

WINTER/SPRING SEASON

Jan 19-22

Silencio Blanco
*Chiflón, El Silencio
del Carbón*

Feb 11-12

MCA Cunningham
Event

Feb 18-19

CCN-Ballet de
Lorraine
*Works by
Merce Cunningham
and Others*

Feb 25-26

Music for Merce

Mar 11

Spektral Quartet,
Morton Feldman
String Quartet No. 2

Mar 23-25

Charles Atlas/
Rashaun Mitchell/
Silas Riener

Apr 5-8

Peter Brook and
Marie-Hélène Estienne
Battlefield

Apr 23

Matthew Duvall
and guests
Whisper(s)

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

January 19–22, 2017

Silencio Blanco

Chiflón, El Silencio del Carbón

(Chiflón, Silence of the Coal)

Directed and conceived by Santiago Tobar

Producer	Dominga Gutiérrez
Performers	Rodolfo Armijo Felipe Concha Dominga Gutiérrez Consuelo Miranda Astrid Roldán
Cocreators	Santiago Tobar and Dominga Gutiérrez
Sound Design	Ricardo Pacheco
Technical Production	Santiago Tobar and Antonio Armijo
Graphic Design	Carolina Díaz

Running time is 50 minutes with no intermission.



Presented in conjunction with the
Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival



The MCA is curator and lead organizer of the Silencio Blanco Southern Exposure tour, which continues through March 2017, traveling to FUNDarte, Miami, Florida; The Clarice Smith, College Park, Maryland; The Theater, Raritan Community College, New Jersey; The Weis Center, Bucknell University, Pennsylvania; HERE Arts, New York City; Center for Art of Performance at UCLA, Los Angeles, California; and Boom Arts, Portland, Oregon.

Tour support for Silencio Blanco's *Chiflón, El Silencio del Carbón* is made possible through Southern Exposure: Performing Arts of Latin America, a program of Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. For further information, visit midatlanticarts.org or southernexposurearts.org. Additional touring support is made possible in part by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile/National Council of Culture and the Arts, and the Performing Americas program of the National Performance Network with funding provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. For further information, visit the NPN website at nnpn.org.

ARTISTS UP CLOSE

MCA Stage's series of artist-centered talks, workshops, and open studios engages the public with the artists in intimate settings and provides a closer look at the creative process.

MCA TALK

Jan 19-22

Following each performance, the public is invited on the stage to talk with the artists and view the puppets and set design.

NASTY, BRUTISH, AND SHORT

Jan 20, 11 pm-1 am

Links Hall, 3111 N Western Avenue

Silencio Blanco and many other performers and their puppets take the floor, for a whopping lineup of off-off acts at the late night cabaret Nasty, Brutish, and Short. Chicago artists Mike Olean and Grace Needlman curate the evening in conjunction with the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival each Friday and Saturday night of the Festival.

MCA TALK

Jan 22, 10 am-1 pm

The Ellen Van Volkenburg
Puppetry Symposium

Silencio Blanco cofounders Santiago Tobar and Dominga Gutiérrez participate in this daylong international symposium, which brings together practicing festival artists with scholars from many disciplines to consider the intersection of puppetry and biology, cinema, poetry, and philosophy. For more information, please visit chicagopuppetfest.org/symposium.

Copresented with the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival and the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry at the University of Chicago. Free with performance ticket or museum admission.

MCA SCREEN

Lota, The Devil's Blast

On Tuesday of this week, Silencio Blanco cofounders Santiago Tobar and Dominga Gutiérrez introduced their video documentation of Lota, the infamous mining town in central Chile's Gulf of Arauco, and discussed the region's coal industry and community resistance. The artists created *Chiflón* while in residence in Lota, inspired in part by Chilean author Baldomero Lillo's story set in that town, *Chiflón del Diablo (The Devil's Blast)*.

MCA STUDIO

Animation of the Object

On Friday of this week, Silencio Blanco cofounders Santiago Tobar and Dominga Gutiérrez led a workshop for artists enrolled in Catalyst, a program of the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival (CIPTF). Tobar and Gutiérrez trained in acting and film and turned to puppetry to deepen their study of everyday situations and familiar gestural movements. The workshop draws from Bunraku training, the art of transferring energy into the object by three puppeteers, and works on devising story, lighting, set, and sound designs collaboratively.

MCA STUDIO

Jan 23 and 24

Para el Futuro (en Español)

The MCA thanks the Center for Community Arts Partnerships Columbia College Chicago, the teachers and students of Lowell Elementary in Humboldt Park, and the Open Center for the Arts in Little Village in Little Village for welcoming Silencio Blanco to their communities. Open to all ages, the hands-on workshops are led by artists and promote imaginative uses of household materials, such as newspapers and paste, to explore people's relationship with objects and to develop observation, dialogue without using words, and teamwork.



Silencio Blanco, *El Chiflón*
Photo: Tatiana Macedo

Feb 18-19
at MCA Stage

CCN-Ballet de Lorraine



CCN-Ballet de Lorraine, *SOUNDANCE*
Photo: Laurent Philippe

WORKS BY MERCÉ CUNNINGHAM AND OTHERS

Tickets at mcachicago.org

SYNOPSIS

A shaft collapses. A young coal miner is thrown out of work. His only chance to keep working for the company is to head to the region of Chiflón del Diablo, notorious for having one of the world's most dangerous mines. Scenes of daily life invite us inside the intimate and fragile situations of the characters: a coal miner's daily heroics, his wife's unconditional waiting and the uncertainty of his return. It is a story forgotten by history, or rather buried in the depths of coal mines, submerged in a truly dark silence.

FROM THE ARTISTS

This work is a tribute to the people of Lota and the whole mining community, to all the families affected by the solitude of coal mining, the women in anguish waiting for their fathers, brothers, and husbands, as well as the forgotten people who toil, extracting the resources that fuel the nation's long period of industrial growth.

—El Mostrador, Chile

SINOPSIS

Derrumbe. Un minero joven es expulsado del pique de carbón en el que trabaja. Su única opción para seguir trabajando es irse a la galería del Chiflón del Diablo, conocida por su siniestra fama. Escenas de lo cotidiano nos invitan a conocer la intimidad y fragilidad de los personajes, el heroísmo diario de un minero del carbón, y la incondicional espera e incertidumbre de la mujer, al no saber si su minero volverá o no. Se trata de una historia olvidada por la Historia, o enterrada en lo más profundo de las minas del carbón, inmersa en un verdadero silencio negro.

DE LOS ARTISTAS

Esta obra es un homenaje a la población de Lota y a todo pueblo minero, a todas las familias de esa ciudad que están marcadas por la soledad de los piques, la angustiante espera de las mujeres por sus padres, hermanos y esposos, y el olvido hacia esas personas que, extrajeron con su esfuerzo el combustible que industrializó un largo periodo de nuestra historia.

—El Mostrador, Chile



Woman at the market, Lota Bajo
Photo: Courtesy of the artists

Mujer en la feria, Lota Bajo
Foto: Cortesía de artistas

ABOUT THE WORK

“Chiflón” is the common name in Spanish that miners give to the natural draft that flows through a mining shaft. It is also the name of the notorious mine in Lota, in central Chile’s Biobío region along the Gulf of Arauco. The mine operated from the mid-1850s until the 1990s and at its height employed more than 1,500 miners and produced 250 tons of coal a day.

Chiflón, El Silencio del Carbón revisits a history of coal miners through their representation as story characters. For their research, the creators reread the short story *El Chiflón del Diablo* (*The Devil’s Blast*), by Baldomero Lillo (1867–1923), the great

Chilean writer, naturalist, and labor sympathizer, settling on a miner’s wife for their story’s protagonist.

Not wishing to betray the reality of mining’s profound silence, they traveled to Lota, notorious for the mine Chiflón del Diablo, an eleven-hour drive by car from the capital.

They were captivated by the sensitivity and charisma exhibited by the people who invited them into their homes, sharing their memories, experiences, and their sadness, pain, and hopes. It was clear that Lota’s residents, the ex-miners and their families, are living treasures for the story of coal, which is a mystery full of secrets and humanity. They presented the visitors a collective,



Outside the house, Lota Bajo
Photo: Courtesy of the artists

Salida de casa, Lota Bajo
Foto: Cortesía de artistas

interior silence—a dark silence.

The experience grew into a two-year creative investigation, involving repeated trips to Lota, interviews, and the hand building of many of the puppets used in *Chiflón* with the help of the townspeople.

The endeavor would shape the humanity of the story’s characters, by means of Silencio’s aesthetic approach to both constructing and manipulating the puppets. *Chiflón, El Silencio del Carbón* (*Chiflón, Silence of the Coal*) is their representation of a part of history that lives and exists in anonymity, forgotten, while for decades it fueled the economic development of the national arenas of transportation, energy, and export.

A HISTORY OF LOTA

Lota is located in the center of Chile, the Araucanía region by the Gulf of Arauco. The name Lota is thought to derive from the indigenous Mapudungun *louta*, which means small or insignificant settlement. The Chilean history of repeated colonial aggression, particularly against the Mapuche people, was concentrated in Araucanía.

Lota’s Western history began in the 1500s with the Spanish settlements on the Biobío River. The waterway is a natural boundary and at first helped maintain Mapuche independence by promoting trade and exchange. Lota became the battle line in the Arauco



The mines of El Chiflón del Diablo
Photo: Courtesy of the artists

Galerías El Chiflón del Diablo
Foto: Cortesía de artistas

War between Spain and the Mapuche over the latter's rights and land. The slaughter of and other aggressions against the Mapuche lasted more than 290 years were part of one of the world history's longest-lasting wars.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the modern city of Lota expanded with the coal mining industry. Lota has Chile's oldest hydroelectric power station, the Chivilingo Hydroelectric Plant, designed by Thomas Edison (1847–1931) and built in 1897. In the early 1970s, President Salvador Allende nationalized the city's coal mines after civil unrest and with heavy socialist support. The mines were privatized again under the totalitarian regime of Augusto Pinochet, and in the 1990s closed after Lota's

coal resources were nearly exhausted and cheaper Colombian coal arrived on the market, plunging the residents of Lota into poverty.

Today Lota is one of the poorest cities in Chile, and its economy is turning towards tourism. The area is part of the national parks and tourist attractions included for guided visits to the coal mine. The town remains a wellspring for the labor movement and civil protests.



Former miners
Photo: Courtesy of the artists

Ex-mineros
Foto: Cortesía de artistas

ACERCA DEL TRABAJO

"Chiflón" es el nombre que los mineros suelen dar al proyecto natural que fluye a través de un eje. También es el nombre de la mina con siniestra fama de Lota, en la región central de Chile del Biobío, cerca del Golfo de Arauco. La mina operó desde mediados de 1850 hasta los 90 y, hubo un tiempo en que empleaba a más de 1.500 mineros y producía hasta 250 toneladas de carbón por día.

El proyecto Chiflón pretende revivir parte de la historia de los mineros del carbón a través de sus personajes emblemáticos. Para esto los creativos hicieron una lectura del cuento *El Chiflón del Diablo* de Baldomero Lillo—gran escritor chileno,

naturalista, y testigo ocular del mundo que retrata, eligiendo como foco central e hilo conductor al personaje de la Mujer minera.

Con el fin de no traicionar la realidad silenciosa, viajaron al pueblo de Lota, donde se encuentra el famoso pique del *Chiflón del Diablo*, a unas once horas en coche desde la capital.

Fueron cautivados por la delicadeza y el carisma de la gente; quienes conversaron con ellos, les invitaron a sus hogares, les contaron sus recuerdos, sus experiencias, sus penas, dolores e ilusiones. Se dieron cuenta de que la gente de Lota, los exmineros y sus familias, son hoy en día un tesoro de la historia del carbón, un misterio lleno de secretos y humanidad. Les presentaron su propio silencio; el silencio negro.

La experiencia se convirtió, durante un período de dos años de investigación creativa, en repetidos viajes a Lota, para entrevistar a los habitantes y construir a mano muchas de las marionetas utilizadas en Chiflón con su ayuda.

Se plasman, por medio del detalle estético y simbólico, en la construcción de la marioneta y del gesto en movimiento, la delicada fibra humana de los personajes de la historia. Hablan de una parte de su Historia que vive y existe en animato, que ha sido silenciada en la memoria, pero que fue, sin embargo, el seno en el que se basó el desarrollo económico de la región durante décadas, tanto en materia de transporte y energía como en términos de exportación.

UNA HISTORIA DE LOTA

Lota se ubica en el centro de Chile, en la región de la Araucanía del Golfo de Arauco. El nombre Lota se cree que se deriva de la palabra Louta indígena Mapudungun y significa 'pequeño asentamiento o insignificantes'. La historia de repetidas agresiones a manos de la colonización chilena, especialmente contra el pueblo Mapuche, se concentra en la Araucanía.

La historia occidental de Lota comienza alrededor del año 1500 con los asentamientos españoles del río Biobío. Esta vía fluvial es una frontera natural que, al principio, ayudó a mantener la independencia

Mapuche a través de promover el comercio y el intercambio. Lota se convirtió en la línea de batalla en la Guerra de Arauco entre España y los Mapuche sobre sus derechos y sus tierras. La masacre y las demás agresiones contra los Mapuches duró más de 290 años, y es una de las guerras más largas en la historia del mundo.

A mediados del siglo XIX, la moderna ciudad de Lota se ampliará con la industria minera del carbón. En Lota se localiza la más antigua hidroeléctrica de Chile, la Central Hidroeléctrica Chivilingo, diseñada por Thomas Alva Edison y construida en 1897. A principios de 1970, el Presidente Salvador Allende nacionalizó las minas de carbón, después de los disturbios civiles, y contando con un fuerte apoyo socialista. Las minas fueron privatizadas de nuevo bajo el régimen totalitario de Augusto Pinochet, y en el decenio de 1990, cerraron, después de que los recursos de carbón prácticamente se agotasen, y el carbón colombiano más barato, llegase al mercado, sumiendo a los habitantes de Lota en la pobreza.

Hoy, Lota es una de las ciudades más pobres de Chile, y está convirtiendo su economía hacia el turismo.

El área es hoy parte de los Parques Nacionales, y sus atracciones turísticas incluyen visitas guiadas a la mina de carbón. La ciudad sigue siendo una fuente de la lucha obrera y las protestas civiles.



Lota
Photo: Courtesy of the artists



Dominga Gutiérrez (right) with Lota residents
Photo: Courtesy of the artists



Workshopping El Chiflón
Photo: Courtesy of the artists

Taller: La Madre
Foto: Cortesía de artistas

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Dominga Gutiérrez
Photo: Courtesy of the artists

Silencio Blanco is a collective of mixed media—artists based in Santiago de Chile. The members are best known for their hand-built puppets—painted white and constructed from a newspaper base—and for performing without words to original sound scores. They use this montage, and detailed portrayals of everyday situations and familiar gestures, from a desire through acting to represent the emotional and expressive human experience.

The group was formed in 2010 by Santiago Tobar and Dominga Gutiérrez, who met while studying acting at the legendary Theater School of the University of

Chile. At the time, few schools offered majors in puppetry. The founders adopted Bunraku, the Japanese art of transferring energy into the object by three puppeteers, to innovate their training as actors.

The core members today include seven puppet artists and sound artist—composer Ricardo Pacheco. They work collaboratively and to date have created three full-length works: *De Papel*, *Pescador*, and *Chiflón*, *El Silencio del Carbón*, employing puppets and, more recently, film. Tobar serves as Artistic Director and the head puppet maker. Prior to forming Silencio Blanco with Gutiérrez, he was master puppeteer with Compañía Teatro Milagros, collaborating with artistic director—designer Aline Kuppenheim on the company's award-winning multimedia works *El Capote* and *Sobre la Cuerda Floja (Over the Tightrope)*.

Most recently the company completed a two-week creative residency in filmmaking using puppetry at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, the alma mater of Jim Henson. For more information about the artists, please visit silencioblanco.cl.

ACERCA DE LOS ARTISTAS



Santiago Tobar
Photo: Courtesy of the artists

La Compañía 'Silencio Blanco' es un colectivo mixto de artistas de Santiago de Chile. Sus miembros son conocidos por sus marionetas hechas a mano a base de papel de periódico y pintura blanca, y por actuaciones desprovistas de un texto y del diseño de un universo sonoro original. La compañía de este montaje se sirve del minucioso retrato de situaciones cotidianas y gestos familiares para hacer realidad el deseo de los actores de representar la capacidad emocional y expresiva del ser humano.

El grupo 'Silencio Blanco' fue formado en 2010 por Santiago Tobar y Dominga Gutiérrez, dos estudiantes

de actuación que coincidieron en la legendaria escuela de Teatro de la Universidad de Chile. En el momento, sólo unas pocas escuelas ofrecían la posibilidad de especializarse en el teatro de títeres. Los fundadores adoptaron el bunraku, el arte japonés de la transferencia de energía al objeto a través de los tres titiriteros, para innovar en su formación como actores.

Los actuales miembros del grupo incluyen siete titiriteros y el compositor Ricardo Pacheco. Su trabajo en conjunto ha producido hasta hoy tres obras: *De Papel*, *Pescador y Chiflón*, *El Silencio del Carbón*, todas ellas basadas en el trabajo con las marionetas; incluso han producido una película. Santiago Tobar es el Director Artístico y Director de Titiritero del grupo. Anteriormente a la formación de 'Silencio Blanco' con Dominga Gutiérrez, Tobar fue maestro titirero en el Teatro Milagros, la notable compañía dirigida por la Directora y Diseñadora Artística Aline Kuppenheim, galardonada por los trabajos en *El Capote* y *Sobre la Cuerda Floja* (*Over the Tightrope*).

Más recientemente, la compañía ha completado una residencia de dos semanas de duración basada en el trabajo con marionetas en el cine, en la Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, de la Universidad de Maryland, el alma máter de Jim Henson.

Para más información sobre los artistas, no deje de visitar silencioblanco.cl.



Silencio Blanco, *El Chiflón*
Photo: Lorenzo Mella

Silencio Blanco, *El Chiflón*
Foto: Lorenzo Mella

The MCA's newest affinity group, **Enact**, is a group of MCA Circle Donors dedicated to supporting the renowned programs of MCA Stage. Join today for opportunities to meet artists, gain behind-the-scenes access, and discuss groundbreaking directions with leading curators—all while providing vital support.

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THANK YOU

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MCA Stage's groundbreaking performances are an integral part of MCA Chicago's artist-activated, audience-engaged programming. Along with the museum's exhibitions and educational initiatives, they encourage a broad and diverse community to experience and discuss the work and ideas of living artists.

PARKING

Validate your ticket at coat check for \$12 parking in the MCA garage (220 East Chicago Avenue) and the Bernardin garage (747 North Wabash). The \$12 parking is limited to six hours on the date of performance.

LOST AND FOUND

To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312-280-2660. Unclaimed articles are held for thirty days.

SEATING

Please switch off all noise-making devices while you are in the theater.

Patrons are seated at the management's discretion. Food and open beverage containers are not allowed in the seating area.

REPRODUCTION

Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance are prohibited.

GENERAL INFORMATION

312-280-2660

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312-397-4010

VOLUNTEER FOR PERFORMANCES

312-397-4072

mcastage@mcachicago.org

Museum hours

Tuesday: 10 am–8pm

Wednesday–Sunday: 10 am–5 pm

Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas

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Program notes compiled
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