfect marriage of the marvels of nature and photographic art. We are very proud to have worked with Denise on this series. The effect of depth is supported by Denise's choice of material – a combination of 6mm acrylic glass, high gloss, rich contrast Fuji

Flex paper, DIASEC® mounted on AluDibond, and presented without a frame to achieve a borderless impression of the image.” –Hannah Pierce

Denise was selected as one of the Chilean photographers at a conference on Woman Photographers presented by The National Museum of Woman in the Arts, UBS and Christie's in Santiago, Chile.

Denise received a nomination with her photograph ***ALMA, The Atacama Large Millimeter Array, at the 10th Annual International Color Award Photography, Worldwide.*** In 2017, Denise Lira-Ratinoff had a solo exhibition in Switzerland on her trilogy.

Denise Lira-Ratinoff's photography book ***16:03:27*** is now part of the libraries of the ***Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Museum of Modern Art MOMA and International Center of Photography ICP in New York, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, United States, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Pompidou in Paris, France and Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Chile.***

Denise received an Honorable Mention at the 9th International Award Honoring Color Photography, with her photograph ***Atacama Desert from the Trilogy Natural Cycles of Nature, Worldwide.***

A photograph from Denise's series Glaciers was featured at Christie's New York. Christie's Green Auction, the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day a Bid to Save the Earth.

PINTA New York 2009, The Modern & Contemporary Latin American Art Fair, MBA Lazard Bank bought a photograph of Denise Lira-Ratinoff's Glaciers series for its itinerant collection of Latin American Art.

Denise Lira-Ratinoff's Installation ***At First Sight II was named "Best Art Event of the Year". Best of Atlanta 2008, United States.***

Openmade publishes Denise Lira-Ratinoff's Photography Book ***16:03:27, a 300-copy limited edition book, each copy numbered and signed.***

This book explores the concept of time and questions the public awareness of the importance of time through images of glaciers.

Denise was commissioned by Chilean Government to produce a Monumental Installation, SCL, CL.

Awarded Best Young Artist, First Prize, XXI National Competition of Art, CL

One of her most emblematic installations was created in Chile in 2000. Together with video artist Isabel Garcia, Denise Lira-Ratinoff created “**Art for the Sighted, KM 9 Route 68**”, **an installation in the vicinity of the airport and along the highway**. The installation was seen at high speed from the connector, from cars arriving or departing the city and from the planes taking off and landing. “Art for the Sighted, KM 9 Route 68” was based on the principle of visual perception, understanding and association of reality; the idea was to relate the image and the reality, as the work itself with the place. Using architectural elements, it offered a game of perceptual relations between territory and the people that operate in it. The project was a triptych that consisted of an enormous straw-bail house made out of 5000 bails, a geometric volume of 140 square meters and two 12x4 meters billboards with 4 photographic images creating in the viewer a reflection between “image and the imaginary”.

Later, amongst boldo modules (a tropical herb that only blossoms at night) and total darkness in one of the spaces at Museo Casa Colorada (Red House Museum), in Santiago, Chile, Denise presented a new installation called “**Nicatgenias**” (flowers that only open in the dark).

This was an invitation based exclusively on the senses of smell and touch. In the form of bricks, it was built out of four large walls the size of the entire room, allowing only a narrow walkway to be traversed through the perimeter and for the spectator to encounter a massive wall of boldo bails. There was a great vacuum in the space, but it was contained by the scent.

The intention was to make us re-direct our perception, exploring seldom-touched territories.

It was through this project, that Denise Lira-Ratinoff was invited to present her photo installation “**Chepica-Bermuda**” in Lima, Peru, using photographs, videos and Bermuda grass. Her objective was to establish a rapport between nature and culture, observing the vegetable versatility with all of its senses and confronting the simplicity of things. The monotony and monochromatic shape of this element, induces a recognition of the strength of nature. The intense scent of the earth within a given space transports us to a special frame of mind, quiet, sensitive and makes us want to travel through memories and sensations.

After experimenting with several organic matters and interacting not only with the audience, but as well having a constant dialogue between nature and the use of new technologies, Denise Lira-Ratinoff presented her new proposal “**at first sight I**”, where she did an in-depth analysis of the senses. Her subject matters were reduced to the essentials: sky, water and grass. These were direct and precise images that dealt with universal elements and need no translation.

It was presented as a photo-installation where the viewer was able to see horizontal lines of light within total darkness. The only source of light came from the images. After the results of “**at first sight I**”, by using new technologies and using the physical space as an element to allow

the audience to interact with each photograph, Denise developed a new concept not only regarding the photographs, but also the importance of the environment as a scenario of visual impact.

“at first sight II” was created as a multidisciplinary project presented on three different platforms: a book, a website and a photo-installation. Through photographs of melting and receding glaciers, this trilogy witnesses the immense environmental devastation that is taking place on our planet. Not knowing for how long they will last, is the mystery of time and the state of nature’s changes. These photographs constantly questioning the audience’s awareness of the importance of time, life and death. At a crossroad where life and death meet and from a different perspective, this project was created to invite the audience to see what will no longer exist and what has already melted.

Choosing a loading dock of 8,856 square feet and 177,120 cubic feet (825 square meters and 5775 cubic meters) as the site-specific and preserving it in its raw original condition (with a dumpster and the building’s equipment), the photo-installation opened its 14 ft. silver doors and closed them at midnight.

It was comprised of 9 light boxes, 1 HD 47” LCD flat screen display and 2 speakers. The selection of the light boxes emphasized the awareness of time, in terms of the life of each image and how the images disappeared during the period when the light was turned off after the event. The light became a key element not only to reproduce the images. The absence of light in the entire space created the mood for the audience in the otherwise dark space. The objective of the screen that was the same size as the light panels was to present a closed-loop video of all the individual images included in the book.

In addition, Denise decided to fill the space with a particular sound. The idea was born from the non-stop sound of nature and the glaciers that were always screaming. This sound was mixed with the industrial sound of the loading dock, enabling the audience to leave the space with a silent beat in their minds.

After the 6-hour photo-installation, the space went back to being a loading dock, with no evidence of what had occurred. Everything was gone, as were the images of icebergs that have now also vanished.

After the website was launched, the photo-installation ended and the book was sold out, **“at first sight II”** is shifting to a different phase in the same manner as the glaciers are. Never again in the same setting, the Glaciers series will be presented in different scenarios. The disappearance will stay in our memory and makes us see things from a different perspective.

“at first sight” is an ongoing project in which each different phase is envisioned as a

search to discover the senses through the emotions of a first glance. It is a meeting of the senses produced by facing the unpredictable.

After a successful experience with her projects “*at first sight I*” and “*at first sight II*”, which was awarded **Best Art Event of the Year**, Denise presented “*at first sight III*”, called **Breathe-Respirar**, at the Patricia Ready Gallery in Santiago, Chile, having a marked impact on the audience. She is currently researching on plastic and acoustic pollution in the Ocean.

Images of these projects are available upon request. If you would like to know more about a specific work by the artist Denise Lira-Ratinoff, please visit:

www.deniseliraratinoff.com

Thank you for your dedication and interest.